



DFAT / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation
A joint committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and
Australian non-government organisations

Minutes of the 151st Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC) Meeting held on 22 March 2018

DFAT CDC Members

Megan Anderson (Chair)
Jon Burrough (DFAT)
Simon Cann-Evans (DFAT)

Secretariat

Rebecca Lysaght (DFAT)
Sarah Dreese (DFAT)
Rebecca Hamilton (ACFID – Minutes)

NGO Members

John Morley (Plan International Australia)
Kalene Caffarella (Australian Red Cross) (Dial in)
Anthea Spinks (Oxfam Australia)
Chris Jensen (World Vision)

Observers

Joanna Pradela (ACFID)
Rosemary Welsh (DFAT)

Apologies

Sally-Anne Vincent
Jocelyn Condon (ACFID)

10:30am – Meeting Opened

ITEM 1. Welcome Remarks

In opening remarks, the Chair:

- Welcomed participants to the meeting, Kalene via telephone; and recognised Chris Jensen for his first meeting as part of the CDC.
- Congratulated Jo on her new position and acknowledged this will be her last CDC.
- Acknowledged traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting took place, and paid respects to elders past and present;
- Noted apologies from Sally-Anne Vincent and Jocelyn Condon, also passing on best wishes to Jocelyn who is taking maternity leave.
- Thanked ACFID for acting as Secretariat in organising this meeting.

Conflict of interest check:

The Chair requested all meeting participants declare any conflicts of interest.

- Chris Jensen declared a conflict in reviewing World Vision Australia's (WVA) organisational review (OR) scheduled for this CDC meeting, and recent former employment with ADRA. The Chair requested Chris absent himself for the World Vision OR discussion, but that former employment with ADRA was not a conflict.
- Simon Cann-Evans reported his former employment with AustCare. The Chair noted this was not a conflict.
- John Morley noted Plan International occasionally partners with ActionAid, but in this case the Chair noted that, as a CDC representative John participates on behalf of the sector, not Plan International, and this is therefore not a conflict.

The Chair reminded participants that at any point in the discussion they should reassess their position and step out if necessary.

ITEM 2. Endorsement of minutes of the 150th CDC

The committee briefly discussed the minutes of the 150th meeting.

- No points of clarification on the 150th meeting minutes were declared.
- The Chair queried the inclusion of the phrase *"how ANGO's can bring value to the Australian Aid program"* on Page 3, and suggested this phrase be removed.
Removal of this phrase moved by Anthea Spinks.
Seconded by Jon Burrough.
- The Chair accepted the minutes of the 150th meeting, seconded by Jon Burrough.

AGREED ACTIONS:

- **150TH minutes to be amended to remove the phrase *"how ANGO's can bring value to the Australian Aid program"* from Page 3, dot point 7.**

ITEM 3. Update on action items

The Chair spoke to the item.

DFAT reported on action items from CDC 150th in October 2017.

- With regard to the question that NGO representatives tabled on Afghanistan (*Agenda Item 4: CDC to provide question regarding Afghanistan and OHS in writing to DFAT for response*), DFAT confirmed submission, and consideration of the question through the next Grant Agreement review process.

No further points were raised.

ITEM 4. Update from DFAT

Foreign Policy White Paper

The Chair spoke to the item

- The Chair thanked the NGO community and the CDC for their inputs into the Foreign Policy White Paper.
- The Foreign Policy White Paper has been released since the last CDC (November 2017). It presents a statement by the Australian Government with respect to our foreign policy objectives, and a strong statement around Australian values. Broadly speaking there has been wide-ranging and bi-partisan support for the key principles outlined within.
- Commitment to Australian values and the 'rules of the game' are the fundamental frame for how Australia will reach out to the world. The Foreign Minister appreciates the broad ranging inputs from members of the community, both in Australian and overseas. In the Humanitarian sector, the White Paper acknowledges ANGO's as vital partners for prosperity and security in the region. The White Paper also shows strong commitments to human rights and effective governance, social protections and the important role NGO's play in prosperity building service delivery.
- There is a strong focus on participation of the most disadvantaged, including people living with a disability, and on displacements being experienced in many regions. It is significant that development is mentioned in all chapters of the Paper.
- John Morley raised a question around the India focused Business Partnership Program window, and whether we would see the aid program's economic growth opportunities returning to countries like India, and questioned whether trade will start to lead our aid efforts. The Chair said that we should see policies that are more united between focus areas of trade, diplomacy and development. An example is the Pacific step-up.
- Aid for Trade targets are now met, and an announcement is expected by 23 March 2018.

Sexual exploitation and abuse in the Aid Program

The Chair spoke to the item:

- The Chair notes it is important to engage the CDC in this conversation, given the question goes to the heart of reasons why the CDC convenes - how we balance the need to protect with the requirements of red tape.
- The Government's view is that the exploitation of vulnerable persons by people purporting to help them represents an appalling abuse of power. The Chair noted that the mandatory ACFID code is built upon NGO recognition of this point.
- DFAT has written to all ANCP CEO's highlighting their responsibilities as recipients of Government funding and requesting them to review their own internal processes and report to DFAT, including with any instances of suspected abuse. There has been a solid response from the sector; DFAT will write again soon thanking those who have responded and prompting several larger agencies that have not yet reported.
- DFAT also contacted major contracting partners.
- The Foreign Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific have joined with other ministers in writing to the UN Secretary General. Ensuring protection of the most vulnerable is not just something to be mandated but something we need to do in concert

with others. DFAT and ACFID are working closely on a proposed review into sexual misconduct.

