Australia Community Rehabilitation Program Phase 3 (ACRP3)

INI865

INDEPENDENT MID TERM REVIEW

Nov – Dec, 2012

Aid Activity Summary

Aid Activity Name			
AidWorks initiative number	INI865		
Commencement Date	May 2010	**Completion Date**	January 2015
Total Australian $	$45 million		
Total other $	✖ GiZ: EU 2.4m (from German Federal Ministry for Economic Development) ✖ Oxfam: AU $3,774,367		
Delivery Organisations	ACRP3 is directly administered by AusAID Post.		
Implementation Partners	✖ GiZ ✖ ILO ✖ IOM ✖ Oxfam	✖ TAF ✖ UNDP ✖ World Vision ✖ ZoA	
Country/Region	Sri Lanka		
Primary Sector	✖ Reconstruction Relief and Rehabilitation ✖ Post Conflict Peace-building ✖ Governance		

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Special recognition must be made to the people of Sri Lanka who have shared with us their stories, experience, and perceptions. We trust we have done justice to them.

Author's Details

The ACRP3 Mid Term Review was undertaken by Donna Leigh Holden and Arjuna Parakrama who act as Independent Consultants. As such, the views presented are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of AusAID nor bind it to action.

The specific contribution of Ian Kidd (Manager, Performance Reporting) as AusAID Canberra representative to the mission, and as contributor to the report should also be acknowledged.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
ACRP3	Australian Community Rehabilitation Program Phase 3
CBO/s	Community Based Organisation/s
CSO/s	Civil Society Organisation/s
DNH	Do No Harm
DoC	Domains of Change
DS	Divisional Secretary
EOPO	End-of-program outcome
EVAW	End Violence Against Women's
GiZ	German Society for International Cooperation (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)*
GN	Grama Niladari (also sometimes referred to as Grama Sevaka [GS])
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IP	Implementing Partners (ACRP3)
LGA	Local government authorities
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NELSIP	North East Local Services Improvement Project
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PB	Participatory budgeting
PHI	Public Health Inspector
Post	AusAID office in Colombo
PRS	Public Redress System
PS	*Pradeshiya Sabha*
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
RA	Result areas
RDS	Rural Development Society
TAF	The Asia Foundation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TST	Technical Support Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Vanni or Wanni	Geographic area covering the entirety of *Mannar*, *Mullaitivu* and *Vavuniya* Districts, and most of *Kilinochchi* District
WV	World Vision

Definitions

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

Partnership: An ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared. A partnership is based on principles of equity, transparency, and mutual accountability. In practical terms this means each partner's involvement in co-creating projects and programs, committing tangible resource contributions and mutual accountability[2].

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

[2] AusAID Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) Concept Design, (2010) p. 33

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Executive Summary

"We have lost enough. I lost a son and don't want to lose any more.
We need to move forwards"
School teacher involved in School Twinning Project, Vavuniya

The Australian Community Rehabilitation Program Phase 3 (ACRP3) is a five-year, A$45 million program which tackles issues that entrench poverty and conflict in war-affected and lagging areas of Sri Lanka. It addresses the constraints to livelihood and economic development at the community level while systematically addressing the causes of conflicts, strengthening governance and improving service provision by the State. The ACRP3 approach is based on the premise that removing the impediments to peace would facilitate equitable development in conflict-affected and lagging areas. The overarching ***goal*** of ACRP3 is:

> "to increase the number of conflict affected communities across Sri Lanka benefitting from and living a sustainable, secure and productive life."

ACRP3 supports a range of projects delivered by eight implementing partners (UNDP, The Asia Foundation, ILO, Oxfam, World Vision, IOM, ZoA and GiZ). Projects have been designed around three interlinked (but not mutually implemented) ***objectives:***

- Strengthened governance structures at the local and community level to reduce factors that have contributed to conflict;
- Increased economic opportunity for disadvantaged and conflict affected communities delivered in a way that reduces factors that have contributed to conflict;
- Empowerment of actors to promote and support peace and strengthen social inclusion.

Since June 2009 Sri Lanka has been in post-war but not post-crisis, nor post-conflict situation[3]. The context continues to be unpredictable, with militarisation, regular changes to systems of local governance, slow relocation and rehabilitation of internally displaced people, and lack of attention to the socio-political and economic issues which lay at the foundation of Sri Lanka's peace and conflict context.

AusAID has commissioned this Independent Mid Term Review (MTR) for ACRP3 to:

- inform AusAID's funding decision for Year 4 and 5; and
- improve the management arrangements to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of ACRP3.

The MTR was undertaken in October – December 2012 by a team of two Independent Consultants and one AusAID Canberra staff who spent three weeks attending meetings in Colombo and visiting partners, communities and other stakeholders in field project locations in the war-affected and lagging areas of north, central and eastern Sri Lanka.

The MTR found that ACRP3 works within an ambiguous, constrained and consistently changing and changeable environment. Designed in the immediate post-war period, the cessation of the armed conflict led to urgent humanitarian priorities, which temporarily and pragmatically diverted ACRP3 from its initial peace and conflict intent to a greater

[3] This key distinction has been reiterated in the latest TST Report of April 2012, and was widely accepted by ACRP3 partners during MTR discussions, making it a shared and crucial divergence from the official position of the Sri Lankan State.

focus upon rehabilitation and recovery. Nevertheless, ACRP3 interventions have effectively weathered and withstood these changes and demonstrate the degree of flexibility and adaptability that the context necessitates.

There is clear evidence of progress towards the objectives and emerging impact:

- ACRP supported projects are targeting and engaging with vulnerable communities in areas badly affected by the war and/or poorly served by state service delivery and other support mechanisms;

- These efforts have supported the reestablishment of communities, livelihoods, infrastructure and permanent settlement in war-affected areas. There is evidence of emerging impact in the reestablishment of livelihoods and infrastructure for vulnerable individuals and communities, and in the successful piloting and establishment of local governance initiatives which are being replicated by State authorities and other development actors;

- ACRP partners have been able to capitalise on the limited space afforded to international development actors to work on humanitarian and infrastructure activities to expand this engagement to longer-term development concerns such as capacity building, strengthening local governance and conflict transformation;

- Despite the war having ended, the social, economic and political inequality, marginalisation and lack of restitution that represent the drivers of conflict remain;

- The partnerships that AusAID Sri Lanka has built with its ACRP3 partners are aspirational for other AusAID programs as they move towards partnership approaches. AusAID's closeness to the program in such a complex and challenging environment is a significant asset which adds value both to ACRP3 but also to the wider Australian aid program in Sri Lanka.

The promise of the remaining two years of ACRP3 is the opportunity for enhancing ACRP3 impacts and outcomes through the integration of community-based successes with local government accountability mechanisms in a way that supports and enables conflict transformation for the people of Sri Lanka:

> "We have never worked in this open transparent way before. But as a result we have more questions to ask, more doubts to clarify, more problems to solve, more wrongs to right".
>
> Woman Peace Committee Member

The recommendations within this report, summarised in brief below, and provided in detail at Annex 9, intend to support and enable AusAID, its ACRP3 partners, and the duty bearers and communities with whom they work to achieve this. The recommendations of the MTR are as follows:

1. Technical and M&E Support

The contribution that a competent and consistent TST / M&E process can make to ACRP 3 is significant, particularly with regard to supporting AusAID in quality processes, strengthening the technical focus on key cross cutting issues and program themes (gender, social inclusion and conflict transformation), strengthening attention the collection and analysis of verifiable evidence, and enabling cross program learning. While AusAID may have some concerns regarding division of labour between technical and

M&E functions, there is precedence for this shared function where effective management strategies are in place for managing objectivity and potential conflict of interest.

1.1 *That AusAID immediately reestablish permanent and expanded technical team with a revised role and ToR which includes:*
- *The provision of technical support for AusAID and partners on identified priority concerns (peace and conflict, gender and inclusion, capacity building);*
- *Support for overarching program level M&E functions including an ACRP3 ToC and EOPOs, biannual monitoring missions;*
- *Support to partners to strengthen M&E systems and practice with a focus on strengthening evidence based analysis and evaluation;*
- *Facilitation support for improved analysis and learning across the portfolio of initiatives and between partners or groups of partners;*
- *Delivery of identified capacity building activities for AusAID and ACRP3 partners.*

1.2 *The expanded technical team would include national and international technical advisers with competencies in:*
- *M&E;*
- *Gender and social inclusion;*
- *Peace and conflict;*
- *Capacity building;*
- Governance

1.3 *The size and composition of the team should be structured and mobilised in a way that will allay any concerns that AusAID or partners may have regarding potential of perceived conflict of interest between monitoring, technical and evaluation functions. This could include peer review, mobilising combined skill teams, collaborative and learning focused monitoring processes, and using independent teams for evaluation such as an independent completion report (ICR) and impact study.*

2. Program Logic

The lack of an overarching ToC creates challenges for AusAID and its partners in illustrating the linkages between the three RA's, evidencing each partners specific contributions against clearly articulated and shared EOPOs and illustrating synergies across the portfolio of activities.

2.1 *The MTR proposes that AusAID bring together ACRP3 partners to articulate a ToC to guide programming over the next two years, as an urgent priority, and as an imperative to ensure both programmatic continuity and coherence. This process should build on the initial framework for change presented in the ACRP3 design by calibrating the efforts of individual partner projects with the result areas rather than developing or justifying any new program logic.*

3. M&E Framework and Reporting

The wide range of reporting frameworks used by partners makes consistent measurement and demonstration of the overall performance of ACRP3 challenging.

3.1 *The MTR proposes that consideration be given to the application of a **simple** unified ACRP3 M&E reporting framework, for all partners to report against for the duration of ACRP3.*

3.2 *Partners need to pay stricter attention to analysis based on verifiable evidence for the remaining life of ACRP3 in order that this responsibly reflects emerging outcomes and impacts, contributes to end of program analysis and future program planning. This will ideally be aligned with an overarching ACRP3 ToC to ensure that clear guidance support are provided to ensure that this analysis contributes to higher order requirements.*

4. Analysis and Learning

AusAID's direct role in the management of ACRP3 means that AusAID is brought closer to the field, hence providing it with a direct lens through which to view and analyze the very real development challenges in the North and East. The strategic value of this should not be underestimated, and heightens the importance of systematic efforts at analysis and learning across the ACRP3 portfolio, and the responsibility of all partners to engage in this.

4.1 *We propose that ongoing learning and development opportunities be strategically planned and overseen by the TST (in consultation with AusAID) so as to link them with quality processes such as strengthening M&E and performance in a limited number of identified strategic areas, namely inclusion/exclusion (including gender) and conflict transformation/DNH, as well as enabling a clearer articulation of EOPOs and impact by 2015.*

4.2 *The frequency of learning opportunities is practical and should not be decreased in these last two years of programming especially where this will be linked to quality processes. Consideration of including peer review as part of this strategy, perhaps as part of the TST monitoring missions is strongly recommended to promote strengthened partnership, cross program synergies and learning.*

5. Strengthening the Peace and Conflict Lens

Moving into the future, the original conflict transformation perspective needs to be retained if ACRP3 is to mitigate current and future risks to vulnerable and marginalised groups, and to remain relevant and conflict-sensitive in the highly politicised and volatile post-war (but not post-crisis) context. Refocusing learning and analysis around peace and conflict dynamics and issues will produce multiple benefits that will be valuable as AusAID makes the transition from addressing conflict as a thematic program to integrating it as a cross cutting issue across the portfolio:

- Strengthening the effectiveness and relevance of ACRP3 projects;
- Enabling both AusAID and partners to track the dynamics and influences of a rapidly changing socio-political context; and
- Identifying the strategies and approaches that are most effective in addressing these.

5.1 *Maintaining a strong peace and conflict lens is central to the achievement of the ACRP3 goal and objectives. AusAID should reengage technical expertise in conflict transformation (as part of its revitalised TST) to support regular conflict and DNH analyses at the program and project level.*

6. Gender and Social Inclusion as Strategic Issues

Cultural constraints and historical traditions that devalue women's role in Sri Lanka militate against women being able to effectively mobilise against exploitation. Meaningful gender work, in the context of ACRP3 would be informed by AusAID's Gender Thematic Strategy "Opportunities for All[4]" and would recognise the centrality of gender equality to economic and human development including planned, sustained and affirmative efforts to:

- Provide women with equal access to (gender responsive) services;
- Support the economic empowerment of women and girls and improve their livelihood security;
- Increase women's voice in decision-making, leadership, and peace-building;
- Promote the ending of violence against women and girls at home, in their communities, and in disaster and conflict situations.

A focus on gender equality calls IPs to consider their own discourse and implied messages around gender and take opportunities to demonstrate good gender practice and sensitise

[4] http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/Documents/thematic-strategies/gender-equality-strategy.pdf

stakeholders to gender dynamics and considerations.

6.1 *We recommend that attention to strengthening the gender focus of ACRP should focus on the enabling a more sophisticated consideration of gender equality at all levels of ACRP3 through:*

- *Ensuring specific gender competence and gender analysis within the TST;*
- *Ensuring that gender equality is reflected within the M&E framework;*
- *Including a focus on gender within all M&E at the program and project level;*
- *Supporting partners to integrate gender assessment tools to assist them to move from gender mainstreaming to equality approaches;*
- *Enabling analysis of the impacts and burdens of engagement of development upon women, men and families and ensuring effective safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable women.*

6.2 *Gender can be addressed within a wider package which takes a rights based focus on promoting inclusion through systematically addressing exclusion and marginalisation and measuring the outcomes of these efforts.*

7. Local Partnerships and Capacity Building

The constrained operating environment means that IPs are limited in their choices of local partnerships to support implement. This results in IPs utilising long-term partnerships which predate, and will likely extend beyond the life of ACRP3; working within local government structures; or being forced to work almost exclusively through State-sponsored CBOs. Each presents considerations and challenges for sustainability and effectiveness. In relation to capacity building:

7.1 *Partners are strongly encouraged to pay more systematic attention to capacity building and institutional strengthening, in particular articulating the intended changes and using effective tools to measure capacity building and institutional strengthening outcomes.*

7.2 *IPs need to be more prepared to describe the nature of the different relationships that they may have with their various partners, the strategic intent and purpose of those relationships and articulate, where appropriate, exit strategies for Years 4 and 5, or conversely, where exit is not anticipated, provide benchmarks and milestones on which exit would be made in the future.*

7.3 *AusAID is urged to directly nurture strategic partnerships with key national and provincial counterparts that will facilitate a more holistic and integrated approach among IPs, and which will support linkages with its wider development portfolio.*

7.4 AusAID and its ACRP3 partners would benefit from a deeper understanding and recognition of the distinction between State-based and civil CBOs, and the specific development challenges and dilemmas that this brings to the context.

8. Strengthening Attention to Safeguards

The MTR identified less than optimal attention to safeguards in a number of activities. Increased vulnerability is an unacceptable risk.

8.1 *Instances of strong potential risk in relation to safeguards identified by the MTR have foregrounded the need for urgent action by all IPs to:*

- *Investigate and remedy specific cases, such as those identified on page 20.*
- *For partners to review their portfolios to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, which take special cognizance of post-war vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups*
- *For partners to ensure that policies, tools and procedures are in place to protect beneficiaries and mitigate future risks. This should include arrangements for monitoring these safeguards in instances where the activity or partner is no longer working in that area.*

8.2 *The monitoring and evaluation of safeguards and risk requires significantly increased attention by partners, AusAID and the TST into the future.*

9. End of Program Quality Processes

ACRP3 has been at the fore of Australia's aid investment in Sri Lanka at a critical juncture in Sri Lanka's development. By the end of ACRP3, eight partners will have delivered over $45m of Australian aid in 5 districts to approximately. There will be a lot to learn and understand from this.

9.1 *In order to capitalise on investments through ACRP3, we recommend that program learning and reflection be captured through the following quality processes (in addition to TST monitoring):*

- *An Independent Completion Report (ICR) to be undertaken in Year 5 in order to assess outcomes of ACRP and its associated programs; and*
- *Systematic and detailed Impact Assessment of ACRP 3 or selected components thereof.*

Evaluation Criteria Ratings

The following are the final overall ratings for the ACRP3 against the evaluation criteria. There are no dissenting viewpoints amongst the MTR team members on these ratings nor the wider observations and recommendations of the following report.

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (1-6)
Relevance	5
Effectiveness	4
Efficiency	4
Sustainability	4
Gender Equality	4
Monitoring & Evaluation	4
Analysis & Learning	4

Note: Impact is not rated but addressed within the narrative.

Rating Scale

Rating Scale			
Satisfactory		**Less than Satisfactory**	
6	Very high quality	3	Less than adequate quality
5	Good quality	2	Poor quality
4	Adequate quality	1	Very poor quality

Rating scale: 6 = very high quality; 1 = very low quality. Below 4 is less than satisfactory.

Fishing boats at the Mathagal Auction Centre. The Construction of auction centres such as this has brought the market directly to the village and established a focal point for other resettlement and community development activities within these recently returned fishing communities.

Introduction

Activity Background – ACRP3

The Australian Community Rehabilitation Program Phase 3 (ACRP3) is a five-year, A$45 million, community development program which tackles issues that entrench poverty and conflict in war-affected and lagging areas of Sri Lanka. It addresses the constraints to livelihood and economic development at the community level while systematically addressing the causes of conflicts, strengthening governance and improving service provision by the State. The approach is based on the premise that removing the impediments to peace would facilitate equitable development in conflict-affected and lagging areas.

