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ABOUT THE AID PROGRAMMING GUIDE

The Aid Programming Guide (APG) is the basic source of information for all DFAT officers (A-based and LES) who are responsible for aid management in Canberra and at Posts. It sets out mandatory processes and recommended approaches for aid management, and is supplemented by detailed policies, guidelines, tools and templates. These are all available on the intranet, linked to the online version of this guide.

The guide can be read in full, or readers may choose to focus on individual chapters. DFAT officers who need detailed advice on their specific circumstances will find contact details for the responsible area in each relevant chapter and on the intranet. Training is available for key topics including investment design, monitoring and evaluation, procurement, sectoral and thematic issues, fraud, risk and safeguards.

WHAT’S COVERED IN THE GUIDE

Chapter 1
Background and context
- Background, legislative and policy framework, and governance arrangements for the aid program.
- An introduction to AidWorks, DFAT’s aid management IT system.

This chapter gives officers, at all levels, an overview of key aspects of the aid program and how the program is managed within DFAT.

Chapter 2
Australia’s aid policy and performance framework
- Australian Government and DFAT sectoral policies and strategies that guide aid planning and delivery.
- The performance framework for Australia’s aid program, including the role of evaluation.
- Requirements and instructions for Aid Investment Plans (AIPs).

This chapter provides officers, particularly senior managers, with an overview of the policy framework for the aid program, as well as the performance framework, evaluation policy, and individual sector and thematic policies. It also sets out how the policy architecture is implemented in country and regional AIPs.

Chapter 3
Aid program management and performance reporting
- Management of aid programs and portfolios of investments, specifically the tools available to help managers plan investments, track budgets, undertake annual aid program performance reporting, prioritise and plan evaluations and engage stakeholders.

This chapter is particularly relevant to senior managers and delegates who manage country-specific or regional aid programs. It also includes important information for officers who directly support senior managers in discharging their responsibilities.
Chapter 4
Investment management, evaluation and quality reporting

- Management of individual investments, specifically the tools required to implement and maintain quality control for individual investments. These tools include annual Aid Quality Checks, Aggregate Development Results, Partner Performance Assessments and Annual Evaluation Plans.

This chapter is aimed at officers designated as investment or agreement managers, and provides information on key aspects of investment and agreement management.

Chapter 5
Investment design

- The requirements and approval processes that help ensure high-quality investment designs proceed to implementation.

This chapter is for officers, including senior managers, who are involved in designing investments or approving investment designs.

Chapter 6
Procurement, grants and approvals

- The legislative requirements and DFAT policies involved in gaining spending approvals and entering into various types of agreements.

This chapter is particularly for delegates and officers involved in preparing procurement or grant agreements.

Chapter 7
Aid risk management

- How to manage risk in the aid program and DFAT requirements for fraud monitoring and reporting.
- Meeting safeguard obligations on environmental protection, children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, displacement and resettlement, indigenous peoples, and health and safety.

This chapter is important for officers at all levels who have aid management responsibilities.
FEATURES OF THE GUIDE
Each chapter includes several elements to draw the reader’s attention and highlight crucial information.

Key messages
The introductory box provides key messages and mandatory requirements covered in the chapter.

Mandatory requirements
The introductory box provides key messages and mandatory requirements covered in the chapter.

Proportionality
Proportionality boxes highlight where requirements vary depending on the value and nature of the specific program or investment.

In practice
‘In practice’ boxes give tips and ideas on how a process might work, together with any specific details that officers should consider in their work.

AidWorks
AidWorks boxes outline requirements of what needs to be uploaded or updated in AidWorks. Readers who need help using AidWorks in relation to any of these requirements should contact AidWorks at aidworks.support@dfat.gov.au.

Key resources
This box provides a list of resources referred to in the chapter. Links to resources throughout the document connect to policies, detailed guidance, good practice notes and templates. They are also available on the APG intranet.
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Key messages

This Aid Programming Guide (APG) is the starting point for all officers working on the aid program. It outlines policy and program management responsibilities, legal and financial obligations, and aid quality and accountability requirements.

Legislation underpins the aid program. All officers are responsible for ensuring that outcomes specified in agreements with aid delivery partners are achieved to the required standard, within the agreed time frame. Under the legislation, financial delegates must also be able to demonstrate that all agreements represent good value for money for the Australian taxpayer. In particular, delegates need to understand the costs and impacts of their spending, as well as the risks involved.

AidWorks is DFAT’s aid management IT system. It enables officers to effectively manage budget, financial, procurement, agreement and performance aspects of the aid program.

Each year, the Australian Government promotes Australia’s national interests by investing around $4 billion to promote sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries, primarily in the Indo-Pacific region. The investment is delivered through a series of country, regional, global and thematic aid programs. This APG sets out DFAT’s operational framework for ensuring the aid program aligns with government policy, and can demonstrate results and value for money.

1.1 OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE APG

This guide is designed to help aid program managers and financial delegates plan and deliver high-quality aid programs. It focuses on processes that relate to country and regional programs and includes basic information for global aid programs (see Chapter 3). The APG describes officers’ policy and program management responsibilities, as well as legal and financial obligations, and aid quality requirements. It reflects a planned and systematic approach to aid programming and delivery, and describes how DFAT manages aid to deliver effective development results. It also provides links to supplementary resources and support, including technical advice, guidance and templates for approval and reporting.

1.2 THE LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR THE AID PROGRAM

The aid program operates in accordance with Australian law, including legislation that has extra-territorial effect.

- Commonwealth legislation and other instruments—including the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act); Commonwealth Procurement Rules; and Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines—require appropriate use of public money. Aid investments may be subject to internal audit and to Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) review.
  - Value for money is a key consideration in decision-making for all aspects of the aid program. DFAT’s [Value for Money Principles](#) seek to ensure the effective, efficient, economical and ethical management of Australian aid, in a way that advances Australia’s national
interests and achieves the Government’s policy commitments. The principles reflect the requirements of the PGPA Act.

- One of the Government’s policy commitments—outlined in *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability*—is to ensure high standards of transparency. This is part of the ‘ethics’ Value for Money Principle, and involves publishing comprehensive, accessible and timely information about the aid program on the DFAT website.

**Figure 1: Value for Money Principles**

ECONOMY
- Cost consciousness
- Encouraging competition

EFFICIENCY
- Evidence-based decision-making
- Proportionality

EFFECTIVENESS
- Performance and risk management
- A focus on results
- Experimentation and innovation

ETHICS
- Accountability and transparency

- DFAT must consider risks and environmental and social safeguards at all stages of aid management, irrespective of the investment’s financial value. The Department has obligations to protect the environment in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and other international agreements ratified by Australia. Individuals are bound by Australian legislation that supports child protection, health and safety and prohibits bribery of foreign officials.
  - Risk management is defined as identifying and analysing potential risks and opportunities, and developing proportionate, defensible management strategies that balance risk and treatments against the benefits of investment.
  - The Australian aid program operates in a number of countries that have complex, challenging and changing environments. By their nature, aid investments can involve a high degree of risk that requires careful and ongoing management.
  - DFAT’s aid management systems are designed to involve a proportional approach; that is, the time and effort it takes to ensure high-quality aid and manage risk should be proportional to the value and nature of the aid investment.
  - Chapter 7 includes more information on risk management and environmental and social safeguards

- Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, senior managers and Heads of Mission (HOMs) have legal obligations relating to departmental officers, volunteers, scholarship recipients and other delivery partners. Senior officers and HOMs must ensure systems are in place to protect and preserve the health and safety of those conducting business on behalf of DFAT.

### 1.3 FINANCIAL DELEGATIONS

Financial delegations give officers authority to approve spending (financial commitment under s23 of the PGPA Act) and to approve entering into (signing of) an agreement. For administered aid funding, this
approval is under s. 32B of the Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997 (FFSP Act). Financial delegates are accountable for their decisions and actions, and must operate in accordance with their delegation levels and obligations. They are also responsible for ensuring that a proposed aid investment represents proper use of Australian Government resources and meets legislative and DFAT requirements.

Delegations are determined and approved by the DFAT Secretary and can be found on the Financial Delegations Intranet Page.

1.4 DFAT’S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AID PROGRAM

The Departmental Executive and three other departmental committees oversee the strategic direction and quality of Australia’s aid program. They involve senior managers from across DFAT.

1.4.1 Departmental Executive

The Departmental Executive has overall responsibility for the department’s strategic priorities and resource management, including for the Australian aid program. It considers budget and policy matters that require high-level attention; how the program aligns with government policies and priorities; and strategic-level program performance.

1.4.2 Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance and advice to the Secretary and Departmental Executive on DFAT’s risk management and fraud control arrangements; internal control framework; external accountability responsibilities; and internal and external (ANAO) audit activities, including in relation to the aid program. The Committee reports directly to the Secretary.

1.4.3 Aid Governance Board

The Aid Governance Board (AGB) is an advisory body that provides aid policy, risk and performance management oversight. The AGB supports the Secretary, the Departmental Executive, relevant Deputy Secretaries and Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) delegates on specific country, regional or multilateral program decisions about the Australian aid program.

The primary aim of the AGB is to ensure strong governance of the aid program consistent with Government policy and ensuring that the aid program aligns with bilateral, regional and multilateral priorities, achieves development impact, and promotes value for money. The AGB also:

- promotes policy coherence between Australia’s foreign affairs, trade and development agendas; and
- provides end-to-end oversight of the strategic, management and risk frameworks for Australian aid, including monitoring performance of the aid program across the portfolio.

The board’s advice to inform aid program decision-making is complementary to the assurance roles of the Independent Evaluation Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee.

The AGB is chaired by a Deputy Secretary. Its Secretariat is located in the Contracting and Aid Management Division (ACD).
1.4.4 Independent Evaluation Committee

The Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) is an advisory body that oversees the work of the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE). Its objective is to strengthen the quality, credibility and independence of ODE’s work program, which involves evaluation and performance, and quality analysis, including independent analysis of the Annual Evaluation Plan and Performance of Australian Aid Report.

The IEC comprises an independent chair, two independent members and a DFAT Deputy Secretary. A representative of the Department of Finance attends as an observer. The Minister for Foreign Affairs appoints all external members.

1.5 DIVISIONAL AID RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPERTISE

Geographic divisions and associated posts are responsible for managing country and regional aid programs. Responsibilities include setting strategic direction, investment design, implementation, managing development relationships with partner governments and other development stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation, and performance reporting.

There is flexibility in how aid management responsibilities are divided between posts and geographic divisions, taking into account the scale of aid and level of engagement required, balanced with costs, resourcing, security and availability of local expertise.

Regardless of how the responsibilities are divided, they need to be clear and understood by all relevant officers. Posts and divisions are responsible for maintaining appropriate internal controls to ensure compliance with all departmental policies and legislative requirements.

A number of other DFAT divisions are engaged in aid-related work—for example, as managers of global, sectoral or thematic programs, or as centres of aid policy or aid management expertise. Error! Reference source not found. lists the relevant areas of sectoral, thematic and management responsibility and expertise, by division.
**Figure 2: DFAT thematic, sectoral and aid management responsibility and expertise**

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1.6 THE AID MANAGEMENT CYCLE

DFAT uses a standard program management cycle as a conceptual framework for aid program management. The phases of the aid management cycle cover policy and planning; design and procurement; implementation and performance management; and review and evaluation. The phases are presented as a cycle to reflect the usual sequence of aid management steps, but are interrelated and mutually reinforcing; aid management is not linear and phases will be repeatedly revisited.

Figure 3: The aid management cycle
1.7 DFAT’S AID MANAGEMENT IT SYSTEM

1.7.1 What is AidWorks?

AidWorks is DFAT’s aid management IT system used to administer the Australian aid program. It is integral to aid program policy, planning, program delivery, investment and agreement management, as well as program reporting and analysis. AidWorks supports key business functions including pipeline planning, budget and financial management, procurement, and implementation of agreements including performance management.

1.7.2 What information is in AidWorks?

AidWorks supports evidence-based decision making for aid programs, investments and agreements. It holds comprehensive information on country, regional and global programs including program pipelines, planned and current investments, and agreements—including critical documentation such as program designs, agreements with delivery partners and evaluation reports. This ensures DFAT can manage, track and report on the aid program.

The information in AidWorks reflects the policy and program management responsibilities, legal and financial obligations, and quality and accountability requirements contained in this APG. AidWorks includes:

- program fund plans, including planned investments
- descriptions of investments, including costs, time frames and delivery partners
- indicators relating to gender equality, disability, child protection and other issues
- investment-quality reports and other performance information
- investment documents such as designs, reviews and evaluations
- details of agreements (such as contracts and grants)
- commitments and expenditure
- a comprehensive reporting framework to assist in program monitoring, performance and issues management.

AidWorks information is used for a variety of purposes—including as the basis of reporting to the Departmental Executive, the Australian Government and the public—so it must be accurate and up to date at all times.

1.7.3 How does AidWorks support aid management?

DFAT officers—from senior managers with aid program responsibilities to officers in operational positions at posts or in Canberra—use AidWorks to do their job to plan and implement programs and to meet reporting requirements efficiently and accurately.

Program planning: What’s in the pipeline?

Effective aid management and delivery against AIPs requires planning for expenditure in future years—generally the current year plus the following three financial years. This is known as ‘pipeline planning’. AidWorks’ pipeline planning reports give senior managers in Canberra and at Posts visibility and control over prioritisation and funding of a program’s portfolio of current and planned aid investments.
The Program Fund Plan is a critical management tool that assists with the development and maintenance of a Program’s pipeline of investments. It is used to manage the program’s current and future financial year allocations across the full portfolio of investments.

**Investment and agreement management**

Investment and agreement managers use AidWorks on a daily basis to complete business steps involved in planning, approving, implementing and reviewing investments and agreements. Managers need to pay particular attention to ensure the financial information in AidWorks is regularly updated and is accurate.

AidWorks produces summary reports so managers can see at a glance the current ‘state of play’ for individual investments. The summary information includes:

- description of the investment
- current financial year position
- investment quality reporting
- timelines for each of the activities under the investment
- expenditure on active agreements
- upcoming payment events.

**Reporting**

The quantitative and qualitative data in AidWorks informs policy briefings and helps DFAT meet internal management requirements, as well as the information requirements of many stakeholders. These include the Australian Government, the Australian public, international organisations—such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Donor Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC)—and other bodies and initiatives such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

1.7.4 How can officers get help using AidWorks?

Most geographic divisions have a central coordination unit that can provide AidWorks support. ACD has a small team that supports training in Canberra and at Posts, and serves as an AidWorks help desk: aidworks.support@dfat.gov.au. The Global Support Centre provides support relating to user access.

---

**AidWorks**

A box at the end of each APG chapter provides hints and reminders about how best to use AidWorks.

Remember, DFAT relies on the quality of AidWorks data for all public reporting. All planned aid expenditure must be recorded in AidWorks, and information must be accurate and regularly updated.

1.7.5 AidWorks redevelopment, 2018–19

AidWorks was updated in late 2018, and a focus remains on continuous improvement for the system. The redevelopment process is focused on improving:

- system usability
• manageability by introducing an Investment Management Plan to allow for oversight and ongoing management of key deliverables pipeline planning for aid investments and the ability to manage an investment over its life cycle
• system capacity for processing aid investment approvals and ensuring PGPA Act compliance
• reporting capabilities and dashboard features.

From November 2018, AidWorks will guide users down a specific pathway depending on the nature of the investment:

1.8 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND THE AID PROGRAM

The aid program provides many opportunities to build public understanding of Australia’s aid effort, increase influence and promote Australia as a reliable partner. HOMs, SES and other aid officers should refer to DFAT’s Public Diplomacy Strategy and Posts’ annual public diplomacy priorities for overall guidance.

Promoting Australia’s development credentials is an important public diplomacy goal. Highlighting Australia’s work with partner countries to accelerate economic growth, enhance stability, manage the impacts of climate change and reduce poverty through effective development and humanitarian assistance are all themes with public diplomacy opportunities. To take advantage of these opportunities, programs hold launches with ministers or HOMs in attendance; host media engagements around ministerial visits; and
produce stories and photos for publication in local host country media. Case studies drawn from monitoring and evaluation reports can also be a source of new stories. Using social media content on official DFAT platforms to explain the benefits of an aid program can help enhance public awareness in a host country and among the Australian public. DFAT media liaisons and the Digital Communications Hub can advise on engaging with the Australian media and promoting stories on social media.

For further information about issues raised in this chapter, or about the APG more generally, email apg@dfat.gov.au.

For details of all other key contacts, see the contacts list.

### Key resources

**Policies and strategies**

- Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability
- Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid
- Performance of Australian Aid Report (2015–16)
- Value for Money Principles
- Aid Evaluation Policy

**Guidance**

- AidWorks Support (new support site operational from November 2018)
CHAPTER 2
AUSTRALIA’S AID POLICY AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Key messages
Promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability are the overarching objectives of Australian aid policy.

Australia has a strong focus on performance at all levels of the aid program to give taxpayers confidence that Australia’s aid delivers results and value for money.

Aid Investment Plans (AIPs) give effect to the aid policy and performance framework and outline Australia’s strategic objectives in a country or region.

The Annual Evaluation Plan outlines the evaluations that program areas and the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) will conduct.

The Secretary approves DFAT’s Annual Evaluation Plan.

Mandatory requirements
Aid investments must align with the aid program’s strategic framework.

Country and regional programs valued at $15 million total annual official development assistance (ODA) or great must produce an Aid Investment Plan (AIP).

AIPs must be quality assured, approved by the relevant FAS and published on the DFAT website; content and size depend on the value of the program.

The Aid Governance Board (AGB) reviews AIPs for programs with a total annual ODA allocation of $50 million or more.

The AGB is responsible for ensuring evaluation findings inform aid strategies and investments it approves.

2.1 AUSTRALIA’S AID POLICY

The Minister for Foreign Affairs launched Australia’s development policy Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability on 18 June 2014. This policy is the key framing document for all officers involved in the aid program.

