



**Australian Government**  
**AusAID**



# **Australia Mekong – Non-Government Organisation Engagement Platform**

**Final design document**

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## Definitions

**Civil society:** The arena of un-coerced/voluntary collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil society is often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-government organisations (NGOs), community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.<sup>1</sup>

**NGOs:** NGOs are defined throughout this design document as including Australian ones (ANGOs) and international ones (INGOs) working in the region. Where reference is made to Australian NGOs only, ANGO is used. Similarly INGO is used where reference is made to non-Australian NGOs only. Where reference is made to NGOs from the countries concerned, the term 'local NGO' or 'local CSO [civil society organisation]' is used.

**Partnership:** In the context of the Australia – Mekong NGO Engagement Platform (AM-NEP), partnership is not seen as a specific way of operating, but as a broader approach to the way in which the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and NGOs do business. Because AM-NEP addresses multiple sectors across a regional portfolio, a range of partnering approaches is expected. In this context partnership is defined as an ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared. A partnership is based on principles of equity, transparency and mutual accountability. In practical terms this means that each partner is involved in co-creating projects and programs, committing tangible resource contributions and mutual accountability.<sup>2</sup>

**Country strategy:** This sets out Australia's whole-of-government strategic position on official development assistance (ODA) engagement in a country or region. Each country strategy articulates what priorities Australian aid will target and specific aid objectives in those areas; why the priorities have been identified; and how aid objectives will be met. Its purpose is to develop coherent, focused, manageable and effective means for providing Australia's ODA.

**Sector and delivery strategies:** The 'how' components of a country or regional strategy is articulated in operational strategies, often focused on specific sectors. These are called 'sector strategies' or 'delivery strategies'. These guide AusAID's policy inputs and program delivery approach, ensure the overall coherence of its engagement and avoid (or actively reduce) fragmented programs. Sector or delivery strategies may be developed for some or all priority development outcomes within an AusAID country or regional strategy. They articulate the rationale for the approach adopted to achieve the priority development outcome, define how Australia's aid will contribute to the outcome, and set out the logic for policy dialogue, aid activities, partnerships and other actions employed to achieve it. They also provide a clear explanation of the roles of the Australian aid program, partner governments and other actors, and set out how progress will be measured and managed. Delivery strategies are dynamic documents, revised regularly so they remain up to date and relevant for ongoing program management.<sup>3</sup> AusAID needs to maintain flexibility in whether to use such strategies. Their structure may not be appropriate or necessary in some circumstances where the sector focus is defined and links to country strategy priorities are intrinsic. For consistency terminology in this document has been standardised to 'sector/delivery strategy' unless referring to specific cases where a specific type of strategy (sector or delivery) has been produced or is being prepared.

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<sup>1</sup> The London School of Economics: Centre for Civil Society; sourced on 28 March 2011, <http://www.answers.com/topic/civil-society>

<sup>2</sup> AAACES concept design, 2010, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness: Country Strategy Development Information Note, January 2009, p. 4.

**Mekong Region:** The term ‘Mekong Region’ is used in this document to refer to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. It is also used in the context of AusAID’s structure for the region—the country programs in the three countries plus work being undertaken through the Mekong Water Resources Program.

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## Acronyms

Term	Meaning
AACES	Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AM-NEP	Australian – Mekong NGO Engagement Platform
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
ANGO	Australian NGO
APHEDA	Union Aid Abroad
APPR	annual program performance report
ASU	Administrative Support Unit (AM-NEP)
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CA	cooperation agreement
CANGOCA	Cambodia – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program
CCWG	Climate Change Working Group
CSO	civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EL1	Executive Level 1
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
INGO	international NGO (includes Australian NGOs)
ISRLP	Integrated Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Program
IWG	Internal Working Group (AM-NEP)
LANGOCA	Lao – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MEL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NGO	non-government organisation
ODA	official development assistance
ODE	Office of Development Effectiveness (AusAID)
PDD	project or program design document
PQRG	Program Quality Resource Group (AM-NEP)
TAG	technical advisory group
TBC	to be confirmed
TOR	terms of reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VANGOCA	Vietnam – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene

## 1. Executive summary

The Australia Mekong – NGO Engagement Platform (AM-NEP) seeks to reform the way AusAID and its NGO partners work together in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to better achieve sector goals and outcomes. The platform responds to substantial evidence suggesting that development outcomes can be enhanced by changing how AusAID and NGOs do business in the Mekong Region.

AM-NEP, as described in this program design document, will contribute to aid effectiveness by strengthening the roles and contribution of NGOs within the sectors in which AusAID is involved. AusAID's Director-General has recently put on record that the Agency will spend around \$1 billion through NGOs by 2015 (worldwide). The Australia Government, in its response to the April 2011 *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, said it will increase funding through and engagement with NGOs as part of its increasing overall commitment to aid. AM-NEP also reflects emerging Agency policy and lessons learned on engaging NGOs and, more widely, civil society as articulated in:

1. Best Practice for Donor Engagement with Civil Society<sup>4</sup>
2. Working Beyond Government<sup>5</sup>
3. Civil Society Engagement Framework.<sup>6</sup>

These emerging directions heighten the imperative to ensure that funding for NGO engagement is spent in the best and most effective manner possible. AM-NEP will play a vital role in helping AusAID's missions overseas (Posts) ensure that NGOs involved in its programs in the Mekong Region are resourced appropriately and that AusAID – NGO activities are effectively designed and implemented.

AusAID has strongly signalled that AusAID – NGO cooperation activities in the Mekong be driven by the Agency's sector/deliver strategies. In its response to the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, AusAID agreed that its global aid program should be driven by country strategies focusing on selected sectors. These strategies for the Mekong are key AusAID priorities established in line with partner government priorities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam as well as the Mekong Water Resources Program. The strategies that emerge—in response to national sectoral policies and through discussion and negotiation with partner governments—will encourage relationships and partnership approaches with institutional actors, including partner government agencies, other donors and multilateral organisations, the private sector and civil society. In this context, AusAID – NGO engagement is highly valuable in sectors where NGOs can offer approaches, skills, programming experience and insights that complement and strengthen the skills and experience available from by AusAID, partner governments and development partners.

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4 AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness working paper.

5 Hall, J and Howell, J; Working Paper: 'Good Practice in Donor Engagement with Civil Society', working paper, June 2010; 'Working Beyond Government', evaluation of AusAID's engagement with civil society in developing countries, March 2012.

6 The draft 'AusAID Civil Society Engagement Framework: Working with civil society organisation (CSOs) to help people overcome poverty', (2012,) was developed by AusAID in consultation with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). The recent draft has been published for comment.



AM-NEP will support integrating AusAID – NGO approaches into the Agency’s Mekong portfolio. As such, it will mobilise resources for quality program implementation so that partners can achieve shared development goals.

Evidence from Mekong and other program areas highlights good examples of what can be achieved through effective partnerships between AusAID and NGOs. It also points to challenges faced in developing more effective working relationships. These include the reality that:

- NGO activities and insights tend to be siloed from other AusAID activities and partners
- AusAID and NGO staff are often too burdened with administration to engage in regular policy discussion about development outcomes
- opportunities are limited to strategically addressing re-occurring challenges across NGO activities, such as in crosscutting issues
- monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks have had limited ability to demonstrate results that directly contribute to AusAID strategic objectives.

Without a catalyst for change, these challenges will likely continue to restrict AusAID’s engagement with NGOs in the Mekong Region.

AM-NEP will help to build a strong network among AusAID and its NGO partners. Platform activities will be integrated in a consistent, structured manner into wider bilateral programs. AM-NEP is a platform for change in AusAID’s working relationships with NGOs. It is not a program (or funding window) in its own right. Rather it is designed to support and champion the implementation of multi-level reforms to support AusAID – NGO partnerships and engagement. These reforms will contribute to the higher-level development outcomes specified in the sector/delivery strategies AusAID agrees to with partner governments.

As a platform for change, AM-NEP is premised on the understanding that NGOs can deliver Australian aid by implementing approaches and applying insights gained from working with sub-national and national governments as well as civil society. In turn NGOs will gain extensive and valuable experience in working at strategic level with AusAID and its other partners.

AM-NEP focuses on supporting the working relationships AusAID and its NGO partners can develop to more effectively deliver aid, rather than on partnerships for their own sake. Nevertheless, the notions and principles of ‘partnership’ are fundamental to AM-NEP and the term is used in the platform’s design to encompass a wide range of possible models for programming in the Mekong. AM-NEP’s design does not assume that particular models of engagement or partnership are appropriate or best. Instead, it encourages partnering approaches that integrate NGO engagement into sector/delivery strategies. Resourcing for these relationships needs to be flexible and account for the sizes, capacities and organisational mandates of individual NGOs.

Over the next decade, new programming options will emerge for AusAID in the Mekong and perhaps include opportunities to increase the Agency’s portfolio of regional sectoral or thematic, multi-sectoral programs. AusAID may also find opportunities to extend the geographical scope of its programs, within countries and to other countries. Growing roles of civil society and capacities of CSOs will also likely bring new and exciting opportunities.

The time is right to strengthen engagement between AusAID and NGOs in the Mekong, building on the mix of sectoral programs and capacities of both partners. AM-NEP is an investment in reform and learning that will inform sector program and wider program development in the region well into the forthcoming decade.

AM-NEP provides AusAID and NGOs with resources to achieve a better quality aid program in the Mekong. It links with the overall purpose of Australian aid, which is to 'help people overcome poverty', and the aid program's five overarching strategic goals:

1. saving lives
2. promoting opportunities for all
3. sustainable economic development
4. effective governance including strengthening civil society
5. humanitarian and disaster response.<sup>7</sup>

Through AM-NEP, AusAID policies and programs should be strengthened and uptake of policy and change in practice by other actors (for example, provincial governments) increased, based on learning and experience.

AM-NEP is aligned around the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) aid effectiveness and evaluation criteria<sup>8</sup> of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. AM-NEP will therefore assist AusAID to work with NGO partners to augment the impact of Australia's aid program in the Mekong and make positive changes in people's lives. Improvements in impact will come through sector/delivery strategies negotiated with government partners. AM-NEP helps by integrating NGO engagement within these strategies.

AM-NEP aims to achieve its goal by supporting and facilitating change in the way in which AusAID and NGOs conduct business in the Mekong and by moving towards deeper, more meaningful engagement. The platform will see:

- NGO partners taking strategic roles in AusAID sector programs through partnership discussion on and access to AM-NEP services
- flexible response to sector program opportunities
- value for money with AusAID – NGO engagement in the Mekong.

In aligning around DAC criteria, AM-NEP will focus on 'domains of change' and address:

**Relevance** through establishing relevant objectives based on shared goals at country sectoral and regional programming levels which will lead to more appropriate interventions. This should see: agreements based on shared goals; appropriate solutions and technical approaches; and NGO engagements reflecting the highest priorities of AusAID's programs.

**Effectiveness** through more appropriate roles in implementing AusAID's program activities, including by: mobilising each partner's unique contribution; developing collaborative and

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<sup>7</sup> 'An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—Delivering real results', the Australian Government's response to the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_34435\\_2086550\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html)

flexible design; and resourcing MEL practices that focus on relationships, outcomes and crosscutting issues. This should see partners: agree on what to do individually and together; work through flexible and collaborative design processes; and learn from implementation.

**Efficiency** through shared resources for program implementation that mobilise each partner's program strengths and shared responsibility for managing risks in implementing programs. This should see: increased value for money through NGO engagement; and joint approaches to risk management

**Sustainability** through flexible business processes adaptive to the changing context and various roles of each partner. This should see: AM-NEP resources being used flexibly; partners measuring achievable changes and benefits; and collaborative efforts to build resilience to cope with changing conditions.

AM-NEP architecture and processes aims to minimise burden on AusAID and NGO partner organisations. They will fit around existing organisational processes and minimise the number of new processes. As such, the platform is an enabler for facilitating partnership. It will provide services to AusAID and its NGO partners on an on-demand basis, in two essential areas:

1. guidance and facilitation in establishing consistent, quality (good practice) processes to help partners focus on development and partnership outcomes
2. administrative support.

While it is difficult to fully eliminate partnership transaction costs, it is possible to shift some to AM-NEP to free up AusAID and NGO staff to focus on relationships, policy dialogue and development outcomes.

The AM-NEP will establish a Program Quality Resource Group (PQRG) and an Administrative Support Unit (ASU), which will operate under the guidance of, and report to, an AM-NEP Coordinator (a selected AusAID staff member). The ASU will be contracted through a managing contractor. A joint AM-NEP Reference Group will advise on the management and strategic direction of AM-NEP.

On overall roles and responsibilities, the AM-NEP will focus on supporting AusAID's existing processes for program delivery in the Mekong. The PQRG will provide performance and quality enabling support to staff at AusAID Posts and to NGOs, including advice on good practice approaches to shared design and implementation processes. The ASU will provide administrative support to Posts and NGOs, including secretarial and logistics support, and to the Reference Group, including for competitive grants processes and contracts management, administration and collation of reports, and procurement of technical assistance.

AM-NEP's design calls for a phased approach over 2012 and 2013. The initial implementation period is to be five years with a forward commitment of between seven and 10 years. This will fully embed desired reforms and enable AusAID and NGOs to fully benefit from them.

Assuming Mekong programs continue to support NGO initiatives in the region to the value of approximately 8 per cent of country-program expenditure, AM-NEP represents an investment of

around [cost information deleted for tender process<sup>9</sup>] of NGO program expenditure. This is considered by AusAID to provide value for money for the benefits to be provided—a more relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable Australian aid program. Furthermore if total NGO expenditure varies, AM-NEP resources can be scaled up or down so the platform continues to provide value for money.

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<sup>9</sup> The implementation of this design involves a public tender process.

## 2. Analysis and strategic context

### 2.1 Background to the AM-NEP design

**Decisions on major options:** AusAID reviewed its approach to working with NGOs in the Mekong Region through extensive discussions within AusAID Headquarters in Canberra, with its Internal Working Group (IWG) members in overseas missions in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam<sup>10</sup>, and with ANGO partners. Lessons were reviewed from the cooperation agreements (CA) in which ANGO partners have participated in recent years—Lao – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program (LANGOCA), Cambodia – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program (CANGOCA) and Vietnam – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program (VANGOCA). Lessons were also reviewed from AusAID-supported NGO partnership programs in other regions.

In February 2011 AusAID's Mekong Section produced a discussion paper<sup>11</sup>, assessing and building on program reviews and lessons learned. The paper included a framework of options for future programs. The discussion paper and subsequent concept note for the AM-NEP<sup>12</sup> informed AusAID's understanding of the issues and its decision on the preferred approach. It also provided essential reference points for AM-NEP design. The issues identified in the discussion paper and concept note were shared and extensively explored with ANGOs through ACFID. The concept note was peer reviewed and adopted in September 2011 and a decision made to proceed to detailed design of the Australia Mekong Partnerships Program (now renamed AM-NEP).

Through these key documents, AusAID was able to pinpoint the strengths of NGO cooperation programs in the Mekong, including their capacities to:

- facilitate community-based approaches to development and build capacity with local stakeholder organisations
- generate practice-based evidence to help shape government policy
- build strong relationships with local communities and local government
- work with the most marginalised members of communities
- progress gender equality
- provide direct and tangible benefits at community level in a range of sectors.

Limitations of the NGO cooperation programs and lessons learned are discussed in more detail in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of this Program Design Document (PDD) and include limitations with:

- functioning at a wider AusAID program level and with lack of program-level M&E frameworks
- fully capitalising on individual good practices and lessons learned
- providing limited opportunity for policy dialogue between AusAID, NGOs and partner governments
- funding flexibility to allow for change of approaches to reflect changing circumstances

<sup>10</sup> The IWG was established in early 2011 to guide AusAID's work on the development of a new approach for engaging NGOs in the Mekong Region. It comprises members of staff from the three missions overseas and from AusAID's Mekong and NGO sections in Canberra.

<sup>11</sup> 'Mekong programs: Future engagement with NGOs, discussion paper' AusAID 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Available on request. In April 2012 the name was changed to AM-NEP.

- managing the intensive nature of design and early implementation phases, to the detriment of staff focus on higher-level program issues
- explicitly focusing on local NGO capacity building.

AusAID assessed three major options for engagement with NGOs in the Mekong, as outlined below.

### **Option 1—developing a Mekong regional program with centralised administration**

The first option was developing a Mekong regional program with centralised administration because this approach would sit well within sectors that share a lot in common across the three countries, notably rural development. This option would also incorporate opportunities for country and regional policy dialogue and for partnerships within sectors, and it would reasonably respond to local context (bearing in mind differences in civil society environments). However, AusAID found it difficult to envisage how a Mekong regional program would work in all sectors involving AusAID programs and NGO involvement. While the option would offer administrative efficiencies through centralised support, the architecture, resourcing and monitoring arrangements would be complex and would risk reducing engagement by Posts. Despite its positives a regional program was not AusAID's preferred option.

### **Option 2—earmarking funds from AusAID global sector programs for specific use in the Mekong**

The second option was contributing through AusAID global funds for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) or community-based adaptation activity grants. While this option would offer administrative efficiencies, AusAID's global funds do not naturally have strong alignment to AusAID strategies in the Mekong. Remotely operated, they do not easily provide clear avenues for policy dialogue between AusAID, NGOs and partner governments. Capturing country-specific impact through M&E would be difficult. It was also difficult to determine how this approach would maximise responsiveness to local context, particularly to partner government priorities and civil society, and how it would facilitate close Post involvement in partnership approaches. This was AusAID's least appropriate option.

### **Option 3—replacing NGO programs with new country-specific programs**

The third option was to continue with country-specific approaches and this emerged as the preferred direction. This will facilitate involving NGOs in sectors that closely align to country strategies, as agreed with partner governments, and will maximise synergies with other elements of AusAID country programs. This option can also facilitate policy dialogue and partnerships to enhance program effectiveness. With appropriate investment it can use strong program-level M&E frameworks which benefit from the cohesion and context country-focused programming provides and can effectively use external resources to enhance quality during activity design and implementation. AusAID acknowledges that country-specific approaches will be resource intensive, especially because partners will need to invest heavily at design stage and because contract management and administration is the responsibility of individual sectoral staff at Post. They are, however, more likely to be flexible to local context. Also, through closer and more direct engagement with local organisations, networks and government they will facilitate the strengthening of local civil society. With this preferred option, AusAID understands the need to pay attention to streamlining administrative processes so Agency and NGO staff can focus on higher-order program functions (such as policy, MEL).

Through the development of the concept note and resulting discussion a major and exciting innovation emerged for programming for the Mekong—sector/delivery strategies within AusAID’s three country programs should drive the establishment of partnerships between the Agency and NGOs. This will facilitate the transition to a longer-term, more strategic approach that will see NGOs play a greater role in shaping policy and programming dialogue with partner governments. The new approach will allow robust design processes to enable early and transparent engagement of NGOs and ensure partnership objectives are in line with partner government priorities. It will encourage the use of program M&E on an aggregated sector basis. The approach will also actively engage Posts in partnerships because of the synergies between the partnerships and overall sector strategies.

A fundamental assumption of the guidance provided through AusAID’s civil society engagement assessments is the understanding that working in new ways with NGOs will lead to more effective delivery of development programs and assistance. AusAID has established different partnering approaches across its global portfolio, some of which present as specific delivery methods. In contrast, the AM-NEP is not a program, but rather a platform providing support for implementing multi-level reforms and seeking to establish different business arrangements and working relationships. Given that partnerships are a relatively new and emerging way of working for AusAID and NGOs, clear effort is needed to measure effectiveness. The AM-NEP is designed to articulate ways of partnering and to contribute to the development of an Agency-wide body of knowledge articulating the results and outcomes of these approaches.

Partnership approaches are increasingly recognised within AusAID as having the core attributes the Agency wants for its work with NGOs in a growing number of circumstances. The AM-NEP approach articulates the potential development benefits of partnerships. Its key attributes will integrate work with NGOs into delivery/sectoral strategies at bilateral level in the Mekong, bearing in mind there will remain other ways for AusAID to work with NGOs.<sup>13</sup>

**AM-NEP design:** The discussions and decisions outlined above form the basis of AM-NEP’s design. One aspect of the design brief was to examine the appropriateness of the partnership approach and define the form of regional architecture needed to support the delivery of strategy specific outcomes. The design confirms that a partnership approach on a country and sector basis with regional support has significant merit and benefits. It explores and develops options and recommendations for a regional supporting architecture.

In October 2011, AusAID engaged a design team to further consult key stakeholders in Australia and the region and design the AM-NEP platform. The design team's terms of reference (TOR) are listed in Annex 1. The design process will be completed by May 2012.

The team comprised two consultants working with AusAID Canberra and regionally deployed staff. The team consulted with AusAID Posts, NGOs, national government, civil society and other donors in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in November and December. The AM-NEP concept was revisited and colleagues from NGOs and AusAID provided additional views and insights, particularly in how it could

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<sup>13</sup> That is, AM-NEP will not preclude or replace work being done through other forms of NGO engagement, for example, the Australian – NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) and local small grants programs.

operationalised. A two-day workshop was held in Hanoi for IWG members, during which field findings and design concepts were tested. Persons consulted and the design team's itinerary are outlined in annexes 2 and 3 respectively.

A first draft design document was submitted for AusAID review in December 2011 and responses provided in January and early February 2012. Following appraisal and peer review in late February 2012 and further discussion on design and management options within AusAID, the final draft design was presented for approval with AM-NEP in May 2012.

## 2.2 Sectoral and partnership issues

**The emergence of AusAID sectoral strategies for the Mekong:** In implementing the Australian Government's commitment to aid effectiveness, and the partner government priorities and programs to which it contributes, AusAID must focus on core strategic objectives, clear results and impacts. AusAID's development priorities are captured in its agreed country and regional strategies, which reflect high-level program choices about the sectors and sub-sectors in which the Agency is best placed to work.

Since 2011, AusAID has been developing sector programs for its commitments in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and for the Mekong Water Resources Program through sector/delivery strategies. These define the broad parameters for sectoral program delivery in accordance with AusAID's country and regional commitments. As it invites engagement with NGOs in its sectoral programs, AusAID will draw on existing and emerging strategies to identify areas where it feels engagement with NGOs can greatly assist in program delivery.

The status of the strategic development of AusAID – NGO involvement in these sectors is shown in Annex 5. These strategies will be refined throughout 2012, where appropriate, with AM-NEP support. Flexibility is important for AM-NEP design because the platform needs to assist AusAID to respond to opportunities for NGO engagement in a region in which sectoral priorities and methods for developing sector programs are still emerging. This work in progress does not preclude:

- further delivery strategies emerging in which NGOs can partner with AusAID
- AusAID – NGO engagement emerging in country sectors for which delivery strategies will not be needed
- NGO activities from going ahead before sector/delivery strategies are finalised.

AM-NEP support will also be appropriate for some of AusAID's delivery strategies for aid across borders in the Mekong (for example, the Mekong Water Resources Program).

**Opportunities for partnership between AusAID and NGOs:** The *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* highlights the increased importance of NGOs in delivering the Australian aid program into the future, specifically within the context of an expanded aid program.<sup>14</sup>

AusAID recognition of the important role of civil society (including NGOs) in development is currently addressed through these three key forms of engagement:

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<sup>14</sup> *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, p. 206.



1. **Policy dialogue:** Contributing to policy, program and strategy development in Australia and overseas.
2. **Program delivery:** Facilitating better access to basic service delivery and humanitarian activities for poor and vulnerable communities; strengthening the role and capacity of civil society in partner countries; and supporting government systems to work better for the poor.
3. **Building community support (within Australia and abroad):** Undertaking development awareness activities and advocating on international development issues; facilitating partnerships; and promoting people-to-people and organisational links through volunteer and other programs.<sup>15</sup>

In line with the recognition of the varying contributions and complementary roles of a range of development actors, AusAID has been investing in understanding how civil society contributes to higher development goals, and designing new approaches to partnership with NGOs to enable this. This includes increasing recognition that donor management practices can affect the ability of civil society to achieve intended outcomes. Emerging engagement approaches seek to promote robust and structured dialogue and mutual learning. They enable each partner to mobilise skills, capacities and resources towards mutually agreed objectives. This means an increasing shift towards approaches with clear and realistic objectives, focus on outcomes (as opposed to activities), shared analysis for planning and of lessons learned, and more flexible business processes (for example, funding arrangements and reporting).

Emerging partnership processes also seek to foster systemic engagement in policy development with informed ANGOs, INGOs and civil society groups. This is gaining impetus through AusAID's new sector/delivery strategies and strengthening the involvement of NGOs in overall program design, implementation and evaluation.

**Key principles** in partnership approaches include:

1. identifying shared objectives<sup>16</sup> and areas of potential collaboration
2. recognising the attributes, strengths and capacities of each development actor
3. recognising the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives
4. recognising that each partner makes different contributions and mobilises different resources to achieve shared objectives
5. sharing risk among partners
6. basing business processes on the roles and contributions of each partner and exhibiting the flexibility required to achieve shared objectives
7. jointly reviewing the progress of each party towards achieving overall objectives
8. sharing success between a range of partners.

This requires developing collaborative relationships between partners based on trust and a high degree of transparency. Table 1 shows the shifts between traditional and emerging partnership

<sup>15</sup> 'Mekong Programs: Future Engagement with NGOs', discussion paper. AusAID, October 2009

<sup>16</sup> This is not about coming to agreement, but rather about understanding each other's priorities and programs and identifying areas where collaboration would add value.

approaches. It outlines where AusAID and NGOs ‘have come from’ in the recent past and maps where they ‘wish to be’ as partnerships develop.

**Table 1: Shifts between traditional and emerging partnership approaches**

<b>Traditional partnering</b>	<b>Partnership approach</b>
AusAID solicits information with specific NGOs by invitation (plus opportunistic dialogue)	For strategy development: A range of actors are brought to the table to engage in dialogue on shared objectives; policy dialogue is planned and resourced
Competitive selection of NGOs based on concept notes solicited by AusAID	For programming: Selection based on degree of shared objectives, capacity to implement and willingness to adopt a partnership approach
Activity design undertaken by implementing partner before agreement signing	Additional design work may not be necessary if an existing design is suitable; or if so may be done after agreement signing
NGOs do not share information or collaborate due to competitive selection and design	NGOs more able to share and collaborate as selection and design process are separate
Design and implementation plans enshrined in agreement (varying timeframes)	Design is flexible and implementation plans and resource allocations are reviewed regularly in line with operational context and programming outcomes
Funding largely focused on delivery of projects with limited lifespan and for specific activities	Resource allocation enables NGOs to plan and invest in long-range programs to achieve sustainable development outcomes
AusAID provides funding for project costs and some administrative overheads	Shared resources: AusAID provides more than funds; NGO provides fund and in kind contribution; the contributions of each are recognised in partnership agreement
Contractee/contractor relationship outlining NGO obligations	Partnership agreements that outline all obligations
NGO bears risk	Risk is shared and jointly assessed, monitored and managed between partners
Defined and inflexible business processes	Flexible business processes adaptive to the changing context and roles of each partner
M&E focuses on reporting of activities and outputs	M&E focuses on relationships and engagement as well as outcomes, impacts and lessons learned

The focus of AM-NEP is clearly on the working relationships AusAID and its NGO partners can develop to more effectively deliver aid, and not on partnerships for their own sake. Nevertheless, the notions and principles of partnership as defined above are fundamental to AM-NEP and the term ‘partnership’ is used in this design to encompass a wide range of possible models for AusAID – NGO programming in the Mekong. The design of AM-NEP does not assume that particular models of partnership are appropriate or best in all circumstances. Resourcing for partnerships needs to be flexible and take into account the size, capacities and organisational mandates of NGO partners.

AM-NEP will encourage a range of partnering approaches that support the integration of NGO engagement into sector/delivery strategies. Possible approaches using the partnership principles as

defined above and to be developed to suit the specific context of sector/delivery strategies and ensuing program designs include NGO engagement in:

- dialogue to determine appropriate NGO involvement in sector/delivery strategies
- single NGO programs with objectives and designs defined through sector/delivery strategies
- programs involving groups of NGOs and/or CSOs or consortia with objectives and designs defined through sector/delivery strategies
- sector-wide approaches involving a range of development partners, including government agencies, multilateral organisations, civil society and private sector
- specific service-delivery approaches within sector/delivery strategies as determined through dialogue with partner governments and national CSO partners
- specific civil society support activities aimed at helping CSOs (and more widely civil society) to develop the capacity to deliver development activities or more widely in advocacy or governance
- policy dialogue and/or advice on sector/delivery strategies where no specific NGO programs are envisaged
- regional policy dialogue with AusAID and other NGOs on issues of regional importance
- specialised technical assistance/expertise or training services, including the use of volunteers for other partner activities (including those of other NGOs) within sectoral programs
- formulation and dissemination of development awareness materials, for use in the Mekong or through home-base constituencies and networks.

The AM-NEP design mission heard universal acceptance and support for more collaborative partnership arrangements between AusAID and NGOs, particularly the establishment of mechanisms to enable NGOs to bring programming evidence and experience to policy dialogue and development planning processes. Despite this broad in-principal agreement, feedback also highlighted the need (and fine balance) between ensuring partnership approaches do not overrun the individual institutional characteristics, relationships, mandates and autonomy of each partner. This means the AM-NEP will support the development of activities for which resourcing suits the size and capacity of NGOs able to contribute to sector programs.

**Essential attributes of NGO engagement:** Lessons learned from AusAID's global experience highlighted the following essential attributes of partnership approaches to NGO engagement in the Mekong.<sup>17</sup> Engagement needs to ensure:

- opportunity for genuine partnership between AusAID and NGOs based on shared principles and objectives, joint involvement in design and implementation, mutual accountability, space for innovation and flexibility, shared benefit and risk, and equal voice
- space for meaningful policy dialogue between AusAID, NGOs, partner governments and other major stakeholders
- opportunity for sharing lessons learned and taking advantage of synergies between NGO activities, AusAID activities and other programs to maximise impact

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<sup>17</sup> Adapted from Mekong Section's 'AusAID – NGO Partnership: Options in the Mekong Region', discussion paper March 2011.

- accountability and quality within the design of interventions through reducing competition during design and facilitating broad multi-stakeholder involvement, including with beneficiaries, implementing partners, civil society, donors and partner government at all stages of the program cycle
- appropriate resourcing for AusAID and NGO partners including:
  - meaningful engagement by AusAID Posts and desk staff in higher-order program issues and for Posts to have the skills and capacity to support policy dialogue
  - resources and skills for NGOs to prioritise policy engagement and share lessons learned with other development actors
  - strategic approaches to engagement with local civil society, including support for capacity building, and to encourage accountability and transparency for government delivery of service
  - specialist facilitation assistance to strengthen performance in areas of historical weakness such as design, M&E, crosscutting issues (for example, gender equality, child protection, disability, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV])
  - activities of scale and duration to enable meaningful development impact, including recognition that time is required to develop relationships and trust, build capacity, observe impact and recalibrate implementation strategies to maximise impact
  - comprehensive assessment of the impact of development interventions, including M&E needs to capture program-level impact and provide evidence to beneficiaries and other development actors
  - appropriateness to local context, that is resources to reflect capacity of civil society, the operating environment and opportunities for engagement
  - flexibility to respond to changing environments and emerging issues.

## 2.3 Problem and opportunity analysis

The cohesion of programs at goal and development outcome levels is a development effectiveness priority for AusAID worldwide. This is manifested through high-level results frameworks which provide evidence that Australian funds are being used to achieve outcomes in accordance with good development practice and within the country strategies AusAID develops and negotiates with national government partners. Sector/delivery strategies are key building blocks within this approach. These strategies are a major opportunity to address program limitations of past NGO CAs in the Mekong by incorporating AusAID – NGO activities into higher-level program frameworks. This will provide opportunities for AusAID and NGOs to contribute to achieving a better aid program in the region. It will also define an overall aid effectiveness goal for AM-NEP (Section 3, overall logic).

