



**AusAID / NGO Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC)**

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

**Notes from the CDC**

**Highlights of the 116th CDC meeting held on 25 June 2007**

Attendance:

<b>NGO Representatives</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>AusAID Representative</b>
Ms Karen Hill	Ms Ellen Shipley	Ms Jessica Jordan Hoverman
Mr Jamie Isbister	Community and Business	
Rev John Deane	Partnerships (CBP), AusAID	
<b>Observers</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>AusAID CBP observers</b>
Mr Alex Maroya, Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)	Mr David Syme (for Item 4.2)	Ms Johanna Wicks
Mr Jack Quinane, ACFID		Ms Ines Tallos
		Ms Rhonda Bobbin
		Mr Darren Raeburn
		Mr Morgan Edwards

**ITEM 1 CDC 116 Meeting**

**Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Ms Shipley, Chair, welcomed members to CDC 116. She introduced Mr Morgan Edwards, the new AusAID contact person for the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

**Item 1.1 Apologies**

No apologies were received.

**Item 1.2 Minutes of CDC 115 Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held at AusAID on 17 May 2007 were circulated and approved with minor corrections.

Any outstanding issues were incorporated into the current agenda.

**Item 1.2 Actions arising from CDC 115**

Ms Shipley informed the CDC that AusAID had received notification from both UNICEF Australia and Australian Volunteers International (AVI) that they had withdrawn from the Accreditation process and were eligible to reapply for Accreditation at any time.

***ACTIONS:***

- \* CDC notes that UNICEF Australia has withdrawn from the Accreditation process
- \* CDC notes that Australian Volunteers International (AVI) has withdrawn from the Accreditation process

Ms Hill informed the CDC of the response from NGOs at the Member Information Forums (MIFs) regarding possible inclusion in Accreditation Reports of “Suggestions From the Review Team”. Responses at the MIFs differed between indifference and opposition to the proposal. Ms Shipley suggested that if NGOs were concerned about this information, it could be sent directly from the Review Team to the organisation. All agreed and that in the future similar information could be obtained by future ACFID surveys of organisations who had undergone the Accreditation process.

***ACTIONS:***

\* CDC agreed that the “Suggestions From the Review Team” were communications between the NGO and the Review Team and that neither AusAID nor CDC would view these. “Suggestions” will not be provided to future Review Teams and the policy regarding “Suggestions” would be re-emphasised to Reviewers at the forthcoming Reviewer’s workshop.

\* ACFID is requested to undertake another Accreditation survey in the future (similar to the one completed in May-June 2007) in order to gather information for CDC on the learning component of Accreditation.

**Item 1.3            Approval of Agenda and Conflict of Interest Declaration**

The agenda for CDC 116 was approved without change and all CDC members and observers declared they had no Conflict of Interest in reviewing the items on the agenda.

**ITEM 2            OVERVIEW**

**Item 2.1            NGO Priorities**

Mr Isbister reminded the CDC of the upcoming seminar on NGO, Ethics and Accountability. He noted that World Vision Australia was also planning a seminar on accountability in early August. He said that these seminars would draw from Development Practices Advisory Committee (DPAC) discussions and were an opportunity to talk through issues about Cluster Evaluations and furthering the aid effectiveness dialogue.

Mr Isbister said the dynamic between those working on the Solomon Islands Tsunami and the Humanitarian and Emergencies Section (HES) continued to be positive and the handing over of programs from HES to AusAID Post was going well.

Mr Isbister thought NGOs had concerns in the way the PNG Australia Sexual Health Integrated Program (PASHIP) Cooperation Agreement had been handled. Ms Shipley said CBP had had conversations with AusAID Post and senior staff at Desk and it would continue to be part of the on-going dialogue. Ms Hill asked if it would be useful for more NGOs to provide feedback. Ms Wicks said this would be very useful. Ms Hill said she would coordinate with ACFID to provide feedback on the PASHIP process.

***ACTION:***

\* Ms Hill, with ACFID support, to coordinate NGO feedback on the development of the PASHIP Cooperation Agreement

**ITEM 3            AUSAID ISSUES AND PRIORITIES**

Ms Shipley said that any current AusAID issues and priorities were included within agenda.

## **ITEM 4**

## **ANCP ISSUES**

### **Item 4.1 Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs)**

CDC Members considered a spreadsheet of NGO IPFs for 2007-08.

#### **ACTION:**

\* CBP will publish IPFs on the AusAID website once NGOs receive their final allocations

### **Item 4.1 Progress on Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE) Issues**

Ms Shipley said since the last CDC, AusAID had decided that more discussion within CDC was required before the proposed Accreditation criterion regarding international affiliations went to the sector for comment.