The purpose of the aid program is to promote Australia’s national interests by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. The aid program focuses on achieving two development outcomes: strengthening private sector development and enabling human development. The framework in Figure 4 sets out the six priority areas for investment, and Section 2.4 provides more detailed information.
Figure 4: Strategic framework for the aid program

Promoting Australia's national interests by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction

TO ACHIEVE

PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

We maximise impact by being innovative and leveraging knowledge and finance

Infrastructure, trade facilitation and international competitiveness

Building resilience: humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction and social protection

Gender equality and empowering women and girls

Agriculture, fisheries and water

Education and health

Effective governance: policies, institutions and functioning economies

WE INVEST IN

The balance of investments will be tailored to suit the context of each country and reflect Australia's national interest
2.1.1 International policy environment, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Australia’s development priorities are well aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. The 2030 Agenda sets the globally agreed road map for sustainable development and brings together all aspects of development: social, economic and environmental. It emphasises self-reliance and the need to mobilise all resources to finance development, including domestic revenue, trade and private sector investment.

Australia has also committed to global agreements on development effectiveness (at Paris in 2005, Accra in 2008 and Busan in 2011), which provide a framework for development cooperation that emphasises the principles of country ownership, a focus on results, multi-stakeholder partnerships, transparency and mutual accountability.

2.2 INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION AND REPORTING

In 2014, the Minister for Foreign Affairs introduced a new performance system: Making Performance Count; enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid. The system draws on performance assessment at all levels of the aid program—for delivery partners (including contractors, non-government organisations (NGOs), multilateral organisations and others engaged by DFAT to deliver aid); individual investments; and country, regional and global programs—to inform the overall performance of Australia’s aid program. It is designed to link performance to funding, and ensures a strong focus on results and value for money. The performance framework is illustrated in Figure 5.

At the highest level, the whole aid program is assessed against 10 strategic targets and development policy priorities. Performance is publicly reported each year in the Performance of Australian Aid Report.

At the individual country and regional program level, Aid Program Performance Reports (APPRs) provide an evidence-based assessment of progress against the Australian aid objectives set out in AIPs, and include agreed management actions. APPRs help strengthen program management, demonstrate accountability and improve program effectiveness. The reporting process is also an opportunity to discuss program performance with partner governments (see Aid Program Performance Report (APPR) Good Practice Note and Chapter 3).

At the individual investment level, investment quality reporting (IQR) assesses and reports on the performance and results of individual aid investments and delivery partners during implementation or at completion (see the Aid Investment Quality Reporting Good Practice Note and Chapter 4). IQR comprises:

- Aid Quality Checks (AQCs), Final Aid Quality Checks (FAQCs) and Humanitarian Response Aid Quality Checks (HAQCs)
- Partner Performance Assessments (PPAs)
- Aggregate Development Results (ADR) reports.

DFAT assesses the performance of multilateral organisations separately. Multilateral Performance Assessments (MPAs) inform Australia’s partnership engagement with key organisations and support dialogue with multilateral headquarters on key performance issues. DFAT conducts MPAs on a rolling basis—on average every three years—for multilateral organisations that receive the most significant amounts of core aid funding ($7 million or more per year).
Independent evaluation (see Section 2.3) supplements this integrated system of self-assessment of performance. Evaluation will generally use data gathered through performance monitoring as one source of evidence on which to base evaluation findings and recommendations.
### Australian aid program performance framework

#### Whole of Aid Program

- **What performance is assessed?**
  - 10 strategic targets
- **What is performance measured against?**
  - 6 aid policy priorities
- **How is performance reported?**
  - Performance of Australian Aid Report

#### Programs

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<td>Multilateral Performance Assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Individual Aid Investments

- **7 aid quality criteria:**
  - Relevance
  - Effectiveness
  - Efficiency
  - Monitoring & evaluation
  - Sustainability
  - Gender
  - Risk management & safeguards
- **Alignment with key policy priorities:**
  - Innovation
  - Private sector engagement
  - Climate change
  - Disability
  - Inclusion
- **Annual Aid Quality Checks**
- **Program prioritised evaluations**

#### Key Aid Delivery Partners

- **5 assessment criteria:**
  - Lasting results & impact
  - Value for money
  - Collaboration, communication, responsiveness
  - Policy alignment, risk management, innovation
  - Effective personnel
- **Annual Partner Performance Assessments**
### Figure 6: Australian aid program strategic targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET 1</th>
<th>TARGET 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting prosperity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Delivering on commitments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote economic development by increasing Australia’s aid for trade investments to 20 per cent of the aid budget by 2020</td>
<td>From July 2015, progress against mutual obligations agreed between Australia and its key partner governments and organisations forms part of program performance assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET 2</th>
<th>TARGET 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging the private sector</strong></td>
<td><strong>Working with the most effective partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All new investments will explore innovative ways to promote private sector growth or engage the private sector in achieving development outcomes</td>
<td>From July 2015, new systems used to assess the performance of the aid program’s key delivery partners and ensure stronger links between performance and funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET 3</th>
<th>TARGET 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reducing poverty</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ensuring value for money</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By July 2015, all country and regional programs had Aid Investment Plans describing how Australia’s aid will promote economic growth in ways that provide pathways out of poverty</td>
<td>Deliver high standards of value for money in at least 85 per cent of aid investments. Where standards are not met and improvements are not achieved within a year, investments will be cancelled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET 4</th>
<th>TARGET 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowering women and girls</strong></td>
<td><strong>Increasing consolidation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation</td>
<td>Reduce the number of individual investments by 20 per cent by 2016–17 to focus efforts and reduce transaction costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>TARGET 5</th>
<th>TARGET 10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focusing on the Indo-Pacific region</strong></td>
<td><strong>Combating corruption</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the proportion of country program aid that is spent in the Indo-Pacific region to at least 90 per cent from 2014–15</td>
<td>From July 2015, new fraud control and anti-corruption strategies introduced for all major country and regional programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3 INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

Independent evaluations also contribute performance information to support management, accountability and learning. They are generally undertaken at two levels.

- High-level strategic evaluations focus on key policy directions, specific development themes or sectors, or large programs. The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) produces these under the oversight of the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC).
- Country, regional and global program officers identify and manage independent evaluations as outlined in the Annual Evaluation Plan. These may be evaluations of individual investments or evaluations which examine a particular issue at the program level or across a number of investments. Sectoral or thematic
programs manage independent evaluations of sector strategies. In DFAT, these are called program- prioritised evaluations.

DFAT program areas initiate and manage program prioritised evaluations. Designated program areas undertake an annual process to identify and prioritise independent evaluations, which they can use to improve their work. In accordance with the Aid Evaluation Policy, designated program areas must complete a minimum number of these evaluations within the relevant year. Global programs and sectoral programs conduct evaluations every three to five years of their programs and sector strategies respectively. Program areas have flexibility to determine the highest priority issues their evaluations should focus on. ODE has developed an Annual Evaluation Plan template and prioritisation tool for program areas to assist their evaluation planning and prioritisation (see Chapter 3).

On occasion, program areas may wish to undertake a rapid management review to help inform immediate decisions required on individual investments. Rapid management reviews are similar to evaluations but involve less time and resources and are generally less rigorous. The requirements of the Aid Evaluation Policy do not apply to rapid management reviews.

ODE compiles DFAT’s Annual Evaluation Plan, which outlines the strategic evaluations to be published by ODE and the program prioritised evaluations to be published by program areas during that year. The Plan is endorsed by the IEC, reviewed and approved by the Secretary, and shared with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Plan is published on DFAT’s website. ODE regularly reports to the Secretary on the progress of planned evaluations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs also receives progress reports against the Plan.

Why evaluate?

Independent evaluation is a process for systematically and objectively assessing investments, programs and strategies. Independent evaluations ensure that DFAT has credible and robust information on how aid investments have performed. They support:

- **management**: presenting evidence and analysis to guide decisions about new and existing investments, AIPs and aid policies
- **accountability**: demonstrating the effectiveness of the aid program to stakeholders, including the Australian public, the Australian Parliament, partner governments, implementing partners and the communities DFAT works with
- **learning**: contributing to the body of knowledge about what does or does not work in a particular context and why.

See Aid Evaluation Policy.

### 2.4 SECTOR AND THEMATIC STRATEGIES AND GUIDANCE

To assist in making strategic choices for country, regional and global programs, DFAT has developed detailed guidance on priority thematic and sector areas, including those linked to the 10 strategic targets. These strategies and guidance notes provide analytical frameworks to inform decision-making, strengthen program effectiveness and promote coherence across the Australian aid program. All are available on the DFAT website.

In AidWorks, themes describe a collection of measures including government priorities and objectives, targets and safeguards. Cross cutting areas not covered by DAC codes are captured by themes – with the exception of Gender, which has both.
Themes that should be tagged in AidWorks include Climate Change, Disability, Disaster Risk Reduction, Gender, Indigenous People, Innovation, Maternal and Child Health, Private Sector Development, Research, and Social Protection.

2.4.1 Private sector development and engagement

When a country’s private sector expands and increases its productivity, that country’s economy grows. When the poor can contribute and participate, economic growth leads to reduced poverty. Higher and more inclusive growth provides people with the best chance to find jobs, enhance their incomes and escape poverty. Australian support seeks to strengthen the private sector in partner countries by building better business and investment environments, supporting growth in specific markets and maximising the development impact of individual businesses.

The private sector has a wealth of knowledge, ideas, capabilities and resources that can help improve the effectiveness of Australia’s aid program. By engaging the private sector—informally or through formal partnerships—the aid program can leverage assets, connections, creativity and expertise to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes that satisfy Australia’s development objectives.

Promoting private sector development and private sector engagement is a strategic target for the Australian aid program and must be considered in AIPs. All new aid investments must explore innovative ways to promote private sector growth or engage the private sector in achieving development outcomes. More detail is provided in the [Strategy for Australia’s aid investments in private sector development](#) and the [Private Sector Engagement Guidance Note](#).

2.4.2 Gender equality

Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is a strategic priority for the aid program and should be considered in all AIPs. DFAT takes a two-track approach, which involves taking measures specifically designed to tackle gender inequalities while incorporating gender issues into all aspects of Australia’s work. The first track requires action to address gender inequalities where they are particularly challenging or where progress is slow. The second track requires integrating gender equality across all areas and sectors. This approach is reflected in [Making Performance Count](#), which establishes a strategic target of having at least 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, effectively addressing gender equality issues.

All programs, regardless of sector, must take into account the potential for development interventions to have different impacts on particular groups of women and men, and must take steps to maximise opportunities and results for both women and men. At a minimum, programs must ensure their aid investments do not exacerbate gender inequality; where possible, the aid program should actively work to close gender equality gaps. Australia will also continue to fulfil its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. More detail is included in the [DFAT Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy](#) and the [Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in DFAT’s Aid Program – Good Practice Note](#).

2.4.3 Aid for trade

Aid for trade is about helping developing countries address their internal constraints to trade—such as cumbersome regulations, poor infrastructure and lack of workforce skills. This might include training customs officials to facilitate trade, investing in ports and storage facilities, connecting farmers to overseas buyers and helping women entrepreneurs become exporters. Aid for trade supports developing countries’
efforts to better integrate into and benefit from the global rules-based trading system, implement domestic reform and make a real economic impact on the lives of their citizens.

The Australian Government is committed to promoting economic development, including by increasing aid for trade investments to represent 20 per cent of the total aid budget by 2020. This is consistent with the level of aid for trade investment by other key donors and the increasing demand for this support in developing countries, including in the Indo-Pacific region. No country has achieved high and lasting growth without participating in international trade or attracting investment.

Investing in more aid for trade activities is a strategic target for the Australian aid program and must be considered when developing AIPs and related pipelines for new investments. More detail is included in the Strategy for Australia’s Aid for Trade Investments and the Aid for Trade Guidance Note.

2.4.4 Innovation

Where a challenge exists and there is no clear solution, thinking more openly about how to gather new ideas and address that challenge can lead to innovative approaches that deliver better value and have more of an impact than previously realised. Innovation is a process of first deeply understanding the problem, then collecting and developing new ideas, trialling and adapting possible solutions, and trying again until something works. This can be done effectively through collaboration and partnerships that bring in new thinking and perspectives. Because innovation broadens the scope of people and organisations involved in developing a solution, it can create cost efficiencies by leveraging the finance, skills and knowledge of others. Innovative approaches to using technology and science (including behavioural science) can emerge in the process of solving problems. New perspectives emerge in the effort to understand a problem and find cost-effective ways to solve it, or in seeking to finance a project and increase its scale and impact, then incentivising its outcomes and sustainability.

Considering an innovative approach involves seeking opportunities that build on the influence and impact of others; those that promise to be transformative can be scaled to reach many, and can offer superior impact and reach than is achievable using existing approaches. Being innovative also means taking measured risks on something new and unknown. These risks can be measured by seeking advice from experts and making small investments while still gathering evidence, learning more and building the case for a larger investment.

Although InnovationXchange is leading DFAT’s work to identify and test innovative approaches, innovation needs to become an essential component in how the whole aid program—and indeed the whole Department—does business. More detail is available on the InnovationXchange website.

2.4.5 Effective governance

The term ‘governance’ refers to how power and authority are used to manage public resources. The term can also be used to describe a sector. The governance sector includes public sector reform, public financial management (including domestic resource mobilisation), economic management, electoral support, law and justice, and anti-corruption efforts.

Where governance is poor, development outcomes are also poor, so the Australian Government has prioritised investment in effective governance. Governance is critical for making aid and development more effective, because it influences the development and implementation of public policies; the establishment of strong and inclusive institutions; the maintenance of peace and stability; the eradication of corruption; and the ability of businesses to grow and offer employment opportunities. Governance also affects the extent to which men, women and children can access basic services (such as health, education, transport, water and sanitation) and are empowered to hold political leaders and government officials to account.
Despite being technically sound, an aid investment may not be politically feasible in a given context. Broad political awareness will inform an understanding of formal and informal institutions (that is, how things are really done) and how change can be achieved in the particular country context. Australia’s aid programming should be guided by Effective Governance: Strategy for Australia’s aid investments. This strategy provides advice on the types of governance investments to consider, and how to ensure that all development cooperation investments are sufficiently informed by an analysis of the relevant context.

2.4.6 Fragility and conflict

Fragility and violent conflict pose some of the most intractable challenges to prosperity, stability and poverty reduction. Fragility and conflict, while not synonymous, are frequently related. Across the Asia-Pacific region, this tends to manifest as subnational conflict in South and South-East Asia, and fragility in Pacific states, which tend to be less resilient to shocks. Addressing conflict and fragility requires more than just an aid response; fragility and conflict are fundamentally political problems that require political solutions. Strategies and interventions should be sensitive to fragility and conflict, but also need to be holistic in nature, incorporating appropriate diplomatic, trade, development and security responses.

2.4.7 Building resilience: Climate change and disaster risk reduction

Australia is committed to intensifying its efforts to develop climate and disaster resilience in vulnerable countries and sectors. The 2015 Paris Agreement sets a new course for global climate action. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development integrates risk and resilience across at least 10 of the 17 SDGs. The Sendai Framework is the global blueprint for reducing the risk of climate-related and other disasters for the next 15 years. Resilience is being used to make sense of the linked issues of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The Australian aid program adopts a two-track approach to building climate and disaster resilience: firstly, by mainstreaming climate and disaster resilience in all relevant sectors, including at-risk sectors in disaster-prone countries; and secondly, by taking a targeted approach, including investments that assist countries and communities in their climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction priorities and efforts. AIPs should consider climate- and other disaster-related risks and opportunities. At the design level, all investments (but particularly those in highly vulnerable sectors like agriculture; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and infrastructure) must seek to mitigate existing risks and avoid creating new ones. More detail is available on the Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Intranet Page.

2.4.8 Disability-inclusive development

The Australian Government is committed to expanding opportunities for social and economic development for people, businesses and communities to promote economic growth and reduce poverty. Australia recognises this cannot occur effectively if the most disadvantaged people are left behind. People with disabilities comprise one in seven of the global population and are the largest and most disadvantaged minority in the world. For Australia’s development efforts to be effective, it is essential that people with disabilities are partners in and beneficiaries of the Australian aid program. Australia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which requires international cooperation and humanitarian action to make aid disability-inclusive. Throughout the aid management cycle—including during aid policy and direction-setting activities—programs should engage with people with disabilities and with their representative organisations (disabled people’s organisations) to identify and address barriers to inclusion. More detail is included in the DFAT Development for All 2015–2020 Strategy and the Disability-Inclusive Development Guidance Note.
2.4.9 Indigenous peoples

The Australian Government is committed to delivering programs that improve outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples hold their own diverse concepts of development, based on their traditional values, visions, needs and priorities, which may differ from those of the broader population. Indigenous peoples are also at greater risk of exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination. For example, social, economic, political and power imbalances may prevent Indigenous peoples from achieving equal access or benefits, or may actively cause them harm. DFAT encourages its officers to use the DFAT operational guidance Reaching indigenous people in the Australian aid program: guidance note to ensure the aid program is effectively reaching—and not inadvertently harming—Indigenous peoples in partner countries. The guidance note is also applicable to ethnic minorities and other minority groups.

There is no universally accepted definition of the term ‘Indigenous’ and DFAT should use whatever terminology is appropriate in each country context. Further guidance on terminology is outlined in the DFAT Indigenous Peoples Strategy 2015–2019: A Framework for Action. The strategy also provides more detail on DFAT’s foreign policy, aid, trade, public diplomacy and corporate priorities for Indigenous peoples in Australia and around the world.

2.4.10 Sector strategies

DFAT has developed or is developing sector strategies and further guidance—including good practice notes—for the following areas:

- infrastructure
- agriculture, fisheries and water
- social protection
- education
- health
- humanitarian
- domestic resource mobilisation (tax policy and administration)
- climate change
- disaster risk reduction
- Australia Awards (scholarships and fellowships)
- public financial management.