AusAID envisages that over the next five to 10 years the Agency and its NGO partners will have jointly developed and implemented strong and cohesive programs for delivering development outcomes that will make long-term, sustainable and positive changes in the lives of the people in the Mekong Region, particularly by empowering the disadvantaged. This calls for multi-level reform in the way AusAID and its NGO partners do business in the Mekong and defines AM-NEP as a catalyst for change. With AM-NEP, AusAID articulates major domains of change, as aligned to the DAC quality criteria —relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of development programs.

AusAID's analysis during 2011 (Section 2.1) identified key limitations in the NGO CA approach in the Mekong. Lessons learned in Section 2.4. Most importantly, CAs have not fully operated at a wider program level, with cohesive and integrated MEL systems and the wider policy dialogue functions a fully programmatic approach requires. Lessons from previous CA programs also show that AusAID-funded NGO activities in the region have tended to be stand-alone and cannot, therefore, be easily compared. They have often been implemented alongside, rather than integrated with, other interventions and AusAID partnerships seeking to achieve related strategic objectives and outcomes.

A fundamental reform in the way AusAID and NGOs do business is thus to enable partners to achieve a joint vision and together define relevant, quality and sustainable development objectives, bearing in mind that this best happens where AusAID and NGO strategies for development converge. The challenge is to more clearly and consistently articulate effective NGO contributions to, and roles at the agreed higher-level goals and development outcomes within, AusAID's current and emerging delivery strategies, while maintaining the autonomy and mandates of NGO partners. It is recognised that NGO mandates, ways of working, systems, approaches and programs are diverse. Recognising the strengths and weaknesses of partners and their contributions is appropriate to effective relationships between AusAID and NGOs. AusAID envisages that AM-NEP will support the development of a network of partnerships over the next few years that fully integrate within AusAID country and sector programs by allowing each partner to best contribute to mutually agreed outcomes.

Part of the difficulty in achieving shared goals is to perceive and share higher-level issues when design, MEL and reporting are more focused at the output level, as they have been in CA programs. This typically manifests itself as a perception that NGOs have poor capacity to demonstrate higher-level development outcomes and impacts at program/sectoral level, despite the solid grassroots evidence they can bring to the fore. This is understandable within the contractual and reporting frameworks that have focused largely on activity and output levels.

Fundamental to building effectiveness in the aid program is establishing collaborative and flexible design as well as MEL processes. This implies commitment to sound analysis and opportunities for open dialogue about relationships, partnerships, the way partners work together and program goals. It is essential to recognise that AusAID – NGO relationships are a vital and integral element of the way outcomes are achieved. This means improving structural opportunities and making resources available to share lessons and good practices, as well as reflect on what it is about relationships that makes, or does not make, effective development happen. Limitations to this have largely resulted from inadequate resourcing, including time (although efforts have been made on this in some CA programs).

The AM-NEP design also recognises that working together towards agreed and shared goals can enhance efficiency of AusAID – NGO activities through sharing resources and risks, as appropriate, to programs that emerge. This means reducing burdensome administrative processes for AusAID and NGOs. Share resources and using flexible business processes to better respond to changes within the wider development environment, means AM-NEP will also be able to help sustainably build local capacity to attain development outcomes.

AusAID envisages that these benefits will accrue over the next five to 10 years, and that AM-NEP will play a vital part in this. AusAID also envisages that flexible quality systems focusing on outcomes and

relationships will be developed and adopted early in implementation. This essential change needs to be followed through as a set of practices for at least one full program cycle (preferably more), so partners can refine and adjust their quality systems through learning in the longer term.

## 2.4 Lessons learned

CAs have been a key way of operating for AusAID engagement with NGOs. All countries in the Mekong Region have had CAs<sup>18</sup>, in place between 2004 and 2014, representing a combined value of approximately \$58.7 million.

AusAID has taken considerable steps to understand the key lessons learned from its cooperation with NGOs in the Mekong, through independent evaluations of each CA program, an overarching lessons-learned analysis undertaken in March 2010<sup>19</sup>, dialogue with ANGOs through the ACFID Mekong Working Group, and analysis of other Agency-wide NGO CA programs. The key lessons summarised below have been verified throughout the AM-NEP design process.

**Unique contributions from partners to development outcomes:** The *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* recognises the unique contribution of development actors in contributing to aid effectiveness:

The role which AusAID and other Australian government agencies play in development, and the role of NGOs, are not identical, but they can be powerfully complementary.<sup>20</sup>

AusAID's shift towards more strategic partnership approaches recognises and builds upon the resources, capacities, skills, attributes and knowledge that the Agency and NGOs bring to development. In addition to funding, AusAID, for example, has an expansive global portfolio enabling it to link to and influence policy makers (such as other governments, multilateral and bilateral donors), as well as coordinate with whole-of-government partners. AusAID is also, however, obliged to operate within the framework of Australia's bilateral relationships, to be cognisant of the views of other governments and to promote Australia's interests and positions.

NGOs have broad geographic reach and strong international networks through which Australia can extend the reach of its aid program. They can be active in advocacy, rights and support for civil society development. They rely on their extensive networks on the ground to consult and deliver programs. NGOs are often sources of rich information at community level, in particular with traditionally marginalised groups including, but not exclusive to, the poor, women, children, young people, ethnic minorities and people with disability. NGO relationships and experiences generate valuable evidence that can contribute to policy dialogue and development planning processes. ANGOs also have established link with the Australian community through which they can enhance community understanding and commitment to development, as well as mobilise public and corporate contributions. By proactively using the comparative strengths of NGOs, AusAID can access more accurate information and develop a deeper understanding of the development context. This enables its programs to more effectively address emerging needs.

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<sup>18</sup> VANGOCA 2004–10; CANGOCA 2005–11; LANGOCA 2006–14.

<sup>19</sup> AusAID, 'AusAID – NGO Partnership: Options in the Mekong Region', discussion paper, March 2011.

<sup>20</sup> *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, p. 205.

**Community engagement:** Mekong CA reviews have identified that to varying degrees strong relationships and linkages between NGOs, communities, local government and civil society result in activity implementation that provides direct, tangible benefits at community level (especially among poor and marginalised groups) and contributes to program effectiveness. Despite this being a traditional key strength of NGOs, there remains considerable room for strengthening downward accountability and having local authorities and communities participate at all stages of the program cycle.

**Two-stage selection processes:** Two-stage selection processes focus on selecting partners with the operational capacity and relationships to implement development activities. Once selected these partners participate in activity design. This type of process reduces competition and lowers transaction costs to an extent by ensuring only selected NGOs with funding-surety proceed to design stage. This process also limits the number of proposals requiring design appraisal.

Early identification of stakeholders enables early discussion around program and activity design, which is key to partnership approaches. This enhances program design quality and ensures greater attention to crosscutting issues. It also enables AusAID and partners to jointly identify priorities and shared principles and allocate technical and financial resources for effective design, implementation and policy dialogue. Finally, it enhances flexibility during implementation in response to emerging issues, changing contexts and lessons learned.

Another strategy AM-NEP can use to reduce the administrative burden associated with NGO partner selection is to recognise existing accreditation mechanisms of AusAID and other actors, such as ANCP, ACFID, or the Cooperation Committee of Cambodia, as providing sufficient evidence of satisfactory NGO management capacity. This focuses on contextual capacity, relationships and identification of shared programming principles at the first stage of selection, followed by program-specific technical and design issues in the second stage.

In pursuing such a strategy AusAID needs to ensure promotion of a level playing field. Only ANGOs have been eligible for funding through CAs. With the untying of Australia's aid program, and greater globalisation of international organisations, there is significant internal pressure to open up NGO programs to include non-ANGOs where appropriate, particularly for those that have specific skills and can contribute to AusAID programs. Design consultations highlighted ANGO concern that attention is needed to ensure their accreditation with AusAID is not undervalued or discounted, and that non-ANGOs be subject to the same level of institutional scrutiny during selection.

**Project as opposed to program-based approaches:** CA programs have largely provided for sector-focused projects designed, managed and implemented by individual agencies. This tends to 'silo' individual NGO activities from the work of other partners. It also limits structured opportunities for cross-program sharing of knowledge, lessons learned and policy dialogue<sup>21</sup>, resulting in failure to capture much of the evidence and learning gained through implementation:

This lack of a genuine program approach for most of the Mekong NGO programs has meant there have been limited opportunities for AusAID, partner NGOs, and partner governments to fully capitalise on individual activity achievements or effectively share good practice and lessons

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<sup>21</sup> This occurred on an adhoc basis in VANGOCA and CANGOCA and it was an explicit design feature of LANGOCA.

learned. It has also limited opportunities for national level policy dialogue between AusAID, partner NGOs and partner government.<sup>22</sup>

There is considerable scope to increase the opportunities for bring NGOs, with their programming evidence, into policy dialogue to identify areas of shared priority for joint action. This should not preclude the spaces in which NGOs are independently engaging. Annex 4 includes some good practice examples of joint policy dialogue between NGOs, AusAID and other stakeholders in Laos and Vietnam.

Wider program approaches include systematic efforts for collaborative design, implementation and MEL between and across partners and key stakeholders. Such collaboration can take many forms and it is vital that individual characteristics and core purposes of actors be recognised and valued.

Lessons from previous NGO partnership programs show that efforts to encourage collaboration and engagement between partner NGOs should not force the establishment of consortia. Design consultations have indicated that donor-led consortia may not lead to effective results, as they can be hindered by elements of competition between NGO partners and difficulties in moderating different agency approaches. Consortia also tend to shift transaction costs to NGOs and do not necessarily represent cost-effective solutions. If used, consortia need to ensure all stakeholders are well resourced so they can develop common visions of their roles, linkages and joint outcomes.

**Monitoring, evaluation and learning:** Individual sector-based projects naturally result in MEL focusing on performance information (output, input and activity level) for individual projects. As a result, CA programs have largely failed to establish overall program-level MEL frameworks and are challenged to demonstrate higher-level development outcomes and impacts at program/sectoral levels. This can reduce AusAID's ability to promote program achievements and adjust direction to reflect lessons learned. There is a strong argument in the context of up-scaling the aid program and the Australian Government's strategy for its aid program<sup>23</sup>, that AusAID and its partners in sectoral/delivery strategies will benefit from collating and reporting on results at the end of aid outcome level.

MEL should therefore not solely be a contract management tool, but the primary way to identify and articulate development outcomes and, importantly, the reasons some interventions are working and others are not. With partnership approaches, MEL is a key element in building trust, mutual understanding and shared objectives. This embraces AusAID's increased emphasis on the important role MEL plays in providing feedback to primary stakeholders (beneficiaries, partner governments and civil society).

MEL is also a key program function that needs to be adequately planned for and well-resourced for all partners involved, including AusAID as well as NGOs and their partners in-country and at headquarters. While gains have been made, MEL, particularly at higher levels (results and impacts), is perceived by AusAID as an area of traditional weakness for some NGOs. The shift towards partnerships will enable AusAID to bring technical resources to the table to support the development of program-level MEL frameworks, strengthen the capacity of NGOs to better

<sup>22</sup> 'Mekong Programs: Future Engagement with NGOs', discussion paper p. 10. AusAID, October 2009

<sup>23</sup> *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a Real Difference—Delivering Real Results.*



implement higher-order MEL, and collect evidence demonstrating the significant contribution NGOs make.

**Specific contribution of NGOs:** ACFID-sponsored research on the development effectiveness of ANGOS<sup>24</sup> suggests that these organisations undertake the most effective development work in locations where they have operated for a long time and are able to experiment, make mistakes and work with marginalised and poor people through a relationship-based approach. The research also highlights that effective development work is most often undertaken through approaches linking service delivery to people's rights—activities mixing service delivery, capacity development, advocacy and research.

ANGOs, however, do not typically use donor funding for their innovative and complex programs. Current contracting systems result in NGOs using donor funds to implement less risky activities that more likely lead to immediate, tangible outcomes. As a result, AusAID and other donors 'generally do not engage with the best work of ANGOs and their partners'.<sup>25</sup> Recent developments in partnership approaches between AusAID and NGOs have sought to move past this limited relationship to focus on increasing synergies and opportunities for cooperation. Other program delivery approaches, such as ANCP and AusAID programming in other regions, have recognised that this opportunity to buy into existing long-term NGO programs, where they can contribute to AusAID's sector/delivery priorities, should not be discounted.

**Funding—security and flexibility:** Five-year implementation periods provide NGOs, their implementing partners and beneficiaries with security of funding and sufficient time to implement effective, sustainable activities. However, the ability of NGOs to mobilise resources to modify approaches, augment resources allocated for successful activities or adjust budgets to reflect changing operational contexts remains limited. There is scope to implement grant-making processes to provide higher degrees of flexibility (including without-year funding) and enable improved responsiveness and effectiveness.

**Role of civil society:** With limited scope for direct funding to CSOs in countries where they operate, AusAID support for civil society has largely been delivered through intermediary organisations such as NGOs (international and Australian). Strengthening civil society capacity has not been an explicit aim of CAs in the Mekong and there has been limited policy direction to inform the nature and intent of expected engagement with civil society. As a result, CSOs most often act as implementing partners for NGOs.

There is strong rationale for supporting the natural roles of CSOs vis-à-vis governance and demand for accountability and transparency, as well as their ability to provide services government cannot provide. AM-NEP consultations identified varying capacity and limitations for civil society operations across Mekong countries. It also recognised that capacity-building approaches used by NGOs with local civil society are not homogenous and vary considerably across developmental contexts,

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<sup>24</sup> R. Chapman, 2008, 'A survey of ANGOS on development effectiveness', ACFID; C. Roche, 2009, 'ACFID development effectiveness research report'.

<sup>25</sup> AACES, PDD, June 2011, p. 13.

agencies and mandates. This in turn has a significant impact on the sustainability of development activities.

The release of *Working Beyond Government*, AusAID's evaluation of its engagement with civil society in developing countries, and more recently the draft of AusAID's Civil Society Engagement Framework, provide much-needed impetus for developing civil society engagement in AusAID's programs. These documents were released for comment towards the latter stages of the AM-NEP design process and signal policy directions recognising the contributions in skills and expertise and the ability to connect with communities that CSOs can make to aid effectiveness. As a result, civil society should be integral to the development process and approaches for its engagement should be built into country aid strategies. Recommendations contained in the evaluation of civil engagement include that civil society be included in policy discussion and implementation when designing sector-wide approaches with partner governments and that AusAID support initiatives that strengthen the enabling environment for civil society, where appropriate. AusAID's management response to date indicates acceptance of the evaluation's recommendations. At the time of finalisation of AM-NEP's design, the draft Civil Society Engagement Framework was open for public comment.

Developments respecting the role of civil society, while a work in progress, will provide AusAID (as a whole but especially in the Mekong context) with better understanding of the intent and purpose of the Agency's engagement with civil society. They will also lead to clearer policy guidance for AusAID's NGO partners in the Mekong on the scope and nature of their engagement with civil society and better define their capacity building needs and role within this (both the evaluation and framework recognise that NGOs play a vital role in this).

**Partner government engagement:** Key variables in NGO relationships with partner governments include: duration of in-country presence; history of service delivery; sectoral and technical areas of focus; partner government perceptions of civil society's role (including INGOs); and the peace and security context. As with CSOs, NGOs tend to focus on communities as key stakeholders and limit engagement with government to programming approval and management approaches rather than policy discussion and sharing evidence.

Ensuring more effective engagement with government partners, including a focus on support for learning at sub-national level and capacity building to support basic service delivery for marginalised groups and broad development programming, is a key theme in current development thinking and a priority for AusAID under its new results framework. There is strong rationale for future partnerships to place higher emphasis on engaging with local government as a key strategy for sustainability and scalability of NGO initiatives, however, this must be balanced with the advocacy role of many NGOs.

**Transaction costs—management:** AusAID uses a wide range of ways to delivery its aid program and implementation arrangements with NGOs vary within regions, countries and sectors. This involves many business processes and management systems which have led to a perception by some that approaches to and the quality and nature of partnerships are inconsistent. In some countries CAs are one of many forms of AusAID engagement with NGO partners. In others they are the sole form, resulting in some organisations feeling 'shut out'. AusAID sector programs, such as WASH and Community-based Adaptation Activity Grants, are different in nature and operate through central or regional funding modalities. This means sector programs can be constrained from incorporating current and emerging thinking and lessons learned through partnership approaches, particularly at

country level.<sup>26</sup> The Australian Government's response to the *Independent Review on Aid Effectiveness* acknowledges that future aid programming should be channelled through bilateral programs and recognised by country strategies to reduce inconsistencies.

Some AusAID staff see NGO CAs as management intensive for the amount of funds flowing through them. Contract management responsibilities are time consuming and reduce the time AusAID staff can spend on higher-level program issues such as quality of design processes, MEL, capacity building and policy dialogue. While AusAID wants to reduce this management burden, it is important that it not be transferred by default to other partners. Evidence suggests there is considerable scope to adopt more flexible business processes within emerging approaches. The proposed AM-NEP model makes considered effort to do so and ensure all partners are sufficiently resourced to engage in more strategic high-level program functions.

## 2.5 Rationale for AusAID investment

As it seeks to enhance aid effectiveness in achieving sectoral outcomes in the Mekong, AusAID wants to enhance the roles and contribution of NGOs within the sectors in which it is involved. The essential reason for providing support through AM-NEP to partnerships is to help achieve sectoral goals and outcomes through reforms in the way AusAID and its NGO partners work together and do business in the region.

AusAID's Director-General has recently put on record that AusAID will spend around \$1 billion through NGOs by 2015 (on a worldwide basis). This is with the support of the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* which committed to increasing funding and partnerships through NGOs and is backed by Australia's overall commitment to increase aid. The AM-NEP will play a vital role in helping Posts in the Mekong Region ensure NGO involvement in their programs is resourced appropriately and that AusAID – NGO activities are effectively designed and implemented.

AusAID has already invested heavily in examining options for NGO partnerships in the region. As outlined in Section 2.1, country and sector-specific NGO engagement programs driven by sector/delivery strategies are the preferred option.

AusAID considers here the extent to which investment in regional support for AusAID – NGO activities in sector programs through the AM-NEP is justified, given that programs are largely country based and significant investment will be required. Section 2.3 outlines the limitations common to previous CA programs and future opportunities. This section highlights that CA programs across the region have not fully operated within AusAID's wider program. However, it envisions that AusAID and NGOs can develop roles and goals for cohesive outcome-oriented programs that will make long-term, sustainable and positive changes in the lives of people in the Mekong Region. It also envisions that partners can jointly develop the quality tools and practices to support this. Together this will create a strong network among AusAID and its NGO partners featuring invaluable experience gained over a number of years through activities integrated in a consistent and structured manner into wider bilateral programs. NGOs will have gained extensive experience in working at this strategic level with AusAID and its other partners. They will be able demonstrate and report on contributions to high-level development results and will increasingly be able to share information on operations

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<sup>26</sup> 'Mekong Programs: Future Engagement with NGOs', discussion paper p. 14. AusAID, October 2009

and lessons learned. These positive changes will inform NGO wider strategies and approaches to implementation. In addition, NGOs will be able to provide major insights about the realities of working in particular sectors, especially at sub-national levels and with civil society. This will significantly broaden AusAID's perspectives on country strategies and programming and inform the Agency's development and management of programs that have no NGO involvement.

This is a region-wide need and it is not realistic, cost effective or appropriate to expect sector programs to resource the support required on a country-by-country basis. While single strategies (for example, sustained and intensive partnership training for AusAID and NGO program managers) could be undertaken, these only address part of the challenge. Single strategies do not sufficiently or consistently address the multi-level reforms needed to strengthen the way in which AusAID and NGOs do business together. Further, sector programs function to achieve sectoral outcomes and should not need to devote significant resources or develop program elements to facilitate this change. Sector managers at Post and NGO program managers will gain major insights through their relationships and activities and, where appropriate, through regional training or mentoring. These managers should not be delegated with the responsibility to be primary facilitators of this change since this facilitation requires regional leadership.

All of these factors define the investment AusAID needs to make in managing change in its relationships with NGOs and approaches to AusAID – NGO programming. It calls for sustained support over a number of years to achieve multi-level reform in the way AusAID and NGOs work together to more effectively achieve development outcomes. While the time required to implement interventions will vary, five-year timeframes are the norm to allow for outcome-level results. AM-NEP support to individual sector programs and activities therefore needs to be for at least five years to ensure benefit from using quality tools and processes throughout activity cycles.

Sector/delivery strategies are still emerging and will continue to in years to come as new activity cycles for AusAID – NGO partnerships emerge. In the next five years overlapping programs with these partnerships will have been established, some of which will operate towards the end of this decade and beyond. With some individual sector programs, arguments may be made to extend NGO activities beyond the initial timeframe. With others the need for NGO activity may cease. New and extended programs create new activity cycles. Decisions will vary from sector to sector.

For these reasons it is strongly recommend that AusAID invest in reforms to the way it works with NGOs work for longer than five years (in excess of one activity cycle starting in 2012). This will allow lessons learned through sector programs to be integrated into country programs well into the future. As new programs are developed, the new partners involved in them will fully benefit from and build on what has been learned.

For immediate financing purposes, AM-NEP is budgeted for a standard five-year cycle, a useful indicative timeframe. However, subject to review and evaluation, the timeframe envisaged by AusAID is more likely to be between seven and 10 years.

The length of the framework will likely see the emergence of new programming options for AusAID in the Mekong. Building on results of existing and future sector programs and on emerging regional cooperation measures among governments, AusAID may see opportunities to increase its portfolio of regional sectoral or thematic, multi-sectoral programs. It may also see opportunities to extend the

geographical scope of its programs, within and to other countries. It is also likely that the growing roles of civil society and capacities of CSOs will present new and exciting opportunities.

The time is right to strengthen partnerships between AusAID and NGOs building on the current mix of sectoral programs and the current capacities of both parties in the Mekong. This investment in reform and learning will inform sector program development now and into the future.

## **2.6 Broad underpinnings of the AM-NEP design**

AM-NEP is designed to support multifaceted reforms to strengthen relationships between AusAID, NGOs, and potentially CSOs, in the Mekong. It is not a program in its own right. Its key role is to support reforms to the way AusAID and NGOs do business in the region through expediting processes, assuming some administrative functions and providing technical support for quality and aid effectiveness. AM-NEP will enhance relationships and enable more effective and efficient delivery of important elements of AusAID's development strategies. It will do so through shared achievement of upper-level results and outcomes. It will represent value for money. Section 2.5 discusses how AM-NEP will help build strong networks for development effectiveness and inform wider program development throughout the next decade.

AM-NEP is premised on the underlying assumptions that NGOs, and increasingly local CSOs, can effectively deliver Australian aid through implementation approaches at sub-national and national levels and that NGOs and CSOs can bring solid evidence to development dialogue on approaches and methodologies that work well or do not work well. NGOs are well placed to obtain these insights, which will benefit AusAID through deeper understanding of the development context.

AusAID's bilateral engagements in the Mekong Region are managed through four main programs: Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam country programs (managed from Posts in each country) and the Mekong Water Resources Program (managed by AusAID's Mekong Hub from Laos). In addition to partnerships with NGOs, these programs encourage partnerships with national and sub-national governments, other donors and multilateral organisations, the private sector and civil society. AM-NEP seeks to help AusAID involve its NGO partners in the Mekong in wider, more strategic discussion so their grassroots evidence is at the table enabling opportunities to implement what is being learned.

AM-NEP, as a catalyst for change, will not in its own right open funding windows for NGO activity within AusAID's programs in the Mekong. These windows will open under AusAID's strategic programs in the region, particularly through the development of country-specific sector/delivery strategies. AM-NEP is a support system providing resources on demand for delivery/sector strategies.

The initial demand for AM-NEP support will therefore largely be from the four programs managed out of the three country Posts, although this may change as new priorities emerge. Programs resourced through AM-NEP will need to understand, advocate for and implement its principles of partnership. A robust design must also recognise the need to flexibly respond to other major opportunities as they arise (Section 2.5) and be forward looking to accommodate a wider definition of geographic scope in line with restructuring.

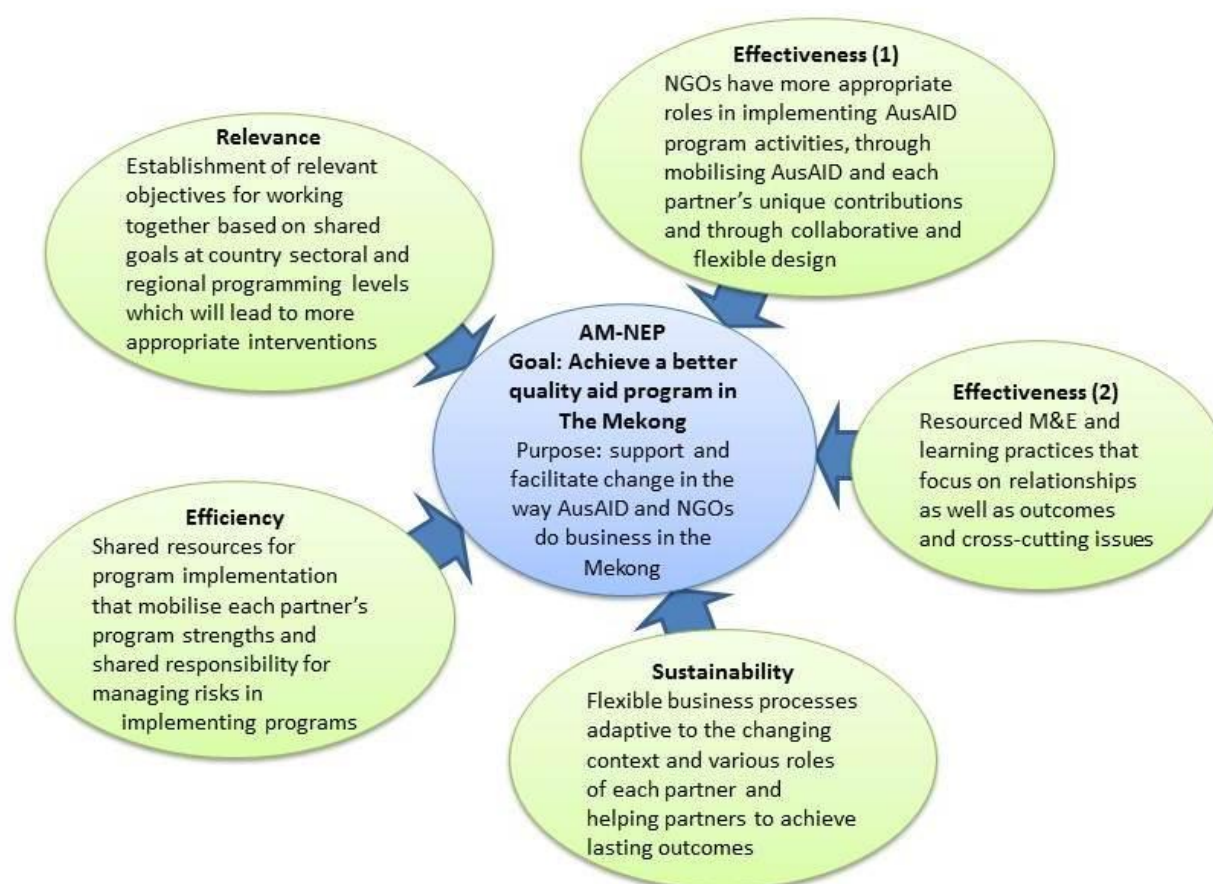
Finally, the earlier stages of AM-NEP design were conducted in the absence of an overarching AusAID policy for its engagement with civil society, although this was under development in Canberra at the time the AM-NEP design was finalised. The findings of Working Beyond Government and the draft Civil Society Engagement Framework provide considerable impetus for this. There is an assumption that NGOs will bring local civil society partners into the mix through their AusAID-funded activities. It is acknowledged that the Australian Government's response to the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* highlights the need to engage CSOs as part of the aid effectiveness agenda and ensure sustainable development. AM-NEP's design therefore needs sufficient flexibility so it can progressively include CSOs as major partners in their own right as policy directions and strategies for civil society engagement become clearer, and as CSOs increasingly signal their capacity to play valuable roles in AusAID programs.

## **3. Description of AM-NEP**

### **3.1 AM-NEP theory of change**

The AM-NEP is designed around a goal, purpose and five complementary domains of change. These and the program logic are summarised in Figure 1. Evidence of success is defined and developed in Annex 6.

Figure 1: AM-NEP theory of change



The preceding analysis recognises that NGOs have a wide range of development aims, mandates, policies, strategies, approaches and methods. AM-NEP helps to identify where AusAID and NGO interests intersect, and design and implement activities to help AusAID and NGOs effectively work with governments and sectoral stakeholders to achieve quality development outcomes. The analysis implies that the work AusAID and NGOs do will provide opportunity for other stakeholders to make changes in their policies and practices. With this in mind, AM-NEP provides resources for AusAID and NGOs to:

**GOAL: Achieve a better quality aid program in the Mekong**

The extent to which AM-NEP can attain this goal will be evidenced by:

**Strengthened AusAID policies and programs through AusAID – NGO engagement.**

**Uptake of policy and change in practice by other actors (for example, partner governments) based on learning and experience of AM-NEP partners.**

AM-NEP will help augment the impact of Australia's aid program in the Mekong. This clear and simple goal is meant to unify the many sectoral and organisational contexts within which AusAID –



NGO relationships operate. It links to the overall purpose of Australian aid which is to ‘help people overcome poverty’ and the aid program’s five overarching strategic intentions:

1. saving lives
2. promoting opportunities for all
3. sustaining economic development
4. effective governance, including strengthening civil society
5. humanitarian and disaster response.

Improvements in impact will come through the sector/delivery strategies negotiated with government partners and be measured through the MEL systems established.

**PURPOSE: Support and facilitate change in the way in which AusAID and NGOs do business in the Mekong Region**

Evidence that AM-NEP has achieved its purpose will be:

**NGO partners taking strategic roles in AusAID sector programs through partnership dialogue and access to AM-NEP services.**

**AM-NEP flexibly responding to sector program opportunities.**

**AM-NEP demonstrating value for money as a platform for AusAID – NGO engagement in sector programs in the Mekong.**

AM-NEP is a platform aligned around DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. It is designed to integrate NGO engagement within sector/delivery strategies, and be flexible in responding to opportunities, both as programs emerge and as they need to adapt and develop. AM-NEP helps AusAID and NGOs focus on the DAC criteria and use MEL systems to measure changes in how partners do business.

Because AM-NEP is a new way of working, it needs to prove itself, including to partner governments and other development partners. It needs to demonstrate its value for money. From AusAID's programming and accountability perspectives, value for money will be a crucial measure of success. AM-NEP has been designed to be scaled upwards or downwards as it progresses to flexibly meet the demands of sector programs for AusAID – NGO engagement (Section 4.2 for further thinking).

### **3.2 AM-NEP domains of change**

AM-NEP aims to enhance aid effectiveness through five essential reform areas or domains of change, aligned with the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. These domains of change are the commitments partners need to make to transition to more mature, inclusive and productive relationships and, through this, achieve quality development outcomes.

The domains of change are in Figure 1 and briefly described below.

**Relevance: Establishment of relevant objectives based on shared goals at country sectoral and regional programming levels which will lead to more appropriate interventions**

Changes in this domain of AusAID – NGO engagement will be evidenced by these results:

**Partnership/engagement agreements based on shared goals.**

**Solutions and technical approaches appropriate to the development context.**

**NGO engagement reflecting the highest priorities of the sector/delivery strategies.**

This domain of change is about relevance, which is essential to the way AusAID and NGOs do business in the long term. Both partners will be encouraged to focus on establishing relevant objectives for activities that closely align with the higher-level priorities AusAID has established with partner governments for its country/sector and regional programs. This will be through the strategies in sectors in which AusAID can best operate and in which NGOs can best contribute. This recognises that AusAID and NGOs need to share their respective visions and goals for their work in the region.

With AM-NEP facilitation and support, AusAID and NGOs will engage in more inclusive sectoral and partnership dialogue—to share lessons learned and develop their engagement, solutions and technical approaches in sector/delivery strategy development and implementation. Wider, more inclusive and equal partnership recognises from the start that this type of dialogue is essential to healthy inter-organisational relationships and development of shared goals. With resources (including time) available to ensure that such dialogue can occur, and by following agreed principles of partnership, discussion on goals and objectives will be shared early in a non-competitive way.

