



Kyeema Foundation

Submission to DFAT regarding New International Development Policy

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1. Executive Summary

In a time of converging and cascading mega risks, international development policy must deliver optimal returns on investments in human, environmental and financial capital by ensuring synergistic actions across development partners. Australian Government Policy that facilitates engagement with and action by those operating at global, regional and national level would ensure Australia is represented and seen as a trusted partner. Given that the Kyeema Foundation is an Australian NGO which focuses on delivering positive change through partnerships with local communities, this submission will focus on national and sub-national level challenges and outline responses that would complement activities implemented by multilateral and regional bodies.

The following policy recommendations are highlighted for what we see as three key development challenges:

- 1. Build more resilient food systems that can better withstand increasing supply chain shocks;*
- 2. A One Health approach that enables intersectoral coordination will deliver better health for all;*
- 3. Localisation will be more effective if viewed through a First Nations lens.*

2. Development Challenges

COVID-19 and the increasing prevalence of impact from climate change has highlighted key challenges for Australian foreign policy and development assistance:

1. Global and regional supply chains have proven brittle and when they fail the effect is felt most acutely by the most vulnerable;
2. Increasing global health threats (including infectious pandemics) have highlighted the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment; and again, these threats disproportionately effect more vulnerable groups;
3. Localisation is impeded by a trust deficit.

Below are connected recommendations to address these challenges. We believe that these can be enhanced by Australian expertise delivered through a community centred development policy.

We believe addressing these issues through policy and targeted funding with appropriately tailored measurement will provide cost effective investment in the Indo Pacific region. Adaptive and locally lead implementation will have a multiplier effect in countries where Australia does not have a significant diplomatic presence.



3. Recommended Policy Responses

3.1 More Resilient Food Systems

Australia has significant, and growing, expertise in sustainable and regenerative agriculture suitable to a variety of climate conditions. This expertise is applicable across different components of the agricultural economy. However, promotion and funding of regenerative agriculture targeting community, village, and household resilience, with particular focus on nutrient-rich and locally grown food is suitable for the majority of partner environments. This ‘agriculture for nutrition’ approach symbiotically combats unacceptably high malnutrition rates and unreliable livelihoods, particularly when focused on up-skilling women-led households.

Low investment smallholder farmer models can be scaled through innovative business models while ensuring they address nutrition needs in urban, semi-urban, and rural and remote settings with a strong localisation agenda.

Digitalisation of agriculture, marketing and project implementation is increasing rapidly. The protection of farmer data and rights requires significant ongoing attention. In relation to project implementation, a digitised common reporting system and framework could significantly enhance the role of development officers at post and facilitate real-time dialogue with partner agencies and communities.

Such approaches provide a framework for interaction on more complex, multi-sectoral issues to be addressed, including tailored biosecurity and early warning mechanisms for health and food systems through a One Health approach.

3.2 One Health: Effective Intersectoral Coordination That Delivers Better Health For All

Achieving optimal health for humans, animals and the environment through a One Health approach requires an equitable and efficient sharing of resources.

Effective and efficient biosecurity is recognised as crucial in the Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action. The successful implementation of this plan will be strengthened by learning the lessons of the past. One lesson is the importance of adequate investment in animal health. Insufficient attention to animal health, especially vaccine preventable livestock diseases, in the Indo-Pacific region has contributed to the spread of diseases with pandemic potential (e.g. highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1) and significant economic impact to the livestock industry (e.g. foot and mouth disease and African swine fever).

Options for improving sustainable control of vaccine preventable animal diseases include the co-design and co-implementation of biosecurity improvements such as: local and/or regional production of efficacious and safe vaccines; local and/regional vaccine quality assurance; the use of thermotolerant vaccines; cold chain establishment and maintenance; timely, efficient vaccine distribution through public and private sector pathways; and developing cost-sharing options with producers.



More broadly we see poor production practices leading to greater land clearing, increase use of antibiotics, consumption of diseased animals (including wildlife), and consequently greater food and health insecurity (including greater risk of zoonotic disease spill-over with pandemic potential).

We recommend including One Health/One biosecurity as a unifying policy strand with funding for livestock biosecurity initiatives that include cross-sectoral partners and draw on the expertise in Federal Government Agencies, Australian research institutions, and NGOs delivered and monitored both at a policy development and a community and/or local level. Appropriate private sector partnerships and investments that encourage improved local or regional animal health systems, and innovative One Health approaches to improved control and treatment should be prioritised where feasible.

3.3 Localisation Through a First Nations Lens

Acknowledgement and reconciliation with First Nations people is intrinsically linked to a genuine, long term localisation agenda. Rapport from shared experience and acknowledgement of the history of colonisation aids in building trust. Local staff and organisations need to trust that development efforts termed localisation are based on a commitment to intergenerational growth and not short-term exploitation or piecemeal labour hire.

By involving First Nations people in that dialogue, including a First Nations ambassador, Australia's development policy will be held to a standard of account that will also be respected domestically.

Some programs are already moving towards local development and ownership, but we envisage a step beyond that. We see the psychological, organisational, and economic benefit of having local staff not bound by single year or project bounded contracts but instead having their own organisation that is a competitive service provider to implement multi-year funded activities. Thus, the return on the investment in building the capacity of local staff would be returned to a local organisation that can in turn grow leaders and a skilled workforce that is less reliant on changing country program priorities or international development actors.

This can be termed a partnership, but that is a term that is weather worn and flexible in interpretation. Building local professional service capability is more apt.

The entry point to this may be more easily found in a civil society hub model that provides a curated market for new local ventures to secure long-term engagement. A concept not dissimilar to the early iterations of Supply Nation.

This will require investment in the guiding framework and standards setting and a risk tolerance not usually seen in the Australian foreign policy environment.

If successful, the downstream benefits are threefold. Local economic growth with reinvestment in the country will increase stability and security. A sustainable base of professionals, trained in the standards and objectives of Australian governance practice will be able to transmit that standard to other programs and non-donor activity. The provision of First Nations advisory practice to the development program and the growth of high standard enterprises will provide workforce capability for the region.