

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (2022)



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The Australian Volunteers Program
is an Australian Government initiative.

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The Australian Volunteers Program is an Australian Government initiative. The program is managed by AVI, in a consortium with Cardno Emerging Markets Pty Ltd and Alinea International.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AOs	Australian Organisations
AVP	Australian Volunteers Program (acronym for internal use only)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social inclusion
HDS	Humanitarian & Development Deployments Section (in DFAT)
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MELF	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework
MIS	Management Information System
POs	Partner Organisations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

1. Purpose of MEL Framework

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF) sets out the approach to assessing the performance of the Australian Volunteers Program. The Framework identifies the evidence that will be generated to enable:

1. Accountability to DFAT, program partners, and the public
2. Program performance and management decision-making for DFAT and the program team
3. Learning and continuous improvement to ensure effective program delivery
4. Stronger understanding of good volunteer practice within DFAT and the wider volunteer community
5. Communications to promote the value of volunteering in Australia and in partner countries.

The MELF will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes as the program adapts and learns more about how to best monitor and evaluate the performance of the Australian Volunteers Program.

The MELF was a requirement of Clause 8.1 of the Head Contract with a due date of 1st December 2017. It was generated by the program team, with input from DFAT. It was first submitted to DFAT on 1st December 2017, and reviewed and revised in February 2020. In 2021, the program logic was refreshed by AVP and DFAT and in 2022 a contract extension signed for the second five-year term of the program up to 2027. The MEL Framework was reviewed and updated in line with the refreshed program logic. A process of external stakeholder consultation also fed into the revised MELF and the MEL Unit is very grateful for inputs provided by partner organisations, volunteers, DFAT staff and external research and MEL professionals.

2. Australian Volunteers Program

The Australian Volunteers Program is an Australian Government initiative. It builds on the Australian Government's investment in international volunteers over the past 60 years. The program replaced the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, which concluded on 31st December 2017. The new program retains the core elements of AVID and enhances the program's reach, visibility and impact. The Australian Volunteers Program is managed by AVI, in a consortium with Cardno Emerging Markets Pty Ltd and Alinea International. It is a ten-year program, from 2018 to 2027, with an estimated total budget of up to AU\$ 264 million.

The Australian Volunteers Program matches skilled Australians from all walks of life with organisations in developing countries to help these organisations to deliver on their own development objectives. The program uses international volunteering as a people-centred approach to capacity strengthening. The Australian Volunteers Program is part of the Australian Government's people-to-people program portfolio, connecting Australians to Australia's aid program and the region.

The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by a Global Program Strategy that sets out the strategic direction, policy context, guiding principles and priorities for the program. It informs plans, partnerships and volunteer assignments at the country level, which align with partner countries developmental objectives and Australia's aid investment plans. The strategy is framed by and contributes to Australia's aid policy, the Foreign Policy White Paper and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program's MELF, alongside a range of other program-level strategies, supports the strategy and effective program implementation.

3. Overview of the MEL Framework

The core sections of the MELF articulate:

1. What the program intends to achieve: the program logic describes what the program hopes to achieve over the next five years, and how it aims to influence change, both in Australia and overseas.
2. How progress will be tracked, which includes:
 - a. key evaluation questions to guide all monitoring, evaluation and learning activities
 - b. indicators for regular monitoring
 - c. tools to support regular data collection on the indicators, and
 - d. evaluative activities to provide a deeper understanding of aspects of the program
3. The process of making sense of program evidence and the ways the evidence will be used in the program.
4. The roles and responsibilities for delivering on the MELF.
5. The risks to MELF delivery.
6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning planning and budgeting.
7. The ethical principles that guide the MELF.

4. Australian Volunteers Program Logic

4.1. Program logic

The program logic identifies the relationship between the program's actions and the intended changes it aims to support. It also identifies underlying assumptions that are key to ensuring outcomes will be achieved as planned.

The initial program logic was developed in 2017 with input from DFAT and Australian Volunteers Program staff. It was highly aligned with the program logic in the design document. The program logic was refreshed in 2021 (following the recommendations of the 2021 independent evaluation), the principles of which are as follows:

The Australian Volunteers Program's overarching goal is to support locally-led change and the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program values volunteering as a powerful means to support Australia's, and partner country's achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Ultimately, the program aims to contribute to partner countries sustainable and equitable socio-economic development.

The strategic focus for the program is set out in the Global Program Strategy. The strategy is framed by and contributes to Australia's aid policy and the SDGs.

The program is part of the Australian Government's people-to-people program portfolio. Volunteering, particularly skilled, global volunteering promotes cultural understanding through connecting people and forming partnerships between communities and organisations. The program helps connect Australians to Australia's aid program and the region, and to connect a growing network of people across the region through a shared value in the role of volunteerism to support locally-led development and social justice. As such, the overall objective of the program for the Australian Government is for Australia to strengthen mutual relationships with people and communities across the Pacific, Asia and Africa that contribute to achieving equitable development outcomes.

To contribute to this Objective, and Goal, over the next five years the program aims to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Partner organisations are supported to progress their development objectives
2. Key stakeholders in Australia and partner countries appreciate the value of volunteering
3. Program participants gain greater cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries

Partner Organisations are supported to progress their development objectives

The Australian Volunteers Program works with a diverse range of partners across 26 countries. The program works to support our partners through a range of approaches (including, but not limited to, volunteer assignments in-country and remote, small grants, and brokering new partnerships and networks), to enable partners to strengthen their capacity to better progress their own developmental objectives.

The program starts from a position of respecting our partners existing capacity, and works with them to identify how best the program can support our partners achieve their own objectives. Capacity strengthening is seen as an ongoing process of maintaining and increasing the capabilities of individuals, teams and organisations in order to achieve a range of positive sustainable outcomes. It is contextually-grounded, locally-owned, occurs at multiple levels (individual, organisational and systemic) and is a long-term, non-linear process.

Mutually respectful and valued partnerships are central to our approach. Partner organisations' strategic rationale for participation in the program, their provision of a safe working environment for volunteers, and their contribution to reciprocal learning and quality assignments are fundamental.

Key stakeholders in Australia and partner countries appreciate the value of volunteering

The program works to increase the appreciation of volunteering, and the role of volunteering as an effective means of contributing to sustainable development, amongst key stakeholders. These stakeholders include our partners (overseas and Australian), current, past and potential volunteers, DFAT (in Australia and overseas), participants of other DFAT people-to-people programs, the development sector, and other international volunteering agencies.

The program values and seeks to amplify the voices of our partners, volunteers and DFAT in promoting the benefits of volunteering to their networks in Australia and partner countries. This serves both to support higher-order outcomes and other intermediate outcomes, to grow partnerships with a diverse range of partners, and to attract a diverse range of volunteers to the program.

By sharing the program's learning, innovations and impact with key stakeholders, particularly the international volunteering and development community, the program seeks to contribute to peer learning and increase understanding and appreciation of the value of skilled volunteering.