NGOs agreeing to work towards sectoral strategy objectives will be encouraged to share their experiences from core programming (AusAID will be encouraged to do the same). NGOs will also be encouraged share perspectives on how initiatives are achieving goals and identify emerging areas of collaboration. In some program contexts this will encourage NGOs to develop initiatives for AusAID funding that fit with their core activities, and are consistent with the Agency's intended outcomes and priorities. As the goals for engagement are negotiated and shared with AusAID and other NGO partners, individual NGOs will automatically be contributing to AusAID's strategic goals for sectors. This will lead to more appropriate and relevant interventions.

**Effectiveness: More appropriate roles in implementing AusAID's program activities, through mobilising each partner's unique contribution and through collaborative and flexible design**

Changes in this domain of AusAID – NGO engagement will be evidenced by these results:

**Partners agree on what they do individually and together to achieve development objectives.**

**Flexible and collaborative design processes being used by AusAID and NGOs.**

This domain of change is about elevating the relationship between AusAID and its NGOs to the strategic level. NGOs will be invited to participate within sectoral programs agreed between AusAID and development partners as opposed to operating within stand-alone programs. When formulating sector/delivery strategies and grants processes, AusAID will define the roles it will invite NGOs to play and anticipated aid outcomes and results. AM-NEP will support this as requested which will enhance effectiveness in AusAID – NGO programming in the Mekong because it will focus programming on strategic-level objectives.

NGOs will prepare capacity statements to demonstrate their strengths (approaches, linkages and experience) in identified sectoral areas. Annex 5 outlines initial sectors for engagement and future ones that may emerge. NGOs will be selected to engage with AusAID based on demonstration of their capacity and past performance in accountable and effective management, implementation for results and monitoring systems.

This means NGOs will not be selected based on submission of activity designs—this will occur later through collaborative and flexible design processes. Separating partner selection from activity design is a more effective way to allocate funds to NGOs and signals joint accountability for effective design. Early dialogue among selected NGOs, and between NGOs and AusAID’s other development partners, will encourage partners of their respective capacities to contribute to achieving sectoral goals and objectives in AusAID’s country programs and strategies. This refined process aims to distribute effort, resources and accountability in accordance with partner strengths—what each has to offer and can handle.

There will be no assumption during selection that the same kinds of partners will be appropriate for all sector programs across the three countries. For instance, some local CSOs in Cambodia have systems and program capabilities that allow them to take on full implementing roles in partnerships. This is much less likely at this stage for Laos. Decisions on the kinds of partners to be selected will be made on a program-by-program basis by AusAID Posts with support from AM-NEP.

**Effectiveness: Resourced monitoring, evaluation and learning practices that focus on relationships, outcomes and crosscutting issues**

Changes in this domain of AusAID – NGO engagement will be evidenced by these results:

**Partners learning from implementation and measuring and achieving development changes against agreed program outcomes.**

This domain of change is about measuring, evaluating and learning from partnerships, which is of primary importance to development effectiveness. This goes beyond design and provides a rich source of lessons learned. It represents a joint focus on practices around relationship building.

Program MEL systems and practices will start by building on AusAID and NGO systems and will be geared to higher-level outcomes within sectoral programs. At outcome and sector levels MEL is a country-specific activity and there is a need to ensure partners share understanding of desired results at this level. AM-NEP’s MEL practices for this are discussed in Annex 6.

The collaborative processes of design and MEL will also encourage a focus on crosscutting issues. AM-NEP will help ensure these issues are integral to all stages in program and activity design and implementation. Section 4.4 outlines AM-NEP’s response to the wide range of crosscutting issues likely to be relevant to AusAID – NGO engagement in the Mekong. AM-NEP is the platform for sharing expertise in crosscutting areas and can provide additional specialist expertise to enable this to happen.

**Efficiency: Shared resources for program implementation that mobilise each partner’s program strengths and shared responsibility for managing risks in implementing programs**

Changes in this domain of AusAID – NGO engagement will be evidenced by these results:

**NGO engagement in sectors demonstrating value for money.**

**AusAID and NGOs undertaking joint risk management exercises.**

**Partners measuring and achieving changes within their organisations.**

This domain of change is about ensuring each partner can ‘put its best foot forward’ by sharing resources to achieve mutually agreed goals. This involves AusAID sharing its resources with NGOs in the sectoral program context and NGOs sharing their resources with AusAID and each other. This presages greater efficiency in resource mobilisation and use, which collaborative program development and implementation can bring. AM-NEP will encourage collaborating in a way that enables all partners to use their strengths and resources to meet agreed outcomes, with a view to encouraging partners to examine alternative approaches and select the most resource-efficient ways of achieving outcomes.

Engagement is most effective where the principles and objectives of each party converge. This does not mean that AusAID and NGOs will have to give access to all of their resources. Boundaries to access will be defined by shared goals and objectives and through agreed activities and programs.

In traditional contracting arrangements the bulk of risk is transferred to program implementers who have their own systems and procedures for risk management. It is important to recognise that elevating relationships and programs to more strategic levels makes risk management a shared responsibility. This is a more efficient approach to managing risk.

This domain of change sees a shift from the traditional paradigm in which risk is transferred to implementers through contracts. Instead, through AM-NEP, AusAID and NGOs will have shared goals and objectives, agree to share resources, agree to collaborate through agreed quality processes in design and MEL. In doing so, both partners will acknowledge shared risk and accountability. In practice means risk is shared and receives regular, joint attention through sectoral and partnership dialogue. Precisely how this will be done will be determined in each sectoral program in which NGOs participate. AM-NEP will support this and help engender a culture of shared risk by developing quality partnering processes.

A major benefit from AM-NEP efficiency gains is that partners will be able to measure the changes to their organisations that result from sharing resources and risks. They will also be able to assess the value of working in partnership through their own assessments of how successful activities are. This is premised on MEL systems efficiently providing priority and timely information. It is anticipated that by having the time and resources to reflect on their own roles within sector programs, partners will be able to enhance their programs and see new opportunities and roles.

**E. Sustainability: Flexible business processes adaptive to the changing context and various roles of each partner and helping partners to achieve lasting outcomes**

Changes in this domain of AusAID – NGO engagement will be evidenced by these results:

**Partners flexibly using technical and administrative resources provided through AM-NEP.**

**Partners measuring/achieving changes and benefits to which AM-NEP has directly contributed.**

**AusAID – NGO engagement promoting resilience in coping with changing conditions.**

This domain of change is a major departure from previous ways of working for NGO cooperation programs which use defined and centrally-managed generic business processes. This departure means using business processes that can adapt to opportunities, including those brought about by new or updated policies within AusAID, emerging sector/delivery strategies, needs to scale up or down, and/or changes in local laws and regulations regarding foreign or local NGOs, or more widely civil society.<sup>27</sup> It promotes sustainability because it allows partners to access resources as and when needed. It also promotes resilience to changing development conditions which helps achieve sustainability among stakeholders because it allows for flexible response.

Although engagement supported through AM-NEP will need to reflect common and agreed principles and processes for quality of operation that apply to all partners, it will be flexible in how activities are mobilised and will adapt to the planning, implementation and financial systems used by NGOs (premised on NGOs meeting quality standards). While a level playing field will be required to ensure equity and quality implementation through commonly accepted and simple processes for calling on AusAID resources (including AM-NEP) there will be no one-size-fits-all assumptions on how NGOs structure and implement their activities. Partners will agree to common objectives and result, for design and MEL processes, but they can reach these in different ways.

Financing systems will be more flexible to enable timely and effective resource allocation. NGOs will be able to adjust activities for programming needs and emerging issues. This includes the flexibility to shift budget lines or put in place out-year budgeting. It implies shared understanding of intended outcomes, effective MEL and annual planning and a high level of trust and accountability in financial systems.

AusAID staff at Post generally considers that transaction costs for AusAID and NGOs under CAs are high. Staff are required to establish and manage a large number of output-focused contracts, requiring them to process a large amount of report material. This is often at the expense of assessing progress and participating in discussion at program or outcome levels. For NGOs the challenge has been to present large amounts of activity or output-level information, which needs to be organised and presented in ways determined by AusAID's administrative and contracting processes. This inflexibility in business processes contributes to high transaction costs. While transaction costs cannot be entirely removed, they can be reduced by transferring some to AM-NEP itself. For this reason AM-NEP will invest in administrative support for AusAID – NGO engagement as a central part of its architecture. Operating business processes flexibly to suit needs as they arise will also promote sustainability.

Flexibility in business process starts at selection stage. The intention is for partners to collaboratively design activities that fit within overall sectoral requirements. Asking prospective partners to present designs as part of the tender process is therefore counterintuitive to developing sound partnerships.

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<sup>27</sup> The design team notes that in all three countries government changes in such regulations are in process.

AM-NEP's two-stage selection process has an additional benefit—NGOs, including those eventually not selected, are not required to expend considerable resources on detailed designs. They are simply required to demonstrate capability at the first stage.

### 3.3 AM-NEP architecture

**Overview of AM-NEP architecture:** Figure 2 represents the AM-NEP architecture as a star. The five points of the star are described below:

**Three country posts** are the managers of AusAID's sectoral programs (including the Mekong Water Resources program) with primarily responsible for the Agency's engagement as a partner with NGOs.

**AusAID leadership of country programs** (heads of Post) are the managers of change in AusAID's shift to strategic, outcome-level approaches and the primary drivers of sectoral program decisions, including with AusAID – NGO partnerships.

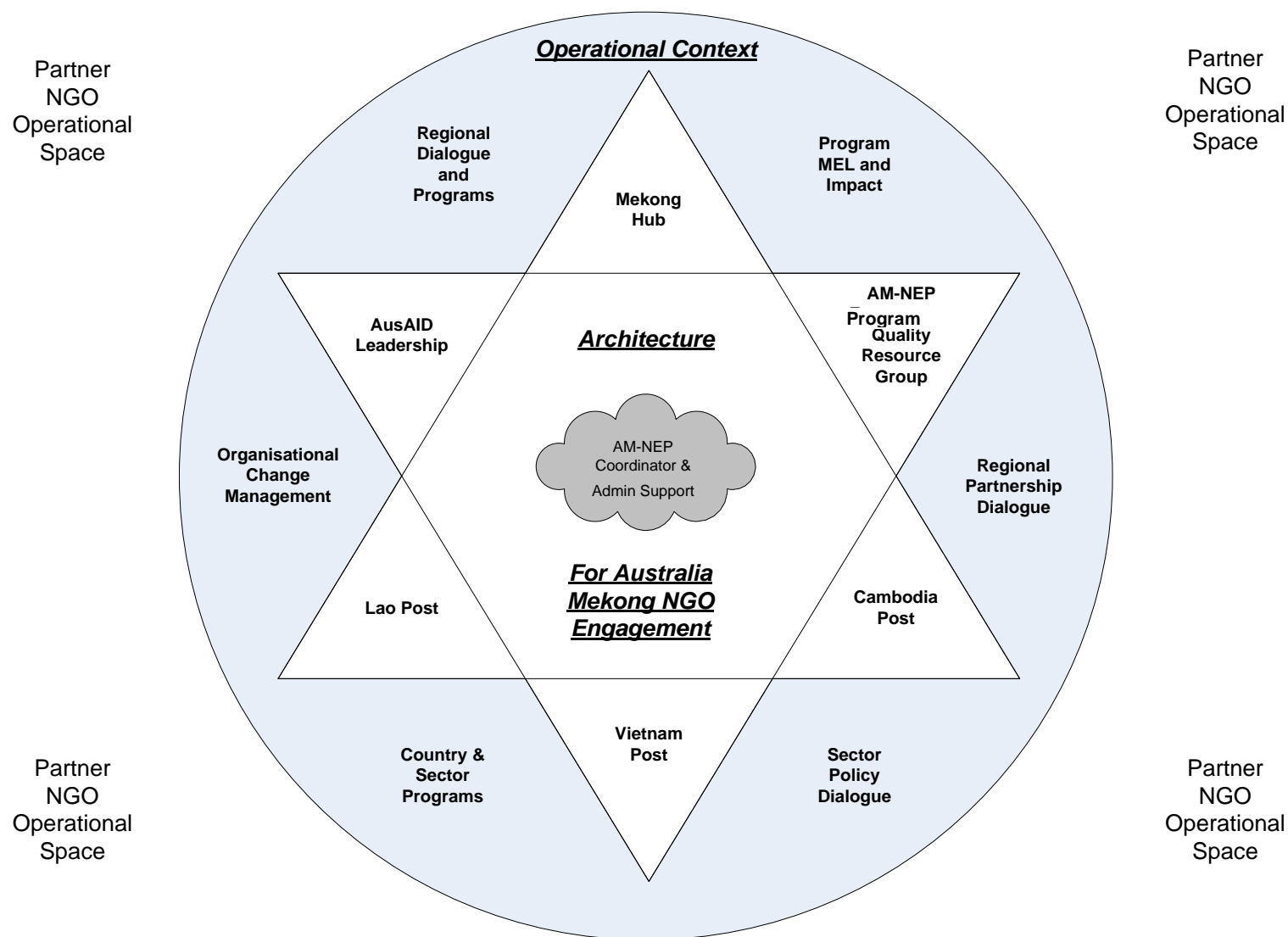
**Mekong Hub** is the driver of overall development of AusAID's regional presence and programs, with a regional strategic overview of the mobilisation and value of AusAID – NGO partnerships.

**Operational context of partnerships**—the circle shows the broad areas of support AM-NEP will provide in line with its domains of change.

**Wider NGO context** is shown outside the circle, depicting the wider range of programs and activities NGOs have. By definition this includes the wealth of experience NGOs bring to partnerships.

Section 4.1, tables 3 and 4, outline the roles of AusAID Mekong Post and NGO staff for the AM-NEP and the types of support that can be expected.

Figure 2: Summary of the AM-NEP architecture (the star)



**Major resources required for AM-NEP:** Four additional major resources will be established for the AM-NEP, to help AusAID and NGOs get the best results and outcomes from their relationships. This recognises the medium to long-term commitment required to implement change through the AM-NEP. These resources will be needed for the initial five-year implementation period and potentially beyond. Some are scalable and can be adjusted to needs at any time during implementation (this will help maintain value for money). The resources are covered in more detail in Section 4.1 with a note on scalability in Section 3.5.

The additional resources are:

1. **Reference Group**, which addresses the need for a top-level forum to provide strategic guidance to AM-NEP. The group will comprise an AusAID Mekong Hub nominated representative, an NGO representative involved in partnership programs from each country (to be nominated by NGO partners) and a representative from each Post. This group will champion change and be supported by the other additional resources.
2. **Coordinator**, a full-time AusAID person tasked to address the need for AM-NEP to be a catalyst for reforms and changes. This is largely a change facilitation role and the Coordinator will help NGOs and AusAID focus on long-term vision and benefits, as well as help them navigate necessary change processes. The Coordinator will be the overall driver of AM-NEP support (quality of engagement and administrative) and will coordinate the work of the PQRG and ASU.
3. **PQRG**, which addresses the need for AusAID and NGOs to develop and use quality processes at all stages in the program cycle. The PQRG will be engaged short term (over five years) to help design and support quality processes within partnerships. Its support will be scalable to allow greater use of the group when sector program involvement of NGOs is higher and enable less use when involvement decreases. The group's role will include supporting Mekong Posts in preparing sector/delivery strategies, selecting and engaging NGOs, and establishing and facilitating quality processes for design, MEL and review. It will comprise NGO engagement specialists recruited by and paid for by the ASU to work exclusively on AM-NEP tasks. The PQRG will be complemented by the team of specialists AusAID is establishing under its Mekong Hub in Laos. These specialists, recruited and funded outside of AM-NEP, will provide broader support to AusAID Mekong programs. AusAID already has some in place (in the fields of water and disability) and is recruiting some (in infrastructure, economics, health, social development and performance and quality). The PQRG and AusAID specialists combined will constitute a significant body of advisory expertise for the Agency's Mekong programs and NGO partners.
4. **ASU**, which enables partners to focus on program and change management processes. The ASU will be full time over the period of AM-NEP and handle day-to-day administrative and logistics tasks. It will be responsible for mobilising AM-NEP resources and managing flexible business practices to support all aspects of partnership development. Its operations will be scalable to support the extent of NGO involvement needed.

**Draft guidance notes:** The design team has developed draft guidance notes (Annex 8) for AM-NEP support in the early stages, to illustrate design logic and formulate and articulate the early stages engagement and the roles of AM-NEP support mechanisms. These draft guidance notes are referenced throughout this document. At implementation these will need to be developed by the PQRG.

**Major areas of support from AM-NEP:** In line with Figure 2, AM-NEP will provide support for:

**AusAID's workplace**, so AusAID leadership in the Mekong can make changes in the workplace to integrate partnerships within country and sector programs.



**Dialogue through partnerships** between AusAID and NGOs. so programs can share and fully benefit from program and partnership implementation.

**Good practice processes for selecting and managing partnerships and associated programs and activities**, so AusAID and NGOs can underpin partnerships and programs with quality operational processes.

**Administration**, so AusAID and NGOs can fully participate in and benefit from partnership approaches.

### AusAID's workplace

AM-NEP will support AusAID's leadership, management and program decision-making structures at country and regional hub levels to implement the required multi-level reforms, integrate partnership approaches within the Agency's Mekong programs and effectively channel AusAID resources into partnership approaches and activities.

Leadership challenges for managing AusAID's unique contributions to partnerships through AM-NEP include the need to ensure that the partnerships are geared towards sector program delivery outcomes. Changes in work practices inherent in this are in line with AusAID's overall thrust for Post staff—to manage for development outcomes while balancing management of contractual outputs. AM-NEP can support this.

The key is for all AusAID Mekong staff involved in managing these programs to be able to access AM-NEP on demand. AM-NEP will help AusAID staff adjust to the new approach and allow them to fully commit to and participate in partnership approaches. AM-NEP will also provide administrative services to AusAID Mekong staff.

The AM-NEP Coordinator will be the link between AusAID's leaders and managers ensuring that AM-NEP's quality and administrative services are geared to emerging and changing program requirements. This oversight requirement is best met on a regional basis with the Coordinator reporting to AusAID through the Counsellor of Operations and Programs (and thus to the Minister Counsellor). This will ensure AusAID management in the region can also access PQRG and ASU services.

Opportunities for support likely to emerge include training and/or workshop sessions to elevate AusAID program manager ability to be involved with NGO activities (from managing contracts to being partners).

In examining options for AusAID management and leadership support, the AM-NEP should not require:

- new structures or levels of decision making for managing AusAID – NGO programs through partnerships—this would be counterintuitive because it would define AM-NEP as a resource-demanding program rather than a support system to help the Agency implement change in partnering practices and managing sector program demand
- the appointment of selected staff members in each Post to manage interactions with AM-NEP—AusAID staff need to fully represent the Agency within partnerships and while

contract management tasks will exist, AM-NEP support as proposed would considerably streamline these.

### **Dialogue through partnerships**

AM-NEP will support AusAID and NGO leaders to seek answers to questions about how development programs can be most effectively implemented in the sectors and sub-sectors in which NGOs are best placed to work. This will help both partners decide where to strategically invest in shared resources.

The essential level of support that AM-NEP will provide is to facilitate multi-dimensional dialogue between AusAID and NGOs on development directions and policies. AM-NEP will enable joint reflection on lessons learned from engagement and management of program responses. It will help partners define shared objectives and activities and the mutual management of activities for quality results. AM-NEP will also help bring NGO insights into sectoral policy dialogue with institutional partners.

This also includes, where appropriate, investment in small-scale innovative or value-adding activities that support exploring policy dialogue options. If innovation funding to augment sectoral or program activities is required, this should be made available through sector program resources and not through AM-NEP. In reality, however, this may pose challenges. Nevertheless, if AusAID and NGOs are seeking to explore dialogue options on issues affecting partnership approaches and key regional policy issues (such as the role of civil society, research on environmental laws, and gender analysis), there needs to be some flexibility. Options could include small-scale funding through AM-NEP for policy and/or research related initiatives (strictly not additional programming) stemming from partnership and policy dialogue. The need to expand funding for innovations may emerge.

AM-NEP support will differentiate between three separate but complementary forms of dialogue:

1. country sectoral policy
2. regional partnership
3. regional policy.

The PQRG will facilitate this dialogue and the ASU will provide logistical and secretarial support. The AM-NEP Coordinator will provide direction. The PQRG will develop guidance notes on these three forms of dialogue.

### ***Country-level dialogue***

AM-NEP supports AusAID's decision to predominantly manage sectoral programs at country level. It will provide logistical support, on demand, for sectoral policy dialogue at country level. This will include integrating NGO perspectives into dialogue and sharing information with partners. Country-level dialogue will be a priority during the first two years of implementation.

### ***Regional partnership dialogue***

As an early priority, AM-NEP will facilitate regional partnership dialogue, bearing in mind that learning will draw on partnership experiences. AM-NEP will help partners understand the lessons learned from and benefits of their working relationships, and how they are jointly managed. AM-NEP will help partners recognise when relationship milestones have been reached and signal possibilities for extending and developing approaches and activities. AM-NEP will enable partners to evaluate the

role and effectiveness of its support, including the usefulness of its mechanisms. Partnership dialogue will be a priority during the first two years of implementation.

### *Regional policy dialogue*

As engagement develops, AM-NEP will assist to elevate sectoral and multi-sectoral policy dialogue to the regional level. The priorities for this will emerge from learning around the relationships and experience from early implementation of programs. AM-NEP's implementation plan (Section 4.2) reflects a phased approach to this.

The PQRG will develop, in collaboration with program stakeholders, guidance notes and schedules for the dialogue to be supported. Covered will be that AM-NEP should not:

- encourage early policy dialogue at regional level
- encourage the perception that partnership dialogue is primarily about joint advocacy approaches to regional governments—while such approaches may emerge, NGOs should recognise that AusAID's overarching role is to manage bilateral relationships with governments
- send the wrong message to prospective partners that partner selection is outside of developing engagement—this continuation of the service delivery approach in procurement is counterintuitive to partnership approaches (notwithstanding this, NGO selection will, by necessity, be competitive).

### **Good practice processes for the selection and management of partnerships and their associated programs and activities**

AM-NEP will support quality processes and play a major role in supporting:

**Good practice at selection and design** through the formulation of sector/delivery strategies, NGO selection and design, and mobilisation of key AM-NEP support structures. This will happen under the direction of the AM-NEP Coordinator; PQRG and ASU.

**Good practice throughout implementation** through mutually-agreed MEL and peer review processes and, as relationships progress, sound and supportive processes for dialogue.

To do this the PQRG will support AusAID by contributing, if requested, to the development of sector/delivery strategies. It will also help AusAID select and mobilise NGOs as well as assist with activity design processes.

The AM-NEP can also assist sector programs to define and resource their own monitoring frameworks and arrangements. It will also support relationships and encourage partners to be jointly responsible for quality aspects, with traditional client – service provider relationships replaced by shared objectives, perspectives and responsibilities.

The early stages of sector/delivery strategy formulation, NGO selection and activity design are covered in Annex 8, draft guidance notes 1, 2 and 3. The procurement process for the AM-NEP Coordinator and the PQRG is outlined in Annex 8, draft guidance notes 4 and 5.

As AusAID – NGO partnerships progress, AM-NEP will support the management of quality processes for dialogue and MEL. In examining options for supporting the development of quality mechanisms the AM-NEP should not:

- hire a traditional technical advisory group to provide technical skills and advise AusAID on program progress, implementation issues and forward options—this traditional ‘policing’ role is not consistent with AM-NEP’s role, which requires specialised facilitation skills
- hire quality specialists on an adhoc basis—this does not provide required continuity in process, engagement quality and facilitation
- be seen as the primary source of M&E support for sector programs—while a group such as the PQRG can facilitate to ensure processes are in place to engender quality M&E of sector programs, its members are not sectoral technical specialists (AM-NEP requires one group to provide sector-based advice for all programs)
- define PQRG members as managers of AM-NEP or employees of the ASU—AM-NEP should be managed through engagement with PQRG members as facilitators working with AusAID and NGOs.

### Administration

AM-NEP administrative support will only be provided to facilitate the space for AusAID and NGOs to develop, implement and achieve results through and benefit from their partnerships. AM-NEP will be geared to AusAID Post staff and NGO managers who will find administrative and technical assistance to support their roles in managing partnerships and associated programs. AM-NEP will have a minimal profile and will be reactive to requirements.

AM-NEP will strengthen aid effectiveness by reducing the burden of transaction costs as much as possible, a key principal of the partnership approach. There will always be transaction costs associated with the establishing and implementing activities, which are a real cost to programs for all parties (regardless of where they are transferred). However, AM-NEP will seek to minimise and streamline these costs. AusAID clearly wishes to maximise its own resources to manage its involvement with NGOs.

The ASU will resource the design and development of guidance for streamlined quality systems and business processes, enabling partners to meet their responsibilities and accountability requirements. It will be a collection point and repository for information required by AusAID and NGOs and will facilitate support and technical assistance for specific program needs. The ASU will manage a modest fund for unspecified technical assistance, which it can call upon for each sector. Technical assistance will be sourced through an AM-NEP-specific consultant register, which the ASU will establish as an early priority.<sup>28</sup> Broad estimates for this fund are in Section 3.4.

ASU administrative support services will vary among sector programs and for program managers and may include:

- administrative and facilitation support for regional dialogue opportunities
- secretarial, administrative and professional support for the Reference Group

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<sup>28</sup> An alternative might be to use AusAID's period offer system, however this is currently being redeveloped.

- support in competitive grants processes, including preparing selection criteria, advertising calls for capacity statements and administering NGO proposals
- support in establishing technical appraisal panels to select NGO partners and conducting due diligence checks on selected NGOs
- administer and collate NGO reports
- assist with contract administration
- provide logistics for AM-NEP-supported events
- procure technical assistance.

The requirements and selection process for the ASU contractor are detailed in draft Guidance Note 6.

In examining options for supporting the development of quality business mechanisms the AM-NEP should not:

- require administrative functions to be performed directly by AusAID staff (other than the AM-NEP Coordinator), primarily because this would take away human resources from priority program management roles, which would pose risks and be an inefficient use of AusAID resources
- simply transfer administrative burden from one party to another (for example, from AusAID to NGOs)—this would be counterintuitive to bringing the strength of each party to the table and would institutionally detract from the benefit of partnerships in strengthening program quality and policy dialogue. The funding and accounting arrangements so required would almost certainly result in complicated and multiple arrangements within agreements, a situation that AusAID and NGOs would wish to avoid.
- be a separate level of bureaucracy or see AusAID or NGO staff as implementers under AM-NEP direction. Nor should AM-NEP act as a mediator between AusAID Posts and NGOs (this risk is referenced in Section 4.5). Attempts to create a new level of bureaucracy at regional level for AM-NEP will be resisted by AusAID and NGOs alike. The creation of an administration to which AusAID and NGOs are required to respond is counterintuitive to partnership principles.

### **3.4 Estimated timing, budget and value for money**

Broad AM-NEP resource and cost requirements for implementation over five years, beginning in 2012, are in Table 2 (draft design). This should be considered as an initial implementation period. The table does not include costs for sector delivery/sector strategy implementation through AusAID – NGO partnerships (which will be resourced through sector programs) and has been prepared against the following assumptions:

1. AM-NEP support personnel and mechanisms will be on stream by early 2013.
2. AM-NEP support mechanisms (PQRG and ASU) will be outsourced and support staff estimates are in line with AusAID's remuneration framework.
3. Estimates for the AM-NEP Coordinator (AusAID EL1, Executive Level 1) are for a long-term input and may vary by relocation and allowance costs. The Coordinator is costed based on the package for an EL1 to be deployed in Hanoi.

4. Estimates for the PQRG and unspecified technical assistance are made as per short-term inputs with travel, accommodation and per diem costs included and costed at AusAID's remuneration framework level 4, discipline group C.
5. Estimates for the ASU are notional and will vary greatly depending on work required and the risks that the contractor will take on.
6. Activity design and partnership dialogue costs are estimated separately.
7. Current projection of six sector/delivery strategies and one regional strategy being implemented across three Mekong Region countries. Costs will likely change if additional partnerships emerge.

**Table 2: Broad indicative costs for AM-NEP over its first five years [cost information deleted for tender process]**

This estimate assumes seven sectors will be supported by AM-NEP between early 2013 and mid-2017. If the support level varies, the AM-NEP total costs will vary.

### 3.5 Value for money and AM-NEP scaling

**Value for money:** Value for money is as an essential result area of AM-NEP that requires monitoring. The Mekong Section undertook a basic value-for-money analysis of AM-NEP. This strengthened the Agency's understanding of the number, timing and sequencing of Mekong delivery strategies, potential points of engagement by AM-NEP and the quantum of Mekong country program funds likely to be spent on NGO engagement. The analysis forms the baseline for ensuring AM-NEP represents value for money throughout implementation.

After consultation with country program staff, the Mekong Section produced indicative timing tables for delivery strategies (Annex 5) showing the delivery strategies envisaged at this stage, NGO engagement under these and associated AM-NEP engagement points.

At the heart of this is the relationship between AM-NEP management and service provision costs and expected total quantum of Mekong country program NGO expenditure.

At this stage, AusAID estimates NGO expenditure across Mekong programs to be about 8 per cent of country program allocations. According to forward projections of country expenditure, if this occurs, then between 2012–13 and 2016–17, AM-NEP's current estimated budget of around [cost information deleted for tender process] would be around [cost information deleted for tender process] of total expenditure. This represents reasonable value for money in terms of percentage expenditure.

**Scaled approach:** In light of uncertainty about Mekong program NGO expenditure, AM-NEP's resources and operating budget is designed to be scaled up or down. Both the ASU and PQRG lend themselves to this, as do other AM-NEP elements such as lessons learned support, technical assistance and regional fora. AM-NEP will be managed to minimise the risk of disproportionate AM-NEP operating budget vis-a-vis Mekong program total NGO expenditure and demand for AM-NEP services.

To be effective, AM-NEP needs administrative and guidance services from the start. Posts need to be confident these resources are available before committing to the new programming approach. Given this, the scaled approach will help achieve value for money. It allows AM-NEP services to come on

line as soon as practicable, while at the same time allowing their extent and cost to be adjusted to reflect demand and the volume of funding being managed through AusAID – NGO partnerships. This will enable the scale presented in the draft design to be reduced, if it is more appropriate to rely on existing AusAID resources in the region. The PQRG is inherently scalable with minimal ongoing costs and ability to source expertise on demand. The contract for ASU functions can be structured to allow for increasing services up or down.

This approach will also provide the potential for AM-NEP to be scaled up to reflect an increase in scope through increased programming in the Mekong, in response to strong results or by servicing additional programs (for example Burma).