- The Chair noted OXFAM Australia's new whistleblowing process, and the introduction by the UN of mandatory carry of the No Tolerance card for UN staff – including peacekeepers. DFAT is participating strongly in an international donor working group on the issue. In addition, DFAT has provided technical input into DFID's new safeguarding taskforce through a DFAT technical advisor and sharing information about the ACFID Code and Child Protection work in Australia.
- Australia also chairs the Good Humanitarian Donorship Group—another area where Australia will play a leadership role on the sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid program issue.

Small Grant Scheme

The Chair spoke to the item.

- In the context of the White Paper, there was a lot of discussion about DFAT engagement, including how DFAT engages with the Australian community more broadly.
- Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) has about 800 organisations it works with in Australia and abroad. Extracting out of ACNC data, potentially around 1000 organisations are doing overseas work: ACFID has 125 members; DFAT has 57 accredited NGOs so it is important to investigate the mechanics in place to engage with more of the organisations doing this important work.
- To that end, DFAT has looked closely at other funding examples and is designing a new small grants program.
- Last year DFAT undertook a “listening tour” around Australia, meeting with over 100 organisations delivering development work overseas outside of ACFID's membership to get a sense of the breadth of work, DFAT found that there is a lot of capacity and potential in these organisations.
- The current plan is that ANCP agencies will not be eligible to apply for this scheme. From a governance structure perspective transparency, independence and due diligence are very important, as well as combining accessibility and investment in long-term projects.
- Travelling around the country proved useful for DFAT in terms of learning how DFAT should do outreach to community organisations and engage more people in conversations around community development capacity building.

AGREED ACTION:

- Megan Anderson to come back to the CDC with more detail on eligibility and scale for this proposed scheme, following official announcement.

Accreditation Review

Jon Burrough spoke to the item:

- Jon Burrough discussed the release of the ANCP Accreditation Review Discussion Paper. The consultation process within DFAT was extensive and rewarding – with areas becoming more

engaged and educated on the ANCP, making the team feel very much a part of the wider Department.

- Jon Burrough advised the Discussion Paper has also been shared with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the Office for Women.
- Jon Burrough went on to acknowledge that establishing an NGO Reference Group was a good idea. The Reference Group is now working with the Discussion Paper, which has also been sent out to all 57 ANCP CEO's.
- The Discussion paper will be endorsed at an out-of-session CDC, date to be confirmed. It depends on the level of feedback as to whether the Paper will be revised before this meeting.
- Letters have been distributed to relevant NGOs to postpone the next round of Organisational Reviews to allow time for preparation under the new criteria.
- At this point the CDC provided the following feedback to the paper:
 - John Morley raised the point on the importance of the Agency Profile (AP). Questions in the Agency Profile are very important and will need to be modified. For example, the Accreditation Manual states that agencies will get 12 months' notice, including the questions in the AP – it is great to have visibility on the accreditation criteria, but it would be more useful to see the actual questions that will be asked.
 - John Morley raised a query on the use of 'subject to' findings. Have these 'fallen out of fashion' and are therefore not widely used or has there been a more deliberate decision to cease use? The CDC expressed a clear desire to make definitive *in* or *out* decisions, with more clarity required around the 'red line' issues, but this can be re-visited as part of the review process.
 - 'Subject to' findings are useful as a tool, but definition is lacking in their application, especially in terms of leniency on 'red line' issues, such as child protection.
 - The Chair acknowledged the differentiation between the 'subject to' provision used by assessors and deliberations within the CDC – which retains the ability to use 'subject to' findings as they see fit.
- Chris Jensen raised that the definition of 'partners' needs more work, as there are a wide range of perspectives on what a 'partner' is. Some of the criteria in the profile refer to 'partner assessment', which required more clarity. On this point, the Chair went on to query the implication on localisation for the standards of partners and partner capacity assessments, and potential 'perverse incentives' for localisation.
- John Morley stated that often people are not clear on the fundamentals of localisation, as well as managing the risk at the right level. How capacity building and risk management are handled is important—the implication is that partners are absorbing the risk and it is flowing down, as opposed to situations where agencies are building the capacity of an organisation and therefore holding the risk.
- Simon Cann-Evans confirmed that it is the prime delivery partner that is responsible for quality assurance. DFAT is going through a due diligence review process with private sector and other non-aid programs, to develop mechanisms that balance the thirst for knowledge with the requirements of red tape.
- The Chair voiced her expectation that DFAT will review these issues as part of the Accreditation Review.

AGREED ACTION:

- **ACFID's Code team and DFAT's NGO team will meet to discuss the 'partnerships' definition.**

Role of Post Policy

Jon Burrough spoke to the Item:

- The Role of Post Policy was distributed via the ANCP Bulletin. DFAT is noticing a steady increase in engagement from Post in most cases. Majdie Hordern travelled to Nairobi in February to conduct a full day of training on ANCP matters, as part of a regional weeklong get together of Africa Post focal points. .

RDE Spot Check

Jon Burrough spoke to the item:

- The submission window for RDE is open; there are no changes to the forms and the deadline is 5pm Saturday 31 March.

ITEM 5. Other items tabled by NGO Representatives

The Chair invited NGO Representatives to table any additional items.

- John Morley raised a question about the accreditation assessor workforce, and how DFAT views the size of the current workforce, which appears to be small. Rebecca Lysaght responded to say DFAT is looking at increasing the workforce, but that in recent years there have not been delays attributable to the size of the assessor cohort. John Morley added that access to assessors is an issue for NGO's. The specialisation expertise seems to be concentrated in the hands of a small group, but in their preparations, NGO's are finding it difficult to access these specialists.

ITEM 7. Next Meeting

- The CDC agreed the next meeting is proposed for the 29th of May or the 1st of June.

AGREED ACTION:

- **DFAT will come back to CDC members on timing and arrangements for the out-of-session meeting regarding the Accreditation Review.**

Meeting Close 2.10pm.