The overarching ***goal*** of ACRP3 is:

> "to increase the number of conflict affected communities across Sri Lanka benefitting from and living a sustainable, secure and productive life."

Its ***purpose*** is:

> "to strengthen social cohesion by increasing the levels of trust, awareness, capacity and confidence on the part of men, women and children from different ethnical and religious groups to initiate and participate in activities that improve their economic and social opportunity in a manner that reduces the factors that have contributed to conflict."

ACRP 3 supports a range of projects/interventions which have been designed around three interlinked (but not mutually implemented) ***objectives/result*** *areas (RAs):*

- Strengthened governance structures at the local and community level to reduce factors that have contributed to conflict;
- Increased economic opportunity for disadvantaged and conflict affected communities delivered in a way that reduces factors that have contributed to conflict;
- Empowerment of actors to promote and support peace and strengthen social inclusion.

In assessing performance against its objectives, ACRP3 considers six Domains of Change (DoC) behaviour, practices, policy, resources, equality and participation.

Grants of three to five year duration have been provided to eight implementing partners (IPs) selected through a competitive tender process for the delivery of projects addressing one or more of the ACRP3 objectives (refer Annex 1). Partners comprise:

- three multilateral agencies
  - United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
  - International Labour Organisation (ILO),
  - International Organisation for Migration (IOM);

- four international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs):
  - Oxfam,
  - The Asia Foundation (TAF)
  - World Vision (WV),
  - ZOA;

- one government technical agency:
  - *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ).

Partners work with civil society actors, NGOs, community based organisations (CBOs) and local government institutions in implementing ACRP3 projects.

The changing context and humanitarian imperatives that have emerged in the post-war period have resulted in some creep from the initial peace and conflict focus of the initial ACRP3 design. This has been further impacted by the limited spaces available to non-State actors to engage in development activities, particularly in the *Vanni*. While ACRP3 interventions have effectively weathered and withstood these changes and continues to be highly relevant to the context and needs, this report proposes some action to be taken to remedy this creep, and bring ACRP3 and its partner activities into a greater strategic alignment with the emerging context and shifting emphases of the Australian aid program in Sri Lanka[5].

Context Background – Post War, not Post Conflict Sri Lanka

Since June 2009 Sri Lanka has been in post-war but not post-crisis, nor post-conflict situation[6]. A unique feature of ACRP3 is that it was designed in the latter stages of war, but by the time of its implementation the war was over under circumstances that had bequeathed a humanitarian crisis that spanned the entire *Vanni*[7] region. This crisis is especially visible in the Northern and Eastern areas of the country where the majority of ACRP3 projects are operational resulting in partners working in these areas refocusing some interventions to address urgent humanitarian challenges in the first two to three years of ACRP3 implementation.

In the last three years the overall post-war context has continued to be unpredictable, even arbitrary, with entrenched militarisation presenting as the one constant. In particular, the relocation and rehabilitation of internally displaced people (IDPs) has been slow and controversial, fraught with political and technical problems. The last official IDP camp was closed in September 2012 and resettlement of IDPs is still taking place, as is new settlement into former conflict areas. This changeability affects IPs' ability to plan and implement ACRP3 projects as designed. GoSL policy and practice is in flux, with potentially game-changing legislation in the pipeline. In addition, demarcation between civilian and military administrative roles and functions still remains unclear in some instances.

Now that the humanitarian emergency is all but over, the transition to development has become the emphasis of ACRP3 interventions, including targeting key governance and capacity development gains. Yet there is a tension between this more upstream focus and basic service delivery and livelihood enhancement for the most vulnerable and excluded groups. While it is a strength of ACRP3 that it continues to grasp the nettle of this inevitable dichotomy through a range of diverse initiatives, it is conversely a weakness that it has failed to achieve significant synergy across them. The promise of the last two years of ACRP3 is precisely the integration of community-based successes with local government accountability mechanisms.

Even within the North and East, discrepancies and differences are palpable. The Jaffna

[5] AusAID itself has recently reviewed its Country Strategy for Sri Lanka 2012 – 2015.
[6] This key distinction has been reiterated in the latest TST Report of April 2012, and was widely accepted by ACRP3 partners during MTR discussions.
[7] Geographic area covering the entirety of *Mannar*, *Mullaitivu* and *Vavuniya* Districts, and most of *Kilinochchi* District.

Peninsula, much longer under Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) control and the homeland of the Tamil elite, is better served than the three *Vanni* districts. In the East, competing political, civilian administrative and military demands have created parallel structures which are currently being confounded by confusion over different priorities between the devolved and decentralised systems of governance.

Current political developments at the national level, as well as post-war transitioning which may affect the law and order context in the short term, provide additional challenges for the development trajectory in war-affected areas. Crucial for the country's future stability is an enlightened multiethnic and multilingual policy which mainstreams reconciliation and trust-building across all such initiatives.

The Government coalition has been able to win parliamentary and provincial elections in most districts with notable exceptions in the North, East and plantation districts. Since the plantation political leadership invariably aligns with any regime in power, this leaves only the Northern districts as outliers. Systemic inclusion of all marginalised populations must remain a key national priority.

In macroeconomic terms, Sri Lanka is a Middle Income Country at the lower end, but this assessment blurs internal disparities and regional inequalities in a country where the GINI coefficient remains above 40, though the poverty headcount is below 9%[8]. According to government reports Sri Lanka remains on course or ahead on all key MDG targets, but the data used does not include the worst war-affected districts. Here too both horizontal and vertical inequalities are significant. Moreover, what these and other economic indicators do not touch is the level of war-related trauma including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) suffered by the local population, which has clear consequences for both governance and livelihood interventions, and which require a safe and enabling environment for healing. This pre-requisite for development is conspicuous by its absence, though signs are that space for engagement is gradually, if slowly, increasing.

Challenges to development initiatives in the post-war environment include a population devastated by decades of trauma, destroyed infrastructure and fundamentally disempowered local governance structures with war-oriented military logic still in place. Opportunities include a highly committed and competent bureaucracy, the gradual normalisation of civilian-military relations, as well as housing and road projects that are being implemented. Both sustainable and market-oriented livelihoods need to be developed, and unequal competition from the military in this sphere requires address.

Evaluation Objectives and Questions

AusAID has commissioned an independent Mid Term Review (MTR) for ACRP3 in accordance with its quality at implementation standards and project cycle arrangements. The MTR has two primary purposes as outlined within the Terms of Reference (ToR) provided at Annex 2:

- to inform AusAID's funding decision for Year 4 and 5; and
- to improve the management arrangements to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of ACRP3.

The primary ***objective*** therefore, is to assist AusAID to:

[8] http://data.worldbank.org/country/sri-lanka

> "devise the best possible composition of ACRP3 to deliver the targeted results against the country program objectives in an efficient manner and ensure individual projects have the robust program design to support such delivery".

In addition to assessing the performance of ACRP3 against AusAID evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, gender, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and analysis and learning, the MTR has been asked to pay specific attention to:

- Assessing the existing information sharing mechanisms and level of collaboration amongst partners and providing recommendations towards improving collaboration;
- Assessing the effectiveness of the Technical Support Team (TST) and recommending changes to the composition, frequency and role of the TST;
- Assessing management arrangements and provide recommendations towards improving the collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of ACRP3 by AusAID Colombo Post;
- Highlight alignment and possible linkages between ACRP3 and other parts of AusAID's development assistance portfolio in Sri Lanka now and into the future.

Discussion of these issues is integrated throughout the report with recommendations provided in the Summary and Recommendations section and Annex 9.

Evaluation Scope and Methods

The primary purpose of the MTR is to gain an informed understanding of how effective the ACRP3 mechanism has been in enabling AusAID and its partners to deliver community rehabilitation activities in war-affected and lagging areas of Sri Lanka, verify outcomes and identify any emerging impacts. This analysis is required to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and interventions and assess the extent to which these continue to be relevant in a constantly changing and changeable context in order to inform programming priorities and operational supports that can be taken to support the implementation of ACRP3 in its final two years.

As such the MTR methodology was developed so as to focus on assessing the overall performance of the ACRP3 and its portfolio of projects, as opposed to the performance of individual projects, activities and approaches.

The MTR was undertaken in three key stages, a desk review, Sri Lanka field mission and analysis and reporting. Table 1 below shows the keys stages and processes of the MTR as well as the sources of information.

Table 1: ACRP 3 Mid Term Review Processes

Evaluation Activity	Purpose	Information Sources
Desk Review:	✖ Establish understanding of ACRP3 and its portfolio of projects ✖ Form key assumptions and analytical framework ✖ Develop MTR methodology and lines of inquiry	✖ AusAID Country Strategy and policy documents ✖ ACRP 3 design ✖ TST reports and documentation ✖ IP Designs and implementation reports ✖ Books, articles on Sri Lanka context.

Colombo Consultations: 6 days		
AusAID Briefing	✖ Understand institutional policy framework and priorities ✖ Clarify key questions ✖ Confirm methodology ✖ Discuss logistics	✖ MTR ToR ✖ AusAID Country Strategy and policy documents ✖ ACRP 3 design
IP Leadership Discussions	✖ Discuss intent of MTR ✖ Understand strategic intent of ACRP3 participation ✖ Identify key issues at policy / program level	✖ Discussion with Executive Management of IPs; ✖ Discussion with Senior Program Managers ✖ IP program materials
MTR Debriefing	✖ Provide preliminary feedback on MTR to IP program and leadership teams	
Field Mission – North, North Central, Eastern and Central Provinces: 14 days		
Project Site Visits	✖ Verification of activities ✖ Evidence emerging outcomes ✖ Evidence operational context/challenges ✖ Engage multistakeholder voice in MTR	✖ Partner/Key Stakeholder Presentations ✖ FGD with beneficiaries and key stakeholders ✖ Discussion with IP field teams
Final Analysis and Reporting:		
MTR Team Workshops x 2		✖ ACRP3 design, TST reports ✖ Partner designs, reports ✖ Field visit notes

Annex 3 contains the MTR field schedule and Annex 4 provides a list of those consulted.

During the mission the team developed a shared understanding of 'what success for ACRP 3 would look like and a framework for analysis against each of the rating criteria. These statements précis the sections of this report to which they pertain and are provided in summary form in the Table provided at Annex 5. During field consultations each team member undertook specific lines of inquiry to enable them to make an independent assessment and provide substantiating evidence against their ratings.

The methodology for field consultations had to be sufficiently flexible and adaptive to the diversity of partners, thematic engagement, programming approaches, contextual and environmental concerns and limitations, stakeholders and target beneficiaries. Methodology was therefore, largely qualitative in nature and key lines of questioning were developed in line with the specifics of each meeting. Considerations included the activity, location, the audience/informant/attendees, the safety and security of attendees particularly where open community consultations were held, the age, gender, literacy levels and openness to speak and share experience.

The MTR took regular opportunities throughout the mission to debrief and share observations and initial finding from meetings and consultations. Two workshops were held during the field mission to enable a structured exchange and analysis and facilitated a shared understanding of the MTR outcomes. While the independent

analysis and right of each team member to hold dissenting viewpoints were upheld throughout the mission, in the final analysis team members were broadly of similar mind and no dissenting viewpoints were recorded.

Limitations

In light of the focus on the performance of ACRP3 as a whole, the key area of analysis is the extent to which sub-projects are achieving their objectives, and most specifically the extent to which these have contributed to the overall strategic objectives of ACRP3 and in turn the Australian aid program in Sri Lanka.

While the team did review all available documentation including TST and (where available) independent mid term evaluations of ACRP3 supported projects, sufficient time was not made available to undertake detailed and systematic analysis of individual partner projects and interventions. As such the MTR does not provide nor make claim to substantive evaluation of individual projects.

Understanding the approaches, operational realities and emerging outcomes of each ACRP3 supported project is however fundamental to reaching this analysis. As such field consultations and project site visits were undertaken to enable the MTR to evidence program operations. These visits were arranged by ACRP3 IPs. They did not take a consistent format, nor seek to systematically address questions lines of inquiry pre-established by the MTR team, as such, evidence collected is random and purely qualitative in nature. Moreover, as each partner field visit totaled one full day[9], the choice of visited areas/projects from the broader partner portfolio may have skewed the MTR's analysis.

The MTR was not resourced to undertake primary data collection, as such it has relied on the data from the M& E systems of AusAID and its IPs and verified (where possible and appropriate) by staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders during the MTR field visits.

Evaluation Team

The MTR team comprised two independent evaluators, Donna Leigh Holden (Team Leader) and Arjuna Parakrama (Context Adviser), and Ian Kidd from the AusAID Performance and Quality Unit. AusAID Colombo team members, Steven Wawrzonek (First Secretary) and Sweta Velpillay (Senior Program Officer) provided in-country support and joined the field mission. Annex 6 provides brief bios on MTR team members.

The team composition ensured a gender mix and the required balance of technical skills in evaluation practice; an understanding of the Australian aid program, its policies and priorities sound understanding of the socio-political history of Sri Lanka and the issues which influence development in the current context; relevant operational and technical experience in key thematic areas humanitarian and recovery programming, governance, capacity building, rural development, community development, gender and social inclusion.

AusAID and the MTR team place shared importance and value on ensuring the integrity of the MTR process, specifically maintaining independence, transparency and avoiding any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

[9] In some cases these visits were spread over two days in different locations

Evaluation Findings

AusAID applies Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance as the standard base reporting criteria for the review and evaluation of its development assistance, with the addition of a number of additional quality standards to ensure capture of key policy priorities such as gender and inclusion.

The following section presents the key observations and findings of the MTR in relation to the performance of ACRP3 and its portfolio of projects against each of the criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, gender, M&E and analysis and learning. Ratings are also provided. Each section is précised by AusAID's definition of each criteria (in blue text) as well as the analytical framework for assessment as developed and applied by the MTR team. As previously discussed, analysis does not reach to substantive assessment of individual projects or approaches. Where comment is made on specific interventions or partner activities these are generally provided as examples of evidence, as opposed the sole source of evidence.

A summary of key findings and recommendations based on the analysis presented in the following pages is provided at the end of the section. Recommendations charted against their relationship with each evaluation criteria are also provided at Annex 9.

Relevance

To determine whether the activity contributed to higher-level objectives of the aid program (outlined in country and thematic strategies).

Analytical Framework: In the context of ACRP3, the most relevant interventions are those that are strongly aligned to key AusAID policies and safeguards, are consonant with Sri Lanka's national needs and priorities, promote conflict transformation, and facilitate an enabling space for equitable and pro-poor development and service delivery in lagging regions and sectors.

Observations: The MTR identified that ACRP3 is strongly aligned with key AusAID policies and safeguards (e.g. gender equality, disability inclusive development, peace and conflict[10]) and is implemented within the framework of AusAID's priorities as agreed with the GoSL.

This was achieved through proactive engagement with key stakeholders based on prioritising sustained attention to partnership at all levels of ACRP3, and in particular AusAID-NGO partnerships which enabled a high degree of responsiveness to changing priorities in an uncertain context. For instance, the adaptation of the initial ACRP3 design to address urgent humanitarian requirements and servicing of IDP needs in the immediate post-war context (2009-11).

The MTR highlights the limited spaces for engagement in community development, local governance and conflict transformation, as well as the rapidly changing and changeable context within which partners are programming. This is not likely to change and requires a high degree of flexibility and adaptability at both programmatic and management levels ongoing. ACRP has provided a vehicle that has enabled IPs to capitalise on their engagement in the humanitarian space to gradually broaden this engagement to development issues such including local governance, capacity

[10] http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Documents/aid-fragile-conflict-affected-states-staff-guidance.pdf

building, peace and security etc. This will be evidenced in further sections of the report.

ACRP3 was originally designed in the immediate post-war period with the intent to build on lessons learned from its previous incarnation, ACRP2. The cessation of the armed conflict however led to immediate humanitarian needs including the need to support resettlement of IDPs. This has forced changes in the original intent of ACRP3 which includes perhaps less attention to the peace and conflict intent of the program than initially anticipated. This shift is a pragmatic response to the then rapidly and unpredictably changing context and demonstrates the adaptability of the program and its partners. However, the MTR team finds that, moving into the future, the original conflict transformation perspective needs to be retained if ACRP3 is to mitigate current and future risks to vulnerable and marginalised groups, and remain relevant and conflict-sensitive in the highly politicised and volatile post-war (but not post-crisis) context. This requires that the conflict transformation lens still continues to be applied, and indeed prioritised, and that regular conflict and DNH analyses be undertaken at the program and project level. The MTR also proposes that support for this should be provided as part of the package of services provided by an expanded TST.

While the ACRP3 objectives are relevant, the absence of a clear Theory of Change (ToC) for ACRP3 means that there is some ambiguity about the interrelationship between them, and subsequently the expectation of partners to address them singularly or collectively. A clear ToC for ACRP3 would assist in overcoming this tension.

Links to GoSL systems and structures range from close alignment to parallelism, but this may also reflect the unevenness of government engagement in the North, East and plantation areas. Though GoSL priorities remain ambiguous and uncertain beyond broad statements of intent, available data indicate that ACRP3 partners are focused on disadvantaged and excluded people within lagging geographical areas, and hence are synchronised with ***national*** priorities. In terms of locations, the northern districts of *Mullaitivu*, *Kilinochchi*, *Mannar*, *Vavuniya*, the Eastern districts of *Trincomalee*, *Batticaloa* and *Ampara*, the North Central districts of *Polonnaruwa* and *Anuradhapura*, and the Central district of *Nuwara Eliya*, where ACRP3 IPs work, are among the most vulnerable in the country. Examples of integration with government structures and processes that have the potential for orientation towards greater sensitivity to the poorest and most deprived in neglected regions are Public Redress Systems (PRS) and participatory budgeting for third tier local government authorities (LGAs).