2.5 AID INVESTMENT PLANS

Country and regional programs valued at $15 million total annual ODA or greater must produce an Aid Investment Plan (AIP). An AIP is a public document that details Australia’s development-related objectives in a partner country or region, how they will be achieved and how success will be measured. AIPs are mandated by the Government’s aid policy statement, Australian Aid: Promoting Prosperity, Reducing Poverty and Enhancing Stability.

Where an Integrated Country Strategy is being drafted, an AIP should, where possible, be developed concurrently or shortly thereafter and be informed by the choices made in the strategy.

AIPs generally span four years, in line with budget forward estimates. Alternatively, they may be aligned to a partner country political cycle (up to six years). For countries facing dynamic or highly challenging
circumstances, programs may develop AIPs with shorter time frames. For example, this may be appropriate in the case of countries facing rapid political change or dealing with the impacts of conflict or natural disasters.

AIPs reflect the Government’s total aid effort in a given country or region, including information on significant expenditure through regional or global programs or by Australian Government agencies other than DFAT. All AIPs are published on the DFAT website.

**Proportionality: Aid Investment Plans**

DFAT applies a proportionate approach to developing AIPs. This means that the time and effort put into developing an AIP, the analysis underpinning it, the detail contained within it and the authority for approving it should be proportional to the value and/or strategic importance of the country or regional program. In all cases, existing resources should be drawn upon where possible. The Contracting and Aid Management Division (ACD) is responsible for setting AIP requirements.

### 2.5.1 What is included in an AIP?

AIPs are underpinned by analysis that:

- With reference to the Foreign Policy White Paper, identifies Australia’s core national interests in a country or region, including the potential costs of instability and insecurity;
- Outlines the key challenges to the achievement of those interests (including constraints to growth);
- Identifies the extent, distribution and drivers of poverty, and considers the relationship between growth and poverty reduction;
- Makes a realistic assessment of what Australia can influence given the political economy of the partner country or region and our resources (including funding, staff numbers and capacity, and partner capacity);
- Explains what Australia will seek to achieve and why (including, where relevant, what we will not do and why); and
- Considers implementation risk, including safeguard risks and delivery modalities together with the results of previous evaluations.

For advice on how to do analysis including for AIPs see the [Analysis Good Practice Note](#) and [Poverty and Social Analysis Good Practice Note](#). DFAT thematic areas can also facilitate access to external experts.

The analysis underpinning AIPs needs to be documented such that the Aid Governance Board (AGB) and the relevant approver can clearly understand the choices made in the AIP. The exact form such a document takes is at program discretion. For example, an Integrated Country Strategy may satisfy some or all of the above points. Alternatively, a document could be prepared summarising the results of the analysis and explaining the choices made in the AIP.

An AIP itself must be as succinct and direct as possible and in the format set out in the [AIP Template](#). For programs with $50 million total annual ODA or greater, an AIP should be approximately 10 pages, exclusive of annexes. For programs $15 to $50 million total annual ODA, approximately 4 – 5 pages, exclusive of annexes, is generally sufficient.
In practice: AIP outline

- **Part I: Context & Rationale**
  - Political economy of the partner country/region
  - Australia’s national interests and influence objectives
  - Growth and poverty analysis
  - Australia’s value-add and leverage

- **Part II: Objectives & Implementation Approach**
  - Key development objectives (generally between two and four) together with the approach and key interventions to be employed to achieve them (e.g. partnerships, policy dialogue, major current and planned investments etc.)
  - Explain how planned activities will address poverty reduction
  - Identify how planned activities under each objective will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
  - Include resourcing implications (budget, people and partners)

- **Part III: Performance Management**
  - Set out mutual obligations between Australia and partner government, outline approach to monitoring and evaluation and identify performance benchmarks

- **Part IV: Program Management**
  - Outline governance and resource management arrangements, key risks and approach to risk management

- **Annexes (Public)**
  - Performance Assessment Framework
  - Investment Pipeline

- **Annexes (Non-Public)**
  - Program Fund Plan
  - Program Risk Register

2.5.2 AIPs: The foundation for program-level performance assessment

The Government’s performance framework *Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid* drives links between performance and aid funding, ensuring a stronger focus on results and value for money.

The framework requires that all AIPs identify a set of performance benchmarks for the life of the AIP. These should highlight key planned program results and significant milestones (for example, a milestone might be the adoption of a new policy, with the key program results flowing from the implementation of that policy). They should include measures of improved operational effectiveness or efficiency. Performance benchmarks may be selected from Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators (see proportionality box below).
Proportionality: Performance Assessment Frameworks

All programs requiring an AIP are required to develop a Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). A PAF is a management tool for comprehensively detailing expected results across the program’s overall portfolio of investments. It includes measurable indicators against which progress towards a program’s overall stated objectives can be assessed. Previous experience has consistently shown that programs with a PAF are better able to present credible performance reporting in their APPRs.

The level of effort allocated to developing a PAF and its overall complexity should be proportional to the value and risk profile of the program. Some programs delivering economic partnerships have developed PAFs that sit across both aid and economic objectives. This is an acceptable model.

For more detailed guidance please refer to the Performance Assessment Framework Good Practice Note.

2.5.3 Partner governments and other stakeholders

Partner governments must be consulted on the development objectives, performance benchmarks and mutual obligations contained within an AIP. Judgements on the depth, scale and sequencing of consultations should be made by Post. For regional AIPs, this should include discussions with regional organisations or other organisations working regionally. Although AIPs must be informed by consultation, they are not required to be formally negotiated with or endorsed by partner governments (although they may be adapted for this purpose if considered necessary in a particular local context).

When developing an AIP, DFAT officers responsible for the country or regional program should also consult with and seek input from other stakeholders, including:

- Other divisions in DFAT (including cross-cutting areas, for example gender);
- Other Australian Government agencies;
- Private sector organisations, NGOs and civil society organisations (as relevant);
- Research organisations working on development issues in the country or region; and
- Bilateral and multilateral development partners.

2.5.4 How are AIPs quality assured and approved?

Prior to starting work on an AIP, it is good practice to document the planned process and timeline in an AIP commissioning minute signed by the relevant First Assistant Secretary (FAS) or Assistant Secretary (AS), depending on program value and risk profile (see AIP drafting and approval box below).

After a draft AIP is produced, relevant stakeholders should be consulted on the proposed development objectives, implementation approach, performance management (PAF, performance benchmarks and mutual obligations) and risk assessment. At a minimum, these would generally include the thematic and policy areas of the department relevant to the areas of focus in the draft AIP (including cross-cutting areas, for example gender) together with the Contracting and Aid Management Division. Comments and responses
should be documented to enable the approver of the AIP to satisfy themselves that an appropriate quality assurance process has been undertaken.

The relevant FAS is responsible for ensuring all appropriate consultations have been undertaken and the AIP is in line with high-level Government policy directions. The relevant Head of Mission must endorse the AIP before it is submitted to the FAS for approval.

AIPs valued at $50 million total annual ODA or greater are then submitted for review by the Aid Governance Board. The Aid Governance Board may, at its discretion, also review AIPs valued at $15 - $50 million total annual ODA. Thereafter, they are either approved by the Minister ( $50 million total annual ODA or greater) or the relevant Deputy Secretary ( $15 - $50 million total annual ODA).

2.5.5 How are AIPs reviewed and kept current?

APPRs are the key tool for reviewing progress against the objectives set in an AIP (see Chapter 3). This may include an assessment of the continuing relevance of AIP priorities. Significant changes in the country or regional context—including changes to the nature of Australia’s bilateral relationship, the emergence of conflict, a major natural disaster or a political change—may lead to a decision to revise AIP objectives.

Where the relevant FAS/HOM deems that significant adjustments to an AIP are required due to a major change in the operating context, approval should be sought from the initial approver (Deputy Secretary or Minister). Minor adjustments to an AIP are made through Annual Program Performance Reviews (APPRs). These should be incorporated into the AIP each year to ensure it remains current and relevant. AIP annexes should also be updated on an annual basis.

Extensions to an AIP should likewise be sought from the initial approver (either through a Ministerial submission where the AIP has been approved by the Minister, or a minute where the AIP has been approved by the relevant Deputy Secretary).
NOTE: AIP NOT REQUIRED FOR PROGRAMS UNDER $15 MILLION TOTAL ANNUAL ODA

* See Executive Branch guidance on integrated country strategies and Section 2.5.1 of this guidance.

# An Integrated Country Strategy or other document explaining choices made in the AIP is required to be annexed to the AIP for AGB review. AIP’s are published on the website and must be uploaded into AidWorks.
2.5.6 Roles and responsibilities

The relevant division in Canberra has primary responsibility for drafting an AIP. Posts should provide analytical input and lead any consultations with partner governments and in-country stakeholders.

The relevant Director is responsible for ensuring that the public version of the AIP is placed on the website within 1 month of AIP approval, amendment and inclusion of annual updates.

For further information about issues raised in this chapter, contact programplanning@dfat.gov.au.

For details of all other key contacts, see the contacts list.

AidWorks

AidWorks is the management system used to analyse sectoral and thematic policy and programming issues across the aid portfolio.

IQR templates are downloaded from AidWorks. Completed and approved reports must be uploaded by the due date.

Key resources

Policies and strategies

- Australian Aid: Promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability
- Australia Awards Global Strategy
- Aid Evaluation Policy
- Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Intranet Page
- Development for All 2015–2020 Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia’s aid program
- Effective Governance: Strategy for Australia’s aid investments
- Political Economy Analysis Guidance Note
- Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy
- Health for Development Strategy 2015–2020
- Early Recovery – Humanitarian Strategy Guidance Note
- Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Guidance Note
- Other Humanitarian Guidance Notes
- Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid
- Public Financial Management Intranet Page
- Framework for supporting tax policy and administration through the aid program
Strategy for Australia’s Aid for Trade Investments
Strategy for Australia’s aid investments in agriculture, fisheries and water
Strategy for Australia’s Aid Investments in Economic Infrastructure
Strategy for Australia’s aid investments in education 2015–2020
Strategy for Australia’s aid investments in private sector development
Strategy for Australia’s aid investments in social protection

Guidance
Aid for Trade Guidance Note
Aid Investment Quality Reporting Good Practice Note
Aid Program Performance Report (APPR) Good Practice Note
Annual Evaluation Plan Prioritisation Tool
Analysis Good Practice Note
Disability-Inclusive Development Guidance Note
Social Protection and Disability Guidance Note
Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in DFAT’s Aid Program – Good Practice Note
Performance Assessment Framework Good Practice Note
Poverty and Social Analysis Good Practice Note
Private Sector Engagement Guidance Note
Reaching indigenous people in the Australian aid program: guidance note

Templates
Annual Evaluation Plan Template
AIP Template
Performance Assessment Framework template
CHAPTER 3
AID PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Key messages

DFAT’s country and regional programs comprise a set of strategic investments that are chosen as a portfolio and designed to generate specific outcomes as set out in aid investment plans (AIPs) or equivalent strategy-setting documents.

The relevant First Assistant Secretary (FAS) and Head of Mission (HOM) are responsible and accountable for all aspects of their aid program. A Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) model is being trialled with a few programs. View the Senior Responsible Officer guidance for more information.

Program management involves fostering relationships with the partner government and other partners; setting strategic priorities; allocating budgets; tracking results; managing risk; and ensuring that all expenditure complies with the law.

The relevant FAS also approves which program evaluations will be conducted as part of DFAT’s Annual Aid Evaluation Plan.

Mandatory requirements

Programs must comply with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) and other relevant legislation.

Budgets are allocated through the Program Fund Plan (PFP), which must be completed in AidWorks and updated quarterly.

Program risks must be reviewed regularly and escalated as appropriate.

Aid Program Performance Reports (APPRs) must be produced annually by country and by regional programs that have an annual total official development assistance (ODA) allocation of $15 million or more. Length and content requirements depend on the value.

APPRs must be peer reviewed to ensure performance reporting is robust and contested.

APPRs must be approved by the relevant FAS and published on the DFAT website.

All evaluations and management responses must be published on the DFAT website within three months of an evaluation report being completed.

Aid program management ensures that the program’s portfolio of investments is coherent and will achieve the objectives set out in the AIP.

Program management ensures that resources (both staff and budget) are allocated according to the program’s strategic priorities, and that expenditure fully complies with the law.

Performance reporting enables DFAT to assure the Minister and taxpayers that the aid program is achieving credible results.
3.1 WHAT IS AN AID PROGRAM?

A program is a set of strategic investments that are chosen as a portfolio and designed to generate specific outcomes. A program may cover a country (country program), or work across a region (regional program). The investment choices are guided by the Australian Government’s objectives as set out in country and regional AIPs. They are also influenced by partner country preferences, opportunity (particularly the presence of reformers) and experience (for example, the longer the engagement in a sector, the stronger the results). It can take up to two years to design and procure an investment, so there is always a mix of old and new investments in any portfolio. Each program is allocated an annual budget appropriation at the start of the financial year and is given a medium-term funding envelope through the forward estimates process.

In practice: Funding to multilateral organisations and global funds

Australia funds a number of multilateral organisations, global funds, and UN development and humanitarian organisations. This allows Australia to leverage resources from other donors, extend its reach, access expertise, and pursue aid policy objectives at a scale that would not otherwise be possible.

Funding is normally channelled to these organisations in two ways:

**Non-core funding** is targeted for a specific program, project or projects, usually either at a country or regional level or for activities in a specific sector or sectors. Non-core funding is generally provided through country, regional or sectoral programs from the budget allocations managed by those programs. It typically involves project-level co-financing, contributions to single or multi-donor trust funds, or earmarking voluntary contributions for specific sectors or initiatives.

**Core contributions** support an agency’s core mandate and objectives and are often committed on a multi-year basis.

**Responsibility for managing non-core funding** generally sits with the relevant DFAT geographic or sectoral area or with the relevant country or regional program. In planning and managing non-core funding, DFAT officers should follow DFAT’s investment design (see Chapter 5) and management processes (see Chapter 4). The design process normally relies on the partner’s project design, procurement and project management systems (see Good Practice Guide: Partner-led Design).

**Responsibility for managing core funding** and the overarching relationships with multilateral agencies rests with the Multilateral Development and Finance Division (MDD), Multilateral Policy Division (MPD), Development Policy Division (DPD) or Humanitarian, NGOs and Partnerships Division (HPD). For contact details, see the contacts list.

Core contributions are exempted from many of DFAT’s investment design and management processes. Overall performance is monitored through a Multilateral Performance Assessment (MPA) process, which is conducted every three years and considers overall (core and non-core) organisational priorities and performance of DFAT’s main multilateral partners. Relevant geographic and sectoral areas and posts are consulted as part of the MPA, and information from Partner Performance Assessments (PPAs) is collated by the relevant division to inform the MPA.

For more information, see:
3.2 WHO ARE AID PROGRAM MANAGERS AND WHAT ARE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

In DFAT, aid programs are managed by divisions and posts. The relevant FAS and HOM have ultimate responsibility for all aspects of their aid program. Responsibility for certain elements of the program can be delegated to SES Band 1, EL 2 or EL 1 officers as appropriate, depending on the size and risk profile of the program. In large programs, responsibility for sector programs is generally delegated to EL 2 managers. A Senior Responsible Officer model is being trialled in a few programs. View the Senior Responsible Officer guidance for more information.

Financial responsibilities are derived from the PGPA Act, with delegations determined by the DFAT Secretary (see Chapter 1).

There is no single model for the division of responsibilities between posts and Canberra, and the situation will vary according to the size of the program, the level of devolution and the risks involved. Given this flexibility, it can be beneficial for managers in both locations to document their agreed respective responsibilities, including for the information of their teams.

Under the PGPA Act, program managers are accountable for using and managing public resources efficiently, effectively, economically and ethically. This involves:
- meeting high standards of governance, performance and accountability
- providing meaningful information to Parliament and the public
- properly using and managing public resources.

3.3 KEY ASPECTS OF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Senior managers should stay focused on the big picture: maintaining relationships with partners, setting strategic priorities, managing risks, allocating budgets, tracking results and ensuring that expenditure complies with the law.

3.3.1 Build relationships with partner governments and other partners

Australia aims to build mature partnerships based on principles of mutual accountability with partner governments and organisations. This provides the basis for reinforcing the responsibility of partner governments in planning and funding their own economic development and poverty reduction strategies. It
also ensures that relationships are in place to advocate for partner government policy reforms that promote economic growth and poverty reduction, complementing aid program support.

Managers also need to focus on other partners including:

- the local private sector and representative business organisations
- delivery partners, including but not limited to commercial contractors, local and Australian NGOs, and other international development agencies involved in delivering Australia’s aid
- other bilateral and multilateral development agencies
- local community and civil society organisations.

### 3.3.2 Ensure alignment with AIP objectives

Senior managers should take a holistic view of their specific country or regional program to ensure that the portfolio of investments achieves maximum impact against the priorities set in AIPs (see Chapter 2).

**In practice: Strategic alignment**

Managers can achieve maximum impact by:

- fostering coherence and ensuring a collective approach across the investment portfolio, which usually spans several sectors, is delivered by a range of implementing partners, and is managed by a number of individual investment managers at a Post or in Canberra
- regularly calibrating the program’s portfolio of investments to ensure alignment with the strategic objectives of the AIP and the Australian Government’s development policy
- being sufficiently informed of shifts in the development context that may affect the continuing relevance of Australia’s aid programs and their alignment with partner government interests (see Program Planning and Management Good Practice Note)
- regularly examining program-level performance indicators, such as investment quality reporting, performance against strategic targets, consolidation profile, risk exposure, expenditure levels (current and projected), aid management capability and resourcing levels
- formally reviewing the risk profile each quarter as a management team
- engaging with program evaluations including by identifying evaluation subjects to be included in the Annual Evaluation Plan, setting clear expectations for evaluation teams and ensuring evaluation recommendations are then considered and implemented.

### 3.3.3 Ensure strong risk management

All managers need to manage risk. This includes identifying, monitoring and reviewing risks, and determining when escalation is appropriate (see Chapter 7).

