



**Australian Government**

**AusAID**

*117<sup>th</sup> CDC Meeting, Australian Volunteer International, Melbourne*

*15 November 2007*

*Notes*

**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 117<sup>th</sup> CDC meeting held on 15 November 2007.**

**Attendance:**

**AusAID Representatives**

Ms Rosemary Cassidy (Chair)

Ms Jessica Jordan Hoverman

**NGO Representatives**

Ms Karen Hill

Mr Jamie Isbister

**AusAID Observers**

Ms Ellen Shipley

Ms Johanna Wicks

Ms Ines Tallos

Ms Katherine West

Mr Darren Raeburn (minute taker)

**ACFID Observer**

Mr Alex Maroya

**Apologies**

Rev John Deane

Mr Jack Quinane, ACFID

***ITEM 1 CDC 117 Meeting***

**Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Ms Cassidy, Chair, welcomed members to CDC 117. She welcomed Ms Katherine West, the new NGO Manager in Community and Business Partnerships (CBP), replacing Ms Jordan Hoverman.

**Item 1.1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Rev Deane (NGO Representative) and Mr Quinane from ACFID.

**Item 1.2 Minutes of CDC 116 Meeting (Appendix A)**

Minutes of the 116<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 25 June 2007 were circulated and approved with no amendments.

**Item 1.2 Actions arising from CDC 116 (Appendix B)**

Ms Cassidy noted that guidance on an accreditation grievance process was still outstanding. Ms Hill said that the NGO feedback in the development of the PASHIP Cooperation Agreement had been done by ACFID (Ms Neva Wendt). Mr Maroya said he would confirm this feedback was passed to AusAID and clarify to whom feedback was provided.

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



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- The agenda for CDC 117 was approved with minor adjustments

All CDC members declared they had no Conflict of Interest in discussing any agenda items.

**Item 1.4 New CDC members**

Ms Cassidy informed the CDC that there will be two new AusAID Representatives on the CDC at CDC 118. Nic Notarpietro (Director of Operations Policy Management) and Timothy Church (Legal Officer), both of whom have wide experience in development. She said she looked forward to welcoming Andrew Newmarch (from World Vision) to CDC 118 as the new NGO Representative. The Director of CBP would continue as Chair.

Ms Cassidy thanked outgoing CDC members Ms Hill, Ms Shipley and Ms Jordan Hoverman for their many years of service and contributions to the CDC.

**ITEM 2 Accreditation Issues**

**Item 2.1 Revision of Base Criteria**

Ms Tallos reminded the CDC that it had been nearly one year since the ANCP Review recommended a review of the Base Criteria and that CDC needed to progress the issues so that NGOs wanting to apply for Base Accreditation had certainty in the criteria to be addressed.

Ms Shipley said the issue of Base Criteria within a continuum of certification was important. She said Base criteria had to be looked at within this continuum (tax deductibility [assessment under the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme], ACFID Code of Conduct, Base Accreditation and Full Accreditation).

Mr Isbister said that the sector was supportive of having a Base Accreditation level. It was important as it is seen to assist in the development of NGOs, giving small and emerging organisations a standard to aspire to. He said he was a strong advocate of having two accreditation levels and respected the learning principles of accreditation. He said the revisions had helped in these efforts. However, the criteria needed further differentiation between Full and Base, in order to make this difference in standards clearer. For example he thought the demonstration of cross-cutting issues was important but that currently the same level of evidence was required for both Full and Base. He thought these could be differentiated.

Mr Maroya said he thought only minor changes were needed. He asked how new Global Programs' advice might be reflected in Base.

Ms Jordan Hoverman asked if NGO Representatives and ACFID could table their suggested changes.

Ms Shipley noted that this would have to be done before the upcoming Reviewer's Workshop and that NGO Representatives would need to go to this Workshop with words and guidance on any "grey areas" within the Base criteria.

**Item 2.2 Revision of Full Criteria**



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Mr Maroya said the suggested modifications from ACFID and NGO Representatives (as tabled in Attachment F) were in response to feedback from the Member Information Forums (MIFs). It was thought that the revisions proposed for Criterion B were prescriptive and limiting, and the modifications better reflected the accreditation principles and softened institutional requirements.

Ms Jordan Hoverman suggested two minor clarifications.

Mr Maroya asked if the terminology throughout the document referring to Global Programs and “International partners, alliances or affiliates” be standardised (the later to be used when not referring to governance arrangements).

All agreed that with the inclusion of these suggestions.

Ms Hill noted that the Family Planning Criteria F were not clear, noting several areas of guidance which were ambiguous and uncertain.

