



DFAT / NGO COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

A Joint Committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian Non-Government Organisations

168th COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION MEETING

6 March 2023 9.30am to 1.05pm

Meeting held in-person at DFAT, 255 London Cct, Canberra City and online via Teams

Participants

- Ms Selvi Vikan (DFAT) - Chair
- Ms Liz Nannelli (DFAT)
- Ms Ellen Shipley (UnitingWorld) – joined online
- Mr John Morley (Plan International Australia)
- Ms Sarah Hunt (Childfund) – joined online
- Ms Jessica Waite (International Women’s Development Agency) – joined online

CDC Secretariat and Observers

- Ms Jocelyn Condon (ACFID)
- Ms Emily Moreton (ACFID),
- Ms Tina Angel (DFAT), minute taker
- Ms Shani Field (DFAT)

Agenda

Item 1 - Welcome, Introduction, Apologies and conflict check- Chair

Acknowledgement of Country

- The Chair opened the meeting with the Acknowledgement of Country as follows “I would like to pay my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place, and also pay respect to Elders both past and present. I extend this respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people here today.”

Welcome

- The Chair welcomed everyone to 168th CDC meeting and provided reflections on key issues since the 167th meeting held in October 2022.
 - International Development Policy process (over 200 submissions received)
 - the announcement of the international gender equality strategy for investments over \$3m
 - Australian Government’s commitment to a new Disability Strategy.
 - a focus on First Nation’s perspective on foreign policy.

Introductions

- The Chair welcomed the new CDC NGO representative, Ms Sarah Hunt from Childfund and invited her to introduce herself



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- Ms Hunt advised the CDC she is the Global Program Director for Childfund and was looking forward to working with the CDC.

Apologies

- The Chair advised the CDC Ms Christina Munzer has stepped down from the CDC following her departure from DFAT in February 2023.
 - Further, Mr Tim Church is on secondment and sent his apologies.
 - To ensure CDC quorum, Ms Liz Nannelli has stepped in to the DFAT representative position for this CDC meeting.

Note the observers, and Secretariat:

- Ms Jocelyn Condon (ACFID)
- Ms Emily Moreton (ACFID)
- Ms Tina Angel (DFAT), minute taker
- Ms Shani Field (DFAT), joined online
- Ms Robyne Leven, joined at Agenda Item 6

Conflict Check

- The Chair asked all meeting participants to declare any conflicts of interest.
 - Ms Hunt advised she had assisted Opportunity International Australia with some preparatory work related to re-accreditation.
 - Mr Morley noted Plan International engage with UNICEF on programming issues
 - Ms Waite stated her conflict of interest with the IWDA subject to report.
 - Ms Shipley advised she had undertaken a peer assessment as a secondary participant for Act for Peace and their safeguarding activities.
 - Ms Nannelli advised the CDC she was a long-term financial supporter of Transform Aid International.
- The Chair thanked members for declaring perceived conflicts of interest and advised Ms Hunt, Mr Morley, Ms Shipley and Ms Nannelli could remain in the meeting.
 - Ms Waite would be asked to leave the meeting at the time when IWDA's subject to report was being considered by the CDC.

Item 2 - Endorsement of the 167th CDC Minutes - Chair

- The Chair moved that the CDC accept the circulated 167th CDC minutes.
 - The 167th Minutes were accepted by the CDC.
 - Mr Morley endorsed, seconded by Ms Shipley.



Item 3 - Update on Action Items

Accreditation tracker

- The Chair said ACFID had updated the tracking spreadsheet to include the CDC meeting number, and confirmed the spreadsheet will be provided to members as a reference document for each CDC meeting. Action completed.
- The Chair asked the CDC for their views on sharing a redacted version of the accreditation tracker with the Assessors and new NGOs seeking ANCP accreditation.
 - The CDC discussed at length the purpose and intent of sharing the accreditation tracker data, including different audiences.
 - Ms Waite suggested ACFID should lead on sharing the data with the sector through the Community of Practice (COP).
 - : At the last Assessor Workshop held in February 2023, several Assessors indicated they would like to see trends and good practice across the sector.
 - Mr Morley stated he would prefer to share the accreditation tracker data periodically rather than quarterly to deidentify NGOs.
 - Ms Condon queried the logistics of making the trend data available online via the DFAT website and how the data remain up to date.
 - Ms Nannelli suggested the data could remain static and the information would be useful to new accreditation applicants.
 - : Provide new applicants with a summary of criterion requiring subject to's and areas of strength.