### 3.3.4 Ensure effective budget management and pipeline planning

Annual funding allocations, multi-year funding commitments and investment preparation lead times mean that budget planning and management are dynamic and complex. HOMs and SES should put in place mechanisms so they:
• have a strong understanding of the status and sequencing of existing investments in the program portfolio
• effectively plan for the preparation of new investments and agreements—in terms of budget and staff allocation
• regularly review the program’s budget and expenditure position to ensure that annual expenditure targets can be met, and that sufficient funding is available for current and planned investments.

Effective aid programs are underpinned by strong planning. ‘Pipeline planning’ reflects the need for managers to plan investments and manage budgets two or three years into the future. It enables a program manager to see and create programming opportunities to respond to new priorities. Two tools support strong pipeline planning: the PFP and program expenditure reports. Both are generated in AidWorks.

The PFP is DFAT’s primary tool and central record for managing aid program allocations and commitments, and planning and facilitating aid expenditure. All programs must have a PFP that:

• outlines a program’s current and planned portfolio of investments for the current financial year plus three years into the future
• is approved by a HOM or SES and recorded in AidWorks—a function typically supported by a program’s central coordination, operations or budget unit
• is updated at least quarterly to capture changes in budget allocations to account for variations in planned expenditure against investments and as end-of-financial-year processes take effect
• reflects data for current and planned investments.

Budgets cannot be spent until agreements are in place. Once an investment is designed, the process of selecting a delivery partner and putting in place an agreement can take up to six months. ‘Programmed expenditure’ reports enable managers to see how much of their budget is committed in agreements, and to start planning for agreements that will be needed in 12–18 months’ time. As a guide, managers should generally look two years ahead and aim to have around 50 per cent of their indicative budget already committed (with agreements in place).

To ensure effective in-year budget management, HOMs and SES should:

• regularly review expenditure against the program budget—a function typically supported by a program’s central coordination, operations or budget unit, which prepare dashboard reports using data from AidWorks
• require investment and agreement managers to structure payments so they are spread as evenly as possible across the financial year, alleviating pressure at the end of the financial year
• ensure that investment and agreement managers and central coordination, operations and budget units keep AidWorks program data up to date, which enables accurate reporting of budget use to DFAT senior managers, including the Departmental Executive and the Aid Governance Board
• create flexibility within the portfolio of investments to ensure full and effective use of a program’s budget allocation—for example, with investments that can be readily and effectively scaled up or down, and by selective ‘over-programming’ in anticipation of delays to implementation and expenditure.

3.3.5 Collect evidence of outcomes and performance

Reliable performance information is needed to ensure the program remains relevant despite changes in the political and socioeconomic contexts, and that programs continue to meet overall strategic directions as set out in the AIP.
Programs with an annual total ODA allocation of $50 million or more must have a performance assessment framework (PAF) in place that includes measurable indicators for assessing progress towards a program’s overall stated objectives. Smaller programs are also encouraged to have a PAF; otherwise, they must use the monitoring and evaluation frameworks developed at the investment level as the key tools for assessing their achievement of program-level objectives (see Chapter 4).

HOMs and SES should ensure adequate resources (staff and budget) to cover program performance monitoring.

3.3.6 Prioritising evaluations

All evaluations should be commissioned and conducted to maximise the use of evaluation findings and recommendations to improve DFAT’s work. To ensure evaluations are highly useful, DFAT focuses on three areas: prioritisation; quality; and systems which facilitate use.

Each year programs must prepare a list of priority evaluations for approval by the relevant FAS and inclusion in DFAT’s Annual Evaluation Plan (see also Section 2.3 and Evaluation Plan template). Prioritised evaluation topics should serve to guide current and future programming. Selected evaluations may target areas where there are significant evidence gaps, issues that pose significant risks, high profile interventions or investments of high financial value. Over time programs should ensure that all significant investments are evaluated. A prioritisation tool provides further detail to assist staff in identifying priority evaluations. Selected evaluations are included in each program’s Aid Program Performance Report (where applicable).

Key features of evaluation quality and use are listed in the ‘In practice’ box (see below). Observing these principles ensures evaluation findings are credible, robust and of value. Management responses must be completed for all evaluations and approved by the relevant Senior Manager (e.g. Assistant Secretary or Minister Counsellor). All evaluations and management responses must be published on the DFAT website within three months of an evaluation report being completed. Depending on the evaluation topic and findings, program areas may wish to prepare talking points before publishing the evaluation.

DFAT’s Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) periodically evaluates aid at the ‘whole-of-program’ level, including country, regional, thematic and global programs. These strategic evaluations provide additional performance information, drawing out high level lessons from across Australia’s aid program. Management responses to ODE’s strategic evaluations should be finalised and approved by the relevant Senior Manager within 28 days of completion of the evaluation report.

In practice: Ensuring evaluation quality and use

For DFAT to realise the full value from any evaluation, the following features should be present.

- **Independence**: To ensure objectivity evaluation teams should be led by an independent person, who is not directly involved in the management of the program being evaluated. Independence is important for credibility and often adds a useful alternative perspective. Evaluation conclusions may be debated and recommendations accepted or declined, but no undue influence should be exercised over the process or findings of an evaluation.

- **Expertise**: A team leader with evaluation expertise should lead all evaluations. If the team leader does not have the requisite sector, country or program knowledge, other
team members should be engaged to provide this. Evaluation teams may include consultants or DFAT officers drawn from outside the immediate program area. Involving DFAT staff will ensure evaluation teams understand DFAT’s context and have insight into whether evaluation recommendations are appropriate and feasible. It will also ensure DFAT staff have strong ownership of, and build capacity in, evaluation.

- **Early engagement with partners:** Including partner governments and implementing partners, to the extent possible, will ensure they have ownership of evaluation design and implementation, and that they understand DFAT’s evaluation requirements. Where DFAT chooses to participate in joint evaluations, or allows evaluations to be led by one of DFAT’s development partners, program areas should first ensure that DFAT’s quality, management response and publication requirements can be upheld.

- **Quality:** DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards help teams ensure the quality of evaluation products (including terms of reference, evaluation plans and reports). A peer review of the draft evaluation report is not mandatory but is often useful for quality assurance and information sharing purposes.

- **Ethical conduct:** Evaluation teams should adhere to the Australasian Evaluation Society’s Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.

- **Senior management oversight:** Evaluations can help incorporate analysis of past performance and lessons learned into DFAT’s decision-making and planning processes. Senior oversight of independent evaluations helps ensure this occurs. An EL 2 should be responsible for financial and procurement approvals; clearance of terms of reference and evaluation plans; and ensuring quality assurance processes are applied. Senior Managers (e.g. Assistant Secretaries and Minister Counsellors) are responsible for approving the evaluation report and management responses for publication. All relevant SES delegates are responsible for ensuring evaluation findings inform the planning and delivery of Australia’s aid.

- **Transparency:** Consistent with the Government’s transparency commitments and Aid Evaluation Policy, evaluation reports should be published alongside a management response on the DFAT website within three months of completion. Senior Managers should also encourage appropriate staff handover, record keeping and back-end planning to help ensure follow-through to publication of the evaluation report and management response. The relevant FAS may grant exemption from publication in exceptional circumstances, in such cases a formal minute providing the rationale for non-publication is required.

See Aid Evaluation Policy and DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards

### 3.3.7 Consider public diplomacy opportunities

Good program management includes the identification of opportunities for public diplomacy. Aid program managers should refer to DFAT’s Public Diplomacy Strategy and Posts’ annual public diplomacy priorities in driving support for the aid program and contributing to DFAT’s public diplomacy goals.

Public diplomacy opportunities may include participating in public events linked to program or policy developments that have been supported by Australian aid investments—such as launches at Posts by Ministers or HOMs, ministerial visits, and stories or photos being provided for publication. Case studies drawn from monitoring and evaluation reporting can highlight aid achievements. In addition, carefully
managed social media activity—Facebook posts; shared articles on relevant topics; tweets and use of Twitter hashtags; and retweets from stakeholders and partners—can amplify public awareness and engagement with the aid program.

3.4 PROGRAM-LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Performance of country and regional aid programs is reported through annual APPRs (see Chapter 2).

APPRs provide evidence-based assessment of progress against the Australian aid objectives set out in AIPs. It is not expected that all AIP objectives will be assessed as being ‘on track’ each year, reflecting the challenges of achieving development outcomes. As such, some of the most important aspects of APPRs are the agreed management actions to help address areas where progress is below expectations. APPRs help strengthen program management, demonstrate accountability and improve effectiveness. APPRs note any major evaluations completed during the reporting period, as well as planned program prioritised evaluations. The reporting process also provides an opportunity to discuss program performance with partner governments.

APPRs cover total Australian ODA to a country or region, not just the ODA administered by DFAT. The APPR preparation and drafting process is proportional to the value, risk and complexity of the country or regional program, as set out in the Proportionality box below.

APPRs must report on progress against performance benchmarks and progress towards mutual obligations. They must also include an overall assessment of key risks, how they are being managed and any changes to the risk profile. APPRs should include any revisions to performance benchmarks for the upcoming financial year. See the Aid Program Performance Reports (APPRs) Good Practice Note for further details.

APPRs must be peer reviewed to ensure assessment and reporting of program performance are robust and contested, and that suitable management responses are identified and implemented.

Final APPRs are approved for public release by the relevant FAS. The relevant HOM should endorse the final document before it is published on the DFAT website.

**Proportionality: APPR requirements**

Total yearly ODA and related requirements:

- Less than $15 million: exempt from producing an APPR unless required by the relevant FAS
- $15 million to $50 million: summary APPR required
- $50 million to $100 million: 15-page maximum APPR required
- More than $300 million: 25-page maximum APPR required.

Peer review is proportional to the program’s value, risk and complexity, and should be chaired at SES level. DFAT officers from the Aid Management and Performance Branch, Development Policy Division, Gender Equality Branch and ODE must be invited to participate and given adequate notice of all peer reviews. Participants from thematic and sector areas and representatives from other government agencies can be involved, as appropriate.
ODE publishes a quality review of APPRs, summarising performance trends and assessing the credibility of the reports. The review provides useful feedback on aid program performance reporting for HOMs and SES, and is a good reference for authors wanting to improve the quality of their own APPRs.

### 3.4.1 Program evaluation plans

Program evaluation plans are part of all AIPs (see Chapter 2) and are reviewed and updated annually as part of the Aid Evaluation Plan and APPR process. A program’s evaluation plan should be limited to evaluations that are of greatest strategic importance to the program. The mandatory Final Aid Quality Check provides an alternative means for capturing significant evidence of results and development impact, and records lessons from investments that may not merit a formal independent evaluation.

### 3.5 POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Reviews of program management by ACD and ODE have identified a range of common weaknesses in program management, evaluation, and performance reporting.

- A weak line-of-sight between AIP objectives, investments and the activities being implemented, results in clarity being lost.
- Lack of investment in, and capacity to undertake, monitoring and evaluation, which means there is no evidence to support investment management, in turn risking the weakening of the program-level performance narrative.
- Rating AIP objectives as ‘on track’ in APPRs without evidence to substantiate performance claims, or with the belief that rating otherwise will reflect negatively on program managers if progress is not as anticipated.
- Insufficient attention to pipeline planning, which leads to expenditure pressure and, potentially, poor programming choices.
- Evaluations not being published, which negatively affects DFAT’s ability to learn from its own programs and on the Government’s transparency commitments.

For further information about issues raised in this chapter, contact programplanning@dfat.gov.au or opeval@dfat.gov.au (for evaluation).

For details of all other key contacts, see the contacts list.

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**AidWorks**

Senior managers can customise dashboard reporting from AidWorks to cover all operational needs. This may include financial reporting, analysing delivery partner types, tracking the number of investments and agreements, and summarising investment quality reporting data.

AidWorks supports pipeline planning via the mandatory PFP.

All programmed expenditure information is drawn from AidWorks reporting.

The budget unit monitors program expenditure in AidWorks. If data is not up to date, this can affect budget allocations and future planning.
Key resources

Policies
Aid Evaluation Policy

Guidance
ADB Partnership Framework
Aid Program Performance Report (APPR) Good Practice Note
Explanatory Note on Multilateral and Global Programs
DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards
Program Planning and Management Good Practice Note
Strategic Partnership Framework UNICEF
Strategic Partnership Framework UNDP
World Bank Group Partnership Framework
Senior Responsible Officer

Templates
Template for Annual Evaluation Plan
Evaluation Prioritisation Tool
Templates for Grants to Partner Governments or International Organisations
Aid Program Performance Report Template Full APPR (programs of $50 million or more)
Aid Program Performance Report Template –Summary APPR (programs between $15 and $50 million)
CHAPTER 4 INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT, EVALUATION AND QUALITY REPORTING

Key messages

Aid investments are designed to achieve specific outputs and outcomes, and contribute to the overall objectives of the aid program, as set out in the Aid Investment Plan (AIP).

Depending on the size and complexity of the investment, the investment manager will typically be an EL 1, APS 6, APS 5 or LES officer.

For country and regional aid programs, aid investments are often managed at Post.

Investment managers are responsible for all aspects of the investment, including overseeing agreement management and financial management.

An evaluation manager oversees and manages an independent evaluation. The investment manager or another staff member can be the evaluation manager for an investment.

Mandatory requirements

Investment and agreement managers must follow DFAT’s procedures and financial management policies to ensure compliance with thePublic Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act).

Investment and agreement managers must keep investment and agreement level data up to date in AidWorks.

Programs must complete Investment Quality Reporting: Aid Quality Checks, Aggregate Development Results and Partner Performance Assessments.

Effective management of investments ensures that:

- Australia’s aid investments produce outcomes and the program’s strategic objectives are met
- public funds are spent effectively according to requirements set out in relevant approvals and agreements, and that DFAT can meet its accountability requirements
- risks are identified and actively managed.

Investment quality reporting enables DFAT to review and improve its investments, assess the performance of partners and report on results. This information contributes to DFAT’s assessment of how the whole aid program is performing.

4.1 WHAT IS AN AID INVESTMENT?

An aid investment is an intervention designed to achieve specific outputs and outcomes, and contribute to the overall objectives of a program. An investment may be broken down into different activities and will include agreements with a variety of partners that implement the activities. A country or regional program
will manage a portfolio of investments, which in combination aims to achieve the strategic objectives set out in the program’s AIP. Figure 8 illustrates this program hierarchy.

DFAT aid investments vary in size and complexity. They typically range from $3 million to $100 million or more, and span around four years in duration, although are increasingly extending up to 10 years.

**Figure 8: Aid program hierarchy**
4.2 WHO ARE INVESTMENT MANAGERS AND WHAT ARE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

Investment managers are responsible for all aspects of the investment, including design, implementation and monitoring. Depending on the size and complexity of the investment, the investment manager will typically be an EL 1, APS 6, APS 5 or LES officer. High-value or high-risk investments may also be managed by EL 2 officers. For country and regional aid programs, aid investments are often managed at Post.

Although an investment manager delegates some aspects of their role, they retain overall responsibility for the performance of the investment—such as making sure the investment delivers outcomes, funding is spent accountably and risks are well managed.

Investment managers work as a team with other managers to achieve the strategic objectives of the program.

Where an investment is included within DFAT’s Annual Evaluation Plan, the investment manager will generally also be responsible for managing the evaluation.

4.3 KEY ASPECTS OF INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

There is no set approach to managing an aid investment. Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.7 set out management aspects common to most investments.

4.3.1 Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders

Effective relationship management requires dedicated time; the right forums and communication channels; and appropriately identified counterparts. Strong relationships enable DFAT to participate in meaningful policy dialogue; identify and manage risks; adapt to changing context; address problems when they arise; and use the Department’s influence beyond funding contributions.

While DFAT needs direct relationships with stakeholders, investment managers also need to support and connect stakeholders with each other. This support may take the form of dialogue with a partner government on policy, regulatory or budgetary constraints identified as affecting the implementation of an investment. It may also include making sure delivery partners have appropriate access to partner government officials and are able to operate effectively, consistent with local laws (such as on taxation and customs duties). See Section 3.3.1 for more details.

4.3.2 Ensure alignment with strategic objectives

During the design phase of an investment, it is crucial to make sure investments align with the investment strategy and generate desired outcomes (see Chapter 5). An investment manager, or someone on their team, will generally lead the design process. It is important for more senior managers to be engaged at major decision points throughout the design phase to maintain alignment with overall strategy.

4.3.3 Ensure strong risk management

Investment managers must manage risk throughout the design and implementation phases of an investment. This includes setting out identifiable risks in a risk register and reviewing risks at least quarterly. Significant risks must be escalated to the relevant next level of DFAT management (see Chapter 7).
4.3.4 Monitor budgets and plan for successor investments

Sound management of overall country and regional program budgets relies on accurate investment-level data being entered into AidWorks. Investment managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that program delegates’ decisions on investment budget allocations are entered in an accurate and timely manner
- entering information about planned investment activities
- entering information about the timing and value of payments.

Investment managers should also pay close attention to the end point of activities and agreements to ensure there is sufficient time to confirm replacement activities in the program’s pipeline.

4.3.5 Collect evidence and results

Investment managers must make sure there is sufficient evidence available to track progress, and measure and report performance. Monitoring and evaluating the performance of investments are critical tasks; information drawn from monitoring information and evaluations enables DFAT to:

- understand whether investments are achieving their intended results
- use evidence to promote continuous improvement
- respond to changes in context, and inform budget decisions made by DFAT managers and delegates
- credibly account for the investment of Australian taxpayers’ money.

Strong monitoring arrangements are those that are planned, continuous and systematic, and documented in a monitoring and evaluation framework. The level of resources allocated to monitor implementation will depend on a variety of factors—including risk, historic performance, complexity, size, strategic significance and the form of aid being used.