ACRP3 partner projects are targeting and engaging with vulnerable communities in areas badly affected by the war and/or poorly served by state service delivery and other support mechanisms. This is a crucial strength and a key component in our assessment of its high relevance. IPs work with extremely vulnerable and excluded groups in the *Wanni*, as well as in the *Polonnaruwa*, *Batticaloa*, *Amparai* and *Nuwara Eliya* districts, with whom other International NGOs do not tend to engage, and where government service delivery is delinquent. ILO, IOM, Oxfam, UNDP, WV and ZOA all demonstrated sustained partnerships with communities who reiterated to the team that before ACRP3 they did not receive even basic amenities and had little faith in government to service their needs:

> "We have successes but they are never complete. We protested against a corrupt public officer. After an inquiry he was transferred, so we succeeded, but he kept his job in another place."
>
> Woman CBO leader

Beneficiaries include landless farmers, single parent families, war widows and orphaned children, displaced and relocated populations, and those with special needs.

AusAID is currently in the process of finalising its Country Strategy for Sri Lanka for 2012 - 2016. It is anticipated that key elements of the new programme will continue the emphasis on lagging regions and sectors, as well as address equitable development[11]. This requires sustained engagement with vulnerable communities in post-war areas, which is the main focus of ACRP3 partner projects. As such ACRP3 and its partners has a fundamental role to play in assisting AusAID to understand the shifting peace and conflict dynamics and effective approaches to support conflict transformation.

Final MTR Rating for Relevance: 5

Effectiveness

To determine whether the activity has achieved its objectives.

Analytical Framework: A measure of ACRP3 effectiveness at MTR would be demonstrated evidence of progress/emerging results towards a clearly articulated ToC and end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs) in strengthened governance, increased economic opportunity and social inclusion and conflict transformation. ACRP3 and its partners would have established and functional partnerships to deliver and maximise synergies between programs; demonstrate the ability to identify and mitigate programmatic risk; be responsive and flexible to changing contexts and needs.

Observations: Working within conflict-affected States such as Sri Lanka, present unique and complex challenges in achieving effective development including chronic and entrenched poverty, poor levels or State accountability to citizens, State structures which reflect either a lack of capacity, resourcing or will to provide for public safety and security, or basic services for all citizens, absence of enabling business environment, exclusion of certain groups from the social, economic and political arenas. Ongoing conflict causes and instability result in increased vulnerability of already marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as women, people with disabilities, minority religious and/or ethnic groups etc. AusAID's policy framework highlights that

> 'Lasting solutions require a capable and responsive state underpinned by a cohesive society, with political competition conducted in non-violent ways[12]'.

Common themes undertaken by IPs include, strengthening accountability to citizens through civil service strengthening, improved planning in Government to facilitate accelerated economic growth and institutionalising public redress mechanisms (TAF, GiZ), the provision of basic infrastructure in acutely vulnerable communities to increase local economic development (IOM, ILO, UNDP, Oxfam, ZOA, WV), value chain creation for small businesses (ILO), supporting communities to advocate for fair and equitable distribution of government resources (UNDP, Oxfam, ZOA, WV), and improved social cohesion programs to reduce community tensions and strengthen peace (IOM, ILO, UNDP, Oxfam, ZOA, WV).

The MTR found evidence of progress against each of the ACRP RAs and discussion on these has been integrated and dispersed throughout the various sections of this report

[11] The Country Strategy was not yet approved at the time of reporting.

[12] http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Documents/aid-fragile-conflict-affected-states-staff-guidance.pdf

so as to minimise repetition as much as possible, and enable this discussion on effectiveness to address factors which influence effectiveness.

The lack of an overarching ToC for ACRP3 results in some siloing of projects. While this is not unusual in similar 'umbrella' program models which finance a wide range of partners implementing their own discrete programs, and is also a response to the complex and constrained operating context, it does impact upon effectiveness. The development of an overarching ToC would enable AusAID and IPs to make visible the linkages between the three RAs, strengthen synergies across different partner projects and hence do justice to a better articulation of achievements against a shared set of EOPOs.

IPs have been able to capitalise on the limited space afforded to international development actors, to work on humanitarian and infrastructure activities, thereby leveraging their longer-term development and governance work. Examples include combining basic infrastructure construction with community strengthening through participation in decision-making and selection of projects that seek to bring different ethnic groups together. In addition, IPs and their CBO partners have been able to leverage livelihood and infrastructure support to bring communities together to campaign, network and advocate against human rights violations, collective land issues, corruption, End Violence Against Women (EVAW) and protection concerns.

Despite good progress being made across the portfolio of projects, the MTR was concerned that in some instances less than optimal attention to safeguards may result in increased vulnerability. This includes for example mitigating economic exploitation of vulnerable beneficiaries through ensuring decent work standards, remuneration which are protected by contracts; ensuring that lending products do not present unacceptable risk; ensuring DNH analysis around resource transfer and strengthened analysis and monitoring of gender impacts including increased burden on women. Increased vulnerability and/or hardship is an unacceptable risk, and monitoring and evaluation of safeguards and risk requires significant increased attention by partners, AusAID and the TST into the future.

Cross cutting issues have generally been mainstreamed by partners, particularly in terms of gender and disability inclusive development. All IPs have requisite policies and procedures in place with regard to safeguards such as fraud and child protection, but few have addressed child protection as a broader programmatic protection issue.

Critical to our analysis of effectiveness is the importance of understanding the roles of key development actors and partners. A key issue outcome of the MTR has been a more detailed analysis of the work that partners are doing with civil society and CBOs. The existence of an active and independent civil society is fundamental to democratic governance and development. CSOs and CBOs play a vital role in community development, as service providers, in advocating community concerns, in linking communities with government and in acting as independent observers or watchdogs.

While ACRP3 partners are working with CBOs, these are for the most part State sponsored structures such as Fisher Cooperative Development Societies (FCDS), Rural and Women's Rural Development Societies (RDS and WRDS). While these CBOs assist in community consultations, selection of beneficiaries etc, the risk of elite capture, exclusion of some groups, and predilection of certain agendas is high. The level of the influence of State control over these organisations is most evidenced in one District Officer stating proudly during interview:

"they (the RDS) cannot spend even one Rupee without my approval."

While these organisations provide one of the only spaces for engagement, it is naïve to argue independence and sustainability of these organisations when the State's power to influence the membership of, form and disassemble these institutions is equal. AusAID and its ACRP3 partners would benefit from a deeper understanding and recognition of the distinction between State-based and civil CBOs, and the specific development challenges and dilemmas that this brings to the context[13]. While it is recognised that in the immediate post-war environment state-based CBOs were largely a monopoly in the community development arena, emerging independent CSOs provide a necessary complement to ensure broader participation of vulnerable groups, since state-based CBOs tend to be led by local elites with national political affiliations. Specifically partners need to be careful to position their discourse and reporting on civil society outcomes within a State vis-à-vis non-State framework. We also encourage partners to seek opportunities to support the emergence of independent civil society actors where this is possible

Capacity building (CB) is fundamental to effectiveness. All partners are engaging in CB and a variety of approaches are being used ranging from institutional strengthening, systems strengthening, public sector reform, advocacy, training and mentoring to community empowerment and mobilisation. Within the governance arena, CB and institutional strengthening tends to be planned and (as) well (as possible in the current context) integrated with local government planning and priorities. At the community and individual level this is less so or rather less uniformly clear across the range of partners. It is important to recognise that capacity building is itself a technical discipline but one which is not the core competence of all ACRP3 partners. We encourage AusAID and partners to pay more systematic attention to capacity building and institutional strengthening in the coming years, and in particular to more clearly articulating and measuring the intended changes and desired capacity building outcomes of individual projects. This could include for example the application of organisation development planning and assessment tools. We suggest that support for this could be included within an expanded TST function, as well as present a potential area for linkages between ACRP3 partners.

Less attention has been paid to the conflict transformation aspects of ACRP3 as perhaps envisaged within the original design due to factors discussed in the preceding section. While all partners use some peace and conflict lens around their activities, and implement some activities which have peace-building intent, the MTR saw limited evidence of attention to conflict transformative programming which will lead to sufficient restitution to ameliorate the many drivers of conflict which remain so strikingly apparent despite the end of the armed conflict.

Final MTR Rating for Effectiveness: 4

Efficiency

To determine whether the activity was managed to get the most out of the inputs of funds, staff and other resources, including continual management of risks.

Analytical Framework: Analysis of efficiency for ACRP3 takes into account whether the

[13] It is valuable here to refer to the definition of civil society provided at the beginning of this document which is clear in its distinction of civil society being separate from the state.

delivery vehicle was appropriate and sufficiently resourced to support the program and partners; whether transaction costs were commensurate with the investment, over burdensome or presented obstacles to the efficient operation of the program (e.g. funding delays etc); the quality and ease of communication between AusAID and its partners, the sharing and management of risk. Value for money is a key consideration which includes the cost effectiveness of management and program interventions; if the ACRP3 and its associated projects represented the best use of resources to deliver the intended outcome; the quality, accountability and transparency of financial management.

Observations: In line with the recognition of the varying contribution and complementary roles a range of different types of development actors make, AusAID has been investing in the establishment of new forms of relationships with a range of non-State actors in recent years, including the implementation of new partnership programs and approaches. One of the striking characteristics of ACRP3 is the extent to which AusAID Sri Lanka and its partners have progressed this partnership agenda without it being an explicitly stated intent of the program. This has been achieved through significant and sustained commitment and attention to regular monitoring and evaluation missions (six-monthly field monitoring visits to all supported projects), an annual conference in which all partners share their work plans and programming highlights and regular learning forums at which AusAID and its partners come together to discuss strategic issues and contextual challenges.

These relationships deliver gains, which extend far beyond the outcomes of ACRP itself and provide AusAID with a vantage to field conditions and realities that is as yet aspirational for some regions and country programs. The MTR highlights this perhaps unintended outcome of the approach to ACRP3 as a significant asset not only to the program and partners but also to AusAID as it repositions itself within an extremely complex and changeable context.

A further strength of the ACRP design, as highlighted by partners during the MTR was the fact that it built upon lessons learned from previous iterations of the program (ACRP1 & 2). This included, a reduction in the number of partners to enable increased collaboration and sharing across partners; meaningful levels of resourcing and long term (3 plus 2 years) funding commitments, the ability to engage with competent partners with proven track records enabling, soft touch management. These factors have provided a sound management base, which has enabled partners to be responsive to a constantly changing context while planning for longer-term development opportunities as communities resettle.

The ACRP 3 design establishes a TST, for the life of ACRP3, which has responsibilities for overall M&E systems and monitoring; M&E support to partners; technical support in gender, peace and conflict; and support for analysis and learning. While this TST function was established and operated for the first 12 months of ACRP3, since this time, due to the absence of Period Offers, AusAID has not been in a position to recruit and contract a permanent TST. This has resulted in a lack of continuity in TST membership, approaches to missions and lack of available technical expertise to support safeguards and cross-cutting issues and well as project level quality issues. This has placed additional burdens and limitations on Post but has also resulted in the delivery of mixed messages to partners and the inability to define a clear overarching ToC and strategic direction for ACRP3. The regeneration of a permanent TST is an absolute priority for ACRP3 and should be configured so as to provide technical as well as M&E support to both AusAID and its partners.

The transaction costs associated with the management of eight individual contracts are for AusAID none-the-less fairly high, and certainly greater than was anticipated at design due to the decision to engage in more partnerships than initial six proposed. This has been further compounded by the absence of a permanent TST upon which Post could rely for greater technical assistance and facilitation support. While the MTR recognises the workload of managing these contracts, it wishes to highlight the significant value add of this engagement in line with the comments in the preceding paragraphs. The recommendations within this report are provided so as to support some reduction in these transaction costs in relation to streamlining M&E and reporting support for facilitation of learning events in particular.

Despite this increased partnership with ACRP IPs, most of AusAID's relationships with other ACRP stakeholders such as government officials, are presently brokered by the ACRP partners and are very much focused around M&E of partner interventions rather than broader discourse on development challenges and opportunities. As such, AusAID derives limited benefit from these key relationships and partnerships. Developing these relationships independently will support AusAID to better integrate ACRP3 with its broader development program into the future.

Final MTR Rating for Efficiency: 4

Impact

To determine whether the activity has produced positive or negative changes (directly or indirectly, intended or unintended). The degree to which the various aspects of impact can be assessed will vary according to the nature and duration of the activity.

Analytical Framework: Emerging successful impacts of ACRP3 would include:

- More responsive and accountable local governance in war-ravaged areas (especially towards vulnerable populations) with previously excluded communities empowered as rights holders ensuring that government authorities (as duty bearers) addressing their service delivery needs;
- Significantly less unequal gender relations, which goes beyond targeting of women;
- Protection network and advocacy/awareness campaigns help change previous patterns of impunity and systemic rights abuse;
- Livelihood, service delivery and infrastructure initiatives have changed quality of life, especially health and nutrition status of families in project areas;
- Access to credit and markets, has reduced patterns of chronic indebtedness; and
- The uptake or mainstreaming of successful interventions in broader provincial and national state-owned programmes and processes, or other donor activities.

Observations: Measuring impact in an uncertain and changing context is made even more difficult by the fact that the reporting framework does not promote a strategic perspective and is too granular in focus (output and activity-based). The key impact to be measured is stakeholders' performance in a situation of flux and shifting goalposts. In other words, how are the different tiers and types of stakeholders able to cope with this uncertainty and change, and how can this behaviour be attributed to ACRP3? A second, related issue is, "what is the impact to be measured?" Since IP projects claim a broad space that spans all three RAs which are explicitly connected through their conflict transformation agenda, it seems most appropriate to measure ACRP3's impact in terms of its achievement in transforming conflict in each of the RAs.

Thus, we should measure the programme's impact upon the three main communities' gendered, classed and rights-based enjoyment of better relations that goes beyond personalities and special circumstances to embrace systemic and structural processes. These improved relations should include a shared understanding of the past and a common plan for the future, which is resilient to political and politicised change. In turn, ethnic conflict needs to be seen as a distinct but inter-connected part of a broader conflictual process that is generated by economic, political and social exclusion. Therefore, conflict transformation in Sri Lanka's post-war environment may prioritise ethnic reconciliation, but for this reconciliation to be sustainable, it needs to seriously engage with the parallel problems of socio-economic and political exclusion.

This range of emerging impacts can and should be measured at three levels – individual, community and government. With this framework in mind, broadly speaking, impacts are being seen at the community level through:

- increased confidence of some communities to access services and advocate for their rights;
- increased understanding of common issues and shared concerns, as well as greater cohesion towards a mutually beneficial agenda;
- the reduction of indebtedness;
- the use of redress mechanisms to address land titling and encroachment issues.

Structural impacts are also seen in the mainstreaming of some programme activities such as school twinning, the public redress system (PRS) and participatory budgeting (PB) by Government and other major development actors, including the World Bank.

Though a three-year timeframe in such a changing context is not sufficient to demonstrate firm impacts, evidence of emerging impact of ACRP3 in terms of conflict transformation can be measured as:

- the extent to which increased resources obtained by local government authorities has resulted in greater sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of excluded and vulnerable ethnic, caste based and cultural communities within the purview of these local bodies;
- the collective reconciliation and trust-building that has changed relationships across Sinhala, Tamil and/or Muslim villages;
- the degree of intra-community awareness raising and empowerment of disadvantages groups to address entrenched caste-based and related discrimination; and
- collective protection-related networking and advocacy/campaigning that unites communities across the ethnic, religious and cultural divide.

Table 2 overleaf provides a summary of some of the emerging impacts evidenced throughout the MTR[14]. The team impresses the value of undertaking systematic and detailed impact analyses, either as a stand-alone activity or as part of a broader final evaluation of ACRP3 and its partner projects in its concluding phase. Annex 8 further provides an example template for how this information could be consistently collected by partners.

[14] These are based on observations and desk study, rather than through any systematic and comprehensive impact assessment which lies outside the scope of the MTR.

Tumeric is being introduced as a cash crop with potential for significant returns. It also appears to be a deterrent for elephants.

Table 2: Examples of Emerging Impact

	Individual	Community	Government and other stakeholders	Comments
Increased confidence of communities to access services and advocate for their rights.	Community members display greater confidence and ability to access their rights	CBOs & community groups have successfully advocated for removal of government authorities on the basis of corruption and non-performance.	Examples of government officers paying attention to community complaints, including investigating and transferring GNs and PHIs who were not performing.	The chain from individual to government through community organisations is manifest only in a few instances, and this requires greater emphasis.
Increased understanding of common issues and shared concerns, as well as greater cohesion towards a mutually beneficial agenda	Awareness-raising and capacity building of CBOs have led to notable examples of communities coming together to address issues (garbage dumping, sewerage systems)	Community mobilisation in fishing and farming cooperatives and federations has changed awareness and sense of collectivity	Government shows increased respect to hitherto ignored communities as a result of their strong organisations and collective bargaining power. Even middlemen and business enterprises are forced to negotiate better economic terms for these cooperatives.	In many cases, no clear evidence has emerged that the community organisations reflect increased sensitivity to the most marginalised groups within their villages, especially when these orgs are state-regulated (e.g. RDS, WRDS, Cooperatives)
The reduction of indebtedness	Livelihoods and skills development significantly increases family incomes. Home gardens increase HH income by up to 50%.	Fishermen's Federations increase community economic bargaining power. Farmer cooperatives provide secure higher prices for paddy (but these tend to serve small landowners more than tenant farmers).	Greater access is being provided to communities and CBOs by respective Government ministries (Fisheries, Agriculture, Cooperatives etc)	The emphasis of non-state CBO livelihood development involving the poorest of the poor is on sustainable livelihoods, which needs to be developed to include broader market access through value-addition.

