



Australian Government

AusAID

FAMILY PLANNING AND THE AID PROGRAM: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

Australian Agency for International Development

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This guide aims to serve as a comprehensive reference document for AusAID staff (including A based and Program Support Unit (PSU) staff) and contractors, including NGOs, who are managing activities involving a family planning component. It sets out the Government's policy and outlines the procedures to use to ensure that family planning activities are of the highest quality.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. **Read the *Guiding Principles*:** they summarise the Government's policy on supporting family planning activities under the aid program.

- See page 4 for a copy of the *Guiding Principles*.
- For further explanation of the *Guiding Principles*, refer to the policy section (page 8).

2. **Confirm that the project/program is a family planning activity.**

- See page 10 for the definition of a family planning activity.

3. **Decide on which set of procedures is relevant to the project/program.**

i) Bilateral and regional projects (including NGO Windows, ANCP Base-accredited NGO, Small Activity Scheme (SAS) and other bilateral NGO projects) must use the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* (page 5) and *Family Planning Checklist* (page 6).

- See page 10 for a step-by-step guide to these procedures.

ii) ANCP Full-accredited NGOs receiving program funding must meet a family planning accreditation criterion.

- See page 12 for further information.

iii) Core-funded international organisations must use the *Multilateral Population Checklist* (page 7)

- See page 12 for further information.

4. **Take the time to read the guide:** important features are shaded to enhance quick reference.

5. **For further assistance:** please contact the Economic and Sector Policy Section in AusAID's Corporate Policy Branch.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES **FOR AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY PLANNING** **ACTIVITIES**

Australia supports a reproductive health approach to family planning activities based on the following guiding principles:

- Individuals should decide freely the number and spacing of their children and have the information and means to exercise this choice.
- Women and men should have access to the widest possible range of safe and effective family planning methods and should participate fully in defining the family planning services they need.
- Family planning programs should cater for all people who may be sexually active.
- Australia's assistance should actively work towards improving the quality of care in family planning programs by (but not limited to):
 - involving communities in planning programs appropriate to their needs
 - increasing the choice of family planning methods available
 - improving the skills and competence of family planning service providers
 - providing accurate information and confidential counselling for clients
 - providing follow-up advice and services to clients
 - ensuring affordable, acceptable and accessible services.

NOTE:

- *Australian aid funds are not available for activities that involve abortion training or services, or research trials or activities, which directly involve abortion drugs.*
- *Australian aid funds can only be used to purchase contraceptives which are registered in Australia: monthly cycle oral contraceptive pills; emergency contraceptive pills, barrier methods (including condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps), Depo Provera (three monthly injectable), Copper T and Multiload IUDs and Implanon (hormonal implant). It is not necessary that the particular brand or formula be registered in Australia.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES QUESTIONNAIRE

The *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* is to be used to screen all bilateral, regional, NGO Windows, ANCP Base-accredited NGO, SAS and other bilateral NGO projects which include a family planning component. The *Questionnaire* should be addressed in narrative form by the design team/NGO and form part of the Project Design Document/NGO activity proposal.

1. Are there any partner government policies which limit the ability of women and men to make free and informed choices about timing of childbirth and family size? If yes, how will these be addressed to ensure the project provides a voluntary approach to family planning?
2. How will women and men (in the recipient country) be involved in the design and management of the project's family planning activity?
3. How will local social, cultural and economic issues that impinge on the family planning component of the project be addressed? In particular, consider the differing roles and status of women and men.
4. Which key groups in the community support, and will be involved with, the family planning component of this project?
5. What family planning methods will be available in the project area? Will the available family planning methods be accessible and affordable to prospective clients?
6. What follow-up arrangements will there be for those who wish to change or cease using a family planning method? What arrangements will be made in regard to providing confidential services for clients?
7. What arrangements exist in regard to continuity of contraceptive supplies following completion of the project?
8. Will the project's activities (such as revolving funds or income generating activities) be accessible to people, regardless of numbers of children or contraceptive status?
9. What arrangements will be put in place for monitoring and evaluation against the *Guiding Principles*?
10. Describe any issues relating to the family planning component of this activity, which need to be addressed before the project can proceed. Consider if any of these issues represent major risks.

