

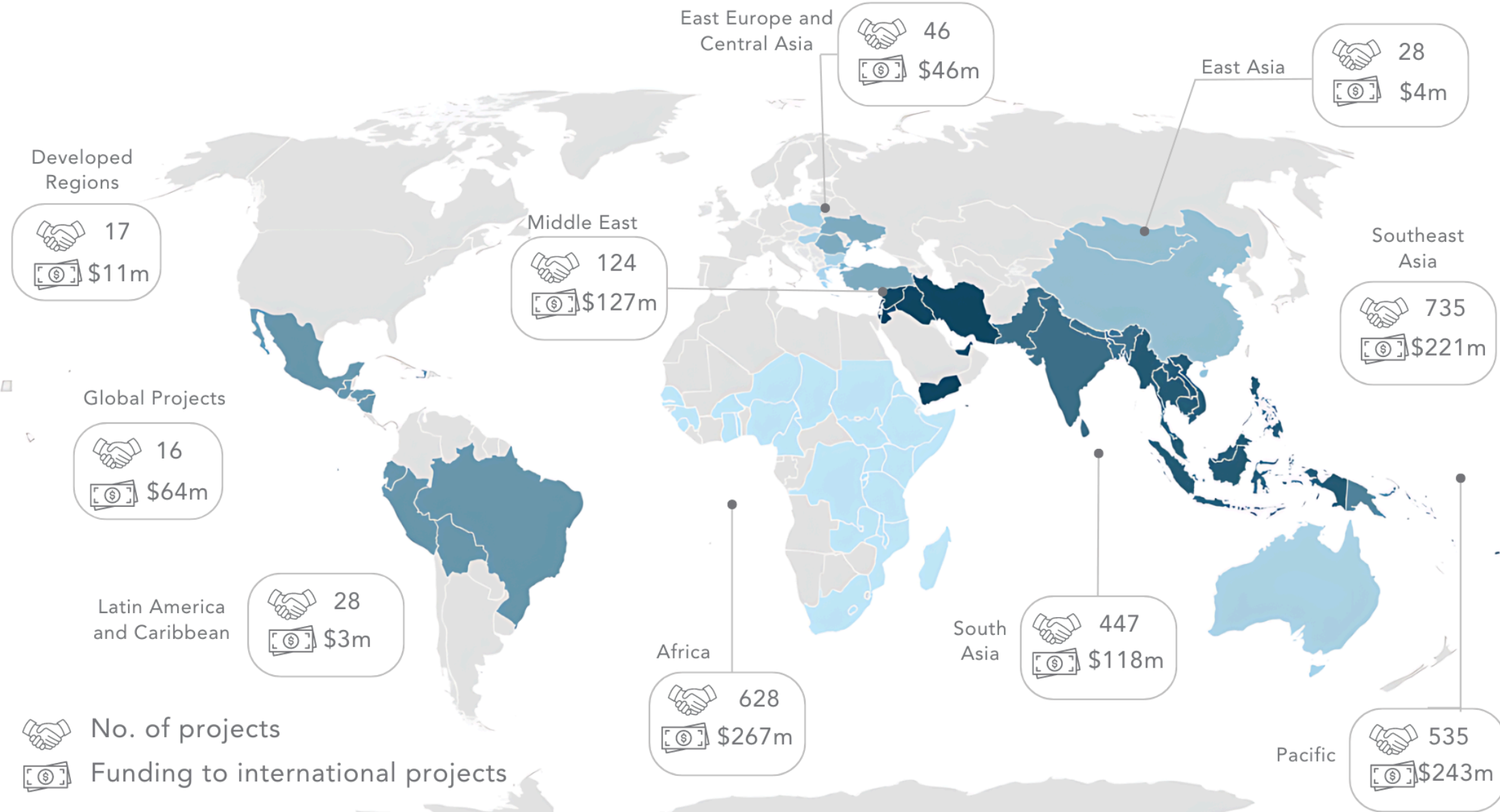
Australian
Council for
International
Development

Advocacy
Agenda



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Global reach of ACFID member organisations



About the ACFID Advocacy Agenda

ACFID’s advocacy connects, champions, and represents a dynamic network of international development and civil society actors united by our vision for a world where all people are free from poverty, injustice and inequality and the earth’s finite resources are managed sustainably. ACFID advocates for compassionate and high impact development cooperation and humanitarian programs that are responsive to context and centred on partner country needs and international norms.

ACFID’s Advocacy Agenda, first published in May 2021 established advocacy priorities at the time through consultation with members and the broader ACFID network. The Advocacy Agenda has been updated in 2024 following consultation with the ACFID membership to ensure its relevance with current trends, sector priorities and global events.

The Advocacy Agenda identifies seven areas of focus and specific recommendations for each. Given the interconnected and multifaceted nature of development, the recommendations in each focus area are intended to be complementary as opposed to standalone. The focus areas include two issue-based areas (humanitarian action and climate change) and five cross-cutting areas. Focus areas are not ranked in order of importance.

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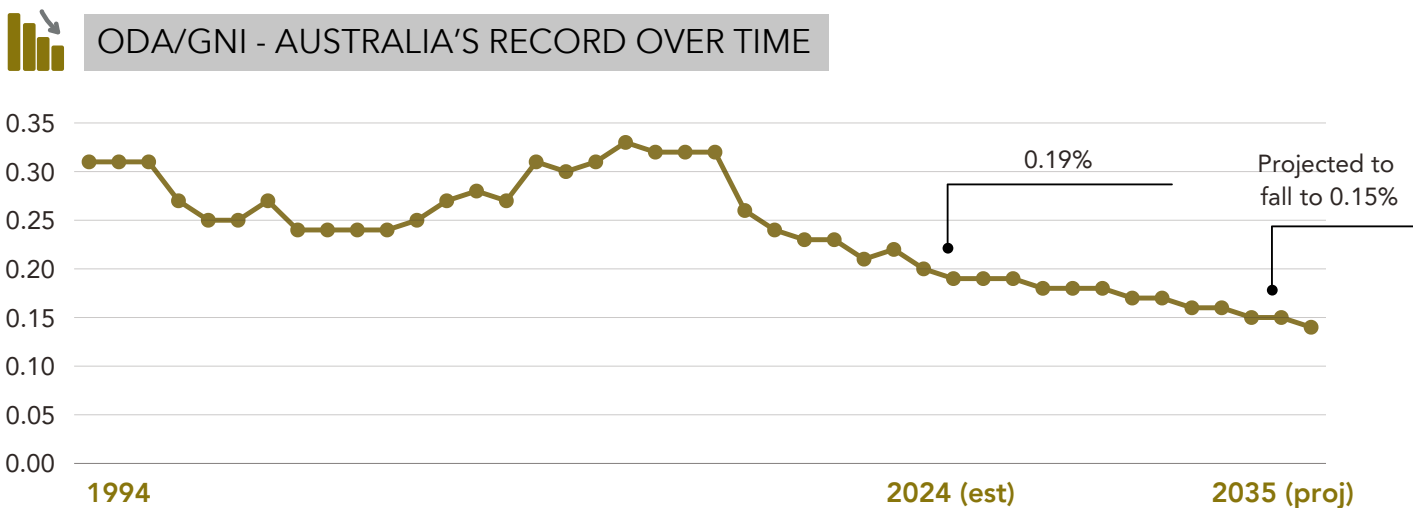
Further details about ACFID are at **Annex 1**

A list of ACFID’s members is at **Annex 2**

Setting the scene: Australia, global need and international development

Despite global wealth increasing by \$350 trillion in the past 20 years over 700 million people across our planet live below the \$2.15 poverty line. Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with economic recovery for marginalised groups and the extreme poor disproportionately slow. Coupled with this is the steady decline in global peacefulness, with the number of deaths due to armed conflict at a 30 year high.

