

**Strategic Review of Australia's Support for Peace in Mindanao  
and  
Mid-Term Review of Building Sustainable Institutions and Communities in Bangsamoro  
(BASIC Bangsamoro)  
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Prepared by: Tim Smith, First Secretary

Approved by: Richard Rodgers, Counsellor Political and Public Affairs

Date prepared: 22 February 2017

### Initiative Summary

Initiative Name			
AidWorks initiative number	INL343 (BASIC Bangsamoro activity: 14A222)		
Commencement date	1 July 2014	Completion date	30 June 2017
Total Australian \$	7,317,718 (BASIC Bangsamoro)		
Total other \$			
Implementing partner(s)	<u>BASIC Bangsamoro</u> International Alert Institute for Autonomy and Governance Oxfam The Asia Foundation		
Country/Region	Philippines		
Primary sector	Peace and Stability		
Initiative objective/s	<p>The main objective of the BASIC Bangsamoro grants program is to support long-term stability and development in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. This program should enhance stability and development by supporting efforts to ensure a successful transition to the Bangsamoro and a durable end to armed conflict in Moro areas.</p> <p>BASIC Bangsamoro grants supported proposals for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving institutional capacity to implement the peace agreement;</li> <li>• Ensuring the peace process is more credible and widely supported; and</li> <li>• Strengthening local mechanisms for averting the escalation of violence.</li> </ul>		

### Evaluation Summary

**Evaluation Objective:** The review serves as the mandated mid-term review of the bilateral BASIC Bangsamoro program. It is, however, formative in nature and will inform the future direction of Australia's bilateral activities and broader support for peace and stability. It will assess the effectiveness of Australia's support for peace in Muslim Mindanao to date, and its appropriateness in the context of the change in the Philippine administration and the new leadership, policies and institutional environment this entails.

**Evaluation Completion Date:** 9 February 2017

**Evaluators:** Dr Fermin Adriano  
Sophia Close  
Robin Bednall

## **DFAT's response to the evaluation report**

DFAT assessed that the Review final report is of good quality and delivered on its objective. The review identifies the strengths and limitations of the current interventions and provides recommendations on the design of future investments in peace and stability in Muslim Mindanao.

DFAT noted that the review team did not have the opportunity to evaluate individual projects and partners in depth, and that further evaluation would be required to comprehensively assess the performance of individual BASIC Bangsamoro partners.

DFAT also noted that the Muslim Mindanao peace process ultimately involves reaching a complex political settlement; a process over which donors like Australia and partners in activities such as BASIC Bangsamoro can have only limited influence. The strategies recommended in the review report with the benefit of hindsight were not necessarily apparent during the course of the peace process.

### ***DFAT's overall response to the findings and recommendations***

DFAT notes the review findings and agrees with the recommendations put forward by the evaluators, while noting that implementing some of these recommendations would be subject to agreement of other parties (such as the Government of the Philippines) and their leadership on policy initiatives.

### ***Brief comments on future direction of sector***

The international community remains engaged in the peace process. Australia will continue its bilateral program of support for the peace process in Muslim Mindanao, incorporating the recommendations of the review where possible.

Since the review mission, the Government of the Philippines in partnership with the UNDP has advanced its design for a multi-partner financing facility that will mobilise peace and development projects in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao, including Muslim Mindanao. Provisions have been made in the peace and stability portfolio pipeline for Australia to contribute to this facility.

This facility will also be able to mobilise technical assistance (TA) for partners to the peace process. Accordingly, it remains to be seen whether the TA facility established to support the GPH-MILF process, FASTRAC, will continue in its current form.

Finding	Response
<b>On Effectiveness</b>	
<p><i>A. Attaining objectives and adjustment to the changing context</i> - BASIC partners were generally successful at building constituencies in support of the peace process, but had mixed results in adapting to the events leading up to the non-passage of the draft enabling law, the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). DFAT could have been more proactive in managing partners.</p>	<p>Agree, noting that neither DFAT nor BASIC Bangsamoro partners were in a position to affect the ultimate outcome of the peace process, which was dictated by domestic political developments.</p>
<p><i>B. Addressing drivers of conflict and violence</i> - BASIC partners deployed local conflict management tools successfully, but activities had very limited geographical coverage and mechanisms may not be sustainable. BASIC partners have good convening power at a community level, and undertook a significant number of outreach activities, but cannot reach or influence all key local political leaders and stakeholders that matter.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
<p><i>C. Impact of research on policies and programs</i> - BASIC partners were generally successful in clarifying controversial parts of the BBL and were able to reach their target audiences.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
<p><i>D. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment</i> - BASIC partners contributed to increasing women's participation in the peace process but it is unclear to what extent their activities contributed to gender equality.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
<p><i>E. Alignment with other Australian assistance in Mindanao</i> – Australian assistance for peace and development in Mindanao remains relevant, but must be re-configured to deliver the best possible impact.</p>	<p>Agree. This process is underway in response to the change in Government and the revised policy settings.</p>
<b>On Relevance</b>	
<p><i>F. Adjustments in response to changed environment and relevance of programs/partners</i> - BASIC partners made adjustments, but some were inadequate due to the constraints on their objectives and staff capacity.</p>	<p>Agree in principle, noting that decisions on 'adjustments' were made with the best available information at the time.</p>
<p><i>G. New initiatives/objectives/partners to support the Duterte peace process</i> - Besides the provision of technical assistance to the formulation of the "Enabling Law", BASIC partners are supporting the political dialogue on federalism. Two information vacuums remain: what is happening in the island provinces, particularly Sulu and Basilan; and how far violent extremism has taken root.</p>	<p>Agree, noting that access to the most conflict-affected island provinces is an issue for all international partners.</p>