Mr Isbister said that in the Reviewer’s Workshop CDC representatives should alert reviewers to the ambiguous areas.

**Item 2.2.a Revision of Agency Profile**

Ms Hill asked for feedback for the proposed revisions to include references to Global Programs in the Agency Profile format. She noted that with further changes to the Full Criteria table the Agency Profile format would need some minor changes to make them consistent.

Ms Tallos said that AusAID was happy with the changes and that she would ensure the Agency Profile was consistent with working in the accreditation criteria.

Mr Isbister noted that the Agency Profile for Base Criteria would also need to be similarly altered.

**Item 2.3 Reviewer’s Workshop**

Ms Cassidy asked for comments regarding the proposed agenda (Attachment G) for the Reviewer’s Workshop on 3-4 December. She noted that most reviewers were attending, including financial systems assessors (FSAs).

Mr Isbister suggested that those Reviewers who did not attend could not undertake the Review Team Leader role as they had not been trained in recent accreditation changes

All agreed

Ms Tallos noted that the Reviewer’s Workshop has been structured to be interactive and provide opportunities for the CDC to provide feedback to reviewers and for Reviewers to share experiences. Additionally, the ACFID survey of NGOs regarding accreditation would provide feedback to reviewers. Case studies would focus on issues of assessing organisations with global alliances and organisations who didn’t fit the Community Development Model. She said these were an excellent opportunity to update reviewers on recent and emerging issues. CBP would provide details to CDC members on the accreditation issues discussed at CDC meetings over the last two years.

Ms Shipley said that in terms of privacy and confidentiality, she suggested CBP seek NGOs’ agreement to have their accreditation review discussed during the workshop. If organisations wish to provide further comments on their accreditation experience they could provide these to the CDC members prior to the Workshop.

All agreed.



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It was agreed that there needed to be an emphasis on the joint nature of the accreditation process and the ownership of by the CDC. It was also agreed that ACFID would ask Wendy Rose to do a joint introduction with Ms Shipley.  
Ms Wicks volunteered in organising a networking evening event for Day One.

***ITEM 3***                      ***Other Business***

**Item 3.1**                      **CDC coordinator proposal**

Alex referred to Attachment H, position description for a CDC coordinator to support CDC NGO Representatives. He said the revision of the accreditation criteria demonstrated that although NGO Representatives had the skills, they could not be expected to contribute much time to such activities. Additionally he said ACFID was reviewing how much support it could provide to CDC members as accreditation was not an issue for a majority of its members.

Ms Jordan Hoverman said that she had thought that this position would also be able to engage at a higher level in research and policy development. Additionally she thought that this role would provide support for the secretariat duties currently being undertaken by AusAID.

Without these aspects she said it was uncertain if AusAID could co-fund such an arrangement. Mr Maroya said that these exclusions were not deliberate but that the role was designed to reflect the pay scale as per the proposal.

Ms Hill said that this person would be tasked by NGO members.

Ms Shipley said the support the NGO community, who received \$37.5 million through ANCP, had shown to NGO Representatives and the CDC in general was disappointing. She asked if this reflected the commitment of the broader NGO sector.

Mr Maroya said NGO support for the CDC resource could come either from a levy-like fee on ANCP funds to NGOs or straight from the ANCP pool (before distribution by AusAID). Both he and the NGO Representatives had doubts that NGOs could use donated funds for this support. He said that this proposed resource would increase communication between the NGO Representatives and the broader sectors and promote the CDC's relevancy and how to interact with the CDC

Ms Hill stated that she thought the reduction in CDC member numbers (including NGO Representatives) had meant CDC members were less visible and had less profile.

Ms Shipley agreed and noted that CDC members were also not conducting reviews, weren't able to contribute time to sub-committees and that CDC profile at the MIFs had also been absent in some instances in the past. However she would find it difficult to advocate for AusAID funding this position without NGO also contributing resources.

Mr Isbister said the CDC had a strong history of its joint nature and this should continue.

However due to the changes within the CDC and the reduction in the numbers of NGOs with accreditation, the CDC did not have its previous high status within the NGO sector. He said that the various accreditation challenges now coloured the NGO view of CDC. He said that as well as the issue of funding of this position, the cost to those NGO's providing representation and contributing to CDC and accreditation was equally an important issue. He said that NGOs providing CDC Representatives had no additional resources and he thought that AusAID could



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provide further resources. He said the current system of NGO Representatives giving input and AusAID supplying a contractor could be enhanced substantially by the provision of resources to NGOs to provide increased input in a timelier manner.

