



New Australian Volunteers Program

Preliminary Design Draft

**Prepared for the Australian Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade by Clear Horizon and
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Purpose

This document outlines the proposed approach to the design of the new Australian volunteer program. As such, the document should not be viewed as a fully developed design. It has been developed to provide external stakeholders with information on the direction of the design and elicit feedback on the feasibility of the overall proposed approach to implementation, as well as any issues or risks in need of further consideration through the design process. Key elements of the design outline we are seeking feedback on include:

- Proposed delivery model for the program
- Establishment of an Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group
- Governance and management arrangements
- Approaches to engaging the private sector and Australian partner organisations
- Approaches to building stronger linkages between individuals and institutions
- Approaches to designing and managing the volunteer Innovation Fund
- Outcomes, including diplomacy and development outcomes
- Views regarding achievable KPIs (indicators if not targets)
- Ways the resultant contractor performance can be linked to associated payments
- Possible scope and reach for the communications products from the Program

Design Context

The Australian aid program aims to promote prosperity, reduce poverty, and enhance stability through a strengthened focus on the Indo-Pacific region. The new aid paradigm is focused on promoting Australia's national interests and stability in the region by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in these countries¹. Effectively achieving these objectives requires strong linkages and partnerships with individuals, organisations and governments and sustained engagement with civil society and the private sector to catalyse change. It also requires leveraging the skills and expertise Australia has to offer to support sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

Volunteers are recognised globally for their unique and valuable contribution to development outcomes, and their ability to build strong and enduring relationships with diverse stakeholders at all levels. The UN recognises volunteering as a powerful means for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the resolution "Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond." It calls on member states and stakeholders to integrate volunteering into national and global strategies. The SDGs Plan of Action recognises that volunteering strengthens

¹ Australian Aid Strategy

ownership of the Sustainable Development agenda and requests that volunteerism be measured as part of broader monitoring of progress towards achieving the SDGs².

Volunteering not only strengthens cross-cultural awareness and understanding, but also provides opportunities for mutually beneficial learning and professional development through the sharing of skills and expertise. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade noted that Australian Volunteering contributes to “people to people linkages, builds local capacity across the Indo-Pacific, and provides valuable cross-cultural experiences for participants”³. Volunteer programs are also an effective vehicle for supporting country and sector level aid priorities, piloting new and innovative approaches to capacity development and institutional-level partnerships, as well as promoting broader public understanding of Australia’s aid investment.

The Australian government has been funding overseas volunteering for more than 60 years. Support was initiated through the establishment of Australian Volunteers Abroad (AVA). Subsequently, the Australian Government introduced a separate Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) program. In 2005 these two volunteer programs were consolidated to become the Australian Government Volunteer Program (AGVP), consisting of two separate program streams; AYAD and the Volunteer Program (VP). The Volunteer Innovation Fund (VIF) was also introduced to pilot twinning, exchanges and south-south volunteering. However, this program was discontinued due to program and branding fragmentation and in-country security concerns. A review of AGVP in 2009 recommended the design of a unified volunteer program that shifted focus from service delivery to capacity development and provide consistent recruitment, management and allowances across service providers. This resulted in the design of the current Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program (2011-2017). Based on recommendations from an Office of Development Evaluation (ODE) review of the AVID program in 2014, AYAD was retired with opportunities for young Australians aged 18-30 to volunteer consolidated under AVID.

The design of the next phase of Australian Government support for overseas volunteering (2018-2028) will be based on lessons learned over the past 60 years of investment in volunteer programs and will firmly align with Australia’s aid policy.

Rationale for Investment

The current program, Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID), has an overarching goal of contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction, and advancing Australia’s reputation and relationships in partner countries⁴. Since May 2011,

² Achieving the global goals: why volunteers are important, UN Volunteers, <http://www.unv.org/en/what-we-do/mdgspost-2015/doc/achieving-the-global-goals.html>, 22 March 2016.

³ Partnering for the Greater Good: The role of the private sector in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty in the Indo-Pacific region, June 2015, Page 73.

⁴ AVID Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, DFAT, July 2015.

over 5000 volunteers have been supported in over 40 countries in the Pacific, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Middle East. In 2013-14, over 2000 volunteers were on assignment in over 1,350 host organisations, with placements in international and local NGOs, government bodies, United Nations agencies, educational institutions and the private sector.

Volunteer assignments support development outcomes and public diplomacy across the aid portfolio through strengthening the capacity of partner organisations and building linkages and relationships with communities, organisations and governments both during and post assignment. Currently, 63% of volunteer assignments align with the Australian Government's country / regional Aid Investment Plans (AIPs), with volunteers working in the key sectors of social infrastructure and services, governance, health, education and environmental protection⁵. In addition, volunteering provides reciprocal benefits to Australian volunteers in terms of cross-cultural understanding, professional development and future career opportunities. Fifty-nine percent of Australian volunteers surveyed in 2012 stated that volunteering led to career benefits and approximately one-third of returned volunteers are now working in international development⁶.

With a current global annual budget of approximately 39.6 million, the AVID program is relatively low cost compared to other Australian aid bilateral programs, as well as other DFAT global programs including Australia Awards and New Colombo Plan. A future program has the potential to be highly visible and provides significant opportunity for the promotion of Australia's aid program both in Australia and internationally. Volunteering contributes to bilateral relationships between Australia and other countries, particularly through the development of strong and enduring people-to-people and organisational partnerships. A volunteer program can enable diverse partnerships that include the private sector (small, medium and large), civil society (including health and education services, academic institutions, NGOs, and others), and governments. It can also provide opportunities for piloting new areas of Australian government support and be a flexible mechanism that can be scaled up or down in response to changing aid priorities and budget availability.

⁵ Evaluation of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) Program, ODE, January 2014

⁶ Australian Volunteers for International Development: an evaluation of the contribution that volunteers make to development effectiveness, ODE, March 2014.

Investment Description

Australia invests in volunteers because it has proven to be a worthwhile contribution to achieving development outcomes in our partner countries. It is also an important public diplomacy opportunity, as volunteers build relationships with people and organisations in our partner countries, which often endure well beyond the volunteering assignment. Through cultural, knowledge and professional skills exchanges (including in civil society, government and the private sector), meaningful engagement and trust is built and strengthened on a range of individual, community and organizational levels. This, in turn, promotes reciprocal cultural understanding, and the good development work of volunteers supports positive perceptions of Australia internationally. The new Australian volunteers program will therefore remain part of DFAT's People to People portfolio of programs. .

The program will **achieve** and be **measured** against the following **End of Program**

Outcomes:

1. Overseas partner organisations (OPOs) are supported to by Australia to achieve their development objectives;
2. Individual Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally;
3. The public and governments in Australia and overseas better appreciate the value of volunteering.

By successfully achieving these anticipated outcomes, the new Australian volunteer program aims to **contribute** to the following **broader development and diplomacy goals**:

1. The Australian Government achieving its development objectives
2. Australians becoming more globally literate and connected, particularly in our region
3. Australian aid is perceived positively, both in Australia and internationally

There are three important assumptions underpinning the end of program outcomes and broader goals. The first is that well developed (relevant to Australian aid program and to OPOs), appropriately resourced (volunteer competencies), and well delivered (support for volunteer) volunteer assignments, will contribute to Australia achieving its development objectives. The second assumption proposes that Volunteers sharing their experiences with others in their personal and professional networks is expected to have a positive impact on Australians' perceptions of developing countries and the aid program. The third assumes that achieving Australia's development objectives will contribute to 'Australian aid being perceived positively in Australia and internationally'. The new volunteer program will increase opportunities to showcase the work of Australian volunteers in contributing to development objectives. If volunteering through this program is highly valued in Australia, it will be perceived as an important element in career development.

A detailed theory of change and program logic will be included in the full design document.

Principles for Implementation

The new Australian Volunteer program will be guided by the following principles:

- **Contributing to the betterment of the organisations and communities** where they are placed, and representing Australia with integrity.
- **Complementing the Australian aid program**, its objectives and geographic spread.
- **An increased focus on inclusiveness and diversity** to build a more representative cohort of volunteers and returned volunteers and widen the appeal of the program, including through:
 - More opportunities for young, qualified Australians to participate and learn further career skills including in international development
 - More opportunities for gender, disability and indigenous inclusion through volunteering.
- **Embracing innovative approaches**, testing and piloting new ideas, and working with multiple sectors and stakeholders, including government, private sector and civil society groups. with a view to bring successful innovations to scale through the program or through the broader bilateral, thematic and global programs.
- **Fostering and strengthening partnerships** between individuals, overseas partner organisations and Australian partner organisations.
- **Promoting global literacy** and cultural understanding within Australia.
- **A focus on increasing visibility** for the Australian aid program in Australia and overseas including through clear branding, the Returned Australian Volunteer Network (RAVN) and program innovation.
- **A capacity / capability development approach** to ensure sustainable development outcomes.
- **Continuous improvement** to capture learning through on going monitoring and purposeful, targeted evaluations.

Delivery Approach

The new Australian Volunteer program will have a 10-year design horizon. This relatively long horizon reflects the Australian Government's long term commitment to international volunteering (over 60 years), and provides for program stability throughout implementation. The new program will retain and further build on a number of key effective elements of the current AVID program, including:

- DFAT program standards and standard operating procedures will continue to guide the program, however, these will be revised to reflect changes to implementation and management arrangements in the new program.

- The new program will further develop the Returned Australian Volunteers Network (RAVN), maintain majority alignment of volunteer assignments with Aid Investment Plans (AIPs) and continue to focus on capacity development.

From research and feedback gathered during the Desk Review (Annex 1) and in-country design missions (Annex 2), the new Australian volunteer program design is considering incorporating changes in the following areas:

- Delivery model: There is a strong value for money case to shift to a single implementing organisation or consortium, in order to increase administrative efficiency and overall program coherence.
- The financing model and M&E approach: The new program must articulate results and impact in order to improve visibility and utility of the program, and would like to shift from focussing on volunteer numbers to a more balanced approach that enables and capture both qualitative and quantitative outcomes.
- Flexibility, innovation and private sector engagement : the new program is seeking to establish improved mechanisms and approaches to respond quickly to changing Australian Government priorities; increase the number of partnerships between Australian Partner Organisations (APOs) and Overseas Partner Organisations (OPOs); identify meaningful opportunities for collaboration with other DFAT global people-to-people programs; further leverage public diplomacy opportunities; and provide more opportunities for addressing gender, disabilities, youth and indigenous engagement through volunteering.

