



## DFAT / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation

A joint committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian non-government organisations

### Minutes of the 160<sup>th</sup> Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC) Meeting held on Friday 12 June 2020 10:00-11:30am

Virtual meeting via message-stick conferencing

#### DFAT CDC Members

Jon Burrough (Chair)  
Tanya Pridannikoff (DFAT)  
Tim Church (DFAT)  
Simon Cann-Evans (DFAT)

#### Secretariat

Rebecca Hamilton (ACFID)  
Rachelle Wood (DFAT)

#### NGO Members

John Morley (Plan International Australia)  
Ellen Shipley (Uniting World)  
Jessica Waite (International Women's Development Agency)  
Andrew Hartwich (Fred Hollows Foundation)

#### ACFID Observers

Jocelyn Condon (ACFID)

#### Apologies

Tim Church (DFAT)

*Note: DFAT and ACFID jointly provide a Secretariat function for the CDC and lead on Minute taking for alternate meetings. These minutes were prepared by ACFID, in consultation with DFAT.*

#### Item 1. Welcome Remarks

In opening remarks, the Chair Jon Burrough:

- Acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting takes place, and paid respect to Elders past and present, extending this respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people present.
- Accepted the apology from Tim Church, DFAT.
- Introduced Observers and Secretariat; Rebecca Hamilton and Jocelyn Condon from the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Rachelle Wood (DFAT).

Conflict of interest check:

The Chair requested all meeting participants declare any conflicts of interest.



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- John Morley advised that Save the Children and Plan International work together occasionally in EVAC advocacy and some program activity. The Committee accepted this did not represent a substantial conflict.
- Tanya Pridannikoff declared a conflict on behalf of Tim Church, who disclosed that as an ongoing donor to Save the Children he would exclude himself from the discussion.
- As per the recent Conflict of Interest Paper, it was agreed that Observers to CDC meetings would also be required to declare conflicts. None were declared.

### Item 2. Endorsement of minutes from the 158<sup>th</sup> and 159<sup>th</sup> CDC meeting

The Chair invited comments on the draft minutes from CDC158.

**Discussion:** Ellen Shipley began Item 3: Update on Action Item: ***DFAT to circulate the draft ToR for the ANCP Audit/Spot Checks to the CDC out-of-session***: A discrepancy was noted in the reflection of the process - although NGO CDC members requested an out-of-session meeting to discuss ANCP spot checks ToR, the minutes say the draft ToR would be circulated out of session.

Tanya Pridannikoff advised this was not a retrospective change, but rather a different interpretation of the discussion, but that the minutes can be changed to reflect the request for a meeting if that was the consensus.

The Committee agreed that going forward, it would be good practice for the Chair to declare action items during the meeting, so everyone is clear.

Ellen Shipley noted that wording from the draft minutes under Item 4 – Conflict of Interest Discussion (*The NGO CDC members wish to see an established set of processes for addressing conflicts once identified*) had been deleted.

Tanya Pridannikoff stated that this may have arisen due to summarising like-points for clarity. Felt emphasis to different sides of the conversation and differing weighting could be reflective of unconscious bias of the minute taker (ACFID/DFAT). Ellen Shipley responded by noting the difficulty in minute taking for the CDC, that when there are differing views, it is important to record the conversation as it happened, to demonstrate thorough process.

**Action:** DFAT to amend CDC158 minutes to reflect CDC members' original request for an out of session meeting to discuss the ANCP audit/Spot checks ToR.

**Action:** DFAT to amend CDC158 minutes to restore the deleted sentence (*The NGO CDC members wish to see an established set of processes for addressing conflicts once identified*) as dot point two.



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### The Chair invited further comment and endorsement of CDC158 minutes

- No further comments
- CDC158 Minutes endorsed (as amended) by Ellen Shipley and seconded by John Morley.

### The Chair invited comments on the draft minutes for CDC159.

**Discussion:** Jessica Waite queried item 6 – *Other Issues tabled by NGO Representatives*. The minutes read as if NGO representatives thought DFAT had already adopted a blanket approach to sharing OR Reports, but in fact NGO representatives were simply looking into this as one of several options. Ellen Shipley suggested alternative wording to reflect the nuance of the discussion: that the NGO representatives had raised concerns that DFAT *proposed* to adopt a blanket approach to sharing OR reports with potential in-confidence information, without NGO consent.

Tanya Pridannikoff confirmed that DFAT would never share an OR report without the NGO's consent. Jessica Waite clarified that it wasn't that NGO representatives thought that DFAT was or would share OR Reports without consent, but that when surveyed, NGOs continue to expect consent be sought. Agreement was reached to amend the wording accordingly.

**Action:** DFAT to amend CDC159 minutes to reflect that NGO representatives “raised concerns that had DFAT proposed to adopt a blanket approach to sharing OR reports.”

Action: DFAT Chair agreed to confirm the action items during the meeting to ensure action items are accurately captured in the minutes.

### The Chair invited any further comment and endorsement of CDC159 minutes

- No further comments
- CDC159 Minutes endorsed (as amended) by Andrew Hartwich and seconded by Tanya Pridannikoff

### **Item 3. Update on Action Items**

Tanya Pridannikoff reported on ongoing action items:

- **Draft Joint Paper on Conflict of Interest:**



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**Discussion:** As per tracked changes in the current Action Log, changes to the paper from both DFAT and the NGO Representatives are now incorporated. Andrew Hartwich suggested scheduling a review of the paper, and agreement was reached to review the paper in 12 months.

