

AusAID Corporate Plan 2001–2003

Director General's Foreword

The aid program advances Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. The program's focus on the Asia-Pacific region is an expression of Australia's strong engagement with the region and commitment to working in partnership to meet its considerable development challenges.

The policy framework, Better Aid for a Better Future, issued by the Government in 1997, continues to shape the direction of the aid program. This Corporate Plan 2001–2003 outlines how, in implementing the policy framework, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) will set priorities, manage resources and achieve results in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Continuous improvement in the quality of the aid program — and being able to measure and demonstrate performance — is a high priority. We will be working to maximise the program's operational impact, including through an even sharper focus on poverty reduction, innovative approaches to aid delivery, more effective engagement with partner countries on their policy agendas and closer coordination with other donors.

We will seek to build support for the aid program in the Australian community by communicating effectively the achievements of the program and involving the Australian public in its delivery.

Our people are crucial to AusAID's core business: providing policy advice on development issues and delivering a high quality program. We need skilled and motivated staff, who work in an environment of effective leadership and who have a shared commitment to the strategic directions of the program and the agency. Our People Management Strategy provides the framework for these goals to be fully realised.

I value the contribution and commitment of staff and look forward to working with them over the next three years.

Bruce Davis
Director General

Our Objective

To advance Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development.

Our Core Business

AusAID serves the Government by advising on development issues and delivering Australia's development cooperation program with excellence.

AusAID will:

- provide professional policy advice and support to the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on development issues
- develop and manage effective and innovative poverty reduction programs in partnership with developing countries, Australian businesses, non-government organisations and international agencies
- be a creative, effective organisation which provides a rewarding workplace with high levels of staff commitment and satisfaction
- be an open, accessible organisation which promotes Australia's aid program and approach to international development issues to key stakeholders, including the Australian community.

Our Operating Environment

Over the last half century, progress has been made in reducing poverty and achieving sustained growth. But the progress has been uneven and halting. Over a billion people still live in abject poverty, with most of these concentrated in the Asia-Pacific region.

The challenge for Australia — as for other donors — is to make the most effective use of the aid program to help reduce poverty and enhance the capacity of our developing country partners to achieve sustainable development.

A focus on the Asia-Pacific region enables Australia to maximise the impact of our development assistance in reducing poverty. Australia's aid program targets countries in East Asia, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island countries — with selective engagement in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Over the next few years, the Asia-Pacific region is likely to face continuing challenges to stability and economic growth. The aid program has an important role as part of Australia's broad approach to promoting regional peace, security and prosperity. It seeks to respond flexibly and innovatively to help our neighbours meet their development challenges.

Globalisation has quickened the process of change, providing opportunities for increased trade and investment to stimulate economic growth. It has also exposed and deepened structural and other weaknesses that prevent countries from taking advantage of these opportunities. Sound governance is critical to achieving economic growth and creating opportunities for the poor and vulnerable. Support for basic needs and essential public services — particularly in health and education — is also vital so that poor and disadvantaged people do not fall further behind.

We can expect a continuing demand for humanitarian and emergency assistance to cope with natural disasters and human-made crises, in our region and beyond. Australia maintains the capacity through the aid program to respond promptly and generously to such crises.

There is increasing recognition of the need for donors to work together more closely to speed progress towards achieving development goals. Australia is actively engaged with other bilateral donors and multilateral development agencies, to ensure greater coordination of development efforts.

Accountability to the Government, the Parliament and the Australian community for the delivery of a high quality aid program requires an emphasis on measuring and reporting on performance. It is important for the aid program to further improve systems, procedures and practices to meet that demand.

Our People

AusAID strives for excellence in carrying out its core business. Our people are critical to achieving high quality results. AusAID must attract and develop skilled staff as the basis of a professional agency with a strong foundation of development knowledge.

AusAID's People Management Strategy supports a culture of high performance and continuous learning, through a focus on five key areas:

- effective leadership and management
- a shared commitment to the strategic directions underpinning the aid program and AusAID
- program management and policy expertise
- flexible, responsive and innovative work practices
- being an employer of choice.

Work Values and Practices

Our core work values and practices are:

- responsiveness and initiative in work performance
- effective communication and consultation in determining priorities and expectations
- openness to innovation and to contestability of ideas
- expertise in and commitment to international development
- professionalism and integrity in carrying out our duties
- a collegiate and co-operative approach to work
- continued development of skills, management capabilities and leadership
- a workplace which is free from discrimination and encourages diversity
- continuous improvement in program quality.

