

Management response: Independent Evaluation of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership

Funding & resourcing

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Strengthen access to multi-year, flexible funding envelopes for protracted crises to enable continuity, staff retention, and adaptive management.	DFAT	Noted	This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026
Expand and standardise pre-positioned and rapid-access funding mechanisms (e.g. PNG Emergency Response Fund, El Niño Fund, crisis modifiers) to strengthen timeliness and flexibility across all countries.	DFAT/ AHPSU	Noted	In recognition of the need for flexible and rapid funding to respond to emergencies, DFAT established the Indo Pacific Response Flexible Fund (IPRFF) as part of AHP Phase 2. The IPRFF pre-positions funding for rapid and localised responses. This recommendation, as well as lessons from the implementation of the IPRFF, will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026
Clarify criteria for using competitive vs. collaborative activations and communicate these to partners and Posts.	DFAT/ AHPSU	Agree	DFAT will refine existing Standard Operating Procedures and guidance relating to emergency responses.	2026
Clarify and standardise allowances for administrative overheads and indirect cost recovery (ICR) , ensuring greater equity across Australian and local partners and enabling localised core funding to strengthen institutional sustainability and ability to meet DFAT standards and manage risk. Establish clear guidance on allowable overhead rates, reporting requirements, and conditions for local partner ICR eligibility.	DFAT	Noted	DFAT is committed to engaging local communities and organisations to strengthen local leadership and capability to prepare for and respond to disasters. This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program, in line with Australia's <i>Humanitarian Policy</i> .	2026

Partner selection and performance

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Establish a process for periodically refreshing or revalidating the partner pool. This should aim to include smaller, specialist, or regionally based NGOs, maintaining diversity of technical expertise and innovation.	DFAT	Noted	DFAT notes the evaluation's finding that AHP partners and their local partners collectively provide Australia with comprehensive humanitarian reach, spanning health, protection, education, food security, livelihoods, shelter, WASH, cash transfer and disaster risk reduction/climate resilience. This	2026

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			recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	
Define clear performance metrics linked to selection criteria and introduce pathways in and out of the partnership to reward performance and innovation.	DFAT/ AHPSU	Noted	DFAT manages the performance of AHP partners, including effectiveness and efficiency, through a number of mechanisms, including evaluation of responses, partner reporting, monitoring visits of activities and thematic reviews. These existing mechanisms will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026

Roles & responsibilities

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Clarify decision-making and communication responsibilities across DFAT Canberra, DFAT Posts, and the AHPSU by developing a concise Decision Rights and Delegation Framework (RACI) for activations and funding approvals.	DFAT/ AHPSU	Noted	DFAT will refine existing Standard Operating Procedures and guidance relating to emergency responses (including activations and funding approvals).	2026

Climate integration

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Review Program incentives and disincentives for working in the most remote and climate-affected communities	DFAT	Noted	Through its <i>International Development Policy</i> , Australia commits to increasing our climate investments and better addressing climate risks. Australia notes the review's finding that AHP's disaster preparedness component has embedded climate adaptation, risk reduction and community preparedness into its design. This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026
Facilitate and enable community voices – especially those of more marginalised communities - to directly contribute to National and sub-national decision making and policy development.	DFAT	Noted	Australia's <i>International Humanitarian Policy</i> prioritises locally led development and commits to supporting local leadership, solutions and accountability. This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Ensure maximum flexibility in AHP climate integration resourcing and ensure climate and resilience investments- particularly in the Pacific and Timor-Leste- do not duplicate efforts or divert resources away from priorities identified by Governments and local communities.	DFAT	Noted	Australia's <i>International Development Policy</i> outlines Australia's commitment to maximising collective impact, and cooperating with others to amplify collective efforts, reduce duplication and support development outcomes. As above, it also prioritises locally led development and local leadership in Australia's development assistance. This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026

Inclusion

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Maintain and expand access to specialist technical assistance on gender, equality, disability protection and safeguarding, including roving or pooled expertise available to all partners.	DFAT	Noted	DFAT notes the review's findings that local non-government organisations, church networks and civil society organisations report that AHP strengthened institutional and technical capability through mentoring, joint planning, and increased roles in coordination fora. This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026
Strengthen the "Do No Harm" approach within AHP GEDSI integration – particularly increasing socialisation and training on approaches to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and others (LGBTQI+) inclusion and addressing the needs of people with diverse Sexual Orientation Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC). Any organisations using the diverse SOGIESC toolkit for Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction groups (CBDRR) should increase technical training and guidance before/with use.	DFAT/ AHPSU	Noted	Australia is committed to gender equality, and improved disability and social inclusion outcomes in its work, including through the <i>International Gender Equality Strategy</i> and <i>International Disability Equality and Rights Strategy</i> . Australia's <i>International Humanitarian Policy</i> includes "do no harm" as a guiding principle. DFAT will ensure that these policy priorities are reflected in ongoing AHP implementation and inform any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026
Consider resourcing the formal integration of leading and nationally recognised Feminist organisations into local program advisory and coordination mechanisms (such as DRCC's) where they are not currently part of local consortia.	DFAT	Noted	Australia recognises the importance of ensuring that a wide range of local voices are included in local decision making and development. This recommendation will	2026