For some investments, there will be an independent evaluation either part of the way through the investment or when the investment is completed. Evaluation supports the learning and decision-making that guides continuous improvement, as well as informing reporting and encouraging accountability. The program management team will identify which investments are priorities for evaluation (see Section 2.3 and Section 3.3.6). The ‘In practice’ box below provides further guidance for managing an independent evaluation.
In practice: Monitoring and evaluation frameworks

An investment manager must consider what information and evidence is required to measure and report on an investment’s performance, and how best to collect this evidence. They will typically commission a monitoring and evaluation framework as part of the investment design—setting out how progress and performance will be regularly measured—and refine it during the life of the investment, responding to changes in context. At a minimum, the monitoring and evaluation framework will:

- articulate the investment’s objectives, expected end-of-program outcomes and outputs
- identify potential evaluation questions and the information required to address these
- contain a schedule of monitoring activities, with details on how information will be sourced and collected (such as through surveys, site visits and stakeholder meetings)
- require monitoring of key investment deliverables—those that account for large effort and/or expenditure, and those likely to have a major influence on the extent to which the investment will meet its expected outcomes
- be easily understood by non-specialist and key stakeholders
- be costed and resourced.

Sector/Thematic Performance Assessment Notes that may help investment managers set sector-specific monitoring indicators and evaluation questions and other resources are available by sector from the Investment Priorities and Cross-cutting Issues Intranet Page.

In practice: Sources of information in the monitoring process

Aid investment managers should engage closely in the process of collecting and analysing information used to monitor investment performance. Monitoring information can be drawn from various sources.

- **Primary data:** This may be information gathered from surveys (such as household surveys and beneficiary satisfaction surveys) and other information provided by investment delivery partners, partner governments and other donors.

- **Progress reports:** These are usually prepared by delivery partners, drawing directly on information gathered from the monitoring and evaluation system. These reports should provide information on the quality, reach and coverage of key outputs or deliverables, as well as an overall assessment of progress toward end-of-program outcomes.

- **Field visits:** The investment manager must plan and conduct regular field visits to verify results and identify risks. Participation from partner government representatives is strongly recommended, as it helps reinforce ownership, resolve problems and contributes towards stronger management capabilities among local authorities. Investment managers may also engage independent consultants to participate in field visits to provide high-level technical advice and assist with monitoring and reporting.

DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards provide detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation systems, investment progress reporting, monitoring visits and evaluation products.
In practice: Managing an independent evaluation

Aid evaluation managers are responsible for managing independent evaluation processes and facilitating their publication. Senior Managers will decide which evaluations will be conducted each year and will approve management responses.

An evaluation manager must consider all the key features for a high quality and useful evaluation (see Section 3.3.6 and the ‘In practice’ box: ‘Ensuring evaluation quality and use’). These key features include: evaluation independence, relevant expertise within the evaluation team, early engagement with partners, evaluation quality in accordance with DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards, ethical conduct in line with the Australasian Evaluation Society’s Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, senior management oversight, and transparency.

DFAT’s Good Practice Note on How to Manage an Evaluation and the Monitoring and Evaluation Standards provide detailed guidance for evaluation managers to:

- produce high quality evaluation terms of reference
- manage an evaluation process effectively.

Good practice examples of terms of reference, evaluation plans, evaluation reports and management responses are available at this link.

DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards also provide detailed guidance for evaluation teams to assist them in producing high quality evaluation plans and reports. An evaluation manager can organise a peer review of the draft evaluation report. A peer review is not mandatory but often useful for quality assurance and information sharing purposes.

To facilitate follow through to publication of the evaluation report and management response, evaluation managers must:

- engage early with partners (typically through the investment manager) and consultants so they understand DFAT’s quality and publication expectations
- ensure appropriate record keeping and staff handover
- publish evaluation reports inclusive of management responses on the DFAT website within three months of the evaluation report being completed. Any partner-led evaluations should also be published on the DFAT website. The Good Practice Note: How to manage an evaluation provides a template for the management response at Annex A.

See Aid Evaluation Policy; Good Practice Note: How to manage an evaluation; and DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards.
4.3.6 Oversee agreement management, including financial management

DFAT engages its delivery partners principally using procurement, grant, whole-of-government or partner government agreements (see Chapter 6).

Investment managers must ensure that responsibility for agreement management is clearly assigned to a nominated officer.

Agreement management involves:

- planning, administering and finalising the agreement (see Chapter 6)
- ongoing relationship management, in particular so all parties, especially the partner government, understand and agree on expectations and responsibilities
- ensuring deliverables meet the required standard, are produced within the agreed timeline and achieve value for money
- certifying payments against specified milestones and/or deliverables
- identifying and monitoring risk regularly (proportional to the value, risk and complexity of the agreement)
- managing and measuring performance to ensure that all parties produce their respective deliverables and the agreement does not degenerate into dispute
- providing regular feedback on delivery partners’ performance, including by completing Partner Performance Assessments (PPAs) where required
- recording and maintaining agreement and financial information in AidWorks
- ensuring delivery partners prepare regular progress and completion reports. Progress reporting provides information as agreed in the monitoring and evaluation plan, and is a key source of evidence for performance reporting. DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards provide guidance for officers on the expected standards for progress reports.


In practice: Managing contracts

The aim of contract management is to ensure that all parties meet their obligations. It includes managing contractual relationships and ensuring that deliverables meet the required standard, are produced within the agreed timeframe and achieve value for money.

It is important that contracts are actively managed throughout their life. This helps ensure contractor performance is satisfactory, stakeholders are well informed and all contract requirements are met.

Agreement and investment managers must be fully aware of the requirements under the contract. A contract management plan is a useful tool that supports risk management and helps ensure the investment is achieving value for money.
Financial management

Financial approval for investments is made at the agreement level (see Chapter 6). Agreement-level financial information must be kept up to date—it is reported to the Departmental Executive and the Aid Governance Board (AGB).

The agreement manager is responsible for monitoring the financial aspects of the agreement. All payments must be made in accordance with the Financial Management Manual. This includes:

- carefully checking invoices before payment to verify that they are correctly calculated
- ensuring that the items being charged have been delivered to a satisfactory standard and in accordance with the agreement
- having payments authorised by the relevant delegate
- monitoring overall financial progress against planned budgets
- reporting required information to appropriate finance and budget coordinators in Canberra (Divisional Coordination Units) and at Posts (Senior Administrative Officer), and to finance managers and designated development officers.

In practice: Managing grant agreements

Grant agreements involve a partnership between DFAT and the grantee, which could be a multilateral organisation, a non-government organisation (NGO) or a partner government. DFAT and the grantee are jointly responsible for setting the strategic direction of the aid investment, although DFAT has less hands-on involvement in directing and deciding operational details.

Managing a grant is more collaborative—and less prescriptive—than managing a contract.

Partner government systems

For grants that use partner government public financial management systems, the partner government’s policies, plans and expenditures, and development outcomes are the focus. DFAT’s role is generally to support the partner government while it implements its own programs. This is achieved by working to understand and influence the partner government’s policies and systems, and to help build the partner government’s capability in using these systems.

Multilateral or NGO partners

Grants to multilateral bodies or NGOs are likely to feature in most country or regional programs. These grants also require a strong focus on partnership approaches. It is important to identify key areas where DFAT can leverage and engage with shared goals to achieve Australia’s objectives.

4.3.7 Consider public diplomacy opportunities

Investment managers should use monitoring and evaluation reporting to identify achievements that can contribute to a program’s public diplomacy efforts (see Section 3.3.7).
4.3.8 Engaging Minister’s Offices on Parliamentary Travel

If the investment involves travel by a current or former Australian State or Federal Parliamentarians, divisions should provide early advice to the relevant Minister of the potential travel. Divisions should be mindful of this requirement when designing, managing and implementing investments.

4.4 INVESTMENT-LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Investment quality reporting (IQR) assesses and reports on the performance and results of individual aid investments and delivery partners during the implementation of an investment or at its completion. IQR comprises three elements:

- Aid Quality Checks (AQCs), Final Aid Quality Checks (FAQCs) and Humanitarian Response Aid Quality Checks (HAQCs)
- Partner Performance Assessments (PPAs)
- Aggregate Development Results (ADR).

For detailed guidance on all elements of the process, see the Aid Investment Quality Reporting Good Practice Note.

4.4.1 Aid Quality Checks

Program areas—typically with Posts in the lead—prepare AQCs each year using evidence gathered from implementing partner reporting, monitoring visits, reviews and evaluations. The AQC process assesses the performance of an investment over the previous 12 months.

The AQC assessment enables investment managers to review how well aid investments are performing against standard quality criteria, record practical actions to improve performance and provide information about the achievements of Australian aid investments. AQCs assess investments against a number of quality criteria to inform an overall assessment of aid program effectiveness.

Proportionality: AQC requirements

- An AQC or HAQC must be completed for all aid investments worth $3 million or more. The process is optional for smaller investments.
- In the final year of an investment, an FAQC is conducted rather than an AQC.
- Independent moderation is required for all FAQCs; AQCs for investments requiring improvement (IRIs), and AQCs and HAQCs for investments valued at $10 million or more.
- AQCs are not required for investments of an administrative nature or core contributions to multilateral organisations.
- Exemption from AQC reporting may be warranted in certain limited circumstances e.g. investments that have been implemented for less than six months. All exemptions must be approved by FAS ACD and recorded in AidWorks.
- There are no exemptions from completing an FAQC.
AQC, FAQC, and HAQC must be approved by a relevant EL 2 (or above) and the investment manager must upload them into AidWorks by the due date.

FAQCs
In the final year of an investment, a FAQC is conducted instead of an AQC. Each FAQC provides information on the final performance of an Australian aid investment against planned outcomes, and should reflect on the performance of an investment throughout its life, not only in the preceding 12-month period. The FAQC report should identify lessons learned to inform future designs and strategic directions.

HAQCs
Humanitarian aid investments are those that primarily aim to save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance human dignity during and in the aftermath of disasters and other crises. For these investments, a HAQC, which uses slightly different assessment criteria, must be completed instead of an AQC. Exemption, moderation and approval provisions are the same as for AQCs.

Moderation
AQC reporting is a self-assessment system, so it is important that AQC reports undergo a process of quality assurance. Moderation ensures that the assessment and reporting of investment performance is robust and contested, and that suitable management responses have been identified and implemented.

The moderation meeting should be proportional to the investment’s value, risk, and complexity. It should be chaired by the relevant EL 2 (or higher) and should involve a moderator (usually EL 1 or higher) who is independent from the direct management of the program. Moderation meetings for high-value, high-risk, sensitive, complex or underperforming investment should, whenever possible, be chaired at the SES level. DFAT officers from the Gender Effectiveness Branch and other relevant thematic and sector areas can be involved, as appropriate. ACD moderates all Facilities AQCs and all investments requiring improvement (IRIs).

The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) assesses the robustness of AQC ratings through an annual spot check. These reviews support the credibility of the self-reporting, and are a useful reference for AQC writers wanting to improve the quality of their reports.

Investments requiring improvement
There are strict management procedures for dealing with underperforming aid investments (‘investments requiring improvement’ or IRIs). Aid investments will be cancelled if value-for-money standards are not met and improvements are not achieved within one year. This allows DFAT to direct funding to aid investments with a greater chance of success.

Investments of $3 million or more that receive an unsatisfactory rating (3 or below) for both the effectiveness and efficiency criteria in their annual AQC are designated as underperforming. In such cases, the AQC should clearly outline a management action plan to improve performance.

The First Assistant Secretary of the Contracting and Aid Management Division (FAS ACD) will determine the final list of IRIs. The FAS ACD will report the status of IRIs to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and summary numbers will be reported in the annual Performance of Australian Aid Report.

Program areas with IRIs must assign an SES officer to provide senior management oversight of the investments. A minute outlining management actions to improve performance, approved by the assigned
SES, must be provided to the Aid Management and Performance Branch (MPB). IRI s are then moderated by MPB in the subsequent annual AQC.

If performance against both the effectiveness and efficiency criteria remains unsatisfactory after one year, the FAS of the relevant program area will decide whether or not the investment will be cancelled and provide a minute to the FAS ACD outlining their decision. The decision will be included in the annual advice from ACD to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

4.4.2 Aggregate Development Results

ADRs are indicators of development impact that can be aggregated across the aid program to demonstrate the contribution of Australian aid to development outcomes in partner countries. ADRs are valuable for public diplomacy, communications on aid impact, and strategy and policy development. ADRs must be reported for all aid investments of $3 million or more, and where the resulting value exceeds the reporting threshold.

The list of ADRs and thresholds is included in the Aggregate Development Results Guidance. The relevant implementing Post or branch must report ADRs across all bilateral, regional and global programs for all partners. ADR reports should reflect all DFAT funding for an investment, including any results available after the investment has concluded.

Calculations of ADRs must be based on evidence; be clearly attributable to DFAT funding using a pro rata approach; be sex-disaggregated if reporting numbers of persons; and be reported consistently year on year without gaps, overlaps or double counting. Technical notes and assistance are included in the guidance to help calculate ADRs. ADRs must be approved by a relevant EL 2 or above, and uploaded in AidWorks by the investment manager by the due date.

4.4.3 Partner Performance Assessments

Each year, agreement managers must complete an assessment of implementing partners’ performance in relation to specific agreements (commercial agreements and grant agreements). PPAs are mandatory for commercial suppliers, NGOs and multilateral organisations with agreements valued at $3 million or more, but are not required for partner governments that are also implementing partners or for core contributions to multilateral organisations. PPAs are used for official Australian Government purposes to inform DFAT’s operations, and for internal and public reporting.

The effort involved in preparing PPAs should be proportional to the value, risk and complexity of the agreement. They do not need to be moderated, but must be approved by a relevant EL 2 and uploaded in AidWorks by the due date.

In accordance with the principles of natural justice, implementing partners must be given at least 15 days to review and respond to PPAs. Partner performance information is valid for five years and is used to inform the selection of partners. It is considered in tender evaluations, when making decisions on aid grants, and when deciding core contributions to multilateral organisations. For privacy and information-handling protocols that apply to PPAs, see the Aid Investment Quality Reporting Good Practice Note. Requests for an exemption must be made in writing to the FAS ACD.

4.5 POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Effective investment management is most commonly impacted by:
- A poor understanding of contracted or agreed implementation arrangements, which weakens DFAT’s relationship with the delivery partner, undermines the quality of results and deliverables, and fosters weak and inefficient administration.
- Lack of investment in and capacity to complete monitoring, which means insufficient evidence to support investment management.
- For AQC’s, a tendency to look for the positives and downplay the negatives rather than making objective judgments about performance based on progress against expected results.
- Weak engagement with the partner government, which compromises the enduring relevance of the investment and fosters weak and inefficient implementation, in turn reducing effectiveness.
- Poorly identified objectives that undermine the delivery of strong results.

For further information about issues raised in this chapter, contact programplanning@dfat.gov.au.

For details of all other key contacts, see the contacts list.

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**AidWorks**

Investment and agreement managers use AidWorks on a daily basis to undertake every business step involved in planning, approving, implementing and reviewing their investment or agreement.

Investments must be entered in AidWorks in the planning phase.

All IQR report templates are downloaded from AidWorks.

It is critical to update information in AidWorks regularly, particularly information relating to payment events.

DFAT relies on the quality of investment-level information for all public reporting.

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**Key resources**

**Policies**
- Aid Evaluation Policy

**Guidance**
- Aggregate Development Results Guidance
- Aid Investment Quality Reporting Good Practice Note
- Australian National Audit Office: Developing and Managing Contracts Better Practice Guide
- Australian National Audit Office: Implementing Better Practice Grants Administration
- Financial Management Manual
- Good Practice Note: How to manage an evaluation
- DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards
- Gender and Quality Ratings Short Note
- Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation Good Practice Note
Performance Assessment Note – Gender Equality Strategy
Performance Assessment Note – Governance
Performance Assessment Note – Social Protection
Investment Priorities and Cross-cutting Issues Intranet Page
Climate Change and Disasters (Building Resilience) AQC Ratings Short Note

Templates
AQC template
FAQC template
HAQC template
PPA template
CHAPTER 5
INVESTMENT DESIGN

Key messages

High-quality investment designs underpin the effectiveness of Australian aid.

The review and design process should begin well before the investment is due to start. Quality designs are well planned with enough time for analysis, review, field consultations, partnership brokering and quality assurance.

Each design needs to be tailored to meet the specific context and development outcome sought.

There are mandatory design requirements but sufficient flexibility exists to enable officers to determine the approach best suited to the investment.

Mandatory requirements

All investments must screen for key risks and environmental and social safeguards to determine the design process.

There are mandatory processes for investment concepts, design documentation, quality assurance and approvals. Requirements are proportional and depend on size, risk profile and approach.

All investments must meet the investment design quality criteria.

All investments over $10 million must have policy approval from Post and the Canberra home division at concept and at design stages.

All investments valued at $50 million or more must consider innovative ways to promote private sector growth or engage the private sector.

All investments valued at $100 million and/or rated as high risk as well as all facilities must go to the Aid Governance Board for consideration.

Investment design sets out the clear logic between the outcomes sought, intended investment activities and implementation arrangements, and how progress towards outcomes will be measured.

The design document forms the basis of a procurement or grant process, including the agreement documentation.

A good quality design process takes into account context, involves meaningful engagement with stakeholders (particularly partner governments), and is informed by evidence and analysis. Designs should take full account of the lessons documented through the evaluation of other relevant investments.
5.1 WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF DESIGN?

In DFAT there are two approaches to design.

- **DFAT-led design:** In these cases, DFAT manages the design process, and draws on external expertise as appropriate. An *Investment Design Document (IDD)* of maximum 25 pages must be prepared (plus annexes).

- **Partner-led design:** In these cases, a partner—such as a multilateral development bank, non-government organisation (NGO) or a UN agency—leads the design process. DFAT may have opportunities to participate in and influence the design. An *Investment Design Summary (IDS)* document of maximum 15 pages must be prepared (plus annexes).

**In practice: DFAT-led design processes**

Leading on managing a DFAT led design is one of the most important and rewarding tasks for staff involved in Australia’s aid program. The design process supports staff to meet all their legal obligations, to obtain guidance from senior managers and to learn from the experiences of past activities. The process provides the flexibility for staff to consider all the options available and determine the most effective approach for the specific context.