The Asia-Pacific is the most disaster-prone region in the world. The communities in our region, face a future of uncertainty and disrupted livelihoods, reduced health outcomes and in some cases the complete destruction of their homelands. SDG 13 - climate action - urgently requires attention with progress on all of its targets off track or in reverse in the Asia-Pacific.



Yet in the face of current trends and projections of global instability, poverty and climate change, **Australia's current and projected Official Development Assistance (ODA) contributions reveal a government out of step with the realities of our region and global need.** Despite being the 13th wealthiest country in the world, Australia's ODA as a percentage of our Gross National Income (GNI) has fallen continuously over the past decade. If current trends continue, Australia's ODA could fall to 0.15 per cent of GNI by 2034-35 leaving us at the very bottom of the global donorship ladder.

If Australia plans on taking up a United Nations Security Council seat in 2029-30 and hosting COP31 with our Pacific partners in 2026, **Australia's contributions to global development and humanitarian assistance must move well beyond the bare minimum towards our fair share.**

The recommendations set out in the following pages outline the steps for **Australia to carve back its place on the global stage, resume its position as a generous donor and step into the role of 'partner of choice'** it could be.

Elevate Development to the Heart of Australia's International Engagement

In the face of climate change, increasing inequality and growing global instability, the Australian Government should elevate development cooperation to the core of Australia's foreign policy and statecraft.

To build a development program 'fit for our times' the Australian Government must increase development and humanitarian investment, resourcing and expertise

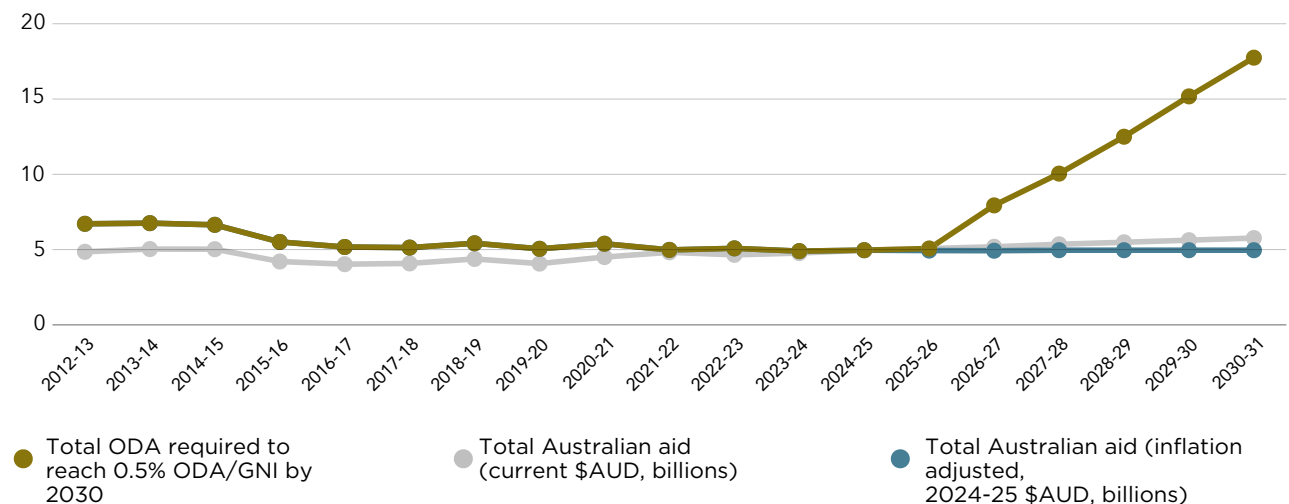
to a level that is commensurate with the challenges facing our region and the world.

Principled and effective development that places people at the centre of program design can wind back the drivers of inequality and poverty by creating structural change. It is a critical but underutilised tool for increasing stability and prosperity, enhancing resilience to external shocks, and building strong and enduring people-to-people and government relationships within Australia's region and globally. Foreign aid is not a zero-sum game. Ten of the 15 largest export markets for Australian trade were once recipients of Australian foreign aid.

It is in Australia's interest to actively contribute to the safety and prosperity of the world through increasing ODA to communities and countries where development progress lags far behind. The Asia-Pacific region, is projected to achieve just one-third of the necessary progress on the SDGs by 2030. In particular, for Small Island Development states (SIDs), the effects of Covid-19 have resulted in just 5.9 per cent progress on the SDGs since 2015. Progress by least-developed countries stands slightly higher at 11.5 per cent.

Despite recent investment, the long-term trajectory of Australia's development program is forecast to flatline in real dollar terms at a time when Australia's leadership, engagement and partnership is a critically needed and strategically astute asset in an increasingly unstable and unpredictable world.

AUSTRALIA'S 10-YEAR ODA PROJECTION (\$BN)



Despite its place as the 13th largest economy in the world, Australia continues to languish at the bottom of the OECD Development Assistance Committee ODA/GNI donor rankings.

If Australia is to be considered a credible player in the international arena it must contribute our fair share to Our Common Agenda and other global goals and commitments.

Central to this is the fundamental purpose of Australia's development program: to effectively and meaningfully improve the lives of the people and communities we partner with.

Australia's development program must prioritise addressing root causes of conflict and state fragility and strengthen human security through investments in education, health, livelihoods, water, and sanitation. To be effective, Australia's development program must reach the most marginalised through ensuring their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Too often systemic discrimination and entrenched negative social norms exclude individuals, children and minority groups from development progress.

With decades of expertise guiding their work, Australian development and humanitarian organisations stand ready to assist the government in delivering on the objectives set out in the International Development Policy and rebuilding a development program that is adequately resourced and funded to meet the needs that shape our current world.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

1. Increase Australia's Official Development Assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2030 with a clear trajectory and commitment to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI. Any investments in climate finance must be new and additional to existing ODA.

2. Invest in, strengthen and value development knowledge and expertise at all levels of DFAT, including at post, to deliver effectively on the objectives set out in the International Development Policy.

3. Rebalance the allocation of Australia's:

- development assistance, based on consideration of Australia's relative strengths as a donor, the history and strength of our partnerships, and the population groups that have experienced the least progress in achieving the SDGs.
- humanitarian assistance, based on geographic areas of greatest need, including those beyond Australia's region.

4. Ensure development outcomes that align with the International Development Policy are the primary objectives of any development financing, and institute strong accountability mechanisms to ensure development impact and effectiveness are prioritised.

5. Elevate the voices of First Nations people, their expertise and knowledge systems (formal and informal) in Australia's development investments and programming.

Achieve human rights and equity for all through transformative development

Australia's international development and humanitarian programs should prioritise the fulfilment of human rights and achieve equity by addressing the underlying structural drivers of inequity to ensure transformative development outcomes for all.

In the face of a growing well-funded and coordinated global anti-rights movement, strategic and scaled-up investment to protect minority rights through Australia's development program is needed now more than ever. This investment is necessary to prevent the continued erosion of hard-won gains. Rising authoritarianism, climate change and conflict also combine to amplify the aims of the anti-rights movement. The rights of women, girls and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) are especially at risk, with sexual and reproductive health and rights often the first line of attack.

