



## DFAT / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation

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

171<sup>st</sup> COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION MEETING  
12 MARCH 2024 – 11:30 – 2:30pm  
ACFID House, 14 Napier Close, Deakin & online via MS Teams

### Participants

- Ms Selvi Vikan (DFAT) - Chair
- Ms Mary James (DFAT)
- Ms Laura Minson (DFAT)
- Mr John Morley (Plan International Australia)
- Mr Peter Keegan (UnitingWorld)
- Ms Sarah Hunt (ChildFund Australia)

### CDC Secretariat and Observers

- Ms Jocelyn Condon (ACFID)
- Ms Emily Moreton (ACFID), minute taker
- Ms Liz Nannelli (DFAT)
- Ms Shani Field (DFAT)
- Ms Thenu Herath (DFAT)

### Additional (joined 11:50)

- Ms Sarah Goulding (DFAT)
- Ms Fabia Shah (DFAT)

### Agenda

#### 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 171<sup>st</sup> CDC meeting.
- The Chair acknowledged the departure of Ms Jessica Waite from the CDC, following her resignation from IWDA and move into the domestic sector. The Chair noted Ms Waite’s valuable contributions to the CDC and confirmed that DFAT would draft a thank you letter to Ms Waite. CDC members were invited to provide input to the letter through the ANCP Accreditation team.
- The Chair welcomed Thenu Herath, as an observer to the Committee. Ms Herath is currently working as a Graduate in the NGO Program and Partnerships Section.



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### Apologies

- Mr Adrian Fleming (DFAT)

### Conflict Check

- The Chair asked meeting participants to declare any conflicts of interest.
  - Mr Keegan declared a conflict related to agenda item 5 due to his employment at Uniting World. The Chair confirmed that Mr Keegan would be requested to leave the meeting for the discussion and decision regarding Uniting World's OR report.

### 2. Endorsement of the 170<sup>th</sup> CDC Meeting Minutes (Chair)

- The Chair said the draft minutes of the 170<sup>th</sup> CDC meeting were circulated to Members as part of the meeting papers.
  - Ms Minson noted that some minor edits had already been shared with the Accreditation team regarding the spelling of her name.
  - Mr Morley moved to accept the minute and Ms Hunt seconded the motion.

### 3. Update on Action Items (Chair)

- The Chair noted that the Action Log was circulated to Members and asked if there were any that required clarification.
- Mr Morley asked if there were any updates on the use and utility of Spot Checks.
  - The Chair said that it had been a pilot program and the continuation of the process is currently under discussion. Resources are currently focused on ANCP Refresh, but an update will be provided at the next CDC meeting.
  - Ms Condon asked if it will be an update on the outcomes of the pilot or how the Spot Checks will be progressed.
  - The Chair said it will be an update about if and how the Spot Check process will be continued, following conversations with the ANCP Operations team.

### 4. Updates

#### a. From DFAT (Chair)

#### ANCP Accreditation and Funding Policy refresh

- The Chair provided an update on the ANCP Accreditation and Funding Policy refresh.
  - Current focus is on drafting advice to the Ministers' offices.
  - The contract of the Refresh team has been extended to 30 June 2024 to work on the Accreditation manual and any changes to the funding policy.
  - Aiming to share recommendations with CDC at the next meeting.

#### ANCP Annual Reflection

- There was strong support from the NGOs for a face-to-face event.



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- The Chair thanked Ms Hunt for providing the CDC update at Annual Reflections.
- In 2024, DFAT is considering combining ANCP 50-year anniversary celebrations with the Annual Reflections event and will look for ways to engage the sector in planning the celebration, with Ms Herath coordinating this process during her graduate rotation.