		Special projects targeting women farmers include profit-sharing but need better safeguards.		
The use of redress mechanisms to address land titling, encroachment and similar issues	PRS has led to better service delivery for all families living in the project areas.	Women's right to land titles has been established as normative based on work done by ACRP3 partner in East.	Property dispute mediation by LGAs (between parties where encroachment has occurred) is potentially transformative since LGAs are delivering services at grassroots levels of administration.	Public redress mechanisms do not deal with larger policy and corruption issues, including military-related concerns
Mainstreaming of programme activities by Government and other major development actors		CBOs are now consulted by LGAs and decentralized government systems (GN, DS and Gas) in decision-making and implementation of local programmes.	NELSIP[15] mainstreams Public Redress and Participatory Budgeting mechanisms across North and East provinces. The School Twinning program adopted by Education Ministry.	The success of these upstream (TAF and GIZ) projects can help leverage AusAID's investments with the WB and other future governance initiatives.
Conflict Transformation impacts	Livelihood initiatives for LTTE[16] ex-combatants have provided crucial option for their rehabilitation into society	School Twinning has begun process of inter-ethnic reconciliation and trust-building.	Increased sensitivity to marginal and vulnerable ethnic community needs not yet visible though increased incomes have been recorded by selected LGAs through better revenue collection.	

[15] WORLD BANK Multidonor Fund: North East Local Services Improvement Project
[16] Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

Increased engagement with core post-war issues and militarisation concerns	Women and families more empowered to confront military and majoritarian systems when there is personal injustice against them, which acts as deterrent	CBOs have won concessions from military, such as shifting of camps and checkpoints in North & East.	Gender and EVAW networks in East have increased Government accountability vis-à-vis protection issues, but not yet at higher political levels. Key campaigns include contesting Navy land grabs, shifting of military camps etc	However, military still enjoys full impunity for rights abuse, especially against women.

Final MTR Rating: For the purposes of MTR, impact is not rated[17].

[17] AusAID MTR Standard

Sustainability

To determine whether the activity has appropriately addressed sustainability so that the benefits of the activity will continue after funding has ceased, with due account of partner government systems, stakeholder ownership and the phase-out strategy.

Analytical Framework: Sustainability outcomes for ACRP3 would demonstrate resilient and adaptable communities and CBOs working on collectively identified issues, and whose capacity has been developed to engage as equal partners with the spectrum of government structures. In turn, both decentralised and devolved arms of government will be responsible to public needs and aspirations through institutionalised systems and processes, and will have developed capacity to do so.

Observations: The MTR team's understanding and assessment of sustainability is broader and more nuanced than simply ensuring that the IP sponsored CBO partners and projects remain in place beyond the life of ACRP3. While in most cases the continuity of institutions and partners on the ground is a valid criterion for measuring sustainability, it is neither necessary nor sufficient in all instances. For example, while GIZ's STEPS programme is clearly sustainable in the Northern Province as a result of the establishment of a government-owned dedicated STEPS Institute, in the Eastern Province (where resources do not permit the formation of such an institution) the project is sustainable if a critical mass of government officers have been trained and others can be regularly supported by the Jaffna STEPS Institute. The point is that STEPS-trained bureaucrats are in any case subject to transfer across provinces, and it is the behaviour change that lies at the core of sustainability here.

Similarly, a significant number of IPs partnerships with their CBO and NGO/Network partners predate and indeed extend beyond ACRP3. Many of these partnerships (irrespective of whether they involve funding[18]) will continue beyond the life of ACRP3, particularly where partnerships with the most vulnerable and excluded groups in difficult contexts will require extended engagement and more so when the nature of the work challenges established hierarchies. This long-term engagement is also characteristic of a context where there are limited spaces for international actors to engage. While some concern was expressed during the MTR of the long-term nature of some of these relationships, the above factors are understood to influence the nature of relationships that some IPs have with their local partners. While AusAID should be mindful of exit strategies in terms of ACRP3, it should also take heed not to force the cessation of strategic partnerships between long term actors. It is therefore important for IPs to be more prepared to describe the nature of the different relationships that they may have with their various partners, the strategic intent and purpose of those relationships and to articulate (to AusAID) where appropriate exit strategies for Years 4 and 5 are in place. Conversely, where exit is not anticipated, IPs need to provide benchmarks and milestones on which exit would be made in the future.

Sustainability is strongly influenced by the changing and changeable context in which ACRP3 operates, and which will naturally vary from project to project. The very factors crucial to sustainability, such as adaptability, flexibility and a critical mass of required capacity are most challenging criteria in crisis situations. Different agencies also view sustainability differently. Some focus on the maintenance of institutions, skills and systems, while others approach it from a perspective of scalability and

[18] It is important to recognise that not all INGO – CSO partnerships involve financing transfers.

replicability. In this context, the issue of State-based versus independent CBOs (discussed in the section on effectiveness) presents an important challenge for sustainability, particularly in light of proposed changes to local governance regulations and service delivery modalities. We suggest that partners be pragmatic and careful not to overstate sustainability outcomes in relation to work with State-sponsored CBOs.

In a climate of unequally-allocated resources and where responsiveness for citizen needs is not uniform, the measure of sustainability must go beyond the State's current absorption capacity and/or systems of prioritisation. Further, sustainability should be addressed through the entrenchment of accountability systems, which move beyond responsibility *for* to responsibility *to* claim holders. It is extremely positive that some of ACRP partners' flagship interventions have been scaled up by GoSL and its other development partners. This includes NELSIP's mainstreaming of PRS and PB initiative, as well as some initiatives which have been taken on by provincial and national networks, especially in relation to sensitive protection concerns such as access to land, gender based violence etc.

It is unfortunate that the enabling environment for learning from one's mistakes has not yet been fully established within and between the ACRP IPs. Written and oral reporting continues to tend towards 'spin' when it comes to articulating sustainability (and other) outcomes. Within such a challenging environment, this is of course not in the interests of **any** stakeholder from AusAID to IPs, all the way down to beneficiary level. AusAID, the TST and partners need to prioritise the creation of a more open and nurturing environment where real sharing, problem solving and learning can take place without adversely affecting perceptions of individual IPs or their projects.

In summary, in the context of ACRP3's geographic focus and range of interventions and stakeholders, sustainability needs to be understood and measured in nuanced and plural ways. This includes perceiving sustainability not merely as the institutionalisation of processes and systems but also as resilience through the creation of a critical mass of aware and empowered community members (claim holders) and state officials (duty bearers).

Final MTR Rating for Sustainability: 4

Gender Equality

To determine whether the activity advanced gender equality and promoted women (considering the four dimensions of gender equality: access, decision-making, women's rights, capacity-building).

Analytical Framework: Meaningful gender work, in the context of ACRP3 would be informed by AusAID's Gender Thematic Strategy "Opportunities for All[19]" and would recognise the centrality of gender equality to economic and human development". This would include planned, sustained and affirmative efforts to:

- provide women with equal access to (gender responsive) services;
- support the economic empowerment of women and girls and improve their livelihood security;
- increase women's voice in decision-making, leadership, and peace-building;
- promote the ending of violence against women and girls at home, in their

[19] http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/Documents/thematic-strategies/gender-equality-strategy.pdf

communities, and in disaster and conflict situations.

Observations: All ACRP3 programs have developed programmatic rhetoric around gender and the promotion of opportunities for women, and make efforts to demonstrate the active targeting of women as beneficiaries of aid, and within programme activities.

While all partners are able to demonstrate efforts and outcomes at the level of women's participation, access to services and capacity building for example, active attention to gender equality, with few exceptions, tends to stall at the higher end objectives of empowerment, leadership, decision-making.

Gender participation outcomes for example are found within:

- Women's participation in CBOs, but do not generally extend to equal opportunities for women's election to CBOs outside of State defined membership quotas[20];
- The inclusion of women in livelihoods activities, but where women receive less income for like work and claim increased workload, which adds to their domestic burden;
- Attendance of women in community consultations, but where there is limited discussion of key issues for women or where facilitated efforts to engage them in community decision-making, or where the agendas are defined by men and co-opted by men's interests.

As such, targeting and participation is insufficient justification of gender outcome.

A focus on gender equality calls on IPs to consider their own discourse and implied messages around gender[21], take opportunities to demonstrate good gender practice and sensitise stakeholders to gender issues. The MTR evidenced few examples of where IPs work specifically on gender equality issues, and with the exception of Oxfam, few partners are actively promoting EVAW.

Despite this limited attention to gender equality across the portfolio of programs, some significantly positive changes which have the potential to result in solid impacts are emerging through the work of some ACRP3 partners. Examples of this include the acceptance of women as co-owners within land titling in the East, sensitive protection work including where this includes civilian-military dimensions, and capacity building of LGAs e.g. gender sensitive components of the STEPs curriculum, and gender emphasis in the PRS process.

The MTR did identify a number of instances in which it was concerned for potentially negative consequences for women participating in or receiving benefit from partner activities. Effective gender and DNH analyses would significantly reduce these risks and partners are reminded of their responsibilities to take specific care to mitigate against any negative and unintended consequences of development or humanitarian assistance. Specifically, when women are engaged in economic activities, safeguards need to be more rigorously in place as cultural constraints and historical traditions that devalue their labour in Sri Lanka militate against women

[20] Oxfam was observed as the exception to this with women holding office on merit and within CSOs and CBOs that are non-State regulated and do not operate on quota systems.
[21] For example composition of field teams, use of language, proactive and affirmative efforts to put women in positions of leadership, discussion of women's issues in mixed forum etc.

being able to effectively mobilise against exploitation.

The MTR teams assessment of gender work within ACRP3 does not reflect poor attention to gender, but rather recognises the efforts of all partners to support the development of women and girls, and seeks to highlight the potential that this offers for partners to engage in more meaningful ways to promote gender equality in Years 4 and 5:

> "We have never worked in this open transparent way before. But as a result we have more questions to ask, more doubts to clarify, more problems to solve, more wrongs to right".
>
> Woman Peace Committee Member

ACRP3 would be significantly strengthened through increased articulation of intended gender outcomes at the program level and the provision of support for strengthened gender analysis at the project level. This could be achieved by ensuring gender (and social inclusion) competence within the TST, the provision of technical support to IPs to develop tools for gender analysis and undertaking more structured analysis of gender outcomes and impacts during TST missions and other M&E activities.

Final MTR Rating for Gender Equality: 4

Monitoring and Evaluation

To determine whether the activity's monitoring and evaluation system effectively measured progress towards meeting objectives.

Analytical framework: Successful M&E for ACRP3 would exemplify:

- A program level ToC which includes all partners and explains clearly how ACRP3 and its components will contribute to end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs);
- Partners and AusAID are able to assess the extent to which the program is on track and make adjustments as appropriate;
- Information from the M&E system provides sufficient evidence to enable partners and AusAID to assess progress towards meeting objectives and intended outcomes;
- ACRP3 is able to demonstrate the extent to which each IP is strengthening governance at the local and community level and to identify factors which have contributed to reduced conflict;
- ACRP3 has evidence to show the extent to which it has led to increased economic opportunity for disadvantaged and conflict affected communities;
- ACRP3 has evidence to demonstrate the extent to which communities have been empowered to strengthen social inclusion and promote peace; this includes empowerment of women;
- The program is able to show how outputs have led to EOPOs.

MTR Observations: The attention to M&E within the design and AusAID Sri Lanka's active attention to quality processes is a strength of ACRP3. The changing context which has led to some shifting in ACRP3 priorities, coupled with the inability to engage a consistent TST throughout the life of ACRP3 has however undermined some of the strong gains that such a rigorous approach to M&E and learning would normally have.

The ACRP 3 design states the intent that a ToC for ACRP3 and overarching M&E framework to be used by all partners would be developed by the TST following the selection of partners and interventions. Due to a number of extenuating circumstances previously discussed this did not happen.

The gap in high level M&E systems support at the program and project level created by the loss of a permanent TST function, has had some negative effects on ACRP3's ability to clearly articulate its progress against clear EOPOs. The absence of an overarching M&E framework and ToC for ACRP3 means that at times partners struggle to articulate and clearly measure EOPOS. All IPs have paid independent attention to M&E, with some support from AusAID and the TST, but these efforts have been mixed and there is little uniformity in M&E across the portfolio. While most partners have articulated M&E for their own individual programs, these are not always sufficiently aligned with ACRP3, nor do they provide sufficient evidence to provide a clear assessment of ACRP3's contribution at the goal and purpose level. For example, while all partners report progress towards outputs and outcomes (with at times a disappointing emphasis upon output) only one has articulated a ToC with an aligned M&E framework. Even then, this framework only measures and reports progress towards outputs and outcomes against the project itself, and does not respond to the key result areas of ACRP3.

Ideally for ACRP3 and its partners to measure effectiveness in meaningful way that does justice to the good work being done, an overarching ToC for ACRP3 as a whole would be developed which would enable partners to describe and measure progress towards ACRP3's program level EOPOs. Further partners, would also ideally move towards a level of M&E commensurate the above standard including a clearly articulated ToC and aligned reporting frameworks.

Partner reporting against outcomes is not sufficiently evidence-based,[22] and partners should be careful not to overstate anecdotal information as evidence of sustained attitude and behaviour change. The MTR evidenced many cases where partners make claims which are not substantiated, or claim attribution for outcomes which may be influenced by factors outside the program[23]. For example, partners commonly report issues such as the 'participation of women in CBOs or the establishment of women's organisations have highlighted women's role and contributions, changing the community attitudes'. In such cases, the links between outputs such as women's participation and outcomes such as changing community attitudes need to be carefully thought through. While there may be evidence for the increased participation of women, the link between women's participation and a change in community attitude needs to be evidenced.

Similarly, it is impossible to effectively measure change in the absence of baselines, targets and clearly stated tools of measurement. It is difficult to interpret exactly what is meant for example by a baseline indicator of 'poor' with an achievement listed as 'fair'. Clear rubrics describing the characteristics of these measures would be a minimum requirement.

Partners are reminded that broad and unsubstantiated statements such as 'local

[22] The last TST report in April 2012 noted that most ACRP3 progress reports from the eight IPs were focussed on activities rather than outputs and outcomes. While this has, to a degree, improved in the most recent progress reports, claims are still largely insufficiently supported by evidence.

[23] For example, changes in the incidence of diarrhoeal disease could be attributed to a range of external variables outside of some of the specific interventions, which lay claim to it.

authorities/leaders are increasingly sensitive to the priorities of marginalised communities' are value-loaded statements, which counter evidence coming from other areas. Such statements are poorly served as evidence of programmatic achievement. Further, the context and conflict transformation intent of ACRP3 underscores a broader ethical responsibility to reflect a true and accurate picture of the context and the challenges within it.

While our assessment is that there is less than satisfactory attention to evaluation (measurement and analysis) by IPs, this is not to say that there is not clear evidence of development outcomes being achieved in some areas. Indeed the MTR has found many. Our assessment fact simply highlights the need for considerable attention by **all** partners to bring **verifiable and non-contestable** evidence to support their claims of development outcomes.

IPs recently commenced reporting to the ACRP3 DoC. While the attempt to report against the DoC is clearly based on an effort by the TST and AusAID to encourage partners to report against a consistent and comparable set of criteria prior to the MTR, partners have interpreted and applied these differently, resulting in eight completely different presentations of the DoC, which has not achieved the desired uniformity of reporting across the portfolio.

While recognising that partners have been very responsive to considerable change in M&E and reporting arrangements, and that further change may be perceived at this stage of the program as a further and possibly unnecessary burden, the MTR does feel that the introduction of a simple and common M&E reporting framework warrants some consideration.

Annex 7 provides an example of a simple framework that could serve as a basis for discussion between AusAID and the IPs in determining if such an approach is viable. The MTR stresses that such a framework should be simple and only introduced with the intent to further streamline the transaction costs associated with M&E reporting for both AusAID and its partners.

The size of the overall ACRP3 envelope coupled with the number of partners implementing discrete interventions within it presents an issue of proportionality in terms of M&E, where the evidence that AusAID would expect for a program of this value, is not commensurate with the M&E requirements of $4-5m sub projects. This accounts for some of the critical assessments made by the MTR team of less than optimal attention to evaluation at the outcome and impact, and poor evidencing and attribution of development outcomes. An increased focused on analysis and learning at the high order ACRP goal, purpose and objective level will enable AusAID to effectively bring together evidence and lessons from partner projects to articulate the overarching results and impacts of ACRP3 at the time of its completion.

The MTR proposes that in addition to undertaking an Independent Completion Report (ICR) at the end of Year 5 to assess the achievements of the program as a whole, consideration also be given to undertaking an impact assessment of the various ACRP3 interventions[24]. We have also provided an example tool for early partner reporting against impact which could be considered as part of a revised reporting framework (refer Annex 8).

[24] This may be best undertaken in Year 4 and may be focussed upon specific interventions.