As we move towards 2030, the shared SDG pledge that 'no one be left behind' is at risk of remaining unfulfilled. Structural inequality and negative social norms contribute to the marginalisation of people with disabilities, women and girls, people with diverse SOGIESC, children and young people, First Nations peoples and those that face discrimination due to ethnicity, race, religious beliefs, displacement and cultural practices. Individuals and groups at the intersection of identities experience compounding marginalisation.

One of the most effective ways for Australia to support movements for transformational change on minority rights and achieve development progress is by working with locally-led constituent organisations and advocates. People with lived experience are the most effective advocates for change in their contexts and mitigate against critiques that the push for equality is a 'Western' or colonial agenda that is being imposed.

ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

Covid-19, the effects of climate change and conflict as well as the global pushback on women's rights have undone decades of slow but long-awaited progress, with parity not anticipated to be reached for another 131 years. To realise the International Development Policy's vision of gender equality, and protect the hard-won achievements of the gender equality and feminist movements over past decades, the development program must support both mainstreaming of gender equality objectives across all programs coupled with new commitments to drive transformative outcomes. This should be supported by increased technical expertise within DFAT, robust accountability structures to ensure markers are applied appropriately, and sufficient funding for mainstreaming gender equality within programs.

ACHIEVING DISABILITY EQUITY

People with disabilities make up at least 20 per cent of the poorest populations and are a large constituency of participants in any development program. Yet too often people with disabilities are excluded or ineffectively supported.

Despite its previous recognition as a global leader in disability inclusive development, Australia's progress in this area has plateaued with stagnant funding, stalled strategic direction and gaps in implementation. Championing disability equity across development programming is critical to ensuring effectiveness in addressing the causes and effects of poverty and inequality. To realise the Government's commitment to being led by 'the experiences and expertise of people with disabilities,' the development program must adequately invest in and meaningfully partner with Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) and disability rights advocates.

ADVANCING LGBTQIA+ EQUITY AND RIGHTS

The Government's initial partnership and investment in LGBTQIA+ organisations is a long-awaited and welcome start to driving change for persons with diverse SOGIESC through Australia's development program. It offers a practical avenue to advance LGBTQIA+ rights through investing in locally-led LGBTQIA+ organisations and advocates. Continued international advocacy by Australia, in both bilateral and multilateral fora is important to shift policy and legal settings towards inclusion and protection for people with diverse SOGIESC, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

6. Adopt an intersectional, feminist and transformative approach to promoting gender equality through all aspects of Australia's international engagement.
7. Ensure a dedicated focus on addressing the root causes of gender inequality by committing 20 per cent of ODA to initiatives with gender equality as the principal objective (currently at 5 per cent), including 5 per cent of ODA to Women's Rights Organisations and movements.
8. Require that all in-country programs over \$3m have a disability objective, and that 80 per cent of programs effectively address disability equity.
9. Increase the central disability allocation to \$20m per annum with annual increases thereafter in line with overall budget increases to support delivery on disability equity commitments across the development program, and provide core support to OPDs.
10. Increase Australia's Inclusion and Equality Fund to the value of \$15m per annum, commensurate with the need for support to human rights defenders and civil society organisations working towards LGBTQIA+ human rights and equality.
11. Strengthen Australia's leadership and advocacy on human rights including LGBTQIA+ rights in multilateral fora and expand bilateral dialogue and advocacy in partnership with local human rights and LGBTQIA+ organisations.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Asia-Pacific has one of the youngest populations in the world with 50 per cent of the population across the region aged 24 and under. Children and young people experience particular marginalisation directly related to their age and factors such as gender, race and development capacity which combine to prevent them from realising their rights. At the same time, the region's youth also offer untapped potential to drive prosperity if empowered to play a role in the decisions that shape the opportunities and challenges they face through strategic investment and well-designed policy. It is critical Australia develops and implements a clear strategy for protecting and empowering children and young people through the development program, as it is the progress, wellbeing and rights of children and young people that will catalyse the achievement of the SDGs and help deliver long-awaited development outcomes for the region.

ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect health outcomes across the world with global life expectancy returning to the level a decade ago. For the Asia-Pacific region, the SDG target of achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is in regression. Achieving equity requires actively addressing health disparities, including enhancing mental health support, to ensure every community member can reach their full potential. Strengthening health systems and prioritising investments in primary health care are essential for achieving UHC, which is fundamental to fulfilling the SDGs.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

12. Develop a strategy for children and young people for Australia's development cooperation program in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

13. Establish a child and youth focal point within DFAT, to deliver development and humanitarian programs that respond to the lifecycle and are attuned to their impact on the most marginalised children and young people.

14. Strengthen investment, capability and collaboration to build sustainable, people centred health systems that are resilient to future shocks and changing population health needs.

15. Double Australia's health ODA over the next five years, with a renewed focus on health systems strengthening.



Strengthen Civil Society

In a more contested region, support for governments and the private sector must be balanced with greater support for civil society abroad. This includes adequate and sustained investment in the Civil Society Partnerships Fund and supporting a Pacific-led Regional Civil Society Organisation Standard.

Open, plural and diverse civic space is the cornerstone of democratic societies.

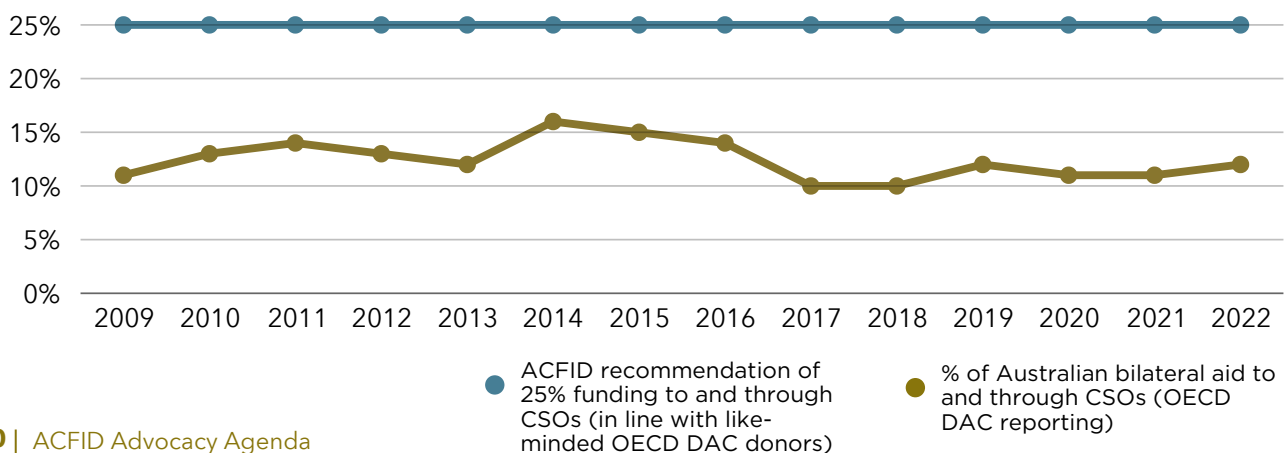
Civil society organisations (CSOs) are the key protectors of civic space, underwriting the requisite values of freedom, transparency and inclusion – inherent features of effective and accountable states. Civil society includes non-governmental organisations, community groups, faith-based organisations, trade unions, media, educational institutions, youth groups, networks and informal groups that exist outside the sphere of the state and the market.