NOTE:

- Australian aid funds are not available for activities that involve abortion training or services, or research, trials or activities, which directly involve abortion drugs.
- Australian aid funds can only be used to purchase contraceptives which are registered in Australia: monthly cycle oral contraceptive pills; emergency contraceptive pills barrier methods (including condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps), Depo Provera (three monthly injectable), Copper T and Multiload IUDs and Implanon (hormonal implant). It is not necessary that the particular brand or formula be registered in Australia.

FAMILY PLANNING CHECKLIST

The Family Planning Checklist is a tool for monitoring and reporting on the family planning component of projects funded under the Australian aid program. The contractor/NGO should answer the Checklist in narrative form.

NAME OF PROJECT: _____

NAME OF CONTRACTOR/NGO _____

COUNTRY: _____

PERIOD COVERED BY THE CHECKLIST: _____

1. Has the project encountered any difficulties in ensuring the beneficiaries are able to make free and informed choices about the number, timing and spacing of their children?
 - If so, what were these difficulties?
 - How are these difficulties being addressed?

2. Are project beneficiaries able to choose freely from a wide range of family planning methods?
 - What is the range of methods available?

3. Do all project beneficiaries have access to accurate information about family planning?
 - What is the range of information available?
 - Is the quality of information adequate?

4. Please list all types of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) material developed or purchased with Australian aid funds during this reporting period. (Please note: it is the contractors/NGO's responsibility to ensure that all Australian aid funded IEC material complies with the *Guiding Principles*.)

5. (Other questions as identified by the AusAID Activity Manager/Community Program Section)

NOTE:

- Australian aid funds are not available for activities that involve abortion training or services, or research trials or activities, which directly involve abortion drugs.
- Australian aid funds can only be used to purchase contraceptives which are registered in Australia :monthly cycle oral contraceptive pills; emergency contraceptive pills, barrier methods (including condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps), Depo Provera (three monthly injectable), Copper T and Multiload IUDs and Implanon (hormonal implant). It is not necessary that the particular brand or formula be registered in Australia.

MULTILATERAL POPULATION CHECKLIST

Completion of this *Multilateral Population Checklist* is a precondition for release of annual grant aid contributions by the Australian Government to international organisations which support family planning activities. This represents an undertaking by the organisation to use such contributions in accordance with the criteria listed below.

Name of Organisation: _____ **Period Covered by the Checklist:** _____

In activities using Australian aid contributions, the organisation demonstrates an integrated approach to reproductive health issues by taking into account social, cultural and economic issues and particularly the role/status of women. The organisation's documentation and implementation of its programs show that:

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| 1. | activities meet a need in the community | |
| 2. | participants, especially women, are involved in programming | |
| 3. | socio/economic/cultural issues are addressed | ..... |
| 4. | key groups are committed to, and involved in, the organisation's programs | ..... |
| 5. | monitoring and evaluation is included | ..... |
| 6. | a range of family planning options is available | ..... |
| 7. | the organisation's programs are sustainable in terms of continuity of supplies | ..... |
| 8. | training is conducted by skilled personnel | ..... |
| 9. | family planning is voluntary for all participants, and all participants will receive quality information | ..... |
| 10. | confidentiality provisions are appropriate | ..... |
| 11. | contraceptive supplies are accessible and affordable to prospective clients | ..... |
| 12. | Australian Government contributions will not be used to fund abortion training or services, or research, trials or activities which directly involve abortion drugs | ..... |
| 13. | Where contraceptives are purchased with Australian Government contributions, only those contraceptives registered in Australia are bought: monthly cycle oral contraceptive pills, emergency contraceptive pills, barrier methods (including condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps), Depo Provera (three monthly injectable), Copper T and Multiload IUDs and Implanon (hormonal implant). It is not necessary that the particular brand or formula be registered in Australia. | ..... |

Please attach a list of contraceptives to be purchased with Australian Government funds.