## 4. Implementation arrangements

### 4.1 Management and governance arrangements

**Roles of AusAID officers in Posts and AM-NEP support for them:** The roles AusAID officers will play with AM-NEP and the support they can expect to receive from the platform are summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3: AusAID Post roles in and support from AM-NEP**

Position	Role in AM-NEP	Support from AM-NEP
Minister-Counsellor  Mekong Hub staff (as the hub develops staff will be able to take a role in AM-NEP; daily leadership will be delegated to the hub's Counsellor of Operations)	Approval and oversight of country strategies in the region and coordination between them  Involvement in sectoral and program dialogue as required  Leadership of (or delegation of leadership of) the Reference Group  Oversight of Coordinator (and through this position the PQRG and ASU)	Information, reporting and analysis of learning from AM-NEP support of country and sector/delivery strategies  Administrative and facilitation support for regional dialogue opportunities  Secretarial, administrative and professional support for the Reference Group  Professional services of Coordinator, PQRG and ASU administrative services in facilitating AM-NEP support for programs  Advice on Australia's Mekong – NGO engagement profile, including funding flows and workforce planning implications  Overall reporting on AM-NEP progress and activities

Position	Role in AM-NEP	Support from AM-NEP
		Communications messages regarding NGO engagement in the Mekong
Counsellors	<p>Approval and oversight of sector/delivery strategies in each country</p> <p>Involvement in sectoral and program dialogue</p> <p>Decisions on engagement of NGOs to participate in sector programs</p> <p>Involvement in Reference Group as required</p> <p>Promote cross-program monitoring and lesson sharing about effective AusAID – NGO relationships, including through the Annual Program Performance Reports (APPR) process.</p> <p>Leadership for AM-NEP agenda for improved AusAID – NGO engagement and program quality</p>	<p>Information, reporting and analysis of learning from AM-NEP support of delivery strategies across the region</p> <p>Professional services of Coordinator, PQRG and ASU administrative services in facilitating AM-NEP support for programs</p> <p>Overall reporting on AM-NEP progress and activities</p>
Program staff at Post	<p>Development and overall management of sector/delivery strategies and NGO relationships and engagement</p> <p>Task AM-NEP to provide administrative or logistics services and access guidance and technical support for AusAID – NGO relationships and related aid activities</p> <p>Decisions on sector program dialogue opportunities and management of dialogue with NGO partners</p> <p>Involvement in sectoral, program and regional dialogue</p> <p>Management of contracts and</p>	<p>Information, reporting and analysis of learning from AM-NEP support of delivery strategies</p> <p>Professional services of Coordinator and PQRG in facilitating design and MEL processes for sector programs</p> <p>Administrative services of ASU in facilitating AM-NEP support for programs including: support in grant and tender processes, administration of NGO proposals; support in establishing technical appraisal panels to identify NGO partners; administration and collation of NGO reports; assistance with contract administration; and logistics for AM-NEP supported events</p>



Position	Role in AM-NEP	Support from AM-NEP
	reporting with NGOs  Involvement in Reference Group as required/instructed  Assess effectiveness of NGO engagement through Quality at Implementation and APPR processes	Procurement of technical assistance as required

**Indicative roles of NGO managers and AM-NEP support for them:** The roles for NGO managers will vary depending on the management systems and the country/regional architecture NGOs employ. Some NGOs operate in-country on a semi-autonomous basis in that their programming decisions and actions to secure funding are the domain of country directors. Requirements for NGOs to liaise with home offices vary. For some, if not all, liaison is through head offices. Some NGOs work as part of international coalitions, in which case decisions on programming and funding may require dialogue (and negotiation) with home-office colleagues. Others operate with single lines for decision making to one home office.

The roles NGOs play and the support they can expect from AM-NEP are summarised in Table 4. The content is indicative, but signals to NGOs the kinds of activities country directors and program managers will be involved in through AM-NEP and the kind of support they can expect. Involvement of head office staff will vary and while their roles are not included in the table, this does preclude them from being involved.

**Table 4: NGO roles in and support from AM-NEP**

Position	Role in AM-NEP	Support from AM-NEP
NGO country directors and senior program development staff  NGO partners	Involvement in dialogue with AusAID and other NGOs on program opportunities within sector/delivery strategies  Involvement in regional dialogue with AusAID and other NGOs  Involvement in sectoral and program dialogue  Involvement in selecting NGO representatives for the Reference Group  Membership if selected by NGO peers on the Reference Group  Involvement in monitoring and	Information, reporting and analysis of learning from AM-NEP support of country and sector/ delivery strategies  Administrative and facilitation support for regional dialogue opportunities  Secretarial, administrative and professional support for the Reference Group  Professional services of Coordinator, PQRG and ASU administrative services in facilitating AM-NEP support for

Position	Role in AM-NEP	Support from AM-NEP
	<p>lesson sharing about effective AusAID – NGO relationships</p> <p>Liaison with AusAID Program Managers on AM-NEP administrative or logistics services and to access guidance and technical support for AusAID – NGO relationships</p> <p>Leadership for AM-NEP agenda for improved AusAID – NGO engagement and program quality</p>	<p>programs</p> <p>Overall reporting on AM-NEP progress and activities</p> <p>Communications messages from AusAID on NGO engagement in the Mekong</p>
NGO program managers	<p>Participation in collaborative design and MEL processes</p> <p>Involvement in MEL about effective AusAID – NGO relationships</p> <p>Liaison with AusAID Program Managers on AM-NEP administrative or logistics services for activities</p> <p>Involvement in sectoral and program dialogue</p> <p>Management of contracts with AusAID</p> <p>Preparation of reports</p>	<p>Information, reporting and analysis of learning from AM-NEP support of delivery strategies</p> <p>Professional services of Coordinator and PQRG in facilitating design and MEL processes for sector programs</p> <p>Administrative services of ASU in facilitating AM-NEP support for programs including: support in grant and tender processes; liaison on proposals development; feedback on reports submitted; assistance with contract administration; and logistics for AM-NEP supported events</p> <p>Procurement of technical assistance as required</p>

**Role of AM-NEP Reference Group:** The Reference Group will formally provide strategic review and guidance for AM-NEP and, in a wider sense, help it act as a catalyst for change. It will be AM-NEP's champion for change and will recommend needs for high-level external review and evaluation arrangements and direction on allocation of resources for AusAID approval. It should aim to meet face-to-face at least once a year.

The Reference Group will meet immediately after the stakeholder forum (Annex 6, Section 3a) and will comprise:

- one nominated member of AusAID's Mekong Hub
- one NGO representative involved in the partnership programs from each country<sup>29</sup>
- one representative from each AusAID program (total of four)
- the AM-NEP Coordinator
- one person from the PQRG.

Reference Group members will meet as needed between formal annual meetings, where guidance may be required on TOR for reviews and evaluations or for allocation of AM-NEP funds for value-adding activities. It will be resourced through the ASU, which will provide meeting support services. It is anticipated that virtual meetings will be the norm.

**Contracting options for additional AM-NEP resources:** The AM-NEP Coordinator, PQRG members and ASU support staff will be contracted or recruited by AusAID. After the peer review of February 2012, AusAID Mekong Section prepared an AM-NEP Management Options Analysis Paper that (inter alia) examined five contracting and management options and recommended the preferred one. These options and the rationale for the choice of the best one are outlined below:

**Option 1: Managing contractor will identify and provide all governance resources.** Under this option, the managing contractor would identify the AM-NEP Coordinator, PQRG members and ASU members as determined through tender bids. This option would likely take a minimum of six months to complete. The managing contractor would establish an office in Hanoi. PQRG members would work from home bases (for all options considered) with travel to Hanoi and the field as required. This option minimises program establishment and ongoing effort by AusAID, as well as the risk that the Coordinator and staff will be drawn into other AusAID work.

This is not AusAID's preferred option because (inter alia) it creates the risk that the Coordinator and ASU will be viewed as purely commercial. Also, it requires the highest management fees and will likely result in the Coordinator being less linked to AusAID policy and operational procedures, and not in a strong position to influence internally.

**Option 2: Managing contractor will manage all governance resources and the Coordinator and PQRG staff will be identified as a joint task with AusAID Post (through tender).** Under this option bidders would be required only to demonstrate capacity to administer the ASU and find and manage the Coordinator and ASU staff. The successful managing contractor would manage selection and contracting, but AusAID would be able to drive the selection process. This option requires a lengthier process, possibly up to a year to have a Coordinator and PQRG staff in place. The managing contractor would establish an office in Hanoi.

The pros and cons of this option are similar to those relating to option 1. This is not AusAID's preferred option even though this option has the additional benefit that the Agency would be more involved in selecting the Coordinator.

**Option 3: Managing contractor will manage all governance resources and AusAID will identify the Coordinator in advance.** Under this option, which would potentially require up

<sup>29</sup> Nominated by NGOs involved in the partnership.

to nine months to put staff in place, tenderers would only be required to nominate the ASU staff they propose to use. In parallel AusAID would run a tender process to identify a Coordinator, who would be contracted by the successful managing contractor. PQRG selection would be as with option 2. The managing contractor would establish an office in Hanoi.

The benefits of this option are similar to option 2, and it would be quicker to put arrangements in place. This is not AusAID's preferred option for reasons similar to those outlined under options 1 and 2.

**Option 4: Managing contractor with an AusAID staff member as Coordinator.** Under this option, which would potentially require up to nine months to put staff in place, AusAID would select a staff member to be the Coordinator (EL1 level). ASU tenderers would only be required to nominate the ASU staff they propose to use. PQRG selection would be as with option 2. The AusAID officer would direct the managing contractor from the Australian Embassy or managing contractor's office. The Coordinator would be able to maximise effective relationships with Posts and develop deeper knowledge of AusAID systems. This may be more acceptable to NGOs as they may not wish to deal with a commercially sourced Coordinator and would more naturally want a direct relationship with AusAID, although the downside is that some might see this as being less independent. This option would also require lower management fees than would options 1 to 3. This option reduces the talent pool from which a Coordinator can be drawn and may result in the appointment of a Coordinator with less experience in working with NGOs. On balance, this is AusAID's preferred and approved option.

**Option 5: AusAID manages all governance resources.** Under this option AusAID would be responsible for all management resources. The Coordinator would be appointed from within AusAID and the Agency would directly contract ASU staff (as additional local hires). PQRG selection would be undertaken through appropriate tender processes, for instance existing period offers or limited tender. This would maximise AusAID's role in managing AM-NEP resources and would result in a relatively seamless integration of them. It does not require lengthy tender processes or the payment of management fees.

This is AusAID's second preferred option. It is not the chosen option because it involves the highest level of AusAID management effort when staffing resources are already scarce. Also, it has the risk of ASU resources being drawn away for other AusAID requirements.

**Role of AM-NEP Coordinator:** This full-time position will be the overall driver of AM-NEP support to the partnerships (quality and administrative support). The AM-NEP Coordinator will coordinate PQRG and ASU work. The Coordinator will also be responsible to AusAID's Minister-Counsellor in Hanoi and through the Counsellor of Operations will provide high-level guidance on managing the changes AM-NEP will support and ensure AM-NEP support and resources meet partnership needs in AusAID sectoral programs across the region. The position should be located in Hanoi to be close to AusAID's Mekong Hub. Section 4.2 has more information on the preparatory work needed to engage the AM-NEP Coordinator and ASU members.

The coordinator's role is vital to AM-NEP success because it will provide partners with the high-level strategic support needed to navigate the processes and domains of change required to elevate AusAID – NGO activities and partnership arrangements to a strategic level within sector programs. The Coordinator will need to offer skilled, resourceful facilitation support to partners at strategic level to enable them to fully grasp and benefit from the changes to which they commit. This senior facilitation role will help articulate AM-NEP as a catalyst for change. The Coordinator position also encompasses managing AM-NEP support for program cycle quality processes within partnerships and managing administrative support to partners.

The AM-NEP Coordinator needs to operate with a high level of impartiality and objectivity and have credibility among partners. As such the Coordinator will need to have high-order skills and experience. This includes extensive field-based experience at management level, ideally working with development actors including donors, NGOs and CSOs. It also includes detailed understanding of AusAID policies and procedural requirements and a strong understanding of NGO operational contexts and constraints. Ideally the Coordinator would be experienced in working at a strategic level with (but not necessarily within) AusAID and NGOs. The position requires extensive experience in the development industry, including in managing technical assistance and administrative support. Above all it requires someone who can be accountable at a strategic level and be acceptable to, and engender the trust of, all partners.

The role, required attributes and process for engaging the AM-NEP Coordinator are covered in more detail in draft Guidance Note 4.

**Role of AM-NEP PQRG:** The PQRG will help design and support quality processes within partnerships. This will include preparing sector/delivery strategies, selecting and engaging NGO partners, and establishing quality processes for design, MEL and review. The PQRG will be contracted for a short-term, and will be responsible—through the AM-NEP Coordinator to AusAID—for responding professionally to the quality needs of partnerships. A key principle for the formation and operation of the PQRG is that it will offer continuity of quality support throughout the period of AM-NEP. As much as possible the same individuals will be involved and available on an on-call basis. The PQRG will be administered through the ASU to enable it to have the time to devote to partners. Its members cannot be seen as staff of the ASU contractor. As discussed in Section 3.5 the PQRG can be scaled up or down during AM-NEP implementation.

The role, required attributes and process for engaging the PQRG are covered in draft Guidance Note 5.

**Role of AM-NEP ASU:** The ASU will be required full time over the period of AM-NEP to handle daily administrative and logistics tasks (transaction costs) so AusAID and NGOs are free to participate in higher-level partnership processes and activities. It will engage administrative staff responsible for mobilising AM-NEP resources and managing flexible business practices to support all aspects of partnership development. The ASU should be contractually responsible to AusAID, but managed daily by the AM-NEP Coordinator. In turn the ASU will provide the AM-NEP Coordinator with administrative support. The position will be located in Hanoi. As discussed in Section 3.5, the ASU can be scaled up or down during AM-NEP implementation. Section 4.2 details further preparatory work needed to engage the AM-NEP Coordinator and ASU staff.

The role, required attributes and process for engaging ASU staff are covered in draft Guidance Note 6.

## **4.2 Implementation plan and phased approach**

The broad implementation plan for AM-NEP is shown in Table 5, for the initial five-year period, with phase-in by the end 2012. The phases of interim support and full implementation listed in the table are approved by AusAID. Realistically, most AM-NEP systems will be established and operating by quarter 1 of 2013 with interim arrangements required until then. The implementation plan envisages that annual partnership dialogue will be ready by the start of quarter 1 of 2014 and that mid-term and final reviews will be conducted in mid-2014 and mid- 2017 respectively.

**Table 5: Broad AM-NEP implementation plan (indicative only)**

Actual years	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016				2017			
Activity	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
Phases	Interim support—managed from Canberra				Full implementation—managed from the Mekong Hub with AM-NEP systems in place																			
Establish AM-NEP systems																								
Develop partnership review process																								
AM-NEP annual report																								
Annual partnership dialogue and review																								
AM-NEP financial reports																								
Mid-term and final evaluation																								

The implementation plan is detailed in Annex 7 and reflects the phased approach to developing AM-NEP. To assist in the early stages of implementation a more detailed view of the early stages of the platform, including the management of early processes by the Mekong Section and engagement and mobilisation of the AM-NEP Coordinator, the PQRG and the ASU, have been developed. With the scaled approach for using AM-NEP resources this forms a realistic approach for systems to be put into place.

Annex 7 includes a generic implementation plan for partnership development and activity implementation under the sector/delivery strategies. It shows the early phases of sector/delivery strategy development, NGO engagement and activity design. This is followed by the implementation phase within which a series of six-monthly and yearly events and milestones are envisaged. Table 5 is illustrative only and uses notional years because strategy development and implementation will vary considerable between sectors and countries.

**Interim support for AM-NEP:** Arrangements for phasing in AM-NEP through interim support have been made internally at AusAID. Interim support is required because selecting, contracting and mobilising AM-NEP support staff will take approximately nine months.

In the interim a number of partner sector/delivery strategies have been identified as early activities (Annex 5), specifically (at the time of preparing this design document) a climate change strategy in Vietnam (linked to an AusAID global initiative), health strategy in Cambodia (at an advanced stage of

preparation), rural development strategy in Laos (under development) and agriculture and rural development strategy in Cambodia (also under development). Programs likely to emerge by the end of 2012 will benefit from AM-NEP development processes. In addition to existing staffing support in the Mekong Section, AusAID will engage an additional EL1 position in Canberra for 12 months until AM-NEP is fully operational by early 2013. AusAID will also use selected technical assistance until AM-NEP systems are operational. This interim support is essential for establishing partnership approaches early in design.

Work is also needed for procuring and positioning the AM-NEP Coordinator and administrative support. The decision to engage a managing contractor through tender to further develop a scope of services will be required (Annex 8, draft Guidance Note 7). This work will enable AusAID to move forward with procurement of ASU staff. Attention will also be needed to finalise arrangements for the Reference Group (draft Guidance Note 7).

The roles of AusAID Canberra and the IWG in this interim period will be crucial and focus around the transition of AM-NEP management from Canberra to the Mekong Hub, to be completed once the AM-NEP Coordinator and managing contractor are in place. AusAID Canberra will continue to participate in regional dialogue and key MEL activities, as well as help share lessons learned from AM-NEP and relevant agency-wide strategies across the Agency. AusAID Canberra will also ensure lessons are shared within AM-NEP and will continue to rely on the IWG to guide the management of AM-NEP until this is taken over by the Mekong Hub and AM-NEP Coordinator. The IWG has played a significant part in developing AM-NEP from a country-program perspective and it is recommended it continue to do so until AM-NEP systems are in place.

### **4.3 MEL plan**

Given that the AM-NEP is not a program in its own right, but rather a support system for reforms to the way AusAID and NGOs do business with sectoral programs to be delivered in a number of countries and with multiple partners, MEL will be implemented on a range of levels.

A MEL framework has been proposed for use throughout the period of AM-NEP (Annex 6). This covers key functions and shows the five domains of change and the DAC criterion they each relate to. For each domain of change the framework shows:

- expected results
- key questions that will help evidence success in results areas
- mechanisms to be used for obtaining results information
- responsibilities for managing information
- appropriateness of AM-NEP support in assisting partners with MEL measures.

The framework is the foundation on which partners can build shared endeavours. Establishing good practice processes to do so and managing these is paramount.

Annex 6 also includes guidance and tools for core MEL systems and processes to be undertaken for AM-NEP so it meets partner needs and demonstrates results.

Programming for effective AusAID – NGO engagement requires a new dimension of measurement, one that articulates the intended outcomes of the changed relationship and how the relationship



impacts on people's lives in a development context. The qualitative indicators designed to capture the nature of engagement between AusAID and NGOs—how each party works together as well as how roles and responsibilities are mobilised—need a high level of attention within all MEL strategies. The MEL framework ensures these indicators are integrated into all MEL activities and processes.

Strengthening MEL within each country and across the region is fundamental to AM-NEP logic. The platform recommends partners allocate a minimum of 10 to 15 per cent of program costs towards MEL in addition to providing support for facilitating learning, participating in partnership dialogue and covering technical inputs.

AM-NEP will be challenged to begin MEL support before the full complement of AM-NEP staff is on board, particularly the PQRG which will not be in place until early 2013. In the interim the focus will be on developing M&E systems for sector/delivery strategies (as part of strategy design) and the M&E systems needed for the NGO activities designed under these strategies. AusAID should consider what resources it has available to help and whether it can secure the assistance of the Performance and Quality Specialist in the Mekong Hub. MEL systems for implementation are less of a focus at this stage as the clear current priorities are strategy and increasingly activity design. The AM-NEP Coordinator will be in place in quarter 1 of 2013. Conducting a quality-at-entry exercise, including a peer review (Annex 6), will be an early priority.

Annex 6 also includes suggested questions to enable AM-NEP to develop a system of baseline data for NGO engagement in Mekong programs. These are organised around DAC criteria, domains of change and result areas for AM-NEP.

#### 4.4 Crosscutting and compliance issues

AM-NEP will support compliance with relevant Australian government policy guidance and cover crosscutting issues, including gender, child protection, disability, peace and conflict, disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change and the environment, and displacement and resettlement, all of which manifest themselves at all levels across engagement approaches and associated programs. As a priority, AM-NEP support, resourcing and technical assistance will ensure crosscutting issues are addressed across all engagement processes and activities. This responds directly to lessons learned from previous AusAID – NGO cooperation programs which highlight the need for more systematic attention to crosscutting issues across AusAID – NGO activities.

**Aid effectiveness:** At its core, AM-NEP will provide strategic resources to strengthen the effectiveness of Australia's aid activities delivered through NGOs. As a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action<sup>30</sup>, AusAID is committed to increasing efforts in harmonising, aligning and managing aid for results. AM-NEP's design is aligned to DAC criteria and incorporates its key themes of aid effectiveness: programming relevance and managing

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_3236398\\_35401554\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html) Also note that the aid effectiveness agenda is being further developed as a result of the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (late 2011), in which Australia participated.

for results; ensuring transparency, accountability and effective use of resources; and engaging in activities and programs that are mutually accountable for development results.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability in the context of AusAID – NGO programs is not about the durability of AM-NEP itself but about its ability to help partners embed changes in the way they work into the culture and practice of programs on a sustainable basis. It is also about the platform’s ability to enhance a culture of sustainability of development outcomes and impacts within sector programs, through the partnership principles, practices and quality systems it champions and importantly through judicious use of the changed business systems it uses.

With five-year sector program implementation the norm, five years of AM-NEP support will see a significant body of learning that can be capitalised upon. After five years, many of these programs will likely not have reached their conclusion. But it is not possible to predict the length of program cycles that will be appropriate in individual sector programs or how many cycles of NGO involvement will be required. Some sectors may achieve sustainable results in one cycle over a relatively short period, while others may need support for much longer and over more than one cycle. Sustainability and exit strategies will be determined on a program-by-program basis.

For AM-NEP to support sustainability of programs over full program cycles, AusAID should plan on a seven to 10-year investment. AM-NEP’s ongoing, mid-term and five-year review processes will assess whether it is appropriate to scale up or scale back.

AM-NEP will also need to reflect on its own ongoing learning about sustainability as it progresses and adapt its approaches to maximise sustainability within the support it provides. The platform design specifies ongoing learning opportunities for partners and AM-NEP. It also builds in regular reporting to partners which can provide insights on sustainability. This is essential to long-term platform success.

**Gender:** Gender equality is an overarching principle of Australia’s aid program. AM-NEP will seek to ensure women and men have equitable opportunities for access to development, ability to participate, and a voice in planning and decision making.

AM-NEP will develop a gender strategy to inform its support. This will articulate understanding of the roles of women as partners in development and identify key ways to ensure that partners support the equitable engagement of and development outcomes for women and men, girls and boys. Implementation of the gender strategy is expected to ensure that:

1. gender is inherent in all aspects of partner selection, program delivery, policy discussion and project visibility
2. AM-NEP decisions on engaging with partners include assessment of gender issues at organisation (management and policy) and operational levels
3. Program-initiative designs incorporate gender analysis and have a gender bias in identification and origin, including, where appropriate, the affirmative action needed to prioritise and target activities towards women and recognise the key role women play in development
4. technical assistance and building capacity address gender equality in policy, practice and operations

5. appropriate and gender-sensitive ways of consulting and involving women and men are incorporated in activity design, research and MEL processes
6. capacity building includes gender in training materials and training itself and that training is delivered in a gender-sensitive way
7. MEL processes, such as data collection and reporting, include disaggregated gender data for targeting, participation and analysis of gender outcomes
8. partner recruitment and human resource management is aligned with equal employment opportunity principles: instituting a bias to appointing women to achieve gender equality; instituting special measures to ensure women staff members are not discriminated against due to reproductive issues; mentoring and training for women staff members to attain senior roles; selecting team members who can model and mentor local women and men; providing training in, and sensitising in the importance of integrating disability, HIV and gender equality into programming approaches; and ensuring that analysis of how gender has been integrated in work is included in staff performance assessment reviews.

**Child protection:** AusAID's *Child Protection Policy* (2009) is specific in its directions and guidelines for the whole program and applies to all contractors and agencies funded by the Agency, who are held accountable for adhering to the policy through contracts and audits. The overall policy goal is to protect children from abuse in the delivery of Australia's aid program through four guiding principles:

1. zero tolerance
2. recognition of children's interests
3. shared responsibility for child protection
4. use of a risk management approach.

Child protection is an overarching issue requiring special analysis based on international 'do no harm' and child protection principles. As called for in the Child Protection Policy, AM-NEP and associated activities must lead by example. AM-NEP's contractors and partners will therefore share responsibility for child protection in all programs, particularly where partners work directly with communities, families, children and young people.

The Child Protection Policy and accompanying procedures will be put into place for all AM-NEP activities. AM-NEP and partner recruitment and human resource management policies will reflect child protection measures, including training staff and partners in the area. Implementing partners will be required (if not already doing so) to integrate child protection into their activities and encourage awareness of and learning about child protection.

**Disability:** AM-NEP will be guided by the principles espoused in AusAID's *Development for All: Towards a Disability-Inclusive Australian Aid Program 2009–14*. This includes ensuring that activities supported by AM-NEP extend the benefits of development to all, promote the dignity and wellbeing of people with disability, promote their active participation, acknowledge the interaction of gender and disability, and strengthen people-to-people links and partnerships involving people with disability. It also includes ensuring equal employment opportunities. AM-NEP partners are to share these principles and put in place strategies and management plans to support them.

Traditionally providing disability-inclusive support in developing countries has been problematic. Development for All states that in the Asia – Pacific region:

... many challenges remain to improving the lives of people with disability: lack of financial and human resources, lack of assistive devices and technologies, technical knowledge and capacity hinders the implementation of national disability plans and regional frameworks, while the paucity of available, quality data on disability continues to hamper understanding, planning and monitoring efforts. People with disability in rural and remote areas struggle to access social services, and those with psycho-social, intellectual, or multiple disabilities frequently remain marginalised. Much work is needed to achieve the region's goals of halving extreme poverty, improving the well-being of the world's poorest people and creating an inclusive, barrier-free and just society for all.

AM-NEP will need to keep these challenges in full view as it supports sector/delivery strategies in the Mekong. In particular it should encourage behaviour change in AusAID and NGOs to ensure disability is treated as a crosscutting issue in the design and implementation of sector programs. This means encouraging staff to fully understand and take responsibility for disability issues within programs rather than simply assuming responsibility lies with technical experts.

**Fraud and anticorruption:** *AusAID's Tackling corruption for growth and development—a policy for Australian development assistance on anti-corruption* (2007) defines corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain, recognises the severity of corruption internationally and its potential to spoil development efforts. The policy calls for building constituencies for anti-corruption reform, reducing opportunities for corruption and changing incentives for corrupt behaviour. As such, fraud and anticorruption is a crosscutting and compliance issue, and will be treated as such in all AM-NEP business and programming processes.

In line with obligations outlined in AusAID's *Fraud Policy Statement* (2011), the *Commonwealth Fraud Guidelines* (2011) and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act* (Cwlth 1999), the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud is a responsibility of all AusAID staff, contractors and partners. AM-NEP can contribute to reducing opportunities for corruption through careful, transparent and accountable selection of partners, careful design and implementation of program activities, effective measurement of results and diligent contractual management. Measures to strengthen accountability and prevent fraud and corruption should be implicit at all levels of AM-NEP. This should include external audit and program-level audit mechanisms, ensuring transparency between all partners (including NGOs and their beneficiaries), and undertaking concrete actions on fraudulent use of funding.

**Environment:** All AusAID activities must comply with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and be informed by the Agency's environment guidelines. Environment and climate change are crosscutting issues in the Mekong Region and, in some cases, are key to AusAID's engagement with NGOs with delivery/sector strategies.

AM-NEP will support good practice in this area by ensuring that:

- partners share understanding of how environmental and climate change impacts upon development
- environmental analysis is undertaken and is a key consideration in design and implementation of activities

- clear strategies are in place so operations are conducted in environmentally sustainable ways, which involves carefully using resources, reducing waste and providing a healthy work environment for staff.

**Disaster risk reduction:** DRR is a growing and important crosscutting programming area for AusAID globally. In *Investing in a safer future*, AusAID's DRR policy, the Agency aims to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience of countries and communities to disasters. DRR is thus integrated into Australia's aid program and countries are being assisted to reduce disaster risk in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action. AusAID's policy calls for support for leadership and advocacy on DRR as well as coherent and coordinated programs and policies for DRR and climate change adaptation. For their part, NGOs have played and will continue to play significant roles in DRR, including in the Mekong Region.

AM-NEP will, where appropriate, help AusAID and NGOs to ensure DRR is part of policy dialogue for the development of partner activities and is mainstreamed in implementation. This involves focusing on the role NGOs can play in concert with local CSOs in encouraging sound DRR practice in communities. In some cases specific NGO DRR projects are likely to emerge in the region, for instance under the environmental sustainability—climate change sector/delivery strategy for the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. In supporting such initiatives AM-NEP will provide the opportunity for lessons learned to be used in activities not primarily aimed at DRR.

**Conflict prevention and do no harm:** Conflict prevention is a strategic issue for the region, as highlighted in *AusAID's Framework for Working in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (2011)*. AM-NEP will seek to address peace and conflict as a crosscutting issue by adopting conflict sensitive approaches to selecting, designing and conducting MEL processes across the portfolio of programs.

Program design and planning processes will incorporate do no harm analyses of proposed activities. This will involve: identifying the likely impact of resource transfers; balancing the selection of target areas between those with established demand and interest and those that receive little development assistance; proactively addressing issues of inclusion and exclusion; and ensuring implementing partners and teams have parity of esteem in terms of gender, ethnicity and other potential biases.

**Displacement and resettlement:** AusAID's *Displacement and Resettlement of People in Development Activities* and associated guideline (2012) identifies that safeguarding the interests of vulnerable people is a key outcome for AusAID. The Agency recognises that where displacement and population resettlement occur as a result of development activity, there is significant risk that vulnerable groups may be materially and socially impoverished unless appropriate measures are carefully considered and carried out. Underpinning AusAID's approach to project-related displacement and resettlement is the need to:

- avoid resettlement where feasible
- minimise resettlement where population displacement is unavoidable
- work to ensure displaced people receive assistance so they will be at least as well off as they would have been in the absence of the project.

It is beyond the scope of this PDD to envisage how displacement and resettlement issues may arise with AusAID – NGO initiatives in the Mekong. However, it will be important—where such issues may be pertinent in the context of sector/delivery strategies—that opportunities be taken to openly engage in discussion at an early stage. Under such circumstances AM-NEP should, if required, provide facilitation assistance.

## 4.5 Risks and their management

Risks associated with AM-NEP need to be managed. The most pertinent risks briefly described below are divided into discussion, severity, mitigation and link to design elements.

### 1. Partnership is viewed as a modality as opposed to a frame of mind and set of relationships.

**Discussion:** There is potential that expectations about the nature of partnerships will be informed by the previous experience of some partners in their involvement with AusAID through programs such as the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme and Pacific Leadership Program, each which have specific and defined partnering processes.

**Severity:** This risk is considered to be of high likelihood and medium impact in the early stages of implementation of NGO activities in sector/delivery strategies. The risk of this misperception will naturally resolve over time as the many types of programs and working relationships emerge across the region and as AusAID delivery strategies are rolled out.

**Mitigation:** It is important to continue to reinforce that ‘partnership’ is not a specific and defined aid modality, form of contracting or program in its own right, but rather refers to efforts to develop new types of working relationships and ways of doing business between AusAID, NGOs and other stakeholders. This risk will be mitigated through ongoing clarification between all players.

**Link to design elements:** Overcoming this risk is part of the process of socialising a new strategy, approach or program and it links to the AM-NEP domains of change by establishing relevant objectives and appropriate roles and working relationships. AM-NEP logic is aligned to the DAC criteria and around the relationships the platform will support. This helps to measure relationship changes as programs progress and contribute to the view that programs are geared to sector requirements. In turn, this discourages the view that one modality is being used.

### 2. AM-NEP becomes a new level of bureaucracy

**Discussion:** AM-NEP will fail in its key purpose if it is interpreted as, or evolves into, a new layer of bureaucracy or decision making.

**Severity:** This risk is likely to increase in severity as program activities progress, if partners become too reliant on the AM-NEP Coordinator, PQRG and ASU.

**Mitigation:** As a support system for AusAID – NGO relationships—as opposed to a program in its own right—AM-NEP’s key role is to support changes to the way AusAID and NGOs do business in the Mekong Region through expediting processes, assuming some administrative functions and providing technical support for quality and aid effectiveness. It must be

recognised that there will always be transaction costs associated with a donor – partner relationship. However, AM-NEP’s intent is to streamline some administrative processes, position overarching contract management (that is, for the ASU) to the Mekong Hub as a central location and ensure that AusAID Post and NGO staff are less absorbed with daily administrative costs so they can focus on higher-order program functions. MEL processes for the regular reflection on engagement in the region will ensure regular feedback on AM-NEP effectiveness as a support service and, in doing so, help manage this risk.

**Link to design elements:** AM-NEP architecture design (including outsourcing the ASU), proposed staffing structure, competencies of staff, roles and responsibilities and governance structure are all designed to minimise and mitigate against this risk (in particular, links to AM-NEP flexible business processes).