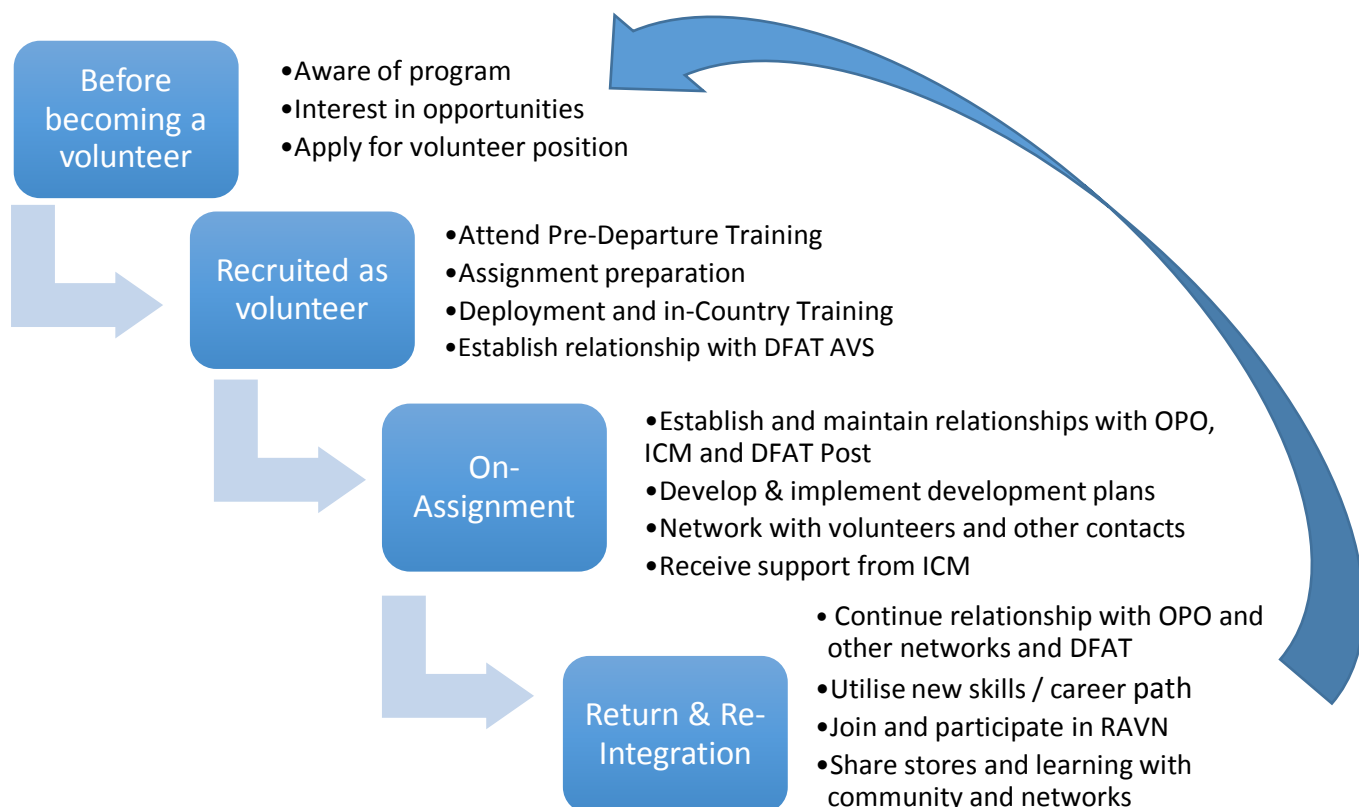
A range of implementation options were considered during the design process, including delivery through multiple partners; establishing an autonomous entity; and implementing a grants program. Through analysis of the risks and benefits of the various delivery options and in-depth internal consultation within DFAT, contracting to a single organisation or consortia was deemed the most effective and efficient approach to implementation. This approach would ensure overall cost-effectiveness and value for money and allow DFAT to focus on the strategic direction of the program, while outsourcing implementation to a specialist organisation.

Under this arrangement, the implementing partner could be a managing contractor, not-for-profit, a private sector group, or consortium, and will be selected through an open tender procurement process. The program is likely to be delivered through an initial 5-year contract from late 2017 to late 2022, with the option of a five-year extension until 2027, subject to a full review and evaluation of the program.

Volunteer Lifecycle

The new Australian Volunteers program will be designed to both support the whole of life cycle of a volunteer, and to leverage it to achieve the program outcomes. Figure 3 describes the stages: the volunteer life-cycle starts with an individual becoming aware of the program, and continues through the volunteer placement and return to Australia.

Figure 1. Volunteer lifecycle



Delivery of the new Australian volunteer program will revolve around the volunteer lifecycle as depicted in Figure 3 above. Volunteer assignments will vary in duration depending on the specific capacity development needs of an Overseas Partner Organisation (OPO). Scoping and shaping a volunteer assignment together with an OPO will determine the needs of the OPO and therefore inform the length of assignment. Assignments may consist of a single, or a series, of short term inputs, or may be longer term, of one to two years.⁷

The new Australian volunteers program requires engagement with audiences in Australia and overseas, and there is a strong case for the new program to be implemented by a contracted provider(s), with strategic direction from DFAT and overseen by an Advisory Panel/Board. Implementation of the program by the contracted organization(s) will require wide ranging skill sets in development effectiveness, strategic management, diplomacy,

⁷ Based on consultations with volunteers and OPOs during the design process, in most cases a minimum assignment length of one-year is required to achieve capacity development outcomes, with two years being the optimal length of time to achieve sustainable outcomes.

communications, recruitment, pastoral care and organisational needs analysis. The new program design will propose three components that will each include a series of inter-related functions. All components will need to work together to ensure that the program operates to maximum effectiveness. The three components will be: Strategic Management; Public Diplomacy; and Innovation. Each of these components will be different in size in terms of personnel and budgets required for implementation. The functions that will be included under each component are:

Component One: Strategic Management

- Strategic and Annual Planning
- Volunteer recruitment, selection, and mobilisation
- In-country Volunteer Placement and Management
- In-country Overseas Partner Organisation (OPO) liaison and needs assessment
- Volunteer networking and learning, in country and in Australia
- Achieving development outcomes

Component Two: Diplomacy

- Returned Australian Volunteers Network
- Government to Government Diplomacy
- Australian Public Diplomacy
- Marketing and Communications
- People-to-People & Institutional Diplomacy

Component Three: Innovation

- Innovation Fund
- Private Sector Engagement and Investment

Component One: Strategic Management

Component One: Strategic Management is focused on achievement of development outcomes, and outcomes for volunteers. The functions will include the bulk of the work involved in ensuring the new Australian volunteer program is effective, which in turn will ensure the program maintains its high standing and credibility.

STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL PLANNING

The new Australian volunteer program will continue to contribute to Australian aid program development outcomes by complimenting and enhancing the development effectiveness of the rest of the Australian aid program globally. Through majority alignment with bilateral and regional Aid Investment Plans (AIPs), volunteer assignments will continue to support the objectives of sector programs and strengthen relationships required to achieve sustainable development impacts. To enable on-going alignment and complementarity with aid priorities and other DFAT programs, the new program will continue to undertake comprehensive strategic planning processes with all key stakeholders both in Australia and

overseas. Higher level strategic direction and policy for the program will be determined, monitored and adjusted through the establishment of an Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group, that will be chaired by DFAT (see section *Governance Arrangements* below for more information on the purpose, role and responsibilities of the proposed new Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group for the program).

Based on higher level direction and policies, country specific annual planning processes will be led by DFAT Posts with secretariat support from in-country management (ICM) teams. All key stakeholders will be invited to join the annual planning process, including DFAT AVS. The Annual Planning process will identify priorities, new potential partners and/or sectors for exploration in the year ahead as well as timelines for implementation.

The Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group, together with the Annual Planning process, guide program implementation and management at the strategic level (Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group) and operational level (Annual Planning at Posts), and identify new priorities and approaches required to ensure achievement of the program outcomes. They will also be key audiences for program monitoring and reporting.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND MOBILISATION

Recruiting and placing a diverse range of skilled and experienced Australians, with personal attributes required to successfully complete a volunteer assignment, is critical to program effectiveness. The new Australian volunteer program will build on recruitment approaches and strategies established under the current AVID program to ensure a broad spectrum of Australians with diverse skills and backgrounds have the opportunity to apply for volunteer positions. In addition, targeting, promotion and recruitment strategies will leverage the networks and recruitment mechanisms of new Australian Partner Organisations (APOs) and private sector companies involved in the program.

Recruitment strategies and selection processes will be robust, transparent and merit-based to guarantee the selection of quality volunteers committed to the program. Recruitment processes will be inclusive, and there will be targeted opportunities for indigenous, people with disabilities, and young Australians to participate in the program and develop their careers. In line with the strategic direction of the program, the implementing partner will work with DFAT to develop both broad promotional materials for the Australian Volunteer program as well as conduct more targeted promotional activities for specific volunteer assignments. This will ensure the program attracts the right applicants and achieves the program's development and public diplomacy outcomes.

Recruitment processes will be predictable, widely published, and completed in a timely manner to avoid prolonged time lags between the identification and development of volunteer assignments, and the placement and mobilisation of volunteers in-country (often between 6-9 months). As part of the recruitment strategy, the implementing partner will be expected to develop a plan for minimising the recruitment period and effectively managing any changes in the capacity development needs of OPOs. Where possible volunteers will

also be connected with OPOs (and their previous volunteers) prior to mobilisation to initiate relationship building, planning and preparation for the volunteer assignment. The ability to source niche skillsets quickly through targeted and specialised recruitment is also critical.

All successful candidates will continue to undertake pre-departure training. The training will be guided by DFAT regarding content and delivered by the managing contractor and with the involvement of DFAT at each session. The training will continue to follow the DFAT Standard on Training and Preparation of Volunteers, however, training will be enhanced to provide more comprehensive country-specific information and include a broad range of core topics including, but not limited to, understanding the Australian aid paradigm; goals and outcomes of the new Australian volunteer program; capacity development approaches; cross-cultural communication; gender and social inclusion; child protection; disabilities; risk, WHS; security and emergency management.

IN-COUNTRY MANAGEMENT

Program effectiveness and volunteer experiences are highly correlated with the quality of in-country management (ICM). ICM teams perform a wide range of tasks including identification and design of assignments, planning and liaison with DFAT Posts and with OPOs, logistics and security, volunteer networking and support in-country, and so forth. Therefore, ICMs need to be resourced with the right mix of skills, experience and networks to support all stages of the volunteer life-cycle. The core strategic elements of in-country management will include the following:

- *Planning and Liaison with DFAT Post*

ICM teams will work closely with DFAT at Post and support their ability to engage with the program. They will undertake preparatory work necessary for the success of the Annual Planning process, and ensure that Monitoring and Evaluation data is collected and fed into program reporting. DFAT Posts will be actively involved in OPO selection and the development of volunteer assignments through engagement in Annual Planning and regular meetings with the ICM team. The ICM team will ensure that volunteers have opportunities to engage with Posts, attend events (including diplomatic events, seminars, training events, etc), and encourage positive relationships between volunteers, Posts, and other aid programs.

- *Identification and Engagement with Overseas Partner Organisations (OPOs)*

The new program will develop and implement a strategy for engagement with OPOs in each country. This strategy will align with country-specific DFAT Aid Investment Plans (AIPs) however; while retaining sufficient flexibility for the program to remain responsive to changing needs and priorities. While there is likely to be a number of strategic priority OPOs working in specific sectors that the program will engage with, promotional activities will be undertaken in-country to broaden the range of OPOs engaging with the program. Clear selection criteria for OPOs will be developed and OPO's will be selected through an open,

transparent and accountable process. The in-country management teams will manage all engagement with OPOs and maintain and foster strong linkages and relationships between OPOs and all other stakeholders, including DFAT Posts.

- *Development of the Volunteer Assignment*

Identifying and developing volunteer assignments that reflect the organisational and individual capacity development needs of an OPO is critical to successfully achieving development outcomes through the program. Volunteer assignments will be driven by OPOs to foster ownership of the volunteer assignment from the start. Development of the assignment collaboratively with the OPO is both a process and a goal as it requires OPOs to undertake an assessment of their own capacity development needs and forms the foundation of the volunteer lifecycle. In-country management teams will work collaboratively with OPOs to undertake organisational capacity needs assessments, prioritise needs and identify the types of skills and experience a volunteer will require to undertake an assignment with a specific OPO. Assignments will be developed based on a clear plan with individual OPOs and will include an exit strategy. The level of investment will vary between OPOs depending on whether the OPO has a long-term strategy in place and the existing resourcing and capacity of the OPO. OPOs engaged in the program will be actively involved in the process and expected to articulate existing capacities, capacity development needs, readiness for hosting a volunteer and a clear strategy for how the volunteer will be utilised to sustainably improve individual and organisational capacity development. Volunteer assignments will be reviewed collaboratively prior to volunteer mobilisation to ensure the assignment remains relevant and meets the capacity needs of the OPO. It is important that the time between selection and mobilisation is significantly less than experienced under the current program, in order to ensure that assignments remain relevant to the needs of OPOs and volunteers. Once mobilised in-country, the volunteer will work with the OPO to further review and refine the assignment.

- *Review of the Volunteer Assignment*

Based on consultation with a broad range of organisations and volunteers throughout the design process, it is evident that there is a clear volunteer journey regardless of whether a 3 month or 2-year assignment is undertaken. The assignment has a natural cycle that can be divided into three phases: a first phase of understanding the OPO and building relationships and trust; a second phase of refining or redeveloping the assignment; and a third phase of implementing the assignment. It is important for the new program to prepare volunteers for this cycle prior to mobilisation in order to manage volunteer expectations and minimise the risk of volunteer dissatisfaction. Facilitating early communication between volunteers and OPOs will help to mitigate this however, in-country management teams will be required to provide continuous monitoring and undertake periodic reviews to ensure terms of reference remain relevant. DFAT Posts will also regularly engage with volunteers to provide broader regional or country and sectoral strategic context so that volunteer tasks continue to contribute to the achievement of capacity development outcomes.