Organisation's Representative:

AusAID Director:

.....

Date:..... Date:.....

THE POLICY

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The *Guiding Principles for Australian Assistance for Family Planning Activities* is the central policy document underpinning the design and implementation of family planning projects. AusAID staff and contractors should be familiar with, and share a common understanding of, the four guiding principles. An explanation of each principle is outlined below:

1. Individuals should decide freely the number and spacing of their children and have the information and means to exercise this choice.

This principle seeks to ensure that:

- the concepts of voluntarism and informed choice are central to family planning activities.
- individuals decide when, and if, to have children and choose their family size.
- individuals have access to accurate information to enable them to make an informed decision.

2. Women and men should have access to the widest possible range of safe and effective family planning methods and should participate fully in defining the family planning services they need.

This principle:

- is about increasing choices for women and men.
- promotes a client-centred approach rather than a provider-driven approach.
- recognises that client involvement is important because personal concerns, health considerations, cost and the cultural environment influence each person's choice of family planning method.
- emphasises the need to consider men's needs and responsibilities in family planning activities.

3. Family planning programs should cater for all people who may be sexually active.

This principle:

- articulates the idea that the deliberate exclusion of any sexually active group is contrary to the policy. All family planning programs must recognise the importance of the cultural, familial and religious context in which projects occur.

4. Australia's assistance should actively work towards improving the quality of care in family planning programs by (but not limited to):

- involving communities in planning programs appropriate to their needs;
- increasing the choice of family planning methods available;
- improving the skills and competence of family planning service providers;
- providing accurate information and confidential counselling for clients;
- providing follow-up advice and services to clients;
- ensuring affordable, acceptable and accessible services.

This principle:

- focuses on some of the key elements to improving quality of care in family planning programs.

The International Conference on Population and Development.

The *Guiding Principles* reflect the consensus reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. ICPD signalled a shift in the population debate: away from a demographic framework with its focus on population control, to a reproductive health framework with a focus on meeting the needs of individuals. Family planning is an important component of reproductive health care. Reproductive health is defined as “*a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes*”.¹

Central to reproductive health is the right to have children by choice. Family planning services help individuals to exercise this right.

Other Criteria of Support

In addition to the four guiding principles, the Government has three specific criteria on supporting family planning activities:

1. Australian aid funds are not available for activities that involve abortion training or services, or research, trials or activities, which directly involve abortion drugs.

The Government seeks to support activities that provide information and access to safe, voluntary and affordable family planning options. The Government does not consider abortion to be a method of family planning. However, Australian-funded activities can provide medical treatment, support and counselling to women suffering from complications resulting from an unsafe abortion. In addition, Australian aid funds can be used to provide information on unsafe abortion as an issue relevant to promoting responsible family planning. Information that promotes abortion as a method of family planning or provides instructions on abortion procedures is not eligible for Australian aid funding.

2. Australian aid funds can only be used to purchase monthly cycle oral contraceptive pills; emergency contraceptive pills, barrier methods (including condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps), Depo Provera (three monthly injectable), Copper T and Multiload IUDs and Implanon (hormonal implant).

The Government restricts the purchase of contraceptives with Australian aid funds to those contraceptives which are registered in Australia. In the cases of monthly cycle oral contraceptive pills, emergency contraceptive pills and condoms, it is not necessary that the particular brand or formula be registered in Australia. Australian aid funds can be used to provide information and training on a range of contraceptives used in project areas, including those not registered in Australia (for example, Norplant).

¹*Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*, United Nations, New York, 1995, paragraph 7.2.

