



AusAID / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation

A Joint Committee of the Australian Agency for International Development and Australian Non Government Organisations

Notes from the CDC Highlights of the 112th CDC meeting held on 5th April 2006

Attendance:

NGO Representatives

Ms Karen Hill
Rev John Deane
Mr Jamie Isbister

AusAID Representatives

Ms Jessica Jordan
Hoverman
Ms Rosemary Cassidy
Mr Titon Mitra

CPS Observers

Ms Rhonda Bobbin
Ms Ines Tallos
Ms Jill Grenfell
Ms Johanna Wicks
Mr Darren Raeburn

Chair

Ms Ellen Shipley

ACFID Observer

Ms Cecily Dignan

Apologies

Ms Irene Davies

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Ms Ellen Shipley, Chair of the meeting, welcomed members to CDC 112.

ITEM 1 CDC 111 MEETING

1.1 Minutes of 111 Meeting

Information Item:

Minutes of the meeting held at AusAID on 24 November 2005 as circulated and approved were accepted.

ITEM 2 AUSAID PRIORITIES

Items 2.1 & 2.2 Information and discussion & White paper

Mr Mitra said he believed the White Paper would be the strategic blueprint for AusAID. The process was nearly finalised, was currently under cabinet consideration and would be launched on the 25th of April. The White Paper consultation process he thought was unprecedented for AusAID and demonstrated good process. As to the detail of what

would be given at the public launch he couldn't divulge much, but he foresaw that the next 3 years would contain significant change within AusAID.

Item 2.3 CDC Terms of Reference (ToR)

Ms Shipley said the CDC ToR had been drafted to address the issues raised in the 111th CDC. She believed the ToR reflected CDC's role in looking at accreditation issues while acting as an advisory body for Australia professional NGOs working internationally. She asked for comments from NGO members on the CDC ToR.

Rev Deane confirmed that he thought the CDC should continue its ANCP focus and that he thought the role of the CDC for ANCP review needed to be emphasised. He said however the role of CDC didn't need to change. Ms Shipley requested Rev Deane to draft exact words for this emphasis to be included in the TOR, which would then be examined.

ACTION POINT:

Rev Deane to draft words on ANCP focus to be considered for the CDC TOR.

Item 2.4 Cooperation Agreements (CAs)

Ms Wicks spoke on the current 8 CAs with two more up-coming. Due to different circumstances in Burma, this agreement would be given a different name but would have very similar arrangements to other CAs. CPS was developing guidance documents on CAs and that updated information would be available through NGOPI.

Ms. Shipley said that CPS now had sufficient resources and would continue to provide leadership in collecting CA information. She also said Ms Wicks was compiling templates, tools and standard guidance, and was also bringing together Desk Officers and sharing lessons-learnt.

Item 2.5 Head Agreement

Ms Wicks outlined the changes from the Umbrella Agreements to the new Head Agreements. A large number of the changes were standard clauses which would bring NGO contracts in line with current AusAID procedures. She spoke about the timeline for Head Agreement negotiations. Ms Shipley said ACFID was currently examining the new Head Agreement.

Ms. Wicks also spoke on the background on the thinking on CAs if an organisation withdrew from or failed accreditation. Ms Shipley said the current process was not flexible but that CPS was proposing Desks make an assessment on specific projects and if they were working well, they would then complete the project cycle under the CA (and under the monitoring of the Desks). This provided AusAID with a risk assessment system with clear boundaries and for flexibility when specific projects were doing well. Ms Shipley stated that no further ANCP or CA funds could be applied for by the NGO without accreditation. Mr Isbister and Rev Deane both said the new proposed approach gave some needed flexibility and was an excellent development.

Ms Dignan flagged that although she could not see any major problems with the document she saw minor stumbling blocks. She mentioned Commonwealth procurement procedures that might be too onerous for smaller organisations.

Rev Deane asked why the terminology was changed from 'Umbrella Agreement' to 'Head Agreement' and for a definition to be included in the glossary. Ms Shipley said it was part of efforts from the NGO section to change from specific NGO contracts to something more AusAID friendly so that AusAID-NGO engagement could integrate more easily within AusAID.

Mr Isbister stated that what he had seen of the Head Agreement looked flexible and seemed to promote good development practice and confirmed the accreditation process.