Key Result Areas

Ten key result areas are used to plan, prioritise and measure the performance of our programs.

Build Effective Partnerships

To build and maintain effective partnerships with developing countries, international organisations and the community, AusAID will:

- develop and refine country strategies in consultation with partner countries to ensure Australian assistance both meets their needs and takes account of the priorities set by the Australian Government
- engage in policy dialogue on the development process with governments and civil society in partner countries
- work closely with Australian businesses, the public sector and non-government organisations to ensure the effective delivery of the program
- work closely with international and regional organisations to influence the international development agenda
- strengthen our coordination with other donors, including through exploring harmonisation of aid procedures, to ensure our activities are complementary and efficient
- ensure our aid efforts remain identifiably Australian
- enhance community understanding of, and support for, the aid program.

Deliver Australia's Aid Program with Excellence

A high quality aid program maximises the impact of Australia's development assistance. To manage effectively the delivery of Australia's aid program, AusAID will:

- provide high quality advice to the Government on aid policy, program performance and international development issues
- design, implement and review our programs in accordance with international standards of best practice
- maintain leading systems of financial management, accountability, performance reporting and contracting procedures and practice
- effectively manage people and resources.

Promote Effective Governance

Good governance is an essential precondition for poverty reduction and sustainable development. It is critical to aid effectiveness. To promote effective governance in partner countries, the aid program will support them to:

- improve economic and financial management to maximise and broadly distribute the benefits of growth
- increase public sector effectiveness
- strengthen legal systems and the rule of law
- foster the development of civil society.

Improve Access to and Quality of Education

Education is development's most basic building block, yet some 130 million children in poor communities worldwide do not attend school and hundreds of millions more attend for only a few years. To assist partner countries meet the educational needs of their people, the aid program will:

- improve the availability, quality, equitable distribution, and relevance of basic education for all their population
- support vocational and technical education
- provide assistance in distance education, higher education and institutional strengthening.

Improve Health

Despite the gains of the 20th century, 10 million children die every year before reaching the age of five and 30 per cent of people in the developing world are malnourished. Diseases that can be readily prevented threaten the health of the world's poor. To assist partner countries to improve health outcomes, the aid program will:

- improve basic health care for those groups most at risk through simple, cost effective methods of prevention and treatment, focusing on:
 - communicable and vector-borne diseases; especially HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria
 - women and children's health, including reproductive health
 - non-communicable diseases and injuries
- support national policy development and health sector reform.

Improve Agriculture and Rural Development

About 70 per cent of the poorest people in developing countries live in rural areas. To reduce rural poverty by increasing the opportunities for the poor to generate income and improve their livelihoods, the aid program will:

- increase agricultural sector productivity and support activities that enable developing countries to benefit from a more open trading system
- stimulate rural non-farm employment
- assist partner countries to manage natural resources sustainably.

Provide Essential Infrastructure

Essential infrastructure is fundamental to poverty reduction and sustainable development. It provides access to needed resources and markets, improving both agricultural and urban productivity. To help ensure vital infrastructure is available for people in partner countries, the aid program will:

- assist the creation of enabling environments for both private and public financing and management of infrastructure
- support human resource development, maintenance and capacity building for infrastructure
- improve poor people's access to essential infrastructure, such as water supply and sanitation, transport and energy.

Deliver Humanitarian and Emergency Assistance

Both globally and in our region the need for humanitarian and emergency assistance has reached unprecedented levels. To deliver prompt, appropriate and effective humanitarian and emergency assistance, the aid program will:

- provide support to those most in need, with a particular focus on countries with which Australia has ongoing and substantial development cooperation partnerships
- provide emergency and refugee relief
- assist in developing longer-term preventative, preparedness and rehabilitation measures.

Maximise Environmental Sustainability

Poor people suffer most from the consequences of environmental damage. Preventing environmental degradation is essential to poverty reduction and ensuring development is sustainable. To maximise sustainable poverty reduction in partner countries, the aid program will:

- assess and manage the impact of aid activities on the environment

- support activities in a range of sectors, such as water and natural resource management, that directly address environmental issues in developing countries
- contribute to global environmental initiatives.