DEFINITION OF A FAMILY PLANNING ACTIVITY

For the purpose of these procedures, family planning activities refer to projects that involve:

- family planning services including counselling;
- training in the practice of family planning;
- distributing contraceptives for family planning purposes;
- developing and distributing family planning information, education and communication materials; and/or
- capacity building for organisations that deliver family planning services.

This definition excludes all other projects that fall under the general categories of health, and population and reproductive health. Projects such as census work, demographic research, STI control including HIV/AIDS, basic health infrastructure and pre- and post-natal care will not be subject to these procedures if they do not include a family planning component.

DAC Code

The DAC (Development Assistance Committee) code 13030 designates that a project includes a family planning component. All Australian aid funded projects that involve a family planning activity should be assigned this code in the Activity Management System (AMS). The 13030 code may be assigned as a primary or secondary code. A project with even a small family planning component should be assigned a secondary code of 13030. Secondary codes can be given a weighting of low, medium or high depending on the impact the project has on family planning.

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PROCEDURES FOR BILATERAL AND REGIONAL PROJECTS

Project Identification and Initial Assessment

Initial assessment should consider whether the project reflects the *Guiding Principles*.

Project Preparation

The *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* is a set of questions designed to ensure the four guiding principles are considered during the project design stage.

The *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* should be addressed in narrative form by the design team and be incorporated (as a chapter/section) into the Project Design Document (PDD).

- The Terms of Reference for the feasibility/design study should specify that in the design process the contractor must consider and address, as appropriate, all issues raised in the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire*.
- The Scope of Services specifications in the contract for the feasibility/design study should include the requirement for a completed *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* in the PDD.

- Strategies to deal with the issues and risks identified through the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* should be incorporated into the risk matrix and cross-referenced to specific logframe activities.

Appraisal

The completed *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* is part of the PDD and therefore will be appraised as part of the PDD appraisal process. It is the responsibility of those nominated to undertake the appraisal to assess the answers to the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* to ensure their compatibility with the *Guiding Principles*. The Activity Manager, by accepting the PDD, is accepting that the project design is consistent with the *Guiding Principles* and that it can proceed.

Selection Tendering

The Request for Tender should include as part of the selection criteria that the Tenderer must demonstrate an understanding of the *Guiding Principles*. Tenderers do not need to complete a separate *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* at this stage. Technical Assessment Panels will consider the level of Tenderer's understanding of the *Guiding Principles* in their assessment.

Contractual Requirements

The Scope of Services in the project implementation contract should specify that the contractor will:

- during the project inception phase (or within the first three months of implementation) review the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* and provide a report to AusAID including an updated *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* if appropriate
- provide timely exception reporting: throughout project implementation the contractor will advise AusAID (Post and Activity Manager) of any issues relevant to the *Family Planning Checklist*
- provide regular progress reporting: six monthly reports (or other appropriate progress reports) will include a section titled 'Family Planning Checklist', reporting in narrative form and providing comment on issues arising from the *Family Planning Checklist*
- consider the *Guiding Principles* and the *Family Planning Checklist* as integral parts of the project's monitoring and evaluation plan to be implemented by the contractor
- include in the Project Completion Report an evaluation of the project's achievements against the objectives of the *Guiding Principles*.

Implementation

The contractor will comply with the contract Scope of Services in fulfilling its obligations with regard to the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* and the *Family Planning Checklist*. It is also the Contractor's responsibility to ensure all Australian aid-funded IEC material is consistent with the *Guiding Principles*.

Monitoring

The *Family Planning Checklist* is a monitoring and reporting tool to be used throughout the life of a project. The Activity Manager can add, as appropriate, additional questions to the *Family Planning Checklist*. Additional questions may relate to issues identified in the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* and/or through the appraisal process, and be relevant to project monitoring/reporting.

