Ensuring our aid program is transparent

May 2012

What is transparency?

Transparency means providing clear and up-to-date information in a way that helps people understand more about the aid program, how the money is being spent and the results it is achieving. It means being open about failures and why they occur and explaining what will be done to improve any project not delivering the expected results.

About our Transparency Charter

Australia is one of the more transparent donors by global donor standards, but we want to do much better.

That's why the Government agreed to the recommendation of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness to develop a Transparency Charter, which was launched in November 2011. The Charter is a commitment to provide detailed information about the Australian aid program's policies, plans, processes, expenditure and results for everyone to see and be able to access.

The Charter increases our accountability both at home and abroad. In line with the Charter, more information on the aid program is being made available on the AusAID website.

Further information about the Transparency Charter is available at: www.ausaid.gov.au/transparency
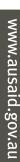
Implementing our Charter

International Aid Transparency Initiative

The Transparency Charter acknowledges that development aid is a global effort and that the Australian Government has a role in contributing to international initiatives that aim to improve aid effectiveness.

The Charter commits us to actively participate in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), which is making information about aid spending across the world easier to access, use and understand.

We are meeting our commitment by progressively providing documents and aid data to the IATI registry. More than 200 documents have been provided to the registry since July 2011, and we provided 2010-11 country level aid data for Cambodia, Kiribati, Mongolia, Nauru, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Vietnam in March 2012.

We are only one of six countries of the 29 currently signed up to IATI to be publishing aid data as at March 2012.

Web pages

In response to the Transparency Charter, AusAID undertook to improve the quality and quantity of information available on its website and in March 2012, six new country websites were released—Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, East Timor, Fiji and Vietnam— in the new format. Vanuatu and Philippines websites were released in November 2011 coinciding with the launch of the Charter, and the remaining country websites will be completed by the end of 2012.

The new website pages:

- are instantly engaging with tables and charts presenting digestible details
- present why we give aid to a specific country, how we deliver that aid, and how much we spend, with greater clarity
- contain downloadable documents in formats that can be manipulated and analysed
- publish data in useable formats.

Information Publication Scheme

Our Transparency Charter also commits AusAID to make agency documents available to partners, stakeholders and the public via the Australian Government's Information Publication Scheme (IPS).

IPS is just one component of a whole-of-government transparency agenda designed to create a culture of public sector openness, transparency and engagement.

Our IPS Registry now contains 1107 documents—the overwhelming majority of which are available via hyperlink.

Further information about the Information Publication Scheme is available at: http://www.ausaid.gov.au/ips

What will be delivered in 2012

Throughout 2012 AusAID will:

- provide all country level aid data to the IATI registry
- make all existing documents available to the Australian public and international stakeholders under the IPS
- release a further 22 country, 15 regional and five thematic websites in the new format
- geocode aid maps for country, regional and thematic areas to make it easy to see where aid initiatives are being delivered
- establish a whole-of-government aid transparency working group to develop agreed standards and processes for departments and agencies to provide their aid program information on AusAID's website
- engage with our aid program partners, grant recipients and other stakeholders to obtain their agreement to publish aid related documents on our website or to link to documents published on their websites, providing a complete picture of Australia's aid program.

Contact: infoausaid@ausaid.gov.au