

Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP)

Call for Proposals – Information Session - Transcript

20 September 2024

Welcome

- Good morning everyone, or good afternoon, depending on where you are.
- My name is John Francis from the Australian Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.
Thank you all for joining us on time.
- We are expecting some more participants, so we'll give it one more minute and then get underway.
- Thank you.

Housekeeping

- Good morning everybody.
- My name is Richard Lee.
- I'm the Operations Advisor with the Mekong Australia Partnership in Bangkok.
- Before I hand over to John Francis, I will just run through some session housekeeping.
- You should have had these instructions via e-mail beforehand, but just to quickly go over, as many of you have already done, please provide your name and organization in your Teams identify.
- We've muted microphones for the first sessions due to the large numbers of participants, but please ensure when they are available that they're muted during the sessions when invited to speak.
- If necessary, switch cameras off to manage your bandwidth.
- Please raise an electronic hand if you have a concise question during agenda item 4. Alternatively, we encourage concise written questions using the chat function, and you can also submit questions through the mailbox before 26th of September.
- Thank you for participants that have already submitted questions, questions and responses will be summarised and posted on the DFAT business notifications page - MAP Call for proposals by 3rd of October.
- Frequently Asked Questions and responses as of the 13th of September are already on the notifications page so please take a look.

- This session will be recorded, and the transcript used to update our frequently asked questions.
- Thank you very much and with that I'll hand over to John.
- Thank you very much, Richard.

Introduction

- Hello everyone, thank you for joining us.
- My name is John Francis and I'm the Development Counsellor for the Mekong Australia Partnership or MAP, as we call it here in the Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.
- On behalf of the Australian Government, it's my pleasure to welcome you all to today's information session to learn more about the MAP and the Call for Proposals.
- We're really excited to see such keen interest in this Call for Proposals, we have had over 140 organizations express interest in the process and I think we've got around 400 or more interested invitees to this session.
- We really thank you for your keen interest and engagement in this process.
- The purpose for today is quite simple.
- We want to explain the background of the Mekong Australia Partnership or MAP and provide a bit more information on the Call for Proposals.
- We want to answer as many questions as we possibly can so that you've got the information you need to submit your proposals.
- There have been many questions that have come through the mailbox, and we have collated Frequently Asked Questions and will provide answers to those in this session. Then, as Richard said, we'll have a session at the end to take further questions from people either in the chat or on the microphone.
- So, following the agenda, I'll provide an overview of MAP, information on the Call for Proposals, answer the Frequently Asked Questions and then we'll go to questions from yourselves.
- So, let's start with the first agenda item, an overview of the MAP.

MAP Overview

- MAP, as I said, is the Mekong-Australia Partnership, it's a regional program implemented by DFAT with the objective of achieving a more resilient and inclusive Mekong subregion that pursues joint solutions to shared and transboundary challenges.

- Through MAP Australia engages pragmatically and flexibly in support of the Subregion's priorities and supports local activities where Australia can add value.
- It operates across the Mekong subregion, and this includes the countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam
- MAP has a focus on five thematic areas, and these include climate resilience, water security, economic resilience and subregional integration, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, or GEDSI, as we refer to it, and preventing and countering transnational crime.
- There's also a cross cutting theme of leadership and skills which contributes to the thematic areas.
The MAP has entered a second phase of investment, which totals 222.5 million Australian dollars over the next five years.
- It aims to build on the lessons and achievements from its previous phase.
- The Mekong Australia Partnership also responds to Australia's Southeast Asian Development Partnership Plan in recognition of the importance of strengthening Australia's reputation as a trusted partner, providing high quality offerings, delivering its commitments and upholding rules and norms.
- It's important to note that MAP is an official development assistance, or ODA portfolio, which means only ODA eligible activities are funded through it.
- So that's the broad background on the Mekong Australia Partnership.
- I should also note that the portfolio design for the Mekong Australia Partnership is on the DFAT website and there are links to that in the Call for Proposals landing page. I encourage you to take a look if you want more information about how the MAP portfolio is structured and how we're planning to implement it.