The contractor will include a completed *Family Planning Checklist* in six monthly reports (or other appropriate specified progress reports), reporting in narrative form and providing comment on issues arising from the *Checklist*. It is the Activity Manager's responsibility to appraise the answers to the *Family Planning Checklist* against the *Guiding Principles*. The Activity Manager, by accepting the six monthly report, is accepting that the project is consistent with the *Guiding Principles*.

Completion and Evaluation

In project completion and evaluation reports, specific consideration should be given to how far the project has succeeded in addressing the *Guiding Principles* and hence improving the quality of information and services to allow individuals to make informed choices on family planning.

PROCEDURES FOR NGO WINDOWS, ANCP BASE-ACCREDITED NGO, SAS AND OTHER BILATERAL NGO PROJECTS

Project Preparation

The *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* should be addressed in narrative form and submitted as an attachment to the NGO activity proposal, SAS project or incorporated into other bilateral NGO project proposals ².

Appraisal

The completed *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* is to be appraised as part of the appraisal process. It is the responsibility of the NGO appraisal panel/Post (or, if appropriate, the Australian Managing Contractor (AMC)) to appraise the answers to the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* to ensure their consistency with the *Guiding Principles*. The NGO appraisal panel/Post/AMC, by accepting the project proposal, is accepting that the project design is consistent with the *Guiding Principles* and that it can proceed.

Implementation

The NGO/contractor will provide:

- exception reporting: throughout project implementation the NGO/contractor will advise AusAID (Post and Activity Manager) of any issues relevant to the *Family Planning Checklist*.
- annual reports will include a section titled 'Family Planning Checklist', reporting in narrative form and providing comment on issues arising from the *Checklist*.

It is the NGO/contractor's responsibility to ensure all Australian aid-funded IEC material is consistent with the *Guiding Principles*.

Monitoring

It is the NGO section's/Post's (or, if appropriate, the Australian Managing Contractor's) responsibility to appraise the answers to the *Family Planning Checklist* to ensure their consistency with the *Guiding Principles*. The NGO section/Post/AMC, by accepting the annual report, is accepting that the project is in full accord with the *Guiding Principles*.

Completion and Evaluation

NGO annual reports, SAS completion reports (or other appropriate final reports) should give specific consideration to how far the project has succeeded in addressing the *Guiding Principles*.

² Please contact the Social Sector Policy area in CORPOL for advice on incorporating these procedures into other bilateral NGO projects.

PROCEDURES FOR ANCP FULL-ACCREDITED NGO PROGRAMS

A quality assurance approach has been developed for monitoring ANCP Full-accredited NGOs receiving program funding. A family planning accreditation criterion provides these agencies with the go ahead to use Australian funds for family planning activities. The criterion requires that each agency demonstrate its capacity to apply the *Guiding Principles* in project design and implementation. Agencies that do not meet this criterion will not be able to access Government funding for family planning activities.

ANCP Full-accredited NGOs receiving program funding are not required to fill out the *Guiding Principles Questionnaire* or the *Family Planning Checklist*.

Spot checks and cluster evaluations of NGO projects supplement the safeguards provided by the accreditation process. Exception reporting (by implementing agency) is required as appropriate - throughout project implementation the NGO will advise AusAID of any issues relevant to the *Guiding Principles*.

Note: ANCP Full-accredited NGOs accessing funds through NGO Windows will need to complete procedures relevant to NGO Windows.

PROCEDURES FOR CORE-FUNDED INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

International organisations which undertake family planning activities and receive core funding are required to complete a *Multilateral Population Checklist* (such as the United Nations Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Federation). Completion of the checklist is a precondition for release of annual grant aid contributions by the Australian Government; and represents an undertaking by the organisation to use Australia's contributions in accordance with the criteria set out in the checklist. Close monitoring of organisation activities will take place, and include participation in field monitoring visits and engagement with agency governing boards.

Note: International organisations receiving bilateral funding will need to complete procedures relevant to bilateral projects.