

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Between the Commonwealth of Australia (AusAID) and
the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)

24 March 2009

Preamble

The Australian Government has indicated its commitment to work more closely with the Australian non-profit development sector. The aim of this Partnership Agreement is to increase Australia's impact in promoting sustainable development in which people are able to enjoy a full range of human rights free from poverty.

This Partnership Agreement is intended to foster effective and innovative approaches which harness the capacities and networks of federal government agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs) to maximise Australia's contribution to international development. It recognises the central relationship between AusAID and ACFID - since the 1970s - in promoting our mutual interests and seeks to enhance this. It also seeks to strengthen cooperation between other federal agencies engaged in development-related work and the NGO sector, as represented by ACFID.

This Partnership Agreement does not replace existing agreements between the parties. It sets out the following principles to guide all future cooperation between AusAID and ACFID between 2009-2014.

Shared development principles

The following principles are shared between the parties:

International Best Practice

Both parties commit to work towards achieving best practice in international development policy formulation, implementation and impact assessment.

Development effectiveness

A strong focus on the evaluation of program effectiveness, particularly from the perspective of partners and beneficiaries, is central to this Partnership Agreement. The long-term positive impact on the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society, especially women, children and people with disability, will be an important measure in this regard.

Both parties will work together to develop an enabling environment for coordination and dissemination of civil society efforts, for enhancing accountability for results and for engaging civil society organisations in the application of *Paris Declaration* principles.

Reducing poverty

In support of international efforts to achieve the MDGs, both parties aim to address both the causes and effects of poverty through the promotion of self-reliance and facilitation of access to basic services including education, water supply and sanitation, health and other resources, especially for marginalised communities.

Building capacity

A strong focus on enhancing the capacity of partner countries and community counterparts will be pursued based on the priorities identified by those counterparts.

Both parties will also support the capacity and professional development of the Australian Development NGO sector to enable Australian NGOs to learn from, transfer skills to, as well as strengthen the capacity of, their local partners

Sustainability

The Partnership Agreement recognises an agreed focus on programs designed to benefit future generations as well as the present generation, taking account of issues of environmental sustainability and long-term economic and financial viability.

Gender

Gender equality is recognised by both parties as essential to reducing poverty, promoting social justice and increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of development cooperation efforts. Gender equality is also a critical development goal in its own right

Disability Inclusive

People with a disability are often among the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded members of developing countries. Both parties agree to support and promote practical approaches to promote the dignity and well-being of people with a disability.

Participation and good governance

The important role of civil society in contributing to international development efforts and building demand for better governance is recognised. The coordination of NGO and civil society efforts with partner government-led development programs will be encouraged. Efforts will be strongly focused on increasing the participation of disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including women and people with disability, in economic, social and political life.

Involving the Australian community

Both parties aim to maximise the Australian community's understanding of, and support for, international development efforts through joint efforts to expand the reach of their public awareness raising programs and activities.

ACFID commitment

Accountability

- To provide leadership to the NGO sector and maintain a high standard of transparency and accountability to the Australian community about the work of Australian development NGOs and demonstrate a commitment to evaluation and development effectiveness.

Policy development and consultation

- To ensure that the Australian development sector is well informed and consulted, where appropriate, about government policy issues and to facilitate effective consultation processes to assist policy development.
- To respect the role of government in implementing Australian government policy and the confidentiality of government information when given access to it on that basis.
- To initiate consultation with government on policy and program opportunities or concerns and to provide early advice of international visitors or events which may be of direct interest to government agencies.
- To provide timely responses to requests for input on relevant policy matters where possible.
- To support a strong, professional and accountable Australian NGO sector to implement 'best practice' by providing leadership on international development policy and the ACFID code of conduct and accreditation issues.

Government commitment

Accountability

- Maintain a high standard of transparency and accountability to the Australian community about government-funded NGO, community and civil society international development programs within Australia and overseas through effective and appropriate monitoring and review mechanisms and reporting.

Independence

- To encourage the views, and respect the independence, of ACFID and its member agencies, including their right to comment on government policy and advocate for policy change and the right to maintain the confidentiality of information provided to ACFID.

Policy development and participation

- To strive for international best practice in developing a coherent policy framework for systematically engaging civil society, including NGOs, in Australia's development cooperation programming and policy.
- To facilitate NGO perspectives and consult ACFID as early as possible on emerging policy and program developments, that may impact directly on Australian NGO operations.
- To provide an annual opportunity for consultation with the government's Development Effectiveness Steering Committee.
- To provide opportunities for dialogue through regular meetings with ACFID.
- To provide ACFID, where appropriate, with sufficient prior notice for input to AusAID's regular country and thematic program planning to ensure that the full benefit of considered NGO perspectives can be brought to bear.
- To consult with ACFID, where appropriate, in finalising Australian government positions in multilateral and regional forums and include a relevant Australian NGO representative in delegations, as appropriate.
- To enhance communications where possible, by informing ACFID in advance of government-organised international visits which are relevant to the work of Australian NGOs.

Joint Review

- Both parties agree to review this Agreement on an annual basis and at other times as mutually agreed.

Partnership Agreement

AusAID and ACFID agree that this Partnership Agreement, whilst expressing the goodwill and intent of the Parties to cooperate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, does not create any legal relations and does not create a partnership at law between the parties in any jurisdiction. The Partnership Agreement does not represent any commitment with regard to funding on the part of the parties. Funding arrangements will be set out in a separate contractual agreement.

Settlement of Differences

The two Parties will consult together at any time upon request of either partner regarding any matter relating to the terms of this Partnership Agreement and will endeavour in a spirit of co-operation, good faith and mutual trust to resolve any difficulties or misunderstandings which may arise.

Amendments

The Partnership Agreement may be amended and supplemented at any time by an Arrangement in writing in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the two Parties.

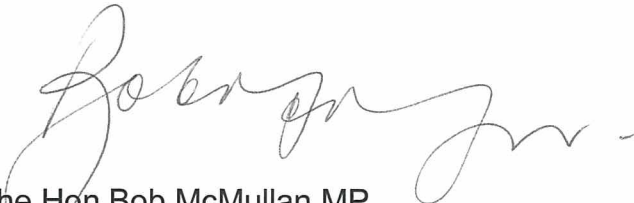
Duration

This Partnership Agreement will take effect from the date of its signature and will remain in effect for a period of five (5) years from that date.

Termination

This Partnership Agreement may be terminated by either party for any reason at any time on six months' notice in writing to the other Party.

SIGNED on behalf of **THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**



The Hon Bob McMullan MP
Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance

SIGNED on behalf of the **AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



The Hon Margaret Reid
President of ACFID