- *Safety and Security*

DFAT policies and standards will continue to guide the management of volunteer safety and security while on assignment in-country. The implementing partner will be responsible for assessing and monitoring the safety and security of volunteers' in-country at both work and home locations. The implementing partner will be required to establish safety and security systems and processes that comply with DFAT policy and undertake security assessments, regular safety and security monitoring and incident reporting and management. Ongoing compliance with DFAT safety and security policies and standards will be monitored regularly.

NETWORKING AND LEARNING

Networking and learning is multi-layered and operates across all levels of the program and between all stakeholders. On an individual level, volunteers (prior to departure and in-country) will have access to online learning on a broad range of thematic areas, and access to returned volunteers as mentors. In-country management teams will provide a range of services that assist volunteers and OPOs to take advantage of the shared learning and networking that the program presents. For example, ICM teams will maintain a database of potential funding opportunities for OPOs, and disseminate useful information to volunteers on a regular basis. They will also provide volunteers and OPOs with information on relevant learning and networking events and where possible, support their participation. ICM teams will host networking and learning events aimed at connecting volunteers and building relationships in-country, and connecting OPOs with like-minded organisations. They will also provide opportunity for DFAT Posts to engage with volunteers and OPOs.

The ICM teams will facilitate linkages between OPOs in-country and regionally and support ongoing partnerships between OPOs and APOs established through the program. Stronger linkages between OPOs, and between OPOs and APOs, will enhance the overall volunteer experience by increasing connectivity, networks and shared learning between volunteers and OPOs. This additional support in-country will contribute to the broader capacity development objectives of OPOs, and therefore the achievement of the Australian Volunteer program development outcomes.

The Returned Australian Volunteer Network (RAVN), established by DFAT in 2015, will continue to be managed by DFAT AVS. Volunteers will be connected to RAVN from the start of an assignment and remain a member beyond the life of the overseas volunteer placement. The network will provide volunteers with access to a range of information and linkages to each other, and to the Australian government, through events and online social media platforms. The RAVN will be a gateway for volunteers to seek opportunities to share their stories and promote the program through community events, seminars and other communications forums. The RAVN platform will also provide volunteers with opportunities to forge linkages with other global people-to-people programs such as the Australia Awards and New Colombo Plan.

ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Australian volunteer program focuses on achieving development outcomes, primarily by strengthening the capacity of individuals, organisations and/or institutions. Successful placements are often the result of preliminary work between ICM teams and OPOs – identifying strategic, organisational, and human resource capacity needs. This enables the volunteer sending organisation to target the right people for the job, and affords OPOs the opportunity of undertaking some organisational reflection and strategic thinking. In some cases, capacity development may not be the pathway to achieving the development outcome. For example, sometimes a highly technical quick fix can achieve good outcomes (for example in the application of IT or a business system). However, capacity development is an effective approach to sustainable development outcomes and utilised widely in volunteer programs.

Volunteers support individuals within OPOs to meet their professional goals, and provide them with an opportunity to model new approaches and ways of working that serve to improve the overall efficiency, effectiveness and strategic goals of an OPO. Volunteers bring new ideas for systems and processes that may be adopted by OPOs, and can help OPOs identify institutional constraints and potential solutions. The bedrock upon which successful development outcomes are achieved is the relationship between the volunteer and their OPO.

The experience of working with an overseas organisation in a cross-cultural environment provides a significant learning experience for Australian volunteers themselves. They are exposed to new ways of working in often isolated environments with minimal resourcing. This builds resilience and requires volunteers to explore innovative approaches and solutions to complex issues. As a result, the skills acquired through a volunteer assignment develop the capacity of volunteers that endure beyond the life of their placement. For example, volunteers often learn to better adapt to changes in the workplace and develop communication and interpersonal skills that are transferable to future careers. The volunteer experience also builds people-to-people linkages and networks that both support future careers for volunteers as well as broader Australian global literacy.

As a key outcome of the new Australian volunteer program, in-country Management teams and volunteers will require a strong theoretical and practical understanding of effective capacity development principles, approaches, strategies and tools. Volunteer assignments will need to be tailored to specific contexts and achieving capacity development outcomes will likely require a mix of interventions at the individual, organisational and institutional levels. Some of the key factors that will need to be considered when developing and implementing a volunteer assignment will include: internal and external incentives that motivate people and organisations; the types of capacity requirements; the supply and demand for capacity building solutions; contextual constraints, enabling factors and opportunities (including existing capacities); the political economy and resilience of an organisation; coherence and linkages between capacity building interventions; and the time

and commitment required for change to occur. Local ownership, internal leadership, and the identification of “champions” or agents of change within an OPO will be critical to success and the sustainability of capacity development outcomes.

The new Australian volunteer program will promote a range of fit-for-purpose approaches and tools for achieving development outcomes, underpinned by a consistent and robust methodology that can be applied across the program to enable continuous learning and improvement. In-Country Management teams will be resourced to conduct participatory assessments to identify the most appropriate approaches. Capacity development approaches could include one-on-one mentoring with individuals and groups within an organisation; a single volunteer assigned to multiple OPOs; multiple volunteers assigned to a single OPO; or a team of volunteers assigned to work on a single development issue/project. Prior to mobilisation, volunteers will undertake short trainings in capacity development and have access to a range of tools and online resources to support their assignments. Volunteers will also undertake pre-mobilisation language training including through online language learning portals where appropriate and relevant to the assignment.

Component Two: Diplomacy

The new Australian volunteer program will continue to provide a platform for Australian aid diplomacy in Australia and overseas. Volunteers play an important role in demonstrating Australia and Australians, engagement in aid and development overseas. The placement of volunteers across multiple sectors and diverse geographic locations will continue to extend the reach and visibility of the Australian aid program, build and strengthen strategic development partnerships and increases the overall number of beneficiaries impacted by Australia’s aid investment in-country. The broader goals of the new Australian volunteer program will support the DFAT Public Diplomacy Strategy by enhancing Australia’s reputation and relationships in partner countries and promoting a positive perception of Australia. Through volunteers, the Australian Government can demonstrate how its aid investment contributes to prosperity, poverty reduction and enhanced stability in the region. In addition, volunteers directly and indirectly support improved global literacy within Australia and are valued for their ability to promote the aid program more broadly to the Australian public.

RETURNED AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS NETWORK (RAVN)

The Returned Australian Volunteer Network (RAVN) will continue to grow and become a key platform for increased public diplomacy, domestic advocacy and overall program visibility. The RAVN will achieve the following objectives:

- Building vibrant networks of influence and strengthening engagement with domestic communities and stakeholders to help build recognition and awareness of our regional and global context, and Australia’s international development work overseas.

- Building connections and networks through increasing Australian Government interaction with volunteers throughout the program cycle (including Post, DFAT state offices, DFAT Canberra Office and Members of Parliament).
- Promoting returned Australian volunteers as skilled and committed professionals and the Australian volunteer program as a valuable career qualification/experience.
- A coordinated approach for Australian Government engagement with volunteers in-country and in-Australia and other alumni of international government programs.
- Consultation with volunteers on program directions to inform strategic and annual planning processes.

Public diplomacy efforts under the new Australian volunteer program can be divided into three key areas, as outlined below. Successfully achieving these public diplomacy outcomes will require systematic, robust marketing and communication strategies implemented at all levels throughout the volunteer life cycle and beyond. The implementing partner will be required to work in close collaboration with DFAT AVS Canberra and DFAT Posts to develop these strategies and support delivery through the provision of operational, logistics, and event management support, and actively identifying new opportunities and innovative approaches to achieving diplomacy outcomes. Potential mechanisms for achieving outcomes in each of these three diplomacy areas is presented in Table 1 below.

GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT DIPLOMACY

Australian volunteers support government-to-government diplomacy through the positive impression of Australia that they demonstrate through their commitment and efforts to assist development in partner countries. Governments and decision-makers in host countries see and appreciate the contribution and impact of the program. However, in the absence of efforts to draw attention to the work of volunteers it can sometimes be invisible, particularly in larger countries. Involving partner governments in the volunteer program through increased promotion of positive volunteer stories in-country, media events, partner government and volunteer attendance at bilateral events, and linking volunteer assignments to other bilateral development programs, will help to build recognition of Australia's aid investment in overseas countries and strengthen positive perceptions of Australia. A renewed focus on ensuring volunteers have a well-developed understanding of Australian aid objectives in-country and more specifically, the goals and outcomes of the new Australian volunteer program, will also ensure volunteers are able to clearly articulate what they are doing and how it fits into the broader Australian aid story.

The flexibility of a volunteer program to respond to emerging priorities and needs provides DFAT Posts with an important mechanism for promoting Australian aid with partner governments. The new program will identify ways to more effectively leverage volunteers when partner governments seek Australia's support in new areas of investment.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian volunteer program provides significant opportunity for public diplomacy and advocacy within Australia. The experience of volunteering provides Australians with cross-cultural awareness and important global literacy skills that support future careers as well as broader global literacy amongst the Australian population, particularly by sharing their experiences with other Australians. Promoting the contribution of the Australian volunteer demonstrates to the Australian public the impact of the program and showcases how the program engages with organisations, overseas individuals, communities and partner governments. Furthermore, it increases domestic visibility and awareness of how the Australian aid program contributes to increased prosperity and stability. Public diplomacy efforts in the new Australian volunteer program will seek to increase awareness of the program to prospective volunteers and Australian partner organisations, extending the reach and effectiveness of the program.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONAL DIPLOMACY

The new Australian volunteer program will continue to support people-to-people and institutional linkages to contribute to a positive perception of Australia and increase institutional connectivity between Australia and partner countries. The new program will include in-Australia exchanges, offered to longstanding Overseas Partner Organisations, to provide further opportunities for building people-to-people and institutional linkages between Australia and partner countries. In addition, the program will identify meaningful opportunities for engagement with other global people-to-people program public diplomacy platforms, including through collaboration with the Australia Awards and New Colombo Plan programs, to forge further linkages between Australians and individuals from other countries.

Table 1: Diplomacy Matrix

Type of Diplomacy	Mechanisms	Responsible Entity
Government-to-Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated engagement between volunteers, in-country management teams and Posts to ensure DFAT Post officers can effectively promote work of volunteers with partner government. Promotional events involving volunteers and partner governments. Development of marketing materials for Posts Holding pre-departure briefing on state-by-state basis, held at the DFAT State and Territory Office. State Directors to deliver key address and AVS to support with country-specific briefing. Joint Post and Partner Government field visits Disseminating information through local and national media Sharing volunteer stories with partner governments Involvement of volunteers in other people-to-people program 	DFAT Posts/DFAT AVS Canberra/Contracted Organisation

	events and public diplomacy initiatives in-country	
Public Diplomacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returned Australian Volunteer Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFAT coordination of returned volunteer events across Australia Engaging returned volunteers in DFAT events (speakers, participants) Engaging returned volunteers as mentors for new volunteers Members of parliament/DFAT state offices hosting events for returned volunteers in electorates DFAT presence on returned volunteer social media platforms Targeting employers and businesses to support returned volunteer careers and promote the program Developing marketing materials and improving visibility and branding as a DFAT program Ongoing program of communications with all stakeholders via social media and e-magazine. Development and promotion of volunteer stories through a range of media forums Facilitated engagement with other people-to-people program events and public diplomacy initiatives Identification of joint diplomacy activities with other people-to-people programs. DFAT AVS participation in pre-departure training for volunteers/DFAT Post participation in in-country training DFAT AVS participation in contracted organisation returned volunteer activities 	DFAT AVS Canberra/DFAT Posts/Contracted Organisation
People-to-People & Institutional Diplomacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of positive stories about ongoing returned volunteer and OPO linkages and activities Dissemination of positive stories about partnerships between OPOs and APOs In-Australia exchanges Promotional events to showcase partnership between OPOs and APOs. Collaboration with other DFAT people-to-people programs including joint alumni and returned volunteer events. 	DFAT AVS Canberra/ DFAT Posts/ Australian Partner Organisations/ Contracted Organisation

Innovation

The new aid paradigm emphasises the importance of encouraging innovation to identify creative and clever ways to achieve improved results through the delivery of Australian aid. A focus on supporting innovative approaches across the Australian aid portfolio and, more specifically, through the Innovation Exchange and Innovation Fund, aims to identify and scale-up effective ways of working and position Australia as a leading international innovation incubator. The new aid paradigm identifies partnerships, exchanges and

technical assistance as key to supporting new ideas, local innovation and reform processes in the region, and unlocking new sources of funding.