The escalating intimidation, repression and censorship of civil society actors by governments within and beyond Australia’s region weakens institutions and fractures social cohesion. Attacks on disability, women’s and LGBTQIA+ rights by authoritarian leaders and anti-rights movements globally, provide an example of how shrinking civic space impacts the lives of the most marginalised.

CIVICUS assesses that in 2023, 30.6 per cent of the world’s population lived in a country with closed civic space, up from 26 per cent in 2018. Closed civic space refers to countries where any criticism of the ruling authorities is severely punished and there is virtually no media freedom.

There is an acute need for Australia to generate strong and enduring relationships around the world and to prevent democratic backsliding. Yet, Australia’s investment in civil society through the development program has been in consistent decline. In 2022, less than 1 per cent of Australia’s bilateral ODA funding was provided to CSOs and just 12 per cent was delivered through CSOs. This is far behind other OECD donors such as: the United States (17 per cent); Canada (15 per cent); New Zealand (15 per cent) and Sweden (32 per cent).

CSO funding overtime (% of Australia’s bilateral aid)



Australia's International Development Policy reaffirms that 'Australia will respect and promote civic space, recognising the distinct nature and value of civil society in each country.' The development of the Civil Society Partnerships Fund is an opportunity to step up Australian support for civil society in the region and globally. Australia's development program must continue to reorient funding, strategic direction and policy commitments towards protecting civic space, commensurate with the scale of the challenge the region and the world is facing.

A failure to invest now in civic space in our region undermines development progress, regional stability and contributes to an increasingly challenging environment for Australia's overall engagement in the region. It is also a missed opportunity to develop critical people-to-people linkages, build public support for our shared development efforts, and engage in a cost-effective manner.

As outlined by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Report on the Inquiry into Supporting Democracy in the Region, "boosting funding for Australian CSOs in the region is important in order for these sustainable partnerships to be effective and to thrive."

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

16. Re-orient Australia's development cooperation program towards sustainable investment to and through civil society organisations, including through increasing the proportion of total Australian ODA channelled to and through CSOs to 25 per cent, for both humanitarian and development funding. This must be flexible, core and multi-year funding.

17. Deliver increased investment in civil society through 'fit for purpose' funding modalities that ensure the delivery of core, flexible and multi-year funding to both Australian development and local civil society organisations, including those that represent the interests of marginalised social groups and communities.

18. Co-fund the Pacific-led development of a Pacific Regional Accountability Framework for Civil Society Organisations, and endorse its use as a benchmark for NGO accountability. This will foster a vibrant civil society sector, and expand the diversity of high-impact development partners for Australia.

19. Deliver on its commitment to full implementation of the OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society. This includes undertaking a civil society analysis during the development of country-level development strategies and program designs.

20. Consider innovative financing mechanisms to unlock additional resources and leverage private sector expertise in support of CSOs.

Take Humanitarian Action for Those in Greatest Need

Australia must affirm a global focus for humanitarian action, ensure humanitarian assistance reaches those in greatest need, and take a multifaceted approach to addressing protracted crises.

The global scale of humanitarian crises is unprecedented. There are more conflicts and disasters, with more deeply entrenched impacts that stretch further, causing massive devastation for civilian lives and livelihoods. Australia needs a restored and reinvigorated focus on locally-led humanitarian action, principles and capabilities that are fit to deal with future challenges.

In 2024, nearly 300 million people around the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection due to the compounding and cascading nature of new and existing conflicts, climate emergencies and protracted crises. The average length of a humanitarian crisis is now 9 years and the average time people are displaced is 17 years. In just 8 years, global displacement due to conflict and violence has doubled, hitting 114 million in September 2023. Last year, more than 333 million people faced acute levels of food insecurity not knowing where their next meal was coming from.

The Australian Government's decision to prioritise its development assistance to the Asia-Pacific region must not limit the provision of humanitarian assistance globally, especially to countries where the need or risk is greatest. This is important in the context of escalating global humanitarian needs, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.

Australian humanitarian agencies have proven that they are timely, effective, efficient, connected and accountable partners for the Australian Government. For example, in response to the Türkiye and Syria earthquake in February 2023, Australian Humanitarian Partnership agencies responded with regional and global coordination teams in an average of 1.5 hours, with 843 staff and volunteers. The response delivered high-quality, complementary and inclusive child protection, gender-based violence services, mental health and psychosocial care to the communities most affected by the earthquake.

In addition to AHP agencies, ACFID members deliver critically needed assistance, often funded by the Australian public, across emergency and protracted crises contexts, operating in the 10 most dangerous conflicts worldwide.



In response to the **Türkiye** and **Syria** earthquake in February 2023, Australian Humanitarian Partnership agencies responded with regional and global coordination teams in an average of **1.5 hours**, with **843 staff and volunteers**.

Throughout their collective action, Australian humanitarian agencies commit to full adherence to the principles and obligations of the ACFID Code of Conduct, Core Humanitarian Standard & SPHERE which aim to improve development and humanitarian outcomes through high global standards of practice.

Recognising the inextricable link between violence, protection, and humanitarian needs, the Australian Government must take a more ambitious role in relation to conflict prevention and conflict-sensitive development, peacebuilding, scaling up its investment in prevention-focused interventions and its capacity to support such programs, including where these fall within the remit of development programming.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

21. Build a pathway to Australia's fair share of humanitarian financing of \$1.08 billion annually.

22. Resource DFAT capability to effectively support response to sudden onset humanitarian emergencies, as well as engage on medium-term priorities such as the development-humanitarian-peace nexus, protracted crises, anticipatory action, resilience and adherence to Good Humanitarian Donorship principles more broadly.

23. Ensure Australian Government policies, program activities and internal decision-making processes continue to uphold and strengthen the Government's commitments to and obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

24. Use a whole-of-government approach to:

- prevent, respond to, and address the root causes of protracted crises;
- finance all investments in protracted crises on a multi-year basis;
- ensure that civil society and all agencies relevant to protracted crises across the disaster cycle, including displacement and conflict contexts, are involved, and;
- prevent, respond to, and develop durable solutions for displaced people.

25. Affirm a global focus for Australia's humanitarian action, diplomacy and advocacy, and a commitment to operating with the primary purpose of alleviating suffering wherever it is found, in line with the humanitarian imperative.

26. Place the protection of women and girls, children, people with disabilities, and minorities at the heart of humanitarian action.

27. Improve DFAT capacity to operate in insecure environments by ensuring that relevant legislation, regulations, internal policies and procedures enable delivery of humanitarian assistance with the best placed partners.

28. Undertake concerted diplomatic, development and humanitarian action to address escalating global displacement crises, with emphasis on prevention and solutions, guided by displacement analysis and sensitivity.

Combat Climate Change

The Australian Government must strengthen its climate commitments across mitigation, adaptation and climate finance to improve partnerships in the region and achieve stability, security and wellbeing for all.

Climate change threatens decades of development progress across a wide range of development goals,

including health, education, poverty reduction, human rights, food security, gender equality, and peacebuilding.