MAP – Call for Proposals

- That brings us to our second part of the agenda, which is to explain the call for proposals and what we are looking for.
- This call requests multiyear proposals from eligible non-government partners to address shared and transboundary development challenges in the Mekong subregion.
- We are requesting proposals that are subregional and/ or multi country in nature and address shared and transboundary development challenges.
- The proposals should involve two or more of the Mekong subregion countries, which, as I said, includes either Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and/ or Vietnam.

- Proposals that are only for single countries would be deemed ineligible for this Call for Proposals and proposals must respond to one or more of the MAP End of portfolio outcomes.
- Noting this, the call focuses on four of the five MAP end of program outcomes and those four are reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, the second is managing water resources in a more coordinated and sustainable way, the third is increase leadership and economic opportunities for women, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, and the fourth is strengthen economic resilience and subregion integration.
- So just repeating it's the four areas of climate change, water security, GEDSI and economic resilience.
- We are not seeking proposals in the transnational crime area, which is covered by another program design.
- Proposals should focus on one or more of these thematic areas and consistent with Australia's International Development policy, proposals should mainstream approaches to strengthen GEDSI outcomes, outputs and activities, including indicators to measure outcomes.
- The proposals require multiyear funding of between 2 million to 10 million Australian dollars.
- All proposals must have an end date no later than the 30th of June 2029 and I would underline that we are looking through this call for proposals for long term partnerships.
- We're not looking for short term programmes, we're seeking proposals that ideally span the length of the Mekong Australia Partnership.
- So that's what we're looking for.
- What we're not looking for, as I said, are proposals that focus on thematic areas of preventing transnational crime, or leadership and skills.
- We are not looking for proposals that are under 2 million (Australia dollars) or proposals that are bilateral in nature, i.e. just one country, they need to include two or more countries of the Mekong sub region.
- We are not looking for proposals that are implemented by managing contractors or other commercial service providers.
- We are not looking for proposals that are managed or implemented by international, regional or national governmental organizations or government aligned unions or mass organisations or multilateral development banks.
- Moving on to eligibility requirements.

- Organizations that operate as international regional or national, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, universities, research institutions, foundations or social enterprises are all eligible for this call for proposals.
- Organizations based in Australia and/ or in the Mekong subregion and can demonstrate an ability to operate in proposed countries of implementation through established offices or partnerships or networks, are eligible.
- If shortlisted, the organization should be expected to meet DFAT due diligence requirements through assessment undertaken by DFAT or third-party assessor that we appoint.
- Eligible organisations may also form consortia, including two or more eligible delivery partners.
- All eligible organisations and consortia must demonstrate sufficient financial and organizational capacity to deliver the proposal.
- The next point I want to discuss is the selection criteria.
- This is covered in the Call for Proposals documentation, but just to make it clear, we are assessing proposals on three key criteria.
- These are activity effectiveness, organizational effectiveness, and value for money.
- Taking the first one of activity effectiveness, this includes the extent proposals demonstrate specific, measurable and achievable pathways to achieving one or more of the MAP End of program outcomes.
- The extent proposals demonstrate relevant, time bound and sustainable plans, strategies, approaches to achieve intended outcomes.
- And the extent proposals respond to GEDSI priorities, including outcomes, approaches and reasonable accommodations.
- For the criteria of organizational effectiveness, this includes the extent proposals demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity and capability to efficiently implement and manage the proposal,
- And the extent to which organisations demonstrate impact in implementing similar investments in the Mekong subregion.
- The third criteria, as I said, is value for money.
- This includes the extent proposals represent value for money against relevant DFAT principles under t categories of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethics.
- What I've covered includes the purpose for the Call for Proposals, the eligibility requirements and the selection criteria that we'll use.

