

## Evaluation of South Sudan NGO Early Recovery and Humanitarian Funding Round DFAT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

### Initiative Summary

<b>Initiative Name</b>	<b>Sudan Humanitarian Assistance</b> (South Sudan NGO Early Recovery and Humanitarian Funding Round)		
AidWorks initiative number	INJ734 / 11A458		
Commencement date	24/12/10	Completion date	30 June 2013
Total Australian \$	\$11,365,006.00		
Total other \$	N/A		
Delivery organisation(s)	Care Australia, Oxfam Australia, Save the Children Australia, World Vision Australia		
Implementing partner(s)	Care in South Sudan, Intermon in South Sudan, Oxfam in South Sudan, Save the Children in South Sudan, World Vision in South Sudan		
Country/Region	South Sudan		
Primary sector	72010 – Material relief assistance and services		
Initiative objective/s	<p>The overall objective of the South Sudan Humanitarian initiative is to support communities through the humanitarian transition and early recovery period. The initiative is comprised of four activities implemented in South Sudan.</p> <p>The South Sudan NGO Early Recovery and Humanitarian Funding Round activity was valued at \$11 million over two years. Over 2010-2012, four Australian non-government organisations (ANGOs) received approximately \$3 million each to work across several sectors in five states in South Sudan. In addition to the implementation of the projects, the ANGOs worked on development of policy analysis and cross program learning to inform future programming in South Sudan as well as working with diaspora in Australia.</p> <p>The overarching objective of the Funding Round was to support communities and community-led early recovery activities and thereby assist in laying a foundation for the Australian Government's longer-term development programming in South Sudan.</p> <p>The Funding Round had five objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Improving access to basic services including safe water, sanitation and hygiene and health services and facilities</li> <li>ii) Supporting the creation of livelihood opportunities, including for women and youth</li> <li>iii) Supporting the creation of basic infrastructure to help facilitate the resettlement and reintegration</li> <li>iv) Reducing community-led armed violence and promoting reconciliation to facilitate recovery and development</li> <li>v) Improving policy analysis and distillation of lessons learned from ANGO engagement in South Sudan, to inform future AusAID programming and funding prioritisation</li> </ol>		

## Evaluation Summary

### Evaluation Objective:

The purpose of the review was twofold:

- i) To appraise the performance and outcomes of the *South Sudan NGO Early Recovery Funding Round 2010-12* and measure the extent to which the objectives of the Funding Round had been achieved; and
- ii) To assess the merit of the early recovery modality in the South Sudanese context.

The review was intended to meet the Australian aid program's performance and accountability requirements and inform any potential future engagement in South Sudan and early recovery activities in Africa more broadly. The review was undertaken as an end of program review rather than the previously planned mid-term review. The review was comprised of a desk review and field visit to Juba to coincide with a planned 'NGO learning event'.

**Evaluation Completion Date:** 16 September 2013

**Evaluation Team:** Dr Harry Jeene (Evaluation Team Leader), Joseph Sabu (Evaluation Team Member) and Katherine Smith (DFAT Evaluation Manager)

### DFAT's response to the evaluation report

The report provides interesting contextual information for South Sudan and insights on the viability of the early recovery approach, particularly at field level. The report helpfully identifies particular areas for further investigation, such as the role of women in peace building. However, the report contains recommendations that deviate from the scope outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) in several instances; clear and factual responses to key evaluation questions are missing in some cases; and subjective statements are made throughout the report without supporting analysis or evidence-based data.

DFAT acknowledges the team was constrained in data collection and unable to travel outside of Juba. The review would have benefitted from more discussion on the draft evaluation plan at an earlier stage and longer time frames to ensure data collected was robust and triangulated. The learning event provided an opportunity to discuss the results being achieved under the Funding Round with field staff, but information from this event cannot be considered sufficient to meet the data requirements of this review. Further discussion on the scope and draft recommendations during the review would have resulted in a more focussed report that directly addressed the TOR.