The priority of re-establishing a permanent TST with expanded functions relating to M&E and technical support is well understood by AusAID Sri Lanka and a priority for early 2012 when new administrative arrangements will be in place to enable engagement of a permanent team. The MTR recommends that aside from technical M&E capabilities that the TST also includes competence in gender and social inclusion as well as conflict transformation. We also strongly recommend that the TST take a greater control in the determination of M&E activities including development of methodologies (including sampling, tools and site selection) for field visits to enable a higher level of robustness and objectivity to program level M&E.

A consequence of increased donor harmony can be a blurring of results attribution. In the case of ACRP3 co-contributions by partners or other donors, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the contribution of AusAID funding from other sources, or to decipher results, which can be directly attributed to ACRP3. The possibility of double attribution[25] of achievements exists and may influence program effectiveness and efficiency. While a clear ToC and more robust universal M&E framework may help to clarify achievements that are attributable to AusAID, results attribution will be an increasingly evident characteristic of the development landscape requiring partners and donors to be increasingly transparent about resource mobilisation and shared results into the future.

In summary, while ACRP3 partners are clearly making progress towards the achievement of the ACRP goal and objective, as well as the objectives of their individual interventions, more robust and systematic attention to M&E will help to ensure that this is adequately documented and evidenced. It will further overcome challenges in comparing and analysing progress between different approaches and interventions which is currently problematic given the lack of uniformity of M&E systems and reporting, but absolutely necessary to enable meaningful lessons learned as ACRP3 moves to closure in 2014.

Final MTR Rating for M&E: 4

Analysis and Learning

To determine whether the activity was based on sound technical analysis and continuous learning.

Analytical Framework: Successful outcomes of good analysis and learning would include:

- ACRP3 assumptions and analysis have been tested to ensure their soundness, particularly in relation to an unpredictable ground reality;
- Program and partners able to demonstrate they have responded in a timely manner to a rapidly changing context;
- Evidence that analysis underpins and is integrated into ACRP3 activities, including but not limited to analysis in peace and conflict transformation, gender, inclusion;
- Partners are able to identify which activities have most impact on peace and conflict dynamics;
- Evidence that partners have undertaken analysis, which informs their engagement with the strategic goals of the program and examines the effectiveness of the intervention;

[25] AusAID and another donor

- Partners and AusAID learn from each other and can show they utilise learning through changes in behaviour or *modus operandi.*

Observations: Organisations learn and value learning in different ways. As such, and not unexpected, there was wide variation in the way in which learning efforts manifest across the different partners. A few examples include:

- For some partners implementing 'legacy' programs and interventions which are "core business" and which are based on known successful interventions, the focus of analysis and learning has been on documentation and replication of strategies perceived as effective (e.g. replication of PRS, adaptation of STEPS modules for different learning contexts, working with Chambers of Commerce on key issues such as power, strengthening civil society networks and EVAW);

- The rapidly changing context necessitating partners to transition between humanitarian and development approaches. For example, agencies whose key comparative advantage lies in humanitarian assistance have developed expertise on the ground in later recovery and early development work, while, on the other hand, development-oriented agencies have successfully engaged in humanitarian activities. In the words of one IP:

  > "ACRP 3 support has really helped us to make the transition from humanitarian and recovery to development;"

- Partners working within newly forming communities and in tightly controlled programming spaces have had to work outside of their usual 'core business' to develop new skills and capacities in community mobilisation and capacity building and have been successful in achieving this to varying degrees. Notable in this respect are community-based infrastructure projects in the war-ravaged *Vanni* and maritime areas, as well as ongoing work with recently relocated populations in the border villages.

The TST initially conceived within the ACRP3 design was to have a broader function which included support for program and project level M&E, assist in learning and analysis, and provision of technical support for individual projects. While some partners have found TST support of value,

> "We were really grappling with issues around social inclusion and were able to access support from Sunil for this"

The extent to which IPs have adjusted their interventions on the basis of the changing context and TST guidance remains somewhat unclear. There is no doubt that re-establishing a consistent and technically strong TST with an active focus on analysis and learning for the remaining life of the program will enable ACRP to more effectively demonstrate, understand and build upon outcomes.

AusAID has made a sound and systematised effort to engage partners in information sharing and cross-program analysis and learning through the implementation of:

- Learning and Development (L&D) Seminars focussing on thematic issues of mutual policy or programmatic interest; and

- An Annual Conference at which partners come together to share their Annual

Plans for the benefit of others, and to promote collaboration across the program.

ACRP partners have different cultures and mandates, and all have a focus on implementation and achieving the outputs and outcomes anticipated within their contracts. This accounts for some mixed response by partners to the usefulness (to them) of organised learning events within ACRP3.

The MTR team agrees that cross program learning is fundamental to the intent and purpose of achieving the ACRP goal and objectives. As such it is a vital part of the program and all partners, including AusAID itself, have a responsibility to engage in analysis and learning at the program level as opposed to just the level of their own projects. AusAID's strategic shift towards partnering as opposed to traditional donor-implementer approaches makes this an even greater strategic concern for IPs.

A pre-requisite for effective learning is the creation of an enabling safe environment where IPs can reflect critically on their own progress without having to worry about adverse judgements from AusAID or their peers. Bringing together organisations that have traditionally been natural competitors for scarce donor resources, particularly within a context where those resources are dwindling is a challenge. There is a requirement for a progressive shift toward more equal partnership relationships over time. This requires a shift from any prevailing ethos of defensive protection surrounding individual performance, which while entirely natural is counter-productive to learning and the type of partnerships that AusAID is trying to establish into the future. One way in which this learning and analysis could be facilitated is through increasing engagement of partners in TST missions including consideration of including supported peer review and learning exercises facilitated by the TST.

As such, while endorsing the continuation of L&D events, the MTR highlights that it makes good programmatic sense to identify one or two key areas for learning in the next two years, with a focus on strategic issues which will:

- Support progress towards the achievement of the ACRP goal and objectives,
- Have common value to all partners; and
- Which will contribute to and align with AusAID's strategic priorities for Sri Lanka into the future.

In targeting communities affected by war and marginalised by conflict, ACRP3 requires all partners to apply a strong peace and conflict lens to their programming. This has been done to varying levels within ACRP3. Refocusing learning around peace and conflict dynamics and issues will have a dual benefit of enabling both AusAID and partners to track the dynamics and influences of a rapidly changing socio-political context as well as identifying the strategies and approaches that are most addressing these. This will be valuable as AusAID makes the transition from addressing conflict as a thematic program to integrating it as a crosscutting issue across the portfolio. As such the MTR team proposes that peace and conflict, combined with strengthened DNH analyses become a strategic focus of ACRP analysis and learning in Years 4 and 5 of ACRP3. It is anticipated that this will also support strengthened conflict and DNH analysis to ensure that the changing content does not result in unintended negative impacts at the beneficiary level and/or unintended outcomes at the community level that are mismatched and potentially conflict exacerbating.

In line with our understanding of the fundamental and ongoing relationships

between exclusion[26] and conflict in the context of Sri Lanka, the second proposed strategic focus for ACRP learning and analysis into the future is Inclusion. This focus should not be limited to social and economic inclusion but include specific **affirmative** attention to gender equality and political inclusion. Aside from contributing to addressing the drivers of peace and conflict, this focus will also align with AusAID's expected focus on inclusion within its new Country Strategy and inform future programming priorities.

Additionally, it is proposed that a dialogue be generated between IPs towards the most useful integration of ACRP3's three RAs, which may require more joint or multi-partner interventions to achieve synergy and sustainability across projects and programs. For instance, in the East, community-level activism on holding local authorities accountable for garbage dumping should integrate with governance initiatives increasing sensitivity to public complaints and the provision of alternative infrastructure support. Many other examples come to mind, and IPs each has instances to report, though progress is very slow. Perhaps, a system of incentives can be introduced to facilitate such inter-IP cross-result are partnerships.

Final MTR Rating for Analysis and Learning: 4

Evaluation Criteria Ratings

AusAID requires that the MTR provide ratings against the key evaluation criteria.

In arriving at the outcomes presented in Table 2 below, ratings were initially made by each team member against the analytical framework described in Annex 5. Key considerations, observations and evidence against each criteria were discussed in detail at a team workshop at which final consolidated scoring was agreed.

There was very little disparity between the initial ratings provided by individual team members and the final overall ratings presented below. As such there are no dissenting viewpoints on the outcomes and content of the evaluation, nor the final ratings.

Table 2: Final Overall Ratings

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (1-6)
Relevance	5
Effectiveness	4
Efficiency	4
Sustainability	4
Gender Equality	4
Monitoring & Evaluation	4
Analysis & Learning	4

Note: Impact is not rated

Rating Scale

Rating Scale			
Satisfactory		**Less than Satisfactory**	
6	Very high quality	3	Less than adequate quality
5	Good quality	2	Poor quality
4	Adequate quality	1	Very poor quality

[26] Particularly exclusion based on ethnic identity, caste, religion, gender

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overarching Summary Conclusions: ACRP 3 works within an ambiguous, constrained and consistently changing and changeable environment. Designed in the immediate post-war period, the cessation of the armed conflict led to urgent humanitarian priorities, which temporarily and pragmatically diverted ACRP3 from its initial peace and conflict intent to a greater focus upon rehabilitation and recovery. Nevertheless, ACRP3 interventions have effectively weathered and withstood these changes and demonstrate the degree of flexibility and adaptability that the context necessitates.

In summary, the MTR found that:

- ACRP supported projects are targeting and engaging with vulnerable communities in areas badly affected by the war and/or poorly served by state service delivery and other support mechanisms;

- These efforts have supported the reestablishment of communities, livelihoods, infrastructure and permanent settlement in war affected areas, and there is evidence of emerging impact in the reestablishment of livelihoods and infrastructure for vulnerable individuals and communities and in the successful piloting and establishment of local governance initiatives which are being replicated by State authorities and other development actors;

- ACRP partners have been able to capitalise on the limited space afforded to international development actors to work on humanitarian and infrastructure activities to expand this engagement to longer-term development concerns such as capacity building, strengthening local governance and conflict transformation;

- Despite the war having ended, the social, economic and political inequality, marginalisation and lack of restitution that represent the drivers of conflict remain. Neither the crisis nor the conflict are over;

- The partnerships that AusAID Sri Lanka has built with its ACRP3 partners are aspirational for other AusAID programs as they move towards partnership approaches. AusAID's closeness to the program in such a complex and challenging environment is a significant asset which adds value both to ACRP3 but also to the wider Australian aid program in Sri Lanka.

ACRP3 has enabled AusAID and its implementing partners to make sound progress towards its goal and three objectives/result arrears. Despite the (necessary) creep described above, the promise of the next two years of ACRP3 is the opportunity for enhancing ACRP3 impacts and outcomes through the integration of community-based successes with local government accountability mechanisms in a way that supports and enables conflict transformation for the people of Sri Lanka:

> "We have lost enough. I lost a son and don't want to lose any more.
> We need to move forwards"
>
> School teacher involved in school twinning activity, Vavuniya

The following recommendations intend to support and enable AusAID, its ACRP3 partners, and the duty bearers and communities with whom they work to achieve

this.

Specific Summary Conclusions and Recommendations:
The following recommendations are based upon the analyses contained within the preceding sections of the report. They are proposed to remedy emerging weaknesses and challenges, build on strengths and emerging lessons, and bring ACRP and its partner activities into a greater strategic alignment with the emerging context and shifting emphases of the Australian aid program in Sri Lanka.

Due to the over lapping nature of these, they are presented separately by subject focus. Annex 9 provides a summary of recommendations and highlights where these relate to the evaluation criteria.

1. Technical Support and M&E Team(s)

The contribution that a competent and consistent TST / M&E process can make to ACRP 3 is significant, particularly with regard to supporting AusAID in quality processes, strengthening the technical focus on key cross cutting issues and program themes (gender, social inclusion and conflict transformation), strengthening attention the collection and analysis of verifiable evidence, and enabling cross program learning. While AusAID made have some concerns regarding division of labour between technical and M&E functions, there is precedence for this shared function where effective management strategies are in place for managing objectivity and potential conflict of interest.

1.1 *That AusAID immediately reestablish permanent and expanded technical team with a revised role and ToR which includes:*
- *The provision of technical support for AusAID and partners on identified priority concerns (peace and conflict, gender and inclusion, capacity building);*
- *Support for overarching program level M&E functions including an ACRP3 ToC and EOPOs, biannual monitoring missions;*
- *Support to partners to strengthen M&E systems and practice with a focus on strengthening evidence based analysis and evaluation;*
- *Facilitation support for improved analysis and learning across the portfolio of initiatives and between partners or groups of partners;*
- *Delivery of identified capacity building activities for AusAID and ACRP3 partners.*

1.2 *The expanded technical team would include national and international technical advisers with competencies in:*
- *M&E;*
- *Gender and social inclusion;*
- *Peace and conflict;*
- *Capacity building;*
- Governance

1.3 *The size and composition of the team should be structured and mobilised in a way that will allay any concerns that AusAID or partners may have regarding potential of perceived conflict of interest between monitoring, technical and evaluation functions. This could include peer review, mobilizing combined skill teams, collaborative and learning focused monitoring processes, and using using independent teams for evaluation such as an independent completion report (ICR) and impact study.*

2. Program Logic

The lack of an overarching ToC creates challenges for AusAID and its partners in illustrating the linkages between the three RA's, evidencing each partners specific contributions against clearly articulated and shared EOPOs and illustrating synergies across the portfolio of activities.

2.1 *The MTR proposes that AusAID bring together ACRP3 partners to articulate a ToC to guide programming over the next two years, as an urgent priority, and as an imperative to ensure both programmatic continuity and coherence. This process should build on the initial framework for change presented in the ACRP3 design by calibrating the efforts of individual partner projects with the result areas rather than developing or justifying any new program logic.*

3. M&E Framework and Reporting

The wide range of reporting frameworks used by partners makes consistent measurement and demonstration of the overall performance of ACRP3 challenging.

3.1 *The MTR proposes that consideration be given to the application of a **simple** unified ACRP3 M&E reporting framework, for all partners to report against for the duration of ACRP3.*

3.2 *Partners need to pay stricter attention to analysis based on verifiable evidence for the remaining life of ACRP3 in order that this responsibly reflects emerging outcomes and impacts, contributes to end of program analysis and future program planning. This will ideally be aligned with an overarching ACRP3 ToC to ensure that clear guidance support are provided to ensure that this analysis contributes to higher order requirements.*

4. Analysis and Learning

AusAID's direct role in the management of ACRP3 means that AusAID is brought closer to the field, hence providing it with a direct lens through which to view and analyze the very real development challenges in the North and East. The strategic value of this should not be underestimated, and heightens the importance of systematic efforts at analysis and learning across the ACRP3 portfolio, and the responsibility of all partners to engage in this.

4.1 *We propose that ongoing learning and development opportunities be strategically planned and overseen by the TST (in consultation with AusAID) so as to link them with quality processes such as strengthening M&E and performance in a limited number of identified strategic areas, namely inclusion/exclusion (including gender) and conflict transformation/DNH, as well as enabling a clearer articulation of EOPOs and impact by 2015.*

4.2 *The frequency of learning opportunities is practical and should not be decreased in these last two years of programming especially where this will be linked to quality processes. Consideration of including peer review as part of this strategy, perhaps as part of the TST monitoring missions is strongly recommended to promote strengthened partnership, cross program synergies and learning.*

5. Strengthening the Peace and Conflict Lens

Moving into the future, the original conflict transformation perspective needs to be retained if ACRP3 is to mitigate current and future risks to vulnerable

and marginalised groups, and to remain relevant and conflict-sensitive in the highly politicised and volatile post-war (but not post-crisis) context. Refocusing learning and analysis around peace and conflict dynamics and issues will produce multiple benefits that will be valuable as AusAID makes the transition from addressing conflict as a thematic program to integrating it as a cross cutting issue across the portfolio:

- Strengthening the effectiveness and relevance of ACRP3 projects;
- Enabling both AusAID and partners to track the dynamics and influences of a rapidly changing socio-political context; and
- Identifying the strategies and approaches that are most effective in addressing these.

5.1 *Maintaining a strong peace and conflict lens is central to the achievement of the ACRP3 goal and objectives. AusAID should reengage technical expertise in conflict transformation (as part of its revitalised TST) to support regular conflict and DNH analyses at the program and project level.*

6. Gender and Social Inclusion as Strategic Issues

Cultural constraints and historical traditions that devalue women's role in Sri Lanka militate against women being able to effectively mobilise against exploitation. Meaningful gender work, in the context of ACRP3 would be informed by AusAID's Gender Thematic Strategy "Opportunities for All[27]" and would recognise the centrality of gender equality to economic and human development including planned, sustained and affirmative efforts to:

- Provide women with equal access to (gender responsive) services;
- Support the economic empowerment of women and girls and improve their livelihood security;
- Increase women's voice in decision-making, leadership, and peace-building;
- Promote the ending of violence against women and girls at home, in their communities, and in disaster and conflict situations.

A focus on gender equality calls IPs to consider their own discourse and implied messages around gender and take opportunities to demonstrate good gender practice and sensitise stakeholders to gender dynamics and considerations.

6.1 *We recommend that attention to strengthening the gender focus of ACRP should focus on the enabling a more sophisticated consideration of gender equality at all levels of ACRP3 through:*

- *Ensuring specific gender competence and gender analysis within the TST;*
- *Ensuring that gender equality is reflected within the M&E framework;*
- *Including a focus on gender within all M&E at the program and project level;*
- *Supporting partners to integrate gender assessment tools to assist them to move from gender mainstreaming to equality approaches;*
- *Enabling analysis of the impacts and burdens of engagement of development upon women, men and families and ensuring*

[27] http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/Documents/thematic-strategies/gender-equality-strategy.pdf

effective safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable women.