- Before I go to the frequently asked questions that we've received, I'll just provide some information on the next steps for this Call for Proposals.
- The indicative key dates for applications are on screen.
- After submitting proposals by the 11th of October, eligible proposals will progress to an evaluation stage and be assessed by an evaluation committee.
- This will take place in October and November.
- Proposals that sufficiently respond to selection criteria will be considered for recommendation to the MAP Steering Committee, which we are aiming to hold in December this year
- If endorsed by the MAP Steering Committee, proposals may then proceed to due diligence, design refinement, quality assurance, financial approval and arrangement stages, which we would aim to take place from January to April in 2025.
- DFAT will also notify applicants if proposals are successful or unsuccessful, and we will aim to do this in December this year.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- I'll now move to our frequently asked questions.
- I'll run through as many as I can and hopefully address some of the questions that are coming up in the chat.
- I also note that these frequently asked questions will be posted on the DFAT business notifications page.
- We received several questions around eligibility criteria, including specific questions about specific organisations suitability.
- Our response on this is that to ensure fairness and transparency, DFAT is unable to provide individual advice to organizations on specific eligibility and suitability. We ask that organizations refer to the MAP Call for Proposals guidance, eligibility and selection criteria to self-assess against the criteria.
- We have a question on whether a lead organization who meets eligibility criteria can subcontract or form a consortium with a consultancy firm?
- Consultancy firms are ineligible, as specified implementing partners or as consortia members in proposals, however, sub-granting or subcontracting arrangements can be managed consistently with the operating rules and procedures of implementing organizations.
- We were asked for clarification of whether for profit businesses are ineligible to submit a proposal even as a subcontractor or part of the consortium?

- Commercial and private companies including managing contractors and consultancy firms are ineligible as specified implementing partners or as specified consortia members in proposals.
- We have a set of questions around consortia approaches, in particular, does the delivery partner have to work in more than one country?
- Proposals should be multi country or subregional in nature and include two or more Mekong countries. For consortia arrangements, involving at least two partners, the breakdown of delivery partners scope should be determined by partner's ability to deliver.
- For consortia approaches please use the documentation to be explicit about which partners would be delivering in which countries
- There's a question on how should consortia approaches be presented in the proposal template?
- Consortia should provide all relevant information for the lead and the implementing partners, and we encourage participants to review the invitation to submit an activity proposal which includes instructions to applicants detailing how consortium information should be prepared, including reference requirements.
- There's a question about whether countries outside the Mekong subregion are eligible?
- The answer is no, countries outside the Mekong subregion are ineligible for funding under MAP.
- There's a question about international NGOs headquartered outside the Mekong subregion?
- International NGOs are eligible if they can demonstrate a base of operations in the Mekong subregion (office/ address) that can be specified in the proposal. Partners will need to demonstrate an ability to operate in the proposed countries of implementation.
- We have been asked if UN agencies were eligible?
- They are not, so international, regional and national governmental organisations, including UN agencies, are ineligible as implementing partners or as consortium members in proposals.
- We have questions if government funded, or partially funded universities or research institutions are eligible to apply?
- Universities and research institutes are eligible for this call, however, on a case-by-case basis, DFAT may need to consult with our relevant posts to check any identified sensitivities regarding universities and how they're funded.
- We were asked what is the definition of a social enterprise for the call?