### Accreditation Assessors Workshop

- The Chair thanked Mr Morley for participating and providing the CDC update and Ms Moreton for providing an ACFID update.
- Draft Accreditation Criteria were shared with the Assessors for their review and input. The focus was on streamlining, reducing duplication and leveraging the ACFID Code.
- Overall, it was beneficial to hear the perspectives of the assessors, including on ways to improve efficiency and consistency in accreditation.
- There was also participation from wider DFAT colleagues, including updates on the various strategies under development.
- Outcomes of the workshop included:
  - Assessors will meet together to discuss a unified approach to assessment;
  - Length of reports – need to have a balance between being concise and including enough evidence for the CDC. The Assessors would appreciate CDC feedback on ways to improve reports, and to have examples of good reports shared with them.
  - Pre-investment in Accreditation process – DFAT are considering a compulsory online activity prior to applying for ANCP, in collaboration with ACFID. The purpose is to help NGOs make informed decisions about whether to proceed with their application.
  - Decision: The timeframe for subject tos will commence from the date of the Delegate's decision.
    - Mr Morley noted that there was a discussion in the room about the consequence being that some organisations will get more time than others, depending on the timing of the OR. This was deemed to be immaterial and the consensus in the room was that organisations would have sufficient time to respond, so long as there was consistency in timing from the delegate's decision across NGOs.
    - Mr Morley also noted that the assessors discussed the difference between 'on balance' and 'subject tos'. Overall the decision is still made on balance, but the use of subject tos are specifically for remediable issues.



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### DFAT Strategies Update

- The Chair welcomed Ms Goulding (A/S Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch) to provide an update on DFAT’s Gender Equality, Disability Equity and Rights, LGBTQIA+ Human Rights Engagement strategies
  - Ms Goulding welcomed the level of interest and support from the NGO community in DFAT’s strategy development.
  - Disability Equity and Rights: Consulted with over 300 people across Australia and in-country as part of consultations and received over 90 submissions. These are in the process of being made publicly available.
  - Gender Equality: Consulted with over 600 stakeholders and received over 90 submissions. These are in the process of being made publicly available.
  - LGBTQIA+ Human Rights Engagement: There has been consultations in the region and in Australia with relevant stakeholders.
  - Working for public release of strategies in 2024.
  - All strategies will speak to International Development and Foreign Policy, and some will speak to other issues including Trade.
  - By the next CDC meeting, expecting there will be the opportunity to discuss implementation with the CDC.
  - Mr Morley asked what guidance will be given to Post once the strategies are completed.
    - Ms Goulding said that it was important to have the strategies being developed at the same time as the DPPs. For Gender Equality and Disability Equity and Rights, there is an expectation that DPPs report against the indicators in the International Development Policy Delivery and Performance Framework. There will be a through-line in terms of implementation. It is important for partner governments to lead priorities. Level of engagement locally will be determined by the context.
    - Ms Hunt asked if the three strategies will be released at once.
      - Ms Goulding said we expected they would be released independently. Their release will have an opportunity for stakeholders to be engaged.
- The Chair welcomed Ms Shah (Director, Disaster Risk Reduction Section) to provide an update on DFAT’s Humanitarian Strategy
  - A new Humanitarian Strategy was announced in August 2023 and 19 humanitarian focused submissions were provided as part of the International Development Policy consultations.
  - Overall there has been a strong appetite for consultation, with 85 held to date with over 250 stakeholders. This included key DFAT Posts, UN agencies, international financial institutions and the NGO sector, through



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ACFID. Consultation focused on specific topics, and took a whole of government approach. The consultation period is now closed.

- The strategy is being drafted and is expected to be released in 2024.
- Mr Morley asked to what extent the strategy will provide direction for programming choices for DFAT and will it cover AHP or float above specific programs.
  - Ms Shah said that it was a broad strategy for whole of government, but DFAT programs will fit underneath it.
  - An implementation plan is being developed that will accompany the strategy.
  - Resilience is being viewed as core to development, not necessarily humanitarian specific.
- Mr Morley asked if protracted crises will be covered.
  - Ms Shah confirmed they would.
- Mr Morley asked if it would articulate the link between resilience and climate change.
  - Ms Shah said that climate change will feature in the strategy.
- Mr Morley asked if planned relocations would be covered in the strategy as this was a topic that had come up recently in discussions in Fiji.
  - Ms Shah said it had been flagged as a strategic issue, but also as safeguards and programming issues.
- The Chair thanked Ms Goulding and Ms Shah for their input.