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
			inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	
For the next Phase of AHP, consider a determination on whether to adapt an integrated approach to mainstreaming Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion across all activities and operations or a transformative approach which seeks to challenge and fundamentally change underlying norms and power structures.	DFAT	Agree	Australia is committed to gender equality, and improved disability and social inclusion outcomes in its work, including through the <i>International Gender Equality Strategy</i> and <i>International Disability Equality and Rights Strategy</i> . Any future humanitarian partnership program will be designed with reference to GEDSI analysis and outcomes, including considering whether a mainstreamed or transformative approach would maximise program impact.	2026

MEL

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Maintain stability of MEL requirements to avoid excessive changes that create cascading system effects and high administrative burdens, especially for local partners.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT notes the evaluation finding that the AHP MEL Framework adopted during Phase 2 established a whole-of-program structure that embeds reflection, accountability, and evidence-based learning across multiple levels of the partnership. Development of any MEL system for a future humanitarian partnership program will draw from the AHP's MEL lessons, including the importance of clear and consistent MEL requirements over the life of a program.	2026
Facilitate peer-learning and exchange across DRCCs through regional reflection events and virtual platforms to promote knowledge transfer and innovation.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT recognises the review's finding that AHP's participatory reflection approach has improved adaptive management, and helped to effectively review progress, identify gaps and share knowledge. The success of this approach, and opportunities to increase impact through regional or virtual approaches, will be considered in the development of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Strengthen inclusion components within learning exercises to ensure ongoing improvements in practice	DFAT	Agree	DFAT recognises the importance of developing MEL frameworks that are inclusive. The development of any future MEL approach for a humanitarian partnership program will include consideration of inclusion approaches, in line with DFAT's <i>Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Standards</i> .	2026

System coherence & coordination

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Strengthen communication and coordination across DFAT-funded humanitarian mechanisms (AHP, Australia Assists, ARC Partnership, HLC, ANCP) through “complementarity mapping”, regular portfolio reviews and the development of strategic guidance notes that outline how each of DFAT’s humanitarian response mechanisms are to work together to deliver DFAT’s humanitarian policy, how this is operationalised in response and recovery and how this will be led.	DFAT	Noted	DFAT’s Humanitarian and Civil Society Division will consider opportunities and approaches to strengthen communication and coordination across DFAT-funded humanitarian mechanisms, in line with Australia’s <i>Humanitarian Policy</i> and strategic guidance notes (such as DFAT’s Guidance Note on Locally Led Development).	Ongoing
Promote and explore ways to strengthen greater regional coherence by convening an annual humanitarian coordination and learning forum with PRP, PResCoM, CROP agencies, and AHP partners.	DFAT	Noted	Australia’s <i>Humanitarian Policy</i> recognises the importance of strengthening global and regional coordination and collaboration in humanitarian response activities, including through mechanisms that support local leadership and decision-making. DFAT will consider opportunities to increase humanitarian learning and coordination regionally and globally.	Ongoing

Partnership & localisation

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Comment	Timeframe
Rebalance risk-sharing and overhead support to ensure local partners are not disproportionately exposed to financial or operational risk. Provide access to modest core funding or contingency lines within grants.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT notes the review’s findings that AHP’s approach to risk, including its structured assurance mechanisms and proximity and contextual understanding of NGO networks, make it a trusted and relatively low-risk vehicle for humanitarian delivery. Risk considerations,	2026

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			including how to support local partners to manage risk appropriately, will inform the development of any future humanitarian partnership program.	
<p>Reinforce local leadership within Disaster READY and activations by formalising DRCC engagement with national coordination systems and granting observer status to key government and humanitarian actors.</p>	DFAT	Noted	DFAT notes the review’s findings that localisation has increasingly become a key structural feature of AHP, and that evidence demonstrates clear progress in devolving decision-making and strengthening local leadership and embedding coordination with national systems. This recommendation will inform the design of any future humanitarian partnership program.	2026
<p>Strengthen the feedback loop between country learning and program design by ensuring Learning Action Agendas inform DFAT funding decisions and AHP planning cycles.</p>	DFAT	Agree	DFAT notes the review’s finding that AHP’s MEL system had been developed to ensure evaluation, reflection and evidence translation, across local partners, Australian organisations, AHP and DFAT. Any future humanitarian partnership program will take lessons from implementation of the AHP MEL framework to inform program development and implementation.	2026
<p>Phase 3 design should include partnership brokering sessions, setting joint priorities and co-designing localisation outcomes and indicators as well as reviewing current localisation frameworks to gain consensus on AHP definitions of localisation.</p>	DFAT	Noted	DFAT welcomes the evaluation’s finding that AHP demonstrated strong alignment with <i>Australia’s Humanitarian Policy’s</i> focus on localisation. Development of any future humanitarian partnership will include a continued focus on localisation, including identifying opportunities for increased strategic coherence and development of a collective understanding of localisation and effective localisation approaches across DFAT, Australian and local partners.	2026