- Generally, we are defining social enterprises as an organization that applies commercial strategies to achieve social objectives or values, and reinvests profits towards its core social objectives or values.
- We received questions about whether one organization could submit two proposals as lead organization?
- There is no restriction on the number of proposals an eligible lead organization can submit. However, each proposal will be reviewed on merit and its demonstrated ability to deliver.
- A similar question was whether eligible organizations can submit as a lead organization in one proposal and be a participant in another proposal?
- Again, there's no restriction on the number of proposals eligible organizations can be involved with either as lead or as a consortium member, however, proposals will be reviewed on merit and demonstrated ability to deliver.
- There is a question on how NGOs are defined for the purpose of the call?
NGOs are generally defined as organisations formed independently from government and for a public or social interest. This includes international, regional or national non-government organisations and civil society organisations.
- Consortia of NGOs, CSOs, universities, research institutions, foundations and social enterprises are all eligible for this call.
- There's a question on how government aligned mass organisations are defined for the purpose of this call?
- Generally, we are defining this as organisations representing large scale groups with substantial membership that collaborate to address social issues and are aligned with government.
- We received questions regarding any special considerations to consider if proposing activities in countries with sensitive operating environments or partners in the Mekong?
- Our response here is that proposals involving countries with sensitive operating environments or partners will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the evaluation committee will consult with the relevant DFAT areas and Posts on these proposals.
- We have several questions related to selection criteria, including will proposals addressing more than one end of program outcome be assessed more highly?
- Proposals may respond to one or more of the specified MAP End of program outcomes. Each proposal will be assessed on merit against selection criteria.
This includes an assessment of the organization's ability to deliver the proposal.
- Will proposals targeting a higher number of countries be assessed more favourably?

- Again, the answer is no. We ask that all proposals include two or more Mekong countries and should be subregional or multi country in nature.
But again, each proposal will be assessed based on merit against selection criteria, and this includes an assessment of the ability to deliver.
- We had a question about funding split for proposals between proposed thematic areas?
- We have not set funding splits between the thematic areas. Proposals will be reviewed on merit and that will inform the eventual outcome of the split between thematic areas.
- There's a question on how many proposals will be awarded?
- The total number of awards has not been set. It will depend on the volume and quality of the proposals we receive.
- There's a question on what is the ratio of grant and organization contribution?
- There is no specified ratio of grant to organization contribution, but we welcome applicants putting this information in the proposal to help give us the most complete picture.
- There's a question on whether third party contributions are compulsory?
They are not compulsory, but again, please put this information in your proposal if relevant.
- Does DFAT have a preference on scaling existing relationships or projects versus forming new ones?
- We don't have a preference on this. All proposals are expected to satisfy the selection criteria and be able to comply with DFAT's requirements, but again, if you are submitting a proposal that is building on an existing relationship or project please include this, so we have the most complete information.
- Further questions along these lines include can proposals work in partnership with other relevant initiatives in the region supported by other funders to achieve common goals and objectives?
- Our response on this is that proposals should be complementary to existing initiatives to avoid duplication, but are expected to clearly satisfy MAP selection criteria and comply with DFAT requirements.
- We have specific questions about the different budget categories, particularly for budget headings can we provide details for overheads, administrative support costs and management fees?
- Budget categories are included for indicative guidance, overheads, administrative support and management costs generally refer to the operational aspects of programming, however, other budget categories may be added or deleted as appropriate to ensure all program costs, including relevant activities, can be costed for the duration of the proposal.
- A similar question on what is the extent of detail required in the budget tables?

- The proposed budget details should be as complete and accurate as possible for the evaluation committee to make informed assessments. Further clarifying budget information or explanation may be provided in the relevant narrative sections.
- We had a question on whether it's necessary for proposals to outline how partners will work together?
- Proposals should clearly outline management, implementation and coordination arrangements in relevant sections of the proposal template.
- We had a question on whether DFAT has a preference to engage subregional cooperation mechanisms?
- We do not have a preference, but where applicants are proposing to cooperate with the range of subregional mechanisms, please do provide that information.
- There's a question on whether we favour research or practice?
- Again, we don't have a preference, but we do encourage evidence-based approaches that contribute to the MAP outcomes.
- Can proposal referees be partners, funders or beneficiaries of the projects that the organisations have implemented or participated?
- Our response to this is that nominated referees may include these groups if they align with the referee criteria detailed on page 16 of the invitation to submit an activity proposal.
- Can 1 supporting letter for the entire consortium proposal be provided?
- No, for consortia proposals 2 letters of support from referees must be provided for each consortium partner.
- There's a question on where to find details on DFATs public affairs requirements?
- The relevant public affairs and publicity requirements are detailed in respective sample grant arrangements, which are made available to all applicants on the DFAT business notification page.
- There were also questions on the MAP portfolio which I'll address now.
- What is meant by supporting local architecture which is referred to in the documentation?
- What we mean is in the context of MAP, that this refers to supporting and strengthening local partners and partnerships, including government agencies, community organisations, think tanks, subregional bodies, networks and platforms.
- I'd ask you also refer to section 5.5 of the MAP portfolio design framework, which speaks to locally led development and localisation for further information.
- There's a question on what do enabling outputs mean?