6.2 *Gender can be addressed within a wider package which takes a rights based focus on promoting inclusion through systematically addressing exclusion and marginalisation and measuring the outcomes of these efforts.*

7. Local Partnerships and Capacity Building

The constrained operating environment means that IPs are limited in their choices of local partnerships to support implement. This results in IPs utilising long-term partnerships which predate, and will likely extend beyond the life of ACRP3; working within local government structures; or being forced to work almost exclusively through State-sponsored CBOs. Each presents considerations and challenges for sustainability and effectiveness. In relation to capacity building:

7.1 *Partners are strongly encouraged to pay more systematic attention to capacity building and institutional strengthening, in particular articulating the intended changes and using effective tools to measure capacity building and institutional strengthening outcomes.*

7.2 *IPs need to be more prepared to describe the nature of the different relationships that they may have with their various partners, the strategic intent and purpose of those relationships and articulate, where appropriate, exit strategies for Years 4 and 5, or conversely, where exit is not anticipated, provide benchmarks and milestones on which exit would be made in the future.*

7.3 *AusAID is urged to directly nurture strategic partnerships with key national and provincial counterparts that will facilitate a more holistic and integrated approach among IPs, and which will support linkages with its wider development portfolio.*

7.4 AusAID and its ACRP3 partners would benefit from a deeper understanding and recognition of the distinction between State-based and civil CBOs, and the specific development challenges and dilemmas that this brings to the context.

8. Strengthening Attention to Safeguards

The MTR identified less than optimal attention to safeguards in a number of activities. Increased vulnerability is an unacceptable risk.

8.1 *Instances of strong potential risk in relation to safeguards identified by the MTR have foregrounded the need for urgent action by all IPs to:*

- *Investigate and remedy specific cases, such as those identified on page 20.*
- *For partners to review their portfolios to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, which take special cognizance of post-war vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups*
- *For partners to ensure that policies, tools and procedures are in place to protect beneficiaries and mitigate future risks. This should include arrangements for monitoring these safeguards in instances where the activity or partner is no longer working in that area.*

8.2 *The monitoring and evaluation of safeguards and risk requires significantly increased attention by partners, AusAID and the TST into the future.*

9. End of Program Quality Processes

ACRP3 has been at the fore of Australia's aid investment in Sri Lanka at a

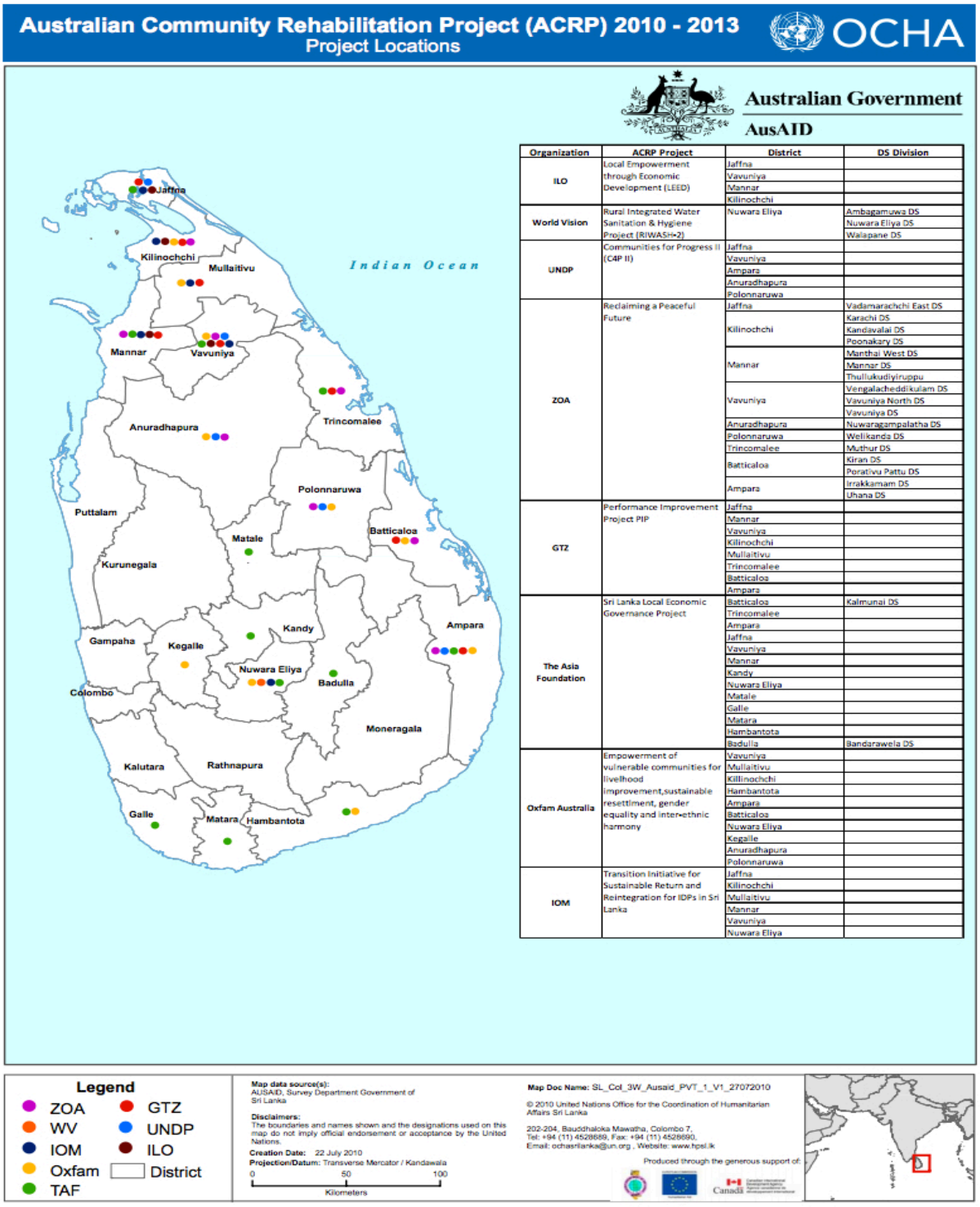
critical juncture in Sri Lanka's development. By the end of ACRP3, eight partners will have delivered over $45m of Australian aid in 5 districts to approximately. There will be a lot to learn and understand from this.

9.1 *In order to capitalise on investments through ACRP3, we recommend that program learning and reflection be captured through the following quality processes (in addition to TST monitoring):*

- *An Independent Completion Report (ICR) to be undertaken in Year 5 in order to assess outcomes of ACRP and its associated programs; and*
- *Systematic and detailed Impact Assessment of ACRP 3 or selected components thereof.*

Annexes

Annex 1: ACRP 3 Supported Partners, Projects and Locations



Organization	ACRP Project	District	DS Division
ILO	Local Empowerment through Economic Development (LEED)	Jaffna	
		Vavuniya	
		Mannar	
		Kilinochchi	
World Vision	Rural Integrated Water Sanitation & Hygiene Project (RIWASH+2)	Nuwara Eliya	Ambagamuwa DS
			Nuwara Eliya DS
			Walapane DS
UNDP	Communities for Progress II (C4P II)	Jaffna	
		Vavuniya	
		Ampara	
		Anuradhapura	
		Polonnaruwa	
ZOA	Reclaiming a Peaceful Future	Jaffna	Vadamarachchi East DS
		Kilinochchi	Karachi DS
			Kandavalai DS
			Poonakary DS
		Mannar	Manthai West DS
			Mannar DS
			Thullukudiyiruppu
		Vavuniya	Vengalacheddikulam DS
			Vavuniya North DS
			Vavuniya DS
		Anuradhapura	Nuwaragampalatha DS
		Polonnaruwa	Welikanda DS
		Trincomalee	Muthur DS
		Batticaloa	Kiran DS
			Porativu Pattu DS
		Ampara	Irrakkamam DS
			Uhana DS
GTZ	Performance Improvement Project PIP	Jaffna	
		Mannar	
		Vavuniya	
		Kilinochchi	
		Mullaitivu	
		Trincomalee	
		Batticaloa	
		Ampara	
The Asia Foundation	Sri Lanka Local Economic Governance Project	Batticaloa	Kalmunai DS
		Trincomalee	
		Ampara	
		Jaffna	
		Vavuniya	
		Mannar	
		Kandy	
		Nuwara Eliya	
		Matale	
		Galle	
		Matara	
		Hambantota	
		Badulla	Bandarawela DS
Oxfam Australia	Empowerment of vulnerable communities for livelihood improvement,sustainable resettlment, gender equality and inter-ethnic harmony	Vavuniya	
		Mullaitivu	
		Killinochchi	
		Hambantota	
		Ampara	
		Batticaloa	
		Nuwara Eliya	
		Kegalle	
		Anuradhapura	
		Polonnaruwa	
IOM	Transition Initiative for Sustainable Return and Reintegration for IDPs in Sri Lanka	Jaffna	
		Kilinochchi	
		Mullaitivu	
		Mannar	
		Vavuniya	
		Nuwara Eliya	

Annex 2: Terms of Reference

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE
Australian Community Rehabilitation Program, Phase 3 (ACRP3)
Mid-term Review (MTR)
July 2012

BACKGROUND
These Terms of Reference (TORs) have been developed to specify the requirements for conducting the mid-term review (MTR) of the Australian Community Rehabilitation Program, Phase 3 (ACRP3).

ACRP3 is a community development program implemented through a strong peacebuilding lens in the lagging regions of the country. The A$45 million / 5 year program has a stop-go point at the end of the third year, at which stage the mid-term review (MTR) is conducted. The program has expensed A$28.79million to date.

The overarching goal of ACRP3 is "t*o increase the number of conflict-affected communities across Sri Lanka benefitting from and living a sustainable, secure and productive life"*.

The purpose of the ACRP3 as stated in the Program Design Document (PDD) is to "strengthen social cohesion by increasing the levels of trust, awareness, capacity and confidence on the part of, men, women and children from different ethnic and religious groups to initiate and participate in activities that improve their economic and social opportunity, in a manner that reduces the factors that have contributed to conflict."

Stemming from these goal and purpose are the following objectives / key result areas, around which individual projects are designed;

- Strengthened governance structures at the local and community level to reduce factors that have contributed to conflict
- Increased economic opportunity for disadvantaged and conflict affected communities delivered in a way that reduces factors that have contributed to conflict
- Empowerment of actors to promote and support peace and strengthen social inclusion

The programme tackles issues that entrench poverty and conflict in lagging areas of Sri Lanka. It addresses the constraints to livelihood and economic development at the community level while systematically addressing the causes of conflicts, strengthening governance and improving service provision by the state. The approach is based on the premise that removing the impediments to peace would facilitate equitable development in conflict affected and lagging areas.

This program is implemented through

- three multilateral agencies (UNDP, IOM, ILO);
- three international NGOs (Oxfam, World Vision - WV, ZOA);
- one government technical agency (GIZ, formerly GTZ); and
- one foundation (The Asia Foundation - TAF).

Common themes undertaken by the Implementing Partners (IPs) within the programme are, improved planning in Government to facilitate accelerated economic growth (TAF and GIZ), provision of basic infrastructure in acutely vulnerable communities to increase local economic development (IOM, ILO, UNDP, Oxfam, ZOA, WV), value chain creation for small businesses (ILO), supporting communities to advocate for fair and equitable distribution of government resources (UNDP, Oxfam, ZOA, WV), and improved social cohesion programs to reduce community tensions and strengthen peace (IOM, ILO, UNDP, Oxfam, ZOA, WV). ACRP partners work with NGOs, CBOs, and local government institutions.

ACRP3 is implemented within the framework of AusAID's country strategy, finalised in April 2012 and the two ensuing country objectives;

- improved social and economic indicators in lagging regions[28], and
- policies and programs implemented at national and sub-national level that are aimed at inclusive growth and improved service delivery.

Implementing partners report twice a year on their progress and submit their annual plans for approval at the beginning of each implementation year. Since the inception, the program has been monitored and supported through the Technical Support Missions (TST), depending on the requirements, comprised of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist, political economist and peace and conflict specialist. These TST missions have been scheduled to coincide with the reporting cycles. Schedule of reporting cycles and the TST missions are as below:

- Progress Report for April – October: due on 30 October and TST mission in November.
- Annual Plans for May – April: due on 1 April and TST mission in April / May.

The Annual Plans includes a progress report for the previous 12 months and the work plan (for approval) for the following 12 months.

TST missions include desk-study of projects and program documents, meetings in Colombo with relevant partner program managers and visit to project sites. The TST mission in April / May includes a two-day conference that kicks-off the mission where partners present their Annual Plans for the benefit of others and to promote collaboration across the program, and external speakers are invited to speak on key thematic issues.

At the end of the TST missions, implementing partner is provided with a Management Response Letter containing the observations and recommendations of the TST mission. In the last Management Response Letter, AusAID shared with the partners the revised reporting format in an effort to streamline the reporting across all 8 partners. Furthermore, due to difficulties in developing and operationalising a program-wide M&E Framework, AusAID now monitors the impact of individual projects using the ACRP3 Framework for Change, as outlined in the Program Design Document.

Towards improving the collaboration between the implementing partners, AusAID has facilitated a series of Learning and Development (L&D) seminars on various thematic issues, where individual partners and external specialists have shared their expertise, lessons learned and experience.

[28] Lagging regions are parts of the country which are significantly behind in social and economic indicators compared to the rest of the country

At present, given the nature of the second country program objective which focuses on policy influence, AusAID is looking for ways in which this could be efficiently achieved through components of the ACRP3. To this end, AusAID is exploring the possibility of extracting the two projects that work directly with Local Governance, namely TAF and GIZ, from ACRP3 and manage them separately.

PURPOSE

AusAID attaches great importance on effectiveness and quality of all aid activities. In accordance with the individual ACRP3 agreements, AusAID is undertaking a MTR with the participation of all ACRP3 partners. The MTR has two primary purposes; firstly *to inform AusAID's funding decisions for the Year 4 and 5* and secondly to *improve the management arrangements to ensure efficiency and effectiveness* in the administration of ACRP3. In addition it will also inform collaboration opportunities across the country program.

The MTR shall draw out achievements and outcomes against a set of evaluation criteria, identify and analyse lessons learned, note implications for future programming and make recommendations for AusAID consideration.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the MTR is to devise the best possible to composition of ACRP3 to deliver the targeted results against the country program objectives in efficient manner and ensure individual projects have the robust program design to support such delivery.

To this end, the MTR shall,

- Assess the performance of the ACRP3 against the stated country objectives and program objectives, in accordance with the evaluation criteria and questions specified in the 'Scope' section of this TORs.
- Assess accountability for expenditure of public funds on ACRP3 activities.
- Assess the extent to which individual partners have been able to adapt to the findings and recommendations of the Technical Support Team (TST) missions.
- Assess the existing information sharing mechanisms and level of collaboration amongst partners and provide recommendations towards improving the collaboration.
- Assess the effectiveness of the TST missions in its current form towards improving the management arrangement and recommend changes to the format, composition and frequency.
- Assess other management arrangements and provide recommendations towards improving the collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of ACRP3 by Colombo Post.
- Assess the feasibility of a separate management arrangement for the two partners who work on Local Governance (TAF and GIZ).
- Assess the potential for ACRP3 activities to achieve the CSA policy objective and provide recommendations for it.
- Recommend to AusAID how existing ACRP3 activities can be better aligned with and complement other AusAID investments in country.
- Based on the findings of the evaluation and an assessment of the current situation, provide advice and recommendations to AusAID on future form of ACRP3.

SCOPE

The MTR will take due account of, and be consistent with, AusAID's relevant quality standards and procedures. The MTR Team will be expected to draw out lessons from their assessment of each of the following evaluation criterion that may be relevant to the ACRP3's implementation. The Team will be required to evaluate and rate the ACRP3 against each of the evaluation criterion, as outlined below. The Team must develop further questions/sub-questions in order to get the most value from the review. The outline and expected contents of the Aide Memoire of the Review, which is to be submitted at the end of the Team's time in country and the final MTR report are given in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2, respectively.

The Team will assess the overall relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Program and whether it is meeting its objectives. The Team will be guided by, but not be limited to, the criteria and considerations outlined below and will draw on their collective skills to produce the MTR for AusAID.

On that basis, the ACRP3 MTR will address:

Relevance: the extent to which the Program contributes to the objectives of the country, ACRP3 objectives program including how responsive it has been to changes in maintaining its relevance over the program life.

Considering:

- Program alignment with AusAID's agreed priorities.
- Individual project objectives' alignment with AusAID's agreed priorities for Sri Lanka
- The approach or modality being taken appropriate in order to achieve the initiative's objectives.
- Relevance to the context and development needs of the beneficiaries.
- Changes to the policy or operating context since design, and if so, the manner in which the initiative adapted to remain relevant.

Effectiveness: whether the Program is achieving its stated objectives and outcomes changes across the six domains).

Considering:

- Evidence of changes across the six domains (from the ACRP3 Framework for Change) consistent with what the initiative intended to achieve.
- The key factors that have enabled or inhibited progress towards the objectives.
- Evidence of unanticipated outcomes associated with the initiative.

Efficiency: whether the Program is efficiently managed by AusAID and partners to obtain value for money from AusAID inputs (e.g. funds, staff and other resources) and to continually manage risks, towards achieving the program objectives.