5.2 WHAT ARE THE MAIN STEPS FOR A DESIGN PROCESS?

There are two broad phases and steps in a design process. The requirements at each step are proportional to the size and risk of the investment, and vary for DFAT-led or Partner-led designs. *Error! Reference source not found.* lists the mandatory requirements for both approaches.

**Planning phase: Identification, risk assessment and Written Approval to Commence**

*Step 1 — Identification:* Planning for a new investment or a further phase of an existing investment should start as early as possible before the required start date of the investment, to allow time for necessary research and/or evaluation. Investment managers must discuss the program pipeline with senior managers and determine what investments are required to support the program’s strategic direction. This will require consideration of the Aid Investment Plan and the Program Fund Plan (PFP) and any policy shifts or programming imperatives. Investment managers should consider commissioning research and/or a review or evaluation of existing investments to inform the new design. Managers should identify consultants for the design team and other assistance required to support the design process.

*Step 2 — Screen for risks and safeguards:* Identify and screen for the key risks, including potential environmental and social safeguard risks and impacts. Screening must be completed for all investments. The level of risk and value of the investment determines the quality assurance process and approval requirements. See *Risks and Safeguard Tool*.

*Step 3 — Written Approval to Commence Minute:* Formal written approval to commence is obtained from the relevant delegate from the initiating area. This does not require joint Canberra/Post approval. This approval moves the investment into the design phase. Refer to *Written Approval to Commence Minute* template.
Design phase: Concept, design, quality assurance and approval

Step 4 — Concept (5 page maximum): Where an investment is valued at $10 million or more, or if it is assessed as high risk, an investment concept is mandatory. Preparation and approval of a concept depends on complexity and risk and may take 1-3 months to develop. Once the concept is approved, the investment proceeds to design. The Investment Concept template together with the Concept Approval Minute must be jointly approved by both Canberra home division and Post at the appropriate PGPA delegate level before proceeding to design (unless the investment is a regional or global program managed from Canberra). If the concept is $100 million or more and/or high risk or a facility it will also need to be considered by the Aid Governance Board (AGB).

Step 5 — Design: Producing a design may take 6 – 9 months and depends on complexity, understanding of the context and implementation requirements as well as the investment design pathway. Meaningful and early engagement with DFAT stakeholders, partner governments, the private sector, beneficiaries, development partners and civil society organisations (including those representing women, people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples) is essential in the design process. The design document must set out the policy objectives, program outcomes, implementation arrangements, and how progress will be measured.

Step 6 — Quality assurance: The quality assurance process aims to improve quality and ensure the intended investment is fit for purpose. Quality assurance is proportional to size and risk and entails independent appraisal, peer review and may require AGB consideration. Refer to the Investment Design Quality Assurance and Scoring Guidance and the Investment Design Quality Assessment Tool and Scoring Matrix.

In practice: Adaptive Design and Procurement Trial

Note that the Adaptive Design and Procurement Trial (ADAPT) explores innovative pathways for investments. Options include design update, concept to tender, co-creation with the private sector, and design-implement. Contact designmail@dfat.gov.au if you are interested in opting into this trial. See Adaptive Design and Procurement Trial (ADAPT) Note.

Step 7 — Approval: The final step of the design process is approval by the relevant program delegate/s. For investment designs valued at $10 million or more, the Design Approval Minute template must be jointly approved by both Canberra home division and Post at the appropriate PGPA delegate level (unless the design concerns a regional or global program led by Canberra). The investment then moves to financial approval and the procurement process. Commercial tender processes may take up to 6 months, including tender and contract document finalisation, advertising, tender assessment and recommendations of preferred tenderers (see Chapter 6).

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1 Canberra refers to the relevant budget owner i.e. the home division/desk. If co-financed between more than one budget owner, more than one Canberra approval may be required i.e. all home Divisions should co-sign.

2 This could include trialling different models such as concept to tender, design-implement and simpler designs (see Adaptive Procurement Trial concept paper).
In practice: Partner-led design processes

Partner-led design processes are typically less burdensome for DFAT, but may provide less opportunity to influence the investment. The best time for DFAT to exercise influence in a Partner-led design is at concept phase. Early engagement can ensure that Australian requirements (for example, gender equality and safeguards) are met. Where DFAT has limited ability to shape existing partner activities DFAT delegates must be assured that the investment implements Australian aid policy and meets DFAT standards.
Figure 9: Proportionality—Mandatory design requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>LESS THAN $3 MILLION OR MORE</th>
<th>$3 MILLION OR MORE</th>
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Investments of less than $3 million and low-risk do not require a design document and move straight to financial approval.

For investments $10 million or more Post and Canberra delegates will provide dual approval (with the exception of regional/global programs which do not have a Post counterpart).

5.3 HOW IS A DESIGN INITIATED?

5.3.1 Complete the risks and safeguards assessment

All proposed investments must be screened for risks and safeguards. This includes impact on the five environmental and social safeguards, as this will help determine the design quality assurance pathway. Do this using the Risk and Safeguards Tool. If an investment is assessed as high-risk, the investment manager must prepare an investment concept and it must go to the AGB for consideration. If an investment triggers safeguard concerns (see Chapter 7), DFAT must ensure appropriate management strategies are in place during the design and implementation phases.

For investments that plan to use partner government financial systems, it is important to check if there is a current Assessment of National Systems in place (see Chapter 7) and sector fiduciary risk assessment.

Low-risk investments valued at less than $3 million do not require a design document and can proceed direct to financial approvals once the risk and safeguard screening is complete.

5.3.2 Obtain written approval to commence

All high-risk investments and investments of $3 million or more require delegate approval to start the design process (Written Approval to Commence Minute). The approval ensures senior managers are aware that the investment is moving from planning to design. It gives delegates the opportunity to shape the approach and focus of the investment.

The approval request does not need to include a detailed explanation of the planned investment, but as a minimum it should:

- Nominate the delegates who will approve the investment concept (if required), the final design and any Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) approvals.
- Confirm that the Program Fund Plan has budget available to meet the costs of the investment design process, and the investment itself.
- Define the investment’s risk rating (low, medium, high or very high), based on the Risk and Safeguards Tool.
- Set out the planned design process with timeframes including: the design management arrangements; likely time and resource demands on DFAT officers, partners and consultants; expected quality assurance; and proposed procurement processes.

For high-risk investments and investments of $10 million or more, an investment concept must be prepared once the approval to start has been granted.
In Practice: Who is the right delegate for dual approval?

Canberra-based First Assistant Secretaries and their delegates are accountable for verifying that minimum standards have been met before approving the investment concepts and designs (refer Admin Circular AC0413/17)

The delegate for approvals of concepts and designs must be the appropriate budget owner and relevant financial delegate as per the PGPA Act. These administrative approvals are pegged to the appropriate delegate under the PGPA Act.

Planning phase: Formal Written Approval to Commence is obtained from the relevant financial delegate as per the PGPA Act from the initiating area. This does not require joint Canberra/Post approval

Concept and Design: Approvals for investment concepts and investment design documents for investments valued at $10 million or more and/or rated as ‘high risk’ must have joint approval by both Canberra and Post Program Fund owner(s) at the appropriate PGPA delegate level before proceeding (unless it concerns a regional or global program that is Canberra led). The Canberra delegate should be the home division/geographic desk.

The delegates must be the appropriate budget owners and financial delegates as per the PGPA Act, even though this is an administrative approval only (EL2 up to $3 million, SES1 to $25 million, SES2 to $100 million, SES3 to budget)

5.3.3 Prepare the investment concept

An investment concept explains important details about the planned investment and how the design process will proceed. It sets out policy parameters - the why, what and how. It should give business owners and delegates clarity on policy directions and broad options for implementation before embarking on more a detailed design process with stakeholders.

The investment concept should not exceed 5 pages.

5.3.4 Aid Governance Board

All investment concepts and designs valued at $100 million and/or rated as high risk, as well as all facilities must go to the Aid Governance Board (AGB) for consideration before they can be approved by the program delegate. The AGB also has the discretion to consider any other concepts and designs upon request. AGB minutes will record any requirements the AGB has of the concept/design process or documentation.

Programs that need to place an investment concept or design on the AGB agenda should contact AGBSecretariat@dfat.gov.au

5.3.5 ADAPT Trial

The Adaptive Design and Procurement Trial (ADAPT) explores innovative pathways for investments. Options include design update, concept to tender, co-creation with the private sector, and design-implement.

ADAPT aims to:

- Speed up the process between the stages of concept, design and procurement;
- Trial different models such as concept to tender, design-implement and simpler designs;
Where the private sector is a key partner, elicit more ideas/solutions from the private sector to identified development challenges at an early stage;

- Allow for firms to tender and be compared on the basis of innovation in the design and implementation process, rather than the present system which places emphasis on their capacity to implement
- Allow more flexible contracting including a ‘design-implement’ approach after mobilisation;

Contact designmail@dfat.gov.au if you are interested in opting into this trial.

5.3.6 Select and mobilise a design team

A small team of up to four people (proportional to the size and required skills) usually produces the investment design document. The investment manager identifies and contracts the right combination of expertise and oversees the design process. DFAT officers can also be part of the team. Officers may seek assistance from the Contracting and Aid Management Division (ACD) Investment Design Section to draft the design Terms of Reference. The design team must be briefed to ensure understanding of DFAT and partner government expectations. For investments valued at $50 million or more, the design team should be briefed by ACD Investment Design Section (designmail@dfat.gov.au) at the start of the design mission. For further information on how to engage the right team, see Terms of Reference for Design Teams.

5.4 WHAT IS INVOLVED IN PREPARING A DESIGN?

Designing an investment involves determining policy objectives, the end-of-program outcomes, delivery approach, partners, forms of aid, the policy reform agenda, implementation and governance, procurement and M&E arrangements. It is important to assess the alternatives and identify the option that will achieve the best development outcomes for the country or regional context. The broad options to be considered are set out in Figure 2.

In practice: Innovation in design

While there are standard steps in the process for developing a design, officers are encouraged to consider different ways to undertake design and prepare design documents. A design must clearly identify the problem and articulate what DFAT is trying to achieve. It should provide an analysis of the situation; determine an approach to delivery; and provide delegates with confidence that the intended aid investment is fit for purpose.

Designs of all new investments worth $50 million or more must consider innovative ways to promote private sector growth or engage the private sector.

5.4.1 Facilities

If programs are considering designing facilities, please refer to Guidance Note: Facility Investments and the Delegate Checklist for Approving Facilities. Officers must contact ACD Investment Design Section before commencing concept/design processes for a facility investment. All facilities are encouraged to have a Senior
Responsible Officer appointed in the early stages of the design process (Note: this is still in trial phase). See Senior Responsible Officer Guidance for more information.

Figure 10: Principal aid investment options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROACHES TO DELIVERY</th>
<th>FORMS OF AID</th>
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<tr>
<td>Facility-based approaches</td>
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<td>Experts and technical assistance</td>
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<td>Sector-wide approaches</td>
<td>Pooled funding/co-financing</td>
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<td>Scholarships and training</td>
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<td>Supply of goods/services, payment of costs</td>
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<td>Volunteers</td>
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<th>TYPES OF DELIVERY PARTNERS</th>
<th>AGREEMENT TYPE</th>
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<td>Academic research institutions</td>
<td>Grant agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian international and national NGOs</td>
<td>Partner government agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing contractor</td>
<td>Procurement agreement</td>
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<td>Multilateral development organisations</td>
<td>Whole-of-government agreement</td>
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<td>Direct funding agreement</td>
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<td>Regional organisations</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 Documentation required

Every investment valued at $3 million or more (GST inclusive) requires either an Investment Design Document (for DFAT-led designs) or an Investment Design Summary (for Partner-led designs). All designs must be underpinned by the Investment Design Quality Criteria. The level of detail in a design document should be proportional to the risk, value and complexity of the investment.

5.4.3 DFAT-led designs

For DFAT-led designs, an Investment Design Document (maximum 25 pages, plus annexes) explains what the investment will achieve and how it will be implemented and measured. The design must clearly identify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for delivery, and specify clear outputs and outcomes for inclusion in a contract or agreement. Design documents must follow the relevant Investment Design Document template, and Design Approval Minute template.
5.4.4  Partner-led designs

For Partner-led designs, the Investment Design Summary (maximum 15 pages, plus annexes) should assure the delegate that the proposed investment meets DFAT’s investment design quality criteria, and is aligned with Australia’s strategic priorities. The Investment Design Summary, must explain what will be gained through the partnership as well as how DFAT will engage with and manage the investment. Key priorities for the design summary are to maximise the performance of the partner(s), ensure participation in governance and decision making, and manage risk.

5.4.5  Procurement

If the design involves procurement processes for a commercial supplier/contractor through a tendering process, officers must contact Aid Business Branch (ABB) (aid.contracts@dfat.gov.au) early to discuss requirements. The Design team must also discuss the draft Statement of Requirements with ABB before it is finalised.

5.5  FINALISING A DESIGN

5.5.1  Quality assurance

Quality assurance improves the quality of an investment and reassures the final delegate of a robust and contestable process. Quality assurance includes independent appraisal, peer review and Aid Governance Board consideration proportional to the investment value and risk rating. The program area coordinates the Quality Assurance process.

DFAT assesses and scores the quality of concepts, designs, and investment design summaries in accordance with the Investment Design Quality Assurance and Scoring Guidance. The DFAT design quality criteria are embedded in the Quality Assurance scoring system. Scoring is required for all investments of $10 million or more using the Investment Design Quality Assessment Tool and Scoring Matrix, before proceeding to implementation.

QA requirements for investment concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under $10m³</th>
<th>$10m-50m</th>
<th>$50-100m</th>
<th>$100m+</th>
<th>High risk (any $)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal QA</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal peer review</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGB</td>
<td>Nor required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
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</table>

³ Investment concepts are optional for low risk designs under $10 million.
QA requirements for investment designs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under $10m</th>
<th>$10m-50m</th>
<th>$50-100m</th>
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<th>High risk (any $)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal QA</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not sufficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Appraisal</td>
<td>Optional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Peer Review</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGB</td>
<td>Not required</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All investment concepts and designs valued at $10 million or more must be formally quality assured. For investments of $10 million or more, written appraisals including scores from independent (internal or external) experts are required.

High-value and high-risk designs require a greater level of scrutiny. For investments worth $50 million or more—or those assessed as high risk—a formal peer review of the design must be undertaken. Two external appraisers and two formal DFAT peer reviewers are required. Sector specialists and representatives from ACD and the relevant sectoral policy Division must be invited to the peer review. Draft design documents (and any completed independent appraisal) should be provided to peer reviewers at least 10 working days before the peer review meeting. Peer review minutes must be completed as an accurate record and a summary completed. See Investment Design Quality Assurance and Scoring Guidance of the meeting and uploaded into AidWorks in a timely manner. The peer review summary must be attached to the design approval minute.

### 5.5.2 Proceeding to implementation

Once the relevant delegates have approved the investment design, it moves to financial and procurement approval (see Chapter 6). Design approval is informed by the quality assurance process, but is ultimately the delegate’s responsibility. See the Checklist for Delegates Approving Design Documents. Investment design documents are published on the DFAT website.
For investments $10 million or more Post and Canberra delegates will provide dual approval (with the exception of regional/global programs which do not have a Post counterpart).

Or any other investment as requested by the Aid Governance Board.
When Partner-led design has already commenced design, start at stage of preparing IDS and annex proposal (i.e. skipping concept).

Or any other investment as requested by the Aid Governance Board.
5.6 EXEMPTIONS TO MANDATORY DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Certain types of investments do not need to follow the mandatory design requirements. These are:

- Humanitarian and disaster assistance investments of less than 12 months duration.
- Deployments under the Australia Assists program.
- Annual contributions made to NGOs under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.
- Core contributions made to multilateral organisations that have been reviewed (and found to have performed satisfactorily) through a DFAT Multilateral Performance Assessment (or the former Australian Multilateral Assessment) and/or by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). For more information, contact multilateralperformance@dfat.gov.au.

Guided workflows that follow different investment pathways (such as those above) will be introduced in AidWorks from November 2018 (see section 1.7.5).

In other specific circumstances, the First Assistant Secretary, Contracting and Aid Management Division (FAS ACD) may exempt an investment from the mandatory design requirements. For example, if DFAT intends to undertake a subsequent phase of an existing investment, a positive evaluation has been held and there is sound evidence that the investment is performing well, and the current scope is broadly consistent, then a full design process may not be required.

Requests for exemption from the mandatory design requirements must be discussed with ACD Investment Design Section before FAS ACD approval is sought via a formal minute. If an exemption is granted, the Written Approval to Commence Minute - signed by the delegate - should also outline the planned design pathway. In the case of opting into the ADAPT trial, written approval from Director Investment Design should be sought and integrated into the Written Approval to Commence Minute for delegate approval.

5.7 POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Reviews of investment design documents and performance assessments of investments highlight a consistent set of potential pitfalls:

- Getting the policy content right. Lack of clear articulation of required policy and budget dialogue can reduce investment effectiveness.
- Failure to engage senior managers early. It is important to test ideas with senior managers as the design process unfolds, and regularly update them, remembering that a low-risk, low-value concepts and designs will require fewer discussions than a high-value or high-risk design.
- Sub-standard concept or design documents can result in delays. The establishment of an internal reference group is recommended as good practice for all investments value at $100 million or more or rated as ‘high risk’. These can include relevant DFAT expertise such as: sector/thematic specialists, gender, disability, budget (if ODA sensitive), design, risk and contracting specialists.
- Poor planning causes most design problems. Failing to prepare properly may:
  - mean the expertise required to help write the design documentation is unavailable.
  - lead to disengaged stakeholders (partner governments, beneficiaries and DFAT officers) who are not committed to program implementation.
  - result in cursory review and quality assurance processes. Weak quality assurance leads to less sharing of lessons learned, so risks tend not to be recognised and good ideas may be missed.
– cause stress between desks, posts and stakeholders and as a consequence undermine a genuine development partnership.