INNOVATION FUND AND PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The new Australian volunteer program is uniquely placed to support the piloting of new approaches and investments that deepen partnerships and support innovations across Australia's aid programs. To that end, the new program will include an Innovation Fund, to allow new partnerships between Australian partner and Overseas partner organisations, and to incorporate new ideas, approaches and diversity in volunteer sending outside the scope of activities of the implementing partner and DFAT. The implementing partner will work with DFAT to design and manage the fund, collaborate and share learning and outcomes. The Innovation Fund may tailor its offerings to seek different kinds of ideas and input from non-traditional stakeholders, resulting in a number of windows of opportunity. Some ideas may include:

- a. piloting scalable partnerships between private sector and community organisations, or between volunteers and Australian scholarship alumni
- b. crowd funding to support the work of OPOs where volunteers are placed
- c. APO/OPO exchanges
- d. matching or co-funding arrangements

Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E context

In recent years the volunteer program M&E has lacked breadth (quantitative) and depth (qualitative) information, making it difficult to report on overall program achievements. It is important that the monitoring and evaluation framework in the new program helps drive continuous improvements and clearly identifies program achievements. The framework must be relevant to all program stakeholders including DFAT, Posts, the implementing partner, the Australian and overseas partners and volunteers. Furthermore, outputs from monitoring and evaluation activities such as case studies, most significant change stories and reports, must be relevant to the Australian public, private sector, government and non-government sector more broadly.

Purpose and scope

The scope of the M&E framework will be for the entire 10 year program. The audience for the monitoring and evaluation framework will be the advisory panel/strategic reference group, program implementing partner, DFAT Canberra and DFAT posts. Those that will need to be kept informed about the monitoring and evaluation results, findings and recommendations are the overseas and Australian partners, volunteers, the Australian public, private sector, government and non-government sector more broadly.

The purpose of the M&E framework will be three-fold:

1. Accountability to the funder – DFAT and the Australian public
2. Program performance and continuous improvement – DFAT and the program implementing partner
3. Learning and contribution to the volunteer community – DFAT and the program implementing partner

Areas of specific interest for M&E include the quality of the delivery (complementarity with DFAT aid policy and standards for delivering volunteer programs), the program's efficiency in delivering its activities, the reach of the program (geographically, issues, demographic of volunteers, types of partners, etc.), the program's effectiveness in achieving its end of program outcomes and learning. It is also anticipated that value for money will be an important aspect of reporting and that this will be measured by assessing program performance against quality and efficiency indicators. In addition, with a renewed focus on inclusivity, it is expected that the M&E framework will include indicators for measuring how effectively the program is contributing to gender, disabilities and youth and indigenous engagement.

M&E approach

The approach to M&E for the program will need to be:

- **Scalable** to enable M&E on for volunteer projects of different scales from individual assignments to multi-stakeholder volunteer projects.
- **Agile** to enable both a quick description of the entire program's performance (breadth) and to capture the diversity and depth of the impacts of the program.
- **Inclusive** in its development and implementation to be of meaning to a diverse audience and meet DFAT's cross cutting themes reporting expectations.
- **Responsive** to changing political, economic, social and environmental context both in Australian and overseas.
- **Evaluative**: the evaluations of the program must enable a judgement on the program's performance.
- **Produce stories** of change: the monitoring of the program must enable the harvesting of stories of change from all stakeholders.

Key evaluation questions

We propose three overarching key evaluation questions to guide the monitoring and evaluation activities of the program. These are:

1. **How relevant is the program to the Australian Aid program and to Australians?**
This question will look at both the programs alignment with DFAT's cross-cutting policies and strategies (gender, disability, public diplomacy, private sector engagement) and aid program and how well it meets the expectations of the Australian public.

2. **How well is the program being delivered?** This questions will look at whether the program meets good practice standards, is being delivered efficiently and achieving its immediate outcomes, if the program is innovating and improving and whether the program can be assessed as value for money.
3. **How effective has the program been in achieving its three end of program outcomes?** This question will look at the reach and impact of the program in Australia and overseas, networks, whether the intermediate outcomes are being achieved as a result of program activities and using rubrics to determine how well the program is progressing towards the achievement of end of program outcomes. This question would also look at identifying the key success criteria of the program's success.

Aside from answering these questions, the M&E framework will also need to collect ongoing reflections and feedback from volunteers and other stakeholders that can be used to inform program decision-making to ensure the program remains relevant and performs to a high standard.

Management & Governance Arrangements

The program will be delivered through an initial 5-year contract from late 2017 to late 2022, with the option of a five-year extension until 2027, subject to a full review and evaluation of the program. Implementation of the program will be undertaken by an implementing partner (this may be a managing contractor, not-for-profit or a private sector group or consortium), selected through an open tender procurement process.

The figure below illustrates the proposed management and governance arrangements and roles and responsibilities are outlined below. Management and governance arrangements will be further developed in the design document.

Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group

The new Australian volunteer program will be governed by an Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference group. The panel/group will be chaired by DFAT Canberra and include other key external stakeholders such as selected parliamentary representatives, significant private sector investors, non-government organisations, nominated returned volunteers and the implementing partner. The Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group will be the key mechanism for high-level policy, strategic direction and Ministerial recommendations for the global Australian volunteer program which will in turn, guide country-level program implementation. The role of the panel/group will also be to foster broader linkages and networks domestically and internationally. The panel/group will enhance the prestige of the volunteer program and support strategic direction of the Returned Australian Volunteers Network (RAVN). The Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group will also be responsible for recommending and piloting new approaches and partnerships through the Innovation Fund.

DFAT Australian Volunteers Section (AVS)

DFAT Canberra Volunteer Section (AVS) will have responsibility for global program policy direction of the new Australian volunteer program. AVS will provide the Advisory Panel/Strategic Reference Group with secretariat support; liaise with global and thematic areas of DFAT; developing global policy and strategic direction for the program in alignment with the Department's priorities and policies; support DFAT posts to align the program with Australian Government priorities; building networks to share best practice; determining the geographic and sectoral focus areas for the overall global volunteer program; and identifying strategic partnerships for the program to take forward, for example with Australia Awards and the New Colombo Plan, and other Australian Government Departments and external stakeholders (for example, private sector partners) identified to enable opportunities for collaboration.

At an operational level, DFAT Canberra will be responsible for policy, financial and contract management; monitoring and evaluation of the program in conjunction with DFAT posts and overseeing the Returned Australian Volunteer Network (RAVN).

DFAT Posts

DFAT Posts will maintain strategic oversight of the new volunteer program in-country, working closely with the DFAT Canberra Volunteer Section to ensure high-level coherence and continued alignment with the global volunteer program. DFAT Posts will have a nominated Volunteer Program Manager who will be the key liaison point between the volunteer program and DFAT sectoral program areas in-country. The Program Manager will have a key role in integrating the Australian Volunteer program as a modality to support other bilateral development programs and ensuring volunteering is included in broader post strategic planning and monitoring activities. Posts will also have the opportunity to provide additional funds for an increased allocation of volunteers in-country through the volunteer program.

DFAT posts will also have responsibility for managing and maintaining bilateral relationships in-country and supporting the approval of Subsidiary Arrangements required for program implementation. Posts will also identify opportunities for government partner engagement with the program and volunteers and ensure that the volunteer program in-country is responsive to emerging partner government priorities.

Implementing Partner

The implementing partner will provide the operational and administrative resources necessary to implement the program as well as the technical and development capacity required to achieve the program outcomes. The implementing partner will manage the whole volunteer cycle including: recruitment, mobilisation, training and management of all volunteers; ensuring compliance with DFAT policies and program standards; establishing in-country management teams; and undertaking monitoring and reporting. The implementing

partner will also manage, with direction from DFAT, Public Diplomacy activities and an Innovation Fund.

The implementing partner will work closely with DFAT to ensure the program delivers high quality outputs and achieves its outcomes. Operational systems and processes will need to be responsive to implementation needs and deliver value-for-money. Efficient and fit-for-purpose systems and processes should be established in each country office, and offices will be adequately resourced to deliver quality human resource management, administration, finance, grants, logistics, security as well as marketing and communications.

Annex 1 – Desk Review

Desk Review

Design of New Australian Volunteers Program

**Prepared for Department of Foreign Affairs
and Trade
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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to consolidate relevant and current information pertaining to the Australian Volunteer International Development Program (AVID), and identify key issues and lessons for the design of the new Australian Volunteers program. It summarises best practice internationally through other volunteer sending organisations and donors and what is working on the current program, extracting valuable lessons and identifying areas for improvement.

The Desk Review serves as a reference document to support the design process and development of an evidence-base for the next phase of Australian government support for Australian Volunteers. It draws from a wide array of relevant literature including international research and experiences; current program evaluations, reviews and assessments; survey findings; and reports from implementing partners. Further research was conducted on specific themes and areas, including private sector engagement, other donor programs, gender, and monitoring and evaluation reports.

Lessons from other donor programs show the importance of a program that has a strong home base brand and leverages its well-known brand to reach a wide and diversified audience. Many of the most successful programs appeal to a broad audience in sending countries (including youth, business professionals, retirees, graduates, etc.) and adopt variety in their development approaches in beneficiary countries (for example, volunteers working as a team on a specific sectoral program, or working with private sector companies to improve reach of products or services to poor communities, etc.).

What is working well?

This section summarises the key findings from the desk review in relation to those elements of the AVID program that are working effectively.

- **Recruitment and placement of volunteers** is a successful element of the current AVID program. Reports indicate core partners are generally recruiting the right people with the right skills for volunteer assignments. Recruitment processes are targeting and attracting quality human resources with the skills and knowledge required to undertake successful placements.
- **Pre-departure training, in-country training and in-country support** is effective and has delivered generally positive experiences for both volunteers and host organisations.
- Based on the 2014 ODE evaluation report, 63% of volunteer assignments are **aligned with Aid Investment Plans (AIPs)**; demonstrating a concerted effort to ensure assignments serve priority sectors for the Australian aid program. It also indicates that the program is responsive to changing priorities and new thematic areas of interest for Australian Posts.
- The AVID program **aligns with the DFAT Civil Society Engagement Framework** by building strong individual and organisational connections through volunteers and their

work with host organisations, particularly NGOs but also governments and private sector entities. In addition, the volunteer program aligns with the core principles for engagement with civil society and contributes to strengthening local partner capacity, a core objective of DFAT engagement with NGOs.

- The Survey of Returned Volunteers (2012) found that 97% of returned **volunteers felt their assignments had increased their understanding of other cultures and knowledge of aid and development** (95%). The program is contributing to the global literacy of Australians and their understanding of, and support for, the Australian aid program.
- The Survey of Returned Volunteers (2012) results indicate that volunteering contributes to **personal and professional development outcomes for volunteers**, with 59% of respondents stating that their overseas assignment had assisted their careers.

Key Challenges

The Desk Review found that the key challenges to implementation requiring further consideration for the design are:

Higher Order Challenges

1. **Public diplomacy outcomes** are currently under-achieving, particularly in Australia, and can be significantly boosted by a new program.
2. **The financing model** incentivises a focus on numbers of volunteer placements rather than quality and effectiveness, negatively impacting flexibility, responsiveness, and innovation.
3. **The Management Model** involving multiple implementing partners, designed to support large-scale volunteer deployment capability in preparation for an increasing aid budget, resulted in administrative inefficiencies in a decreasing budget environment.
4. **Measuring development effectiveness** is currently a low order priority and ineffective in capturing real development outcomes and achievements.
5. **Late adoption and lack of a robust and clear M&E framework** has hindered systematic data collection for on-going management, decision-making and reporting on program effectiveness and development outcomes.
6. **Lack of flexibility within the current model**, including in relation to the duration of volunteer assignments and the placement model (i.e. a single volunteer paired with a single host organisation), is constraining innovation and achievement of capacity development outcomes.