### **3. AM-NEP is asked to become a mediator between partners**

**Discussion:** In the event that parties disagree during design and implementation of NGO activities within sector/delivery strategies, partners could be tempted to engage AM-NEP as a mediator. This would usurp the role of partners in settling disagreements and of the Reference Group as an advisory body.

**Severity:** This would be as a serious problem should it occur and as programs progress this is more likely to occur.

**Mitigation & link to design elements:** The AM-NEP Coordinator and PQRG will doubtless receive requests for advice that may imply problems exist between partners. A level of judgment is needed on the difference between mediation and advice. The PQRG should report all occurrences to the Coordinator. Where the Coordinator determines a serious issue may be arising they should immediately refer the problem to AusAID senior management in the Mekong and, through them, seek advice (if required) from the Reference Group. One of the group’s roles, as outlined in draft Guidance Note 7, is to ‘... recommend to AusAID and its NGO partners measures that can strengthen partnerships and help them to overcome constraints that may arise’. The Reference Group can therefore be a point of reference in cases where formal mediation may be required. If this is not successful, contracts will need to specify further arrangements.

### **4. AM-NEP guidance is too rigid**

**Discussion:** There is a risk that AM-NEP processes and guidance will become rigid and inflexible and not meet the needs of partners and engagement arrangements.

**Severity:** This risk is unlikely to occur, but if it does it would severely hamper AM-NEP capacity to support partnerships.

**Mitigation:** While there is universal acceptance and support for moving towards more collaborative partnering and partnership arrangements between AusAID and NGOs, it is important that AM-NEP processes remain flexible and recognise the unique institutional characteristics, relationships, roles and mandates of each partner to enable them to continue operating their core business with autonomy.

**Link to design elements:** The design has sought to mitigate this risk by providing clear statements of the intent and purpose of engagement, by providing guidance notes on key activities and functions (Annex 8), and by highlighting the importance of establishing open and transparent working relationships in which each partner's roles and responsibilities continue to be discussed. Also, AM-NEP is designed to reflect change processes and incorporate continual learning. The Coordinator will monitor and share lessons learned, and adapt services to respond to program needs.

## **5. Expectation that AM-NEP efforts should add up to plausible impact and evidence at development-outcomes level, that is, changes in people's lives**

**Discussion:** There is a risk that AM-NEP will be seen as the delivery mechanism for achieving development impact at the expense of sector/delivery strategies.

**Severity:** This risk is considered to be of high likelihood and medium impact in the early stages of implementation of NGO activities in sector/delivery strategies. Similar to risk 1, this misperception will resolve over time as programs and working relationships emerge across the region and as AusAID delivery strategies are rolled out.

**Mitigation:** One key assumption underpinning AM-NEP and the MEL framework (informed by universal development effectiveness principals) is that strengthened relationships and engagement will lead to greater impacts on people's lives. As a support system, AM-NEP results focus on the quality of the relationship and how this enables each partner to work to deliver intended activities and achieve associated results. Articulating development impact is the specific function of sector/delivery strategy level M&E. There is real urgency that results frameworks at sector/delivery strategy development be articulated at the outset and inform the nature of engagement, selection of NGOs and design of programs. While the design enables AM-NEP support for this corporate function, alongside other AusAID resources, AM-NEP cannot take primary responsibility for it.

**Link to design elements:** As detailed in Annex 6, Section 4.3, lessons learned from previous AusAID – NGO cooperation programs underline the need to strengthen program-level MEL as a key strategic priority.

## **6. AusAID officers and NGO staff not being able to participate in higher-level program issues due to time constraints and ongoing focus on compliance and contract management**

**Discussion:** With other priorities emerging during program implementation, it is possible that staff will be diverted from sufficient consideration of higher-level program issues.

**Severity:** The likelihood and severity of this risk may increase as program activities progress, if partner staff time is prioritised on other issues. Also, AM-NEP will fail if it cannot take on administrative tasks on behalf of partners.

**Mitigation:** AusAID and NGOs need to place high value on partnership dialogue and good partnership practices. AM-NEP support in streamlining business processes must free up AusAID and NGO staff time so they can engage in these processes and not get bogged down by onerous compliance and contract management tasks. The extent to which this risk



manifests itself is somewhat beyond the scope of the design and contingent upon internal human resource policies and delegations of partner agencies, including AusAID.

**Link to design elements:** This design seeks to mitigate this risk in part by defining the responsibilities of each stakeholder and providing guidance, facilitation and administrative support from AM-NEP to enable partners to focus on higher-order tasks and objectives.

## 7. PQRG loses objectivity

**Discussion:** The PQRG plays a key role in providing objective advice and guidance. Experience shows that technical support groups can develop a life of their own and cross the line into taking a role in governance or management, causing internal conflict and confusion.

**Severity:** Where this happens it is usually problematic.

**Mitigation:** The proposed PQRG differs significantly from other groups used in AusAID projects in that it does not have an overall role in AM-NEP governance or management. The intent is for the PQRG to provide a pool of technical advisers who can provide continuity in support for the implementation and operationalisation of design, MEL and engagement processes in line with sector and country program needs and the principles and approaches of AM-NEP design.

**Link to design elements:** Advisers will report to the AM-NEP Coordinator. While PQRG members may be invited to attend annual partnership meetings or other events, they are expected to be observers, resource people or facilitators. Annex 8, draft Guidance Note 5, outlines how the PQRG will be established and managed.

## 8. Lack of inclusivity in selecting NGO partners

**Discussion:** The existence of AM-NEP and its focus on policy dialogue may result in increased expectation by NGO and civil society actors that AusAID intends to engage in a much wider range of partnerships than is possible with available resources. Sector/delivery strategies as developed by AusAID will limit the number of NGOs that can be engaged.

**Severity:** Expectations will be raised that AusAID is using traditional NGO – CA approaches in the Mekong or that available resources are greatly in excess of what is available. The severity of this risk depends on how expectations are managed in the early stages of engagement.

**Mitigation:** AusAID's intention is to engage and invest strategically where AusAID and NGO priorities converge within specific sectoral areas and within specific countries and that AM-NEP will support the relationships that ensue. AusAID will need to communicate its intent and select NGOs with a high degree of transparency to be able to manage NGO expectations and the risks associated with some development actors feeling excluded.

**Link to design elements:** Mitigation of this risk links directly to the relevance and effectiveness domains of change AM-NEP aims to help achieve. It particularly refers to inclusivity in dialogue on objectives and roles within sector/delivery strategies, during delivery strategy development consultations.

## **9. AM-NEP raises expectations that AusAID will advocate on behalf of NGOs in areas not within Australia's national interest or are contrary to the aid program's objectives**

**Discussion:** CSOs and NGOs may seek to use AM-NEP as a lobbying platform for issues that may not be of mutual interest or appropriate for bilateral engagement. This may increase when a partnership situation is perceived through the creation of AM-NEP, such that NGOs may think their problems are, by definition, AusAID's problems (or vice versa).

**Severity:** This risk, if not managed, will have significant impact on working relationships between AusAID and NGOs and could impact on bilateral relationships.

**Mitigation:** This will need to be mitigated through clear communication among AusAID and NGOs on key policy issues and AusAID guidance on where the Agency can and cannot effectively and appropriately exert its influence.

**Link to design elements:** Emphasis on sectoral/delivery strategies in the support AM-NEP provides will to some extent help to mitigate this risk, provided issues are discussed openly and clear boundaries are set as programs develop.

## **10. One or more stakeholders are not committed to partnership and there is less engagement than anticipated**

**Discussion:** Voluntary engagement is fundamental to partnerships and necessitates recognition of shared objectives and a willingness to work together to achieve these objectives. There is residual risk that once partners have entered into programs their level of commitment—for various reasons—will fall.

**Severity:** This risk is not considered severe.

**Mitigation and link to design elements:** AM-NEP design and draft guidance notes have been developed to highlight this and support AusAID to identify and engage in the right partnerships. The design also provides an overarching MEL framework, support for developing MEL frameworks at sectoral/delivery strategy level and regular, structured opportunities for AusAID and NGOs to meet and reflect on activities being implemented and the relationship quality.

## **11. Inadequate attention to civil society as a key crosscutting issue**

**Discussion:** AusAID's Office of Development Effectiveness working paper, Best Practice for Donor Engagement with Civil Society, the recently published Working Beyond Government evaluation, and AusAID's draft Civil Society Engagement Framework all outline the key role local civil society plays in achieving development outcomes, particularly for marginalised and hard-to-access groups. They also outline lessons learned and directions for civil society programming. The working paper in particular highlights the need to develop a strong analysis of civil society's role and enabling environment and the need to:

... employ a range of different aid modalities, types of assistance, intermediaries and instruments so as to enable and promote the diverse and innovative activity of civil society.<sup>31</sup>

The risk is that AusAID sector/delivery strategies will not be able to emphasis of the key role civil society can play because Mekong countries have widely differing civil society contexts and capacities, and as such civil society plays different roles in each country. The design mission highlighted significant political will and opportunities to support engagement with civil society across the region but acknowledged task complexity. It is vitally important that the challenges of working with civil society in varying contexts not be addressed by default or by blanket arrangements that assume CSOs do not have the administrative capacity to engage with AusAID. Nor should it be assumed that partnership with local civil society will be best delivered directly through subcontracting arrangements for the delivery of programs and services associated with larger AusAID – NGO engagement and that that all Australian or INGOs are best placed to deliver local capacity building.

**Severity:** In the long term, developing civil society capacity is a key to sustainability and impact in development sectors. Failure to grasp opportunities will likely have major negative impact on outcome achievement. The exclusion of a strategy for engaging with civil society in the region (an AusAID-wide framework is being developed) means AusAID and NGOs will continue, at least for the near future, to be challenged to identify and prioritise support for developing civil society space. This risk may lead to the exclusion of local development actors. It may also limit access to local knowledge, analysis and networks, and lead to an ‘us and them’ perception between local and international actors.

**Mitigation:** While AM-NEP will seek to mitigate this risk and contribute to building institutional knowledge on civil society engagement by addressing it as a crosscutting issue and priority for regional policy dialogue, this will be better achieved in the presence of an Agency-wide policy on civil society engagement. In the mid-term, AM-NEP will support gathering of lessons and strategic analysis for Australian support to civil society. This will ensure that AusAID continues to meaningfully engage with local CSOs along side ANGO and INGO partnerships.

**Link to design elements:** At this stage AM-NEP design can only suggest ways in which it can help involve civil society in AusAID – NGO programming. Nevertheless, if invited it is expected that the PGRG and the Coordinator can support the development of relevant objectives and appropriate roles for involving civil society in sector/delivery strategies.

## 12. Poor quality of design in developing activities

**Discussion:** AusAID – NGO partnerships in the Mekong are likely to result in larger sectoral programs, delivered by new groups who may not have worked together before, each with their own mandates and ways of working. This shift from individual projects to sector programming will result in less disbursement of risk across AusAID’s portfolio. It will place higher emphasis on quality design and MEL processes enabling AusAID to articulate clear development outcomes and value for money.

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid* p. 7.

**Severity:** If not managed, this is likely to have major negative impact.

**Mitigation and link to AN-NEP design elements:** AM-NEP will mitigate the risk of poorer design quality as a result of non-competitive design and the need to harmonise the practice of partners by:

- 1) facilitating a two-stage NGO selection process that will establish program relationships before programs are designed and by providing support and guidance for NGO selection based on technical credentials (such as: in-country networks, linkages and programming approaches of partners; capacity to undertake effective design processes; and management support and willingness to invest in a partnership approach)
- 2) providing guidance and facilitation support for collaborative design processes and establishing sound quality processes
- 3) embedding quality mechanisms at delivery strategy level and providing technical support for implementation
- 4) creating opportunities to discuss lessons learned between those working at sectoral level.

### 13. Poor MEL systems in AusAID – NGO programs

**Discussion:** Lessons learned from previous AusAID – CA programs in the Mekong and other regions highlight a weakness in program-wide MEL and underline this as a strategic priority.<sup>32</sup> AM-NEP MEL systems are not developed to, and cannot, articulate specific development outcomes or impacts of individual sectoral programs in-country or of development programs across the region. This must occur at country strategy or sector/delivery strategy level. As a support platform, AM-NEP cannot be responsible for measuring the development impact and success of programs and activities that have yet to be designed and for which MEL frameworks have yet to be established.

**Severity:** This is potentially a critical risk for AusAID – NGO engagement.

**Mitigation:** AM-NEP will highlight the urgent need to ensure that results frameworks at sector/delivery strategy level be clearly articulated at the outset. This is needed to inform the nature of partnerships, selection of partners and design of programs. AM-NEP may be able to support this (alongside other AusAID resources), however this is an overarching country-strategy level issue and AM-NEP cannot take primary responsibility for it. Section 4.3 also deals with this topic.

### 14. Value for money through AM-NEP

**Discussion:** The value of AM-NEP lies in its ability to improve the development results, including the quality, of AusAID – NGO engagement in the Mekong. AM-NEP needs to be managed to ensure it represents value for money. Analysis of value-for-money issues conducted by AusAID during the latter stages of the AM-NEP design process indicates

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<sup>32</sup> 'Mekong Programs: Future Engagement with NGOs', discussion paper p. 7. AusAID, October 2009

uncertainty in future programming, particularly for sectors in which delivery strategies have yet to emerge. There is a risk that the demand for NGO engagement through sector/delivery strategies may be insufficient to demonstrate value for money in AM-NEP investment. This could occur as AM-NEP is being rolled out, or it might occur at later stages, depending on the extent of partner engagement in developing and implementing sector/delivery strategies.

**Severity:** This would represent a serious problem in justifying investment in AM-NEP unless sensible mitigation strategies are developed.

**Mitigation and link to AM-NEP design:** Two mitigation strategies are suggested.

The first strategy ensures, from an overall programming perspective, that sufficient space is made available for NGO engagement in AusAID's Mekong programs. AusAID cannot fix expenditure levels for sectors and activities for which it has little forward detail. The Agency has, however, indicated that a reasonable target for AusAID – NGO activities is 8 per cent of total expenditure in the Mekong Region in 2016–17. If this transpires, AM-NEP would represent value for money (Section 3.5 has more information).

The second strategy, which has been incorporated into AM-NEP design (refer to Section 3.5), is that expenditure be appropriately scaled in the face of uncertainty about total Mekong programs NGO expenditure. The ASU and PQRG elements lend themselves to this. Furthermore AM-NEP support in design, monitoring and learning, and for additional technical assistance inputs and regional for a, lend themselves to being scaled for the level of NGO engagement in sector programs. A scalable approach to AM-NEP is thus appropriate and recommended.

To help monitor this risk, AM-NEP will use, as part of the M&E system, management tools that will provide AusAID senior managers with the information needed to judge value for money of, and appropriate scale for, AM-NEP services. One such management tool, already under development by AusAID, is based on the timeline information provided in Annex 5. This tool can be updated to capture progress throughout the life of AM-NEP. Combining this with regular information on NGO expenditure flows as percentages of total program expenditure through sectors will provide early warning of changes in AM-NEP's value for money.

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Design team terms of reference

This annex provides the design team TORs for the Australian – Mekong Partnerships Program (design phase). Work took place from October to December 2011.

### Australian – Mekong Partnerships Program

#### Design phase

#### October to December 2011

#### A. Background

The Australian – Mekong Partnerships Program proposes that existing and new AusAID-INGO<sup>33</sup> partnerships are managed by Posts in particular sectors in each country—ideally under delivery/sector strategies that clearly articulate how AusAID plans to contribute to the achievement of specific development outcomes in that sector or sub-sector. This approach contrasts with previous stand-alone INGO programs that have their own set of objectives. To streamline INGO engagement delivery/sector strategies will be used wherever possible to integrate INGO partnerships into country strategy processes. As the process for delivery/sector strategies is still being developed, the approach must also be flexible to adapt to specific contexts where AusAID chooses not to use delivery strategies in certain sectors.

The purpose of Australia Mekong Partnerships Program is to **enable** the achievement of country strategy objectives (that is, it is a means) rather than to produce a *product* with discrete outcomes of its own (that is, an end). The ‘regional architecture’ is therefore a supportive structure for country programs, and will support the realisation of delivery-strategy-specific outcomes within Mekong countries.<sup>34</sup>

Based on the objectives and lessons learned above, the purpose of the program architecture will be to facilitate the following:

- **partnerships with a strategic focus** between AusAID and INGOs<sup>35</sup> to improve development outcomes in sectors where AusAID and the partner’s strategic interests and abilities are most complementary
- **policy dialogue** between AusAID, INGOs (and their local partners) and partner governments,
- Genuine two-way partnerships between **local CSOs** and INGOs leading to stronger local organisations
- **resources to share lessons and improve** in traditionally difficult areas such as design, program level M&E, gender, disability and child protection

<sup>33</sup> INGOs refer to international NGOs, civil society and not-for-profit associations *which includes* ANGOs. Although AusAID is committed to working with and strengthening local civil society, it is acknowledged that working directly with local NGOs is sometimes not possible or appropriate, and anticipated that all partnerships with international NGOs will have a strong focus on increasing the capacity of local NGO partners and local civil society more broadly.

<sup>34</sup> Delivery strategies will be used to guide activities for the major commitments within the country strategies of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Delivery strategies are typically at sector-level within each country. Note that flexibility needs to be maintained and therefore delivery strategies will be used where appropriate and may not necessarily encompass all major initiatives under the country strategies.

<sup>35</sup> Refer to the concept note for information on the definition of INGOs and the proposed role of local NGOs in the program.

- **regional consistency in administration** to minimise transaction costs and ensure lessons are acted on.

To achieve this, it is proposed that the program involve architecture at both the country and regional levels. The analytical thinking behind this approach is described in the Mekong NGO Engagement Research Paper and in the subsequent Discussion paper shared with ANGOS in April 2011. In summary, the bilateral architecture responds to Mekong Posts' strong feedback that engagement needs to be directly aligned to country strategy priorities, and in particular delivery strategies. As a secondary, but important consideration, engagement also needs to minimise administrative burden on Posts wherever possible. Bilateral engagement through Posts also provides the best opportunity for taking a partnership approach, which is strongly supported by INGOs consulted (to date only ANGOS have been consulted). INGOs also generally supported a bilateral level engagement. The regional architecture has been developed to address some of the risks with this approach, including inconsistency in engagement practices across the region, and the resourcing burden on Posts required to maintain effective partnerships.

The details of the architecture for Australia Mekong Partnerships Program are a work in progress and it is now timely, through design, to refine the parameters of the Partnership and examine options for managing the Partnership approaches. This includes examining possible central functions required for a successful Australia Mekong Partnerships Program and the ways these could be organised. Potential Australia Mekong Partnerships Program services, guidance and activities at a regional level could include:

- Access to technical support for Australia Mekong Partnerships Program, which could include a range of activity design and implementation advice such as M&E, gender, disability and child protection. It could also include a research component.
- Policy dialogue support for INGOs at a sectoral, country or regional level to reflect on the effectiveness of the partnerships and policy dialogue, and to discuss specific development issues with AusAID. This can also include support for discussion and documentation of lessons learned between NGO and AusAID partners.
- Management services and guidance notes and templates for AusAID Posts and partner INGOs to help streamline administrative processes, maintain approach consistency and support implementation of good practice.

See Annex A regarding more information on the potential suite of activities.

## **B. Purpose of the Design mission**

The objective of this assignment is to;

- a) determine the most appropriate overarching management structure for the Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program in consultation with AusAID and its' NGO partners<sup>36</sup>, including defining the program level M&E framework and incorporating AusAID quality criteria and risk management approaches

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<sup>36</sup> INGOs are identified by AusAID Posts in each country as relevant to each delivery strategy or sector.

- b) support AusAID and INGOs to develop a partnership program, including partnership principles for AusAID-INGO partnerships in the Mekong, which will guide the design and management of the Australia Mekong Partnerships Program
- c) support the development of services to be implemented through the Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program.

### **C. Scope of the Design mission**

#### *Overarching management structure design*

The consultants will be required to:

- confirm or suggest modifications to the existing objectives of the program as outlined in the Concept Note
- assess the feasibility and viability of different models for managing partnerships
- identify options and recommend overarching governance, communication and management arrangements (including the roles and organisational arrangements, Secretariat or other externally contracted support staff and budget)
- prepare a management plan on the implementation of proposed services under the Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program
- develop a risk management strategy for the Australia Mekong Partnerships Program
- develop, jointly with AusAID and the INGOs, an M&E Framework for Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program which integrates M&E framework for bilateral-level program M&E—the framework will include time lines for key activities throughout the life of Australia Mekong Partnerships Program, such as the timing of the mid-term review
- identify factors affecting sustainability and the development of sustainability strategies
- provide advice and guidance on the way in which synergies can be developed with other AusAID activities in the Mekong, or where existing or proposed bilateral or thematic activities can be absorbed into the Australia Mekong Partnerships Program
- provide ad hoc support as required to AusAID Canberra and various Offices in Mekong countries.

#### *Design document*

A design document will be drafted based on the outcomes of the mission. The design document will look at:

- Problem/needs analysis for the development problem to be addressed by Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program.
- Full exposition of the rationale for the Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program and a clear theory of change/program logic.
- Confirmation of the types of partners and partnerships that need to be involved to address the development problem, and partner government and other stakeholder willingness to commit resources.
- A thorough technical analysis.
- Examination of feasibility and viability of delivery options available under the Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program.
- Articulate the feasibility and viability of the preferred options for forms of aid in detail by addressing the key design issues. In the case of the proposed TA facility this includes the development of the draft scope of services and Basis of Payment for a future tender process



and (if appropriate) suggested clauses for inclusion in the activity-specific MoU with the partner government or similar agreement with a partner delivery agency.

- Confirmation and refinement of achievable and sustainable outcomes.
- Analysis and integration of policy issues such as gender and partnerships.
- Full risk assessment and development of a risk management strategy.
- Development of performance indicators within a M&E framework for the activity.
- Development of the design to the point where it is costed and (relevant to the TA facility), can be tendered and implemented.
- Governance arrangements including roles and responsibilities of partners.

See Annex B for further guidance on the format of the design document.

## **D. Organisation of the Design Mission**

### *Principles*

The design mission will be conducted in a participatory manner and ensure involvement of stakeholders and partners as appropriate, with transparent proceedings and reporting, and dissemination of the findings and recommendations.

### *Approach*

The design mission will include:

- a) a desk-based preparation component, with key sources being background documentation and research on AusAID's partnerships with INGOs in the Mekong and AusAID corporate guidance on partnerships with INGOs
- b) consultations in Australia involving AusAID staff and ANGOs (through ACFID)
- c) an in-country component involving visits to AusAID Posts in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, meetings, where appropriate, with INGOs, local NGOs, key government representatives and donors providing support to local civil society
- d) a 2 day workshop with the IWG members in the region to agree on the theory of change/program logic, basic design, and implementation approach
- e) development of the draft design document
- f) peer review
- g) revisions and submission of final design document.

### *Approach to consultations*

The team will undertake a mix of one-on-one meetings, plus workshops for dialogue among potential partners (AusAID, INGOs and local NGOs where appropriate), meeting with relevant government representatives and private sector representatives and a workshop for AusAID staff on strengthening partnerships with NGOs.

The design will aim to provide:

- appropriate consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, and strategy for clear communication with stakeholders throughout design and implementation
- analysis of the diverse operating contexts (countries and sectors)

- a high level of buy-in by both INGOs and AusAID
- an enabling environment for reflection on shifting AusAID policy and practice about new ways of working with NGOs (that is, partnerships).

### *Stakeholder participation*

There is a wide mix of stakeholders involved in the consultation including AusAID, INGOs, local partners and government. The team will develop tailored approaches to consultations in the preparation stages before and during the mission.

The design team will allocate sufficient time for constructive engagement and dialogue, reflection, feedback and analysis throughout the design process. Engagement and dialogue with INGOs during the design mission should reflect the intent and spirit of the engagement and dialogue to be engendered under the partnership approach. This also necessitates the need to ensure time for AusAID (and partner) feedback on draft documents.

To build agreement on stakeholder participation and the design mission approach, an approach document will be prepared before the mission, under the leadership of the team leader, that outlines strategies for effective stakeholder engagement, information gathering, and workshops with ANGOs in Canberra and the IWG in Hanoi.

### *Methodology*

The design methodology will be developed by the team leader, in consultation with other members of the design team. This methodology will be finalised before the design mission begins.

### *IWG*

The Mekong NGO IWG, comprised of representatives from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam Posts, will play a key advisory role in the development of the design. As part of the design mission, the design team will meet together with IWG members in Hanoi to workshop and agree on key elements of the design, including the meaning of a partnership approach. IWG members will also lead in the organisation of in-country mission components in their country and support the design team through the provision of key background documents, information and advice based on past and present country experiences, and feedback on the draft design.

## **E. Design team composition**

The design team will comprise:

- 1) Team leader—Mike Freeman
- 2) M&E/NGO/Mekong specialist—Donna Holden
- 3) AusAID Australia Mekong Partnerships Program Activity manager—Sarah Barns
- 4) AusAID NGO Section Officer—Steve Burns
- 5) AusAID Disability/Gender specialist—to be confirmed (TBC).

Table 1 provides a break up of the time allocations for each team member on the various phases of the design team mission. See Annex C for the specific responsibilities for each team member and expectations of the team.

*Table 1: Design team time allocations*

Week commencing	Component	Location	MF days	DH days	SB/FM Mekong	SB NGO sec	TBC cross-cut
17–28 Oct	Phase 1: preparation	Home Base	6	4	2	1	1
31 Oct–4 Nov	Phase 2: Canberra consultations	Canberra	5	5	5	3	TBC
15 Oct–1 Dec	Phase 3: In-country component	Cambodia, Lao PRD, Vietnam	20	20	20	20	TBC
2 Dec–14 Dec	Phase 4: Draft Design	Vietnam/Home Base	10	7	2	2	1
Up to 30 Jan 2011	Phase 5: Revision and appraisal	Canberra or Home Base	5	2	2	1	1
<b>Total days</b>			<b>46</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>TBC</b>

## F. Schedule

AusAID's intent is that the design is completed in sufficient time to enable Peer Review before 20 December 2011 with any final revisions being completed immediately thereafter. The following phases, inputs, and millstones will be undertaken by the team:

### Phase 1. Preparation: 17 October–28 October 2011

Activity	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Weekly teleconferences</li> <li>Planning for consultations—key questions and workshop agendas</li> <li>Framing of key issues, theory of change and design logistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A draft strategy is developed for Mission approach*</li> <li>Key messages developed for the Australia Mekong Partnerships Program to provide to stakeholders</li> <li>Finalised meetings in-country and in Australia</li> </ul>

### Phase 2. Canberra component: 31 October–4 November 2011

Activity	Outputs
3 days briefing and consultations with AusAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of key issues/actions from consultations</li> </ul>

1 day workshop with NGO Partners—ACFID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of key issues/actions from consultations</li> <li>• Suggested template for guidance notes, specifications for a technical advisory facility, framework for policy dialogue and lessons learned</li> <li>• Information collected for the preparation of guidance notes</li> </ul>
1 day design team debriefing and Planning for Field Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate the findings from the consultations into the final Mission approach document, Hanoi workshop plan and design document planning</li> <li>• Confirm team roles for the in-country mission</li> </ul>

### Phase 3. In-country component: 15 November–1 December 2011

Activity	Outputs
Consultations in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field report covering major issues</li> <li>• Information collected for drafting key guidance notes</li> </ul>
Consultations in Vientiane, Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field report covering major issues</li> <li>• Information collected for drafting key guidance notes</li> </ul>
Consultations in Hanoi, Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field report covering major issues</li> <li>• Information collected for drafting key guidance notes</li> </ul>
Workshop with IWG in Hanoi, Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of workshop to build consensus and determine key design elements with the Australia – Mekong Partnerships Program IWG</li> <li>• Suggested template for guidance notes</li> <li>• De-brief for all stakeholders involved in the design phase, including Minister Counsellor</li> </ul>

### Phase 4. Draft design: 2 December Nov–14 Dec 2011

Activity	Outputs
Design team consolidation of mission findings and preparation for design document drafting (1 day in Hanoi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on mission findings and</li> <li>• Agree team contributions to design document, timelines and key elements of design document.</li> </ul>
Drafting of design document (home base)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit draft design</li> </ul>

### Phase 5. Revisions and appraisal: Up to 30 January 2011

Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AusAID to review draft design and send any revisions by 20 December 2011</li> <li>• Design team to undertake revisions and submit PDD by 3 January Dec 2011</li> <li>• Independent appraisal (mid-January) and appraisal peer review (late January) 2011. Peer review attendance by representatives from all Mekong Posts, chaired by Chris Elstoft (TBC)</li> <li>• Further revisions if required through the appraisal process to be submitted within 5 days of receipt from</li> </ul>

**G. Key milestones**

- 1) Mission approach (draft 27 October; final 7 November).
- 2) Design team to undertake revisions and submit final PDD by 14 Dec 2011.
- 3) Submit final, revised PDD (within 5 days of receipt of final feedback from AusAID) and before 30 January 2011.

**H. Meeting itinerary**

*Canberra Component: 31 October–4 November October*

Date	Time	Venue	Topic	Meeting with	Notes
Mon 31 Oct	9.00 am–10.30 am	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Meet design team members	Design team	
Mon 31 Oct	10.30 am–12.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Briefing, including telecon with Minister-Counsellor	AusAID – Mekong Section	
Mon 31 Oct	1.00 pm–2.30 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	NGO section and Office of Development Effectiveness	Emily Rudland Steve Burns Russell Miles	TBC
Mon 31 Oct	2.30 pm–4.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Gender section and disability section, governance/social safeguards	Gillian Brown, Jacqui Thomson, Sarah Ransom, Fiona Crockford, Darryl Barrett/Megan McCoy	Disability and gender attendees TBC
Mon 31 Oct	4.00 pm–5.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Wrap up	Design team	
Tues 1 Nov	9.00 am–10.00 am	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	WASH and infrastructure section	Mark Wolfsbauer	Other reps TBC
Tues 1 Nov	10.00 am–11.00 am	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Climate change, rural development and trade sections	Kellie Raab, Sean Batton, Bernie Wyler, Sabrina Varma	Time TBC
Tues 1 Nov	11.00 am–12.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Education and health section	Warren Hoyer,	Health rep TBC
Tues 1 Nov	1.00 pm–4.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Insights from past AusAID NGO programs and insights from Australia –	Ludmilla Kwitko and Paul Crawford	Time TBC

Date	Time	Venue	Topic	Meeting with	Notes
			Mekong Partnerships Program concept		
Tues 1 Nov	4.00 pm–5.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 3 (6 capacity)	Wrap up	Design team	
Wed 2 Nov	9.00 am–10.00 am	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Africa section—re AACES—challenges/opportunities	Tracey Newbury, Olivia Chambers	
Wed 2 Nov	10.00 am–11.00 am	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Contracts and program administration sections	TBC	TBC
Wed 2 Nov	1.00 pm–2.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	FREE	FREE	
Wed 2 Nov	2.00 pm–4.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Preparation for ACFID workshop and wrap up	Design team	
Thurs 3 Nov	9.00 am–12.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Half-day workshop on partnership and AusAID processes	ACFID and members	AusAID need to sign-in NGOs
Thurs 3 Nov	1.00 pm–2.30 pm	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Country specific issues	ACFID and members	Lunch
Thurs 3 Nov	3.00 pm–4.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Sector specific issues	ACFID and members	Afternoon tea 30 minutes
Thurs 3 Nov	4.00 pm–5.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 1 (20 Capacity)	Wrap up	Design team	
Fri 3 Nov	9.00 am–12.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 2 (12 Capacity)	Preparation of draft ‘program logic’	Design team	
Fri 3 Nov	1.00 pm–4.00 pm	Ground floor meeting room 2 (12 Capacity)	Debriefing and planning for field mission	Design team	

### 3. In-country consultations 14 November–2 December

Activity	Possible itinerary (TBC in telecon with IWG on 17 October)
Consultations in Vientiane, Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrive 15 Nov</li> <li>consultations 16–18 Nov</li> <li>team meeting and travel over weekend 19–20 Nov</li> </ul>
Consultations in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consultations 21–23 Nov</li> <li>travel and team meeting 24 Nov</li> </ul>

Consultations and workshop in Hanoi, Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultations 25 and 28 Nov</li> <li>• country consultation findings consolidation and preparation for workshop 29 Nov</li> <li>• IWG 2 day workshop 30 Nov and 1 Dec</li> <li>• meeting with Minister-Counsellor (29 and 1 Dec)</li> <li>• wrap up and design document preparation 2 Dec</li> <li>• travel 2–3 Dec depending on flight schedules</li> </ul>
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## Annex 2: List of people consulted

This annex provides a list of people consulted during AM-NEP's design mission.