The Australian Volunteers Program's Innovation Hub supports the program to adapt and explore innovative volunteer approaches and models to expand the program's reach and ability to evolve. In doing so, it supports the program's intended outcome of increasing the appreciation of volunteering, recognising volunteering as a unique modality and expanding what the program offers and to whom. It also supports other outcome areas, designing alternative volunteering modalities to support partners in new ways, and providing opportunities to a greater range of potential volunteers.

Program participants gain greater cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries

Skilled, well-supported and strategically placed volunteers are at the heart of a successful volunteering program. The program not only supports volunteers, but also volunteer's family members on in-country

assignments. The inclusion of dependents broadens the scope of those benefitting from cross-cultural exchanges.

The program is inclusive of and accessible to a diverse range of people. The program understands and addresses barriers to participation, and considers accessibility when promoting and communicating about the program. For example, the program's Indigenous Pathways initiative aims to expand and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in international volunteering, by providing culturally safe, flexible and tailored support.

The program supports volunteers from different backgrounds who have the right skills, attitudes and attributes to complete effective assignments from which both volunteer and partner mutually benefit. If volunteers complete their assignment well, they are more likely to also help communicate to their networks the value of volunteering. This mutual reciprocity and learning enables volunteers to gain both personally and professionally. Through their assignment, program participants (volunteers, their dependents, and partner organisation counterparts) also gain greater cultural awareness and help build stronger connections across borders throughout the region.

The program's three end of program outcomes are strongly inter-connected. Progress towards one supports progress towards others. All outcomes are underpinned by the program's guiding principles, as set out in the Global Program Strategy, and a commitment to supporting quality assignments, principled partnerships and innovative approaches that support locally-led change. These principles ensure that we work in ways that:

- Value volunteering
- Support locally-led capacity strengthening
- Build strong relationships and partnerships
- Evolve best practice and embrace innovation
- Enhance diversity and inclusion
- Ensure accountability and value learning

By successfully achieving these outcomes, the Australian Volunteers Program will have contributed to the Objective of: Australia has strong, mutual relationships with people and communities across the Pacific, Asia and Africa that contribute to achieving equitable development outcomes. This in turn leads into the higher-level Goal of: Global volunteering supports locally-led change and the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The program logic is presented visually in the diagram below.

Our Program Logic



4.2. Assumptions (risks to delivery of program outcomes)

The achievement of program outcomes, as articulated in the program logic, is based on a number of underlying assumptions, which define conditions assumed to be in place. Reframed, these assumptions are actually risks to the delivery of program outcomes.

Tracking progress against the program logic through monitoring and regular reflection, provides the opportunity to determine whether these assumptions have held or not, and whether or how they will affect the achievement of results. The MELF data collection tools aim to provide insights into these assumptions (risks). As part of the Annual Reflection events (Section 6.1), assumptions in the program logic will be reviewed and tested.

The assumptions are:

1. There will be ongoing bi-partisan support for the Australian Volunteers Program
2. Volunteers have a positive volunteering experience
3. The successful delivery of volunteer assignments will make a real contribution to partner organisations' ability to achieve their objectives
4. The success of volunteer assignments and partner capacity strengthening, will meaningfully contribute to Australia's development and public diplomacy objectives
5. Potential, current and past volunteers have a positive perception of the Australian aid program and Australia's development objectives overseas

6. Most volunteers will want to share their volunteering experiences and articulate how volunteers contribute to development outcomes with others in Australia and overseas
7. Australian organisations, partner organisations, and DFAT see value in and will actively promote the benefits of the volunteer program
8. With the right support, volunteering overseas can be an attractive and accessible opportunity to skilled Australians from all walks of life
9. A diverse and relevant range of Australian organisations and in-country partner organisations will be interested in and have the capacity to partner with the program
10. DFAT post, Canberra and State offices will be interested in strategically engaging with the volunteer program and leveraging the program to support the delivery of development outcomes

Risks to delivery of the MELF are captured in Section 8.

5. Assessing progress

The approach to assessing progress in the Australian Volunteers Program draws on some of the key principles of developmental evaluation to provide, as far as possible, real time data that helps to interpret what is working and what is not within the program. Whilst the Australian Volunteers Program has a (relatively) linear and seemingly simple program logic, the reality is that the Australian Volunteers Program is operating in a multitude of complex operating environments. Strengthening capacity of partner organisations, and understanding how to influence public diplomacy are situation specific and complex undertakings. The elements of developmental evaluation being applied include:

- A heavy emphasis on monitoring using multiple sources and obtaining (as far as possible) and analysing real time data
- Identifying patterns in data that may prompt new thinking
- Interpretation and meaning being assigned by those involved in delivering the program through a process of asking what does the data tell us? So what does it mean for the way we operate and the partnerships we have? Now what are we going to do (same or differently)?
- The focus is on learning and using reflection to test whether we are on the right path to achieving the desired outcomes

5.1. Key evaluation questions

Key evaluation questions are high level questions designed to frame the analysis of progress and performance of the Australian Volunteers Program. They will be used by the program to help structure regular reflection events, and to guide reporting. The key evaluation questions in the design document were reviewed and refined by the program team.

Effectiveness

1. What have been the outcomes (intended and unintended, positive and negative) of the program for volunteers, partner organisations, development in partner countries, and raising awareness of the value of volunteering?
2. To what extent have these outcomes furthered equitable development goals, specifically related to gender equality, disability and social inclusion?
3. To what extent has the program contributed to these outcomes?
4. To what extent has the program improved the reach and diversity of:
 - a. Partners in Australia and overseas (partner organisation type, size, sector)

- b. Volunteers, including across the areas of gender, disability, ethnic background, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, age, location
- c. Avenues and audiences for public diplomacy?

Value for money

- 5. How efficiently is the program being delivered, including achieving its outputs as intended (on time, of good quality, on cost)?
- 6. To what extent has the program been able to learn and improve its approaches to managing a volunteering program, including through trialling new approaches?

Relevance

- 7. How relevant is the program to partner country priorities, Australian aid priorities, and partner organisation priorities?

Through the program's research and learning, some broader, more exploratory questions may also be considered.

- 1. How are partner organisations achieving change, what are the ways in which partners can strengthen their capacity, and what does this help them achieve?
- 2. In what ways can volunteering best support locally-led change and equitable partnerships?
- 3. In what ways is the program, through skilled volunteering, able to support equitable development outcomes
- 4. What is the distinctive value of volunteering in comparison to other development modalities?

5.2. Program indicators

This section provides a summary of the regular indicators of Australian Volunteers Program progress and the tools used to collect this data.

The program indicators are used to gather regular information on the progress of the Australian Volunteers Program. They provide "windows" for viewing progress on the program. Regular data collection and analysis (using the key evaluation questions as higher level guides) will help the team to understand areas of progress, and risks to delivery. The interpretation of why progress is fast or slow, is done informally through regular feedback/conversations with implementing teams and partners, as well as formally through the annual reflection events (section 6.1). Where the Australian Volunteers Program team can't plausibly explain reasons for progress, the MEL team can commission further evaluative research (section 5.4), or the program can revisit the assumptions in the Program Logic (section 4.2) to ensure these still hold true.