DFAT is not in a position to respond directly to the recommendations regarding future development funding to South Sudan. One year has elapsed since the completion of the report in September 2013. The political and security circumstances in South Sudan have changed in that time following an outbreak of violence in the capital, Juba, in December 2013, which quickly spread across parts of the country. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan subsequently deteriorated and the security situation remains volatile. Since September 2013, there has also been a consolidation of DFAT's Sub-Saharan Africa program and the program's strategic objectives have been refined to reflect the Government's policy priorities and our national interest. Australia will continue to consider humanitarian funding for Africa within Government priorities and available budget.

## DFAT's response to the specific recommendations made in the report

Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
On the early recovery approach			
1. <b>The Early Recovery approach should be considered for scaling up in the fragile context of South Sudan.</b>	<i>Agree</i>	DFAT will consider the early recovery approach in future programming, where possible.	Africa program
2. <b>The 'gender and peace' approach has high potential and could be expanded.</b>	<i>Agree</i>	Gender equality is a critical cross-cutting theme in the aid program and will continue to be integrated into aid investments.	Africa program will share the lessons of this review with relevant areas.
3. <b>Future funding rounds that focus on early recovery should develop flexible ways of cooperation within AusAID to try and bridge this gap [between humanitarian and development areas].</b>	<i>Noted</i>	The Africa program will continue to strengthen, where possible, the linkages between its early recovery and longer-term development programming in Africa country programs; however this recommendation has implications beyond the Africa program and is beyond the scope of the TOR.	Africa program will share the lessons of this review with relevant areas.
On monitoring and evaluation			
4. <b>[Early recovery activities] require a longer proposal design phase and sufficient resource allocation, human and financial, to M&amp;E throughout implementation.</b>	<i>Noted</i>	Given the humanitarian imperative and the need for a rapid response in post-independence South Sudan, a pilot call for proposals was issued for early recovery activities.  The Africa program will consider ways to balance strengthened M&E with response flexibility in early recovery programming.	Africa program
On learning in a fragile environment			

<p><b>5. Any learning component must have clear deliverables, activities and budgets, with full clarity of who does what. This requires close donor-NGO interaction and follow-up.</b></p>	<p><i>Agree</i></p> <p>To maximise the opportunities for learning (collaborative learning and distillation of lessons learned), early consultation is beneficial for setting agreed deliverables and setting out responsibilities. Creating early opportunities for sharing and consolidating lessons learned is also important.</p>	<p>In instances where learning is a primary program objective, mechanisms for NGO-donor collaboration and communication would be considered during program design.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>6. Early determination of key questions, and decisions on methodologies, should be developed with the involvement of all stakeholders. Involvement of academia might be beneficial to increase rigour, while including South Sudan in a learning framework such as AACES could place the learning in a broader context.</b></p>	<p><i>Agree</i></p> <p>Stakeholder consultation is an important component of program development.</p> <p>South Sudan is not a focus country of the AACES, however broader opportunities for learning across the Africa program should be explored.</p>	<p>The Africa program acknowledges the valuable in-country experience and extensive networks of NGO partners. Opportunities exist for lessons learned in South Sudan to be shared across the broader Africa program.</p> <p>As a general principle, academic linkages and the application of research are drawn upon, where possible, to ensure that programs are delivered in accordance with recognised best practice.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p>On diaspora involvement</p>			
<p><b>7. Expanding [diaspora training] curricula to include investment opportunities should be considered.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>This recommendation does not provide advice in accordance with the parameters of the TOR.</p>	
<p><b>8. Great care should be taken to ensure that any involvement with members of the diaspora is perceived as giving equal access to the whole political spectrum.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>DFAT will continue to engage with the diaspora, as appropriate. Perceptions within the diaspora about whether DFAT has given equal access to the whole political spectrum are beyond DFAT's control.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>