- Enabling outputs refer to internal MAP outputs designed to support the management and coordination of the MAP portfolio.
- There's also a question on what we mean by external economic shocks and pressures?
- Here we're referring to the economic shocks and pressures resulting from events outside of the Mekong subregion, or Mekong countries that impact the economic systems or economies of the Mekong countries.
- We have a few more frequently asked questions. Will DFAT grant all MAP funding through this call? Will there be future calls, and if so, is there a time frame?
- So, we're using a range of funding modalities to program MAP investments, in addition to this call and we're not planning future calls unless necessary.
- The final question is, will advisors or technical experts be provided by DFAT to guide applicants through the proposal development or implementation phases?
- MAP program staff will only be available to assist successful proposals and partners through the relevant next steps.
- OK, so that is the end of the frequently asked questions submitted through the mailbox.
- We're at the halfway mark so there's plenty of time for further questions. I can see lots of questions coming through.
- Before we go through those, I will pass to Richard.
- Thanks John, there are a phenomenal number of questions coming through the chat.
- These are greatly appreciated and let me assure participants that we will do our best to get to your questions today, if not during the session we will review afterwards and also those received before the 26th of September.
- Many of the questions I think have been addressed by John's responses to frequently asked questions.
- I have a few questions that came through the mailbox that I can answer. They expand on the frequently asked questions and will give colleagues a chance to look at other questions.

Any Other Questions?

- We had a set of questions around how partners can engage with private sector and related to co-funding arrangements?
- As John touched on in the frequently asked questions, we've not placed any restrictions on co-funding arrangements, including with private sector.

- Within the templates we've also provided scope for partners to outline any complementary funding or co-funding should it be applicable. I would underline that in those instances, proposals should align with the MAP eligibility and selection criteria and DFAT requirements.
- Similarly, we had questions around the extent of partners co-contributions and in-kind support to proposals?
- Again, there's no specified criteria in this instance, but again, the proposal templates facilitate this if applicable for individual proposals, and all proposals will be assessed on merit against the selection criteria.
- We've had further questions about the budget structure and again, just want to highlight that the structures in the template are indicative and they can be adapted to demonstrate what's applicable for the organisations and the proposals activities
- We request as complete and accurate information at this stage of the process and budget information should be for the duration of the proposal's life.
- We received questions around the proposal timeline, start dates and duration?
- As John has indicated, there is a preference for longer term proposals over the duration of the MAP program. We prefer start dates in DFAT's financial year 24-25, but there are no restrictions on start dates.
- There may be instances where there's need for some flexibility, but all proposals must conclude by the end of June 2029.
- We had some specific questions from university partners around funding scholarships and as John has outlined in the eligibility and selection criteria sections MAP has separate processes for funding scholarships, which falls under the leadership and skills component of MAP, which is not included within this call.
- There are questions around funding for travel costs in relation to budgets, specifically in relation to travel for technical experts.
- Again, John has highlighted in his presentation that all activities must be ODA eligible, and all activities need to be costed and outlined in the budget as best as possible.
- We also had further questions on minimum requirements around consortia, as presented the minimum requirements are two or more implementing partners for consortia.
- Those are the extra questions. Back to you John.
- Alright, so thanks Richard. I've been looking through other questions. Thank you so much everyone.
- So, we have a question if government funded research organizations are eligible?
- Again, we can't provide individual advice and we ask that everyone self-assesses against the criteria, but if it's a government funded organization, that would indicate it's ineligible.