**Recommendation:** The meeting endorsed the revised paper.

**Action:** Review Conflict of Interest Paper in June 2021.

John Morley noted the importance of the assessors' report remaining 'as written' but questioned the method of ensuring that additional conditions recommended by the CDC or DFAT and approved by the delegate remain attached to the OR.

Tanya Pridannikoff confirmed that DFAT's internal process ensures that the OR reports and Delegate's advice are filed appropriately. SmartyGrants is used to record any 'subject to' clauses, and an internal master list remains up to date, to ensure information is always at hand, in two separate sources.

John Morley asked - if an agency has a subject to, but the subsequent review comes back not entirely acceptable, how are the unresolved issues handled, what information and recommendations are provided to the delegate?

Ellen Shipley asked about DFAT's process of ensuring it tracks and NGOs receive reminders of expectations of additional conditionality through delegate decision advice – and whether a clear explanation of the process should be incorporated into the accreditation manual. Tanya Pridannikoff explained that in the past when an agency is nine to twelve months out from re-accreditation, a letter goes out reminding them of the date, and the Delegate's previous advice of their accreditation, to ensure no information is missing.

**Action:** DFAT to update the accreditation manual at its next review to note the documents that should be supplied to re-accrediting NGOs and NGOs with subject to requirements. NGOs should receive additional documents, i.e. including the reminder letters with AP submission due date, the last delegate's advice, the previous OR report and any subsequent requirements provided by DFAT, CDC and assessors.

- **DFAT is to investigate options to ensure consistency across assessor reports – including through the Assessor Workshop.**

**Discussion:** Ensuring consistency across OR Reports was raised by NGO representatives in previous meetings. Tanya Pridannikoff noted that this issue was raised with assessors prior to, and during the assessors' workshop. One option agreed at the assessors' workshop was for DFAT to provide all completed OR reports to assessors for their information to help facilitate consistency (e.g. DFAT to forward reports after CDC meetings). Committee members discussed how to progress an action item on



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the missed opportunity for CDC members to provide consolidated feedback to the recent assessor's workshop.

Tanya Pridannikoff noted that to ensure that NGOs who have just met the requirements for a criterion keep going in the right direction, assessors often write in a 'recommendation' style. Assessors seek clarity on when they can insert these types of recommendations (which fell short of a 'subject to').

Andrew Hartwich asked if there would be an opportunity to feed into a future assessor's workshop Tanya Pridannikoff confirmed that CDC members can make suggestions to assessors without a workshop if need be.

Ellen Shipley suggested that a consolidated one-page guidance note be drafted out of session summarising the issues noted above, circulated to CDC members for approval, and including a request for assessors to seek guidance from the CDC if required. Jocelyn Condon noted ACFID would be happy to provide assistance to DFAT for this task.

**Action:** DFAT And ACFID to work together to consolidate issues raised at CDC meetings in the last 12-18 months to identify common trends, opportunities for the sector to improve, and enable assessors to learn from each other's assessments. To be circulated to CDC for review and feedback.

**As part of the spot-check process, DFAT is to note trends over time and feed this information back to the CDC.**

The Chair updated the Committee on this action item - the spot check process has been delayed due to COVID-related resourcing pressures and will not be going ahead at this time.

### **Item 4. Accreditation Review Reports**

### **Item 5. Update from DFAT**

Jon Burrough gave an update on DFAT matters to the Committee.

ANCP webinars are proving very useful and will continue whilst there is a need. The budget is the priority now, with the delay in receiving allocations, there have been no cost extensions, and DFAT is hoping for allocation advice early in July to begin an expedited process.

Accreditation assessors' annual contracts are nearly exhausted for FY20/21 and cannot be renewed without a budget allocation, so DFAT is not in a position to consider agency profiles.



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An upcoming webinar led by Belinda Lucas will discuss virtual OR. DFAT is currently discussing management of remote accreditation process.

The DFAT NGO Branch is undergoing restructure – and in a rebuilding phase are considering things like how to conduct the Volunteer Program remotely. OAGDS, ACFID Partnership and CDC and Policy area now led by Jon Burrough, who reports directly to James Gilling, as FAS. Jon Burrough noted the NGO program and partnership section is very interested in developing capability on NGO policy.

### Item 6. Other issues for NGO Representatives to Table

- **Minutes.**

**Discussion:** The Committee agreed that minutes should aim to be as consolidated as possible, moving away from a record of discussion format, unless there are dissenting views. The minutes should also be finalised within a week of the meeting, with DFAT and ACFID working together to get a consolidated set distributed to CDC as soon as possible after that.

The Committee agreed a separate minute is needed for the OR endorsements that took place by prior email to this meeting rather than attempting to include them in the minutes of CDC160.

Ellen Shipley noted that in current circumstances it may be useful to agree whether we want to establish a process to circulate less contentious ORs via email and pick this up in records such as action logs to make sure governance standards are upheld. Jon Burrough noted it might not be an ongoing way to operate but in this very busy year it is important to avoid perpetuating inefficiencies – possibly an emailed record can become an addendum to the previous meetings' minutes. John Morley noted option to record a minute and annex to the next formal meeting.

Out of Session consideration will require CDC members to declare any conflict of interest in advance.

**Action:** DFAT to create a minute to record out-of-session email discussion held prior to CDC160.

### Item 7. Next CDC Date

A meeting date will be set when there is a better idea on the timing of the next assessments.

John Morley raised it may also be possible to look at the revisions to Criterion D2, but this is contingent on the timing of the review by the safeguarding section. Tanya Pridannikoff noted this is not scheduled for consultation till the second half of 2020.

**12:20pm Meeting Close**