Action: The Chair agreed to come back to the CDC via email seeking feedback on how DFAT can share ANCP good practice and areas where NGOs need more support.

Conflict of Interest (COI) Paper – ACFID

- Ms Condon advised the CDC that ACFID had made very minor changes to the COI paper.
 - Action completed; Ms Condon advised minor amendments were made for clarity, reflecting the discussion held at CDC 167.

Accreditation Policy Review

- Ms Vikan said we will need to update reference throughout the Action Log regarding the timing of the Accreditation Refresh. She also said DFAT and the Assessors discussed at the Assessor workshop, held 22-23 February, moving forward with shorter reports, re-introducing the section on recommendations/learnings, and proceeding with using “on balance” wording.
- Ms Waite commented that informed consent (D2) and child protection often get grouped together in subject to recommendations.
- Mr Morley added many NGOs struggle with informed consent and noted the policy could be clearer on record keeping, systems and policies.
- The Chair suggested the trend may warrant a deep dive to see which agencies require additional support.



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- Recognised ACFID's ongoing work with their Code of Conduct and requested ACFID identify any gaps in their CoC around informed consent.
- Ms Nannelli shared with the CDC that some assessors have specialised skills in relation to Australian Indigenous cultural perspectives and informed consent which could be useful to draw on further.
- Ms Hunt suggested a few NGOs could lead on informed consent sessions and Mr Morley added it is worth reviewing domestic structures in schools for guidance.
- Ms Condon mentioned ACFID could organise a session with their members on DFAT's expectation on informed consent.

Action: ACFID to identify gaps in the Code of Conduct as they relate to informed consent and advise CDC of their analysis results at next meeting.

Action: Update the action log to reflect the current timing of the Accreditation Refresh.

Safeguards Policy update

- The Chair said there was no new update from the Human and Environmental Safeguards team, but that the Secretariat had conveyed CDC feedback that the implementation of DFAT's Safeguard Policy will need to ensure adequate lead time for NGOs to implement to make genuine change in real behaviour and actual practice. The Human and Environmental Safeguards team took on this feedback and anticipate being able to provide updates later this year.

ANCP Spot Checks

- The Chair advised spot check findings are shared with the NGO and there is no delegate decision involved in the process; ANCP Spot checks are a program management tool and not an accreditation tool; given the reform agenda and new funding for the ANCP spot checks in 2022-23 had been delayed; and that DFAT can provide a letter to NGOs that have participated in an ANCP spot check and the findings on request.

Action: DFAT to ensure NGOs are aware of the option to request a spot check letter.

ACFID Code of Conduct (CoC) Review

- Ms Condon advised the CDC the review will focus on locally-led development/humanitarian action, climate change, and racial justice, and opportunities to align with other standards including Accreditation criteria. The timeframes may feed into the Accreditation Refresh agenda.
 - ACFID are proposing to consult with stakeholders in March 2023 on the first round of proposed changes.
 - Member workshops will inform changes to the CoC and further conversations with DFAT's refresh team would be beneficial.
 - Will work with DFAT to align consultation workshops with possible Accreditation Refresh sessions in April/May 2023.



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- Expect a clearer picture on where changes to the CoC will be in June and aim for approval of ACFID's revised CoC by August 2023.

