**ACFID Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Community of Practice**

**Building capacity and organisational capability and understanding change across scales.**

**Terms of Reference**

**Background**

ACFID members range from the very small local NGO, up to very large international alliances, with varying capacity, capability, expertise and engagement around MEL. There are MEL requirements to do with measurement, evidence and learning based on data (often at a project level) but also requirements to understanding change pathways and contributions to outcomes and impact at a project level or a larger systems level.

ACFID members need to respond to donor requirements regarding data that demonstrates outputs, but they also are needing to understand and provide evidence of impact across scales that demonstrate systems level change. These require different capacity (individually and organisational) and may involve the same or different people within organisations working together or separately.

ACFID has provided over the years training and capacity building opportunities or resources for members around:

* Monitoring and Evaluation skills
* Developing Effectiveness and MEL Frameworks
* How to apply systems thinking and collaborative approaches to complex issues
* How change happens
* Innovation

There are many courses that are available to increase capacity around organisational learning. This COP will allow members to engage more directly with developing work and priority setting for ACFID.

DFAT has provided opportunities for ANCP[[1]](#footnote-1) funded programs and staff to build capacity around MEL, for the purpose of meeting the needs of ANCP logical frameworks and the ANCP MEL Framework. This COP will allow members to engage with each other around these DFAT opportunities and invite DFAT to discussions where appropriate.

ACFID and the RDI Network have commissioned research into Demonstrating Outcomes and Impact Across Scales which has spurred further thinking around strategic level MEL for the sector. The sector is starting to think about how to measure achievement against the SDGs. The COP will be a place to house these ongoing conversations.

These different foci are important across both the development and humanitarian sector. There is benefit in bringing the humanitarian and development MEL conversations together and thus the TORs are relevant to both.

This COP can establish sub-groups as required. The intention is that any sub-groups align and report regularly to the host COP. Sub-groups might include, for example: ANCP, SDGs, Data, Humanitarian/Development overlap, others...

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| **Objective** |
| Create a community of online and face to face opportunities for ACFID members to engage, learn and innovate around MEL and understanding impact across scales. |
| **Outcomes** |
| Increased capacity and organisational capability for best practice Monitoring Evaluation and Learning in humanitarian and development work.  | ACFID members can better articulate (individually, collectively and with partners) contributions to change across scales.  |
| **Outputs** |
| * Provide a support network for medium and small size organisation to share best practice for MEL.
* Opportunities identified and opened for learning across the sector and between organisations of different sizes.
* ACFID members collectively engage with consultants (individuals and companies) and universities that offer evaluation and research courses/degrees
* ACFID offerings scoped and prioritised by the COP members
* The COP to advise and support the potential tailoring of offerings for more effective MEL capacity building.
* Lay out a frame for the strategic tensions identified during visioning exercise at MEL Across Scales workshop
* Find and share examples of organisations/people who have been tackling with those tensions.
* Convene and engage with a wide range of stakeholders and experts to continue to challenge current thinking.
* Engage with senior leaders within NGOs and Government to shift the thinking around ways to contribute to change across scales for greater and more strategic impact.
* Develop applied research priorities.
* COP workplans, outputs, publications, training/learning material, minutes to be shared within the Collaborate platform and through ACFID’s resources library and other online mechanisms as appropriate.
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| **Ways of Working** |
| One face-to-face meeting can be scheduled each year. This meeting typically comprises half a day of COP-only interaction (planning and strategising) and half a day ofmeetings open to a wider audience. The process for meetings is as follows:• Meetings are planned ahead of time to allow organisations to plan for this in their budgets.• Meeting invitations will be circulated to all people on the COP email list and via My ACFID Group at least one month in advance of the meeting date.• Where possible video or teleconferencing is used to involve members who are unable to physically join the meetings.• Additional meetings are organised on an as needs basis and must be member funded.• In addition to these meetings, Community of Practice activities, such assharing days, workshops, trainings and conferences are organised. These will be member funded unless the COP is able to find external financing. |
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| **Membership** |
| The COP will comprise of ACFID member staff and RDI Network members. Other people can join the COP at the discretion of the chairs, including government and private sector staff where their membership is seen to benefit the work. |
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| **Key Audience** |
| Anyone within the ACFID membership who has responsibility for MEL or is interested in how MEL might contribute at a higher level to organisational strategies and directions. Staff who have specific MEL roles. Managers. Senior leadership. Any staff interested in MEL practice and learning. People involved in the day to day work of gathering and using project, program and organisational data for demonstrating change, impact and learning, and improving programs and practice?People involved in or wanting to use evidence (e.g. data, stories of change, evaluations) for organizational strategy setting, advocacy and public communications. |
| **Convenors** |
| There will be 2 convenors at any time sharing the role who will organize an annual program of teleconferences and possible face-to-face meetings in Consultation with the COP membership.The 2 convenors will ensure there are working group leaders who are able to support each working group. The convenors and working group leaders should confer regularly and as required. |
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| **Becoming a member** |
| Individuals or organisations interested in becoming members should approach a Co-Convenor via the ACFID website who will provide them with this document and invite them to join the COP. Their membership will be acknowledged at the next meeting of the COP.The benefits of becoming a member of the COP is that it gives the individual or organization the opportunity to take part in emerging issues, best practice and new thinking around MEL with the humanitarian and development sector. It also means meeting and learning from peers, sharing experiences and constructive critique by peers. Contribution by COP members adds value to the COP experience. |
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| **Communication within the COP** |
| The ACFID Collaborate online platform (My ACFID) is used for communication. All members are free to post to Collaborate.Meetings of both Co-convenors and the wider group will be minuted and posted to Collaborate after each meeting. |
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| **Budget** |
| Activities and any face to face meetings of the COP are self-funded by participants. It is advantageous to try to align any face to face meetings with other activities – such as DFAT trainings or ACFID Conference to reduce travel costs. Some money can be made available from time to time by ACFID or the RDI Network, budget depending. |
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| **Representation of ACFID** |
| *See ACFID Policy (not yet available)* |  |
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1. Australian NGO Cooperation Program [↑](#footnote-ref-1)