



Australian Government
AusAID

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 119th CDC meeting held on 27th May 2008.

Attendance:

AusAID Representatives

Ms Megan Anderson (Chair)
Mr Timothy Church
Mr Nic Notarpietro

NGO Representatives

Rev John Deane
Mr Andrew Newmarch
Mr Jamie Isbister

AusAID Observers

Mr Conrad Bulenda
Ms Rhonda Bobbin
Ms Ines Tallos
Mr Hugh Paterson (minute taker)

ACFID Observers

Ms Cetana Das
Mr Jack Quinane

Apologies

ITEM 1 CDC 119 Meeting

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Ms Anderson introduced herself as the new chair of the CDC and welcomed members to CDC Meeting 119.

Item 1.1

There were no apologies to be noted. There were no conflicts of interest to be noted.

Item 1.2 Minutes of CDC 118 Meeting

Minutes of the 118th meeting held on 12 February 2008 were circulated and were approved following some minor grammatical changes and amendments in relation to items 3.2 and 3.6.

ITEM 2 NGO Priorities

Mr Isbister provided an update to the CDC on the Australian NGO sector's response to the emergency in Burma. There were two groups of NGOs working in Burma: 1) those that had MOUs with the government of Burma for some time and 2) Australian NGOs who had local partners in Burma who could assist them in getting access into areas of Burma.

Mr Isbister commented that AusAID should investigate options to support NGOs with good capacity that already have a presence in the country (who are not necessarily part of the Periodic Funding Agreement (PFA) with the Humanitarian and Emergency Section) in these kinds of emergency situations.

Rev. Deane commented that the increased funding under ANCP for the coming financial year was well received by the NGO sector. He went on to question the role of the CDC in relation to other funding mechanisms. The CDC has primarily focused on the ANCP and accreditation but there is a need for a forum to discuss other AusAID funding mechanisms, such as Cooperation Agreements.

Ms Anderson noted the need for a mechanism to discuss and provide advice to the NGO community on AusAID policy for working with NGOs wider than ANCP and Cooperation Agreements.

The CDC discussed the viability of Cluster Evaluations, and agreed that while the Cluster Evaluations were narrow, they were a useful tool.

ACFID and the NGO sector appreciated the responsiveness of the government in relation to the Burma disaster.

The committee noted the celebration of 10 years of the Code of Conduct and recognised its important role in accreditation

Questions were asked about the extent to which AusAID captures what NGOs are doing when they prepare country strategies. AusAID representatives agreed to discuss this issue with country desks and the Office of Development Effectiveness.

Action: AusAID to examine the role of the CDC including discussion with the NGO sector on the role of the CDC in providing advice to AusAID on the impact of policy changes and funding to the sector.

ITEM 3 Accreditation Issues

Item 3.1 Accreditation Report: Australian Cranio-Maxillo Facial Foundation (ACMFF)

The CDC recommended that ACMFF not be re-accredited at Base Level, under current guidelines, but that AusAID consider options for niche NGOs and community organisations.

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

Action: Australian Cranio-Maxillo Facial Foundation not be accredited at Base level.

Item 3.2 Indicative Planning Figures

Ms Anderson raised issues about confidentiality surrounding the IPFs and the CDC reiterated the reasons they see the figures.

Ms Bobbin noted that there would be minor changes in the IPFs due to a clerical error and that 10 NGOs made errors in their RDE calculations.

ITEM 4 Other Business

Item 4.1 New ANCP

Ms Anderson advised that AusAID would like to work with the NGO sector to develop ANCP further, including examining in greater detail opportunities to work with niche NGOs, multi-year funding, strategic partnerships and better engagement with NGOs of all sizes.

Ms Anderson detailed how over the next ten months, AusAID will hold internal discussions about the policy for engagement by AusAID with the NGO sector.

Mr Isbister highlighted that change was difficult and to be successful perhaps there is a need to build on ANCP and keep the accreditation process because of its high level of integrity within the sector.

The CDC agreed that it would be useful to map out a one page process so the NGO sector understand how everything will progress and where the individual NGOs fit.

Mr Notarpietro said that AusAID should examine the effectiveness of NGOs in partnership with country governments as he felt that played a crucial role through value adding relationships.

Action: CPS to draft a short concept note detailing the possibilities of the new ANCP for circulation to the NGO sector.

Item 4.2 Base Criteria

Rev. Deane informed the CDC of how expensive it can be for an agency to prepare for accreditation, but felt that if funding is provided, some form of accreditation is necessary.

Ms Anderson informed that while the government is looking to engage more broadly with the NGO community, risk management would remain important.

Action: AusAID to seek further guidance from the Government on funding mechanisms and policy development.

AusAID to undertake stakeholder engagement on broadening and deepening community engagement with the aid program

Item 4.3 ACFID Partnership

Ms Anderson detailed the discussions of the ACFID AusAID annual planning day and how AusAID is keen to move the partnership forward.

Rev. Deane highlighted that small agencies have little opportunities to meet with AusAID staff.

Mr Isbister explained that he felt that the ACFID thematic groups were essential to the long term health of the sector.

Mr Quinane highlighted the capacity constraints within ACFID.

Ms Anderson noted a Partnership with ACFID would include increased support for training to the sector and support for the role of the CDC.

Item 4.4 The Role of the CDC

Ms Anderson stated that she felt that having three AusAID CDC members was an expensive exercise and perhaps not the best use of the other two member's time, if the CDC was only to fulfil the role of making recommendations on accreditation.

Rev John Deane noted that the NGO CDC representatives and ACFID were planning to meet to discuss the best possible way to use the CDC as a mechanism to engage with the NGO Sector on possible funding schemes and strategic partnerships as well as the best way to work with AusAID.

The CDC agreed that a forum is needed to provide AusAID with feedback on policy development and funding mechanisms.

Action: NGO CDC representatives and ACFID to suggest the best way to use the CDC to engage the NGO sector on discussions about AusAID policy and funding mechanisms.

ITEM 5 Next Meeting(s)

The next CDC meeting will be held before November.

OUT OF SESSION DELIBERATIONS – CDC 119

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 the item be discussed at a formal CDC meeting.

Due to the timing of submission of reports, the following decisions were reached Out of Session via telephone conference on 20 June 2008:

Attendance:

AusAID Representatives

Ms Megan Anderson (Chair)

NGO Representatives

Rev John Deane

Mr Jamie Isbister

AusAID Observers

Ms Ines Tallos

Mr Hugh Paterson (minute taker)

Written comments submitted:

Mr Nic Notarpietro

Mr Andrew Newmarch

ACFID Observer

Ms Cetana Das

Ms Anderson stated that this Out of Session meeting of the CDC had been convened to discuss two accreditation reports put before the CDC as follows:

Accreditation Report: Nusa Tenggara Association (NTA)

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

Action: CDC recommends NTA for Base Accreditation

Accreditation Report: World Education Australia Limited (WEAL)

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

Action: CDC recommends WEAL for Base Accreditation

Next Meeting:

Rev Deane suggested that there was a need to have a meeting of the CDC prior to the November meeting to discuss the Concept Paper that would be circulated to the NGO Sector for comments. Ms Anderson agreed and said that at this meeting a range of other topics could be addressed such as the accreditation criteria and process, NGO engagement with the Australian Community and accessibility for smaller NGOs.