AusAID / NGO
Committee for Development Cooperation
A Joint Committee of the Australian Agency for International Development and Australian Non-Government Organisations

Minutes of the 129th CDC Meeting held on 26 May 2011

AusAID CDC Members
Ms Therese Mills (Chair)
Mr Russell Miles

NGO Members
Mr Andrew Newmarch
Ms Bridgette Thorold
Rev John Deane

AusAID observers
Ms Ruth Megirian
Ms Katharina Dollmann

ACFID representatives
Mr Alex Oates

Apologies
Mr Timothy Church

1. Endorsement of CDC minutes 128
The minutes were endorsed with a minor amendment to the reference to Bridgette Thorold being a new CDC member

2. Update on outstanding items
   a. Development of new Head Agreement
AusAID confirmed that progress had been made on a draft structure and preamble of the revised Head Agreement and would meet with ACFID for a preliminary discussion on the development of a more finalised draft for discussion with the CDC.

   b. Development of good practice guidelines
ACFID advised that it would meet with AusAID to agree on a process to develop the guidelines and AusAID agreed to nominate a contact point in the NGO & HR Section to progress this work.

   c. Innovations Fund
AusAID confirmed that the Innovations Fund applications had been assessed and the successful applicants would be notified following delegate approval and acceptance of the grant funds by the successful applicants. CDC members expressed concern that so few applications were received. The Innovations Fund in its current format would not be offered in 2011-12 and AusAID confirmed that it was reassessing the best approach to support NGO innovation. NGO members agreed to provide AusAID with
reasons why support for and recognition of innovation was particularly valuable for NGOs. It was also agreed that a definition of innovation in the sector would be useful.

3. Implementation of new agency Profile and Accreditation manual

- The CDC endorsed the revised Agency Profile (AP) and Accreditation Manual and agreed to publication on the AusAID website.
- The CDC agreed that AusAID should make the AP available on the AusAID website by 1 July and give NGOs the choice to use the new or old versions over a 6 month phase in period.
- ACFID agreed to advise accredited and other interested member NGOs of the changes to the Agency Profile
- The CDC agreed to seek comments from accredited NGOs and ACFID on the daft Accreditation Manual and to provide consolidated comments to AusAID in time for the reviewers' workshop (scheduled for 28-29 July 2011).
- The Member Information Forums (MIF) scheduled for November were suggested as a suitable forum to focus NGO comments and discussion around the new Profile and Manual.
- The CDC will also seek feedback from accreditation reviewers on the implications of the new AP and the content of the accreditation manual during the reviewer’s workshop in July.
- The CDC agreed to provide feedback on the Accreditation Manual by a date to be set by Ruth Megirian.

ACTION: The CDC requested a document highlighting the key differences between the new and old versions of the Agency Profile. This document will also be made available on the AusAID website.

4. Accreditation applications

a) Accreditation Reports

Anglican Board of Mission (ABM)
The CDC endorsed the recommendation to re-accredit ABM at Full level.

International Nepal Fellowship (INF)
The CDC endorsed the recommendation to accredit INF at Base level.

Australian Himalayan Foundation (AHF)
The CDC endorsed the recommendation not to accredit AHF at Base level.

b) Status of accreditation and applications assistance

AusAID reported that it will be necessary to stagger accreditation reviews in 2011-12 due to the number of re-accreditations due in 2011-12 and a spike in demand. The level of demand is beyond the current capacity of the limited pool of accreditation reviewers. Deferring re-accreditation for 12 months is also an option for agencies that had been subject to an AusAID audit within the previous 12 months. As the same pool of reviewers also provide TA, there may be limited opportunities for AusAID to provide TA, at least in the short term.

The CDC raised other accreditation issues including that:
- AusAID should ensure that review feedback forms from NGOs that have undergone accreditation are provided to the CDC;
- Suggested that it was timely to review the implementation of TA since its introduction in 2009;
• AusAID should seek feedback from NGOs on their experience of AusAID-funded TA;
• Agencies should be encouraged to attend the ACFID accreditation training course;
• More guidance is needed for technical advisors on the scope of the advice they could provide, noting that the accreditation manual can be seen as a first step in that regard.

c) Other Business

The Chair outlined key outcomes of the federal aid budget for Australian NGOs, and advised that the Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) for NGOs would include a modest increase.

Therese Mills indicated that she would like to meet with accredited agencies and would consult with ACFID around opportunities for this to occur.

The Chair also provided an update on the establishment of the Not-For-Profit Regulator, and advised that the Review of Aid Effectiveness and the Government’s response to it were expected to be released late June or early July. The Chair requested an NGO response to the Aid Effectiveness Review once it becomes available and to discuss the Aid Effectiveness Review at the next CDC meeting.

AusAID advised that draft guidelines had been developed around the use of ANCP funds (currently up to 10% of NGO allocation) for development awareness activities. Subject to AusAID Executive approval, the draft guidelines will be issued to the sector for consultation and could raise this at an ACFID Member Information Forum. An update will be provided at the next CDC meeting.

AusAID had sent a letter to all accredited NGOs with respect to referencing “matching ratios” to leverage their fundraising efforts. The CDC noted that inappropriate use of the matching ratio policy in fundraising advertising may be in breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct. AusAID may wish to raise individual cases with the Code of Conduct.