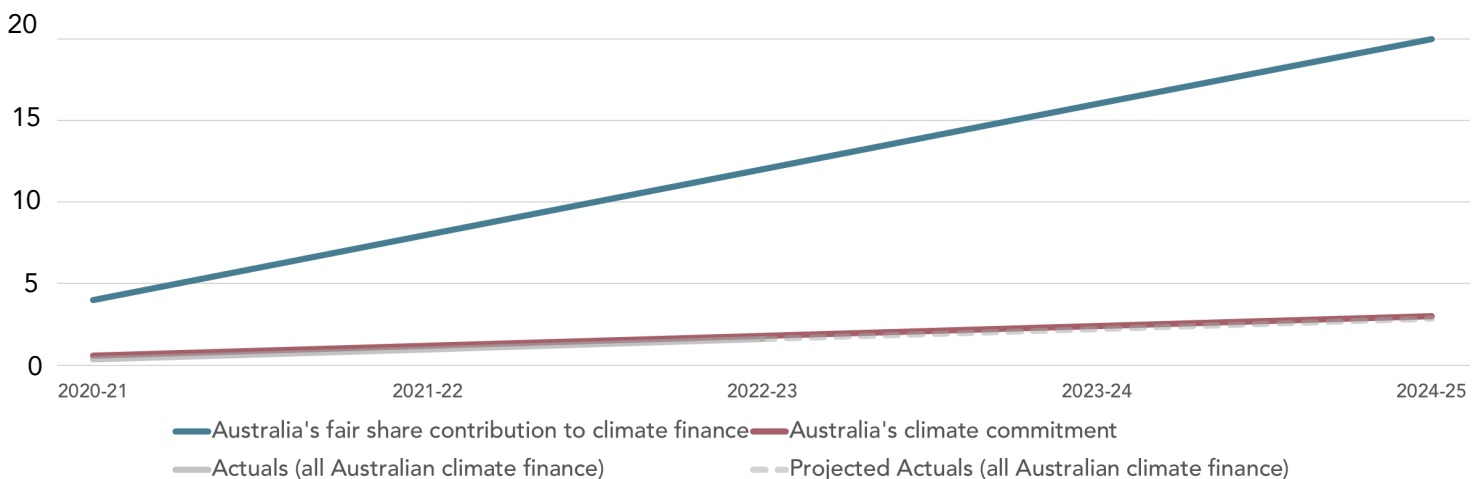
This disruption will only worsen with further global warming. Efforts to alleviate poverty and inequality will not be successful without concurrent action on global climate change and environmental degradation.

With the economic capacity and the responsibility to act in line with climate science, Australia must effectively address the threat of climate change on the livelihoods and socio-economic development of communities in our immediate region.

This includes funding gender-responsive, locally led and inclusive climate responses that recognise and value Indigenous and localised knowledge in climate solutions. This is central to developing mitigation, adaptation and resilience strategies relevant to the contexts and capacities of Pacific Island countries.

To foster more genuine and respectful partnerships in the region and further afield, the Australian Government must use all tools of statecraft to achieve greater progress on climate mitigation, adaptation, finance and resilience.

Australia's international climate commitments and contributions (\$bn)



The Pacific is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, driven by the climate crisis. Applying a cross-sector and cross-industry (or "nexus") approach to climate resilience can reduce the impact of cyclical or recurrent climate-related shocks and stresses, addressing people's economic, social and environmental vulnerability before, during and after crises.

The cost of mitigating and adapting to climate change is going to cost developing countries trillions of dollars. The UN Environment Program has estimated that developing countries face a climate finance shortfall in the hundreds of billions per annum in meeting their mitigation and adaptation needs. Australia's current climate finance contributions sit on average at \$629 million per annum - a shortfall of \$3.37 billion below Australia's \$4 billion per annum fair share. As stated in the International Development Policy, responding to the calls of the Asia-Pacific region "requires increasing our climate investments and better addressing climate risks." Realising these commitments begins with a whole-of-government approach to meeting Australia's fair share on high-quality climate finance and loss and damage, as well as strengthening emissions reduction targets to limit global warming to below 1.5C.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

29. Develop a whole of government approach to meet Australia's climate finance fair share as agreed by parties under the Copenhagen Accord to achieve the collective \$100 bn climate finance goal. This should be new and additional finance to existing levels of ODA and should include:

- Contributing Australia's fair share of \$4 bn per year by 2025 towards the \$100 bn collective finance goal and advocating for an ambitious and inclusive New Collective Quantified Goal (NCGQ) at COP29.
- Funding climate finance mechanisms that do not add to sovereign debt distress but prioritise direct access modalities to enable funding for developing countries in our region.
- Developing and publishing a transparent and consistent approach to reporting on climate finance that reflects its real value to partner countries.

30. Fund Australia's fair share of Loss and Damage (including non-economic) to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on the societies, economies and cultures of developing countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

31. Demonstrate Australia's commitment to a genuine partnership with Pacific Island countries by strengthening the Government's domestic and exported greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in line with the pathway to limit global warming to below 1.5C.

To achieve this Australia should also:

- Redirect fossil fuel subsidies to provide new and additional sources of climate finance.

Prioritise NGOs as Valuable Partners

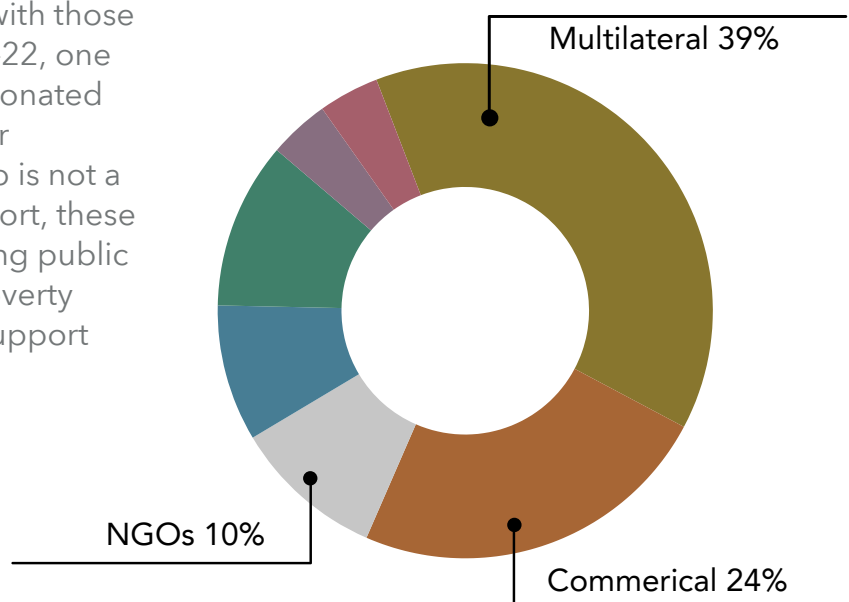
The Government should elevate the role of Australian NGOs in humanitarian and development investments, leveraging and recognising their unique value-add in protecting civic space, inclusive practice and trusted partnerships with local communities.

Australia should prioritise partnering with the not-for-profit community to maximise development impact and capitalise on the trusted relationships and deep expertise held by Australian development and humanitarian organisations. The renewed focus on locally-led approaches also necessitates greater investment in NGOs with their strong people-to-people connections and long-standing relationships with local communities, often developed over decades of collaboration. A recent survey of over 50 agencies accredited through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) found a total of 1130 partnerships, with an average partnership length of 11.5 years. Of these, over 250 partnerships have existed for more than 20 years.

Australian NGOs have close ties to the Australian public positioning them as critical interlocutors connecting communities across Australia with those throughout the world. In 2021-22, one million individual Australians donated \$773 million to ACFID member organisations. While donorship is not a fulsome picture of public support, these figures go some way to detailing public interest in Australia's role in poverty alleviation and humanitarian support globally.