Whilst the program logic doesn't detail key program management indicators, these support effective and efficient program management, are required as part of the contract, and provide the evidence base for answering the key evaluation questions on value for money.

Most information is available through the online Management Information System. By integrating key data into the Management Information System the program will provide real time data on a number of key measures for intermediate outcomes as outlined in Figure 2 below.

Where meaningful, all indicators relating to volunteers will be disaggregated by gender. Such indicators will be further disaggregated by other diversity characteristics where the sample size allows it and where doing so will not identify individuals.

Figure 2 Intermediate outcome performance indicators

Partner organisations capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Percentage of partner organisations that demonstrates progress on assignment objectives -Percentage of partner organisations satisfied or highly satisfied with the program overall -Percentage of volunteers who report their assignment was a good fit for their PO's priorities 	Value of volunteering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of AOs, volunteers and DFAT who have actively engaged in promoting the program -Percentage of promotional AOs, POs, Volunteers and DFAT reporting that they were adequately supported to deliver public communication activities. 	Cultural connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Percentage of volunteers who report feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the level of personal and professional development achieved Percentage of volunteers who report positive achievement of assignment objectives -Percentage of volunteers who report feeling supported by the program and by their PO -Percentage of early returns (and reasons for) by reasons within control / outside of the control of the program
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5.3. Tools for data collection

Our approach to data collection and management will be:

- User-centric which ensures a meaningful involvement of service users from listening, acting upon user feedback, to consider user voice in planning, implementation and review.
- Using assessments to inform strategy and performance management by regularly analysing and responding to data and using it to change and improve. This means acting on assessment findings during the life cycle of the intervention rather than just at the end.
- Collection of data on a regular basis as opposed to a one off activity, and aimed at learning, making corrections, and addressing issues — rather than just reporting and accountability.
- Utilising a variety of data collection tools in line with the above-mentioned approach. These include conducting micro-surveys, social listening, and feedback from current and returned volunteers through interactive sessions and online tools.
- Proportionate, only collecting data and at a frequency that is necessary for the uses outlined in the MELF.
- Utilising online tools connected to the program's MIS where possible to efficiently collect, clean, store and analyse data

Key data sources for the Australian Volunteers Program regular monitoring approach are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Monitoring data sources for the Australian Volunteers Program MELF

Data Source/Tool	Description	Frequency of collection	Data availability
Volunteer assignment feedback Completed online and captured in MIS	At the commencement of the assignment partner organisations and volunteers complete an assignment plan. At the mid-point (for assignments six months and over) the partner organisations and volunteer review progress. At the end of the assignment the Volunteer provides feedback. (partner organisations feedback captured independently). The end of	Assignment plan at the start of every assignment Mid-point (for assignments six months and over) End of assignment	Continuous and ongoing

Data Source/Tool	Description	Frequency of collection	Data availability
	assignment evaluation is supplemented with an exit interview		
Partner organisation end of assignment evaluation completed online and captured in MIS	At the end of each assignment, the program requests feedback from the partner organisations, provided independently of the volunteer	End of assignment	Continuous and ongoing
Partnership Plan and review. Captured in MIS	At the commencement of a partnership a three-year plan is established, identifying capacity needs and options for volunteer support. The partnership plan is reviewed periodically to track progress, including on capacity strengthening outcomes	Ongoing	Progress against Partnership Plan updated on a rolling basis.
Case studies / stories of change from partner organisations	Case studies collected from partner organisations about the impact of the program on their development outcomes, using an outcome harvesting approach. Analysed to share learning during reflection sessions.	Annual	Annually on a rolling basis.
Management Information System	Stores and enables analysis of basic information on volunteers and partner organisations	Ongoing	Real-time
Media monitoring and media analytics	Monitoring: To capture stories that are profiled in the media about international volunteering. Analytics: To capture insights about social media sites including engagement, reach, content performance, reactions, audience demographics.	Monthly	Available in Australia for social and online media.
Social listening analytics	Insights that go beyond the program's social platforms, listening to conversations about the program's brand. This includes sentiment toward the brand, trends, topics target audiences are interested in	Monthly	Compiled annually.
Alumni survey	To understand how past volunteers continue to be engaged with and promote the value of volunteering and how the volunteer program can best support this.	Bi-Annual	Bi-Annually one month after survey closes

Data Source/Tool	Description	Frequency of collection	Data availability
Assessment of alignment between country program plans and partner organisations objectives	Each region will conduct an assessment of alignment in one country in each region, each year.	Annual	Annually
DFAT Post survey	A survey to all Posts from AVS to get feedback on the alignment of the program at the country level and Post engagement	Annual	Annually, one month after survey closes
DFAT monitoring visits	DFAT monitoring visits and written reports will support data assurance and triangulation.	Ongoing	One month after monitoring visit

In addition to the regular monitoring tools outlined above that are used across the program specifically in relation to volunteer assignments, some components of the program also use other tools and approaches. Key components are summarised below in Table 2.

Table 2 Monitoring of separate program components

Component	MEL Approach
Innovation Hub The program's Innovation Hub identifies and tests new ideas to improve volunteering.	<p>The Innovation Hub has a specific way of working and a dedicated MEL approach. This approach focusses on two levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEL for the Innovation Hub's overall performance, and • MEL for individual innovations that are developed and tested under the Innovation Fund. <p>Six high level evaluation questions guide all MEL activities related to innovation. These are:</p> <p><u>Doing innovation well</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the Hub effectively and efficiently facilitating the generation of ideas and their progression through the innovation pipeline? 2. Is the Hub supporting the right ideas? 3. Is the Innovation Hub the right innovation model for the program? <p><u>Innovation Fund's direct achievements</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What changes or outcomes have been achieved because of the Hub? <p><u>Program Influence</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To what extent has the Hub influenced the program, including broader program capability? 6. What broader lessons from the Hub (not related to the innovation process) can be used to improve the program? <p>The program logic intermediate outcome relating to Innovation includes specific indicators that relate to these broad areas. Other end of program outcome indicators are also disaggregated by volunteering modality to further assess different forms of volunteering.</p>