ITEM 3 NGO PRIORITIES & ISSUES

Items 3.1 NGO Priorities & Issues

Mr Isbister spoke about how the White Paper consultations had led to expectations of greater NGO engagement with AusAID and that there was now an expectation from the NGO sector for further opportunities/venues for on-going dialogue.

Mr Isbister also believed that the number of accreditation reviews occurring at one time meant that newer CDC members had gained a greater awareness of the process. He saw the need for further discussion on ways to better distribute information from CDC members to other NGOs through MIFs and other forums.

Ms Dignan spoke briefly about issues covered in the latest MIFs and said that most of these would be covered later in the meeting in more detail. Mr Isbister thought the MIFs had developed into a venue that allowed for discussions that went further than AusAID issues. Ms Shipley agreed. Ms Dignan said that efforts would continue to make MIFs a venue for inter-NGO dialogue with additional workshops and other skills building and dissemination activities.

ITEM 4 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Item 4.1 Cluster Evaluation - Cambodia

Ms Jordan Hoverman said CPS had received a revised Cluster Evaluation from the consultants. Their revisions had made the document better but it was still considered not 'a best example'. She acknowledged there were issues as it was a new model and there was a need to streamline the 3 methodologies in the original evaluation brief into one.

Ms Jordan Hoverman said she saw no material benefit in reworking the document again, and therefore it would be released to ACFID and relevant NGOs. However when released it would be clearly identified as a 'Learning Process' and lessons learned would feed back into future cluster evaluations.

Mr Isbister asked if, as this ANCP Cluster Evaluation was not ‘a best example’, whether its release would reflect poorly on ANCP as a whole. Ms Shipley said that despite the quality of the evaluation, the evaluation itself was supportive of ANCP programs. She noted that a main focus of the Cluster Evaluations was to build a body of evidence that showed NGOs were effective in what they are doing.

Ms. Shipley did not foresee an organisation losing accreditation from a Cluster Evaluation. Rev Deane agreed with Ms Shipley and stated it was about strengthening partners and adding a degree of rigour to ANCP.

ITEM 5 ACCREDITATION

Item 5.1 General Accreditation Issues

Ms Jordan Hoverman advised CDC that ALRI had gone into receivership, were in breach of their contractual obligations, and that CPS had written to the administrators. She suggested the CDC needed to formally recommend to the Delegate their accreditation be revoked.

All CDC Members agreed.

ACTION POINT:

CDC to formally recommend the Delegate to revoke the accreditation of ALRI.

Item 5.2 Accreditation Organisation Review: African Enterprise (AE)

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CDC to recommend to the Delegate that AE not be accredited.

Item 5.3 Accreditation Organisation Review: Every Home for Christ (EHC)

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CPS to send back the OR Report to the Review Team for some minor changes

Item 5.4 Accreditation Organisation Review: National Council of Churches (NCCA)

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CPS to send back the OR Report to the Review Team for changes.

Item 5.5 Accreditation Organisation Review: Opportunity International Australia (OIA)

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CDC to recommend to the delegate OIA to be accredited as a full agency.

Item 5.6 Accreditation Organisation Review: TEAR

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CDC to recommend to the delegate TEAR to be accredited as a full agency.

Item 5.7 Accreditation Organisation Review: Salvation Army Australia Development Office (SAADO)

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CPS to send back the OR Report to the Review Team for changes.

Item 5.7 Accreditation Organisation Review: Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific (AFAP)

Decision Item: CDC discussed the above report and made the following recommendations and/or comments

ACTION POINT:

CPS to send back the OR Report to the Review Team for changes.

ITEM 6 ANCP

Item 6.1 ANCP Review

Ms Shipley asked if there were any comments on the proposed ANCP Review ToR. Rev Deane said he had questions on the first objective and the wording of “determining whether the ANCP has become” and what this meant. He had questions as to ANCP being a mechanism to engage the community. Ms Shipley said that the ToR was meant to articulate the change of ANCP to supporting professional international NGOs. It was a reflection of not funding NGO organisations per se and that community engagement was broader than ANCP. Rev Deane said the wording should reflect the evolution of ANCP. Ms Shipley: Proposed a change to Objective A; “Redefine the ANCP as a funding mechanism for....”. All CDC members agreed to the change.

Mr Isbister asked if RDE levels should be included in the review and the issue of channelling. Ms Shipley proposed adding an additional objective: “E) Examine the level of RDE requirements for Base and Full Accreditation”.