- What is the definition of transboundary in the Mekong subregion? Are you referring to geographical area or issues when we talk about transboundary in MAP?
- We are referring to those issues that affect all the countries or a subset of countries. We talk about issues like smoke haze, which does not respect the borders of countries, issues related to the Mekong River and water management, and issues related to climate change. These are transboundary in nature. Please refer to our MAP documentation for further information.
- Thank you for your question. Can the consortium sub-contract and if yes, are there qualifications for the subcontractors and the maximum budget to be subcontracted?
- Yes, you can use subcontractors, and we do not specify budget limits. That's for organizations to detail in proposal budgets.
- A question, can government agencies be an implementing partner, consortium partner or strictly beneficiaries?
- Government agencies cannot be implementing partners or a consortium partner, but they can be beneficiaries. Again, please refer to the selection criteria and the eligibility requirements.
- A question, should proposals include governmental organisations?
- If you're referring to whether a government organization should be implementing partner or consortium partner, the answer is no.
- Just to be clear for this set of questions. Government partners and private sub-contractors should not be specified as lead or implementing partners in the proposal, and in terms of sub-contracting unspecified partners this is possible if consistent with the rules and regulations of the lead organization that DFAT will enter into an arrangement with.
- When engaging governmental organizations as stakeholders or beneficiaries, it's important to look at the proposal and what your intended outcomes are and outline in proposals what, who and how you intend to benefit.
- Thanks Richard. Another question, what is meant by mass organisations?
- I covered this in the FAQ, but just to reiterate, it is generally defined as organisations representing large scale groups with substantial membership that collaborate to address social issues and are aligned with government.
- Please clarify what you mean by proposals are not requested for implementation by mass organizations. Are women's unions in Laos and Vietnam eligible to participate in the project as local partners?
- So that's a good question, thank you. It comes back to that point about the extent of alignment with government. I would urge applicants to self-assess against criteria, and in

cases where a proposal is submitted and there's questions around that eligibility, we would consult with DFAT Posts to clarify eligibility.

- A question if an organization based in Malaysia, and working for over 15 years with stakeholders in target countries such as Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam is eligible?
- If your organization has a business address, an operating base, within the Mekong region that can be specified in the proposal, then that would enable you to submit a proposal, but importantly demonstrate the ability to deliver the proposal in your identified countries of implementation.
- Great. Thank you. Are there any priority subregions within the Mekong for this funding round?
- We aren't specifying specific priority subregions. The thematic areas of MAP give you the best indicator of areas that we are looking. So, water security, climate resilience, GEDSI, economic resilience and sub-regional integration.
- Proposals should also operate within the five target countries.
- The criteria states organisations and consortium must demonstrate sufficient financial and organization capacity to deliver the proposal. Does this mean the consortium members collectively must have the ability to manage a total of at least 2 million, or each member have the capability of managing at least 2 million? Is this an annual budget?
- \$2 million refers to the minimum total proposal value and we would not require that every consortium member can manage \$2 million. The consortium as a whole must be able to manage \$2 million, or the total amount budgeted in the proposal.
- To add on that, the lead organization would be the organization that DFAT enters into an arrangement with and so that organization will be expected to provide the lead budget oversight of the consortium and any program requirements that apply.
- There's another question in relation to due diligence and how that applies to other partners?
- DFAT has a category for cascading due diligence through lead organisations and with consortia partners, and to highlight again the responsibilities of the lead organization in responsibilities to extend their capacities and capabilities through partnership with consortia members.
- The next question can proposals be from the private sector, if they bring funding, for example, but don't receive any direct grant funding from DFAT?
- Commercial private companies, including managing contractors and consultancy firms, are ineligible as specified implementing partners or consortia members in proposals.
- Does DFAT have a preference of the number of countries?