Organisation	Name	Position	Process
<b>Australia consultations</b>			
<b>AusAID</b>			
Mekong desk	• Craig Kentwell		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
	• Rob McGregor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
	• Sarah Barns		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• briefing</li> <li>• Canberra meetings</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• selected Vietnam field consults</li> <li>• IWG workshop</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
	• Fiona McAllister		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• briefing</li> <li>• Canberra meetings</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• all field consults</li> <li>• IWG workshop</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
	• Kate Howard		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> <li>• selected Canberra meetings</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
NGO section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve Burns</li> <li>• Russell Miles</li> <li>• Rachel Rawlings</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• meeting</li> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Climate change section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellie Raab</li> <li>• Wendy Conway Lamb</li> <li>• David Geyer</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Rural development and trade section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bernie Wyler</li> <li>• Sabrina Varma</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Education section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warren Hoyer</li> <li>• Amy Haddad</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Health and HIV section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roger Nixon</li> <li>• Deepa Gajjar</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Africa section	• Olivia Chambers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Procurement and agreement services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pip Armstrong</li> <li>• Martin Nightingale</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
WASH and infrastructure section	• Mark Wolfsbauer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
Gender section	• Gillian Brown		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>



Politics, state and society section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarah Ransom</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
<b>NGOs</b>			
Adventist Development Relief Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cameron Reid</li> <li>• Denison Grellman</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> <li>• INGO meeting (Vietnam)</li> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Australia Friends of Asia Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christine Murphy</li> <li>• Cassandra Mok</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
ActionAid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sally Henderson</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Child Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark McPeak</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Fred Hollows Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristen Bailey</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
International Centre for Eyecare Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May Ho</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Janet Parry</li> <li>• Emma Thomas</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christina Munzer</li> <li>• Bharath Mohan</li> <li>• Michelle Lettie</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Oxfam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wayne Gum</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Save the Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kate Azima</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
ACFID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joanna Lindner</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
World Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julie Smith</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACFID workshop</li> </ul>
Marie Stopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mina Barling</li> </ul>		
<b>Independent advisers</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ludmilla Kwitko</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Laos consultations</b>			
<b>AusAID</b>			
Lao country program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katherine Bennett</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Secretary/Head of Post</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• briefing</li> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dulce Simmanivong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior program manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• briefing</li> <li>• ANGO workshop</li> <li>• INGO workshop</li> <li>• debriefing</li> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julie Hudson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second Secretary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alex Marks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Secretary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manivanh Phoumavong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior program officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sounisa Sundara</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior program officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> </ul>

	• Manithda Sithimolada	• Senior program officer	• meeting
	• Pisay Souvansay	• Senior program officer	• briefing • meeting • ANGO workshop • INGO workshop • local NGO workshop • debriefing
	• Phanthakone Champasith	• Program manager	• meeting
	• Rakouna Sisaleumsak	• Senior program officer	• briefing • meeting • ANGO workshop • INGO workshop • local NGO workshop • debriefing
	• Mone Sysavath	• Program manager	• meeting • debriefing
	• Jenny Reddens	• Operations manager	• briefing • debriefing
	• Kongthanou Khanthavixay	• Program officer	• meeting
	• John Dore	• Water resources senior advisor	• meeting
<b>International NGOs</b>			
Child Fund	• Chris Mastaglio	• Country manager	• ANGO workshop • INGO workshop
Save the Children	• Shumon Sengupta • Emma Aguinot	• Country director • Program director	• ANGO workshop • INGO workshop
Plan International	• Andrew Hill	• Program development manager	• ANGO workshop
CARE International	• Henry Braun	• Country director	• ANGO workshop • INGO workshop
Burnet Institute	• Niramongh Chanlivong	• Country program manager	• ANGO workshop • INGO workshop
Oxfam Australia	• Manivanh Suyavong	• Program quality coordinator	• ANGO workshop
World Vision	• Grant Power	• Operation director/Officer in charge	• ANGO workshop • INGO workshop
Humpty Dumpty Institute	• Stephanie Sparks	• Country director	• INGO workshop
CUSO – VSO	• Tim Cook	• Country representative	• INGO workshop
Health Poverty Action	• Mel Whitney-Long	• Program development officer	• INGO workshop
Handicap International	• Anne Rouve-Khiev	• Country director	• INGO workshop
Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA	• Vilada Phomduangsy	• Acting country manager	• INGO workshop

Adventist Development Relief Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manisone Sangdala</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO workshop</li> </ul>
CORD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Luisa Peticucci</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO workshop</li> </ul>
<b>Lao CSOs</b>			
Coalition for Lao Information, Communication & Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Hongkham Chanpaseuth</li> <li>Mr Sythanonxai</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO consultation</li> </ul>
WRSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mrs Inthana Boupasavanh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO consultation</li> </ul>
Lao Association for Disadvantaged People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr Kaykeo Inthavongsa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Government of Laos</b>			
Ministry of Home Affairs PASCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vice chairperson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> </ul>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Somlith Khantivong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NGO section head</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Cambodia consultations</b>			
<b>AusAID</b>			
Cambodia country program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Megan Anderson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counsellor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> <li>ANGO workshop</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kat Mitchell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second Secretary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>briefing</li> <li>INGO consultation</li> <li>ANGO consultation</li> <li>CSO consultation</li> <li>debriefing</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jennifer Lean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Secretary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michelle Vizzard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second Secretary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>briefing</li> <li>debriefing</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Megan McCoy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional disability specialist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canberra meeting</li> <li>all meetings and consultations in Cambodia</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sokunthea Nguon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> <li>debriefing</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sovith Sin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior program manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>briefing</li> <li>meetings</li> <li>local NGO consultation</li> <li>debriefing</li> <li>IWG workshop</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socheat Chi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brett Ballard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture adviser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> <li>debriefing</li> </ul>
<b>International NGOs</b>			
Action Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sen Kimthery</li> <li>Boramay Hun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program and policy coordinator</li> <li>Program and policy manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>

Child Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carol Mortensen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lim Soksan</li> <li>• Barbara Fitzgerald</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program coordinator</li> <li>• Coordinator Cambodia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Save the Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sakina Sakisiwalla</li> <li>• Kristina Mitchell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, donor and member programs</li> <li>• Health Adviser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Adventist Development Relief Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Schwisow</li> <li>• Anne Stickle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country director</li> <li>• Associate director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> <li>• ANGO consultation</li> </ul>
Marie Stopes International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Che Katz</li> <li>• Chum Thou</li> <li>• Antionette Pirie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program director</li> <li>• Grants director</li> <li>• Health adviser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> <li>• ANGO consultation</li> </ul>
World Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinah Dimalanta</li> <li>• Chap Vibol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program quality director</li> <li>• Operations director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> </ul>
PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prashant</li> <li>• Carol Harewood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program manager</li> <li>• Business development manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> </ul>
OXFAM Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priyajit Samaiyar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program support coordinator (Mekong)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> <li>• ANGO consultation</li> </ul>
Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanong Deth Insixiengmay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior project manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> </ul>
CARE Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stav Zotalis</li> <li>• Bill Pennington</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country director</li> <li>• Assistant country director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INGO consultation</li> <li>• ANGO consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Cambodian NGOs</b>			
Cooperation Committee of Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lun Borithy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting</li> <li>• CSO consultation</li> </ul>
Partnerships for Development in Kampuchea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Srei Kosal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program officer M&amp;E</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO consultation</li> </ul>
Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Boran</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO consultation</li> </ul>
Srer Khmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victor Onions</li> <li>• Pou Sovann</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisor</li> <li>• Executive director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO consultation</li> </ul>
RAHDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huoth Lovgoly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO consultation</li> </ul>
Medicam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pouv Sopheak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Technology manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Vietnam consultations</b>			

AusAID			
Regional hub	• Michael Wilson	• Minister-Counsellor	• briefing • mission debriefing
	• Hao Tien	• Corporate manager (regional)	• debriefing
Vietnam country program	• Mark Palu	• Counsellor for Vietnam	• meeting • debriefing
	• Kate Elliot	• First Secretary	• briefing • VANGOCA partners consult • INGO consultation • Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) consultation • debriefing
	• Nguyen Van Thuan	• Senior program manager	• meeting • VANGOCA partners consultation
	• Doan Thu Nga	• Senior program manager	• meeting • internal WG workshop
	• Duong Hong Loan	• Executive manager	• meeting • VANGOCA partners consultation
	• Le Minh Nga	• Program manager	• meeting • VANGOCA partners consultation • CCWG consultation • INGO consultation • internal WG workshop
	• Mai Chi		• meeting
International NGOs			
OXFAM	• Andy Baker  • Provash Mondal  • Vu Minh Hai	• Country director  • Humanitarian DRR/CCA co-ordinator • Regional lead – building resilience	• VANGOCA partners consultation • VANGOCA partners consultation • CCWG consultation
PLAN in Vietnam	• Glenn Gibney	• Country director	• VANGOCA partners consultation
Australia Friends of Asia Pacific	• Ta Van Tuan  • Duong Van Hung	• Country director  • Program manager	• VANGOCA partners consultation • CCWG consultation
CARE	• Peter Newsum  • Christina Northey  • Morten Thomsen	• Country director  • Deputy director  • Rural development adviser	• VANGOCA partners consultation • VANGOCA partners consultation • climate change WG consultation
World Vision	• Khong Huong Lan	• External relations and advocacy officer	• VANGOCA partners consultation
World Wildlife Fund	• Trine Glue Doan	• Climate change adviser	• CCWG consultation
Live and Learn	• Nguyen Thuy Hang	• Communications manager	• CCWG consultation

Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pham Thi Bich</li> <li>Truong Quoc Can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vietnam NGO and CC coordinator</li> <li>Communications manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCWG consultation</li> </ul>
Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations VUFO – -NGO Resource Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marko Lovrekovic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing co-director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> </ul>
The Asia Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>William Taylor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy country director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Union Aid Abroad APHEDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philip Hazelton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Childfund in Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ngo Hanh Lien</li> <li>Nguyen Ba Lieu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fundraising officer</li> <li>Program team leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
PACT Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matthew Tiedmann</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Australian Red Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kara Jenkinson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program advisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Adventist Development Relief Agency in Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pham Viet Anh</li> <li>Ashton Davis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acting country director</li> <li>Programs development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
SNV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tom Derksen</li> <li>Gemma Jones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country director</li> <li>Business development coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Action Aid Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hoang Phuong Thao</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
East Meets West Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nguyen Minh Chau</li> <li>Nguyen Thi Minh Thu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country director</li> <li>Program development director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Save The Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nguyen Van Gia</li> <li>Pham Sinh Huy</li> <li>Doan Anh Tuan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency sector head</li> <li>Country director</li> <li>Emergency and recovery program manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
Clinton Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ngo Huy Dang</li> <li>Benny Tranh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INGO consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Government of Vietnam</b>			
People's Aid Coordinating Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Mr Le Trung Hieu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy director general</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meeting</li> </ul>

### Annex 3: Design team field itinerary

This annex provides the itinerary of the design team in undertaking its consultations in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The team's itinerary for consultations in Canberra is in Annex 1, TOR.

Date/time	Activity	Location
<b>Vientiane</b>		
Tuesday 15/11/11	Arrival in Vientiane	
Wednesday 16/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office, Vientiane
Wednesday 16/11/11: 10.30 am	Plenary meeting with Post staff	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Wednesday 16/11/11: 12.00 pm	Meeting with Head of Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Wednesday 16/11/11: 1.30 pm	Meeting with Education staff from AusAID Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Wednesday 16/11/11: 2.30 pm	Meeting with Rural Development and Trade and Investment staff from AusAID Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Thursday 17/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with Ministry of Home Affairs	Ministry of Home Affairs Office, Vientiane
Thursday 17/11/11: 10.30 am	Meeting with ANGOs	Hotel Salana
Thursday 17/11/11: 1.00 pm	Meeting with INGOs	Hotel Salana
Thursday 17/11/11: 4.00 pm	Meeting with local non-profit associations	Hotel Salana
Friday 18/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with AusAID regional water program team	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 18/11/11: 10.00 am	Meeting with Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 18/11/11: 3.30 pm	Debrief with Vientiane Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Saturday 19/11/11	Travel to Phnom Penh	
<b>Phnom Penh</b>		
Monday 21/11/11: 8.00 am	Meet with regional disability advisor	Hotel Himawari
Monday 21/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting IWG members	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Monday 21/11/11: 10.00 am	Meeting with AusAID Post staff	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Monday 21/11/11: 12.00 pm	Meeting with First Secretary regarding health program in Cambodia	Titanic restaurant, Phnom Penh
Monday 21/11/11: 2.00 pm	Meeting with Agriculture and Rural Development staff at Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy

Date/time	Activity	Location
Monday 21/11/11: 3.00 pm	Meeting on disability-inclusive development	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Tuesday 22/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with Cooperation Committee of Cambodia	Cooperation Committee of Cambodia Office, Phnom Penh
Tuesday 22/11/11: 2.00 pm	Meeting with local NGOs	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Wednesday 22/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with Council for the Development of Cambodia	Council for the Development of Cambodia Office
Wednesday 23/11/11: 10.30 am	Meeting with INGOs	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Wednesday 23/11/11: 12.00 pm	Lunch meeting with ANGOs	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Wednesday 23/11/11: 2.00 pm	Meeting with The Asia Foundation	The Asia Foundation Office, Phnom Penh
Wednesday 23/11/11: 3.30 pm	Wrap-up meeting with AusAID Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Thursday 24/11/11: 9.00 am	Team discussions	Hotel Himawari
Thursday 24/11/11	Travel to Hanoi	
<b>Hanoi</b>		
Friday 25/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with Head of Post and First Secretary	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 25/11/11: 10.30 am	Meeting with First Secretary and O-Based Staff	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 25/11/11: 12.00 pm	Meeting with ANGOs	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 25/11/11: 2.00 pm	Roundtable meeting with Climate Change Working Group	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 25/11/11: 4.30 pm	Meeting with Minister-Counsellor	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Saturday 26/11/11:	Team discussions and preparations for workshop	Melia Hotel
Sunday 27/11/11:	Team discussions and preparations for workshop	Melia Hotel
Monday 28/11/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with INGOs	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Monday 28/11/11: 12.00 pm	Working lunch with NGO Resource Centre	Le Tonkin Restaurant
Monday 28/11/11: 2.00 pm	Team preparations for workshop	Melia Hotel
Tuesday 29/11/11: 9.00 am	Team preparations for workshop	Melia Hotel
Tuesday 29/11/11: 2.00 pm	Meeting with AusAID Post staff on CSO support in Vietnam	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Tuesday 29/11/11: 3.00 pm	Follow-up meeting on sectoral programs	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Tuesday 29/11/11: 4.00 pm	Wrap-up meeting with AusAID Post	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy



Date/time	Activity	Location
	staff	
Wednesday 30/11/11: All day	End of mission design workshop on AM-NEP and administrative arrangements for staff from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam Posts.	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Thursday 1/12/11: All day	End of mission design workshop on AM-NEP and administrative arrangements for staff from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam Posts.	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 2/12/11: 9.00 am	Meeting with People's Aid Coordinating Committee	People's Aid Coordinating Committee Office
Friday 2/12/11: 11.00 am	Meeting with Minister-Counsellor	AusAID Post, Australian Embassy
Friday 2/11/11: 2.30 pm	Team meeting to discuss follow up from mission and workshop	Melia Hotel
Saturday 3/11/11:	Departure from Hanoi	

## **Annex 4: Good practice case studies from cooperation agreements**

This annex provides some good practice case studies from NGO CAs in the Mekong Region in recent years. These contributions from the region are gratefully acknowledged.

### **Sharing lessons learned in Vietnam**

In Vietnam, following the outcomes of the VANGOCA mid-term review, AusAID has made efforts to improve the sharing of lessons learned and experience within thematic areas, including bringing government and other stakeholders into this process. Work includes engaging AusAID with NGOs through the Agency's dialogue in a number of partnership fora led by the Government of Vietnam, in particular in water and sanitation and climate change. This had led to some joint advocacy on key issues and the collection of valuable evidence to inform program and advocacy efforts.

There is recognition that such efforts could be strengthened. With DRR, for example, this resulted in the documentation of community-based DRR risk management approaches that have been distributed by the Government of Vietnam throughout Vietnam's disaster prone provinces. This has served to promote what was happening at community level with government counterparts. With previous VANGOCA partners, AusAID is now working in a technical working group to help shape Vietnam's national Community Based Disaster Risk Management Program.

### **NGO Partnerships in Education in Laos**

#### **An AusAID perspective**

In Laos, the NGO Network has an education sub-group, with four lead agencies: Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, PLAN and Action with Lao Children. These NGOs are active participants in the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), chaired by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), and co-chaired by AusAID and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). They maintain strong working relationships with the Ministry of Education and donors engaged in the education sector, as well as with local civil society working in the sector.

With AusAID and UNICEF as co-chairs, AusAID hosts quarterly informal donor working group meetings which aim to consolidate the comments and perspectives of development partners in the lead-up to ESWG meetings. The NGO Network actively participates in these meetings bringing updated knowledge of the issues they face at district, village and school levels and sharing innovative approaches they use to address these issues. This dialogue is extremely valuable in helping shape development partner input to education policy.

In 2011, the MoES publicly recognised the value of NGO experience in education in Laos and acknowledged the value of knowledge about grassroots issues to policy dialogue. Under the ESWG, the MoES, along with the leading NGOs in the education sector, held the first annual INGO Forum, chaired by the Vice-Minister for Education. The forum brought together INGOs and local organisations working in education. It provided an opportunity for INGOs and civil society to present and share their work, innovations and knowledge with government representatives and other development partners. As a co-chair of the ESWG, AusAID's relationship with NGOs is one of mutual partnership. The Agency considers NGO contribution to be extremely valuable to sector policy dialogue.

## **An NGO perspective**

The ESWG is led by the MoES and comprises government and development partner representatives, including donors and NGOs. NGO representation has been shared between four NGOs and leadership and participation has been consistent for many years.

The ESWG is a remarkable body by any standards, especially in the Laos context. It is a model for other sector working groups. There is open debate on policy (for example, in the development of the Education Sector Development Framework and the Education For All – Fast Track Initiative Proposal). There is open sharing of information, including news about problems and gaps in education provision and quality.

Remarkably, the openness extends beyond the ESWG membership itself. ESWG documents are circulated to the wider NGO and CSO sectors in Laos and the ESWG is open to receiving comments and is willing to have other NGOs and CSOs sitting in on its meetings.

Two main factors have contributed to ESWG success:

1. MoES enthusiasm—MoES leadership welcomes the openness and comparative informality of the ESWG and its willingness to release and share information, including when the news is not all positive.
2. Excellent Secretariat (AusAID and UNICEF)—Since its establishment in 2007–08, the Secretariat has been active in formally bringing together education sector actors (MoES, donors and NGOs) by organising meetings, distributing documents and communicating through emails and by phone, through conversations and in informal donor meetings. The ESWG would not have functioned nearly as well without consistent, excellent Secretariat support.

## **Annex 5: Current priority sectors and timelines for AusAID – NGO engagement in the Mekong**

This annex outlines the current priority sectors and anticipated timing of delivery strategies for AusAID – NGO engagement in the Mekong, in the form of two tables. Information was provided by Posts in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

Table 1 shows priority country sectors with existing, planned or potential AusAID – NGO engagement under AM-NEP as at design finalisation (May 2012). It is the baseline against which AM-NEP will be developed. The table also outlines indicative timelines for engaging NGOs in the three countries, in various sectors and with the Mekong Water Resources Program. Engagement includes, as appropriate, the development of delivery strategies and likely involvement of AM-NEP.

The tables in this annex form the basis for reporting on management issues for AM-NEP and are integral to the platform's framework. They form an updateable record of the timing of sector/delivery strategies.

AM-NEP will develop a format for, and present regular reports on, the progress of delivery strategies using this method. This will include information on funding flows for AusAID – NGO engagement through each delivery strategy and, as it becomes available, information on progress of partner activities being designed and implemented (quality at design, implementation and completion). This information will be provided to the Minister-Counsellor in Hanoi as needed and effectively provide an early-warning system to ensure AM-NEP continues to represent good value for money and that the activities it supports remain on track.

The AM-NEP Coordinator will be responsible for preparing these reports, with PQRG involvement as appropriate.

**Table 1: Priority sectors with existing, planned or potential AusAID – NGO engagement under AM-NEP as at design finalisation**

Laos	Cambodia	Vietnam	Mekong Water Resources Program
<b>Sectors with planned NGO engagement under AM-NEP</b>			
<p><b>1) Education (NGO engagement 2012—primarily policy dialogue only)</b></p> <p>a) Mitigation of key constraints to equitable access to a quality basic education in targeted poor geographic areas. <i>Delivery strategy not yet developed.</i></p> <p>b) Better management of Government of Laos and donor resources available to the education sector through implementation of a jointly agreed 10-year education sector framework. <i>Delivery strategy not yet developed.</i></p> <p><b>2) Rural development (NGO engagement 2012)</b></p> <p>Delivery and modelling of effective programs that result in equitable and sustainable improvements to livelihoods in targeted poor geographic areas. <i>Delivery strategy under development.</i></p>	<p><b>1) Health (NGO engagement 2011–12)</b></p> <p>a) Increased access to quality health services for the poor, women and children through improved health management. <i>Delivery strategy under development.</i></p> <p><b>2) Agriculture and rural development (NGO engagement 2012)</b></p> <p>a) Increased value of agricultural production and smallholder income in targeted provinces. <i>Delivery strategy not yet developed.</i></p> <p>b) Increased food and livelihood security for the rural poor through social protection and landmine clearance.</p>	<p><b>Environmental sustainability—climate change (NGO engagement 2011–12)</b></p> <p>a) Advance climate change adaptation and mitigation (focusing on Mekong Delta). <i>Delivery strategy under development.</i></p> <p><b>Environmental sustainability—WASH (NGO engagement 2012)</b></p> <p>a) Increase rural access to clean water and hygienic sanitation.</p>	<p><b>Mekong Water Resources Program delivery strategy II</b></p> <p>This is under development and could include:</p> <p>a) Strengthening institutions to improve integrated water resources management in the region.</p> <p>b) Improving the availability of reliable knowledge about water resources.</p> <p>c) Influencing policies on water resources, and negotiations with public sector, private sector and civil society actors.</p>
<b>Sectors where NGO engagement under AM-NEP is not currently anticipated</b>			
Trade and investment	<p>Law and justice</p> <p>Infrastructure</p>	<p>Human resource development</p> <p>Economic integration</p>	

**Table 2: Priority sectors with existing, planned or potential AusAID – NGO engagement under AM-NEP as at design finalisation - details**

Vietnam program—indicative NGO engagement timelines										
Calendar/delivery strategy		2012				2013				2013
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
		<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>
Environmental sustainability (climate change)	Delivery strategy	NGO partner selection	Delivery Strategy First Assistant Director General endorsement obtained  NGO partner contracting	DS implementation starts  NGO program designs start	NGO programs implementation starts					
	AM-NEP engagement			Support for design process	Support for implementation	Support for implementation	Support for implementation	Support for implementation	Support for implementation	Support for implementation
Environmental sustainability (WASH)	NGO engagement—no delivery strategy planned	Global WASH program appraisal peer review	Liaison with WASH program to confirm Vietnam engagement  Call for NGO proposals	Selection of NGO partners  AusAID DG approves partner selection outcome  Preliminary contracting to cover an inception phase	Inception phase during which design approaches and M&E frameworks are refined	Contracting for implementation phase  Implementation of NGO activities starts				

Vietnam program—indicative NGO engagement timelines										
Calendar/delivery strategy		2012				2013				2013
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
		<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>
	AM-NEP engagement		Supports Post define partner selection criteria	Supports Post involvement in partner selection  Supports Post in shaping contracting approach	Supports Post involvement in interaction with NGOs around design approaches	Supports Post in shaping contracting approach	Support for implementation	Support for implementation	Support for implementation	Support for implementation
Human resource development  (no NGO programming or liaison envisaged)	Delivery strategy (fit for purpose)		Delivery strategy commissioning minute agreed to by Minister Counsellor Hanoi		DS submitted to appraisal panel  DS FADG endorsement obtained					
	AM-NEP engagement									
Economic integration  (no NGO programming or delivery strategy envisaged)	Delivery strategy									
	AM-NEP engagement									

Laos program—indicative NGO engagement timelines										
Calendar/delivery strategy		2012				2013				2013
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
		<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>
Rural development	Delivery strategy	DS submitted to appraisal panel  ISRLP design process starts	Delivery Strategy First Assistant Director General endorsement obtained  ISRLP design goes to appraisal peer review	DS implementation starts  ISRLP approved by DG	ISRLP starts implementation					
	AM-NEP engagement	NGOs consulted during ISRLP design process			NGO partners selection support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support
Education  (NGO engagement an option, but focused on policy dialogue)	Delivery strategy		Laos Australia Basic Education Project evaluated	Delivery strategy commissioning minute agreed to by Minister Counsellor Hanoi  Situational analysis undertaken  Review of EFA FTI program starts	DS preparation starts  NGO perspectives on delivery strategy sought	DS submitted to appraisal panel  Delivery Strategy First Assistant Director General endorsement obtained	NGO partners selection  Delivery strategy implementation starts			



Laos program—indicative NGO engagement timelines										
	AM-NEP engagement				Supports NGO liaison		Supports NGO selection	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support
Trade and investment	Delivery strategy									
(No delivery strategy or sector strategy envisaged. No NGO programming envisaged)	AM-NEP engagement									

Cambodia program—indicative NGO engagement timeline										
Calendar/delivery strategy	<b>2012</b>					<b>2013</b>				<b>2013</b>
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q1</b>	
	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	

Cambodia program—indicative NGO engagement timeline										
Calendar/delivery strategy		2012				2013				2013
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
		<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>
Health	Delivery strategy	NGO partner selection starts	NGO programs design process concludes  NGO contracting	NGO programs start implementation						
	AM-NEP engagement	NGO partners selection support	Supports development of head agreements with NGOs	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support
Agriculture and rural development	Delivery strategy	DS preparation starts  NGO perspectives on Delivery strategy sought  NGO engagement space discussions		DS submitted to appraisal panel  Delivery Strategy First Assistant Director General endorsement obtained	New Delivery strategy implementation starts  NGO partners selected  NGO programs designed	NGO contracting  NGO programs start implementation				

Cambodia program—indicative NGO engagement timeline										
Calendar/delivery strategy		2012				2013				2013
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
		<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>
	AM-NEP engagement	Supports NGO discussions			Supports NGO partner selection  Supports NGO program design process	Supports NGO contracting	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support	Implementation support
Law and justice  (no NGO programming envisaged)	Delivery strategy									
	AM-NEP engagement									
Infrastructure  (no NGO programming envisaged)	Delivery strategy									
	AM-NEP engagement									

Mekong Water Resources Program—indicative NGO engagement timeline										
Calendar/delivery strategy		2012				2013				2013
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
		<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>	<i>April to June</i>	<i>July to September</i>	<i>October to December</i>	<i>January to March</i>
Mekong Water Resources Program Delivery Strategy II	Delivery strategy			Delivery strategy commissioning minute endorsed by Minister Counsellor Hanoi.  Review of current delivery strategy starts  NGOs consulted on perspectives on past delivery strategy performance	Start of development of new delivery strategy  NGOs consulted regarding space for engagement	Delivery strategy submitted to appraisal panel  Delivery Strategy First Assistant Director General endorsement obtained	New Delivery strategy implementation starts  NGO partners selected  NGO programs designed	NGO contracting  NGO programs start implementation		
	AM-NEP engagement			Supports NGO consultations	Supports NGO engagement space consultations		Supports NGO partner selection  Supports NGO program design process	Supports NGO contracting	Implementation support	Implementation support



## Annex 6: AM-NEP MEL framework

This annex provides tools and guidance that AusAID and NGOs can use to help measure results of the AM-NEP platform and of the sector programs it is set up to support. Together these define a proposed MEL framework for AM-NEP, which needs to be refined through dialogue and scrutiny as AM-NEP comes on stream.

**Section 1** details the AM-NEP results framework with Figure 1 presenting this in graphical form. The full results framework is explained in detail in Table 6 and shows expected achievements and results at goal, purpose and domains of change levels. It defines the evidence required to show results and key questions that might be asked to obtain such evidence. The vehicle (or means of verification), those responsible for demonstrating evidence and the appropriateness of AM-NEP support on obtaining evidence are also shown.

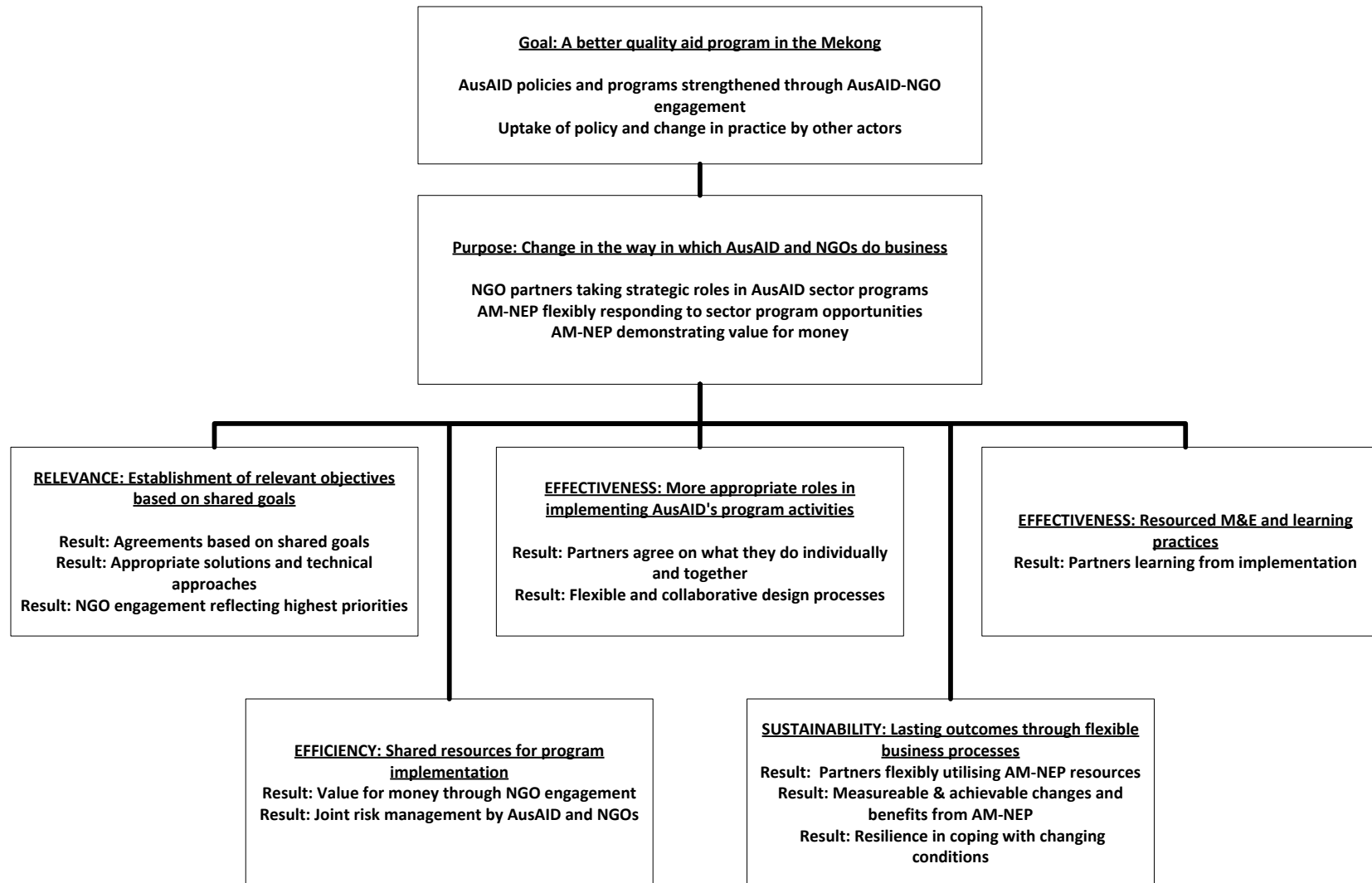
**Section 2** defines the recommended measures for MEL of AM-NEP and suggests how these can be used within the sector programs it supports. This section suggests who should be responsible for these measures and appropriate timing for implementation.

