

Exemplar Written Submission  
to the Australian Government  
International Development  
Policy Consultation

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## Introduction

As per the new International Development Policy Terms of Reference (ToR), Exemplar International Pty Ltd (Exemplar) is responding to the Australian Government's invitation for submissions addressing the prescribed topics and related matters.

Due to recent global uncertainty triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Exemplar highlights the need to develop greater disability inclusion, health preparedness and resilience which will lead to enhanced regional security and stability and the ability for lower income countries to finance basic services. In addition to the devastating toll on humanity, the global pandemic and climate change disaster events has also tested global supply chain networks and economies to the brink of collapse. Themes highlighted within this submission encourage the Australian Government to consider and explore various opportunities to boost and enhance production capabilities in the region.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the new International Development Policy to support Australia's foreign policy, trade, security and development objectives and help countries in our region achieve their development and climate objectives. We have also welcomed the opportunity to meet with DFAT staff in person to consult on the policy.

### 1. Exemplar Overview

Founded in 2021, Aspen Medical is an Australian owned new entrant to the international development sector with a focus on health, disability inclusion, addressing the health impacts of climate change and engaging on key Pacific issues through a unique partnership approach. Exemplar is supported in its health programs by Aspen Medical, a leading global provider of innovative healthcare solutions. Aspen Medical has over 19 years of experience delivering health solutions in remote, challenging or under-resourced areas for international development as well as humanitarian and defence programs. They have worked across the Pacific, Middle East and Asia including Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, UAE, Indonesia and Vanuatu.

### 2. Responses to the Terms of Reference

The Australian Government is preparing a new International Development policy to guide Australia's international development cooperation, a vital element of support for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Pacific.

The new policy will set the long-term direction for Australia's international development program. It will deliver on the Government's commitment to work in partnership with its neighbours in the Pacific and Southeast Asia to address shared challenges and achieve our shared aspirations. It will also see Australia contribute to a global system that can help meet present and future development needs.

Exemplar's responses to the TOR are set out below under the Guiding Key Questions.

### 3. Guiding Key Questions

Exemplar has chosen to address only a selection of the Guiding Key Questions as advised in the face-to-face consultations.

## 1.1. What key trends or challenges will shape Australia's engagement in our region and globally over the next five to 10 years? What risks and opportunities does this present for Australia's development assistance?

Climate change is the largest challenge that Australia will face in the long term and short term in Australia and the Pacific. Climate change mitigation and adaptation must be key in every decision and investment in the Pacific by the Australian government. This needs to be addressed in all criteria for selection of investments, as well as design, implementation and evaluation.

The opportunity to work with local partners on climate change and adaptation will ensure locally led solutions that could be beneficial globally. It also provides an opportunity for Australia to be a leader in climate change technology and advancement and ensuring a First Nations approach to addressing this challenge.

Australia needs to reinvest in Education and Health in the Pacific to ensure a well-educated and healthy generation to engage in future opportunities and build a prosperous and resilient Pacific. To ensure maximum positive impact, people with disability, women and minority groups MUST be in the forefront of design, implementation and review for every investment and strategy.

Health and Education priorities must be guided by the National Government plans for each Pacific country. A regional Pacific Health Network must be strengthened and resourced, so that Pacific Islanders can receive specialist medical treatments within the Pacific. For example, Pacific Islanders could travel to Fiji for oncology and cardiology treatment. Other Pacific Island countries could focus on other medical specialities (renal dialysis, neurology etc), as well as building capabilities for allied health. The network must also be resourced to address the increasing health impacts of climate change. It should also be noted that climate change is a major disruptor not only to health, but to education in the Pacific.

Along with improved health infrastructure, Australia must build the health capabilities within each Pacific country such as nursing, aged care and disability support workers, benefitting Pacific Islands and ultimately, Australia's health worker skills shortage in regional areas through its Pacific Labour Mobility program.

Along with capacity building a regional skilled health workforce, Australia must support opportunities to boost and enhance production/ manufacturing capabilities in the region, addressing supply chain restrictions and complexities.

## 1.2. How can Australia best utilise its national strengths to enhance the impact of our development program and address multidimensional vulnerabilities?

Australia has a high performing health workforce that can be deployed to capacity build Pacific Island health workers. Ensuring Australia has a highly effective health workforce on its doorstep will ensure we can address regional health emergencies and respond to health requirements in a disaster. Ensuring a well-resourced and capable health workforce in the Pacific will also ensure Pacific Islanders have a reduced number of acquired disabilities through inadequate medical responses to premature births, accidents and illnesses.

Australia should invest and support the growth of Australian and Pacific owned organisations to ensure investment in this sector and an improved economic outlook for the region, including increased employment opportunities for women and people with disability.

### **1.3. How should the new policy reflect the Government's commitments to build stronger and more meaningful partnerships in our region, founded on mutual trust and respect and shared values of fairness and equality?**

The policy should facilitate the building of trusted partnerships that lead to a stable and inclusive regional economy. This can be achieved if Australia works with local partners and civil society in supporting their strategic directions and providing capacity building to enable them to access opportunities such as tenders, grants or building their production/manufacturing capabilities.

Bilateral relationships must be maintained, and this can be improved in the immediate future by re-establishing mentoring relationships between Australia and Pacific government ministers. Australia also needs to support the increased political and civil leadership of women and people with disabilities. The benefit of building the advocacy capacity of PWD and OPDS in the Pacific is an example of how this leadership development support can have an enormous benefit.

### **1.4. What lessons from Australia's past development efforts should inform the policy? What is Australia seen to be doing comparatively well?**

Long term sustainability must be the major learning from past development efforts. Quick wins are not to be expected in the Pacific environment and Pacific Island Governments need a longer timeline to build their capacity to provide essential services. Long term investment and commitment is the key to successful programming and national government run services in the Pacific.

Australia is the leader in disability inclusion, in particular advocacy for international development. This should be continued and enhanced, as well as encouraging other donors by demonstrating the impact of disability inclusion.

The new Development Policy should ensure that assistive equipment is available through regional or local production that will reduce the barriers for people with disabilities to health and education opportunities.

### **1.5. How should the performance and delivery systems be designed to promote transparency and accountability, as well as effectiveness and learning in Australia's development assistance?**

Australian International Development investments must be accountable to beneficiary communities, and communicate outcomes appropriately.