Promote Gender Equity

Men and women have not shared equally in the benefits of development: about 70 per cent of the world's poor are women. To promote equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries of development in partner countries, the aid program will:

- incorporate strategies to address gender inequalities in all Australian aid activities
- provide assistance to increase women's access to education, health care and economic resources, to encourage women's participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels and to promote the human rights of women and eliminate discrimination against women.

Measuring Our Performance

Measuring and improving our performance is essential to delivering a high quality aid program and ensuring accountability. To continuously improve our performance, AusAID will:

- assess the quality of country and regional program activities in terms of appropriateness of objectives and design, achievement of objectives, professional management and sustainability of outcomes
- monitor and report on achievements in our key result areas
- assess the performance of multilateral and non-government organisations that are funded through the aid program
- maintain and report regularly on corporate outcomes and outputs
- apply the results obtained from monitoring, evaluation and reporting to improve the quality of the aid program.

AusAID will continue to assess and improve our systems to ensure performance reporting is effective.

Our Commitment to Quality Services

Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and Government

AusAID undertakes to:

- provide high quality advice on aid policy, program directions and international development issues
- provide high quality and prompt support for the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary and Government's communications with the community and the parliament, including correspondence, speeches, publications and parliamentary questions.
- deliver a high quality aid program and evaluate, measure and report on its performance.

Australian Public

AusAID undertakes to:

- provide information to the public to increase the level of the Australian community's awareness, understanding and support for development cooperation
- respond promptly to specific requests for information from the public and give high priority to freedom of information requests in accordance with procedures set out in the Freedom of Information Act 1982
- manage public monies in a professional and accountable manner
- provide information on procurement opportunities and contracting selection processes under the aid program and comply with Australian Government procurement guidelines.

Developing Countries

AusAID undertakes to:

- encourage the full participation of partner governments and their people, as appropriate, in the management and delivery of our development activities
- consult major partners on a regular and timely basis on policy, program and procedural matters including through the development of country strategies and the holding of annual high level consultations
- respond to requests for assistance in a timely and professional manner
- provide information on the performance of our programs, including major evaluations and reports

- encourage feedback on the quality of our service.

Aid Delivery Partners

AusAID undertakes to:

- provide aid delivery partners, including international and regional organisations, non-government organisations, Australian businesses and other donors with timely, accessible and accurate information on the Australian aid program and opportunities for cooperation
- consult on a regular and timely basis on policy, program and procedural matters, as appropriate
- share information on lessons learned in aid delivery
- encourage feedback on the quality of our service.

AusAID — A Snapshot

AusAID is an administratively autonomous agency within the Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio. It is responsible for the management of the official Australian Government overseas aid program.

AusAID's central office is in Canberra. Operations in developing countries and multilateral agencies are supported by AusAID staff deployed at Australian overseas missions and by locally engaged staff.

Corporate Governance Arrangements

While all staff have a role in the operation and performance of AusAID, final responsibility rests with the Director General, who reports directly to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on all aspects of aid policy and operations. The Director General is responsible to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the administration of AusAID and is also a member of the Department's Executive.

The AusAID Executive assists the Director General in meeting his responsibilities. The Executive, comprising the Director General and three Deputy Directors General, is responsible for strategic direction-setting and broad management issues. It also focuses on AusAID's relationship with the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary who assists the Minister for Foreign Affairs on aid matters.

AusAID has two Committees which report to the Executive on:

- ensuring quality in all areas of aid delivery
- program strategies, as the basis of the development and delivery of the aid program.

Comments, Feedback and Further Information

AusAID welcomes comments and feedback on its range of services. Comments, feedback and requests for information should be addressed to:

Address: AusAID
GPO Box 887
Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6206 4000

Fax: (02) 6206 4880

Website: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au>

Freedom of Information requests should be directed to the Freedom of Information Officer, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Unit, telephone (02) 6206 4617

AusAID's commitment to quality services is noted in a range of documents, including country strategy papers, memoranda of understanding and program guidelines. Further information on the aid program is available in other AusAID publications, including:

Australia's Overseas Aid Program 2000–01
Better Aid for a Better Future
AusAID-NGO Cooperation Annual Report
Contracting Out

Copies of publications by the aid program are available on the AusAID internet site:

Website: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/>

For a hard copy of these documents address correspondence to:

Canberra Mailing Centre
PO Box 650
Fyshwick ACT 2609

Tel: 02 62691209

Fax: 02 6269 1212

Email: books@ausaid.gov.au