Considering:

- Value-for-money and if the program budget is spent as expected.
- The availability of inputs (human resources, funding and time) by AusAID and partners to achieve the program objectives.
- Extent to which the different parts of the management system and implementation arrangements are harmonised and working well, including:
- Reporting cycles and reporting requirements.
- The format, frequency and composition of the TST missions.
- The format and frequency of L&D seminars.

- Collaboration between ACRP3 partners and other AusAID partners.
- Roles, responsibilities and communication lines between ACRP3 partners towards aid effectiveness.
- Possibility of managing and monitoring TAF and GIZ under a separate governance program, outside of ACRP3.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): whether the Program's M&E framework effectively measures progress towards meeting objectives.
Considering:

- The appropriateness and effectiveness of monitoring, review, evaluation and reporting frameworks and procedures of partners.
- The appropriateness and effectiveness of AusAID's mechanisms to collate and best use them.
- The extent to which partners' M&E framework and AusAID program-wide M&E framework are adjusted over the life of project to take account of changes.
- The extent to which the existing M&E tools identify information required for sector or country performance frameworks.

Impact: whether there are indications that the Program produced positive or negative changes (directly or indirectly, intended or unintended).
Considering:

- The type of intended or unintended changes produced in the lives of beneficiaries and their environment (directly or indirectly), by the activities.
- The extent to which there has been positive or negative impacts from external factors.
- Lessons and learning: whether the Program was based on sound technical analysis and continuous learning, the extent to which the ACRP3 supported *Australia's commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action and whether the Program responded appropriately to* the emerging developments in its implementation and the changes in the Sri Lanka context.
- *Considering:*
- What lessons from the program can be applied to further implementation and designing the next phase of ACRP3.
- What lessons from the program can be drawn in applying thematic practices [i.e. working in partner systems/environment/fragile stages].
- What lessons from the program can be drawn for AusAID's other programs in Sri Lanka.

Sustainability: whether the Program is appropriately addressing sustainability so that the benefits will continue after funding has ceased.
Considering:

- Extent to which sustainable benefits and changes the initiative aims to generate.
- Activities are designed and implemented by individual partners in collaboration and partnership with existing systems, with clear phase-out strategy.
- Extent to which specific constraints to sustainability of the initiative identified by partners, have strategies to address these constraints and the quality of the strategies and are they being acted upon.

Gender Equality: whether the Program is adequately identifying and effectively addressing, monitoring and reporting on gender equality issues.
Considering:

- Extent to which gender equality objectives have been achieved under the Program, and if the program is producing meaningful changes in the lives of women and girls.
- The four dimensions of gender equality, namely access, decision-making, women's rights and capacity building.
- Extent to which the program integrate gender equality into objectives and the consideration of risks and sustainability, and progress has been made on addressing/resolving any gender equality issues identified at design, or subsequently.
- Extent to which gender equality considerations and impacts discussed at the policy level by implementing partners in design and implementation level.

Cross-cutting issues: whether the program addressed cross-cutting issues including equity, disability, participation, conflict sensitivity, do no harm, poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS and the environment.
Considering:

- The extent to which the Program contributed to the fulfillment of AusAID policies on aid effectiveness (Paris/Accra/Busan/Cairns Compact in the Pacific), use of government systems, anti-corruption, as well as cross-cutting thematic issues such as HIV/AIDS, environment, anti-corruption, disability, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding or other Australia or Australian Government policy commitments, as relevant.

- This section should provide meaningful information, across the country and thematic programs, of plans, monitoring and results which show adherence with and/or progress towards these aid policy commitments. Specific details of relevant outputs, outcomes or activities rather than generalities should be provided, and, where possible, track progress towards defined objectives in these areas. For instance: Do individual projects have disability action plan, how does this Program support this particular cross-cutting theme

Risk management: whether any significant risks requiring management attention.
Considering:

- If strategies (such as a current risk management and mitigation plan) are in place to manage risk and whether these are working.
- Any new risks emerging, including fiduciary, environmental and social impacts, child protection, corruption and fraud or political concerns related to the Program.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Following the assessment of the Program based on the above criteria and points for consideration, in the final chapter of the MTR team will:

- provide a brief summary of the major findings and an overall assessment of the quality and success of the ACRP3.
- discuss the implications of the findings and lessons learned for future program development and support, including to advise AusAID implementing partners who should be scaled up and scaled down during the remaining two years of the Program.
- discuss any issues or problems which are adversely affecting Program outcomes as well as any particular strengths of the Program, including organisation and management arrangements of the Program.

- make recommendations to AusAID on ways it may position its future support to community development, peacebuilding and other thematic areas in Sri Lanka to maximise the contribution of the ACRP3 and vice-versa.

DURATION AND TIMING (I need to review the number of days)
The MTR will be conducted for a period of 39 working days commencing on 1 November and completing on 18 December 2012. Eight days will be allocated for pre-mission documentation review and consultations as required, up to four days for travel to and from Sri Lanka, up to three days in Colombo meeting with individual partners, other donors and AusAID, up sixteen days for field work, up to one day for debriefing partners and AusAID and up to five days to draft the MTR report and two days to finalise and submit the report after all comments have been provided by AusAID.

Activity	Duration / Deadline	Number of Days
Desk Review	1 - 8 November	08
Travel to Sri Lanka	11 – 13 November	02
In-country Meetings in Colombo, field visit (including travel times), submission of Aide Memoire and debriefing meetings.	14 November – 3 December	20 days
Travel time from Sri Lanka	4 – 5 December	02
Draft MTR report	12 December	05
Final report	18 December	02
Total		39 days

Table 1: Schedule of Activities

METHODOLODY
In carrying out the ACRP3 MTR, the Team will undertake the following (but not be limited to):

Phase 1: Pre-Mission Document Review and Consultations
- Document Review and Consultations before arriving in Sri Lanka will involve:
- Examination of key Sri Lanka Country Program, ACRP3 and related documents as listed in Section 9.
- Telephone consultation with and briefing by key informants in AusAID Colombo, including the relevant Senior Program Officer, First Secretary and the Counsellor.
- Contact with other members of the MTR team, as necessary.

Phase 2: In-country Mission
- Based on the pre-mission document review and consultations an in-country mission will be undertaken by the Team involving a range of activities, including consultations, interviews, data gathering (qualitative and quantitative), program site visits and other activities as needed. The Team will consult with:
- AusAID Colombo Post officials
- Implementing partners in Colombo and the field.
- Relevant government counterparts from provincial departments other government stakeholders.
- Delivery partners of ACRP3 partners.
- Other donors.

Other stakeholders and/or beneficiaries as determined

Phase 3: Presentation of Initial Findings

- The Team will document its initial findings in an Aide Memoire and present it to AusAID to use as a basis for discussions. As part of consultations, the MTR team will meet with the implementing partners at the end of the field visit and debrief them on the initial findings and recommendations of the Mission.

Phase 4: Reporting

- Based on consideration and analysis of the findings, a draft MTR report will be prepared by the team using the template provided in within fifteen days (three working days) of completion of the in-country mission.

- The Team will then prepare a final MTR report within six days (2 working days) of receiving comments from AusAID. To ensure the integrity of the report, the Team, as an independent body, will incorporate changes and comments as it sees fit. In the case of any major divergence in views between the Team and AusAID, these should be noted in an Attachment to the final MTR report.

TEAM COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Mission will consist of the following two professional members: an international M&E consultant who will act as Team Leader and a Context Specialist with expertise in community development. AusAID Colombo Post will facilitate the Mission's work in-country.

The Team should have an appreciation of:

- the Sri Lankan socio-political and policy context, in particular any recent government and development policies;
- Australia's Development Cooperation Program in Sri Lanka;
- Relevant AusAID policies, including gender, anti-corruption, peace, conflict and development, and education; and
- AusAID's reporting and accountability requirements.

The Team members should have experience in consultative and participatory research methods and have appropriate analytical, research and report writing skills.

Role of Team Leader:

- The Team Leader should have strong M&E expertise (especially in community development) and should have substantial experience in conducting project and program reviews and experience in being a Team Leader for appraisal, review, evaluation and MTR missions.
- The Team Leader will be responsible for the overall effective leadership, management and coordination of the Mission, including delivery of outputs in a timely manner.
- The Team Leader will direct the field review in accordance with the agreed review methodology and work plan as specified above, as well as allocation of responsibilities and timeline.
- The Team Leader shall, in consultation with the Context Specialist, analyse data and draft sections of the MTR during the field review, delegating tasks to the Context Specialist, according to agreed responsibilities.

- Towards the end of the field review the Team Leader shall prepare an Aide Memoire (up to five pages) covering the major findings, preliminary recommendations, lessons learned, and a clear summary of the review process.
- The Team Leader will be responsible to submitting the draft and final reports, in consultation with and managing outputs from the Context Specialist, meeting the deadline as stated in *Table 1: Schedule of Activities*.

Role of Context Specialist:

- The Context Specialist should have extensive knowledge and experience in community development in Sri Lanka and other comparable countries with special focus on capacity development and community mobilisation. S/he should have a wide knowledge of GOSL policies, management and monitoring systems at central, provincial and divisional levels.
- The main responsibility of the Context Specialist expert is to examine the program achievements in the local context with respect to ethno-political, social, and religious aspects.
- The Context Specialist should support the Team Leader to collect and process the data and information in specified areas and with report writing.
- S/he should report on disparities, challenges relating to the above *4.I – 4.X*, with recommendations for improvement as in *4.XI*.

OUTPUTS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

At the conclusion of the Mission the Team will provide the following outputs:

- An Aide Memoire – The team will present the preliminary findings in the form of an Aid Memoire (up to 5 pages) to AusAID Colombo, prior to departure from Sri Lanka.
- Draft Mission Report - Draft of the MTR report (up to 25 pages plus annexes as per the template) will be submitted to AusAID Post for comments by 21 November 2012. If required it will be presented to AusAID Desk and the Community Development Thematic Group and a debriefing session through a teleconference may be arranged.
- Final Draft Report – Final report after incorporating AusAID's comments (as the team sees fit) will be submitted by 30 November 2012.
- The final report should be a brief, clear and cogent summary of the review outcomes, focusing on a balanced analysis of issues faced by the Program and it should recommend ways to overcome any problems identified. Annexes should be limited to those that are essential for understanding the text.

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The key documents to be provided to the ICR team include the following:

- AusAID 2012, Our Mission, Our Values
- AusAID 20112, Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Thematic Strategy
- AusAID 2012, Framework for working with Civil Society
- Mahinda Chintha I and II: Vision for a New Sri Lanka
- AusAID's Risk Management Policy and Guidelines
- Government of Sri Lanka Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- AusAID, Colombo Performance Assessment Framework
- Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework (CAPF)
- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – for achieving harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results

- Accra Agenda for Action
- AusAID Policy on Performance Management Evaluation Policy
- DCD-DAC Criteria on Evaluation of Development Programs
- Unclassified Country Strategic Assessment (CSA).
- ACRP3 Progress Reports of October 2010 and October 2011
- ACRP3 Annual Plans of April 2011 and April 2012
- ACRP3 Program Design Document
- Project Design Document of 8 partners
- Any other relevant documents

Annex 3: Field Visit Schedule

ACRP3 Mid Term Review Mission	
Date	**Visit / Meeting**
Tue, 13 Nov	
14.30 - 16.00	MTR team meeting with AusAID
Wed, 14 Nov	
08.30 - 10.30	Meeting with IOM
11.00 - 13.00	Meeting with UNDP
15.00 - 17.00	Meeting with WV
Thu, 15 Nov	
08.30 - 10.30	Meeting with TAF
11.00 - 13.00	Meeting with Oxfam
15.00 - 16.00	Meeting with GIZ
Fri, 16 Nov	
09.00 - 11.30	Meeting with ZOA
13.30 - 14.30	Meeting with ILO
15.00 - 16.30	Meeting with TAF Stakeholders
Sat, 17 Nov	
12.30 - 17.30	Travel to Anuradhapura
	Overnight at Palm Garden
Sun, 18 Nov	
13.00 - 19.00	Travel from Anuradhapura to Jaffna
	Overnight at Tilco
Mon, 19 Nov	
06.00 -	Drop SW at Ratmalana airport
09.00 - 16.30	Meeting with **GIZ** and visit to project sites
	Overnight at Tilco
Tue, 20 Nov	
07.15 - 11.30	Visit **IOM** project sites
13.00 - 17.00	Visit **UNDP** project sites
	Overnight at Tilco
Wed, 21 Nov	
08.45 - 12.30	Visit **TAF** project sites
Afternoon	Time to reflect and synthesise
	Overnight at Tilco
Thu, 22 Nov	
00.00 -	Pick IK from the airport at 00.15
07.00 - 09.00	Travel from Jaffna to Pooneryn
09.00 - 15.00	Visit **ILO** project sites in Pooneryn
15.00 - 18.00	Travel from Pooneryn to Vavuniya
	Overnight at Thampa
Fri, 23 Nov	

07.00 - 12.00	Visit **UNDP** project sites
14.00 - 18.00	Visit **ILO** project sites
	Overnight at Thampa
Sat, 24 Nov	
08.30 - 09.00	Travel from Vavuniya to Kokkeliya
09.00 - 12.00	Visit **IOM** project site
13.30 - 18.00	Travel from Vavuniya to Pollonaruwa
	Overnight at Sudu Araliya
Sun, 25 Nov	
09.00 - 17.00	Time to reflect and synthesise – team workshop
	Overnight at Sudu Araliya
Mon, 26 Nov	
06.30 - 08.00	Travel from hotel to ZOA office
08.00 - 14.00	Visit **ZOA** project site
14.00 - 19.00	Travel from Pollonaruwa to Batti
	Overnight at Riviera
Tue, 27 Nov	
08.30 - 17.00	Visit **Oxfam** project site
17.00 - 19.00	Travel from Batti to Ampara
	Overnight at Monty's
Wed, 28 Nov	
07.30 - 08.30	Travel time from hotel to Uhana junction
09.00 - 15.00	Visit **ZOA** project site
	Overnight at Monty's
Thu, 29 Nov	
8.45 - 12.30	Visit **TAF** project sites (Kalmunai)
14.00 - 18.30	Travel from Ampara to N-Eliya
	Overnight at Kandy
Fri, 30 Nov	
09.00 – 18.00	Visit **WV** project sites
	Overnight at Kandy
Sat, 1 Dec	
08.00 - 14.00	Travel back to Colombo
Afternoon	Time to Draft Aide Memoire
Sun, 2 Dec	Team Workshop
Mon, 3 Dec	
08.30 - 10.00	MTR team meeting with AusAID
10.00 - 11.30	Debriefing meeting with partners
14.00 - 16.00	MTR team meeting with AusAID

Annex 4: Analytical Framework

The following table shows the analytical framework developed by the MTR team to assess and rate ACRP3 progress against each of the key evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Criteria Measures	ACRP3 Analytical Framework – Definition of Success
Effectiveness To determine whether the activity has achieved its objectives.	A measure of ACRP3 effectiveness at MTR would be demonstrated evidence of progress/emerging results towards a clearly articulated ToC and end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs) in strengthened governance, increased economic opportunity and social inclusion and conflict transformation. ACRP3 and its partners would have established and functional partnerships to deliver and maximise synergies between programs; demonstrate the ability to identify and mitigate programmatic risk; be responsive and flexible to changing contexts and needs.
Efficiency To determine whether the activity was managed to get the most out of the inputs of funds, staff and other resources, including continual management of risks.	Analysis of efficiency for ACRP3 takes into account whether the delivery vehicle was appropriate and sufficiently resourced to support the program and partners; whether transaction costs were commensurate with the investment, over burdensome or presented obstacles to the efficient operation of the program (e.g. funding delays etc.); the quality and ease of communication between AusAID and its partners, the sharing and management of risk. Value for money is a key consideration which includes the cost effectiveness of management and program interventions; if the ACRP3 and its associated projects represented the best use of resources to deliver the intended outcome; the quality, accountability and transparency of financial management.
Impact To determine whether the activity has produced positive or negative changes (directly or indirectly, intended or unintended). The degree to which the various aspects of impact can be assessed will vary according to the nature and duration of the activity.	Emerging successful impacts of ACRP3 would include: ✖ More responsive and accountable local governance in war-ravaged areas (especially towards vulnerable populations) with previously excluded communities empowered as rights holders ensuring that government authorities (as duty bearers) addressing their service delivery needs; ✖ Significantly less unequal gender relations, which goes beyond targeting of women; ✖ Protection network and advocacy/awareness campaigns help change previous patterns of impunity and systemic rights abuse; ✖ Livelihood, service delivery and infrastructure initiatives have changed quality of life, especially health and nutrition status of families in project

areas;
- Access to credit and markets, has reduced patterns of chronic indebtedness; and
- The uptake or mainstreaming of successful interventions in broader provincial and national state-owned programmes and processes, or other donor activities.

Sustainability

To determine whether the activity has appropriately addressed sustainability so that the benefits of the activity will continue after funding has ceased, with due account of partner government systems, stakeholder ownership and the phase-out strategy.

Sustainability outcomes for ACRP3 would demonstrate resilient and adaptable communities and CBOs working on collectively identified issues, and whose capacity has been developed to engage as equal partners with the spectrum of government structures. In turn, both decentralised and devolved arms of government will be responsible to public needs and aspirations through institutionalised systems and processes, and will have developed capacity to do so.

Gender

To determine whether the activity advanced gender equality and promoted women (considering the four dimensions of gender equality: access, decision-making, women's rights, capacity-building).

