Anowara Begoum lives in Kazipara village. Anowara received a cow and goat to from BRAC through its STUP Special Targeting Ultra Poor. AusAID funds BRAC's work in Bangladesh, its estimated that BRAC works within 70,000 of Bangladesh's 86,000 villages. Photo: Conor Ashleigh / DFAT.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ACFID Code and DFAT Accreditation

This fact sheet provides answers to frequently asked questions for existing or prospective ACFID members who are considering applying for DFAT Accreditation.

We are currently applying to be an ACFID member. If we are assessed as compliant with the ACFID Code of Conduct, can we apply for accreditation immediately?

An organisation is recognised by ACFID as being a Code Signatory when they receive interim full membership once they have been approved by ACFID's Board. If an organisation meets eligibility requirements for DFAT accreditation, they are eligible to apply at that point.

However, it is important to note that DFAT's Accreditation Manual advises agencies applying for accreditation for the first time to allow a preparation time of 18 to 24 months before the submission of its Agency Profile. This allows adequate time for any necessary changes to be made to policies and practice and a thorough review of the Agency Profile by staff members and the governing body. Some areas of the Australian NGO's practice may need significant change, and a minimum two-year track record is a requirement for accreditation.

We are currently applying to be an ACFID member. DFAT has suggested we may be eligible to apply for Accreditation in order to receive funding through the ANCP, does this mean we will be automatically accepted?

No, organisations are never automatically guaranteed that they will receive accreditation and be eligible to receive funding through ANCP. DFAT's accreditation process is a front-end and rigorous risk-management and due diligence process for Australian NGOs seeking funding through the ANCP, and any organisation receiving funding through the ANCP needs to be DFAT accredited.

Most organisations use the ACFID Code Self-Assessment process and associated review and membership application as a first step to drive internal reflection and quality improvement. This process should prompt an organisation to review policies, procedures and practices to ensure alignment with sector good practice, risk management and compliance obligations. Once an organisation has successfully

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gained Code Signatory status, they may use the structure of the accreditation criteria, coupled with a reasonable track record of established practice, to commence their preparation for accreditation.

We are currently applying to be an ACFID member and wish to apply for Accreditation. Can ACFID fast-track our membership application so that we submit an application for accreditation by the closing date?

No, there is no fast-tracking ACFID membership applications.

Whilst all efforts are taken to be cognisant of your timelines, all applicants will be progressed through ACFID's application process in a fair and consistent manner. This can take anywhere from 4 – 18 months.

Generally, the more prepared an organisation is, the better equipped it will be to pass through any assessment process. If an organisation has thoroughly understood the Code requirements, ensured that its own policies, procedures and approaches are compliant with the requirements in the Code, and reported this in a detailed and thorough manner in its Code Self-Assessment, then it is likely that the resubmission requests and timeframes involved will be efficient.

Are ACFID and DFAT accreditation requirements the same?

No. While there are many similarities and overlap, there are some critical differences.

Both the ACFID Code of Conduct and DFAT Accreditation outline high standards for Australian NGOs' structure, governance, policies and practices, but they serve different purposes. This means that at times the two standards have different or additional requirements to each other.

There are also differences in how organisations are assessed and the level of evidence required in the assessment process.

ACFID has produced detailed mapping, which compares the compliance requirements of the ACFID Code of Conduct and DFAT accreditation criteria. This tool is designed to assist members in identifying where the standards are similar and where they differ, and to help members prepare their compliance reporting for both standards.

We are an ACFID member and would like some support preparing for DFAT Accreditation, who can we talk to?

Technical assistance may be provided by DFAT to help Australian NGOs understand and prepare for accreditation. Technical assistance is provided at the discretion of DFAT and involves financial support for the NGO to hire an independent consultant of their choice to review and assess the readiness to submit the Agency Profile and commence the accreditation assessment process.

Questions about technical assistance can be directed to the DFAT Accreditation team at accreditation@dfat.gov.au.

ACFID can provide members with a list of individual accreditation consultants who have expertise in preparing for accreditation. If your organisation would like to connect with other ACFID members who have been through the accreditation process, a list of ANCP agencies can be found on DFAT's website. Where possible, ACFID can help connect organisations at a leadership level, or with relevant networks.

Any ACFID queries should be directed to the Code Team at code@acfid.asn.au.

We are an ACFID member and will be undergoing DFAT accreditation but are also scheduled for a Code Self-Assessment around the same time. Is it possible to get an extension on our Code reporting?

Organisations who are going through DFAT accreditation can request a deferral on their Code Self-Assessment until the following financial year. However, this is only considered at the member's request as some members choose to undertake the two assessments simultaneously. No deferrals are provided for Exceptions Reports. Contact code@acfid.asn.au to request a deferral or to discuss your options.

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