On DFAT management			
<p><b>9. Bi-annual reporting would be more appropriate for early recovery grant mechanisms in a fluid context, to make sure that all actors are aware of changing circumstances and agree on the required adjustments in the action.</b></p>	<p><i>Partially Agree</i></p> <p>Early recovery contexts are particularly fluid and require ongoing oversight, including in terms of reviewing inputs and objectives.</p>	<p>The frequency of required reporting will be determined with consideration to the context and the nature of activities.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>10. A flexible mechanism is required and a somewhat less formal dialogue between donor and NGO can work well, where the process is documented and continuity guaranteed.</b></p>	<p><i>Agree</i></p> <p>Programming in rapidly changing contexts, and through trusted partners, requires that program designs allow for a degree of flexibility in execution, with an appropriate level of engagement between the donor and implementing partners.</p>	<p>The Africa program recognises the value of strong communication with implementing partners and will continue to implement suitable communication mechanisms as appropriate.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>11. Moving the management to the Nairobi office should be considered for future grants.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>While proximity to program implementation is important, program management arrangements will be determined by resource and other considerations.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>12. In view of the considerable portfolio of AusAID in South Sudan, a light in-country presence should also be explored.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>This recommendation is beyond the scope of the TOR.</p>	
<p><b>13. AusAID should urgently lift the travel ban outside Juba in order to enable field visits.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>This recommendation is beyond the scope of the TOR.</p>	

On DFAT funding options for South Sudan			
<p><b>14. In a fluid context such as South Sudan, providing stand-alone grants through reputable ANGOs is an appropriate approach, and this could be repeated in further actions, provided the capacity of both the NGOs and the donor to accompany the process is assured.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p> <p>ANGOs, with a history of programming and engagement in-country, are often well-placed to undertake early recovery activities. ANGOs are accredited to ensure value for money and compliance with policy.</p>	<p>DFAT will continue to engage ANGO partners and consider direct funding when this meets design objectives.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>15. The complementarity of Australian, international and local NGOs worked well, certainly at field level. A consortium of Australian NGOs with one lead agency and the same INGO/LNGO mix would likely have produced similar results at similar cost. Both options would be suitable for further actions.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>This recommendation is not based on data or evidence.</p>	
<p><b>16. The option of directly funding international NGOs in order to realise cost savings needs further investigation.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>DFAT recognises the benefit of engaging INGOs, which have entrenched local networks and valuable experience. Funding arrangements will continue to reflect program needs and value for money considerations.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>

<p><b>17. As a mid-sized donor, AusAID should continue to support selected UN bodies and pooled funding mechanisms following the principles of the 'New Deal'. Value for Money should be carefully considered for these funding options.</b></p>	<p><i>Agree</i></p> <p>UN bodies may represent the best-equipped partners in difficult and insecure contexts. Investment in pooled funds supports donor coordination in line with the New Deal.</p>	<p>Funding arrangements will continue to consider the most effective delivery mechanisms and value for money.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>18. Australia has prioritised Mining for Development and inclusion of South Sudan in this initiative could be explored.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>This recommendation does not provide advice in accordance with the parameters of the TOR.</p>	
<p>On transferring lessons</p>			
<p><b>19. AusAID should make maximum use of ANGOs involved in this funding round in developing of the new AusAID South Sudan country strategy.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>ANGOs bring useful experience to inform country programming in Africa.</p> <p>DFAT will continue to consult with ANGOs to strengthen program development, as appropriate and as resources permit.</p>	<p>Africa program</p>
<p><b>20. Caution should be exercised in transferring the lessons learned in South Sudan to other post-conflict contexts.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>		

<p><b>21. Having conflicting groups produce sectoral outcomes together can be a tool for additional peace building.</b></p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>Recognising 'do no harm' and other conflict-sensitive development principles, DFAT seeks to leverage peace building opportunities as appropriate to context.</p>	
<p><b>22. The emerging theory of change where women of ethnic groups in tension with each other create common economic resources deserves further exploration.</b></p>			