Mr Maroya said the proposed location of the position (ACFID) was up for discussion and was not an issue for ACFID, he said that this position could be within an NGO.

Ms Shipley asked about ACFID's withdrawal of resources for the CDC.

Mr Maroya said that there was a business decision made that ACFID membership income could not be applied to services which did not benefit at least half the membership, and which was not stipulated under the AusAID contract. In response to a request for clarification on this issue by Mr Isbister, Mr Maroya said he would provide further clarification on any ACFID Executive Committee decision regarding future ACFID support to the CDC. He said there was a need for a further decision on this matter.

The NGO Representatives said any decision on providing resources for CDC secretariat support and CDC members should be delayed until there was further information on the level of clarification ACFID support.

### **Item 3.2            Comments on ADPlan**

Ms Jordan Hoverman, as AusAID NGO Manager, provided feedback regarding the administration of ANCP ADPlans. She said that several common mistakes reoccurred and there was strong evidence that some organisations do not take the preparation of ADPlans seriously. She said these issues had been raised repeatedly at the MIFs and included bad grammar and spelling, acronyms not spelt out, missing DAC codes, requests for welfare or infrastructure programs, budgets which were inaccurate, ADPlans which did not reach a basic 3:1 match, family planning issues, ADPlans which were indecipherable, and even cases where organisations submitted the same ADPlan.

Mr Isbister asked if further training was necessary and if the same organisations were making mistakes.

Ms Jordan Hoverman said that in many cases it was the same organisations but that very few ADPlans in any case were without some inaccuracies. She said that as these documents were distributed to relevant areas within AusAID impressions of the NGO Sector could be guided by these substandard documents.

She suggested that CBP could combine the ANCP Guidelines and ANCP Principles documents to help NGOs find information. CBP could meet with staff with NGO ANCP reporting responsibilities to emphasise the importance of presenting a professional document. She also suggested in the next round that substandard ADPlans would be returned for editing and correction. A check list noted common problems could be included.

Mr Isbister said that with 40 organisations an ADPlan or two needing some revision could be excused but if the problems were across the board then there needed to be a system put in place. He suggested that for repeat offenders a letter to the ANCP officer CCed to the CEO should be sent highlighting the substandard nature of the document.

Ms Shipley said this letter from AusAID could emphasise the recent increase in ANCP funds and the need for quality to ensure continued support for the ANCP.



All agreed with these suggestions. It was noted that CDC's attention had been drawn to ADPlan quality and that CDC would monitor this as an issue.

**Item 3.3          Sharing of Cooperation Agreement (CA) principles and outcomes of Cluster Evaluation Peer Review meeting**

Mr Isbister asked for an update on sharing CA principles. He asked if NGOs (perhaps through the Development Practices Committee (DPC) should provide input. He suggested that he could lead the discussion on this at the next DPC meeting.

Ms Wicks said that she was working with Ms Cassidy to have the CA policy and guidance document approved by the AusAID Executive which would mean mandatory consideration of certain procedures by AusAID desks. She supported a discussion at DPC however the document was substantially an AusAID procedural document. She said she would share the document with ACFID and DPC. Once this document was finalised, Ms Wicks confirmed she was considering a Cooperation Agreement roundtable with NGOs.

Ms Shipley thought it was a good idea and suggested that this meeting could be furthered by 1) asking NGO participants to gather and collate experiences before the meeting, 2) AusAID to do the same, 3) the meeting to then focus on this material. She said the issue of the future of CAs in light of devolution was one that needed to be considered.

Ms Wicks informed CDC members that the recent Cluster Evaluation Peer Review meeting had several outcomes for the CDC. The meeting recommended the following steps

- a) should an organisation be assessed as having an unsatisfactory program in one Cluster Evaluation, then
- b) an activity of the same organisation would be included in another Cluster Evaluation within two years.
- c) If that activity was also rated unsatisfactory then all documentation, CBP analysis of these reports, and a statement from the organisation would be presented to the CDC for consideration.

***ITEM 3                      Next Meetings***

Ms Shipley suggested that in light of the discussions regarding the future directions and options of the CDC that the next meeting be attended by senior AusAID and ACFID staff. This meeting could consider a potential widening for more diverse partnerships in particular discussion on the impact of partnership approaches and changes within AusAID such as devolution.

Ms Cassidy again thanked outgoing CDC members Ms Hill, Ms Shipley and Ms Jordan Hoverman for their many years of service and contributions to the CDC.

Mr Isbister, on behalf of the NGO community, wished Ms Shipley well in her new role as Director of AusAID's Philippines Section and thanked her for her valuable contribution to the NGO sector during her time as Director of CBP.



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