Component	MEL Approach
<p>Impact Fund</p> <p>The program makes small grants available to partner organisations to support their capacity strengthening objectives.</p>	<p>Grants are disbursed through a competitive process in rounds. They are managed through SmartyGrants. The program assesses and reports on the effectiveness of grants through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data tracking of grants disbursed, summarised annually in the annual report • Individual grant-level reporting, including a mid-term check-in with program staff and end of grant report and acquittals through SmartyGrants • Assessments of grant 'rounds' conducted after all activities are completed and have been reported on individually, that summarise key achievements and challenges • A periodic external review of the Impact Fund overall • Other relevant MEL tools and approaches, such as case studies of partner organisations, also capture information about the contribution of grants to organisational capacity strengthening.
<p>Indigenous Pathways</p> <p>Indigenous Pathways is the program's approach to actively promoting international volunteering opportunities among Indigenous Australians.</p>	<p>Indigenous Pathways is a component stream within the broader program and integrates into the program logic. The Indigenous Pathways Framework is a comprehensive Indigenous engagement strategy.</p> <p>The Indigenous Pathways Framework offers different pathways into volunteering for Indigenous Australians, increasing the variety of opportunities through which people-to-people links can be forged between volunteers and communities. A twin-track approach is taken, with both targeted (including group) assignments and mainstream assignments. Separate MEL tools and processes for targeted assignments will be developed and used that are culturally appropriate. Mainstream assignments will be assessed through disaggregation of volunteer data. Additional surveys or reviews may also be used as required and in discussion with the Indigenous Pathways advisory panel.</p>

5.4. Evaluation

5.4.1. Internal evaluation for program learning and improvement

The MELF places a strong emphasis on regular monitoring and reflection. The program also invests in focussed evaluative activity that helps to better understand program achievements, and strengthen program efforts. The key evaluation questions will guide all evaluative processes, which will also be linked to the key objectives of the program logic. Priority is given to evaluative activity which provides insight into how to increase program impact.

The program distinguishes between different types of evaluative activity.

- Internal reviews are carried out to look at specific issues of interest to the program with a focus on internal processes and operations and how these can be improved (for example, to make the program more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities, or to look for improvements in business process).

- Operational research and thematic evaluation studies look at program outcomes relating to particular components of the program and/or thematic areas (for example, research into the effectiveness of remote volunteering as a modality, and thematic studies on climate change and gender equality).
- The program also conducts strategic evaluations that relate directly to the end of program outcomes.

Reviews and operational research will be carried out in support of specific issues as they emerge. This may relate to activities carried out under the program's Innovation Hub, operational priorities such as Partnership Plans, or to address specific evaluation questions in more detail (for example relating to Value for Money). Qualitative case studies will also be collected about partner organisations developmental outcomes relating to cross-cutting issues. The aim would be to provide an insight into how volunteering assignments have contributed to partner organisation capacity development and development outcomes in different sectors and for different cross-cutting issues or development priorities.

Priorities for research and reviews are established on an annual basis informed by the needs of the program, through the annual reflection and planning process. Strategic evaluations are longer-term pieces of work planned in advance.

5.4.2. Strategic evaluations

Key evaluative activities will be focussed on each of the program's end of program outcomes.

Partner organisation Capacity Strengthening: in the first five-year term of the program the program evaluated impact on partner capacity through a series of evaluations focussed on the 'impact areas' as set out in the Global Program Strategy (2018-2022). These evaluations focussed on a sample of thematic and geographic areas. In the second term of the program from 2022, the emphasis shifted to following a sample of partner organisations, with a stronger emphasis on a participatory approach that is based on on-going partnerships focused on mutual learning based on in-depth case studies with a sample of partners.

The Value of Volunteering: the initial program logic (2017 to 2021) focussed on public perceptions to aid and international volunteering in Australia. This was supported through a series of public opinion surveys with a representative sample of the Australian population. This public opinion survey will be repeated at least once more in the second term of the program, but extended by a more in-depth, qualitative approach in a small sample of countries (including Australia). This will ask how stakeholders see volunteering as contributing to strengthening relationships between the countries in the region and Australia, and if and how volunteering is valued as contributing to locally-led, equitable social development outcomes.

Cultural Connections: A longitudinal study (the Longitudinal Study of Australian Volunteers, or LSAV) was started in 2018, following a cohort of volunteers over time. This study, supported by periodic quantitative surveys of all former volunteers (Alumni surveys) has been the primary means of evidencing outcomes relating to volunteers. The study will be continued in the second term of the program (though with fewer rounds of data collection). Learning from the LSAV will also be used to strengthen the Alumni survey and make stronger connections between the three strategic evaluations in recognition of the interconnectedness of the three end of program outcomes.

5.4.3. External evaluation

In addition to the internal evaluative work, DFAT will commission an end of program evaluation that will address the Key Evaluation Questions. The Australian Volunteers Program MEL team will provide external evaluators with access to all required information.

5.5. Impact Areas, SDGs, and inclusion priorities

The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by a Global Program Strategy (2018-2022). The strategy identifies three impact areas that act as lenses, helping the program demonstrate policy alignment, communicate stories about the program, and help measure the developmental outcomes achieved by partners in a more focused set of thematic areas of work. These impact areas are:

- inclusive economic growth
- human rights
- climate change, disaster resilience and food security

The program conducted a formative evaluation of the impact areas in 2018 to measure the program's global footprint in relation to them. Following this, the program evaluated the contribution to partners' developmental outcomes using these three thematic lenses.

The program also codes and maps its contribution to the SDGs. Partner organisations are coded according to which SDGs their work primarily contributes.

The MELF will support the program to collate and analyse program outcomes in relation to gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) priorities. These are:

- gender equality and diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)
- disability inclusion
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (through the Indigenous Pathways program)

Social inclusion of minority and under-represented groups in the volunteer program will also be monitored. Specifically, diversity monitoring will cover: location (i.e. regional and rural Australians); age; people with disabilities; and culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The MELF supports data collection and analyse in support of GEDSI priorities through the following approaches:

Volunteer diversity monitoring: all applicants are asked to provide demographic data. This supports the collation of data relating to the diversity of volunteers and allows a comparison between successful and unsuccessful applicants to help monitor the fairness of recruitment processes

Partner organisation coding: all partner organisations are coded based on the thematic areas of work they undertake, including through the use of gender and disability markers to allow analyse of the numbers of organisations supported that work on women's rights and/or disability inclusion

Disaggregated indicators: all relevant indicators are disaggregated by sex and other characteristics where possible to analyse the different experiences of volunteers

Indigenous Pathways: Indigenous Pathways identifies two approaches to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the program, through a mainstreamed approach and a targeted approach. The MELF

supports both, through diversity monitoring (as above) of all assignments and adapting MEL tools to be culturally safe for targeted / group assignments.

GEDSI Reviews: The program has carried out internal reviews relating to gender equality, diverse SOGIESC, and disability inclusion. Progress against recommendations and management responses to these reviews will be monitored and follow-up reviews potentially supported to assess changes.

Case studies and thematic evaluations: The MELF's approach to documenting case studies of partner organisations' developmental outcomes, based on an Outcome Harvesting approach, enables the program to look at changes in relation to GEDSI priorities. Case studies are collected from partners' working in different areas and appropriately coded. Those that relate to the different priorities are then periodically analysed and synthesised to explore common trends and lessons learnt. This complements the in-depth approach of the Impact Areas with a broader process for measuring outcomes relating to GEDSI.

The program and the MELF aims to remain responsive to emerging areas of interest and changing policy context. Approaches to data coding, case study collection and flexibility in operational research allow the program to explore emerging issues as required. The MEL team will remain in close contact with DFAT to receive updates as development priorities evolve.