Due to their specialist expertise and nuanced understanding of local contexts, NGOs and their partners are also well-placed to deliver on the priorities set out in the International Development Policy, particularly relating to local leadership, climate change, gender equality, disability equity and civil society. Local constituent-led organisations such as women's rights organisations and organisations for persons with disabilities play a crucial role in advocating for and delivering on the priorities of marginalised groups. Partnerships between these organisations and Australian NGOs closely align with Australia's development objectives ensuring the aid program is responsive to and reaches all.

Australian aid by delivery partner, 2022-23



Similarly, as a result of their networks, knowledge and relationships at the community level, Australian humanitarian organisations have shown repeatedly their ability to provide unique rapid, localised, and well-coordinated support to crises as they emerge such as the response to the Turkey-Syria earthquake in 2023.

Despite these benefits, Australia's development program has increasingly moved away from NGOs as preferred delivery partners over the past decade with just 10 per cent of Australian aid being delivered directly through Australian NGOs. This is a missed opportunity for Australia's strategic engagement in the region and globally.

The ANCP has a 50-year track record as a civil society partnership that brings results and lasting impact and enables testing of innovative responses to long term problems, reaching over 57 million people across 54 countries. DFAT's 2022 evaluation of the ANCP corroborates the effectiveness of the program's approach; "the ANCP enables DFAT to support ANGOs to implement activities where they represent the most effective, and in some cases, only effective delivery mechanism."

Similarly the 2015 evaluation described the ANCP as "one of the best performing programs" delivering "18.2 per cent of DFAT's aggregate development results for only 2.7 per cent of the overall development program spend." Yet, Australian NGOs and their partners are constrained by overburdened budgets with duplicative grant and contractual due diligence and reporting. Together with inflexible and unpredictable funding cycles, this works to reduce opportunities to innovate, and diverts resources away from communities in need.

To realise the Government's development priorities and the value of renewed investment in Australian NGOs and their partners, a fundamental rethink of these requirements and a rebalancing of how development and humanitarian assistance is proportioned across Australian delivery partners is needed.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

32. Increase funding to NGOs and expand the avenues through which Australian humanitarian and development organisations can access funding. This includes increasing investment to the Australian NGO Cooperation program by an additional \$20m per annum ongoing, and \$15m in a pilot accredited NGO adaptive response pool. The increase of \$20m ongoing is to increase the minimum grant amount for accreditation with ANCP.

33. Purposefully recalibrate development program designs to ensure they do not preclude Australian civil society organisations as delivery partners in development programming. Given the International Development Policy's support for civil society organisations as 'an integral part of how Australia implements its development program,' designs should be actively inclusive of the unique opportunities and value Australian NGOs offer.

34. Embrace opportunities to align compliance reporting processes and streamline NGO reporting requirements within the ACFID Code of Conduct and the ANCP. DFAT should move towards alignment of due diligence assessment processes for NGOs across all DFAT-funded activities.

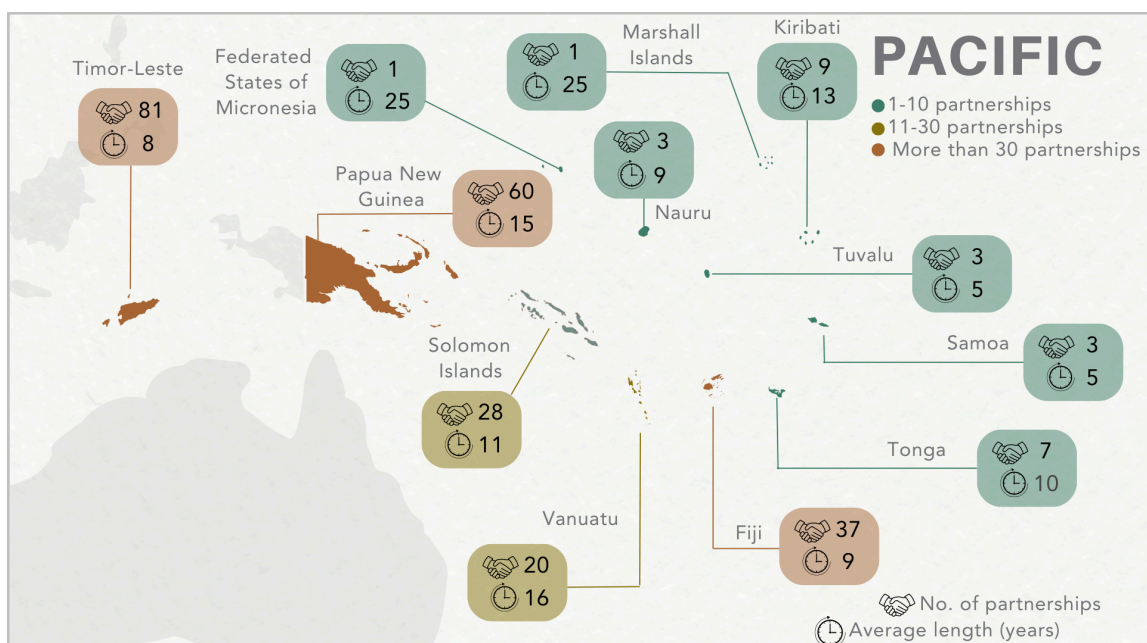
Enable quality locally-led development and humanitarian action

Australia's approach to locally-led action should be guided by local civil society, implemented through long-term policy shifts and accompanied by sustained and adequate funding.

Locally led approaches are key to delivering sustainable and effective development and humanitarian action. A locally-led approach recognises that local actors are better placed to facilitate viable transitions from response to recovery programming due to their sustained proximity to, and intimate understanding of, affected populations. It is facilitated by strong and equal partnerships, quality direct funding, transparency, mutual accountability, diversity and empowerment in staffing and leadership. Successful locally-led action recognises the power imbalances that influence development and humanitarian initiatives and places power in the hands of those directly affected by these initiatives.

Australian development actors can support the redistribution of power needed to recreate a system that places diverse local knowledge and actors at its core and that guarantees long-term sustainability while safeguarding development outcomes. This means going beyond technocratic solutions to ensure organisations, including donors, reflect on what needs to happen to challenge colonialist, sexist and racist practices and systems that remain prevalent in the international development system. Development initiatives that are locally-led are more likely to have sustainable, long-term benefits for communities. These initiatives meet the needs of communities and can support positive shifts in power relations and local skills development.

Snapshot of Australian NGO partnerships in the Pacific



Local civil society is at the heart of locally-led development with a central role in representing the needs of the individual to government. A strong, robust civil society is critical to realise effective and successful locally-led action. Australia's bilateral partnerships with Pacific governments must be balanced by a simultaneous approach that steps up efforts to strengthen civil society. This dual approach should reinforce efforts to develop resilient, robust and accountable institutions and governments that will in turn be responsive to and represent local civil society. Partner governments play the role of 'local actors' when they are responsive and representative of the wishes of local civil society as opposed to serving the interests of specific individuals or politically beneficial groups.

Many Australian NGOs have well established partnerships and connections with local actors and can play a valuable role connecting DFAT with local partners and communities. The intergenerational relationships of mutual respect and trust that Australian NGOs hold with local communities across the region and globally means they are well placed to deliver on the Government's locally-led policy priority. Three-quarters of Australian NGOs already support local partners with their own funds.