Lower Order Challenges:

- **Language skills and cross-cultural awareness of volunteers.** While both language skills and cross-cultural competency may be acquired through a volunteer placement to varying degrees, a lack of these skills may be a barrier to success in a volunteer assignment.
- **Variation/change in the volunteer role and position description at implementation** often slows the achievement of objectives and negatively affects early assignment satisfaction of volunteers.
- **Host Organisation and volunteers lack understanding of the AVID program, and** volunteers find it is more difficult to work strategically and contribute to the higher-level objectives of the program through their work.
- **Volunteers' knowledge of a range of capacity development strategies and approaches/tools** could be strengthened; currently the approaches are limited and lack diversity.
- **Professional isolation of volunteers in-country** caused when assignments are in geographically isolated parts of a country and volunteers find themselves a significant distance from peers and professional and social support networks.
- **Lack of clarity and consistency regarding roles and responsibilities,** particularly in the areas of security and WHS, between DFAT Canberra, DFAT Posts and Implementing Partners.

Lessons Learned & Design Considerations

This section identifies lessons learned from the desk review, requiring further consideration through the design.

Management & Contracting

- Review the pros and cons of a **single contractor versus multiple contractor** model for program delivery. The current multiple contractor model negatively impacts administrative efficiency however attracts a diverse range of volunteers and networks in Australia and overseas. While moving to a single contractor could lead to increased administrative efficiency, this needs to be weighed against the benefits of a multiple contractor model.
- Clarify **governance arrangements, implementation mechanisms and controls, roles and responsibilities** to ensure core partner(s) retain operational autonomy and DFAT have a substantive and strategic role in setting program objectives and monitoring progress towards achieving objectives.
- Consider ways to encourage and **incentivise collaboration or innovation**. This could include specific contractual obligations and outcomes related to collaborative activities that are linked to performance payments.
- Consider how to **resource volunteers** during their assignment to assist in achieving their assignment outcomes, including access to small grants. This is a common element in other donor programs.

Value for Money

The new AVID Program Design will need to consider:

- **Multi-year funding for effective planning and investment:** Annual funding undermines longer term planning and incentivises delays in volunteer placement to the next financial year in order to secure out-year funding. The next phase should consider the feasibility of multi-year funding (or 'whole of volunteer placement' funding) for effective investment planning over the life of a volunteer placement.
- **Multi-dimensional / cluster approach to addressing capacity needs:** volunteer(s) working across several host organisations with similar needs, and/or volunteers working in teams to address specific sectors, can have the potential to increase management efficiency, reduce isolation, strengthen capacity development and avoid capacity substitution.
- **Incentivise improved cost effectiveness and performance:** the current contracting model incentivises spending and adopts a maximum cost budgeting approach. The next phase of the program could consider funding lower cost estimates with reserve contingency funds and competitive pricing up-front to incentivise cost savings.

Alignment with the Aid Program & Linkages with Other DFAT Programs

The new AVID Program Design will need to consider:

- The extent to which volunteer program assignments should be **aligned with / compliment / or extend sectoral reach of AIPs** and in-country programs (currently 63% of assignments align with AIPs).
- If, and how, to **improve engagement of Posts in-country** including with volunteers, host organisations, and with the AVS section, DFAT Canberra. Potential areas for improvement include clarifying roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders; increased Post responsibility for determining volunteer numbers and placements; integrating volunteers into the design of in-country programs; and, encouraging the use of country program funding allocations to increase volunteer numbers.
- **Concrete ways to link with and support other DFAT programs** including Australia Awards (AA), New Colombo Plan (NCP), Australian Civilian Corp (ACC), ANCP, and Sports for Development - at both a higher level as well as in-country. There are similar higher order outcomes between these programs and the current AVID program, for example NCP and Australia Awards both aim to build people-to-people linkages at the individual, institutional and country levels and develop capacity and leaderships skills. A concept paper for a mentoring program between Australia Awards Alumni and AVID volunteers has already been developed and could be piloted (or scaled-up) through the next phase of the program. The New Colombo Plan provides opportunities for AVID to develop further linkages with universities and private sector partnerships. ANCP presents opportunities for linkages with Australian NGOs and in-country partners through volunteers.
- **Purposeful organisational linkages between in-country organisations and Australian Partner Organisations (APOs)**. One quarter of volunteers are assigned to host organisations through APOs and 67% of these volunteers had contact with their APO during their assignment, helping to foster ongoing organisational linkages. Fostering and building these partnerships may leverage more sustainable and continuing development outcomes.

Public Diplomacy

The new AVID Program Design will need to consider:

- **Substantial boosting of the Program profile in Australia:** the current program is not leveraging in Australia public diplomacy enough and the new design should consider a broad-based approach utilising a range of marketing and communications strategies.
- **Improved and simplified branding guidelines** to increase visibility of the AVID program and ameliorate the current challenges regarding using a single AVID branding versus using the AVID branding and partner logo.
- **Reduced control regarding volunteer and partner media and communications activities:** quality and content issue combined with substantial delays and difficulties in DFAT approval of media opportunities results in numerous missed opportunities to undertake public diplomacy activities. The design needs to consider how this can be addressed, potentially learning from the Australia Awards program and New Colombo Plan initiative.
- **Increased inclusion of returned Australian volunteers for public diplomacy efforts** to promote the AVID program as well as improve understanding of Australia's aid program and partners. The Returned Australian Volunteers Network (RAVN) has been established and should remain a key element of the next phase of the program.
- **Communication and public diplomacy strategy:** the design should provide guiding principles for the development of a communications and public diplomacy strategy to be developed at implementation by the delivery partner(s).

Cross-Cutting Issues – Gender, Disabilities & Youth Engagement

Gender

DFAT recently published the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy that applies to all programs. The strategy adopts a twin-track approach that involves directly addressing gender equalities and integrating gender issues into all aspects of Australia's work. The three priorities guiding the strategy, and their relevance to the AVID program, are:

- 1) Enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building.** Of direct relevance to the Australian volunteer program is a focus on supporting "women's organisations, networks and coalitions wherever possible, particularly those giving a voice to marginalised groups such as women with disabilities, indigenous women or young women and girls" through this priority focus area.
- 2) Promoting women's economic empowerment.** Australia will integrate gender equality into aid for trade, economic diplomacy and trade efforts including through support for sectors dominated by women to improve wages and remove discrimination. AVID can support organisations that assist women and girls to learn business and vocational skills,

support access to finance initiatives, and support organisations conduct advocacy and policy work in relation to women's economic empowerment.

3) Ending violence against women and girls. Relevant to the Australian volunteer program is a focus on engaging with non-government organisations to improve women's access to justice, support services and violence prevention through a broad range of organisations.

In 2014-15, 11% (or 104) new volunteer assignments, focused on gender inclusion, and the current ratio of female to male volunteers is 3:1⁸. In alignment with the recent DFAT global gender strategy, there is opportunity to adopt a more strategic and purposeful focus on gender in the new program and develop an M&E framework that more effectively captures and measures the contribution of the program to gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes as part of the Australian aid program.

Disabilities

There is currently a three-pronged approach to disabilities through the volunteer program: engaging with Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), working with people living with disabilities and advocating for rights and full participation of people living with disabilities. A significant number of volunteer assignments currently engage with DPOs and in 2014-15, 165 out of 921 new assignments were focused on disabilities (17.9%) and 1.4% (or 13 volunteers) were identified as having a disability. Annual reports indicate more work is required on mobilisation and interview processes for people with disabilities.

Youth Engagement

Youth engagement has declined since the closure of the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development program (AYAD), with only 6% of total volunteers in 2014-15 aged between 18-24 years. Youth engagement could be increased through linkages with universities and tertiary study programs as well as through engagement with the NCP initiative, Sports for Development and Australia Awards.

Private Sector Engagement

Currently, only 3% of AVID volunteer assignments are with private sector entities. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade has urged the AVID program to ensure sufficient focus is placed on strengthening businesses and transferring technical skills. The Committee report recommends the Australian Government review current Australian funded business volunteering or mentoring initiatives to: a) improve connections to other Australian-funded business; b) improve public information about Australia's volunteering programs; c) better collaborate with volunteering programs organised and funded by Australian businesses; and, d) consider improved processes with a view to creating a more business-focused volunteering or twinning program. The Committee report states that connecting people and organisations internationally brings reciprocal benefits to

⁸ Data provided by AVS DFAT on 10 March 2016.

both the host country and Australia. Pacific Island countries in particular have encouraged the Australian government to consider short-term work programs and twinning or mentoring programs with Australian companies operating in the region. A summary of ABV and other donor approaches to private sector engagement can be found at Annex 1.

Approach to Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

The AVID program supports and enables the achievement of numerous Australian Government objectives including development outcomes, public diplomacy, global and regional literacy and people-to-people linkages. Measuring and evaluating the program against these outcomes is currently under-resourced and lacks a definitive approach. In addition, attribution can be complex because outcomes can often require long timeframes and outcomes are often non-tangible, such as capacity development and people-to-people linkages and how the program contributes to broader development objectives.

The M&E system for the new program will need to focus on both quantitative and qualitative program achievements, ensuring that data on the development outcomes and impacts of volunteers is captured and measured at both the host organisation/beneficiary level as well as the country and global level. Currently, performance reporting focuses on numbers of volunteers per financial year and does not account for qualitative aspects of assignments, including the experiences of volunteers and impact on capacity development within Host Organisations, nor does it measure progress against other outcomes.

Based on desk review of the AVID annual reports some of the key M&E related design considerations are:

- The M&E framework needs to use **qualitative and quantitative measures for all of the AVID program outcomes**, and provide more robust evidence that services multiple interests.
- **A practical M&E approach** needs to be developed and outline what data will be collected, and for what purposes (recognising that not all things need to be measured), and how.
- **Reporting requirements** need to be systematic and standardised across implementing partners to ensure consistency across data sets.
- Data collection and reporting needs to be **quality controlled**; with clear roles and responsibilities related to data collection and usage.
- Consider a more **proactive role for host organisations** in measuring achievement of outcomes, conducting baseline and capacity needs assessments, identifying capacity development indicators, regular monitoring of progress and so forth.
- **Case studies and most significant change** approaches can be integrated to highlight and communicate achievements for both M&E and public diplomacy.

A summary of approaches to M&E employed by similar types of programs, within Australia and with other donors, is outlined in Annex 2. A brief summary of key aspects of other donor volunteer programs for consideration in the design is provided in Annex 3.

Other Donors

Other donor programs offer insights into how AVID might integrate new ideas and lessons into the new design for the program. Annex 1 discusses how other volunteer programs engage with the private sector, and annex 3 provides an overview of how other volunteer programs are addressing the challenges faced by AVID. The stand-out lesson for the new design is to embrace flexibility and innovation in volunteer approaches. To date, the AVID program has a degree of diversity in its approaches, having adopted more organisational partnership approaches between Australian organisations and similar overseas organisations. However, there are other approaches that may be integrated into a new AVID program design including:

- VSO undertakes projects whereby a team of variously skilled volunteers are brought together to work to a specific project design, from start to finish.
- Many donor programs include exchange programs whereby staff of partner organisations in developing countries travel to the home country for specific learning opportunities.
- Ireland includes a specific graduate program, similar to the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program, and also includes volunteers on its humanitarian rapid response roster.
- The Peace Corps is a semi-autonomous US agency dedicated to sending large numbers of volunteers overseas and is a high profile and highly regarded institution within the USA.
- Norway, Canada, USA and Germany, have explicit outcomes related to the benefits of a volunteer placement for both the individual volunteer and the home country community. They highlight the importance of knowledge transfer, skills development, and global experience for returning volunteers and the communities into which they return.
- Numerous volunteer sending countries also use volunteers to work with communities in their home countries.