<p><i>H. Extent of program support to regional security and economic growth - Some BASIC partners partially addressed this criterion. These included livelihood projects, but they were micro in scale and there is no evidence they were economically sustainable.</i></p>		<p>Agree, noting that Australia's support for livelihoods in conflict-affected Mindanao is primarily delivered through the multi-donor Mindanao Trust Fund.</p>	
Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
<b>For the current phase of BASIC Bangsamoro</b>			
<p>Develop a coordinated advocacy strategy supporting the peace process and addressing biases, stereotypes and historical injustice.</p>	<p>Agree in principle. This is an important area of need, but a program to effectively address this will require local leadership and a level of resourcing that exceeds the scale and scope Australia's program.</p>	<p>DFAT will discuss options with the government and other donors.</p>	<p>DFAT Peace and Stability Team in Manila</p>
<p>Increase coordination of BASIC partners.</p>	<p>Agree, noting that each partner has its own comparative advantage and relationships to manage. Attempts by DFAT to 'drive' coordination could be counter-productive and would need to be managed in close consultation with partners. Increasing coordination also increases the management burden on Australia and our partners.</p>	<p>DFAT will investigate options with partners to improve coordination.</p>	
<p>Focus BASIC partners on areas of core comparative advantage.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>	<p>A competitive and merit-based selection process will be conducted to allocate grants for the next phase of bilateral support.</p>	
<p>Find opportunities to raise the profile of promising conflict management tools.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT will investigate options with partners and relevant levels of government in Muslim Mindanao.</p>	
<p>Embed a stronger gender-sensitive approach across BASIC.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>	<p>DFAT will draw on appropriate expertise to improve this aspect of BASIC and its successor program.</p>	
<p>Deliver more targeted gender-inclusive programming under BASIC.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>	<p>DFAT will draw on appropriate expertise to improve this aspect of BASIC and its successor program.</p>	

Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
<b>For future programming</b>			
Strengthen Australian Government alignment.	DFAT will develop a whole of government strategy that articulates our objectives for investments in Mindanao and peace and stability, how we will achieve those objectives, which partners we will work with, and how progress will be measured.	DFAT Canberra will manage development of this strategy with close engagement with DFAT Peace and Stability team in Manila.	DFAT Peace and Stability Team in Manila and DFAT Canberra
Strengthen inclusivity and gender-sensitivity of DFAT programming.	Agree.	DFAT will draw on appropriate expertise to improve this aspect of our peace and stability interventions.	DFAT Peace and Stability Team in Manila and DFAT Canberra
Further strengthen conflict and gender-sensitivity in the PATHWAYS program.	Agree in principle.	DFAT teams will assess how this can best be achieved. The flexible nature of PATHWAYS will enable it to respond to changes in the operating environment and associated opportunities throughout implementation. Its M&E framework will be designed and updated as needed to appropriately measure the effects of the program and to capture broader outcomes.	DFAT Manila
Promote continuity of existing support mechanisms, while uncertainty over peace road map architecture is being resolved.	Agree, noting that the Philippines government is advancing its peace and development roadmap and developing a multi-partner financing facility.	DFAT will remain engaged with the GPH and development partners to establish the most appropriate modality for supporting the peace process.	DFAT Peace and Stability Team in Manila
Continue to work flexibly at multiple levels of the peace process.	Agree.		
Advocate for centralized GPH (OPAPP) coordination of donors.	Agree, noting that the OPAPP of the new government has already reconstituted the main donor coordination body.	DFAT is participating in the GPH-led Mindanao Working Group.	

Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
Widen technical assistance to both MILF and other Moro peace-builders.	Agree, noting that TA could be mobilised through the multi-partner facility.	DFAT is planning to contribute to the GPH multi-partner financing facility under development.	DFAT Peace and Stability Team in Manila
Start shifting multi-donor funds engaged in community-driven development from confidence building measures to inclusive socio-economic development.	Agree, consistent with GPH policy and good conflict-sensitive development practice.		
Continue to provide bilateral funding to strengthen civil society.	Agree.	DFAT is developing a further phase of its bilateral program to follow BASIC Bangsamoro.	
Scale up local conflict management tools and seek to implement them systematically.	Agree.		
Continue support to ongoing analysis of conflict dynamics.	Agree.		