



Summary of Consultations on the New International Development Policy

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) undertook broad consultations to inform the new International Development Policy, including face-to-face and online discussions with over 300 stakeholders across Australia (see [presentation](#)). More than [200 written public](#) submissions were received from an extremely diverse range of stakeholders. DFAT's overseas network provided inputs based on consultation with partner governments, civil society representatives and other local actors. DFAT also consulted heavily across the Australian Government. An [independent perceptions survey](#) of fifty Australian and fifty regional development experts was commissioned, and [previous independent reviews](#) of the development program were reconsidered during the process (review from 1984, 1997, 2005 and 2011). A bipartisan [External Advisory Group](#) was established to provide independent contestability through the policy development process. See [Terms of Reference](#) for the development policy.

A summary of key messages received during the consultations:

- Partners told us that Australia has a reputation for being a trusted development partner and for delivering high-quality results.
- Stakeholders reflected on the evolving global context, including new challenges facing our region and beyond, and saw our development cooperation as being central to Australia's broader international engagement.
- Our development partner countries also told us that Australia was seen as a trusted and pragmatic partner. Our flexible and adaptive approach and responsiveness was appreciated.
- By far, the main area of feedback related to how Australia operates as a partner. Stakeholders noted the need for partnerships to involve long-term approaches, take account of regional and local priorities, and called for differentiated and contextual approaches.
- Stakeholders reflected on the value of broadening as well as deepening our development partnerships, increasing cooperation with communities, faith-based groups, Australian diaspora, and the private sector. These groups were raised as a key asset for the development program.
- In-country partners, including civil society, raised the importance of building local capacity and addressing gaps in human resourcing, including through educational scholarships.
- Building the capacity of local entities and leaders and driving effective governance were also promoted. More flexible contractual arrangements and reporting requirements were suggested as ways to better support local organisations to deliver development cooperation.



- Thematic priorities raised by stakeholders were broadly consistent, highlighting the need for the development program to focus on: addressing climate change; localisation and locally development; the UN 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals; reflecting First Nations approaches; gender equality and disability inclusion; and human rights.
- Other core human development areas were promoted, including health, education, and economic development. Private sector engagement and advancing connectivity through infrastructure and technology were also seen as important. Australia's support for core economic development activities was welcomed, and some stakeholders in the Pacific noted the value of direct budget support.
- The need for a clear, defined purpose for the development program and supporting implementation through a disciplined and coherent approach was highlighted.
- Stakeholders raised the importance of focusing on long term sustainability and resilience, effective implementation, and realistic and achievable objectives.
- Some stakeholders focused on the need to integrate the development program with other tools of statecraft to achieve Australia's interests while others argued that long-term development itself is a strategic way to advance our region's shared interests.
- Stakeholders supported Australia's focus on the Indo-Pacific, while noting the ongoing need to contribute to cooperation beyond our immediate region.
- Australia's leadership in advocating on behalf of our region in international and multilateral fora was highlighted by regional actors, particularly on achieving the UN SDGs, climate change, health security, and humanitarian action.
- Stakeholders asked us to build effectiveness, accountability and transparency across the development program. Stakeholders welcomed the plan to update the performance and delivery framework that accounts for both short-term results and long-term impact, while delivering greater transparency.
- The need for strengthened independent evaluation was raised, as was the importance of disaggregated data, investing in learning and information-sharing.
- Stakeholders pointed to the need to rebuild DFAT's development capability to support implementation, going beyond thematic and sectoral expertise, to improve implementation capability, relationship management, leadership and accountability.
- The need for greater donor coordination and improved coordination mechanisms was raised, noting that the donor landscape in the Indo-Pacific was becoming more crowded.
- A whole-of-government approach was consistently favoured, noting the intersection of development cooperation across government portfolio's including foreign policy, security and immigration.
- There was significant interest in building institutional government-to-government, private sector, and research and scientific linkages.