Reviewing the wide variety of approaches and lessons internationally brings to light a variety of approaches that could be adopted by the new AVID design, and potentially increase its reach, effectiveness, and visibility both within Australia and overseas.

Summary & Conclusion

The documents reviewed in this report outline the key aspects of the AVID program that are currently working well as well as areas for improvement, approaches for consideration and lessons learned that can inform the design of the new program. While the program is achieving development outcomes, this was not visible in the desk review, indicating that qualitative data on program achievements is not being adequately captured through current M&E and reporting. Similarly, there is substantial room for improving public diplomacy outcomes, particularly in Australia, as well as developing a more strategic approach to integrating gender, disabilities and youth engagement into a future program. In addition, there are substantial opportunities for exploring linkages with the private sector through the volunteer program, trialling new innovative approaches to volunteering and capacity development, piloting joint activities with other DFAT people-to-people programs and improving overall coordination and alignment with other Australian aid programs.

Annex 1 – Private Sector Engagement

This annex reviews AVID's private sector engagement through Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) and other donor approaches to working with the private sector. Based on the review, most donor volunteer programs are connecting with the private sector in varying ways and to varying degrees, however, they lack a clear engagement strategy.

Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) aims to strengthen businesses and private sector institutions for broad based growth across Asia and the Pacific. They focus on developing long term relationships that enable the transfer of business skills to partners over a number of years, combining a mix of skill sets delivered over multiple and short-term volunteer assignments. The organisation also manages corporate volunteering programs on behalf of companies. For example, ABV manages the Corporate Service Corps (CSC) and Smarter Cities Challenge (SCC) programs for IBM which sees corporate staff take on volunteer placements such as providing IT solutions to a water utility in Indonesia, management analysis in the Philippines and project management mentoring for service providers in China.

ABV has a registry of senior business professionals who are mobilised to support organisations such as The Bank of Papua New Guinea, Department of Finance – PNG, Pacific Islands Trade and Invest, PNG Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ADB Pacific Business Investment Facility and Australian Business Councils in PNG, Fiji and the Pacific.

Prior to 2011, ABV received a grant from the DFAT to manage its program. Restructuring of the implementation arrangements saw ABV sub-contracted, first to Scope Global and now also to AVI, to manage short-term volunteer assignments that build business capacity and regulatory capacity of governments. One third of ABV assignments directly support business, marketing and tourism in countries across the Asia and the Pacific. Approximately half of all volunteers were placed with NGOs and a further 21% with businesses or social enterprises.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has a number of long-term partnerships with private companies that aim to mobilise their employees to volunteer in positions that link good business practice and CSR approaches with good development. These partnerships also support linkages between the private sector and the UN system and provide opportunities for volunteer sponsorship and donations from private sector companies.

US Government Peace Corps has a Partnership program that connects volunteers and the communities they work in with the private sector in the U.S to fund small grassroots projects. Volunteers submit a proposal for a specific community project and this is posted online to raise funds for the project. In order to receive funding the community is required to make a 25% contribution to the total project cost and identify success indicators.

Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), a semi-autonomous government agency of the UK government and funded by DFID, works closely with the UK private sector to seek financial

support, technical expertise and employee volunteers. VSO also initiated a private philanthropy initiative, 'Million Hours Fund', which aims to raise £1 to fund more than one million hours of national volunteering; where local people volunteer on VSO projects in their own communities. An ethical review log is also maintained to ensure all private sector partners and donors meet criteria for the ethical funding policy under the VSO program.

The **NZ Government Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA)** program is focused on economic development in the Pacific through private sector engagement. This component focuses on building productive enterprises, increased employment opportunities and creating a more skilled private sector workforce through long and short-term volunteer assignments in the Pacific.

Annex 2 – Monitoring & Evaluation

This annex summarises approaches to M&E for volunteering under other DFAT program and other donor programs. The next phase of the Australian Volunteer program can draw upon global examples of best practice and specialist expertise in order to develop a more robust and complete M&E approach.

The **New Colombo Plan (NCP)** Monitoring & Evaluation Framework focuses on obtaining information for DFAT to report on study programs and professional experience; the impact of NCP on Indo-Pacific knowledge and skills; networks formed between scholars and students; Australian university and private sector engagement with the program; reciprocal partnerships between Australian universities and private sector organisations; and, Indo-Pacific partner government support for NCP. The information is sourced from alumni surveys, feedback from universities, annual reports from Posts, feedback from foreign leaders and high level stakeholders, mobility data from universities, data on internships and mentorships, business engagement database, policy reviews and evaluations.

Australia Awards M&E is outcome and process focused at the pre-award, on-award and post-award activity levels, with information gathered through periodic reviews, student surveys and post-award evaluations. There has been a shift from a quantitative focus (student numbers and successful completion) to a more robust approach that enables reporting on qualitative aspects of the program including how effectively the program supports the aid program; post-award career progressions of alumni; how scholarships contribute to links between individuals and organisations and between Australia and other countries; and, implementation efficiency. Some of the key methods used for qualitative evaluation include longitudinal studies, tracer studies⁹, individual and organisational case studies, thematic studies and review and reflection workshops.

ANCP (Australia-NGO Cooperation Program) has developed a high-level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework that applies consistent monitoring and reporting from Australian NGOs funded by the program. The framework provides DFAT with a system for collecting, collating and presenting information on overall effectiveness. Australian NGOs and in-country partners retain their own monitoring and evaluation systems for where the data is predominantly drawn for ANCP reporting. Additional data is collected through biennial meta-evaluations of completed NGO evaluations, and more in-depth thematic reviews.

Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework is based on their program logic, with progress and success measured against the four key outcomes of improved socio-economic conditions; strong volunteer integration; community-driven partnerships; and, strong organisational capacity. The different stages

⁹ DFAT has a globally mandated approach to post-award outcome assessments that provides three-year cycle tracer studies using a common methodology to enable cross-program evaluation and time series analysis, Investment Design Australia Awards Indonesia 2014-2022.

outlined in the theory of change are used as indicators for measuring contribution over the immediate, intermediate and long-term.

The NZ Government VSA Program Results Framework is focused on their program logic, and measures progress based on the long-term outcomes for each program component: improved economic development (private sector focused); improved public services supporting citizens and; a stronger civil society supporting vulnerable citizens; and, lower level outcomes. Medium and short-term outcomes measured under these long-term outcomes vary across the components, however key outputs remain static.

The UK Government VSO program Evaluation Strategy is program-focused and aims to embed a culture of learning and evaluation within the organisation and within programs managed by consortium members. The strategy builds learning and evaluative questions and processes into program designs, and increases opportunities for collaborative learning and information sharing. Key approaches under the strategy include developmental evaluations for emerging and innovative initiatives; progress reviews and analysis of implementing strategies; and, summative final evaluation and impact assessments. The program-based approach to evaluation aligns with the nature of VSO's assignment of volunteers into broader capacity development programs overseas.

Annex 3 – Other Donor Volunteer Programs

Other donor volunteer programs contribute a range of ideas for consideration in the design of the new volunteer program. This annex summarises the approaches employed by other donors, and highlights areas of interest and/or learning relevant for the design.

Outcome Diversification

A significant number of donor volunteer programs, including Norway, Canada, USA and Germany, have explicit outcomes related to the benefits of a volunteer placement for both the individual volunteer and the home country community. They highlight the importance of knowledge transfer, skills development, and global experience for returning volunteers and the communities into which they return¹⁰. Outcomes tend to be focused on the reciprocal benefits to individuals, organisations and countries through volunteer assignments, as well as learning and professional development that occurs through volunteering. For example, the German volunteer program (Welwärts) focus on volunteer contributions to a development project, mutual learning and intercultural exchange.

Volunteer exchanges

A number of donor volunteer programs offer two-way exchanges and institutional twinning arrangements, emphasising the reciprocal benefits of volunteering to both countries. FK Youth (Norway) funds more than 20 different exchange programs including a group program that involves at least two people from each country volunteering together. Germany offers a South-North component that sees young people from developing partner countries provided an opportunity to volunteer for development work in Germany. South-South and triangular twinning has been implemented by FK Norway since 2012, with one in five volunteers participating in this program.

UNV and VSO offer national volunteering assignments where volunteers are nationals of developing partner countries. Currently 30% of VSO volunteers are nationals. This reduces overall assignment costs and can be an effective approach to capacity building. UNV also offers donor governments a range of volunteering modalities to fund including online or e-volunteering/mobile volunteering, which enables an annual average of 10,500 volunteers from 183 countries to volunteer online.

Volunteer Preparation and Return

Prior to an assignment starting, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) are required to undertake intensive study in the language of the host country as well as studies in the principles of international cooperation, cultural awareness, the history and culture of the host country, health management and safety measures.

FK Norway and Welwärts (Germany) volunteer programs require two-month follow-up service in home countries at the end of a volunteer assignment, and returned volunteers in

Norway automatically become ambassadors for the program. The Peace Corps recruits university campus ambassadors to promote the volunteer program through peer-to-peer outreach, campus connections and social media. Japan has introduced special employment quotas for returned volunteers to serve in local government authorities and boards of education.

Type and Length of Assignment

Irish Aid Volunteering in cooperation with the EU has a Rapid Response Corps register of highly-skilled volunteers for short notice emergency relief. Similarly, Peace Corps also have 3-12-month humanitarian response assignments. Red Cross is working with the Australian Government on a partnership that will embed international volunteering within the humanitarian and development work they do..

Many donor volunteer programs, including New Zealand, Ireland and Norway, identify priority sectors for volunteer placements to align with aid priorities and target specific expertise within the sending country, whilst others do more generic intakes. UNV assignments are also often used to pilot new approaches to development programs, with a view to scale-up if successful.

Most donor programs offer a variety of short and long term volunteer assignments. However, the standard volunteer assignments under Peace Corps, JICA and JOCV is two years. JOCV offer short-term volunteers (less than one year) based on request and Peace Corps also offer a one-year Global Health Service Partnership with physician and nurse educator assignments.

Co-financing and Joint Programs

Some donors require co-funding and fundraising by volunteers, host organisations and partners. A substantial number of donor volunteer programs adopt a multiple grant approach to implementation where partner organisations in the home country jointly develop proposals with a host organisation to seek grant funding of volunteers. Other donors adopt a consortium approach, such as DFID's ICS volunteer program which is led by VSO with sub-partners in each host country.

The UNV program offers 6-month volunteer assignments for university students where the university provides accreditation for the volunteer assignment and/or volunteering is part of the course content. Likewise, Peace Corps offer specialised programs that combine university education with volunteering for undergraduates and post-graduates.

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Annex 2 - Aide Memoire

Aide Memoire

Design of New Australian Volunteers Program

**Prepared for Department of Foreign Affairs
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This Document

This Aide Memoire brings together the key findings and recommendations that emerged from consultations conducted in Australia, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Laos and Cambodia. Consultations followed a Desk Review (canvassing Australian and international evidence, experiences and lessons learned) conducted from Dec 2015 through to end January 2016. The Consultation Phase began in January 2016 and completed in early March 2016. The Aide Memoire has informed the development of a Design Options Paper, which will determine the framework for the final design document. The Desk Review and Aide Memoire, coupled with the detailed notes from in-country consultations, will provide the evidence base and rationale for key design decisions and directions. These documents will shape the final program logic and high-level Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Design Background

The Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has been supporting Australian volunteers in overseas development contexts for more than 60 years. The current Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) Program, commenced in 2011 and ends in December 2017, a new phase is currently in design. The design will be for a six (6) year program valued at approximately \$40 - \$50 million per annum, with a ten-year design horizon.

The AVID program provides opportunities for Australians to contribute to the Australian Government's aid program by undertaking assignments that foster people-to-people linkages and support good development work with overseas host organisations across a range of sectors. The work of Australian Volunteers complements our aid program investments and strategies. Volunteers are active in the Australian Government's public diplomacy efforts; raising awareness of the Government's aid program overseas and in Australia,

Since AVID was launched in May 2011, over 5,300 volunteers have been supported in over 40 countries in the Pacific, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Middle East. In 2014-15, a total of 1,906 AVID volunteers were on assignments in around 1,222 overseas host organisations, spanning international and local non-government organisations, government bodies, United Nations agencies, educational institutions and the private sector. Assignments are on average 10 months in duration, but can be between four weeks and three years.

