

Committee for Development Cooperation Feedback on the ANCP Principles of Engagement

The **Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC)** NGO representatives welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the provided draft principles of engagement. With regards to the principles and behaviours proposed, we provide the following feedback:

Overall:

1. The ANCP is a well-established and effective program that also provides a useful example of good partnership behaviour between DFAT and Australian NGOs. Accordingly, it would be helpful and consistent to use the language of the **'DFAT and NGOs: Effective Development Partners'** document within these partnership principles, so the ambition to model partnership behaviour between DFAT and Australian NGOs is not lost. Specifically:
 - a. the principles should draw reference from the **'effective partners'** section, which contains important language on the due diligence benefits of accreditation, recognising that ANCP accredited NGOs have undergone checks on requirements for organisational capacity, risk management, safeguards and policy.
 - b. The principles should also draw reference from the **'effectiveness and diversity of funding arrangements'** section of the above document with regards to explicitly recognising that predictability in funding is what facilitates the capacity of NGOs to plan and make long term commitments to vulnerable communities. Whilst acknowledging there are specific ANCP funding challenges in terms of RDE, this should not preclude predictability as a guiding principle.
2. **Cooperation is fundamental to the ANCP**, and this should be made explicit within the principles. Cooperation between Australian NGOs in the ANCP and DFAT should be pursued as essential to effective development partnership, as it provides the enabling environment that allows for development programming that delivers impact both through and beyond ADplans.
3. At CDC 139, the Committee agreed on important language to describe the ANCP and its objective. **The wording of the description and objective of the ANCP as agreed at the time should be referenced** as it includes important and useful language about the uniqueness, flexibility, the rigour of the assessment process, and the diversity of the Australian NGOs¹.

On specific principles:

Transparency: open communication and dialogue

4. Open communication is explicit within the title, but not well-defined in the accompanying explanation. It would be valuable for the language of this principle to reflect that communication should be frank and open, and that this approach is welcomed and valued.
5. This principle commits the partnership to 'listening to' on another's views, but not to considering concerns or seeking mutually acceptable resolutions to identified issues. Rather than focus this behaviour on simply hearing one another's concerns or ideas, this should be a commitment to engaging with one another's views to achieve our agreed objective, which is improved development outcomes.

Mutual accountability for results

6. In any effective partnership, trust is a necessary established precursor to mutual accountability. Trust should be called out explicitly within this principle. This would be a good place to draw in the language

¹ see <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/cdc139.pdf>

of the effective partners document regarding due diligence, as referenced at point 1a, and the established base level of trust in ANCP accredited NGOs. This language could also be drawn from that recorded at CDC 139 and referenced at point 3, which agrees that NGOs “...undergo a rigorous assessment of their organisational structure, policies and systems”.

Respect for independence

7. Similarly to point 4 above, respecting NGOs’ right to contribute to public debate is not the same as respecting the NGOs’ independence as a partner in ANCP when it comes to negotiations and decision-making. Given that the language in the ANCP Grant Agreement is now very contractual, contrasted with the statement in the ANCP Principles that ‘...the ANCP approach respects the organisational autonomy of NGOs that goes beyond a transactional contractual relationship...’ how this operates in principle beyond independence of voice could be included here.
8. Further to the point above, at CDC 139 the Committee agreed on the wording of the ANCP objective. At that time, this statement opened with the objective being “To support accredited Australian NGOs to implement their own programs and strategic directions.....”. This language should be referenced in this description of respect for independence, expanding independence of opinion alone to include independence of programming and strategy.