Ms Shipley believed that international affiliations was not a separate issue for the Accreditation criterion and that organisations with international affiliations needed to be judged against strengthened existing criteria. Ms Hill stated that the proposed international affiliation criteria were presented as a separate criterion only for ease of presentation. She said that she supported the interweaving of the proposed criterion into the existing criteria.

Mr Syme said the capacity of international organisations changed over time and there needed to be a process of continued assessment by the Australian organisation of their international affiliate or alliance partners. He said that just as Accreditation allowed CDC to assess the capacity of organisation every five years, organisations needed a process to periodically assess the capacity of their international affiliations.

Ms Hill suggested that within the Agency Profile there could be an optional section expanded to allow organisations to demonstrate how their international affiliations operate. Ms Shipley thought the suggestion was very useful and said this would allow the opportunity for organisations to show more clearly how the specific organisation operates.

Ms Shipley asked the CDC what they would consider the minimal level of ownership for a program to be included as the organisation's own. CDC members discussed minimum requirements for an "NGO's own program" and the following were noted regarding RDE:

1. Funds for welfare, evangelistic or party political activities are ineligible to be included in RDE
2. All funds included in RDE must comply with Australian legislation requirements such as anti-Terrorism legislation
3. The level of Australian organisation engagement required for Accreditation and inclusion within RDE is the same
4. Australian organisations must have either the right to withdraw funding or to instigate a review with the option of action to follow.

Rev Deane requested that simple IPF calculation information be made publicly available to help broaden the understanding of IPFs Ms Jordan Hoverman agreed that CBP would make this available.

#### **ACTIONS:**

\* AusAID to make available as it is finalised the information regarding the minimal engagement requirements in an "NGO's own program" for the purpose of RDE inclusion

\* CBP to redraft the Accreditation Criteria that was proposed by NGO Representatives regarding international partnership

- \* Ms Hill to provide proposed amendments regarding information on international affiliations to be included in the Agency Profile format
- \* CBP to publicise simplified information on the manner of calculating regarding IPF allocations

### **Item 4.3 Revision of Base Criteria**

Copies of the Draft Revised Base Criteria were distributed. Ms Jordan Hoverman said this revision came from a recommendation of the ANCP Review and she asked CDC members to review the document and provide feedback at the next CDC.

#### ***ACTION:***

- \* CDC to consider the Revised Base Criteria at CDC 117

## **ITEM 5 ACCREDITATION**

### **Item 5.1 Accreditation Issues**

Mr Maroya gave an overview of an ACFID conducted confidential survey of 19 organisations who had undertaken accreditation Reviews. He noted that while a majority of organisations thought the process satisfactory, 27% of organisations had some level of dissatisfaction. He said on the whole organisations thought that accreditation was a good learning opportunity but there were requests from NGOs for more feedback from the Review Teams. Larger organisations also thought the Organisational Review stage was overly comprehensive. Mr Maroya suggested that ACFID might conduct similar surveys in the future if CDC thought it useful. All CDC members thought the survey very useful and Rev Deane noted that it was important to have such information so the CDC was confident that the process was achieving its objectives. All CDC members agreed with Mr Maroya's suggestion that this information be shared with the ACFID Executive Committee.

NGO Representatives spoke about the need to document the grievance process for NGOs who were dissatisfied with the Accreditation process in the future. AusAID CDC members agreed.

NGO Representatives spoke of the imposition on NGOs who have had multiple AusAID-related evaluative processes (Accreditation, Cluster Evaluation, RDE Spot-check, Audit) in the one year. Ms Shipley said AusAID was very conscious of the impositions on NGOs of having multiple processes during a one year period and noted the feedback from NGOs. She also mentioned that because of the nature of Cluster Evaluations and the limited number of accredited NGOs that it was sometimes unavoidable to involve NGOs who were also due for accreditation. She also said that RDE Spot-checks came about from concerns about RDE calculations and NGOs were not immune from these concerns during the Accreditation process. She said in terms of audits, although these were discussed with CBP, the timing of audits were at the discretion of AusAID's Audit Section.

Ms Hill said she had received feedback regarding the lack of information about what to prepare for an RDE Spot-check. Mr Quinane said there was a need for further guidance on this. Ms Hill offered to provide comment on the RDE Spot-check guidance. Ms Bobbin welcomed this and said she would send the current guidance for comment.