Mr Isbister proposed including an objective on channelling and examining the issue of channelled funds and on suggesting an on-going policy. Ms Shipley proposed adding an additional objective: “F) Examine issues and implications of channelled funds and suggest an ongoing policy on channelled funds”. All CDC Members agreed to both additional objectives.

Ms Shipley informed the CDC that Lisa Staruszkiewicz was to be the CPS representative on the Review Team. Mr Isbister informed CDC that the Committee’s representation on the ANCP Review would be Rev Deane.

Mr Isbister asked for an indication of the timeline for the ANCP Review. Ms Shipley suggested that holding MIFs in mid-May was a good opportunity to begin the review. Rev Deane said that a timetable would be decided once the third member of the Team was selected.

ACTION POINT:

Lisa Staruszkiewicz to finalise a timetable for the Review.

ACTION POINT:

CPS to update the ANCP Review ToR to include:

- A) Redefine the ANCP as a funding mechanism for professional development NGOs rather than a mechanism to engage the broader Australian community in the aid program;
- E) Examine the level of RDE requirements for Base and Full Accreditation;
- F) Examine issues and implications of channelling funds and suggest an ongoing policy on channelled funds.

Item 6.2 Updated RDE Guidelines and Worksheet

Ms Shipley said the updated RDE Guidelines and Worksheet were presented at the previous MIFs.

Ms Bobbin said all RDEs for this year were received and she noted that some NGOs had included a figure for funds channelled through NGO while other chose not. Mr Isbister said this might become an issue and that it needed to be re-emphasised at the next MIFs that anything included in RDE was eligible to be included in the accreditation process. Ms Shipley restated that it was important that the FSA check this. She said that as the guidance in previous years on this issue might not have been clear, but noted that this would be closely examined in future.

Ms Shipley spoke of efforts to simplify RDE which was now more closely aligned with requirements under the Code of Conduct.

Ms Bobbin asked NGO members if they thought the rates to be used to value volunteer service was to be used as a guide or was it prescriptive. Mr Isbister, Ms Hill and Rev Deane all agreed it was prescriptive.

Ms Shipley said there needed to be a discussion with the Code of Conduct Committee on the value of volunteer services, as some NGOs may have been determining their own rates. Mr Isbister suggested such a schedule of rates be the Code of Conduct Committee's responsibility. Ms Shipley agreed and would seek direction from the Code of Conduct Committee on a standard set of rates to be used for audited financial statements. AusAID would provide to the Code Committee the set of rates used for the 2006 RDE calculations and she said AusAID was willing to work with the Code Committee as they develop this schedule.

ACTION POINT:

AusAID to write to ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee on developing a schedule of rates for volunteer services.

Items 7 & 8

Other Business & Next Meeting

Ms Shipley thanked all members for their work and repeated the aim that non-contentious accreditation reports would be circulated to CDC members and recommendations would be made by consensus out of session.

CDC Members nominated Thursday 31st August as the next CDC meeting date

ACTION POINT:

CPS to finalise the details of the 113th CDC meeting

OUT OF SESSION DELIBERATIONS – CDC 112

As agreed in previous CDC Meetings, decision items which are likely to be uncontentious can be circulated out of session. Any CDC member can request that the item be discussed at a formal CDC meeting. The following decisions were reached after CDC 112 Out of Session:

Accreditation Report: Every Home For Christ (EHC)

Decision Item: CDC accepted the revised Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

Action:

- * CDC recommends EHC for Full Accreditation

Accreditation Report: National Council of Churches Australia (NCCA)

Decision Item: CDC accepted the revised Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

Action:

- * CDC recommends NCCA for Full Accreditation

Accreditation Report: Salvation Army Australia Development Office (SAADO)

Decision Item: CDC accepted the revised Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

Action:

- * CDC recommends SAADO for Base Accreditation

Accreditation Report: Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific (AFAP)

Decision Item: CDC accepted the revised Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

Action:

- * CDC supported the Review Team's recommendation that AFAP not be accredited

Accreditation Report: AUSTCARE

Decision Item: CDC considered the Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

Action:

- * CDC recommends AUSTCARE for Full Accreditation

Accreditation Report: Burnet Institute

Decision Item: CDC considered the Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

Action:

- * CDC recommends Burnet Institute for Full Accreditation