### Safeguards Policy Review

- Ms James provided an update on the Safeguards Policy Review
  - Child Protection and PSEAH policy are being reviewed first, while input is sought from other sections on the Environmental Safeguards policy.
  - Donna Kingelty is leading the process- [safeguardreviews@dfat.gov.au](mailto:safeguardreviews@dfat.gov.au)
  - There will be consultations and the CDC will be kept updated.
- Ms Condon noted that ACFID and its members made a submission in 2021 and asked if previous submissions were being looked at.
  - Ms James said that previous content would be looked at but there would also likely be additional consultations.

### Staffing updates

- The Chair noted the following changes in personnel:
  - Ms Jane Chandler has been appointed the new Assistant Secretary of the Global Programs and Partnerships Branch. Ms Chandler has a long history working with AusAID and DFAT including two postings: one as Deputy HOM in Laos; and another Solomon Islands, as well as engagement with AHP.



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- Civil Society Partnerships: a new NGO policy area has been set up that includes ACFID partnership, civil society partnership fund and NGO policy issues beyond ANCP. The team is currently being formed and is led by Mr Michael Bergmann.

### Accreditation reviews summary

- Four new applications were received by the closing date of 30 September 2023.
- The Chair noted that new accreditation and funding policy changes would take effect in 2025 and would not affect current applicants.

### Questions on DFAT update

- Ms Condon asked for further details regarding the ANCP Refresh and what the status of the Refresh report will be when it comes to the CDC.
  - The Chair explained that there would still be opportunity for feedback from the CDC.
- Ms Condon asked what the CDC will be receiving, will it be the full report and management response?
  - The Chair said that this was still being decided internally.
- Mr Morley asked if the Accreditation and Funding Policy will be released together.
  - The Chair advised that a decision about release has not been made.
- Ms Condon asked if there is a clear policy about how the CDC addresses evidence regarding the conduct of assessors compared with evidence related to the accreditation criteria, and should the discussion about the conduct of the assessors be treated separately.
  - The CDC members agreed that the conduct of the assessors was not within the remit of the CDC, as they were hired by DFAT.

### b. ACFID Update (Ms Condon)

- ACFID's revised Code of Conduct comes into effect on 30 June 2024.
  - ACFID is hosting a series of in-person and online events to help socialise the changes with members in April, including full day workshops and two CEO Roundtables in Sydney and Melbourne on racial justice.
  - ACFID's new Locally Led Action Toolkit will be launched as part of these events
  - ACFID is working with the ANCP team around alignment of the Code and any new Accreditation Criteria.
- ACFID is running a three-month Climate Peer Learning Program which provides a structured learning program for organisations wanting to review and improve their responses to climate change across operations, advocacy or programming.
  - The program includes online and face-to-face discussions.
  - ACFID is collaborating with the ANCP team to host a series of 'deep dive' sessions as part of the Program, specifically on ANCP and Accreditation issues.
- Staffing changes:



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- Ms Condon will take on the role of Chief of Policy and Advocacy until March 2025, and Ms Moreton has been appointed as Director Effectiveness and Engagement for the same period.
- ACFID participation in the CDC will now include Ms Moreton as the ACFID Observer, and Mr Alan Hewson as CDC Secretariat support. Mr Hewson is ACFID's Policy and Partnerships Lead.

### 5. Organisation Review Reports – DFAT

Seven organisation review reports and one subject to report were discussed.

### 6. Other issues for NGO representatives to table

No other issues were raised.

### 7. Next CDC

- Ms Nannelli advised that the next CDC is planned for June, with the potential for an offline meeting in May to review one report if needed.
- The Chair thanked the CDC for their engagement and input.

2:35pm Meeting close.