**Section 3** provides guidance in narrative form on the approaches for MEL and reporting measures for Am-NEP itself and sector programs.

**Section 4** covers the establishment of an AM-NEP baseline and a process for assessing AM-NEP value for money.

## Section 1. AM-NEP results framework

Figure 1: Summary of AM-NEP results framework



**Table1: MEL framework for AM-NEP**

Goal/purpose/domain of change	Results	Key questions for identifying evidence of results	Vehicle	Who is responsible?	AM-NEP support
<b>Goal: Achieve a better quality aid program in the Mekong</b>	AusAID policies and programs strengthened through AusAID – NGO engagement  Uptake of policy and change in practice by other actors (for example, government) based on learning and experience of AM-NEP partners	What changes in AusAID policy and practice have been implemented and who has changed practice as a result of learning obtained through AM-NEP?  What strategies has AM-NEP helped to put into place to enable policy and practice shifts among partners and stakeholders to enhance policy change, sustainability and good practice?  Is policy formulation and implementation by partners and other stakeholders more informed by local issues and evidence?	AAPR and QAI processes  Sector program independent review/evaluations	AusAID	Potentially
			Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, Reference Group, PQRG	Yes
<b>Purpose: Support and facilitate change in the way in which AusAID and NGOs do business in the Mekong</b>	NGO partners taking strategic roles in AusAID sector programs through partnership dialogue and access to AM-NEP services.	Is AM-NEP providing sufficient space for AusAID and NGOs to adequately to analyse the factors that promote sustainability, replication and uptake?	Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, Reference Group, PQRG	Yes
	AM-NEP flexibly responding to sector program opportunities  AM-NEP demonstrating value for money as a	Are AusAID senior managers provided with early warning of demand for AM-NEP services as sector programs emerge and of potential program quality issues as they are	AM-NEP routine management tools	AM-NEP Coordinator	Yes



Goal/purpose/domain of change	Results	Key questions for identifying evidence of results	Vehicle	Who is responsible?	AM-NEP support
	platform for AusAID – NGO engagement in sector programs in the Mekong	<p>implemented?</p> <p>Are AM-NEP resources being scaled according to demand and need for services?</p> <p>Has AM-NEP support provided adequate resourcing to justify its continued use in the future?</p> <p>Does the AM-NEP model demonstrate that it has the flexibility to adapt, improve and refine itself to meet changing sector program needs?</p> <p>Has AM-NEP provided value for money?</p>	Independent review of AM-NEP including value-for-money assessment as part of independent review/evaluation	AusAID, independent review team, partners, Reference Group	No
<b>A. Relevance: Establishment of relevant objectives based on shared goals at country, sectoral and regional programming levels which will lead to more appropriate interventions</b>	<p>Partnership/engagement agreements based on shared goals</p> <p>NGO engagement reflecting highest priorities within sector/delivery strategies</p> <p>Solutions and technical approaches that are appropriate to the development context.</p>	<p>Do agreements articulate development outcomes that contribute to the highest priority sectoral goals agreed with partner governments?</p> <p>Are the shared goals appropriate to the development context of the countries and the region?</p> <p>Are the shared goals set by partners clearly informed by analysis of and lessons from past initiatives?</p> <p>Are the shared goals clearly in line with each partner organisation's own objectives and approaches?</p>	Sector/delivery strategy M&E framework through regular reporting and APPR processes	AusAID (with NGO involvement as appropriate to sectors)	Potentially
			Dialogue during sector program design	AusAID and NGO partners	Yes
			M&E at activity design	AusAID and NGO partners	Yes
			Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, AusAID and NGO partners, PQRG	Yes

Goal/purpose/domain of change	Results	Key questions for identifying evidence of results	Vehicle	Who is responsible?	AM-NEP support
<b>B. Effectiveness: More appropriate roles in implementing AusAID's program activities, through mobilising each partner's unique contribution and through collaborative and flexible design</b>	Partners agree on what they do individually and together to achieve development objectives	What development changes are being sought?	Sector/delivery strategy M&E framework through regular reporting and APPR processes	AusAID (with NGO involvement as appropriate to sectors)	Potentially
		How is each partner proposing to contribute to changes?			
		What are the unique contributions from each partner? Are activities and approaches using the strengths of each partner to the best? What evidence is there of this?	NGO selection processes	AusAID	Potentially
	Flexible and collaborative design processes being used by AusAID and NGOs	Are roles and responsibilities of all partners and actors involved in activity implementation clearly identified and appropriate to their strengths?	M&E at program design	AusAID and NGO partners	Yes
		Do the development approaches involve all the stakeholders (including AusAID and NGOs) that need to be involved?			
		Do designs show clear and plausible links between sectoral analysis, the objectives and the approaches being taken?	Sector/delivery strategy M&E framework through regular reporting and APPR processes	AusAID (with NGO involvement as appropriate to sectors)	Potentially
		Has dialogue provided the opportunity to take into account (as appropriate) political, institutional, economic, financial, organisational and human resource issues?	M&E at program design	AusAID and NGO partners	Yes
		Are lessons from previous experience taken into account in activity designs?			
		Do design processes address and integrate crosscutting issues?	In country partnership dialogue (cross program)	AusAID and NGO partners	Yes

Goal/purpose/domain of change	Results	Key questions for identifying evidence of results	Vehicle	Who is responsible?	AM-NEP support
			Regional partnership dialogue	Stakeholder Forum	Yes
			Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, Reference Group, PQRG	Yes
<b>C. Effectiveness: Resourced M&amp;E and learning practices that focus on relationships as well as outcomes and crosscutting issues</b>	Partners learning from implementation and measuring and achieving development changes against agreed program outcomes.	Is the way partners are defined and operating leading to clear, measurable and achievable changes within agreed timeframes?	M&E at program implementation	AusAID and partners	Yes
		What change has been achieved to date and what is the evidence of this?	In country partnership dialogue (cross program)	AusAID and partners	Yes
		What are the key lessons learned through program implementation?	Regional partnership dialogue	Stakeholder forum	Yes
		Do MEL processes address and integrate crosscutting issues?	Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, partners, PQRG	Yes
<b>D. Efficiency: Shared resources for program implementation that mobilise each partner's program strengths and shared responsibility for managing risks in implementing programs</b>	NGO engagement in sectors demonstrating value for money  AusAID and NGOs undertaking joint risk management exercises	Are design and MEL processes adequately resourced? Do they support the management of the development initiatives partners are working on together?	Sector/delivery strategy M&E framework through regular reporting and APPR processes	AusAID (with NGO involvement as appropriate to sectors)	Potentially
		Are the underlying assumptions and risks that underpin partnerships and partner activities taken into account? Have they changed?  Are implementation arrangements	M&E at program implementation	AusAID and partners	Yes

Goal/purpose/domain of change	Results	Key questions for identifying evidence of results	Vehicle	Who is responsible?	AM-NEP support
		harmonised between AusAID and NGO partners and with other development partners and are they aligned with partner government systems?	In country partnership dialogue (cross program)	AusAID and partners	Yes
		Are partnerships adequately and appropriately resourced to achieve the desired objectives?	Regional partnership dialogue	Stakeholder Forum	Yes
		Are partners sharing resources in a manner demonstrating value for money in implementing activities?	Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, AusAID and partners, PQRG	Yes
	Partners measuring and achieving changes within their organisations—partnership results.	Are partners participating in joint management and governance of their activities?			
		How have partners worked together?	M&E at program implementation	AusAID and partners	Yes
		What has been the value of this contribution and way of working for each partner?	In country partnership dialogue (cross program)	AusAID and partners	Yes
		How has each partner contributed to change? How have they contributed collectively?	Regional partnership dialogue	Stakeholder forum	Yes
		Do MEL processes clearly provide priority information and are they simple to operate? Do they define what needs to be assessed, by whom and when?	Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, AusAID and partners, PQRG	Yes
		Do MEL processes provide the information on whether partnerships are succeeding? Do they support management and accountability?			
		Do MEL processes provide the opportunity to assimilate lessons progressively?			
		How have resources been mobilised to			

Goal/purpose/domain of change	Results	Key questions for identifying evidence of results	Vehicle	Who is responsible?	AM-NEP support
		address new evidence?			
<b>E. Sustainability: Flexible business processes adaptive to the changing context and various roles of each partner and helping partners to achieve lasting outcomes</b>	Partners flexibly using technical and administrative resources provided through AM-NEP (for example, TA, PQRG)	What guidance and support is AM-NEP providing?	Regional partnership dialogue	Stakeholder Forum	Yes
	Partners measuring/achieving changes and benefits to which AM-NEP has directly contributed	What are the specific contributions of the AM-NEP Coordinator, the PQRG and the ASU in supporting AusAID – NGO engagement?	Mid-term review and final evaluation of AM-NEP	Independent review team, AusAID and NGO partners, PQRG	Yes
	AusAID – NGO engagement promoting resilience in coping with changing conditions	How have these contributions been used?	AM-NEP report	AM-NEP Coordinator	Yes
		What is the added value of AM-NEP to the work of development partners?			
		How has AM-NEP management and administrative support responded to changing program requirements? How has this support promoted lasting program outcomes?			
		In what ways does AM-NEP delivery help AusAID and NGOs and their Mekong development partners to build resilience to cope with changing conditions and future uncertainties and to sustain ownership of activities and processes?			

## Section 2. MEL measures, responsibilities and timing

Strengthening MEL within each country and across the region is a fundamental element of AM-NEP logic. Programming for effective AusAID – NGO engagement requires a new dimension of measurement. It requires the need to consider how to articulate the intended outcomes of a changed relationship and, in turn, the outcomes of this changed relationship on the development context (and ultimately the impact on people's lives). The implication is that qualitative indicators surrounding the nature of engagement, that is, the way in which each party works together, roles and responsibilities are mobilised and change, need to have a high level of attention within any M&E strategy.

AM-NEP is iterative, and the way in which transactions are carried out will differ to some extent in the implementation of programs under different sector/delivery strategies in different countries. As Table 2 shows, the tasks for MEL activities within sector/delivery strategies will be managed by AusAID program managers in accordance with established AusAID procedures and in line with the aggregation of monitoring data for Annual Program Performance Review documentation. The table therefore proposes key MEL activities to manage quality throughout implementation of AM-NEP. It suggests measures that can be considered for sector strategies, and the ways in which AM-NEP can assist, including by providing advice on good practices, technical and logistical assistance.

It is also recognised that quality processes for sector programs are mandated in AusAID's established practices, culminating in the Annual Program Performance Report.

**Table2: Proposed MEL measures**

Measures	Responsible	Timing
<b>AM-NEP MEL</b>		
These measures are considered essential for MEL within AM-NEP		
AM-NEP Quality at Entry—peer review	AusAID	End of AM-NEP design stage (Q3 and 4, 2011–12)
Development partnership review mechanisms and tools	PQRG in consultation with AusAID and partners	In early stages of AM-NEP implementation
Annual partnership review to review achievements, effectiveness of resource facility, resourcing of exploratory activities to support policy or partnership dialogue options, and to confirm messages for the annual report	PQRG facilitated, AusAID NGO regional stakeholder forum members (3a in Section 3)	Annual
Financial report	AM-NEP	6 monthly
Independent review of AM-NEP	AusAID, independent consultant. TOR developed in consultation with partners and approved by the Reference Group	Each 2 to 3 years
Value-for-money assessment of AM-NEP	Contracted by AusAID. TOR approved by the Reference Group	As determined by the Reference Group

**Delivery strategy level MEL**

The following measures are suggested as good practice for sector programs, with indications of where AM-NEP will be able to provide services to assist.

Development of overall M&E framework for delivery strategy/sectoral program	AusAID Posts	Sector/delivery strategy approval stage (AM-NEP will assist with advice on good practices)
Development of M&E framework for individual activity designs	Partners with AusAID	Program design stage (AM-NEP will assist with advice on good practices and with resources for technical assistance as required)
Reporting will be in accordance with AusAID's M&E requirements at delivery strategy level and this could include the following types of reporting (1–5):		(AM-NEP will assist with advice on good practices and with resources for technical assistance as required)
1. Snapshot reports (written plus face-to-face partnership dialogue)	NGOs	6 monthly (minimum)
2. Annual report (written plus face-to-face partnership dialogue)	NGOs	Annual
3. Additional methods to communicate results of activities	NGOs	Determined by the NGO
4. Financial reports	NGOs	6 monthly
5. Field monitoring visits	AusAID and NGOs	As required/desired
Partnership reviews		
Peer review	All partners, AM-NEP PQRG	Two delivery strategy per year (AM-NEP will assist in this process)
Mid-term independent evaluation (if undertaken as part of normal AusAID process)	All partners, external consultant, AM-NEP PQRG	Mid-term of delivery strategy timeframe (for example, year 3) (normal AusAID arrangements with AM-NEP resources available)
Final evaluation (normal arrangements)	All partners, external consultant, AM-NEP PQRG	Last year of delivery strategy timeframe (for example, year 5) (normal AusAID arrangements with AM-NEP resources available)

### Section 3. Guidance on MEL and reporting measures

The notes in this section are guidance for those involved in implementing MEL measures for AM-NEP and for the sector programs it will assist. The notes are not exhaustive or prescriptive and should be open to discussion and adapted as AM-NEP comes on stream.

The guidance covers:

- regular review of the quality and effectiveness of partnerships
- independent review of AM-NEP
- processes for managing quality of design and appraisal
- processes for managing quality throughout program implementation
- communication and reporting within sector programs
- communication and reporting for AM-NEP level.

#### 3a. Regular review of the quality and effectiveness of partnerships

Within the MEL process and frameworks to be built into sector programs, the AusAID – NGO engagement arrangements supported through AM-NEP should be reviewed regularly to ensure all partners can reflect on the nature of the relationship and what it has achieved. This will enable both partners to discuss progress, identify and problem solve implementation issues, expand on areas of good practice and identify strategic resource allocations. AusAID and NGOs should be encouraged to reflect on the partnership also, including its changing characteristics, and articulate and address concerns and identify achievements, including unintended and roll-on benefits. AM-NEP is positioned to provide facilitation support and guidance for such dialogue.

A detailed review of engagement across the region will be carried out annually through an AM-NEP Regional Stakeholder Forum (a meeting, not a body). This forum will be organised by the ASU and suggested attendees are:

- senior representative from each partner organisation engaged at delivery strategy level
- AusAID activity manager for each country-level delivery strategy sectors where engagement is being implemented
- member of the AusAID Mekong Hub
- member from AusAID Mekong Desk
- ACFID representative<sup>37</sup>
- representative from the peak civil society group in each country, to promote wider learning
- AM-NEP Coordinator and staff
- PQRG members.

The meeting is to articulate the quality and impacts of relationships on joint development activities in the region, identify key lessons learned and support the identification of key areas of future support. The process and tools (including guidance notes) for doing so will be consultatively

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<sup>37</sup> Recognising that ACFID is the peak Australian agency, AusAID proposes their inclusion to support a wider sharing of lessons learned and building of knowledge around partnership approaches within the sector in Australia.'



developed by AM-NEP (PQRG) in the early stages of implementation, and the PQRG will provide facilitation support. Results will be reported by AM-NEP in its annual report to stakeholders.

### **3b. Independent review of AM-NEP**

In line with AusAID corporate requirements, AM-NEP will be reviewed through an independent monitoring mechanism every two to three years. AusAID will commission the review based upon a TOR developed in consultation with all partners through the Stakeholder Forum. Team members for this independent review would most rationally include:

- independent consultant as team leader
- PQRG member
- NGO representative from the Reference Group
- AusAID representative from the Reference Group.

The independent review will examine the achievements of partnerships and AM-NEP surrounding the result areas as defined in Table 2. The focus would be on the achievements of AM-NEP as a platform for change, not on the achievements of individual sector programs or delivery strategies.

### **3c. Processes for managing quality of design and appraisal**

While processes will differ to some extent across sector/delivery strategies, AM-NEP will support ensuring effective Quality at Entry in sector/delivery strategies through mobilising PQRG assistance in developing guidance notes, processes, tools and facilitation support. Draft Guidance Note 1, Annex 8, on sector/delivery strategies, is for consideration at design stage.<sup>38</sup>

The roles and selection of NGOs will necessarily vary throughout the sectors and programs in which AusAID – NGO relationships will be developed. Nevertheless it is highly desirable that common quality processes be used at entry for selecting and contracting of NGOs. The PQRG can assist in this. It will create a level playing field while recognising that a one-size-fits-all will not suit. Draft Guidance Note 2, Annex 8, on NGO selection and contracting is for consideration at design stage.

As sector/delivery strategies and engagement arrangements come on stream, partners will engage in collaborative design processes for activities. It will be necessary to ensure that design processes and ensuing designs will support meeting shared goals and objectives and contribute to effectiveness in attaining shared development outcomes. AM-NEP should be able to accommodate and build upon the design processes and document formats AusAID and NGOs already use. Draft Guidance Note 3, Annex 8, outlines collaborative design processes and suggests the minimum range of issues designs should address.

### **3d. Processes for managing quality throughout program implementation**

A key lesson learned from AusAID's portfolio of NGO cooperation programs is the capacity of NGOs to meet Agency expectations about MEL, and their recognition that this is an area of strategic

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<sup>38</sup> Guidance notes prepared for the PDD are draft and require development upon AM-NEP approval. (or development and then approved??) Due to the design's iterative nature, these guidance notes should be reviewed regularly in the early years of AM-NEP so lessons learned and new thinking and approaches can be incorporated and key good practices for managing quality identified. These review processes should be facilitated by the PQRG with AusAID in consultation with partners.

investment for both partners programs. While one intended outcome of the AM-NEP partnership is to streamline formal reporting between AusAID and the NGOs, so they can engage in higher-order program issues, it is important for AusAID to know that comprehensive information on NGO approaches and outcomes is available and used to guide program delivery.

To support this, AM-NEP will, as appropriate and invited, undertake reviews of MEL systems of selected NGOs within sector/delivery strategies. These will assess the quality of MEL systems, identify good practices that could be shared, identify improvements needed and plan specific interventions to support improvements. Ideally this would occur as early as possible to enable capacity building objectives and technical resources to be planned at early stages of implementation. However, as a support process (as opposed to compliance) this should not detract from other high priority areas, such as design quality.

Peer review techniques could be useful for sector programs to build trust learn cross-agency. AM-NEP will promote and support peer review processes as a key strategy to enhance relationships and ensure multi-stakeholder learning.

One strategy to support learning in the NGO engagement models that will emerge is for AM-NEP to facilitate reviews of, say, two sector/delivery strategy areas each year. These reviews would include activities of all partners engaged. Partners in other programs not under review could be invited to share the results. The outcomes of such peer review processes would form a valuable basis for regional learning.

### **3e. Communication and reporting within sector programs**

AM-NEP is designed to ensure that AusAID partners with NGOs that have demonstrated capacity to deliver quality development activities where partner objectives converge. Trust, transparency and accountability are characteristics of this. As such business processes need to ensure that the forms of engagement are established within organisations that demonstrate operational and financial management capacity. Business processes need to empower NGOs to ‘get on and do the job’ by recognising and valuing their capacity and reducing the heavy administrative burden of traditional forms of contract management and compliance.

Planning, MEL and reporting will always be required of any donor—with NGO engagement, however, there is significant scope within AM-NEP approaches to be significantly streamline them by focusing on reporting key information and establishing structured dialogue on programming outcomes and the contributions of each partner to the partnership. How AM-NEP proposes to do this is discussed below.

**Sector strategy-level reporting:** NGO reporting to AusAID might typically be based on a cycle of six-monthly snapshots followed by an annual report. Six-monthly reports<sup>39</sup> will typically be three to six pages, and address and/or highlight key activities and achievements, progress against agreed common indicators and emerging challenges. They should also include case studies on outcomes or challenges. Separate financial reports will also be submitted on a six-monthly basis.

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<sup>39</sup> Snapshot report is a reporting format described by the AACES design. It has been used within AM-NEP to ensure consistency in language across partnership programs.

**Annual reports:** These more detailed reports will cover NGO effectiveness (contribution towards program objectives and relevant outcome areas), efficiency (including value for money and the value-add of the NGO), sustainability, crosscutting issues and major issues or risks. They should discuss how the NGO's reach to beneficiaries has expanded or shifted and the degree to which local organisations, duty bearers and communities are managing, providing or demanding services. These annual reports would typically be between six and 12 pages.

**Creative ways to communicate:** NGOs are encouraged to use other creative ways to communicate and showcase project outcomes, including through collections of stories and photographs, radio broadcasts, exhibitions, videos and other forms of visual and social media. While formal reports provide the essential information for meeting AusAID reporting requirements, these creative ways to communicate enable NGOs to share information in ways that are meaningful to constituents and wider constituencies.

**Learning and accountability:** To support the partnership principals of learning, transparency and mutual accountability, narrative reports and other media will be produced to share with partners within the region.

All forms of reporting (as well as any peer reviews undertaken) should be incorporated into six-monthly, face-to-face partnership discussion. This discussion is an opportunity for people to explore program progress, risks, emerging lessons and decide on required changes. It should also explore the nature of the partnership, to build understanding of how it is contributing to implementation.

AM-NEP will provide advice on good practices in reporting and technical assistance as required.

### **3f. Communication and reporting for AM-NEP level**

The AM-NEP's ASU will produce an annual report for AusAID and NGOs at the end of each implementation year. The report's focus will be on documenting the scope and nature of support provided through AM-NEP, and how this has added value to regional relationships. It will also include discussion on how dialogue has effected change in policy and practice. The report will be developed immediately following regional dialogue and will provide examples of outcomes by way of case studies.

AM-NEP will provide a separate financial report at six-monthly intervals, a summary of which will be made available to all partners.

## **Section 4. Establishing a baseline and assessing value for money for AM-NEP**

Understanding AM-NEP's contribution and its associated engagement approaches is important for sustaining attention to new ways of working between AusAID and NGOs however this is not without its challenges. AusAID is exploring options for establishing a value-for-money assessment of partnership programs, such as the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme, which will include a baseline defined at program start and periodic assessment throughout the life of the partnerships. This would likely be handled on a number of levels, by assessing the costs and benefits of:

- NGO activities

- changed management approaches used within the program (for example, the partnership approach)
- partnership dialogue—the value of changes in policy and practice.

The comparison point would likely be the perceived benefits specified at the start of AM-NEP, compared to those experienced during implementation as well as the costs and benefits experienced by other similar programs. Such assessment is to help AusAID and NGO partners better understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the approaches taken with AM-NEP support. This will enable more informed choices about partnership direction and will guide the design of other AusAID programs.

The shape and form of a value-for-money assessment warrants more detailed consideration as AM-NEP comes on stream and the potential to link with similar assessments being undertaken by other AusAID – NGO partnership programs is explored.

During the current interim period, as sector/delivery strategies are developed and as AM-NEP comes on stream, it is therefore important to establish a baseline to gauge value for money and overall effectiveness at later implementation stages. This will be important in assessing the need to scale AM-NEP to suit service demand. The following questions need to be considered when assessing the baseline situation. Questions are divided by goal and purpose, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, as well as sustainability and business practices. They draw on the results framework (Section 1 of this annex). While most questions are framed to express the baseline situation for AusAID and NGOs, many can be used in discussions with governments and other partners.

### **Goal and purpose**

1. Which sector/delivery strategies have already come on stream in the Mekong?
2. Have strategies identified potential roles for NGOs and have NGOs been consulted in their formulation?
3. What feedback was obtained from NGOs, AusAID Posts and partner governments in terms of perceived costs and benefits of the potential roles?
4. Have the policy implications for AusAID and partner governments been documented? If so what was identified as important policy directions to which NGO engagement in sector programs can most usefully contribute?
5. What level of scaling of AM-NEP resources will be appropriate in sector programs that have, or are projected to, come on stream?
6. In discussing AM-NEP with potential partners what do they think are the likely value-for-money considerations for NGO involvement and for the level of support envisaged from AM-NEP?

### **Relevance**

7. What experience do AusAID and NGOs have with CAs?
8. Have lessons from CAs been adequately documented? If not, is there a need for work to address gaps?

9. Have NGOs likely to be involved in sector programs offered documentary or other evidence of their strengths, specific program and technical contributions in the sectors concerned? If so has this been collated and by whom? Is this information available to share?
10. What are perceived to be the highest priorities within sector programs?

### **Effectiveness**

11. What are the perceptions of Posts and NGOs on their future strategic roles within sector programs? What would the implications be for AM-NEP in supporting these roles?
12. To what extent has dialogue taken place between potential partners on their respective contributions to programs? Has this been documented and do those involved agree with the documentation?
13. Have there been discussions on the approaches potential partners can use to design activities? Are people willing to share this kind of information? Are good practice examples of earlier designs available? To what extent is there agreement about these good practices?
14. Have there been discussions on the approaches potential partners can use to reflect on implementation experience and document lessons? Are people willing to share this kind of information? Are good practice examples available? To what extent is there agreement about these good practices?

### **Efficiency**

15. In discussions, have potential partners put forth notions of sharing resources among themselves? What benefits and risks have they articulated about doing so? Have potential partners articulated severe constraints their organisations may have in doing this, and put forth ways of ameliorating these?
16. Within each sector program coming on stream what are the likely value-for-money considerations for NGO involvement and the level of support envisaged from AM-NEP?
17. Are potential partners prepared to discuss with AusAID or among themselves the risks or underlying assumptions pertaining to the work outlined in sector/delivery strategies? Has discussion on risk been documented and, if so, by whom? Is it available for sharing? Is there consensus?

### **Sustainability and business practices**

18. In discussions on AM-NEP have participants articulated their views on how the platform can best provide administrative and technical support? What specific support have they suggested is appropriate?
19. What are the perceptions about the way AM-NEP support might need to change as programs develop and adapt? Are potential partners amenable to such change? How much certainty in what they receive will they require? Have contractual arrangements that will allow flexibility in business practices been discussed?
20. What do potential partners view as evidence of sustainability in the program in which they are considering participation? Have they expressed views on possible changes in the operating environment?

## Annex 7: Additional implementation plan detail

This annex presents two tables outlining additional details for the proposed AM-NEP implementation plan. Table 1 shows initial actions required in 2012 to mobilise AM-NEP. Table 2 illustrates a generic timetable over five years showing key milestones for design implementation and quality systems.

**Table 1: Early implementation requirements for AM-NEP**

Year and month	2012											
Activity	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Peer review and finalisation of design												
Engage and mobilise interim support												
AM-NEP Coordinator												
Preparation of TOR and advertise												
Internal selection in AusAID												
Negotiation and mobilisation												
PQRG												
Preparation of TOR and if required request for tender	PQRG support for 2013 will initially be undertaken as											
Advertisement and selection	Part of interim support arrangements											
Negotiation and mobilisation	Recruitment for PQRG support on a continuous basis will occur in 2013											
AM-NEP ASU												
Preparation of TOR and request for tender												
Advertisement and selection												
Negotiation and mobilisation												

**Table2: Illustrative timetable for sector programs for five years**

Notional years by quarter	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
Activities	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Development of sector/delivery strategy including M&E																				
Engagement of partners																				
Designs for activities including M&E																				
Grant orders for implementation																				
Implementation of partnership activities																				
Field monitoring visits (as required)																				
Opportunities for sectoral dialogue (notional)																				
Snapshot reports from NGOs																				
Financial reports																				
Peer review (two sector/delivery strategies a year)																				
Annual reports from NGOs																				
Mid-term and final evaluation																				

## **Annex 8: Draft guidance notes**

This annex provides draft guidance notes offering broad principles to assist AusAID and NGO partners in the early stages of AM-NEP. As implementation gets underway, additional guidance notes will be required to establish processes and criteria for a wider range of partnership activities.