6. Understanding and using performance information

6.1. Annual reflection cycle

Core to the MEL approach is a series of annual reflection and planning events. These events have multiple purposes:

1. Review and interpret evidence of program progress
2. Identify and prioritise areas for program improvement
3. Feed into the key themes and messages for the annual report
4. Share learning across the program
5. Build relationships across the teams

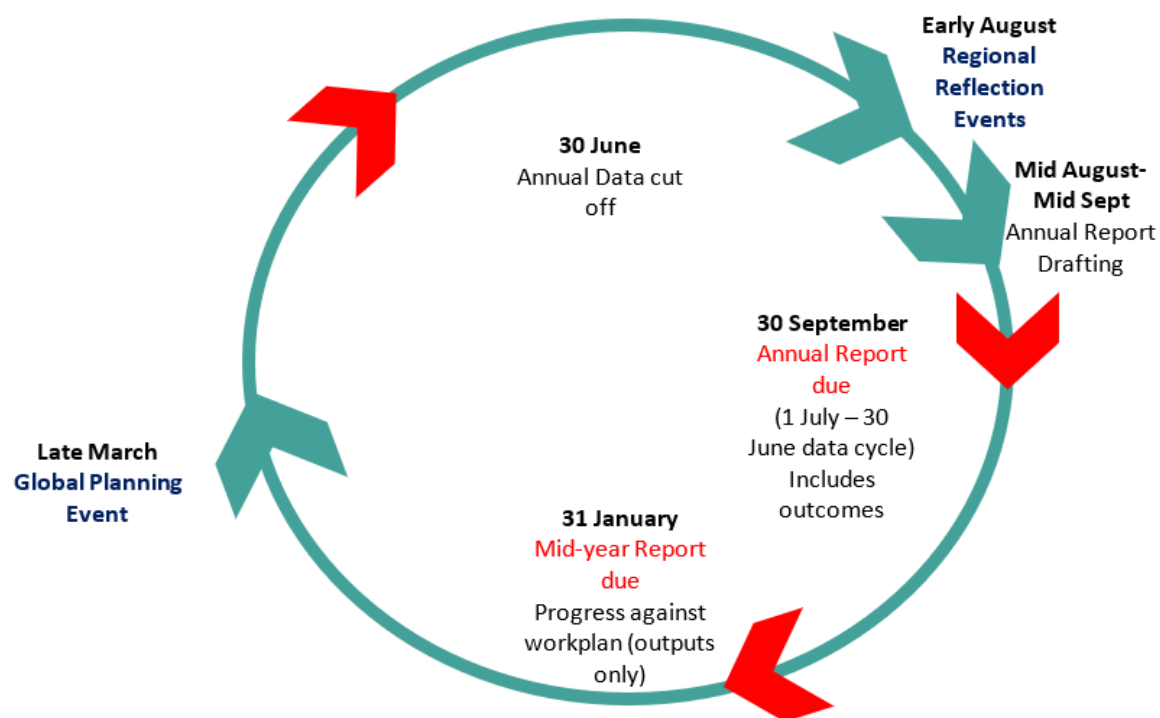
The reflection and planning events will occur at the regional and global program level. The exact format varies depending on the context each year, but broadly includes:

Regional reflection events: Attendees will include program staff and DFAT posts will be invited. The events will be held at least annually and facilitated by the MEL team with input from staff across the program. The key purpose is to analyse and interpret monitoring information, define key messages and learnings which will then feed into the annual report. The MEL team will prepare the analysis for the events, by:

- analysing regional evidence of progress against the key evaluation questions
- drawing on the indicators in the MEL Framework to identify trends and possible areas of risk
- identifying issues that would benefit team interpretation and analysis

Global planning event: Attendees will be the Australian Volunteers Program leadership team. The focus is to review performance over the last 12 months in relation to the annual plan, and set the strategic direction for the coming 12 months.

Figure 1 Annual cycle for data collection and analysis



Within this annual cycle is the continuous collection of data from partner organisations and volunteers on assignment. Annual Post surveys and DFAT monitoring visits feed into key points of the cycle, including the annual program performance appraisal.

6.2. Uses of MEL data

6.2.1. Program learning and information sharing

The MELF asks for feedback from different stakeholders at different points in time. The MEL unit has a responsibility to make sure that feedback collected is channelled to the right people, at the right time, in a format that is useful to them and aids decision making. The MEL unit have a duty to only ask for data if we know how that data is going to be analysed and who will use it. We need to be able to actively demonstrate to those giving feedback how the data they are providing is being used.

The following forums will be established to discuss the program learning and share information related to MELF. DFAT will be part of or have access to all forums except operational meetings (leadership team meetings, fortnightly MEL meetings).

Table 1 Forums for program learning and information sharing

Forum	Description
Annual regional reflection events	See above
Global planning event	See above
Fortnightly MEL team meetings	Ongoing communication and fortnightly structured online MEL team meetings (MEL Manager, Advisor and Regional Coordinators). The purpose is to share information, discuss utility and challenges with tools, evidence and data collection, identify priorities, assign responsibilities and identify support needs and options.
Program leadership team meetings	The MEL Manager will share insights from the regions, monitoring data and evaluative studies with all members of the leadership team. Where findings are likely to be useful to program teams, the information will be presented to the global program teams (see below).
Research steering committees, management actions and follow-up	The MEL Unit will facilitate the coordination of research and evaluation activities to promote learning and sharing at every stage. This includes coordinating the process for the ongoing follow-up of management actions agreed in response to research recommendations and documenting program learning and adaptations
Video conference / workshops of MEL findings	The MEL Unit will actively share findings from MEL activities. Findings from research and evaluations will be presented to program staff. Regional MEL Coordinators will best explore how to present the information to their country offices. Findings and potential application will be discussed/explored with countries. Materials will be uploaded and saved online for future reference. Wherever possible, users of MEL data will be involved in the process of analysing that data, through sense making workshops or reflection events.
All program communication channels including web, social media and electronic communications – for volunteers and partner organisations	MEL data to be presented in engaging formats/dashboards including infographics, animation, videos, case studies, stories, social tiles and banners. Key MEL data at program and country level will be presented on the AVP website through country summary reports.
MEL internal communications	Regular MEL updates will be provided to all country teams via appropriate communication channels.
Sharing learning at international volunteering and development forums	Papers on key program learning and insights will be presented at volunteering, international development learning and information sharing forums.

Quantitative MEL data (i.e. satisfaction rates with the program from volunteers and partner organisations) will be available to program managers and DFAT in real time through the program's online MIS. The MELF will also support program-wide communication to multiple stakeholders, particularly through the program's Annual Report and country summaries, and reports from regional reflection events. Research and evaluation products (or accessible summaries of these) will be made publicly available on the program and/or DFAT website, alongside a DFAT management response, unless there are specific operational or contractual justifications to the contrary.

The MELF will support the work of all teams and functions across the program. This will include supporting teams to collect and analyse relevant monitoring data, facilitating the sharing of feedback from stakeholders,

providing technical advice on operational reviews, and providing evidence on progress towards program outcomes.