Meaningful gender work, in the context of ACRP3 would be informed by AusAID's Gender Thematic Strategy "Opportunities for All[29]" and would recognise the centrality of gender equality to economic and human development". This would include planned, sustained and affirmative efforts to:

- Provide women with equal access to (gender responsive) services;
- Support the economic empowerment of women and girls and improve their livelihood security;
- Increase women's voice in decision-making, leadership, and peace-building;
- Promote the ending of violence against women and girls at home, in their communities, and in disaster and conflict situations.

M&E

To determine whether the activity's monitoring and evaluation system effectively measured progress towards meeting objectives.

Successful M&E for ACRP3 would exemplify:

- A program level ToC which includes all partners and explains clearly how ACRP3 and its components will contribute to end-of-program outcomes (EOPOS);
- Partners and AusAID are able to assess the extent to which the program is on track and make adjustments as appropriate;
- Information from the M&E system provides sufficient evidence to enable partners and AusAID to assess progress towards meeting objectives and intended outcomes;
- ACRP3 is able to demonstrate the extent to which each IP is strengthening governance at the local and community level and to identify factors which have contributed to reduced conflict;

[29] http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/Documents/thematic-strategies/gender-equality-strategy.pdf

- ACRP3 has evidence to show the extent to which it has led to increased economic opportunity for disadvantaged and conflict affected communities;
- ACRP3 has evidence to demonstrate the extent to which communities have been empowered to strengthen social inclusion and promote peace; this includes empowerment of women;
- The program is able to show how outputs have led to EOPOs.

Analysis & Learning

To determine whether the activity was based on sound technical analysis and continuous learning.

Successful outcomes from good Analysis and Learning would include:

- ACRP3 assumptions and analysis have been tested to ensure their soundness, particularly in relation to an unpredictable ground reality;
- Program and partners able to demonstrate they have responded in a timely manner to a rapidly changing context;
- Evidence that analysis underpins and is integrated into ACRP3 activities, including but not limited to analysis in peace and conflict transformation, gender, inclusion;
- Partners are able to identify which activities have most impact on peace and conflict dynamics;
- Evidence that partners have undertaken analysis, which informs their engagement with the strategic goals of the program and examines the effectiveness of the intervention;
- Partners and AusAID learn from each other and can show they utilise learning through changes in behaviour or *modus operandi*.

Annex 5: Review Team Members

Authors

Donna Leigh Holden is a development practitioner with 20 years experience working in Asia and Australia. She has a specific interest in working in challenging, changeable and conflict affected development contexts such as Fiji, Myanmar, post Suharto Indonesia, Timor Leste etc.

Donna has extensive experience in leading and participating in design and evaluation teams for AusAID and other donors, and is presently working with AusAID to establish a new framework for it's engagement in partnerships with NGOs to support the delivery of bilateral aid programs in the Mekong. She has also held long-term positions in international NGOs including as Country Director for Save the Children Indonesia, and also designed and managed the Bali Recovery Fund, AusAID's response to the socio-economic impacts of the Bali bombings.

Donna's lifelong experience in living and working with marginalised communities provides her with a strong interest and commitment to social justice as well as the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships for development.

Arjuna Parakrama has taught for nearly 25 years, mainly at the University of Peradeniya and the University of Colombo, where he was also Dean of the Faulty of Arts. He has worked for the UN in Nepal and Pakistan, with a focus on conflict-sensitive development, and with international NGOs on community empowerment in Sri Lanka.

He led the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition's five-country assessment on the impact of international Tsunami assistance on national/local capacities.

He was a Fulbright New Century Scholar in 2007/8, and held Senior Fellowships at the US Institute of Peace (1999/2000) and the Carnegie Council on Ethics & International Affairs (2000/1). He was awarded a Guggenheim research grant in 2002 and is widely published.

Ian Kidd is the Performance Reporting Manager within the Quality, Performance and Results Branch at AusAID. In his current role he manages the annual program reporting process, develops and manages the Agency's Monitoring and Evaluation panel and contributes to professional and policy dialogue on performance management. He has over 25 years of professional experience in education and development.

Prior to joining AusAID, Ian was a Senior Program Manager at IDP Education Pty Ltd and his portfolio included an AusAID education program in Indonesia and the Cambodia - Australia National Examinations Project. Ian has worked in Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Angola. His publications include 'Hopping Halfway to the Edge of the Pond: Measuring Progress towards Education for All' (18th AIEC International Education Conference, Sydney) and 'Divergent Priorities, Different Goals: Whose Aid is it Anyway?' (Aid in Education Conference, Bristol University, UK)

Annex 6: Draft Reporting Framework Example

Performance management relies on evidence: A common M&E framework will give each program the evidence base for monitoring how it is progressing towards program outcomes. Use the M&E framework as the evidence base for claims about the program's outcomes and achievements and as the basis for reporting to AusAID.

The M&E framework should have clear end-of activity outcomes and specific means by which you will track progress towards them. It should also ask key evaluation questions (e.g. to what extent did your program achieve the intended result? Are the outcomes likely to be sustainable? What was the impact of the program on the beneficiaries?). The framework should capture information on gender and cross cutting issues and how risk is to be monitored.

The suggested draft below is one example, it is not intended to be prescriptive and a different model could be used. What is important is that each program reports against a common goal and objectives so that links and commonalities can be identified.

ACRP goal ***to increase the number of conflict-affected communities across Sri Lanka benefitting from and living a sustainable, secure and productive life***							
ACRP Objective 1 *Strengthened governance structures at the local and community level to reduce factors that have contributed to conflict*							
End of program outcome	**Intermediate outcome (End Yr 4)**	**Indicators used to measure change**	**Target**	**Data source**	**Means of verification**	**Achievement (compare target with outputs achieved)**	**Domains of Change**
		Include qualitative and quantitative indicators	*Expected value: what you intend to achieve*	*Identify the source of data used to track the indicator*		*For reporting, indicate the extent to which you achieved the outputs Report against: Target*	

						met/not met/ exceeded/ changed	
End of program outcome	**Intermediate outcome (End Yr 4)**	**Indicators used to measure change**	**Target**	**Data source**	**Means of verification**	**Achievement (compare target with outputs achieved)**	**Domains of Change**
Evaluation question: *Set out key evaluative questions relevant to your program and how it fits with the program as a whole. This should include questions that go to general program performance, cross-cutting issues, etc (as distinct from specific, outcome related questions). Sample questions are listed below* How does your program contribute to the overall goal of ACRP3? How does your program fit with the other components of ACRP3? To what extent has your program cooperated with another ACRP implementing partner to achieve your outputs?							
ACRP Objective 2 *Increased economic Opportunity for disadvantaged and conflict affected communities delivered in a way that reduces factors that have contributed to conflict*							
Evaluation question: (Sample) To what extent did you achieve the intended result? Are the outcomes likely to be sustainable? What was the impact of the program on the beneficiaries?							
ACRP Objective 3 *Empowerment of actors to promote and support peace and strengthen social inclusion*							
Evaluation question: (Sample) How relevant are the activities to achieving the goal of ACRP3? How has a Do No Harm analysis affected the achievements? How does the program contribute to conflict mitigation and peace building?							

Annex 7: Possible Table for Measuring Impact

The following Annex is provided as an **example tool** which could be adapted by AusAID and ACRP3 partners to enable the collection of evidence of emerging impact

Table 3: Measuring Emerging Impact in ACRP3

Use the following table to identify emerging impact in your project. Fill in the details in Table 4 below.

Impact	Individual	Community	GoSL & other stakeholders
1. Increased confidence of communities to access services and advocate for their rights.	1.I Community members display greater confidence and ability to access their rights	1.C CBOs & community groups successfully advocate for removal of government authorities on the basis of corruption and non-performance.	1.G Government officers pay attention to community complaints
2. Increased understanding of common issues and shared concerns, as well as greater cohesion towards a mutually beneficial agenda	2.I Awareness-raising and capacity building of CBOs have led to notable examples of communities coming together to address issues	2.C Community mobilisation has changed awareness and sense of collectivity	2.G Gvt shows increased respect to hitherto ignored communities as a result of their strong organisations and collective bargaining power. Eg. Middlemen and business enterprises are forced to negotiate better economic terms for these cooperatives.
3. The reduction of indebtedness	3.I Livelihoods and skills development significantly increases family incomes. Eg. Home gardens increase HH income by up to 50%.	3.C Community economic bargaining power is increased. eg. Cooperatives provide secure higher prices for agricultural products, special projects targeting women	3.G Greater access is being provided to communities and CBOs by respective Government ministries (eg. Fisheries, Agriculture, Coops etc)

		farmers include safeguards for profit-sharing	
4. The use of redress mechanisms to address land titling, encroachment and similar issues	4.I PRS has led to better service delivery for all families living in the project areas.	4.C Women's right to land titles has been established as normative based on work done by ACRP3 partner	4.G Property dispute mediation by LGAs (between parties where encroachment has occurred) is potentially transformative since LGAs are delivering services at grassroots levels of administration.
5. Mainstreaming of programme activities by Government and other major development actors	5.I	5.C CBOs are consulted by LGAs and decentralized government systems in decision-making and implementation of local programmes.	5.G e.g. PRS and Participatory Budgeting mechanisms are mainstreamed, School Twinning program adopted by Education Ministry.
6. Conflict Transformation impacts	6.I Livelihood initiatives for LTTE ex-combatants have provided crucial option for their rehabilitation into society	6.C School Twinning has begun process of inter-ethnic reconciliation and trust-building.	6.G Increased sensitivity to marginal and vulnerable ethnic community needs not yet visible though increased incomes have been recorded by selected LGAs through better revenue collection.
7. Increased engagement with core post-war issues and militarisation concerns	7.I Women and families more empowered to confront military and majoritarian systems when there is personal injustice against them, which acts as deterrent	7.C CBOs win concessions from military, such as shifting of camps and check points in North & East.	7.G e.g. Gender and EVAW networks increase Gvt accountability vis-à-vis protection issues, but not yet at higher political levels. Key campaigns include contesting Navy land grabs, shifting of military camps etc.

Table 4: Measuring Signs of Emerging Impact in ACRP3

Implementing partner: _____ **Project:** _____

Identify and illustrate how your project is having an impact on the results identified in the left hand column of the table below. Include this with the M&E reporting in your progress report. You are not required to address every sign of impact nor at every level (individual, community and local/national govt), but should include examples from your project which exemplify the emerging impacts identified.

Impact	**Level Individual, community or Government**	**Project Outcome**	**Indicator used to measure change**	**Comments** Identify and illustrate how your project is having an impact on the results identified in the left hand column of the table.
1. Increased confidence of communities to access services and advocate for their rights.				
2. Increased understanding of common issues and shared concerns, as well as greater cohesion towards a mutually beneficial agenda				
3. The reduction of indebtedness				
4. The use of redress mechanisms to address land titling, encroachment and similar issues				
5. Mainstreaming of programme activities by Government and other major development actors				
6. Conflict Transformation				

impacts				
7. Increased engagement with core post-war issues and militarisation concerns				
Other emerging impacts				

Annex 8: Summary of Recommendations

Legend							
R	Relevance	EFT	Effectiveness	EFF	Efficiency	I	Impact
S	Sustainability	G	Gender	M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation	A&L	Analysis & Learning

Recommendation		Evaluation Criteria							
1. TST		R	EFT	EFF	I	S	G	M&E	A&L
1.1	*That AusAID immediately reestablish a permanent and expanded TST with a revised role and ToR which includes:* ✖ *The provision of technical support for AusAID and partners on identified priority concerns (peace and conflict, gender and inclusion, capacity building);* ✖ *Support for overarching program level M&E functions including an ACRP3 ToC and EOPOs, biannual monitoring missions;* ✖ *Support to partners to strengthen M&E systems and practice with a focus on strengthening evidence based analysis and evaluation;* ✖ *Facilitation support for improved analysis and learning across the portfolio of initiatives and between partners or groups of partners;* ✖ *Delivery of identified capacity building activities for AusAID and ACRP3 partners.*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2	*The expanded TST would include national and international technical advisers with competencies in:* ✖ *M&E;* ✖ *Gender and social inclusion;* ✖ *Peace and conflict;* ✖ *Capacity building.*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

2. Program Logic		R	EFT	EFF	I	S	G	M&E	A&L
2.1	*2.1 The MTR proposes that AusAID bring together ACRP3 partners to articulate a ToC to guide programming over the next two years, as an urgent priority, and as an imperative to ensure both programmatic continuity and coherence. This process should build on the initial framework for change presented in the ACRP3 design by calibrating the efforts of individual partner projects with the result areas.* ***It should not seek to develop nor provide justification for any new program logic!***	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
3. M&E Framework and Reporting		**R**	**EFT**	**EFF**	**I**	**S**	**G**	**M&E**	**A&L**
3.1	*The MTR proposes that consideration be given to the application of a* ***simple*** *unified ACRP3 M&E reporting framework, for all partners to report against for the duration of ACRP3.*	X	X	X				X	X
3.2	*Partners need to pay stricter attention to analysis based on verifiable evidence for the remaining life of ACRP3 in order that this responsibly reflects emerging outcomes and impacts, contributes to end of program analysis and future program planning. This will ideally be aligned with an overarching ACRP3 ToC to ensure that clear guidance support are provided to ensure that this analysis contributes to higher order requirements.*		X		X	X		X	X
4. Analysis and Learning		**R**	**EFT**	**EFF**	**I**	**S**	**G**	**M&E**	**A&L**
4.1	*We propose that ongoing learning and development opportunities be strategically planned and overseen by the TST (in consultation with AusAID) so as to link them with quality processes such as strengthening M&E and performance in a limited number of identified strategic areas, namely inclusion/exclusion (including gender) and conflict transformation/DNH, as well as enabling a clearer articulation of EOPOs and impact by 2015*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.2	*The frequency of learning opportunities is practical and should not be decreased in these last two years of programming especially where this will be linked to quality processes. Consideration of including peer review as part of this strategy, perhaps as part of the TST monitoring missions is strongly recommended to promote strengthened partnership, cross program synergies and learning.*	X	X	X					X

5. Strengthening the Peace and Conflict Lens		R	EFT	EFF	I	S	G	M&E	A&L
5.1	*Maintaining a strong peace and conflict lens is central to the achievement of the ACRP3 goal and objectives. AusAID should reengage technical expertise in conflict transformation (as part of its revitalised TST) to support regular conflict and DNH analyses at the program and project level.*	X	X		X	X		X	X
6. Gender and Social Inclusion as Strategic Issues		**R**	**EFT**	**EFF**	**I**	**S**	**G**	**M&E**	**A&L**
6.1	*We recommend that attention to strengthening the gender focus of ACRP should focus on the enabling a more sophisticated consideration of gender equality at all levels of ACRP3 through:* ✖ *Ensuring specific gender competence and gender analysis within the TST;* ✖ *Ensuring that gender equality is reflected within the M&E framework;* ✖ *Including a focus on gender within all M&E at the program & project level;* ✖ *Supporting partners to integrate gender assessment tools to assist them to move from gender mainstreaming to equality approaches;* ✖ *Enabling analysis of the impacts and burdens of engagement of development upon women, men and families and ensuring effective safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable women.*	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
6.2	*Gender can be addressed within a wider package which takes a rights based focus on promoting inclusion through systematically addressing exclusion and marginalisation and measuring the outcomes of these efforts.*	X	X		X	X	X		X
7. Local Partnerships and Capacity Building		**R**	**EFT**	**EFF**	**I**	**S**	**G**	**M&E**	**A&L**
7.1	*Partners are strongly encouraged to pay more systematic attention to capacity building and institutional strengthening, in particular articulating the intended changes and using effective tools to measure capacity building and institutional strengthening outcomes;*		X			X		X	X
7.2	*IPs need to be more prepared to describe the nature of the different relationships that they may have with their various partners, the strategic intent and purpose of those relationships and articulate, where appropriate, exit strategies for Years 4 and 5, or conversely where exit is not anticipated, provide benchmarks/milestones on which exit would be made in the future.*		X			X		X	X
7.3	*AusAID is urged to directly nurture strategic partnerships with key national and*	X	X	X		X			X

	provincial counterparts that will facilitate a more holistic and integrated approach among IPs, and which will support linkages with its wider development portfolio.								

8. Strengthening Attention to Safeguards		**R**	**EFT**	**EFF**	**I**	**S**	**G**	**M&E**	**A&L**
8.1	*Where instances of potential unacceptable risk in relation to safeguards have been identified by the MTR, immediate action needs to be taken to:* *Investigate and remedy specific cases;* ✖ *For those partners to review their portfolios to ensure that these are isolated instances;* ✖ *For those partners to demonstrate that policies, tools and procedures are in place to protect beneficiaries and mitigate such risks in the future. This should include arrangements for monitoring these safeguards in instances where the activity or partner is no longer working in that area.*		X	X	X	X	X		
8.2	*The monitoring and evaluation of safeguards and risk requires significantly increased attention by partners, AusAID and the TST into the future.*		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9. End of Program Quality Processes		**R**	**EFT**	**EFF**	**I**	**S**	**G**	**M&E**	**A&L**
9.1	*In order to capitalise on investments through ACRP3, we recommend that program learning and reflection be captured through the following quality processes (in addition to TST monitoring):* ✖ *An Independent Completion Report (ICR) to be undertaken in Year 5 in order to assess outcomes of ACRP and its associated programs; and* ✖ *Systematic and detailed Impact Assessment of ACRP 3 or selected components thereof.*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X