

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

AND

**THE AUSTRALIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
(AusAID)**

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Introduction

1. The Australian Government has expressed its strong support for enhanced coordination between Commonwealth agencies. This Strategic Partnership is designed to advance the Government's policies of promoting security and development, good governance and stability. This Agreement recognises the inter-linkages between security and development challenges and the need for clear, shared objectives across the Australian Government to guide planning and response. Defence and AusAID are natural partners in this endeavour, sharing common interests in fostering a secure and prosperous region and assisting developing country partners.
2. The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a cooperative framework between Defence and AusAID by articulating shared strategic goals, acknowledging agency strengths and establishing partnership principles.

Strategic Partnership Principles

3. The Strategic Partnership is governed by the following principles:
 - a) Recognition that policy coherence and the optimisation of program effectiveness can be enhanced through the identification of and commitment to shared strategic goals.
 - b) The relationship between Defence and AusAID is one of equal partnership, in which the skills, attributes and strengths of each agency are valued by the other.
 - c) The partnership is underpinned by mutual respect, professionalism, honesty, cooperation, the sharing of ideas and open, two-way communication at all levels.
 - d) Recognition that the roles and functions of each agency are guided by their respective responsibilities within the Australian Government.
 - e) A commitment to liaison and early and on-going consultation and cooperation in relation to policies and programs in which they have shared interests, underpinned by a desire to optimise the impact of Australian assistance. Consultation in relation to shared interests encompasses the provision of advice to Ministers, dealing with other government agencies, and the public handling of issues.
 - f) The agencies will engage on performance issues, accountability and risk management by drawing the other's attention to matters likely to impact on their respective policies or program delivery.
 - g) The agencies will assist the other with building their capacity in specified and agreed areas of mutual interest.

Shared Strategic Partnership Goals

4. The agencies will work together to promote Australia's strategic interests and to improve security and development prospects in countries of mutual interest, including through responding effectively to situations of humanitarian need, promoting good governance and long-term, sustainable capacity building, and through enhancing cooperation in delivery of multi-sectoral assistance.
5. More specifically, Defence and AusAID will work cooperatively to:
 - a) leverage each agency's specialist capacities and strategic international engagements to achieve whole of government outcomes in pursuit of broader Government policies;
 - b) deliver high quality and strategic assistance in complex security environments, whether targeted development assistance or security-support assistance, in response to humanitarian or security need. This will be realised through shared analysis, policy advice, priority setting, and engagement of appropriate partners;
 - c) build partner capacity to respond effectively to security threats, including natural and human-made disasters, and in post-conflict situations. In some cases this may include security sector reform activities; and
 - d) contribute to broader Australian security and development policy including in relation to regional institutions, disaster response, maritime security, civil-military cooperation, transnational security issues, engaging in fragile states and reducing the impact of armed violence.

Agency Skills, Attributes and Strengths

6. Each agency brings different skills, attributes and strengths to the Strategic Partnership.

AusAID's strengths include:

- a) providing development policy and program advice in complex operating environments, drawing on an understanding of longer-term development objectives;
- b) managing Australian development cooperation programs focussed on achieving economic growth, human development, stability and effective governance, including through strong partnerships with international and multilateral organisations;
- c) knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social, economic and political context of developing countries and the development and poverty impacts of assistance provided in conflict, post-conflict and fragile environments;
- d) building the capacity of state institutions in developing countries to contribute to stability and nation-building objectives;
- e) managing humanitarian responses and strengthening and building the capacity of national disaster management institutions to improve locally-led disaster mitigation and response; and

- f) experience in integrated whole of government responses to regional crises such as RAMSI.
7. Defence's strengths include:
- a) an established security-support presence in a number of countries, complemented by longstanding Defence Cooperation relationships;
 - b) experience in enhancing maritime surveillance in the Pacific through the Pacific Patrol Boat Program;
 - c) experience in integrated whole of government responses to regional crises such as RAMSI;
 - d) the ability to rapidly respond to, lead, and sustain support to regional crises whether they be of a security or humanitarian nature;
 - e) experience in collaborating with regional organisations and countries to combat transnational terrorism and organised crime; and
 - f) experience in cooperating with international security partners and multilateral security institutions.
8. To achieve the Strategic Partnership goals, Defence will look to AusAID to provide assistance in its areas of strength including:
- a) expert advice on development policy and program development for developing countries in the region;
 - b) expertise on program design, monitoring and evaluation and sustainable capacity-building, particularly in a fragile state context; and
 - c) expertise on peace and conflict drivers in developing countries.
9. AusAID will look to Defence to provide assistance in its areas of strength including:
- a) expert advice on capabilities the ADF can contribute to regional crises, including natural disasters, and also long term, capability development programs in the security sector;
 - b) expert advice on appropriate reforms and initiatives to improve security cooperation and capacity in individual developing countries and their exclusive economic zones and the region more broadly;
 - c) personal security for AusAID and whole of government deployees under the aid program in conflict and crisis environments to ensure that an appropriate level of safety and duty of care obligations are met; and
 - d) intelligence information and services which support and improve decision making in the planning and delivery of aid and development programs, including risk and threat assessments.

10. Specialist assistance will be shared between Defence and AusAID in order to facilitate seamless and effective collaboration in promoting security and development, good governance and stability. It will not be provided to the detriment of the primary activities of either agency. Assistance will be provided in accordance with existing obligations and standards.

Coordination Arrangements

11. The Secretary of Defence and the Director General of AusAID will have overall responsibility for maintaining the Strategic Partnership. A senior executive officer will be the designated point of contact in each agency for relationship issues. In Defence's case this will be First Assistant Secretary, Regional Engagement in International Policy Division and in AusAID's case, it will be the Deputy Director General, Global Programs Division.
12. On a day-to-day basis, dialogue will continue at an operational level between officers of both agencies who are responsible for program design, delivery and implementation and policy advice.
13. Defence and AusAID will meet at least annually at a senior executive level to review the Strategic Partnership and set priorities for cooperation and joint work. These formal cooperation arrangements will support enhanced engagement at all levels in areas of shared strategic interest.
14. Senior engagement on work priorities will provide opportunities for more strategic and efficient programming approaches. Subsidiary agreements will govern the actual operation of specific assistance programs being delivered by Defence and AusAID. These agreements will be cooperatively developed at the working level as required.
15. Dialogue at a senior and operational level will identify opportunities for broader cooperation, including joint research and analysis in areas of shared interest and deepening staff links through exchanges or collaborative work processes.



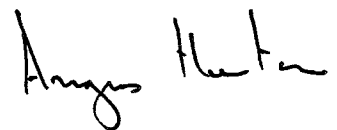
Bruce Davis
Director General
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Date: 28/4/09



Nick Warner
Secretary
Department of Defence

Date: 28 April 2009



ACM Angus Houston
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Date: 28 Apr 2009.