6.2.2. Governance and management decision making

The MELF will support the following management decision making processes:

- identifying annual plan priorities, based on progress to date
- identifying risks for the program leadership team
- identifying opportunities for program performance improvements

The MELF will be governed as outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 2 MELF governance

Governance Function	Participants	Governance Role
Strategic oversight and direction of the MELF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFAT • AVP Program Director • AVP MEL Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the MELF is fit for purpose, meets DFAT standards and provides the information required for program management, accountability, learning and communications needs.
Management and delivery of the MELF across the Australian Volunteers Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVP MEL program team: • MEL Manager • MEL Advisor • Regional MEL Coordinators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement and refine MEL including supporting tools for the Australian Volunteers Program • Facilitate the collection and analysis of country, regional and program-wide data • Facilitate global reflection events, and support regional reflection events • Propose, scope, design, manage and/or undertake, and help the program team to interpret the relevance of findings for internal evaluative work required • Trial and improve different approaches to communicating MEL information clearly to program and non-technical audiences, in collaboration with the Communications team • Ensure all reporting requirements are met.

Detailed roles and responsibilities are outlined in Section 7.

6.2.3. Reporting and accountability

The MELF generates information for use in reporting that is used to justify and account for aid program expenditure to the Australian public. The MELF will generate useful information for DFAT annual corporate reporting, a key requirement being the annual Investment Monitoring Report. There are two formal contractual reporting obligations.

Table 3 Reporting and accountability obligations

Mid-Year Report – 31 January (July–December data set)	Annual Report – 30 September (July–June data set)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against annual plan activities across all key aspects of the program • Activities and achievements to date • Program challenges including any key risks and mitigation actions and • Budget and milestone update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and output progress in line with relevant strategies • Program outcome progress • Lessons learned • Priorities going forward • Full report compliant with DFAT M&E Standard 3 for Progress Reporting and all requirements in Table 4 of the Contract.

7. Monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities

Governance arrangements for the Australian Volunteers Program are clear and comprehensive. Strategic oversight and direction will be provided by DFAT. All stakeholders will interact in a collaborative, professional and responsive manner, ensuring a focus on the achievement of the end of program outcomes.

7.1. Australian Volunteers Program team roles

Table 6 below clarifies the roles of the Australian Volunteers Program team for delivering the MELF.

Table 4 Australian Volunteers Program team responsibilities for MELF delivery

Team Members	Responsibilities
AVP Program Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the MEL meets reporting, accountability, learning and management needs for the Australian Volunteers Program
AVP MEL Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and oversee the implementation of the MEL Framework • Ensure all tools align with the MEL Framework and are tested prior to adoption • Ensure all supporting guidance is simple and user-friendly • Oversee integration of MEL tools into online platforms • Lead the framing, oversight and delivery of quality products for evaluative work • Ensure Annual Reports are produced in line with DFAT quality standards • Manage the MEL team annual work plan to ensure they deliver on the MELF • Frame, and as required facilitate, Regional and Global Reflection events • Ensure accurate, accessible and user friendly MEL products • Share information across the team and with the program on new approaches/tools/thinking that could inform and improve program MEL.

Team Members	Responsibilities
AVP MEL Adviser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, refine and test common MEL tools used across all countries/regions • Support the Regional MEL Coordinators to trial and test MEL Tools and conduct regional reflection events • Establish and moderate technology platforms to enable MEL Team to communicate and share information • Work with the MIS team to ensure all MEL critical data is compatible with MIS requirements and facilitates simple data analysis • Share information across the MEL team on new approaches/tools/thinking that could inform and improve program MEL • Clearly communicate MEL requirements and support them to ensure we meet these requirements, with minimal disruption to the business • Support regional reflection events and program learning and sharing activities • Coordinate annual country reporting
AVP Regional MEL Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support country offices to use the MEL Tools, with particular emphasis on establishing partner plans – and capacity development approach, the annual review of these plans, volunteer feedback, and collecting stories of change • Pilot, test and recommend refinements to MEL tools working in close collaboration with country programs and Melbourne MEL team. • Clearly communicate and support country offices to understand the MEL cycle and data quality expectations • Capture and analyse stories of change from Volunteers and Partner Organisations • Work with Regional Directors to identify regional program information and communication needs, feeding these into the Annual MEL work plan • Support the Regional reflection events, working closely with the Regional Directors • Identify opportunities and approaches to share MEL information with country teams • Share information across the MEL team on new approaches/tools/thinking that could inform and improve program MEL • Ensure that regional program progress on key indicators is updated monthly, or as required in the MELF • Provide and coordinate country program input into Annual and mid-year Reports

7.2. Approach to capacity strengthening for Australian Volunteers Program staff

Strengthening the capacity of Australian Volunteers Program staff to provide quality information into the MELF will be achieved through:

- On-boarding training for new country program staff in the monitoring tools, where to access them and how to use them. This training will be provided both remotely and in person.
- Developing online user-friendly tools with embedded guidance and instructions. The three main tools being created in an online environment are the Partnership Plans, partner organisation feedback forms and the volunteer feedback forms.
- Developing comprehensive, accessible guidance for staff and volunteers on how to use MEL tools. Written guidance is provided in the volunteers' MEL Manual, and the Operations Manual and Systems User Guides for staff.

- Offering refresher training on MEL processes and skills through the organisations learning platform (ELMO) and facilitated workshops.
- Providing remote or in-person support for any queries. For country staff the first port of call will be the Regional MEL Coordinators.

7.3. DFAT roles

As advised in the MELF strategic guidance note, Table 7 clarifies the roles of DFAT for delivering the MELF.

Table 5 DFAT responsibilities for MELF oversight and delivery

Section	Responsibilities
HDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with MEL Manager to develop MELF and oversee implementation, including ensuring that information assists program management decisions by DFAT. • High level oversight of progress of inclusion and diversity priorities and approaches • Monitor and assess overall program and consortium management performance through DFAT mandatory reporting requirements completed annually (Annual Report, Investment Monitoring Report and Partner Performance Assessments) and performance targets. • Manage independent reviews and evaluations • Conduct annual in-country monitoring visits and support DFAT Posts to conduct monitoring visits with volunteers, Posts and partner organisations • Develop and provide monitoring visit guidance and templates for HDS and Posts • Conduct monitoring of relevant in-Australia program activities, including but not limited to returned volunteers and Australian organisations • Escalate program issues and achievements to Program Management Group (PMG), including progress of remedial actions in the action plan • Work with DFAT central comms and Divisional comms teams to communicate results to key stakeholders (including DFAT Posts, line areas, Senior Executive), and external audiences, including the general public. • Develop pre-posting training and briefing for DFAT officers going to Post with Australian Volunteers Program responsibilities.
Posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual monitoring visits of volunteers and provide quality annual feedback on program performance in-country • Provide country-specific performance feedback on program and contractor • Develop the Country Program Plan with the Australian Volunteers Regional Director and in-country Program Manager • Hold quarterly meetings with in-country Program Managers on Post priorities for the program and performance achievements and issues.