#### ***ACTIONS:***

- \* CBP to document and circulate the grievance process for NGOS who were dissatisfied with the Accreditation process
- \* Ms Bobbin to provide Ms Hill with the RDE Spot-check Guidance and Ms Hill to provide comments

**Item 5.2 Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Aid and Relief Fund (ORAF) Accreditation Decision Item:** CDC discussed the Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

***ACTION:***

\* CDC recommends Base Accreditation for ORAF

**Item 5.3 Plan International Australia Accreditation**

**Decision Item:** CDC discussed the Accreditation Report and made the following recommendation:

***ACTION:***

\*CDC recommends Full Accreditation for Plan International Australia

**Item 5.4 Role of Observers**

Ms Jordan Hoverman distributed an Options Paper regarding the Role of Observers at Organisation Reviews.

Rev Deane thanked Ms Jordan Hoverman for exploring the issue. However, he was not supportive of options in which observers may be drawn into the Accreditation decision-making process. He believed there should only be a maximum of one observer on Organisation Reviews and that person should be there for a learning process.

Ms Jordan Hoverman suggested that by expanding the role of observers CDC may have more information about Organisation Reviews and would be better able to monitor the performance of the Review Teams. NGO Representatives said they did not wish observers to be either auditors of the process or the Review Team. Ellen agreed that feedback regarding the NGO learning objective of the Accreditation process would be available through future ACFID surveys of NGOs who had undergone the Accreditation process.

After further discussion CDC members agreed to the following Action Item.

***ACTION:***

\* The CDC reaffirms the role of the Observer on Organisation Reviews to be one of undertaking a learning process only. The role of the Observer in any grievance process would be examined during the drafting of guidance on what steps organisations can take to lodge a grievance.

**ITEM 6 OTHER BUSINESS**

**Item 6.1 CDC Functions and Options**

Mr Maroya referred to a tabled Options Paper regarding CDC future functions and options. He thought there were several issues facing the CDC. He said there was a perception that CDC should be able to do more. All NGO Representatives agreed there were issues that NGO Representatives would like to explore more fully both in the CDC and within the sector but that there wasn't the time to do this.

Mr Maroya stated the five options proposed for the CDC were

1. Continuing the current situation
2. Current situation with additional secretariat support for the NGO members (possibly based at ACFID)
3. Compensate organisations from which NGO Representatives were drawn with the proviso that CDC Representatives would devote a minimum amount of time to CDC
4. Introduce paid full-time CDC positions
5. Have a paid full time NGO 'co-chair' with other NGO positions as per current situation.

Mr Isbister said as the number of CDC members had reduced and the numbers of avenues for interaction with AusAID increased there was now a need for more thinking around many issues. He believed the link between DPAC and CDC was important but this needed to be more than just information sharing. He asked if any future support of the CDC might be better accessed and utilised by NGOs if based in Melbourne or Sydney. He suggested funding for a CDC support position within an accredited organisation that was providing a NGO Representative. Ms Hill agreed and said such a position (part-time or otherwise) would be good for liaison purposes.

Ms Shipley said she had no fixed view and could consider this option. She believed CDC should remain separate from ACFID. She said as AusAID was currently financially supporting the CDC through contracting consultants and providing limited secretarial duties, she was supportive of all options to enable CDC to function more effectively. For any option she believed AusAID would be supportive once the added value had been made explicit and any additional resources/position costed and supportive documentation provided.

***ACTION:***

\* NGO Representatives, with ACFID support, to submit a revised Options Paper on the functions of the CDC. The Options Paper will include the additional option of Secretariat services being provided within an NGO that was already providing an NGO Representative. This proposal would include costings for support from AusAID and NGO for this service.

**Item 6.2            CDC Notes on the Internet**

Mr Raeburn distributed draft CDC 115 Notes for the Internet for CDC's consideration and comments. He noted that out-of-session decisions had not previously formed part of the CDC Notes made available on the internet. CDC members agreed that out-of-session decisions should be attached to the CDC Notes.

***ACTIONS:***

\* CBP to include out-of-session decisions on the CDC Notes on the Internet

**Item 6.3            Child Protection Guidelines**

Ms Wicks said the drafting of AusAID's Child Protection Guidelines were still progressing although a public release date was still unknown. One of the implications was that NGOs would need to have a Child Protection Policy. Ms Shipley added that Guidelines were expected to have implications for the Code of Conduct and Accreditation as well as for NGO Head Agreements. Mr Quinane asked that the ACFID Child Rights Working Group be included in the external consultations.

***ACTION:***

\* CBP to request that the ACFID Child Rights Working Group be included in the Child Protection Guidelines consultation process

***ITEM 7                    NEXT MEETING***

17 August 2007 was nominated as the date for the next CDC meeting (CDC 117).

***ACTION:***

\* Next CDC Meeting, 17 August 2007, AusAID House (London Circuit) Canberra