- Inadequate hands-on management by DFAT officers. This can cause the design process to ‘drift’. Design processes need strong, active management to help keep processes on track and within budget.
- Analysis paralysis. Adequate information and analysis are essential factors informing an investment design, and aid investments must be sensitive to context. However, there should be clear parameters and discipline around time frames and efforts to ensure appropriate return for effort.
- Designs that are overly complex or impractical. This makes it difficult to contract or achieve agreement.
  - A weak Statement of Requirements can lead to weak contracting arrangements which don’t fulfil design intention and/or confuse roles and accountabilities. Ensure these are well thought through.
  - Unclear and measurable outcomes statements can lead to weak monitoring and evaluation systems and may make the investment vulnerable to strategic drift.
  - Weak M&E frameworks which lack baseline data etc. can cause delays in M&E systems establishment and data collection. The M&E Framework/Plan must be in accordance with DFAT standards and must be annexed to the design.

For further information about issues raised in this chapter, contact designmail@dfat.gov.au.

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**AidWorks**

All key documents must be uploaded into AidWorks as soon as they are finalised, including:

- Written approval to commence with Risk and Safeguards Tool
- Approved concept note
- Concept approval minute
- Approved design document
- Independent appraisal document/s
- Peer review minutes
- Design approval minute
- S23 Minute (refer Chapter 6.6.3)
- Agreements and contracts associated with the investment (refer Chapter 6).
Key resources

Guidance/Good Practice Guides
- Investment Design Quality Criteria
- Senior Responsible Officer Guidance
- Gender Equality in Design Good Practice Note
- Explanatory Note on Program Logic
- Top tips for selecting and working with design teams
- Terms of Reference for Design Teams

Facilities
- Guidance Note: Facility Investments
- Delegate Checklist for Approving Facilities

Templates
- Investment Concept template
- DFAT-led design - Investment Design Document template
- Partner-led design - Investment Design Summary template

Tools
- Risk and Safeguards Tool
- Policy Dialogue Matrix
- Investment Design Quality Assurance and Scoring Guidance
- Investment Design Quality Assessment Tool and Scoring Matrix
- Checklist for Delegates Approving Design Documents

Approval documentation
- Written Approval to Commence Minute template
- Concept Approval Minute template
- Design Approval Minute template
CHAPTER 6
PROCUREMENT, GRANTS AND APPROVALS

Key messages

Procurement and aid grants help DFAT meet its aid program objectives by efficiently and effectively engaging delivery partners.

DFAT’s Procurement and Aid Grants Policy and guidance ensure that procurement and aid grants processes meet the relevant legislative requirements, are legal, appropriate, and minimise risk. These processes are proportional to the size, scope, value, risk and complexity of the investment.

Early in the planning and design stage, officers should actively consider the most appropriate type of agreement to meet investment objectives. This will inform whether a procurement or an aid grant process will be undertaken.

Financial delegates are personally accountable for decisions and actions taken in relation to procurement and aid grants processes, and must operate within their delegation levels and legislative obligations.

The Procurement Policy, the Aid Grant Policy and online guidance found in BuyRight outline how to ensure requirements for ensuring the mandatory processes set out below are met.

Mandatory requirements

DFAT’s Procurement Policy must be complied with when conducting a procurement. The DFAT Procurement Policy sets out the mandatory requirements for managing all non-ICT procurements in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth) (PGPA Act) and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs).

BuyRight on the procurement intranet provides step-by-step processes, guidance and templates in workflows to assist line areas conduct Basic, Simple and Complex procurements.

DFAT’s procurement processes are set up to:

- help DFAT deliver the Australian aid program by efficiently and effectively engaging delivery partners
- ensure taxpayer funds are well spent by requiring the proper use of Commonwealth resources, value for money and compliance with legislative requirements
- manage significant commercial, legal and reputational risks associated with delivery partners.
6.1 WHAT IS PROCUREMENT?

In accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) - *Procurement* encompasses the whole process of acquiring *goods* and services. It begins when a need has been identified and a decision has been made on the procurement requirement. *Procurement* continues through the processes of risk assessment, seeking and evaluating alternative solutions, the awarding of a *contract*, the delivery of and payment for the *goods* and services and, where relevant, the ongoing management of the *contract* and consideration of disposal of *goods*.

In relation to aid investments, procurement often involves tendering for the services of a supplier to implement an investment on behalf of the Department, but can also involve contracting for a specific service such as design, or monitoring and evaluation.

All procurements, regardless of value, must comply with Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs). At Post, Division 1 of the CPRs apply.

See [BuyRight](#) and DFAT’s Procurement Policy for specific guidance on how to undertake a procurement.

6.2 WHAT ARE AID GRANTS?

An aid grant is an arrangement for providing financial assistance in which the funds are paid to the recipient to help it achieve its goals (while also addressing one or more of the Australian Government’s policy objectives).

Aid grants are widely used to achieve government policy objectives and priorities for the Australian aid program. They include aid grants that are awarded to: NGOs through competitively or directly awarded processes; to Partner Governments; to Multilateral Organisations and to Other Commonwealth Entities.

See [BuyRight](#) and the Aid Grant Policy for specific guidance on how to undertake an aid grant.

6.3 WHAT LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO PROCUREMENT AND AID GRANTS?

DFAT’s procurements and aid grants are governed by legislation and DFAT’s policy framework, including:

- the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)
- the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997* (FFSP Act)
- Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs), which set out the mandatory procurement rules and requirements (applicable to procurements)
- Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs), which set out the mandatory grant rules and requirements (applicable to grants)

DFAT’s Procurement Policy, Aid Grant Policy, [BuyRight](#), the [Financial Management Manual](#) and related guidance and procedures ensure that DFAT meets these legislative requirements.

6.4 WHAT IS VALUE FOR MONEY

Achieving value for money is the core rule of the CPRs. DFAT Officers *must* be satisfied, after reasonable enquiries, that the procurement achieves a value for money outcome.
Procurements should:
- encourage competition and be non-discriminatory;
- use public resources in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner that is not inconsistent with the policies of the Commonwealth;
- facilitate accountable and transparent decision making;
- encourage appropriate engagement with risk; and
- be commensurate with the scale and scope of the business requirement.

Value for money is the key consideration underpinning all investments. It must be achieved during the process of establishing the agreement and throughout the life of the agreement. DFAT’s Value for Money Principles build on the requirements of the PGPA Act, CPRs and CGRGs, to ensure proper use of Australian Government resources and assist in decision making.

6.5 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCUREMENT AND AID GRANTS?

All Officers working on the aid program are likely to be involved in procurement and aid grants. Investment and agreement managers are responsible for the procurement or aid grant process associated with their investments. For procurements below the complex thresholds the investment and agreement manager prepare the necessary documentation for delegate approval, and manage implementation of the procurement or aid grant activity. Officers should consider all aspects relating to procurement early in the planning and design stages of an investment. See BuyRight for specific guidance on how to undertake a procurement.

Financial delegates are responsible for approving procurements and aid grants under the PGPA Act. They are personally responsible and accountable for their decisions and actions, which they must carry out within their delegation levels and in accordance with DFAT requirements. They must ensure that a proposed aid investment represents a proper use of Australian Government resources and meets legislative and departmental requirements.

The Aid Business Branch (ABB) leads complex and aid procurement processes at defined thresholds and when not low risk, in close collaboration with the relevant program area. ABB manages BuyRight, the procurement and aid grants policies, guidance, tools and templates.

Investment and agreement managers should engage with ABB early in the process to seek advice on the appropriate approach and to discuss the different options available.

ABB provides online learning and face-to-face training courses (enrol via PeopleSoft) covering Commonwealth procurement, DFAT officers’ obligations for spending public money and managing contracts in Australia and at post.
In practice: Using BuyRight and the procurement and aid grant templates

Follow the steps in BuyRight to access relevant financial approval and agreement documentation templates.

These BuyRight steps and templates are maintained to ensure that mandatory legislative and departmental requirements are adhered to and protect DFAT’s interests and appropriately manage risk.

### 6.6 APPROVALS FOR PROCUREMENT

Delegate approvals are required for all procurements, regardless of the agreement type:

These approvals ensure delegates are provided with all of the information they require to exercise their delegation and an auditable record of decision-making. Refer to BuyRight to access the relevant templates.

The information in the approval documents should be proportionate to the size, scale and risk of the activity being undertaken.

#### Proportionality: ABB clearance

Obtaining ABB clearance is an important step to ensure legislative and departmental requirements are met and risks are appropriately mitigated. BuyRight provides guidance on ABB clearance requirements.

### 6.7 APPROVALS FOR AID GRANTS

There are distinct delegate approvals required for aid grants. The Aid Grant must have the approvals as per the relevant procedure.

These approvals ensure delegates are provided with all of the information they require to exercise their delegation and an auditable record of decision-making. Refer to the Aid Grant Policy and follow the steps in BuyRight on the Procurement Intranet to access the relevant templates.

Approval documents should be proportionate to the size, scale and risk of the activity being undertaken.

### 6.8 WHAT TYPE OF AID AGREEMENT IS APPROPRIATE?

There are two key types of aid agreements:

- procurement agreements (contracts and services orders under panels)
- aid grant agreements

Most aid investments will involve either a procurement contract or an aid grant. The choice between the two should occur during the activity design phase, and will depend on DFAT’s intentions regarding scope of
control over the direction setting and operational details of the aid investment, as well as the nature of the relationship DFAT wishes to have with the implementing partner.

Aid grants usually allow for a more collaborative approach than contracts, and are not as prescriptive or focused on service delivery. DFAT and the grantee can be jointly responsible for setting the strategic direction of the aid investment and DFAT has less direct involvement in directing or deciding operational details. In a procurement contract, DFAT is directly involved in the day-to-day decision-making and the contractor has an obligation to meet the requirements of the contract.

Officers should seek ABB advice at an early stage in investment planning to determine which type of agreement (procurement or aid grant) is most appropriate. Processes and approvals will vary according to which agreement type is selected, as each involves different legislative and departmental requirements.

6.8.1 Procurement process and agreements

Procurement agreements include contracts and service orders issued under panels or standing offers. The agreement sets out the details of what the implementing partner has agreed to do for DFAT. Matters such as deliverables, time frames, payments and dispute resolution procedures can all be set out in a contract, which becomes the basis for managing the agreement.

BuyRight provides step-by-step instructions to enable program areas to conduct procurements and undertake aid grants in accordance with Commonwealth and DFAT policy frameworks.

Aid Adviser Remuneration Framework

The Aid Adviser Remuneration Framework (ARF) defines procedures for determining the remuneration of aid advisers. It outlines prescribed adviser rates and allowances.

The ARF ensures that adviser remuneration is appropriate for the type and level of technical expertise required for each task. Framework rates are benchmarked against Australian labour market data and rates paid by other donors to ensure rates represent VFM. All aid advisers—whether funded through administered or departmental funding—must be engaged in accordance with the ARF, unless the FAS ACD has approved an exemption. Information on aid adviser remuneration is publicly reported.

Rates for all aid adviser positions sourced under the AAS are consistent with the ARF.

Where the ARF is relevant, BuyRight provides information and guidance.
In practice: Innovative Complex Procurements and grants

ABB can work with program areas to develop innovative procurement and contracting approaches. Examples include:

- putting an open approach to the international market (called an Open Tender or competitive call for grant proposals)
- collaborating with program areas to determine the most appropriate evaluation process for the proposed investment
- tailoring evaluation criteria
- developing non-prescriptive statements of work
- taking innovative ‘design and implement’ approaches
- linking program outcomes or partner performance with payment regimes

6.8.2 Who do we award Aid Grants to?

DFAT will typically award Aid Grants to the following types of Recipient and ABB have developed procedures that are unique for each type:

- Non-government Organisations (NGOs), Research Institutions, Universities or Corporate Commonwealth Entities/Companies
- Multilateral or International Organisations
- Partner Governments
- Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entities

See BuyRight for these individual procedures and the Aid Grant Policy.

In practice: Key principles for awarding a grant

In line with the CGRGs the key principles that apply to the award and administration of an aid grant include:

- robust planning and design
- collaboration and partnership
- proportionality
- outcome orientation
- value for money
- governance and accountability
- probity and transparency.

DFAT’s Value for Money Principles apply equally to aid grants and procurements.
**In practice: Established aid grant arrangements**

DFAT has established grant arrangements with a number of multilateral organisations and for providing funds directly to partner governments. Templates may already have been negotiated with these parties.

Follow the steps in *BuyRight* for the relevant processes and templates.

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**In practice: Subsidiary Arrangements**

Some partner countries may require Subsidiary Arrangements to cover specific requirements of the investment. Subsidiary Arrangements:

- outline the activity to be implemented
- formalise partner government support for, and involvement in, the activity
- specify which partner government agencies will be involved.

High-value programs usually require Subsidiary Arrangements. DFAT should not enter into procurement agreements without a signed Subsidiary Arrangement in place; having this arrangement in place demonstrates the commitment between the partner government and the Australian Government.

Subsidiary Arrangements can take time to negotiate, so it is wise to start developing them early in the investment planning phase. It is possible to commence the procurement process before a Subsidiary Arrangement is in place, provided there is a letter of endorsement (or similar form of agreement) from the partner government.

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**6.9 PROBITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Probity—evidence of ethical behaviour—is a critical consideration in planning and managing procurement and grant activities. It can be defined as complete and confirmed integrity, uprightness and honesty in a process. In procurement and grant activities, it requires officers to:

- act ethically
- not make improper use of their position
- avoid placing themselves in a position where there is potential for claims of bias
- treat all delivery partners equitably
- manage conflicts of interest appropriately
- ensure the confidentiality of information and the procurement and grant process.
In practice: Confidentiality

The integrity of procurement and aid grant processes hinges on maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality that will protect information and give the market confidence to do business with the Australian Government. Confidentiality has many dimensions, but confidentiality of submissions and the evaluation process is particularly important before awarding the contract or grant. At this stage, information should only be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis.

Confidential information may include defined (and as agreed) elements of the supplier’s proposal, specific intellectual property and pricing structures. It also includes the evaluation process and how it is applied.

Managing probity and confidentiality throughout the procurement and grant process reduces the risk that resources will need to be allocated to reviewing, defending and potentially repeating a procurement or aid grant process as a result of an external challenge. It gives the financial delegate and the broader market confidence that DFAT is serious about its responsibilities regarding the fair and ethical treatment of suppliers. For complex or sensitive procurement and grant processes, it may be appropriate to engage specialist external probity advice. ABB must be consulted when considering this option.

6.10 POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Common weaknesses in procurement aspects of aid management include:

- Insufficient time spent on procurement and pipeline planning, resulting in rushed or poorly considered procurements.
- Poorly defined statements of work that do not articulate the outcomes sought, risking a weak market response, protracted negotiations, more expensive bids and/or delayed mobilisation.
- Failing to obtain or document key delegate approvals (including the basis of a decision or VFM).
- Not complying with departmental requirements, thereby failing to comply with legislative obligations.
- Not maintaining probity and confidentiality, thereby compromising the integrity of the procurement process.
- Information in AidWorks not matching the corresponding agreements.

For further information about the issues raised in this chapter, contact ABB.

For details of all other key contacts, see the contacts list.
**AidWorks**

All procurement and grant approval documents and agreements **must** be uploaded into AidWorks.

Follow the steps in BuyRight to ensure DFAT can meet its statutory reporting obligations.

DFAT relies on the quality of investment and agreement information in AidWorks for all public reporting.

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**Key resources**

BuyRight simplifies aid grant and procurement. It provides step-by-step processes, guidance and templates in workflows to assist line areas to conduct aid grants and procurements in accordance with Commonwealth legislation and DFAT policy.

Access BuyRight on the Procurement Intranet Page
CHAPTER 7
AID RISK MANAGEMENT

Key messages
Managing risk is everyone’s business. Early identification and management of risk helps DFAT deliver effective aid in complex, challenging and changing environments.

Risk management involves thinking about, understanding and regularly discussing risk. It covers due diligence of delivery partners; assessments of partner government financial systems; fraud control and anti-corruption efforts; and safeguards.

Risk is managed at the program and investment level.

Mandatory requirements
Officers must screen for environmental and social safeguards and risk for all investments.

Where screening indicates that an environmental or social impact may occur, the level of risk must be assessed and rated. If a negative environmental or social impact is likely, an impact assessment and management plan must be completed. Agreements with aid delivery partners must include provisions for managing, monitoring and reporting on safeguards.

Major country and regional programs (those with an annual total official development assistance (ODA) allocation of $50 million or more) and high-risk programs must have Fraud Control and Anti-Corruption Strategies (FACS) in place.

Post and investment risk registers must be updated quarterly.

Due diligence assessments of aid delivery partners must be completed before entering into a funding arrangement. This includes making sure the potential partner is not a ‘designated person or entity’ under sanctions or debarment lists.

Where a medium/high/very high terrorism financing risk exists an enhanced due diligence check of this terrorism financing risk of the partner and their systems should be undertaken. Details on this are contained in DFAT’s Approach to Managing Terrorism Financing Risk and the Baseline Due Diligence Operational Procedures.

When DFAT channels funds through partner government systems, an assessment of national and sector-level public financial management systems must be undertaken and updated regularly.

Agreements with aid delivery partners must include approved clauses for detecting, reporting and managing fraud.

Instances of alleged, suspected, attempted or detected fraud must be reported immediately. Where fraud is substantiated, appropriate follow-up action must be taken,
Early identification and management of risk help DFAT deliver effective aid in complex, challenging and changing environments. By aligning risk management with clearly articulated business objectives, DFAT gains a stronger understanding of what those objectives are and how it will achieve them.

- By monitoring the expected benefits of a program, project or activity against identified risks, DFAT can better inform its decision-making processes and clearly rationalise its position.
- Good risk management practices will improve the overall effectiveness of DFAT programs and business-as-usual activities, increasing public confidence in the integrity of DFAT’s aid investments.