Implementing the Government's vision and approach to 'supporting locally-led change' requires adequate resourcing, sustained funding and a sophisticated approach that sets out a program logic for how Australia will realise this vision in practical terms across the development program.

ACFID CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

35. Ensure DFAT's approach to locally-led development is informed by:

- commissioned research to survey local organisations on their preferences for funding modalities and ensure funding decisions are informed by local voices;
- co-creating reporting, risk management requirements and program design settings with local partners;
- specialist in-house expertise;
- regular independent reviews on DFAT's approach which incorporate the views of local actors impacted;
- undertaking a rigorous review of DFAT's current approach to risk management to remove barriers to authentic partnerships in line with recent changes to ACFID's Code of Conduct.

36. Transition to providing flexible, consistent and long-term funding to local development and humanitarian actors.

37. Where identified by local partners as beneficial, support an accompaniment approach as an immediate and interim measure, where ANGOs work alongside local partners to alleviate the administrative and reporting burden of funding and support a transition to locally-led development.

About ACFID

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations involved in international development and humanitarian action.

OUR VISION

Our vision is Australia acting with compassion and fairness for a just, sustainable and equitable world.

OUR SHARED PURPOSE

Our purpose is to lead, unite and support international development and humanitarian organisations to realise our vision.

ABOUT ACFID

Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 128 full members and 20 affiliate members operating in more than 85 developing countries. The total revenue raised by ACFID's membership from all sources amounts to \$1.89 billion (2021 - 22), \$773 million of which is raised from over 1.14 million Australians. ACFID's members range between large Australian multi-sectoral organisations that are linked to international federations of NGOs, to agencies with specialised thematic expertise, and smaller community-based groups, with a mix of secular and faith-based organisations.

ACFID members must comply with the ACFID Code of Conduct, a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development and humanitarian action outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of signatory organisations. Covering 9 Quality Principles, 33 Commitments and 92 compliance indicators, the Code sets good standards for program effectiveness, fundraising, governance and financial reporting.

Compliance includes annual reporting and checks. The Code has an independent complaint handling process.

ACFID'S VALUES

INTEGRITY

We act with honesty and are guided by ethical and moral principles in all that we do.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions and are accountable to our stakeholders, and in particular primary stakeholders, for our performance and integrity.

TRANSPARENCY

We openly share information about our organisations and our work with all our stakeholders and the public.

RESPECT

We recognise the value and diversity of all people and are committed to treating others with due regard for their rights, dignity and integrity.

EFFECTIVENESS

We strive to deliver outcomes that bring about positive change in the lives of people living in poverty.

EQUITY

We are committed to overcoming prejudices and disadvantage and promoting fair and just access to resources and opportunities.

COOPERATION

We work with and alongside others in a spirit of mutuality, respecting diversity and difference in the pursuit of common goals.

List of ACFID Members

FULL MEMBERS

A Liquid Future
ACC International Relief
Act for Peace - NCCA
Action on Poverty
ActionAid Australia
Adara Development Australia
ADRA Australia
Afghan Australian
DevelopmentOrganisation
Anglican Overseas Aid
Anglican Relief and Development Fund
Australia
Anglicans in Development
ASHM Health
Asian Aid Organisation
Assisi Aid Projects
Australia for UNHCR
Australian Afghan Hassanian
YouthAssociation
Australian Doctors for Africa
Australian Doctors International
Australian Himalayan Foundation
Australian Lutheran World Service
Australian Marist Solidarity Ltd
Australian Medical Aid Foundation
Australian Red Cross
Australian Respiratory Council
AVI
BridgIT Water Foundation
Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation
Burnet Institute
CARE Australia
Care for Africa
Caritas Australia
CBM Australia
ChildFund Australia
CLAN (Caring and Living as Neighbours)
Cufa
Destiny Rescue Australia
DAISI (Doctors Assisting in South Pacific Islands)
Diplomacy Training Program
Disaster Relief Australia
Door of Hope Australia Inc.
Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
EDO NSW
Educating the Future
Engineers without Borders
Every Home Global Concern
Family Planning New South Wales
Fairtrade Australia New Zealand
FemiliPNG Australia
Foresight (Overseas Aid and Prevention of Blindness)
Global Evergreening Alliance
Global Mission Partners
Good Return
Good Neighbours Australia
Graceworks Myanmar
Habitat for Humanity Australia
Hagar Australia
HealthServe Australia
Health Equity Matters
Home in Place
Hope for Children
Indigo Foundation
International Justice Mission Australia
International Needs Australia
International Nepal Fellowship (Aust) Ltd
Interplast Australia & New Zealand
Islamic Relief Australia
John Fawcett Foundation

KTF (Kokoda Track Foundation)
Kyeema Foundation
Live & Learn Environmental Education
LiteHaus International
Love Mercy Foundation
MAA International (Muslim Aid Australia)
MAF International*
Mahboba's Promise Australia
Mary MacKillop Today
Mary Ward International Australia
Mercy Ships Australia
Mercy Works Ltd.
Mission World Aid Inc.
MIT Group Foundation
MSI Asia Pacific
Murdoch Children's Research Institute
Opportunity International Australia
Our Rainbow House
Oxfam Australia
Pacific Assist
Palmera Projects
Partner Housing Australasia
Partners in Aid
People with Disability Australia
Plan International Australia
Pollinate Group
Project Rozana
Quaker Service Australia
REACH for Nepal
RedR Australia
Reledev Australia
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Salesian Missions
Salvation Army International Development
Save the Children Australia
School for Life Foundation
SeeBeyondBorders
Sight For All
So They Can
Sport Matters

St John of God Outreach Services
Surf Aid International
SUSTAIN Projects Myanmar
Symbiosis International
Taking Paediatrics Abroad*
Tearfund Australia
The Fred Hollows Foundation
The Leprosy Mission Australia
The Nusatenggara Association (NTA), Inc
The Oaktree Foundation
This Life
Transform Aid International (incorporating
Baptist World Aid)
UNICEF Australia
Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA
UnitingWorld
Water for a Village
WaterAid Australia
Worldshare Australia
World Vision Australia
WWF-Australia
YWAM Medical Ships

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Australian National University -
Development Policy Centre
Deakin University - Alfred Deakin
Research Institute
Global Citizen
Global Health Alliance Australia
Institute of Economics and Peace
James Cook University - The Cairns
Institute
La Trobe University - Institute of Human
Security and Social Change
Monash Sustainable Development
Institute
Nossal Institute for Global Health
Refugee Council of Australia
RESULTS International Australia
Transparency International Australia
United Nations Association of Australia

Unity Housing
 University of New South Wales- Institute
 for Global Development
 University of Queensland - International
 Development
 University of Sydney - Office of Global
 Engagement
 University of Technology, Sydney -
 Institute for Sustainable Futures
 Vision 2020
 Western Sydney University- School of
 Social Sciences and Psychology
 Women's Plans Foundation

* Denotes Interim Full Member

** Denotes Interim Affiliate Member

In 2021-22, the total revenue raised
by ACFID's members amounted to

**\$1.893
BILLION**

\$773 MILLION
of which was raised
by more than
1,000,000
individual donors



2,707
Projects



85
countries



4,131
employees



13,368
volunteers



Summary of recommendations

ELEVATE DEVELOPMENT TO THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

1. Increase Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2030 with a clear trajectory and commitment to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI. Any investments in climate finance must be new and additional to existing ODA.
2. Invest in, strengthen and value development knowledge and expertise at all levels of DFAT, including at post, to deliver effectively on the objectives set out in the International Development Policy.
3. Rebalance the allocation of Australia's:
 - development assistance, based on consideration of Australia's relative strengths as a donor, the history and strength of our partnerships, and the population groups that have experienced the least progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - humanitarian assistance, based on geographic areas of greatest need, including those beyond Australia's region.
4. Ensure development outcomes that align with the International Development Policy are the primary objectives of any development financing, and institute strong accountability mechanisms to ensure development impact and effectiveness are prioritised.