Proposed Investment

The new Australian Volunteers program will contribute to achievement of the following broader goals:

- The Australian aid program is perceived positively in Australia and internationally;
- The Australian government is achieving its development objectives; and
- Australians are more globally literate and connected.

The proposed investment will operate in countries across Asia, the Pacific and Africa.

The design of the new Australian Volunteers program is guided by a commitment to the following principles:

- Australian Volunteers will continue to be a highly valued contribution to the work of many organisations in developing countries, and the Australian Government is committed to supporting their work and development achievements.
- Individually placed volunteers, and volunteers placed through Australian Partner Organisation are both highly valued and offer Australians a diversity of entry points to volunteering.
- Flexibility in assignment duration, and in the kinds of organisations that host volunteers, is important to ensuring assignments are responsive to needs, and tailored to individual circumstances and contexts.
- The Australian Volunteer program will continue to align with and complement the Australian Aid program objectives and is therefore driven, in part, by Posts and their Aid Investment Plans.
- Piloting innovative approaches to volunteering will be encouraged, including exploring ways to engage the private sector and other strategic partnerships and projects.
- The proposed investment will leverage the Australian Volunteer program to: achieve increased visibility of the Australian aid program in Australia and overseas, and promote internationally volunteering to the Australian public.
- The Australian Volunteers program should increase awareness and educate Australians about global issues of aid and development; building global literacy.
- The Program will support strengthened people-to-people links over the long-term; building networks, knowledge, skills and cultural understanding between Australians and our global neighbours.

Observations and Key Recommendations

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM

Observations:

The Design Team found overwhelming support for the Australian Volunteers program from all interviewed stakeholders including volunteers, host organisations, Posts, and Australian Partner Organisations. There was widespread praise for the work of volunteers, and the skills and commitment they bring to their roles. There was also recognition of the mutual benefits to Australia and its development country partners through volunteers which include strong people to people links, mutual skills development and goodwill. 100% of Posts surveyed as part of the design process stated that they would choose to participate in the new program.

The Design Team notes the cost effectiveness of the volunteer program contribution to development vis-à-vis other aid modalities. Budget cuts to the program have resulted in demand for volunteers (from developing countries) and volunteer positions (from Australians wishing to volunteer) significantly outstripping funds available to support positions. In addition, there is an appetite from Africa Posts to increase volunteer numbers to countries in that region.

The quality of volunteers, in terms of professional capability and personal characteristics, have been widely praised by all stakeholders. Based on interviews with host organisations, the program, in spite of other challenges, is delivering very good outcomes for Host Organisations. The general impression is that volunteers have been recruited well, supported in their role, and received appropriate preparation. This general impression notwithstanding, a number of DFAT Posts and some volunteers interviewed were concerned at the (sometimes) high number of long-term volunteers (or “career volunteers”) and questioned whether this was appropriate for the program.

Key Recommendations:

- The new program should continue to focus on building people to people links and capacity development of host organisations through volunteers and further strengthen public diplomacy and communications in Australia and overseas.

INFLEXIBILITY STIFLING INNOVATION

Observations:

Host organisations, implementing partners and volunteers noted that the current program does not provide sufficient flexibility and stifles innovative approaches to implementation. Of particular note was the length of time for assignments with many arguing that they were too short. The Design Team notes that some of this inflexibility emerges from the current financing model under the AVID program which drives implementing partners to focus on annual volunteer numbers rather than innovation and development outcomes.

The Design Team found examples of innovative approaches under the program including institutional partnerships between Australian Partner Organisations with overseas Host Organisations, and examples of teams of volunteers that included young professionals as well as more experienced mentors.

Key Recommendations:

- A more flexible volunteer program could help to strengthen innovation and incentivise new approaches to delivery of the volunteer program. Specific examples include:
 - More flexibility in the management model for a variety of approaches to volunteer placements including cluster placements where a group of volunteers work around a particular theme, such as gender empowerment, or in a particular geographic location (to overcome isolation); a single volunteer working with multiple Host Organisations; or multiple volunteers for a single Host Organisation;
 - A variety of assignment lengths to meet the specific needs of a Host Organisation;
 - More opportunities for volunteers and Host Organisations to share their experiences and learning in a specific country as well as opportunities for knowledge sharing between different countries to support new approaches to capacity development;
 - Establishing a small grants program that can be accessed by volunteers and Host Organisations to support capacity development outcomes through an assignment;
 - Supporting learning and development opportunities for volunteers prior to and while on assignment

ALIGNMENT WITH AID INVESTMENT PLANS (AIPs)

Observations:

The Design Team found that a large portion of assignments, and selection of Host Organisations, are aligned with or complements the Australian Government Country Aid Investment Plan, or other bilateral objectives in the country. In many cases, volunteers were placed in locations and assignments designed to either directly support the bilateral aid program or enable Australia to have some presence in a sector / area where they did not have an aid program but were keen to maintain engagement. 71.43% of Posts with volunteer programs stated that it was very important for the volunteer program to align with Australian Aid program objectives at Post, while 28.57% stated it was somewhat important. All stakeholders identified alignment with AIPs as a positive to the program, but noted that flexibility was required to allow Posts to retain diverse priorities. Alignment with the AIP allows DFAT post to enhance and complement their portfolio. The flexibility to go beyond and outside of the AIP allows new relationships to be built and long-term objectives to be maintained in the face of resourcing constraints.

Key Recommendations:

- Continue to align majority of volunteer assignments with AIPs while retaining flexibility for some volunteer positions outside AIP priorities.
- Undertake more purposeful planning and communications between DFAT Posts and implementing partners to ensure continued alignment with AIPs and opportunities for emerging priorities.

LACK OF ENGAGEMENT WITH RISK

Observations:

The consultations found that a lack of overall DFAT engagement with program risks impacts implementation effectiveness. The large majority of volunteers in-country felt aside from some social activities, their expertise was under-utilised by DFAT, and a number of DFAT Posts emphasised concerns around risks related to volunteers being in-country. A significant contributor to the problem was a lack of clear guidance regarding DFAT WHS responsibility to Australian volunteers vis-à-vis implementing partner's responsibility, host organisations' responsibility, and/or individual volunteer responsibility. Additionally, implementing partners and volunteers felt that DFAT media and communications guidance and approvals processes were somewhat stifling opportunities for promoting volunteer stories, and resulted in volunteers deciding not to engage audiences through local media. Consequently, DFAT is not able to generate the volume of media it might otherwise.

Key Recommendations:

- Ensure guidance on communications and media is not overly cumbersome and incentivises rather than dis-incentivises opportunities for promoting the volunteer program.
- Consider how lessons from Australia Awards and New Colombo Plan's management of individual stories while retaining strong branding could be applied to a new volunteers program.

QUALITY OF IN-COUNTRY MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Observations:

The consultation process found that the quality of the in-country management team (in-country management is a function of the implementing partners), was a significant factor in the success of the program in the eyes of Host Organisations, volunteers, and Posts. In-country management teams that sought to draw volunteers together for shared learning and support; were responsive to various challenges facing volunteers; proactive in working with host organisations; and that worked closely with DFAT teams, were highly valued. This is particularly important in addressing the needs of volunteers who are working in remote and isolated areas.

Instances where there has been less professional and robust in-country management has led to negative experiences for volunteers. For example, some volunteers reported bullying or corruption during their assignments to in-country management teams that were not acted upon, and consequently volunteers were repeatedly placed with unsatisfactory host

organisations. Also, volunteers have reported reminding their country management team of reporting requirements; volunteers receive no feedback on their reports; reporting is not being used to inform implementation; and, DFAT is not being fully informed about the achievements and short-comings of the program.

Key Recommendations:

- In-country management teams should be resourced with expertise in capacity development and organisational development as well as administration, logistics, networking, media and communications, and monitoring & evaluation expertise.
- The new program needs to have robust monitoring and reporting and assessment of implementing partner effectiveness; this should include ensuring that monitoring, feedback and evaluation reports are being used to inform improvements to ongoing program management.

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BUT INVISIBLE

Observations:

Host Organisations reported that their development work had benefited in numerous ways from the contribution of Australian Volunteers. Substantial technical and management skills are being transferred to Host Organisations at the individual level, and plans, strategies, systems and tools are imparted at the organisational level. Australian Volunteers, in turn, learn about other cultures and form strong links with people and organisations in the countries where they volunteer, often for decades after returning. Many returned volunteers return to visit their host organisation and/or fundraise for the organisation. They also host semi-formal information sessions in Australia on their experiences. These are all strengths of the AVID program, yet the current program does not capture the development impacts effectively, nor does it disseminate the knowledge generated.

Implementing partners and volunteers reported they felt DFAT was not concerned with development impacts or outcomes from volunteer assignments. It is worth noting, however, that this was not reflected in consultations with DFAT staff working on the AVID program, who had a solid grasp of the program achievements and were generally impressed with volunteer contributions to development. All stakeholders agree, however, that development outcomes and impacts are not well tracked, recorded or measured, and are therefore unable to be fully leveraged. The Design Team believes that the current driver of the program, annual volunteer quotas (which is the sole indicator in the absence of development-related performance measures), tends to give the impression that other outcomes are of lesser value. As a result, the program is achieving less, and *perceived to be* achieving less, than it could for all stakeholders (volunteers, host organisations, Australian public, DFAT, partner governments).

Key Recommendations:

- Develop a robust M&E framework and system that focuses on both qualitative and quantitative impacts and captures the development and diplomacy outcomes of the program.

- Further leverage public diplomacy opportunities and increase promotion of the volunteer program in both Australia and overseas.
- Establish closer relationship between DFAT Posts, volunteers and implementing partners and support opportunities for closer collaboration between the volunteer program and sector programs in-country.

Conclusions for the Design

VISIBILITY

The visibility of the AVID program is minimal both in Australia and overseas. While the program punches above its weight in terms of development outcomes, it punches well below its weight in terms of visibility. Program impacts are not being adequately promoted or leveraged which leads to under-valuing of the program (including within DFAT internally), missed opportunities for promoting Australia's aid program in Australia and overseas, and for leveraging greater people to people links and global literacy. Based on the Post survey conducted as part of the design consultation process, 7.14% of Posts stated volunteers make a **significant** contribution to aid diplomacy, 50% stated that volunteers contributed **considerably** to aid diplomacy, and 42.86% stated volunteers make a **moderate** contribution.

Implementing partners strongly argued that low visibility is due to DFAT's role in restricting communications and marketing, particularly in Australia; making it too difficult and too resource intensive to get good stories and messages into the public sphere. It is important to note that DFAT's view is that partner promotion of their own brand through the program visibility needs to be balanced with the imperative for a strong link between the AVID program and the Australian government; consistent messaging and quality program marketing and communication strategies and materials. Visibility is further impacted by the minimal engagement of Posts with the volunteers in-country (due to level of resourcing) and the resultant lost opportunities for diplomacy generated through the program.

The design will include an important role for building the profile of Australian Volunteers for International Development through communications and marketing. It will also build on the existing Returned Australian Volunteers Network (RAVN), to include a more explicit and purposeful role for returned volunteers in promoting the Program (both in Australia and in-country), and in supporting global literacy of Australians. The new program will require a clear strategy for increasing the prestige of volunteering in Australia, attracting more volunteer diversity, including people with disability, young Australians and indigenous Australians as well as promoting the Australian aid program more broadly.

REPUTATION

The reputation of the AVID program, particularly within DFAT, is not particularly strong compared to single sector DFAT programs. There is significant room for promoting the program across government and within DFAT to improve overall engagement, increase visibility of program impacts and identify opportunities for collaboration. For example, Australian Commonwealth, State and Local Governments are not excluded from the program, however a more explicit engagement strategy could lead to partnerships for volunteering. The Australian Volunteer program has enormous potential to be much larger than it is currently, with far reaching impact on aid diplomacy and global/regional literacy. The new design will need to take this program to scale and leverage its full potential.