7.1 WHAT IS AID RISK MANAGEMENT?

Aid risk management aims to minimise the impact of uncertainty on delivery of the aid program’s objectives. It is an ongoing process that involves:

- identifying and analysing potential risks throughout the aid management cycle
- developing proportionate and defensible strategies to balance risk and benefit, and enable sound decisions about whether to start, continue, modify or conclude an aid investment
- monitoring risk—including through internal and external discussions—and updating risk registers
- monitoring controls to ensure they are still in use and effective and ensuring treatments are implemented
- when necessary, escalating risk to the attention of higher decision-makers or forums.

Effective risk management is about being open to, and actively managing, an acceptable level of risk in order to achieve effective development outcomes.

Aid risk management includes due diligence assessment of delivery partners; evaluations of partner governments’ financial systems; fraud control and anti-corruption efforts; and environmental and safeguards (including environment, child protection and displacement and resettlement).

In practice: Risk definitions

Risk: The effect of uncertainty on objectives.

Risk control: Existing measures in place to manage a risk.

Risk treatment: A proposed process to modify or mitigate a risk.

Risk management: Identifying and analysing potential risks and opportunities, and developing proportionate, defensible management strategies that balance risk and treatment against benefits.

Risk escalation: The process of raising awareness of risk among higher forums or decision-makers.

Operational risk: Risk that needs to be managed at the lower ‘operational’ levels; for example fraud control.
**Strategic risk:** A risk that needs to be managed at a higher level because, if it eventuates, it may affect the entire investment. These risks are usually outside the control of the organisation and occur within the environment where the investment operates. In the aid program, these would be whole-of-program or country-level risks. They may include a change of partner country government; a shift in policy direction; a natural disaster; or a change in the security or operating environment that may impact the implementation of investments.

### 7.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

All officers are responsible for managing risk. This includes identifying risks, putting in place risk mitigation strategies and regularly monitoring risks. Regular discussion about risks can also help ensure issues are escalated as required.

Investment and agreement managers oversee investment and agreement-level risks. Heads of Mission (HOMs) and SES managers oversee program risks and are responsible for nurturing a proactive risk culture in their teams. A Senior Responsible Officer model is being trialled with a few programs. View the [Senior Responsible Officer](#) guidance for more information.

### 7.3 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD AID RISK MANAGEMENT

- **Identify risks early:** This is the key to effective risk management. By identifying and addressing risk in the early stages of program planning and design, it may be possible to eliminate or greatly reduce risk through the design process. By doing this investment outputs and outcomes can be improved or protected.

- **Fit for purpose:** The approach to risk management must be fit for purpose; it should be commensurate with the level of risk and adaptable to suit changes in the external environment. Eliminating risk is not the goal; risk management involves considering ways to minimise risks, avoid risks, share risks or mitigate and accept risks. High risks may be acceptable because of the potential benefits, or the costs of not taking action. It is usually impossible and unrealistic to eliminate all risk in an aid investment.

- **Communicate, review, monitor and document:** Risk registers must be reviewed at least quarterly. Ensure controls are still in place and that treatments have been implemented (by their due dates). Communicate and consult, are risks being managed, and by who? Do we have a common understanding of what the risks are? Document conversations related to the investment as part of the regular ongoing contract management to help identify any new or emerging risks and any information that may indicate that a risk event is occurring.
7.4 DFAT’S AID RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

DFAT manages risk at the program and the investment levels. The Risk Management for Aid Investments Guide provides detailed instructions on the aid risk management process. The department has a new online risk system Assurance and Risk Management System (ARMS) to support the management of risk and safeguards.

High-level program risks are assessed as part of Aid Investment Plans (AIPs) and reported on through annual Aid Program Performance Reports (APPRs).

Investment-level risks must be assessed using the Risk and Safeguards Tool as part of initiating the investment design process. Risks are recorded throughout the design process as part of the agreement documentation, and are monitored throughout the implementation phase. They are reported on through annual aid quality checks.

DFAT documents risks in registers or in ARMS, these are reviewed and updated regularly. High-level program risks are included in the post or division risk register, which also captures risks other than those attributed to the aid program. See the DFAT Guide to Better Risk Management for guidance on completing division risk registers.

An investment should have its own risk register. It is not enough to rely on partner risk documentation, as partners are not in a position to assess important or relevant risks from DFAT’s perspective. Discussions with partners to review the management of shared risks should be proportionate to the investment’s risk profile. Document any shared risks on the DFAT aid investment risk register and ensure the risk is being properly controlled and managed.

7.5 AID RISK MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

7.5.1 Environmental and Social Safeguards

To minimise risk and ensure the aid program can be delivered effectively and efficiently, DFAT must consider a number of safeguards when planning, designing, delivering and evaluating all Australian aid investments. Failure to adequately address safeguards may result in harm to people or the environment, have legal consequences or damage the reputation of DFAT and Australia’s aid program.

The Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program consolidates DFAT’s approach to managing safeguard risks in the aid program. All investments must be screened for environmental and social impacts, by considering five key safeguards:

I. Environmental protection
II. Children, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups
III. Displacement and resettlement
IV. Indigenous peoples
V. Health and safety

The mandatory risk and safeguard process that must be taken to address safeguards when implementing an aid investment is detailed at Figure 12: Mandatory Risks and Safeguard Process. Where screening indicates that an environmental or social impact may occur, the level of risk must be assessed and rated. If a negative environmental or social impact is likely, a proportional environmental and social impact assessment must be completed. Impacts identified in the impact assessment must be managed through a management plan, and monitored and reported as part of the investment implementation process. Agreements with aid delivery
partners must include provisions to manage safeguards in accordance with DFAT’s safeguard policy. The application of safeguards is supported by operational procedures and guidance notes. Officers and partners can contact the aidsafeguards@dfat.gov.au for advice or assistance with assessing and managing environmental and social risks and impacts.
**Figure 12: Mandatory Risks and Safeguard Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS</th>
<th>INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT STEPS</th>
<th>SAFEGUARD PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial risk analysis</td>
<td>Written approval to commence (if required)</td>
<td>Safeguard screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk and safeguard screening tool</td>
<td></td>
<td>No: No to all screening questions; Yes/Unsure to any questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment concept (if required)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rate the Risk: Refer to guidance notes and safeguard operational procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct due diligence check</td>
<td>Investment design document/summary</td>
<td>Assessment and management plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and update risk register</td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete a proportional impact assessment and management plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreements include risk and safeguard management measures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Impacts can be avoided or mitigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Impacts may not be avoided or mitigated through design measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact safeguard line area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and reporting on risk &amp; safeguards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular risk discussions in team and partner meetings, in line with management plans, agreements, etc.</td>
<td>Updating risk register every three months</td>
<td>Reporting on risks &amp; safeguards in investment quality reporting and annual program performance reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate lesson learned and archive risk register</td>
<td>End of investment review</td>
<td>Evaluate the outcomes of safeguard activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© $3M OR MORE / OR HIGH RISK
7.5.2 Due diligence

Due diligence assessments help DFAT assess delivery partner strengths, weaknesses and ability to deliver before entering into an agreement or funding arrangement. However, due diligence is an ongoing process directly related to managing risk.

The Due Diligence Framework sets out a structured approach for identifying and assessing the risks of using a particular partner before entering into an agreement. The framework includes step-by-step tools and guidance to help DFAT officers undertake the appropriate level of due diligence.

Posts and divisions must ensure they are aware of the sanctions or debarment lists operating within their areas of responsibility or countries of accreditation. Information on all the current United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and autonomous sanctions regimes is available on the DFAT website. The Consolidated List is updated regularly, and identifies persons and entities that are subject to targeted financial sanctions or travel bans under Australian and UNSC sanctions laws. As part of due diligence, officers should search the Consolidated List to find out if a person or entity is subject to sanctions.

Due diligence assessments are valid for up to three years unless a significant change in the entity’s circumstances occurs. Due diligence assessments are conducted in ARMS, further details and task cards for the use of ARMS are available on the due diligence webpage. Before conducting a new assessment, officers should check the Due Diligence Assessment Register to see if a current assessment exists.

Completed Multilateral Performance Assessments (MPAs) serve as a due diligence assessment for multilateral organisations. To check if a multilateral organisation has an MPA check the MPA Indicative schedule or contact multilateralperformance@dfat.gov.au.

Terrorism Financing Risk

On 1 February 2018, the DFAT’s Approach to Managing Terrorism Financing Risk Policy came into effect. This policy outlines due diligence requirements for all DFAT contacts. Details of these requirements can be found in the DFAT’s Approach to Managing Terrorism Financing Risk policy and in the due diligence operational procedures.

A due diligence assessment of terrorism financing risk is required prior to entering into any new contract where the due diligence assessment was conducted prior to the 1 February 2018. This involves assessment of the counter terrorism due diligence criterion.

Why are some partners excluded from the due diligence process?

Due diligence assessments are mandatory before entering into an arrangement with most aid delivery partners. Due diligence assessments are not required for:

- **Accredited Australian non-government organisations (NGOs):** Due diligence assessment of an accredited Australian NGO is not required because the accreditation process for the NGO under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program satisfies due diligence requirements.

- **Partner governments:** Due diligence is undertaken by conducting Assessments of National Systems (ANS) and sector-level investigation of financial management; including procurement systems (see Section Error! Reference source not found.).

- **Whole-of-government partners:** These partners are considered to have met due diligence requirements, as they operate under the Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) or the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997.
• **Australian educational institutions:** Universities and technical colleges operating within Australia are considered to have met due diligence requirements, as these entities operate under a mix of appropriate Commonwealth and State government supervision, oversight, policies and standards.

• **Other bilateral donors:** Due diligence is undertaken in the process of developing a delegated cooperation agreement.

• **Multilateral Organisations:** Multilateral partners that have a current Multilateral Performance Assessment (MPA) are not required to have a separate due diligence assessment. Note: A due diligence assessment is required where there is not a current MPA.

### 7.5.3 Partner government systems assessments

When aid investments consider using partner government systems to deliver Australian aid, an analysis of the risks and benefits of the system is required. DFAT’s analysis is based on a two-tier assessment process, starting with an Assessment of National Systems (ANS).

The ANS provides an overview of key strengths and weaknesses of national-level partner government systems for public financial management, including procurement, and an assessment of the fiduciary risks of using them. The completed ANS report must be submitted to the relevant Assistant Secretary for endorsement, accompanied by a completed endorsement minute.

If the ANS recommends that DFAT should further consider using a partner government’s systems as the funding mechanism for an Australian aid investment, this leads to a detailed assessment of public financial management, including procurement systems of the entities that will be responsible for managing Australian funds. These sector-based assessments conclude whether and to what extent an aid investment should use the partner government’s systems, and may recommend implementing risk mitigation and capacity development strategies as part of the investment. The decision to channel aid funds through partner systems must be documented in the investment design and spending approval stages.

National and sector-level assessments must also be reviewed and updated periodically during the implementation stage. Generally speaking, national updates should be completed every three years, but if there are genuine reasons to do so, program areas may delay an update beyond the three-year mark by consulting with the Public Financial Management Advisory Services Section, subject to close oversight by posts and consistent with the level of risk.

Sector-level assessments of public financial management (including procurement systems) need to be updated every three years, unless program areas can demonstrate to the Public Financial Management Advisory Services Section that they are monitoring risks and mitigation measures regularly, and have a credible mechanism for identifying emerging risks that can replace the formal three-yearly update.

National and sector-level assessments are not required if Australia is providing finance to a partner government through other development partners that have completed their own assessments, as long as DFAT judges that assessment to be adequate.

Advice on these requirements and the scope and timing of assessments can be obtained from the Public Financial Management Advisory Services Section: Partner.Systems@dfat.gov.au. For more information, see the Guideline for assessing and using partner government systems for PFM and procurement and the Guideline for Conducting an Assessment of National Systems on the Public Financial Management Intranet Page.
7.5.4 Fraud control and anti-corruption

DFAT has a zero-tolerance approach to fraudulent and corrupt activity and behaviour. This means all potential instances of fraud must be reported without delay. In practice, zero tolerance also means DFAT will assess and investigate all alleged instances or reports of fraud to determine the nature and extent of the fraud. If DFAT can establish that fraud has occurred, it will seek recovery of funds or assets lost, and will ensure appropriate penalties and prosecution of offenders.

The policy applies to all DFAT employees (including contracted personnel) and external parties that receive Australian aid funding—including contractors, NGOs, civil society organisations, third-party service providers and other funding recipients.

In practice: Types of fraud

DFAT defines fraud as ‘dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means’. This definition extends beyond the legal definition of fraud to include tangible and intangible benefits. As such, it encompasses broader activities or behaviours than the misuse or misappropriation of monies or assets.

Examples of fraud include misappropriation of funds; altering documents; falsifying signatures; misuse of Commonwealth assets; providing false information to the Commonwealth; unauthorised disclosure of confidential information; theft of aid program funds or assets; and bias, cronyism and nepotism.

Prevention and detection strategies

The most effective way to prevent or detect fraud and corruption is by thoroughly and rigorously designing policies and programs; completing detailed planning before implementing an investment; and continuously monitoring, reviewing and adapting policy and practice to ensure they are robust and effective in addressing fraud prevention, mitigation and detection measures.

Fraud risk prevention and detection strategies must be considered throughout the aid management cycle, in line with Section 10 of the PGPA Rule 2014 (an associated instrument of the PGPA Act). All programs and investments must align with DFAT’s Fraud Control and Anti-corruption Plan and Fraud Policy Statement on Fraud Control and the Aid Program.

The Fraud Control and Anti-corruption Plan lists DFAT’s high-level fraud and corruption risks, together with strategies for mitigating them. It identifies key fraud risks based on the type of implementing partner. DFAT officers must consult this plan when designing aid investments or reviewing fraud risks in a country or regional aid program. They must also consult the plan when developing AIPs, which must include risk registers that identify the risks (including fraud risks) in achieving aid investment objectives.

Management strategies to combat the risks of fraud and corruption must also be identified.

Reporting and managing fraud matters

If fraud is substantiated, the matter may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. DFAT will also seek to recover any misappropriated funds or assets, and may seek prosecution of offenders and/or the application of administrative penalties where appropriate.

When an instance of fraud reveals a fraud control weakness, program managers—with the implementing partner—must change processes and policies to address this weakness.
All agreements with aid implementing partners must contain approved fraud clauses. These clauses will also cover fraud reporting obligations. Program managers must be familiar with these clauses, particularly aid implementing partners’ obligations relating to fraud and corruption matters. For more information, contact FCS at fraud@dfat.gov.au.

**In practice: Fraud reporting**

Any instance of alleged, suspected, attempted or detected fraud related to an aid investment must be immediately reported.

This involves:
- reporting to the Fraud Control Section (FCS) if the matter involves external fraud against the Australian aid program and the suspect and/or perpetrator is not a DFAT officer
- reporting to the Conduct and Ethics Unit (CEU) if the matter potentially involves internal fraud committed by DFAT officers against the department. This can include fraud committed jointly between DFAT officers and an external party. In relation to fraud with an external element, CEU and FCS will liaise to ensure an appropriate investigation is conducted
- reporting to the Passports Fraud Section if the matter concerns the passport application process or use of Australian passports
- reporting by the Fraud Control Section to the Transnational Crime Section for matters potentially involving an Australian extraterritorial offence.

All reported matters are investigated in accordance with DFAT policies and procedures.

### 7.5.5 Child protection compliance

Contact with children or impact on children can occur in relation to a broad range of aid investments with different partners. It is not possible to eliminate all risks of child exploitation, endangerment and abuse; however, careful management can reduce the risks to children that may be associated with aid investments.

Direct and indirect risks to children must be considered as part of the design and implementation phases in DFAT investments.

DFAT’s Child Protection Policy reflects obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect children from abuse and exploitation, and obligations under relevant Australian laws. The policy applies to all DFAT officers, functions and programs, including individuals and organisations funded under these programs—regardless of their value, partner or funding mechanism. The policy is given effect through minimum child protection compliance standards and mandatory reporting requirements. It is mandatory to consider child safety and protection risks as part of any safeguard assessment. For more information, see the Guidance for Establishing the Child Protection Risk Context on the Child Protection Intranet Page. Officers should consult detailed guidance on the intranet relating to DFAT child protection requirements. Implementing partners can access this guidance on the DFAT website’s Child Protection page.

Posts and divisions can contact the Child Protection Compliance Section (childprotection@dfat.gov.au) for advice or assistance in establishing, maintaining and reporting on child protection matters.
7.6 POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Potential pitfalls in risk management include:

- Treating risk as a compliance activity rather than as a regular embedded business practice. Risk management involves conversations about risk; it is not solely about filling out a risk register.
- Not consulting widely enough when considering risk, or assuming partners or others can manage DFAT’s risk.
- Failing to ensure controls continue to be used or treatments are implemented.
- Not undertaking appropriate or any due diligence. At a minimum, it is a requirement to assess risks against the eight baseline criteria, which include a partner’s identity and performance record, sanctions and debarment lists, and its capacity to ensure compliance with DFAT policies and safeguards.

For further information about the issues raised in this chapter, contact the relevant area: aidriskmanagement@dfat.gov.au, aidsafeguards@dfat.gov.au, due.diligence@dfat.gov.au; Partner.Systems@dfat.gov.au; fraud@dfat.gov.au; or childprotection@dfat.gov.au.

For details of all other key contacts, see the contacts list.

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### AidWorks

AidWorks requires officers to complete mandatory fields relating to safeguards and government priorities.

DFAT relies on the quality of investment and agreement information in AidWorks for all public reporting, including fraud and risk management information.

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### Key resources

#### Policies and strategies

- Due Diligence Framework
- DFAT’s Approach to Managing Terrorism Financing Risk
- Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy
- Fraud control and the aid program
- Child Protection Policy

#### Guidance

- Risk Management Intranet Page
- Due Diligence Framework
- Managing Terrorism Financing Risk Intranet Page
- DFAT Guide to Better Risk Management
- Risk Management for Aid Investments Guide
- Environmental and Social Safeguards Intranet Page
- Public Financial Management Intranet Page
Guideline for assessing and using partner government systems for PFM and procurement
Child Protection Intranet Page
Senior Responsible Officer
Templates
Risk and Safeguards Tool