Learning agenda and best practice

- The Chair advised the ANCP's Reform and Learning team have developed a draft learning agenda for 2023.
 - Five learning priorities were identified following feedback from NGOs at last annual reflections event.
 - : Climate change (101 training),
 - : Localisation in practice and risk sharing
 - : Gender equality
 - : Disability inclusion and ongoing work with ACFID to identify learning gaps.
 - Consider engaging further with CBM to tailor training
 - : Risk management.
 - Mr Morley suggested reaching out to the Surge Helpdesk to see if there is an opportunity for NGOs to access support on Gender
 - Following feedback from the Assessor's Workshop, DFAT is considering compulsory front-end training for ANGOs applying for ANCP accreditation, including new applicants and upgrades

Action: DFAT will check to see if NGOs are able to access Surge (Gender Practices) or CBM and report back to CDC at the next meeting.

NGO Engagement in Afghanistan

- The Chair provided the CDC with an update on DFAT's approach to NGOs operating in Afghanistan.
 - DFAT welcomes continued engagement from NGOs on the ongoing challenges operating in Afghanistan. Potential support to NGOs is under active review. DFAT's Afghanistan Branch are currently pursuing a restart to CARE Australia's Empowerment through Education program.

Item 4 - Update from DFAT

NPQ Section update – The Chair

- The Chair advised:
 - Ms Elizabeth Wilde commenced as head of the Development Policy Division on 27 February 2023.
 - : Ms Wilde has worked in a number of roles across DFAT, including a posting to Geneva.
 - The NPQ team has had a minor restructure
 - : Reform sub-team established to oversee the implementation of the ANCP Evaluation recommendations.
- Ms Nannelli updated the CDC on member changes



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- Ms Christina Munzer left DFAT in early 2023 and is no longer a member of the CDC.
 - : The CDC collectively noted Ms Munzer was an engaged CDC member that provided valuable feedback, particularly on humanitarian issues and requested that the CDC send a letter of thanks to Ms Munzer for her contribution to the CDC.
- DFAT will shortly undertake an EOI process seeking nominations for new DFAT representatives on the CDC, and DFAT may review the CDC Terms of Reference (TORs) for DFAT's representatives on the CDC as part of the Accreditation Refresh.

Action: DFAT will undertake an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, seeking nominations for DFAT's representatives on the CDC.

Action: DFAT to write a letter to Ms Munzer to pass on thanks for her contribution to the CDC.

2023 Accreditation Assessor's workshop – The Chair

- The Chair advised the CDC of key outcomes for the last Assessor workshop held in February 2023.
 - Development financing
 - : NGOs are accessing different forms of finance that are not currently reflected in Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE).
 - : DFAT will investigate finance options in the Accreditation Refresh.
 - Ms Nannelli reflected feedback about the Organisation Review report structure
 - : Complexity and size of the Organisation Review (OR) reports is an issue
 - : NGOs and Assessors acknowledge the complexity and size of OR reports.
 - : Discussed the option of providing the CDC a two-page summary with the OR report and Desk Assessment (DA) as an annex.
 - : Ms Nannelli sought feedback from the CDC on the structure of the OR report.
 - : The Chair agreed there was room to cut down on repetition and DFAT will come back to the CDC, seeking CDC input on how best to refine the OR report.
 - : The Chair said Assessors see the CDC as a Governance Body rather than a Management Body.
- Ms Waite noted the reports are long and some parts are simply cut and pasted from the Agency Profile (AP) or DA.
 - Liked the summary at the end of the report.
 - Wants to see the analysis of the OR, rather than the mechanics of the process.
 - Supports the use of the 'on balance' judgement.
- Mr Morley questioned how much information the CDC needs to see:



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- There were previous ORs where Assessors had failed NGOs following an OR and provided the CDC with little explanation as to why the decision had been made.
 - Mindful the Assessors have visibility of the whole process, and the CDC has a snapshot.
 - Noted executive summaries create more work for the Assessors.
 - The CDC has a management role as the OR report is considered by the CDC before it goes to the DFAT delegate for a decision.
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- The Chair noted the consensus to continue using the 'on balance' recommendation, providing:
 - The NGO shows intent and a demonstrated commitment to implement the assessor's recommendation.
 - The Accreditation Refresh will look at connections between locally-led development, risk management, and a partnership model.
 - Noted some concerns from CDC members that assessors may be pushing NGOs to operate beyond the criterion requirements.
 - Sought CDC advice on whether DFAT is setting the bar correctly in relation to cross-cutting issues?
 - Ms Shipley said it is useful to know faith-based organisations implement locally-led development well and often carry risk on behalf of their local partners.
 - Ms Hunt noted she looks for an analysis in the report and the 'on balance' terminology is useful to understand how decisions/recommendations are made.
 - Ms Waite expressed cross-cutting issues are difficult to nuance between Base and Full level accreditation.
 - Mr Morley added the criteria is written the same for Base and Full.
 - Suggested the Accreditation Refresh should address the massive compliance burden for Base agencies.
 - The funding amount is not commensurate for the effort Base level NGOs need to demonstrate for accreditation.
 - Ms Shipley suggested DFAT and the CDC look seriously at whether ACFID's Code of Conduct could be used as a measure for Base level accreditation.

Action: Ms Nannelli to email the CDC, seek further input from the CDC on the structure of the OR reports.

10 minute break from 10.50am

Item 5 – Subject-to and Organisation Review Reports

Accreditation Review Summary – Ms Shani Field

- Ms Field advised CDC members the 2022 accreditation round, which closed on 30 September 2022, received 5 applications



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- two ANGOs applying at Base level
- three ANCP NGOs seeking to upgrade their accreditation from Base to Full.
 - : Desk assessments and organisational reviews have commenced.

Organisation Review Reports (DFAT) – Ms Shani Field

- Ms Field also advised that Motivation Australia announced in November they will continue their operations with the support of Interplast Australia and New Zealand.
 - The transition announcement can be found here:
<https://www.motivation.org.au/news-and-events/news/transition-announcement>
 - Ms Field advised up to nine ANGOs due for re-accreditation in 2023-4

Upcoming Subject To reports

- Ms Field advised there are three pending subject to reports:

Item 6 – CDC role in the ANCP Accreditation and Funding Policy refresh – Ms Robyne Leven

- Ms Leven thanked the CDC for their input into the accreditation and funding policy refresh.
 - Moving forward, the CDC role will continue to provide policy oversight.
 - DFAT is seeking to outsource this work and it is currently out to market.
 - Planning to commence work in April/May/June 2023.
 - : Will work in sync with ACFID and their Code of Conduct review to avoid any duplication (starting early May).
 - Draft report completed in August.
 - DFAT will work closely with the consultant and there will be opportunities for the CDC to engage in the process.
 - : CDC seen as key informants with the expectation they will review the draft and endorse the final report.
 - : DFAT will hold an out-of-session CDC meeting if required.
- Mr Morley agreed that the CDC would play a core role in this piece of work and suggested the consultants actively engage with NGOs to try and capture the diversity of ANCP NGOs.
- The Chair stated the ANCP evaluation round tables demonstrated real dialogue and opportunities for NGOs and key informants to exchange views and ideas.
- Ms Hunt asked whether localisation will be considered and there is an opportunity to push the locally led development agenda.
- Ms Shipley queried whether there was any scope for Post to engage in the accreditation (due diligence) process and extended ways in which accreditation may work.
 - Gave the example of Uniting World Pacific Council of Churches, DFAT and various organisations.
- Mr Morley added some NGO projects in Fiji are run by managing contractors.
 - Questioned how bilateral engagement impacts on local partners, the localisation agenda and the burden of due diligence requirements.
 - : In this context, DFAT processes are rarely considered.



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- Suggested the consultants reach out to other key informants (ANGOs) that are not part of the ANCP.
 - : Explore why they are choosing alternative pathways to deliver development projects on behalf of DFAT.
- The Chair noted this review will look at how ANCP processes can support local partners and work with DFAT.
 - Ms Leven added there is also an opportunity to review the role of Assessors in the accreditation process.

Item 7 – Other issues for NGO representatives to table

- The Chair noted no other issues had been tabled.

Item 8 – Confirm next CDC meeting date

- The Chair advised CDC members that the next CDC meeting will be held in late May 2023.
 - The next meeting will be hosted by ACFID.
 - Thanked the CDC members and ACFID for their preparation and input to the meeting.

1.05pm Meeting Closed.