- I addressed this in frequently asked questions. We don't have a preference, but we are looking for the best quality proposals that include two or more Mekong countries that the activities will be implemented.
- Can one organization submit more than one proposal, or be part of more than one consortium.
- Yes, organisations can, noting they will be expected to demonstrate a clear ability to deliver multiple proposals.
- It is stated that MAP phase two will be delivered through long term partnerships. Does this mean you will work with those who have worked with DFAT under MAP in the past?
- So, for this call for proposals, it is not a requirement that you have worked with DFAT under MAP in the past. It's an open call.
- When we say we're looking to deliver MAP through long term partnerships, it's important to point out that MAP is entering another five-year period of investment. This is why we're looking for partnerships that are long term.
- We don't want to provide funds for a one-year project and then have to keep repeating that. We are looking for proposals that build long term partnerships to get the best outcomes under MAP.
- We have another question whether the Women's Union in Vietnam is eligible to participate as a local implementing partner.
- We will need to review the specifics of the Women's Union in Vietnam, but again recommend you assess the criteria and put in an application. If there are questions about eligibility we may also consult with our colleagues in Hanoi.
- I would just highlight the existing criteria that is outlined about government aligned mass organisations and the ineligibility of those organizations as implementing partners.
- Are international organizations considered eligible for applying for this proposal? Specifically, are international governmental or intergovernmental organizations considered eligible?
- We are looking for non-governmental organizations through this call for proposals. Organizations that operate as international regional or national, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, universities, research institutions, foundations or social enterprises are all eligible for this call for proposals.
- I would add there may be instances where international organizations demonstrate significant autonomy or independence in their operating procedures from governmental structures and if this is the case can be reflected in proposals.

- Without knowing specific details and not being able to advise on an individual organisation's arrangements, the onus is on organisations to self-assess. If you are operating as a governmental organization or government agency then take that into consideration alongside the eligibility and selection criteria before submitting proposals for this call.
- Another question, could you clarify what does it mean that MAP will fund bilateral programs to deliver bilateral solutions to complex transboundary challenges?
- Some funding under MAP is provided to our bilateral programs for specific program delivery, but in general the approach for MAP is to fund regional and transboundary programs.
- Someone has again asked what constitutes a social enterprise under the call?
- This question was addressed earlier, but I'll repeat my answer. Generally, organizations that apply commercial strategies to achieve social objectives or values and reinvest profits towards its core social objectives or values would be considered as social enterprises.
- Can the multiyear budget include small grants to support groups such as indigenous women to strengthen seed storage facilities, outreach centres, biodiversity? Can the budget include establishment of pilot sites?
- Thanks for those questions. Your proposal can include those things. Again, we'll be assessing all proposals using the selection criteria, but we expect proposals to specify the types of things that you expect to fund, if that's the kind of proposal you're putting forward
- Is wildfire management an eligible activity under climate resilience related theme, does it include disaster response?
- Yes, climate resilience and managing the impacts of climate change is an objective of the Mekong-Australia Partnership.
- Are you expecting Australian organizations to be part of each proposal?
- We are not expecting that and it's not a requirement. The required location of applicants has been covered earlier.
- Are NGOs with branch offices based in the Mekong region eligible?
- Yes, and again I highlight where you have a base of operations, as office or address, and demonstrate the ability to work in target countries.
- In addition, NGOs must be able to specify details in the proposals, and demonstrate an ability to deliver in the region, in the countries that are identified in each proposal.
- Does the budget cover salary? Can small equipment be purchased with this budget? Is there a maximum percentage of the total budget for the purchase of equipment?
- We encourage you to put as much detail in the budget table as possible, with explanatory notes of what you're putting in there and why. We would expect proposals to outline known costs for what is required in order to implement the project only.