The eight guidance notes, detailed throughout this annex, are:

**Guidance Note 1: Sector/delivery strategies**

**Guidance Note 2: Partner selection and contracting**

**Guidance Note 3: Activity design**

**Guidance Note 4: Coordinator selection and contracting (including outline TOR)**

**Guidance Note 5: Program Quality Resource Group selection and contracting  
(including outline TOR)**

**Guidance Note 6: Administrative Support Unit selection and contracting  
(including outline scope of services)**

**Guidance Note 7: Reference Group formation (including outline TOR)**

<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 1</b>	<b>Sector/delivery strategies</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Post staff</p> <p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>Prospective NGO partners</p> <p>AM-NEP PQRG</p> <p>AM-NEP ASU</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To help ensure that where it is appropriate for AusAID and NGOs to engage in sector/delivery strategies, roles for NGOs have been identified and NGOs that can potentially contribute have been appropriately consulted.
<b>Lessons learned that have informed this guidance</b>	Previous CA programs have tended to 'silo' individual NGO activities and provided limited opportunity for sharing of knowledge and lessons learned. Other AusAID programs have recognised that there is value in focusing on synergy and opportunities for cooperation.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identification of shared objectives and areas of potential collaboration</li> <li>2. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</li> <li>3. recognition of the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives</li> <li>4. recognition of the different contributions each partner makes and the different resources they mobilise to achieve shared objectives</li> </ol>
<b>Stages</b>	



<p><b>1: Identification of NGO roles</b></p>	<p>When preparing sector/delivery strategies, AusAID will always consult with NGOs to obtain views—even if an assessment is made that there is no opportunity for NGOs to engage.</p> <p>Opportunities may also exist for NGOs to partake in policy engagement but not ensuing program activity. AusAID staff will identify areas in which NGO engagement can add significant value to effective achievement of sector outcomes through program activity.</p> <p>Factors AusAID may consider include areas in which NGOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have proven records of effective delivery with extensive delivery networks</li> <li>• are able to develop and maintain relationships and accountability where other development partners cannot (for example, sub-national or remote areas)</li> <li>• have existing relationships with civil society in which they provide significant capacity building, advocacy or rights support</li> <li>• offer complementary capacities to AusAID and other partners</li> <li>• have rich information sources at local level, particularly in methods of supporting marginalised groups</li> <li>• bring benefits, including through their international networks and home constituencies.</li> </ul> <p>The PQRG will be available on request to help identify NGO roles within sectors. AusAID may also draw upon technical assistance in specific sectoral and sub-sectoral areas through AM-NEP’s technical assistance mechanism to support this. The end result of this stage is that AusAID will have undertaken a brief analysis defining specific areas within its sector/delivery strategies for NGO involvement.</p> <p>At this stage also, AusAID Posts should consider whether AM-NEP support to develop NGO partnerships is appropriate. In some cases other NGO engagement mechanisms may be available or more appropriate (for instance where separate NGO arrangements are incorporated into regional or global sectoral schemes). In these cases, AM-NEP support to determine the best ways of engaging NGOs will be available on request.</p>
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<b>2: NGO consultation</b>	<p>Where NGO involvement in sectors has been identified, AusAID will ensure relevant NGOs are consulted during sector/delivery strategy preparation (this is now required because of the 2011 <i>Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness</i>).</p> <p>Consultation at this stage need not be extensive and should not raise expectations among NGOs unlikely to be capable of engaging. Nevertheless the consultation should be of high quality.</p> <p>In bringing together potential NGO partners, these outcomes are desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential NGO awareness of AusAID's broad intended outcomes and approaches in the sector, and how and when these might fit in (an informational and forward-planning outcome)</li> <li>• AusAID and NGO exploration of the space in which they can operate and exchange views on likely roles NGOs can play and approaches they can take in the sector</li> <li>• AusAID and NGOs exploration of the principles and likely contractual implications of partnerships in the sector.</li> </ul> <p>The PQRG and ASU will be available to facilitate and document this dialogue.</p>
<b>3: Incorporation into delivery/sector strategy</b>	<p>Based on the analysis and dialogue referred to above, AusAID will be able to refine sector/delivery strategies to more accurately identify NGO roles and contributions to their sectoral plans. AusAID will therefore be in a position to plan for the establishment of partnerships.</p>

<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 2</b>	<b>Partner selection and contracting</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Post staff</p> <p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>AM-NEP PQRG</p> <p>Prospective NGO partners</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To help ensure that NGO partners chosen have appropriate approaches to and management capacities for effectively engaging to meet identified partnership outcomes, and also have been appropriately engaged to start in collaborative design.
<b>Lessons learned that have informed this guidance</b>	Two-stage selection processes which select NGOs and then engage them in collaborative design have reduced competition between NGOs and helped reduce transaction costs.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<p>1. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</p> <p>2. risk shared among partners</p> <p>3. success shared between a range of partners</p>
<b>Stages</b>	
<b>1: Identification</b>	During sector/delivery strategy development, AusAID Post identifies areas in which NGOs can potentially contribute and consults with potential partners (draft Guidance Note 1).
<b>2: Calls for capacity statements</b>	<p>AusAID Post decides whether select or open tendering is appropriate, and the number of NGOs (both based on indicative budget ceilings) likely to respond. Post then prepares calls for capacity statements specifying partnership principles being sought and criteria for:</p> <p>1. systems capability, including: financial and management systems; M&amp;E systems and capacity; staff mobilisation and management systems; field management and headquarters resource mobilisation</p> <p>2. sectoral approach, including: operational policies; experience of managing activities in the sector; M&amp;E approach for the sector; approaches for capacity building; approaches to crosscutting issues.</p> <p>AusAID Post should draw upon PQRG support when preparing calls for capacity statements.</p> <p>NGOs will be given opportunities to seek clarification before preparing capability statements.</p>

<b>3: Due diligence</b>	<p>ANCP-accredited NGOs will be exempt from providing capability statements on systems. Including non-ANCP NGOs will require additional time for AusAID to undertake due diligence checks to ensure systems capability. The PQRG will, on request, support AusAID with due diligence stage (partner verification). This may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interviews or visits to NGO premises</li> <li>• background checks, including from financial institutions</li> <li>• references</li> <li>• access to audit reports</li> <li>• examination of NGO past documentation from field and headquarters</li> <li>• performance assessment reports from previous AusAID contracts.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Selection</b>	<p>AusAID Post forms a technical assessment panel from within AusAID, and as appropriate partner governments, local civil society, other development partners and ACFID representatives. If a large number of NGOs respond it may be necessary to shortlist. Technical Assessment Panels should, where possible, conduct interviews. If requested, the PQRG will provide one member as an observer to the panels. The PQRG will provide comprehensive secretariat services to the panel process.</p>
<b>5: Head agreements</b>	<p>AusAID Post prepares a generic head agreement form specifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agreement term</li> <li>• nature of partnerships and overall responsibilities of partners</li> <li>• program scope within the sector</li> <li>• process for forming grant or finance orders to be made to NGOs under the head agreement</li> <li>• options for extending the head agreement</li> <li>• other overall legal specifications, as required by AusAID.</li> </ul> <p>Note: head agreements should not include reference to financial limitations.</p> <p>Selected NGOs are invited to negotiate head agreements.</p>

<b>6: Grant orders</b>	<p>These sub-agreements to the head agreements may be variously termed (for example, grant or finance orders). AusAID Post prepares forms of grant order for NGOs at various stages throughout the term of the head agreement, specifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reference to head agreement terms</li> <li>• specific objectives and outcomes to which partners agree</li> <li>• specific activities to be agreed and undertaken by partners</li> <li>• responsibilities of partners in undertaking activities</li> <li>• agreements for using technical assistance through AM-NEP</li> <li>• financial and time limitations</li> <li>• provisions for roll-over of funds and other resources (for example, out-year arrangements and arrangements to carry over to new activity phases)</li> <li>• financial and other reporting requirements</li> <li>• options for extending the grant order.</li> </ul> <p>All NGOs entering into head agreements with AusAID will be provided with an initial grant order to enable them to participate in the collaborative design process. These will specify objectives and outcomes in terms of undertaking a design process. They will not specify objectives for activities that will result from the design process. Once designs are finalised, AusAID and NGOs will negotiate second-stage grant orders for activity implementation.</p>
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<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 3</b>	<b>Activity design</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Post staff</p> <p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>Prospective NGO partners</p> <p>AM-NEP PQRG</p> <p>AM-NEP ASU</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To help ensure a transparent process of collaborative design is put in place to allow partners to best contribute to program aims.
<b>Lessons learned that have informed this guidance</b>	Two-stage selection processes which first select NGOs and then engage them in collaborative design have reduced competition between NGOs and helped reduce transaction costs. To varying degrees across the three Mekong countries, strong relationships and linkages between NGOs, communities, local government and civil society have resulted in activity implementation providing direct and tangible benefits at community level (especially among the poor and other traditionally marginalised groups) and contributing to program effectiveness.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identification of shared objectives and areas of potential collaboration</li> <li>2. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</li> <li>3. recognition of the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives</li> <li>4. recognition of the different contributions each partner makes and the different resources they mobilise to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>5. risk shared among partners</li> <li>6. success shared between a range of partners</li> </ol>
<b>Stages</b>	
<b>1: Grant orders</b>	Grant orders will have been negotiated with selected NGOs to resource them to engage in the collaborative activity design phase (draft Guidance Note 2). Funding will be made to individual NGOs to cover this phase. Funding will cover logistics and remuneration to participate in dialogue for space negotiation and arrangements for staff involved in design document preparation. NGOs will be expected to cover 30 per cent of the costs of their involvement in design and AM-NEP will provide the balance.

<b>2: NGO space negotiation</b>	<p>NGOs selected within a given sector or program will be resourced through AM-NEP to meet with AusAID and other NGOs as a peer group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaboratively discuss overall sector programs, objectives, intended outcomes and M&amp;E requirements (including a wider stakeholder perspective and partners being familiar with these from the capacity statement process)</li> <li>• discuss overall goals, objectives and key issues of AusAID – NGO engagement within the sector</li> <li>• present NGO program strengths and experience in the sector, with initial concepts for how they will best fit into sector engagement</li> <li>• provide feedback on initial concepts presented by NGOs and attain consensus on the complementarity of theses</li> <li>• agree on areas of program activity that each NGO (or group of NGOs) will develop in detailed design</li> <li>• discuss detailed design process and how AM-NEP support can be obtained.</li> </ul> <p>The PQRG will facilitate the space negotiation stage with ASU assistance (logistics and record keeping). Record keeping is important for feeding back into peer review and MEL as implementation gets under way.</p>
<b>3: Collaborative design stage</b>	<p>Preparation of design documentation will be undertaken by individual partners or groups of partners. Partners forming groups will likely require close collaboration and may choose to arrange for further discussion during design preparation. This will be facilitated by the ASU and PQRG.</p>

<p><b>4: Preparation of design documentation</b></p>	<p>AM-NEP is flexible in the form of design documentation required for activities and will respect NGO's capacities, systems and formats for this.</p> <p>Where activities are being considered that are similar or identical to those being otherwise implemented through NGO core programming, NGOs may not need to prepare new design documents. They may instead be able to revise existing documentation.</p> <p>If requested, the PQRG will help NGOs work on specific areas of design and will be available on call to respond to NGO questions.</p> <p>NGOs are encouraged to prepare succinct documentation (a suggested limit is 25 pages) and aim to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sector goals, objectives and issues</li> <li>• sector opportunities and/or problems to be addressed</li> <li>• activity goals, outcomes and results</li> <li>• activity contribution to AusAID's sector strategy</li> <li>• how the activity will relate, contribute to or draw upon other activities in sector partnerships</li> <li>• activity stakeholders and beneficiaries</li> <li>• how the activity will work with key stakeholders and help them, where appropriate, build capacity and avoid duplication or parallel implementation arrangements for managing and monitoring</li> <li>• activity timeline and phases</li> <li>• technical assistance requirements during implementation, indicating where these can be sourced and financed (for example, the NGO, AM-NEP or from other NGOs)</li> <li>• capacity building requirements needed by the NGO to most effectively implement the activity</li> <li>• relevant crosscutting issues</li> <li>• risk management issues</li> <li>• expected follow-on from the activity after implementation, including sustainability.</li> </ul> <p>Initial informal appraisal of design documents will be provided by the PQRG before peer review of design. NGOs will have the opportunity to refine design documents based on the appraisal.</p>
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<b>5. Peer review of design documents</b>	<p>AM-NEP will resource AusAID and NGOs in the sector to attend a peer review as a second stage of dialogue in design. All partners will be asked to submit their documents in sufficient time for other partners to read before the peer review.</p> <p>The peer review will be organised to provide all partners with opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide critical peer support to all designs</li> <li>• reflect on complementarities between activities to add value by, for instance, combining stages in activities between designs or assigning activities in one activity to partners implementing another</li> <li>• reinforce partnership processes in which they are engaged</li> <li>• refine their own designs accordingly.</li> </ul> <p>The PQRG will facilitate this peer review process.</p>
<b>6. Finalisation of designs</b>	<p>Once peer review is concluded, AusAID and NGOs will be able to finalise designs. AusAID may choose at this stage to request formal appraisal from the PQRG or submit designs to external appraisal and peer review. Partners will be given a final opportunity to refine designs accordingly.</p> <p>All partners will be given access to all final design documents.</p>
<b>7. Grant orders</b>	<p>Based on the final designs, AusAID and NGOs will enter into grant agreements for implementation. The content of these agreements will follow the suggested content provided in draft Guidance Note 2. In cases where NGOs enter into formal consortia arrangements, one partner will need to assume overall responsibility for coordinating grant negotiations.</p>

<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 4</b>	<b>Coordinator selection and contracting (including outline TOR)</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>Prospective NGO partners</p> <p>AM-NEP Coordinators</p> <p>AM-NEP ASU</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To help ensure a suitable skilled, capable and experienced coordinator is selected and engaged for the AM – NEP period who can facilitate all AM-NEP support for AusAID – NGO partnerships in a manner reflecting the principles and approaches of design.
<b>Lessons learned that have informed this guidance</b>	Leadership and consistency are required in establishing partnerships in the region and investments are needed to enable this. The AM-NEP Coordinator plays a key role here.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<p>This position underpins all principles in partnership approaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identification of shared objectives and areas of potential collaboration</li> <li>2. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</li> <li>3. recognition of the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives</li> <li>4. recognition of the different contributions each partner makes and the different resources they mobilise to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>5. risk shared among partners</li> <li>6. business processes based on varying roles and contributions of each partner and exhibit flexibility required to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>7. joint review of progress of each party to achieving overall objective</li> <li>8. success shared between a range of partners</li> <li>9. need for incumbent to be seen as objective and credible to a range of partners (additional principle).</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible to: Minister-Counsellor (through Counsellor of Operations), AusAID Hanoi</b>	
<b>Functions of the AM-NEP Coordinator</b>	

The AM-NEP Coordinator will:

- assist the Minister-Counsellor and Mekong Hub to ensure AM-NEP support and resources meet partnership needs
- provide high-quality advice to AusAID on ways to fully integrate partnership approaches into sector/delivery strategies and sector program implementation
- direct and manage ASU support to partners
- coordinate and manage PQRG support to partners and programs
- consult partners in preparing and implementing annual plans for AM-NEP-supported activities
- prepare high-quality AM-NEP annual reports for presentation to partners at annual dialogue events
- help develop annual dialogue event agendas and manage event processes
- provide high-level guidance of AM-NEP learning processes
- contribute to PQRG functions as outlined in draft Guidance Note 5.

The AM-NEP Coordinator will be engaged from within AusAID at EL1 level to ensure a highly experienced development practitioner is on board with extensive experience in working with a range of organisations and organisation types (including donors, NGOs, civil society and government). The position period will be for a full five years.

#### **Attributes of the AM-NEP Coordinator**

The AM-NEP Coordinator will have a minimum 10 year's senior management experience in the development industry and will demonstrate these attributes:

- experience in working with development actors, including bilateral and multilateral donors, NGOs, civil society and government
- ability to engender trust among AusAID and NGO partners and demonstrate impartiality in professional judgment
- ability to formulate and communicate high-level strategic advice on development issues
- sound experience in managing advisory teams and administration functions within the development program environment
- extensive experience of quality systems within development programs, particularly of development outcome-level quality systems.
- extensive experience of AusAID and NGO policies, policies, operational frameworks and quality systems
- extensive field experience of working in development programs and projects, including understanding of how the NGO sector works at field level
- sound intellectual grasp of partnership principles and crosscutting issues
- sound and tested facilitation and consultation skills and proven ability to bring together wide ranging views and agendas, as well as manage conflict
- sound abilities in appraising designs and reports
- sound knowledge of the Mekong Region and its development trends, as well as understanding of the roles of key development actors (donors, NGOs, government, civil society)
- ability to work under pressure in producing high-quality written outputs in English.

#### **Process and timing for procurement of the AM-NEP Coordinator**

<b>Finalisation of TORs</b>	This priority action should start immediately after design completion. The attributes and skills listed above should be considered in the formulation. This should be undertaken under the direction of the Mekong Hub, in communication with AusAID Canberra. TORs should be shared with NGO partners through the ACFID Mekong Working Group. This is one area of support where the design team may assist in immediate tasks to ensure momentum in establishing AM-NEP in the coming months.
<b>Advertising, selection and contracting</b>	<p>The AM-NEP Coordinator should be selected through AusAID internal recruitment processes, following normal Agency practice. Selection should be undertaken under the direction of the Mekong Hub in communication with Canberra. Advertising should be undertaken through usual AusAID channels.</p> <p>If an external selection process is undertaken, it is strongly recommended that a NGO representative be involved in selection, in the interests of transparency and continuing the high level of collaboration between AusAID and NGOs in AM-NEP development. In light of involvement thus far, this would most logically be a member of the ACFID Mekong Working Group.</p>
<b>Mobilisation</b>	This should occur during or before December 2012.

<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 5</b>	<b>Program Quality Resource Group selection and contracting (including outline TOR)</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>Prospective NGO partners</p> <p>AM-NEP Coordinator</p> <p>AM-NEP PQRG members</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To help ensure suitably skilled, capable and experienced members of the PQRG are selected and engaged to provide continuity during the period of AM-NEP. Members must be able to facilitate AM-NEP quality support for AusAID – NGO partnerships in a manner reflecting the principles and approaches in design.
<b>Lessons learned that have informed this guidance</b>	CA programs have largely failed to establish overall program-level M&E frameworks and are challenged to demonstrate higher-level development outcomes and impacts at program/sectoral level. MEL should not be seen as a contract management tool, but rather the key means of, and key processes for, identifying and articulating development outcomes and, importantly, the reasons why interventions are working or not.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<p>These positions underpin all principles in partnership approaches. For AM-NEP design these are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identification of shared objectives and areas of potential collaboration</li> <li>2. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</li> <li>3. recognition of the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives</li> <li>4. the different contributions each partner makes and the different resources they mobilise to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>5. risk shared among partners</li> <li>6. business processes based on varying roles and contributions of each partner and exhibit flexibility required to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>7. joint review of progress of each party to achieving the overall objective</li> <li>8. success shared between a range of partners.</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible to: AM-NEP Coordinator</b>	
<b>Functions of the PQRG</b>	

To assist:

AusAID to fully integrate AusAID – NGO partnership approaches into sector/delivery strategies and sector program implementation

- in facilitating partner dialogue on delivery strategies to help ensure AusAID and NGOs are meaningfully and systematically engaged (as the first stage of partnership dialogue)<sup>40</sup>

AusAID in designing quality, competitive partner selection processes reflecting partnership principles (as the second stage of partnership dialogue)—that is, to help establish clear ground rules for selection that enable prospective partners to articulate their unique contributions to, and capacities and approaches for, partnership and facilitate partners to develop quality collaborative processes and practices for design and appraisal of AusAID – NGO partnership activities (as the third stage of partnership dialogue)—as opportunities for partnerships arise through delivery strategies.

- and facilitate partners to develop and use sound collaborative practices for ongoing partnership dialogue, in particular for MEL, around the experience and implementation of partnerships
- partners (if requested) to develop and use sound collaborative practices for sectoral policy dialogue, in particular MEL, around experience and implementation of partner activities within sectoral programs (this may also include a facilitation role).

#### **Attributes of PQRG members**

PQRG members will need to collectively demonstrate these attributes:

- extensive experience in the design and management of quality systems within development programs, particularly of development outcome-level quality systems
- extensive experience of AusAID and/or NGO policies and operational frameworks as well as quality systems (both would be an advantage)
- sound intellectual grasp of partnership principles and relevant sectors
- sound and tested facilitation and consultation skills
- sound abilities in appraising designs and reports
- sound experience and expertise in a range of crosscutting issues, including but not limited to gender, disability and aid effectiveness
- sound knowledge of the Mekong and its development trends, as well as use of NGO delivery mechanisms in the region
- ability to work under pressure in producing high-quality written outputs in English.

Additional recognition will be given to candidates who are resident in or nationals of the region.

PQRG members will be engaged over a full five years to provide short-term, on-demand inputs. It is anticipated that their expertise will equate to AusAID's remuneration framework level 4, discipline group C.

<sup>40</sup> Consultation with NGOs is a requirement of AusAID's new country strategy development process, but such engagement is not at this stage universally embedded in AusAID's culture and system, *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, p. 213.

<b>Specific skills areas that should be considered for the PQRG:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• design</li> <li>• MEL</li> <li>• progress and financial reporting</li> <li>• crosscutting issues</li> <li>• skills in contracting, selection and due diligence would be an advantage to the group.</li> </ul>	
<b>Process and timing for procurement of the PQRG</b>	
<b>Finalisation of TORs</b>	This should start at the latest by the last quarter of 2012. The attributes and skills listed above should be considered in formulating the TORs. This should be undertaken under the direction of the Mekong Hub, in communication with AusAID Canberra. If possible the AM-NEP Coordinator should be involved.
<b>Advertising, selection and contracting</b>	This will follow normal AusAID practice and should be undertaken under the direction of the Mekong Hub, in communication with AusAID Canberra. Advertising should be undertaken through usual AusAID, Australian and international channels and should include the use of printed media in the Mekong Region.
<b>Mobilisation</b>	This should occur during early to mid-2013.

<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 6</b>	<b>ASU selection and contracting (including outline scope of services)</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>Prospective NGO partners</p> <p>AM-NEP Coordinator</p> <p>AM-NEP PQRF</p> <p>AM-NEP Reference Group</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To provide draft guidance for developing a scope of services to help ensure a suitable and experienced organisation is procured to facilitate administrative and logistical support for AusAID – NGO partnerships in a manner reflecting design principles and approaches.
<b>Lessons learned that have informed this guidance</b>	Consistency of business processes and reduction of transaction costs for Posts and NGOs is required in establishing partnerships in the region to enable staff to play full roles in higher-level programming activities The ASU plays a key role in supporting this.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<p>The ASU will operate within all principles of partnership approaches in AM-NEP design, emphasising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identification of shared objectives and areas of potential collaboration</li> <li>2. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</li> <li>3. recognition of the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives</li> <li>4. the different contributions each partner makes and the different resources they mobilise to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>5. risk is shared among partners</li> <li>6. business processes that are based on varying roles and contributions of each partner and exhibit the flexibility required to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>7. joint review of progress of each party to achieving overall objective</li> <li>8. success shared between a range of partners.</li> </ol>



**Responsible to: AusAID through AM-NEP Coordinator**

The contract will be with AusAID's Mekong Hub. The contractor will communicate on contractual matters directly with the Chief of Operations, Mekong Hub. The AM-NEP Coordinator will be responsible for the strategic management and oversight of the ASU on behalf of AusAID and NGO partners. AM-NEP Coordinator responsibilities are outlined in draft Guidance Note 4. The ASU Contractor will report financially to AusAID on a six-monthly basis on disbursements of funds through AM-NEP and a summary of the report will be made available to partners. The ASU will prepare an annual report for AusAID and partners after the annual partnership review under the guidance of the AM-NEP Coordinator. The contractor's performance will be subject to six-monthly reviews by AusAID in accordance with current Agency practice. AM-NEP will be subject to review and evaluation after three years of operation and at completion of its five years of operation.

**Services of the ASU**

The ASU role will be filled by a contracted organisation or agency and provide responsive, flexible administrative services to AusAID and its NGO partners in development sectors where partnership agreements are being, or have been, entered into. The contract will be for five years starting in December 2012 (or on successful procurement) and the ASU will be located in Hanoi.

The ASU'S administrative work is to free up AusAID and its NGO partners to focus on high-order programming functions and engagement in partnership processes and activities. The contractor will relieve AusAID and NGO partners of the transaction costs associated with administrative burden in- country. The contractor will provide services on demand from AusAID Posts.

The ASU will mobilise AM-NEP resources and manage flexible business practices to support all aspects of partnership development. Administrative services include:

- logistical and events management support for AM-NEP-organised meetings and other events, including arranging travel, accommodation, travel allowance and venues, and providing secretarial and minute-taking support
- providing secretarial, minute taking and logistical support for the Reference Group (draft Guidance Note 6)
- providing logistical and administrative support to the AM-NEP Coordinator (not remuneration, which will be managed internally by AusAID) and the PQRG (draft Guidance Note 5), including administering salaries and allowances
- procuring plant and equipment in line with Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines
- engaging, paying and managing administrative staff
- establishing financial management systems to Australian Government standards and requirements, including fraud control
- enabling timely and efficient disbursement of funds to support partnership processes
- hiring technical assistance personnel
- liaising, in a prompt and timely manner, with AusAID and NGO partners on administrative, logistical and events management work
- keeping records and taking minutes of AM-NEP events to ensure resulting plans, decisions and learning are available for all partners' use
- compiling results from MEL and partnership dialogue and reviewing events in a manner suitable for presentation and sharing with partners
- compiling partner activity and partnership progress reporting for AusAID and partner use (a management information system function)
- assisting the AM-NEP Coordinator to prepare AM-NEP annual reports, including summaries of administrative tasks the contractor has undertaken to support partners and details on funds disbursed to partners and the purposes for which they have been used
- maintaining AM-NEP records for use by partners
- maintaining and registering assets provided through AM-NEP
- establishing and managing an AM-NEP intranet and internet site.

### Attributes of ASU Contractor

The ASU Contractor should demonstrate the following attributes:

- ability to set up and provide administrative, logistics and events management services to service partner needs across sectoral and Mekong regional programs in which AusAID and NGOs are partnering through AM-NEP
- ability to deploy resources to undertake administrative services in Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Vientiane as required—a presence in all three capitals is an advantage
- ability to operate within a multi-dimensional sectoral and development context, including to design and operate flexible business processes that respond to sectoral and organisational needs
- responsiveness and flexibility to client needs in a multi-client and partner environment, including the need to scale-up or scale-down operations for changes in policy or strategy
- demonstrated record in establishing and operating financial systems, including with budgets and financial accountability to Australian requirements
- demonstrated record in assisting clients and partners to set meeting and workshop agendas and in document results
- sound intellectual grasp of partnership principles and partnership transparency and accountability requirements
- sound understanding of AusAID and NGO policies, programs, operational frameworks and quality systems (focusing on the Mekong Region).

The ASU Contractor will be engaged on a long-term basis over five years.

### Process and timing for procurement of the ASU

<b>Preparation of scope of services</b>	<p>Because the establishment of partnerships has already started in some countries and sectors, the rapid establishment of AM-NEP infrastructure is a priority. Preparing documentation for engagement should start immediately in final approval of AM-NEP design.</p> <p>The ASU could be effectively established by a commercial or non-commercial agency through open or select tender. As a precursor to this AusAID will need to finalise a scope of services and basis of payment for the contracting agency taking the services outlined above into account, to form the basis of a request for tender. The tasks required are listed in the Section 4.2 of this design.</p>
<b>Advertising, selection and contracting</b>	<p>Procurement will follow normal AusAID standards once the scope of services is approved and will be undertaken under the direction of the Mekong Hub in communication with AusAID Canberra.</p>
<b>Mobilisation</b>	<p>This should occur during or before December 2012.</p>

<b>AM-NEP draft Guidance Note 7</b>	<b>Reference Group formation (including outline TOR)</b>
<b>To assist</b>	<p>AusAID Mekong leadership</p> <p>NGO partners</p> <p>AM-NEP Reference Group</p> <p>AM-NEP Coordinator</p> <p>AM-NEP PQRG</p> <p>AM-NEP ASU</p>
<b>Purpose of this note</b>	To assist AusAID and its NGO partners being supported through AM-NEP to establish and operate a governance mechanism for AM-NEP.
<b>Principles embodied in this note</b>	<p>The work of the Reference Group underpins all principles in partnership approaches for AM-NEP design, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identification of shared objectives and areas of potential collaboration</li> <li>2. recognition of the unique attributes, strengths and capacities each development actor brings</li> <li>3. recognition of the potential role of each actor (based on points 1 and 2) in addressing shared objectives</li> <li>4. recognition of the different contributions each partner makes and the different resources they mobilise to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>5. risk shared among partners</li> <li>6. business processes based upon varying roles and contributions of each partner and exhibit flexibility required to achieve shared objectives</li> <li>7. joint review of progress of each party to achieving overall objectives</li> <li>8. success shared between a range of partners.</li> </ol>
<b>Functions of the Reference Group</b>	

<p>Act as the highest level forum through which AusAID and its NGO partners will provide strategic guidance for AM-NEP throughout its implementation.</p> <p>Review progress of partnership approaches against agreed AM-NEP principles and recommend to AusAID and its NGO partners measures that can strengthen partnerships and help them overcome constraints.</p> <p>Assess progress and constraints with AM-NEP mechanisms and support measures, through (inter alia) the review of the annual AM-NEP report and feedback from AusAID and NGO partners. Also, as necessary, provide guidance to AusAID and AM-NEP Coordinator on appropriate measures to address issues.</p> <p>Assess options and make recommendations for AusAID approval on allocation of AM-NEP resources, to reflect changes that may be required to flexibly meet new opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>Make recommendations and provide direction on high-level review and evaluation arrangements for AM-NEP and ensure review and evaluation is conducted in a manner that maximises involvement and input from partners.</p>	
<p><b>Composition of the Reference Group</b></p> <p>The Reference Group should consist of the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• member of AusAID's Mekong Hub, to be nominated by the Minister-Counsellor (voting member)</li> <li>• NGO representative involved in the partnership programs from each country, to be nominated by NGOs involved in the partnership (voting members)</li> <li>• representative from each AusAID Post (voting members)</li> <li>• AM-NEP Coordinator (non-voting member)</li> <li>• person from PQRG (non-voting member).</li> </ul> <p>It is desirable that members be available for at least two years for continuity. The AM-NEP Coordinator and PQRG representative will act as resource persons for the Reference Group.</p>	
<p><b>Meetings of the Reference Group</b></p> <p>The fully constituted Reference Group should first meet at the first regional stakeholder forum. Selection of NGO representatives for the Group should be determined by partner NGOs at country level and how to do this should be determined by NGOs.</p> <p>The Reference Group will need to determine its own meeting schedule as a priority agenda item in the first meeting. As a minimum the group should meet face-to-face once a year (the opportunity presented by the annual review suits this). However, the Reference Group should meet in the interim by teleconference if required.</p> <p>Chairing arrangements should be determined by the Reference Group.</p>	
<b>Resourcing</b>	<p>The logistics, administrative, secretarial and financing arrangements for the Reference Group will be undertaken through the AM-NEP Coordinator and ASU under the direction of the Reference Group.</p>

## Annex 9: Selected documentation used during the design process

### Overall background reading

- *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—Delivering real results*, the Australian Government's response to the *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, 2011.
- *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness*, April 2011.
- Performance Assessment of Delivery Strategies, AusAID Quality & Performance Management Group, September 2011.
- AusAID Office of Development Assistance: Country Strategy Development Information Note, January 2009.
- *Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009–14*, AusAID, 2008.
- AusAID Safeguards and Crosscutting Issues, training handout, AusAID, May 2011.
- Gender equality in Australia's aid program—why and how, AusAID, March 2007.
- Manage Quality at Implementation, AusAID guideline current to December 2011.
- Completing a Quality at Entry Report, AusAID guideline current to December 2011.
- Design Team Kit, AusAID rules and tools, 2009.
- Engaging Not-for-Profit Organisations: Statement of International Development Practice Principles, AusAID, June 2009.
- AusAID NGO Cooperation Program: MEL Framework, draft December 2011.
- Survey on Civil Society Development in the Lao PDR: Current Practices and Potential for Future Growth, SNV and the Swiss Development Agency, July 2010.
- ADB civil society briefs for Cambodia 2005, Laos 2011, Vietnam 2011.
- Chapman, R 2008, 'A survey of Australian NGOs on development effectiveness', ACFID.
- Roche, C 2009, 'ACFID development effectiveness research report'.
- Hall, J and Howell, J 2010, Working Paper: Good Practice in Donor Engagement with Civil Society.

### Mekong and other NGO programs

- Mekong programs: Future engagement with NGOs, discussion paper, AusAID Mekong Section, 2011.
- AusAID – NGO Partnership: Discussion on options in the Mekong Region, meeting record, AusAID, 8 April 2011.
- AusAID – NGO Partnership: Options in the Mekong Region, AusAID, March 2011.
- Australian – Mekong Partnerships Program, concept note, September 2011.
- Cambodia – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement—Independent Completion Review — Integrated Rural Development and Mine Action Projects, AusAID, March 2011.
- Cambodia – Australia NGO Cooperation Agreements: Child Protection and Crime Prevention Projects—Mid-Term Review Report, AusAID, August 2008.
- Quality at Implementation Report for the Australia – Cambodia NGO Cooperation Agreements, AusAID, 2004.
- LANGOCA Independent Progress Review, AusAID, May 2011.
- VANGOCA Review, AusAID, June 2009.
- AACES Concept Design, AusAID, May 2010.
- AACES design workshop, Canberra workshop report, AusAID, 27–29 October 2010.
- AACES Program Design Document, AusAID, June 2011.
- AACES Lessons from the Africa design process.
- AACES Request for Tender, May 2010.

- Pacific Leadership Program, operating guidelines, version 4, AusAID, March 2011.
- Community-based Climate Change Action Grants Application Guidelines, AusAID, 2011.

### **AusAID programming in the Mekong**

- Australia – Laos development cooperation strategy, 2009–15, AusAID, December 2010.
- Australia’s strategic approach to aid in Cambodia 2010–15, AusAID, December 2010.
- Australia’s strategic approach to aid in Vietnam 2010–15, AusAID, December 2010.
- Annual program performance report 2010: Lao People’s Democratic Republic, AusAID, June 2011.
- Annual program performance report 2010: Vietnam, AusAID, March 2011.
- Annual program performance report: Cambodia 2008–09, AusAID, September 2009.
- Cambodia development cooperation report 2009, AusAID, August 2009.
- Lao People’s Democratic Republic development cooperation report 2009, AusAID, May 2010.
- Climate change delivery strategy, 2011–16, Australia – Vietnam Development Assistance Program, draft, AusAID 2011.
- AusAID Cambodia Health Sector Delivery Strategy, draft, AusAID, August 2011.

### **AusAID policy notes**

- Sustainable Economic Development: Private Sector Development, policy note (draft for consultation), AusAID, August 2011.
- Sustainable Economic Development: Improving Food Security, policy note, AusAID, August 2011.
- Sustainable Economic Development: Transport, Water, Urban, Energy and Communications, policy note, AusAID, August 2011.
- Effective Governance, policy note, draft, AusAID, August 2011.
- Promoting opportunities for all: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, draft policy note, AusAID, August 2011.
- Saving lives: improving the health of the world’s poorest people, draft policy note, AusAID, September 2011.
- Saving lives: Improving public health by increasing access to safe water and sanitation— policy note, AusAID, August 2011.

### **Interim documentation developed by the design team**

- Mission approach document, 8 November 2011.
- Field mission report, 5 December 2011.