5. Elevate the voices of First Nations people, their expertise and knowledge systems (formal and informal) in Australia's development investments and programming.

ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

6. Adopt an intersectional, feminist and transformative approach to promoting gender equality through all aspects of Australia's international engagement.
7. Ensure a dedicated focus on addressing the root causes of gender inequality by committing 20 per cent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to initiatives with gender equality as the principal objective (currently 5 per cent), including 5 per cent of ODA to Women's Rights Organisations and movements.

ACHIEVING DISABILITY EQUITY

8. Require that all in-country programs over \$3m have a disability objective, and that 80 per cent of programs effectively address disability equity.
9. Increase the central disability allocation to \$20m per annum with annual increases thereafter in line with overall budget increases to support delivery on disability equity commitments across the development program, and provide core support to Organisations of People with Disabilities, particularly for underrepresented groups.

ADVANCING LGBTQIA+ EQUITY AND RIGHTS

10. Increase Australia's Inclusion and Equality Fund to the value of \$15m per annum, commensurate with the need for support to human rights defenders and CSOs working towards LGBTQIA+ human rights and equality.
11. Strengthen Australia's leadership and advocacy on human rights including LGBTQIA+ rights in multilateral fora and expand bilateral dialogue and advocacy in partnership with local rights and LGBTQIA+ civil society organisations.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

12. Develop a strategy for children and young people for Australia's development cooperation program in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
13. Establishing a child and youth focal point within DFAT, to deliver development and humanitarian programs that respond to the lifecycle and are attuned to their impact on the most marginalised children and young people.

ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY

14. Strengthen investment, capability and collaboration to build sustainable, people centred health systems that are resilient to future shocks and changing population health needs.

15. Double Australia's health ODA over the next five years, with a renewed focus on health systems strengthening.

STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY

16. Re-orient Australia's development cooperation program towards sustainable investment to and through civil society organisations, including through increasing the proportion of total Australian ODA channelled to and through CSOs to 25 per cent, for both humanitarian and development funding. This must be flexible, core and multi-year funding.

17. Deliver increased investment in civil society through 'fit for purpose' funding modalities that ensure the delivery of core, flexible and multi-year funding to both Australian development and local civil society organisations, including those that represent the interests of marginalised social groups and communities.

18. Co-fund the Pacific-led development of a Pacific Regional Accountability Framework for Civil Society Organisations, and endorse its use as a benchmark for NGO accountability. This will foster a vibrant civil society sector, and expand the diversity of high-impact development partners for Australia.

19. Deliver on its commitment to full implementation of the OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society. This includes undertaking a civil society analysis during the development of country-level development strategies and program designs.

20. Consider innovative financing mechanisms to unlock additional resources and leverage private sector expertise in support of CSOs.

TAKE HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR THOSE IN GREATEST NEED

21. Build a pathway to Australia's fair share of humanitarian financing of \$1.08 billion annually.

22. Resource DFAT capability to effectively support response to sudden onset humanitarian emergencies, as well as engage on medium-term priorities such as the development-humanitarian-peace nexus, protracted crises, anticipatory action, resilience and adherence to Good Humanitarian Donorship principles more broadly.

23. Ensure Australian government policies, program activities and internal decision-making processes continue to uphold and strengthen the government's commitments to and obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

24. Use a whole-of-government approach to:

- prevent, respond to, and address the root causes of protracted crises;
- finance all investments in protracted crises on a multi-year basis;
- ensure that civil society and all agencies relevant to protracted crises across the disaster cycle, including displacement and conflict contexts, are involved, and;
- prevent, respond to, and develop durable solutions for displaced people.

25. Affirm a global focus for Australia's humanitarian action, diplomacy and advocacy, and a commitment to operating with the primary purpose of alleviating suffering wherever it is found, in line with the humanitarian imperative.

26. Place the protection of women and girls, children, people with disabilities, and minorities at the heart of humanitarian action.

27. Improve DFAT capacity to operate in insecure environments by ensuring that relevant legislation, regulations, internal policies and procedures enable delivery of humanitarian assistance with the best placed partners.

28. Undertake concerted diplomatic, development and humanitarian action to address escalating global displacement crises, with emphasis on prevention and solutions, guided by displacement analysis and sensitivity.

COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

29. Develop a whole of government approach to meet Australia's climate finance fair share as agreed by parties under the Copenhagen Accord to achieve the collective \$100 billion climate finance goal. This should be new and additional finance to existing levels of ODA and should include:

- Contributing Australia's fair share of \$4 billion per year by 2025 towards the \$100 billion collective finance goal and advocating for an ambitious and inclusive New Collective Quantified Goal (NCGQ) at COP29.
- Funding climate finance mechanisms that do not add to sovereign debt distress and that prioritise direct access modalities to enable funding for developing countries in our region.
- Developing and publishing a transparent and consistent approach to reporting on climate finance that reflects its real value to partner countries.

30. Fund Australia's fair share of Loss and Damage (including non-economic) to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on the societies, economies and cultures of developing countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

31. Demonstrate Australia's commitment to a genuine partnership with Pacific Island countries by strengthening the Government's domestic and exported greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in line with the pathway to limit global warming to below 1.5C. To achieve this Australia should also:

- Redirect fossil fuel subsidies to provide new and additional sources of climate finance.

PRIORITISE NGOS AS VALUABLE PARTNERS

32. Increase funding to NGOs and expand the avenues through which Australian humanitarian and development organisations can access funding. This includes increasing investment to the Australian NGO Cooperation program by an additional \$20m per annum ongoing, and \$15m in a pilot accredited NGO adaptive response pool. The increase of \$20m ongoing is to increase the minimum grant amount for accreditation with ANCP.

33. Purposefully recalibrate development program designs to ensure they do not preclude Australian civil society organisations as delivery partners in development programming. Given the International Development Policy's support for civil society organisations as 'an integral part of how Australia implements its development program,' designs should be actively inclusive of the unique opportunities and value Australian NGOs offer.

34. Embrace opportunities to align compliance reporting processes and streamline NGO reporting requirements within the ACFID Code of Conduct and the ANCP. DFAT should move towards alignment of due diligence assessment processes for NGOs across all DFAT-funded activities.

ENABLE QUALITY LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

35. Ensure DFAT's approach to locally-led development is informed by:

- commissioned research to survey local organisations on their preferences for funding modalities and ensure funding decisions are informed by local voices;
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AUSTRALIAN
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INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

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Cover photo credit: Australian Lutheran
World Service

Caption: A family who has received
support with agricultural training which
has meant they have been able to improve
their house.

Inside back cover photo credit: Edmund
Rice Centre Nairobi, Kenya.

Caption: An Occupational Therapist works
with a child with disabilities to improve
learning outcomes. Edmund Rice Centre
Nairobi, Kenya.