- As I mentioned, we'll be assessing proposals on the extent it represents value for money based on economy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethical use of funds. So, you should reflect what you think is required for the implementation of projects.
- To add, the proposal template provides space for specified assets that are required to implement the project and would be purchased under the proposal. If it's applicable to your proposal and echoing what John has just said, each proposal will be assessed on its merits and what it's trying to achieve, and the evaluation committee will be looking at each proposal with that in mind.
- Can non-Australian local organizations in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand apply? Can local NGOs join consortiums?
- Yes, non-Australian local NGOs in all the countries of the Mekong can certainly apply, there's no restriction on that.
- Is any cost contribution from the implementing partner required?
- There isn't a requirement for the implementing partner to contribute, but please reflect it in the proposal if applicable.
- Is a business association considered as a CSO (civil social organisation) and eligible to apply?
- Without knowing specific organisation arrangements, we urge you to self-assess your organisation suitability against the criteria.
- I've explained what we consider to be a CSO or NGO. It's about that not for profit and non-governmental element, and for social enterprises the reinvestment of funds for social values and objectives.
- Is an INGO based out of the Mekong region, but working in these countries eligible to apply?
- Richard answered a similar question about this earlier and I refer you to that answer.
- What percentage of organisation contribution of the total funding is expected? There's also mention of requirement for two references. Can these references be from previous donors or partners?
- In terms of referees for organizations we are asking for two referees for each organization and as stated earlier, that includes consortium members. The reference criteria is outlined on page 16 of the invitation to submit an activity proposal.
- Organizations that can act as referees comes down to your own assessment of who you've worked with in the past years and are able to provide sufficient information consistent with requirements that we've detailed in the template.
- The question on expected percentage of organisation contribution, is answered by there is no expectation. The forms provide an ability for partners to indicate if there's any co-

funding or if there's any contribution from the implementing partners or any in kind contribution, but there's no specific requirements or ratios specified.

- All right, so we've got 5 minutes left.
- I'm going through these as quickly as I can. If I skip over anyone's questions, it's because we've answered them already.
- A question about can an organisation be a lead in one and a consortium member in another?
- Absolutely you can.
- Another participant asks can existing ANCP or Australia awards funding that agencies have, that aligns with MAP program objectives, be considered for ANCP or other DFAT programs where there's alignment?
- I would encourage you to put that in your application, so we have full information.
- To add to John's response, it's important to ensure close alignment with MAP and the program's intended outcomes and the criteria we've specified in this call for proposals when aligning or demonstrating how you complement with existing programs to avoid duplication of operations. In these instances, make that clear and explicit in proposals.
- Will there be future calls?
- We're not anticipating future calls, but we may do so if required.
- We've a question about where we can find more information about the budget rules and allowable indirect costs?
- The invitation to submit an activity proposal (template) provides an indicative table and directions and instructions relating to those tables. This is indicative, so include what is relevant and applicable for your organization and proposal.
- Feel free to expand tables and at the end of budget tables there is space to include other activities. What has been provided for in the template are some of the core program areas, operational areas that you would usually find in budget proposals.
- Feel free to adjust tables so it's relevant and applicable to your organisations proposal and reflects proposal requirements, for example, consortia proposals.
- There is a question about how should proposals be submitted? Is there a specific format?
- There is a template that is available on DFAT's business notification page, so please refer to that. It's a requirement that you submit your proposal using that template and consistent with guidance.
- What do we mean by lessons learned in the sector? Does this refer to past projects or in the region or sector?

- We take a broad view of what lessons learned means. If the organization has been operating in a particular sector and can demonstrate how it has learned and responded to particular issues or challenges, then that's a great way of demonstrating lessons learnt.
- Equally through individual projects and programming and ways of doing things in a different way, demonstrating that from programming or operations where things that have worked (or not) and how their organizations have strengthened responses. So broadly that that's what we would be understanding in terms of demonstrating lessons learned.

Wrap-up

- Okay, I'm sorry we didn't get to all the questions, but we got to all those timed at 10.19. There's a lot more in the chat so we will of course take note of those and will update the frequently asked questions including all those questions submitted.
- We're at 11 o'clock and we have to move on so, again, thank you all very much for listening to me and providing you with all that information.
- We will do a transcript of this event and post that with the frequently asked questions. If you have any more questions, feel free to keep sending them through to the mailbox.
- We will stop taking questions on the 26th of September and we look forward to receiving proposals by the 11th of October.
- Thank you very much and we appreciate your time. Thanks.