8. Risks to effective MEL delivery

Risks to the effective delivery of the MEL Framework include:

1. **The MEL team doesn't demonstrate value add to the program.** It is important that the MEL team position themselves as adding value to the country/regional program teams, as well as the leadership team, and are not seen as extractive for reporting purposes only. Regional MEL Coordinators will work with the Regional Directors and discuss with the Country Program Managers to understand their information needs (types of information, frequency and data presentation preferences). These will be combined with the information needs identified in the MELF. The MEL team will then identify and share approaches to provide the information required by the Regional Directors and Country teams.
2. **The MEL team doesn't demonstrate value to volunteers and partner organisations.** The MELF requires the input from volunteers and partner organisation staff, through online monitoring forms, additional surveys, and other approaches. If these stakeholders do not see their contributions being used appropriately by the program, they may well question their involvement. This has implications for completion rates and data quality. The MEL team will actively communicate to volunteers and partner organisations to close the feedback loop, explaining how feedback is used at relevant opportunities and sharing accessible summaries of learning documents and research.
3. **New tools place too much burden on country teams.** The MELF is more comprehensive than existed under previous iterations of the program prior to 2018, and requires more from country teams. Key to mitigating the additional work for country teams is using efficient online tools, fully aligned with all other program business processes. Additionally, all new tools and adaptations to tools will be discussed with in-country staff to ensure their useability.
4. **Data quality.** Numerous stakeholders are involved in entering data into the MIS, including program staff and volunteers themselves. The MELF aims to ensure consistency, accuracy and reliability of data, through its use of technology and its capacity building approach. However, data quality issues extend beyond the scope of the MELF to all aspects of the program and volunteer and partner data, and delivery of the MELF is reliant on the correct coding and entry of information into the MIS. Mitigation measures will include the design and system use of the MIS to minimise human error, providing support and guidance for its use, the work of the data integrity working group in Melbourne to examine data quality, and the rigorous data cleaning process of the MEL Unit in preparing data for analysis.
5. **Communicating evidence.** However good data collection process are and however robust the data collected, it is of limited value if it is not communicated appropriately such that different stakeholders are enabled to reflect, learn from and adapt based on evidence. If data is not presented in a way that is accessible to its intended audience, can be efficiently accessed and supports understating, then it is not going to be used. This then compounds other risks. To mitigate this risk the MEL unit will work with other stakeholders to ensure that data presented is appropriate, accessible, and speaks to their needs and interests.
6. **Insufficient opportunities, time and resources for decision-makers to reflect and adapt.** The MEL unit aims to support the global program with evidence and learning to facilitate continuous improvement. For decision makers at all levels, in DFAT and across the program, to make use of evidence, they need the resources, opportunities and time to reflect on evidence and their own practice. The MEL unit aims to support that reflection to the greatest extent possible (through organised reflection event, accessible communications and useful and useable data) but also recognises that decision makers are host to numerous other demands and pressures on their time and attention. There are also always limited resources for implementing improvements, and sometimes competing priorities. Mitigating these risks will require on-going communication within the program leadership team and with DFAT, a commitment to evidence-based decision making, and an annual cycle of reflection and planning based on feedback and learning from multiple stakeholders.

7. **Child Protection, Safeguarding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).** Child Protection and PSEAH is an issue for all communities and programs and as with all development initiatives, a risk for the program that is shared by the MELF. The MELF includes consideration of ethical standards and approaches in data collection and use, which are guided by the program's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. The program is committed to DFAT's PSEAH policy.
8. **Changes in the aid policy context.** The MEL Framework and program logic is guided by a Global Program Strategy framed by Australia's aid policy. Baseline data and on-going monitoring data is collected to measure progress against this program logic. Were there to be a significant shift in Australia's aid policy it may pose a risk to the relevance of the data collected. The program is well adapted to be flexible to changing priorities, and the way in which data is coded on the program's MIS further mitigates the risk by allowing investigation of different developmental priorities.

These risks will be reviewed annually as part of the annual MELF planning process. Risks to delivery of the Australian Volunteers Program are outlined in the Global Risk Management Plan. As identified in the plan, there is a risk that the MEL team is not able to demonstrate program effectiveness and sustainability or program outcomes. That is a potential consequence of the risks outlined above. However, the residual risk is considered low as the MELF has been designed to demonstrate progress on program outcomes, as well as demonstrate program effectiveness and efficiency.

9. Annual MEL Plan and Budget

The MEL annual plan will be detailed in the program's annual plan, due on the 31st May each year. The MELF has access to a share of the annual budget available in activity costs for Public Diplomacy, Partnerships and Innovation, and monitoring and evaluation (exclusive of costs for volunteers and staff salaries). MEL staff positions and budget are ring-fenced to ensure the on-going delivery of the MELF. The annual MEL budget will be detailed each year in the annual plan.

10. Ethical Principles and Standards

The global program strategy sets out guiding principles that inform how the program works. These apply to the MELF. MEL activities are also guided by a set of ethical principles and standards. These principles and standards are not all encompassing, and many other issues may exist that need to be considered depending on specific contexts. They do not replace any other ethical commitments outlined in relevant Australian Volunteer Program policy documents or legal frameworks, and should be read alongside other Australian Volunteers

Program policies including but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- AVI's Privacy Policy Statement

Attention to ethical standards should be maintained throughout the entire MEL process: from identifying the potential issues and ensuring that the methodology is conducive to ethical practice; to planning and implementing data collection activities; and to the process of analysing, reporting and using/ storing the data.

Our ethical principles need to be considered at all times and in all MEL activities. Our ethical principles and standards must be considered when designing monitoring processes or considering changes to existing

processes. They are of particular importance during research and evaluation activities that fall outside the scope of standard, on-going monitoring activities.

Where the principles and standards outlined below refer to 'research' and 'research activities' this is intended to cover all data collection exercises for the purposes of monitoring, evaluation or research.

These principles apply to all Australian Volunteer Program staff, partners, researchers and consultants carrying out research of any nature on behalf of the Australian Volunteers Program.

10.1. Ethical principles in MEL

In all aspects of our research, Australian Volunteer Program staff, partners, evaluators, researchers and consultants should adhere to and uphold key principles to ensure the agency, safety and wellbeing of all – particularly the vulnerable and disempowered – in our activities.

In particular, the following principles should guide all of our work:

Do no harm

- We will not put participants at risk for research purposes or use any form of abuse or exploitation.
- We will not discriminate against participants on the basis of age, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender, socio-economic status or any other basis.
- We will not impose the research or the researcher's ideas on project participants.

Always act in the best interests of research participants

- We will pay particular attention to the rights and interests of those who are often the most disempowered, particularly women, girls and boys, persons with disability and other marginalized groups.
- We will respect the rights of children as provided in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- We will ensure that the research is conducted in a way that benefits the physical, psychological and social development of Australian volunteers and our partner organisations.
- Whenever there is a potential conflict of interests between research participants and / or research users, we will privilege the interests of those who are in the position of least power

Ensure that participants can benefit from the evaluation process and be accountable to them.