FLEXIBILITY & INNOVATION

The current program has limited incentives for flexibility to enable a higher profile and to encourage innovation. A focus on reporting quantitative results (annual volunteer quotas) has dis-incentivised piloting new, flexible and innovative approaches to implementation.

Reduced budget since the start of the program has also contributed to reduced opportunities for innovation. The design will need to identify more effective and fit-for-purpose contracting and financial mechanisms that incentivise innovation and build the profile of the program.

STRATEGY

Although there is an annual planning mechanism in place for setting the strategic direction in-country, overall program strategy is currently a major gap in the program. Minimal engagement of many Posts in the volunteer program, and a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities between DFAT Canberra, Posts and Implementing Partners, impacts strategic implementation. As a result, the program is not seen as a priority for DFAT Posts and is not being effectively leveraged by other bi-lateral programs. While volunteer assignments are broadly aligned with Aid Investment Plans (AIPs) and sector programs, Post efforts to establish this alignment is sometimes ad-hoc according to Post resources, and it is difficult to tell a country level or global story about the program at the outcome level beyond numbers. AVID program In-Country Management Teams in the countries consulted generally lack engagement with DFAT officers at Posts and although they refer to AIPs when developing their own annual plans, they tend to develop them in isolation from DFAT and draw mostly on their own existing networks to identify potential host organisations for volunteer assignments. The new design will need to include a clear whole of program strategy, a more robust M&E framework that measures qualitative and quantitative outcomes, and include mechanisms for improved country-level strategic planning.

CONNECTIVITY

A large number of volunteers are on their second, third, and up to a sixth placement, and many volunteers are sourced in-country from the existing group of volunteers. Over 50% of volunteers consulted had volunteered previously, and a large number of respondents were in-country when they applied for their current position, or were part of developing the position they subsequently moved in to. Returned volunteers were sometimes 'head hunted' to fill volunteer positions. The high number of "revolving door" volunteers leads to a number of potential risks including: fewer opportunities for new volunteers; a sense of elitism or "club mentality" within the program (open to a limited number of people); a lack of new skills entering the program and development field; and Australia-focused outcomes not being achieved (regional/global literacy and connection for the Australian public).

There is a lack of connection between host organisations (in country, regionally, with Australia), limited connections between volunteers and posts as well as the broader aid program and minimal connections between current and returned volunteers. Volunteers are sometimes seen as a risk to DFAT in terms of their behaviours in-country and what they might say at an Australian government event. Volunteers generally feel separate and disconnected from the rest of the aid program. The lack of connections impacts opportunities to enhance the experience of stakeholders and program outcomes are lost. There is more that could be done to create networks between numerous of the key stakeholders involved in the AVID program. In particular, DFAT Post connections with volunteers and host organisations, host organisations connections with each other, and DFAT Post Canberra networks. DFAT Posts, particularly larger posts, are not adequately resourced to effectively manage and leverage the AVID program or build close strategic relationships with implementing partners, beneficiaries or volunteers. As a result, the

program is kept at a distance from other bilateral programs and opportunities for collaboration and leveraging are not being fully realised. The new design will need to establish processes and mechanisms that increase access to the program for a wider pool of potential volunteers and the Australian public and build closer connections between all stakeholders to improve program impacts.

OPPORTUNITIES

There is widespread enthusiasm from stakeholders to forge linkages and/or partnerships between Australian and overseas organisations. Establishing linkages and partnerships between Australian Partner Organisations (APOs) and Host Organisations is likely to improve development outcomes as host organisations become better linked to communities of practice in Australia. APOs can assist the AVID implementing partners with recruiting the right volunteer from a technical perspective, and provide volunteers with access to a range of resources. It is also likely to lead to more sustainable outcomes.

Similarly, stakeholders recommended the new program support exchanges where selected staff from long-standing host organisations spend several weeks in an Australian organisation/institution to be exposed to Australian professionals undertaking similar work. One volunteer recently crowd-sourced funds to take a group of colleagues from her host organisation on a study tour to a hospital in Perth. It was very successful and the volunteer reported that this supported the work she had been doing with colleagues in the host organisation as it provided a first-hand perspective of new ways of working and practical learning experience. Exchanges have the potential to develop the capacity and confidence of host organisations; complement the capacity development work of volunteers within an organisation; and build more linkages between people.

Annex 1: What makes a successful volunteer assignment

AN AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER IS SOME WHO....

- Has something to share (cultural) and/or contribute (skills, knowledge) to a host organisation
- Has current skills and expertise (expertise includes cultural)
- Is open to living and working with other cultures
- Is patient and flexible
- Is willing and able to share their skills and expertise with others
- Is able to take the required professional break
- Is willing to share their volunteer experience with others in country and in Australia
- Is actively contributing to their professional field and/or to their community

AN AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER POSITION IS....

- focused on capacity building, this means either delivers on short term outputs (things that could otherwise be contracted in but that the organisation cannot afford or access) and/or on developing specific capabilities of staff or the organisation.
- not an existing or on-going position within an organisation.

SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEERS DEMONSTRATE....

- Professionalism, flexibility, adaptability, open attitude, patience, resilience
- Language skills and/or willingness to learn the language
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Initiative and independence
- Integrity

Note: volunteers without these attributes left their assignments early or were unable to transfer skills and develop relationships with their colleagues. Language and cross-cultural barriers were cited by almost 100% of host organisations as the single biggest obstacle to successful placements. The director of an organisation for severely disabled people said that unless the volunteer had language skills there was no point in them volunteering as it just created an extra burden for already over-burdened staff.

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS HAVE A NATURAL CYCLE....

- The volunteer journey in host organisations includes a first phase of understanding the host organisation, settling in to country and organisational dynamics, and building relationships of trust. A second phase may include re-developing the assignment terms of reference to better reflect new and emerging circumstances. The third phase focuses on implementation. This is the case for ABV volunteers (1 week – 1 week to 1 month– 2 to 2.5 months), other volunteers (1 to 3 months – 2 to 6 months – rest of assignment).
- Note: most Host Organisations reported that it takes 6 months before volunteers are productive, Host Organisations expect and want volunteers to take their time to learn about the Host Organisation and the community before they refine their assignment. All volunteers reported the same journey.

VOLUNTEERS ARE WELL LOOKED AFTER

- Overall, volunteers' welfare, safety and security is well managed and serviced by the implementing partners.
- Implementing partners have dedicated staff looking after volunteers and have a hotline open 24/7. All volunteers reported that the partners took good care of their welfare and were very responsive.
- Allowances are generally very good with the notable exception of one or two countries that have experienced substantial inflation.
- Australian Volunteers receive more financial support than volunteers from KOICA, JICA and Peace Corps.
- Note: Most volunteers complete their assignments, and very few stop their assignments due to security or health reasons. Key reasons for not completing assignments is volunteer's ability to cope in host country (new cultural context), issues related to working with host organisation or sense of disillusionment with the assignment (fails to meet expectations).

Annex 2: Design Team

Table 1. External Design Team

Position	Name
Design Team Leader	Dr Bernadette Whitelum
Program Logic & M&E Specialist	Zazie Tolmer
Design Researcher	Jessica Gillmore

Table 2: DFAT Team Members

Position	Name
Assistant Secretary, NGOs and Volunteer Branch	Mary-Ellen Miller
Director, Australian Volunteers Section	Julie McCallum
Assistant Director, Australian Volunteers Section	Peter Raab
a/g Assistant Director, Australian Volunteers Section	Conrad Bulenda
Program Officer, Australian Volunteers Section	Emma Jones

Annex 3: List of stakeholders interviewed

Canberra

- DFAT
 - Security
 - Work Health and Safety
 - Private Sector Development
 - Global Development Policy Section (SDGs)
 - Consular
 - Gender
 - Fraud and Risk
 - AVID Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Australia Awards
 - New Colombo Plan
 - Public Diplomacy Branch
 - Smarty Grants
 - Humanitarian Response Section
 - Aid Program Planning and Reporting
 - Africa Section
- Australian Business Volunteers
- Deloitte Australia (AVID accountants)

Melbourne

- AVI Headquarters
- ARC Headquarters

Adelaide

- Scope Global Headquarters

Indonesia

DFAT POST

- Sarah Lendon, Counsellor
- Rob Mckelleher, First Secretary
- Merry Ginting, Program Manager
- Majell Hind, Acting DHOM and previous Consul general in Bali

HOST ORGANISATIONS

- Yayasan Pendidikan Dwituna Rawinala, Belle Mantiri, Director
- Pengurus Pusat Persatuan Cricket Indonesia, Albert Tangkudung, General Manager
- Smeru Research Institute, Liza Hadiz (Comms Manager) and other staff.
- Sahabat Anak, Ales Saragi, Director; Linda Romey Hutapea (Capacity Building Officer) and one additional new staff member.
- Puspadi Balu, I Nengah Latra, Director
- Bali Sports Foundation, Rodney Holt, Founder & Director
- Bumi Sehat, Robin Lim, Founder & Director
- Sari Hati School, Ni Komang Sariadi, Head of School and one volunteer from Czechoslovakia.
- Alam Indonesia Lestari (LINI), Gayatri Reksodihardjo-Lilley, Director

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- AVI, Jonathon Hunter, Country Director
- Scope Global, Ray Ash, Regional Program Director
- Scope Global, Pingkan Umboh, Country Program Director
- Scope Global, Fernando Ruroh (Bobby), Program Manager - Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS

- 12 in Jakarta
- 14 in Bali

Solomon Islands

DFAT POST

- Karen Murray, High Commission, Counsellor for Strategy, Governance & Justice
- Danny Nugent, DFAT Staff for AVID at Post

- DFAT Rural Development Program

HOST ORGANISATIONS

- Don Bosco Technical College
- Dr Steve Aumanu, National Referral Hospital

PARTNER GOVERNMENT

- Ministry of Education (MEHRD), Solomon Islands

OTHER DONOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

- Volunteer Services Abroad, New Zealand, Anita
- New Zealand MFAT, Chris Day

VOLUNTEERS

Laos

DFAT POST

- Eloise Saif, Second Secretary
- Pathana Siphandone, Program Manager
- John Williams, HoM
- Andreas Zurbrugg, DHoM
- Laos Australia Institute, Bill Pennington, Institute Director
- Laos Australia Institute, Aaron Rosada, Operations Manager

OTHER DONOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

- CUSO International, Tim Cook, Country Representative

HOST ORGANISATIONS – GOVERNMENT/QUASI GOVERNMENT

- Laos Disabled Women's Development Centre (LDWDC), Madame Chanpheng Sivila, Director
- Ministry of Education & Sport, Madame Chanthavone
- Vientiane Youth Centre/Laos Women's Union, Madame Dalavayn, Director

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- Scope Global, David Sharman-Selvidge, In-Country Manager Laos

VOLUNTEERS

- 5 volunteers

Cambodia

DFAT POST

- Ruth Stewart, DHOM
- Simon Fellows, Charge D'Affaires
- Sarah Toh, Second Secretary, Development Corporation
- Reasksmey Hong, Program Manager

OTHER DONOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

- KOICA, Long Sakanan, Program officer
- KOICA, Park Sora, Program manager
- KOICA, Sangbaek Park, Aid Effectiveness Advisor
- JICA, Kojima Takeharu, Senior representative
- Peace Corps, Alissa Lowrance Bellot, Director of programming and training

HOST ORGANISATIONS

- Care Cambodia, Jan Noorlander, Program director
- Friends International, Marko Ivkovic, International Human Resources Coordinator
- Human and Health, Touch Nimith, Executive Director
- CDPO, Ngin Saorath, Director
- Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, Mr Sam Oum, Project Manager
- Ministry of Interior, General Department of Identification, Department of Civil Registration, Mr Eng Chandara, Director
- Cambodia government
- Council for the development of Cambodia, Phana Veunida, Director Asia Pacific and Oceania Department
- Council for the Development of Cambodia, Mr Saram Martin, Executive Liaison Officer

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- Scope global, Song Kim Hour, In country manager

VOLUNTEERS

- 1 ABV
- 8 AVIDs