- We will, at the start of any research activity, consider and document how and to what extent research participants will be meaningfully involved in research activities
- We will undertake measures to assist participants to engage with and understand research findings, ensure participants receive feedback on results and, where feasible, use of research findings
- We will, where feasible, provide participants with the opportunity to define research priorities, processes and outcomes, and thereby benefit more directly from the activity
- We will give materials gathered from research participants back to the participants, keeping copies only with their informed consent.
- We will disseminate findings to those that contributed to the research, in media and language that they can understand.

10.2. Ethical standards

To uphold these principles, we will adhere to the following standards in all our research activities:

Child Protection: All those engaged in research activities will abide by the Australian Volunteer Program's Child Protection Policy, as well as responsibilities under any relevant Policy or Code of their own organization if they are equal to or stronger than AVPs.

Valid reason: The information generated from any research activity must be used to inform AVPs work, and in particular to improve the delivery of the Program to achieve its end of program outcomes in line with Program strategies.

Minimal intrusion: Data collection exercises such as meetings and interviews must be scheduled at times and locations convenient for the participants and be coordinated between partners and/or volunteers to reduce duplication of activities.

Safety: Research activities should always take place in a safe environment. Participants should feel comfortable and secure in the surroundings. In order to maximise participation and minimise discrimination, staff must think about how easily different people can access the venue, including people living with disabilities, women and children.

Confidentiality and anonymity: Identity of individual participants must be protected, meaning that records and reports should be kept confidential, and no responses or quotes should be attributed to an individual without their prior written consent. Confidentiality should be assured, explaining the limitations (see box)

Limited confidentiality: Confidentiality can never be 100% assured to participants, especially when working with children. If children disclose a need for protection by revealing alleged abuse, the staff member is obliged to take action, even if this means breaching confidentiality. These limits of confidentiality must be clearly communicated before starting the process. If during the process information is disclosed, the staff member must discuss with the participant(s) what action they need to take. In order to ensure that all members of the team are aware and clear about the procedures that must be taken concerning limited confidentiality, the team must discuss amongst themselves the steps prior to the data collection phase. If alleged cases of child abuse are disclosed, they should be immediately reported to the program's child protection focal point or Melbourne-based child protection advisor.

Protecting participants from harm or discrimination: Staff and researchers must make sure that participants suffer no harm or discrimination from the program, other development actors, or other groups or powerful individuals as a result of their participation or non-participation. The program must make sure that the exercise does not cause distress or tension within the group or in the community and ensure that groups are not created or isolated in a way that might expose them to increased stigmatisation.

Inclusivity: We must make active efforts to enable individuals /groups that might otherwise be excluded to participate e.g. by ensuring translation or support to access a particular location.

Informed consent: All participants should be asked for their informed consent to participate, based on an appropriate, detailed explanation of the process and use of information. This means carefully explaining the purpose of the exercise and how data will be used before starting. Participants should always be given opportunities to ask questions or raise issues about the exercise and if anybody decides (either before, during or after the exercise) that they want to withdraw this should be accepted without question.

Handling difficult situations: The exercise should be carried out in a way that doesn't intimidate participants, and prior to the exercise researchers must consider ways to respond to difficult situations or distress. All staff must be aware of appropriate reporting mechanisms and sources of support for any child protection, sexual abuse or other issue encountered.

Incentives: We can never pay in cash or in kind for any participant to take part in research activities. However, it may be appropriate to provide refreshments and transport costs to participants, particularly if the evaluation exercise lasts more than one or two hours.

Debriefing: All participants should be given the opportunity for debriefing at the end of the session. This should involve repeating or summarizing the key points discussed, and explaining what will happen next, what the information will be used for, by whom and when.

Feedback: Once the analysis has been finalised and report prepared this should be shared with the participants (or representatives of participants) in an appropriate manner. We will actively ask for and welcome any and all feedback, acknowledge receipt of any complaint and respond to issues raised in a sensitive, timely and appropriate way.

Data protection: All data (including written notes and reports, digital data, photographs video and audio recordings) must be handled in such a way as to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity is maintained at all times. Sensitive data must be securely stored.

Photographs and video: We will always ask permission from people (or, in the case of young children, their parent or guardian) before taking images of them and respect their decision to say no. Ensure that any images taken of children are respectful and do not impact negatively on their dignity or privacy. Stories and images of children and adults should be based on their own best interest.

Annex 1 Program Logic with indicators

Annex 1: Program Logic with Indicators



Partner organisations have a strategic rationale for participation in the program, provide a safe and productive working environment, and contribute to quality assignments

- Percentage of volunteers who report their assignment was a good fit for their PO's priorities
- Percentage of volunteers who report the PO provided safe and productive work environment (in-country assignments only)
- Percentage of volunteers who report their PO contributed to an effective assignment
- Number and type of security and work health and safety incidents (by security level, country)

Relevant and diverse partnerships with partner organisations are established, maintained and supported by DFAT, the program and Australian organisations

- Numbers and type of AO and POs
- Percentage of assignments that have developed/strengthened relations between a PO and an AO
- Percentage of DFAT Posts able to support the program to make connections with other Australian Aid initiatives

Innovations, learning and program achievements are promoted and shared in the international volunteering and development community by the program and key stakeholders

- Percentage of AOs, volunteers and DFAT who have actively engaged in promoting the program
- Percentage of promotional AOs, POs, Volunteers and DFAT reporting that they were adequately supported to deliver public communication activities.
- Volume and nature of communications activities (events, social media, print and radio) where the benefits and achievements of volunteering are promoted directly by the program
- Frequency and nature of program resources, papers, presentations, and other documentation of lessons learnt shared publicly

Innovative approaches to, and alternative models of volunteering are designed and tested to expand the program's reach and adaptive capability

- Number of new approaches / models that have moved into the Trial stage of the innovation pipeline
- Nature of positive outcomes documented that evidence the program's learning, expanded reach and/or adaptive capacity
- Percentage of respondents who believe the program supports a culture of innovation
- **Innovation outcomes also measured through disaggregating other relevant indicators by volunteering modality / innovation approach

Volunteers complete their assignment well and learn from their partner organisation

- Percentage of volunteers who report positive achievement of assignment objectives
- Percentage of volunteers and POs who rate volunteer assignment, and experience of working together as good/very good, and most frequent reasons given
- Percentage of volunteers who report feeling supported by the program and by their PO, and most frequent reasons given
- Percentage of early returns (and reasons for) by reasons within control / outside of the control of the program

The program is inclusive of and accessible to a diverse range of people

- Volunteer and AAD demographics
- Applicant demographics
- Program participants from diverse backgrounds feedback on barriers to their inclusion on the program



Value volunteering



Support locally-led capacity strengthening



Build strong relationships and partnerships



Evolve best practice and embrace innovation



Enhance diversity and inclusion



Ensure accountability and value learning