



Terms of Reference

ACFID Theory of Change and MEL Framework 2026-2031

1. Purpose

ACFID is inviting expressions of interest from suitably qualified consultants to work with the ACFID Secretariat to develop a Theory of Change and accompanying MEL Framework for its 2026-2031 Strategy. The Theory of Change and MEL Framework will serve as practical management tools to support strong decision-making, performance tracking, organisational learning, and accountability to ACFID's board, members and external stakeholders.

The Theory of Change should balance clarity and usability with sufficient detail to reflect the complexity of ACFID's influencing role. It will enable ACFID to define and refine the goals and outcomes it is working towards in this next strategic period and help staff identify and articulate how their work feeds into these outcomes. It will help ACFID identify the measures of success over the period of the strategic plan and also identify assumptions that underpin our work so they can be tested to see if they hold true and risks that may impede achievement of the outcomes that should be tracked and mitigated.

The process of developing this Theory of Change will be participatory to ensure the ACFID Secretariat and other stakeholders have informed, and are also clear on, the outcomes to be achieved and how they will contribute to success.

2. Background

2.1 ACFID

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is a Canberra-based not-for-profit membership peak body representing over 135 Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in international development and humanitarian action. With our members, ACFID seeks to be an influential policy voice, a catalyst for change and a standard bearer for good practice in international development and humanitarian response, alongside creating public awareness and appreciation on the importance of aid.

ACFID's membership is vibrant and diverse, ranging from Australia's largest and most well-known NGOs to smaller organisations whose work focuses on specific issues or geographical location. ACFID members work to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, support environmentally sustainable and inclusive development and are on the front lines of humanitarian emergency and disaster relief.

The ACFID Secretariat has three teams. The Policy and Advocacy Team coordinates with members on policy, government relations and sector advocacy. The Engagement and Effectiveness Team leads ACFID's engagement with members, including through its learning program, communities of practice and the ACFID Code of Conduct. The Business Operations team supports the ACFID Secretariat's HR, IT, governance and compliance needs, as well as managing external communications, partnerships and providing support for key events.



To note – ACFID uses the Monday.com platform for operational planning, monitoring and a range of other dashboards and functions.

2.2 ACFID Strategy 2026-2031

ACFID’s 2026–2031 Strategy positions the organisation to respond to a rapidly changing and increasingly complex development and humanitarian landscape shaped by climate change, geopolitical shifts, evolving funding models, and the growing emphasis on locally led development. Within this context, ACFID seeks to strengthen its role as a unifying peak body - supporting members to adapt and collaborate, while influencing the broader systems, partnerships and narratives that shape development outcomes. The strategy reflects ACFID’s dual role as both a direct actor and a sector-level enabler, with impact achieved largely through its members and their collective contribution.

The strategy is structured around four strategic directions: strengthening member capability and readiness; convening and shaping a more connected and effective development ecosystem; amplifying the sector’s collective voice to influence policy and public narratives; and building ACFID’s own organisational capability and resilience. These are underpinned by cross-cutting commitments to climate action, locally led development, and equitable, inclusive practice. The Theory of Change and MEL Framework will therefore need to articulate clear outcome domains across member capability, ecosystem functioning, influence, and organisational performance, and reflect ACFID’s contribution to systems-level change.

Scope of Work

The consultant is expected to design and facilitate inclusive, structured, and well-documented participatory processes, ensuring synthesis of diverse perspectives into a coherent and technically robust Theory of Change.

Phase 1 - Inception

- Initial scoping and planning meeting with ACFID Management Team
- Document review
- Develop inception report (methodology, workplan, engagement plan)

Phase 2 – Theory of Change Development

- Stakeholder consultations
- Development of draft Theory of Change (diagram, narrative, risks and assumptions)
- Validation of ToC

Phase 3 – MEL Framework Development

- Indicator framework
- Systems and tools developed
- Integration with Monday.com factored in (the consultant should ensure that proposed monitoring tools and processes can be feasibly integrated into ACFID’s existing Monday.com-based planning and monitoring systems)

Phase 4 – Validation and Finalisation



- Validation workshops
- Deliverables finalised
- Handover

3. Deliverables

- Inception report (methodology, workplan, consultation plan)
- Draft Theory of Change (diagram + narrative + assumptions)
- Final Theory of Change (validated and refined)
- MEL Framework , including:
 - Results framework (aligned to ToC)
 - Indicator reference sheets (definitions, data sources, frequency)
 - Data collection and management plan
 - Learning and reflection processes
 - Reporting structure (including Board reporting)
 - Monitoring tools and templates, including for annual operational plans
 - Consideration for how the framework can be translated onto Monday.com
- Monitoring tools/templates (aligned with Monday.com)
- Final slide deck summarising ToC and MEL system
- Handover workshop (2–3 hours) + materials

4. Timing and duration

Subject to discussion and availability of the successful consultant, the following is provided as an indicative timeline:

- By August 2026 – Consultant engaged. Initial scoping and planning discussions with ACFID Management Team undertaken.
- September – consultations and co-creation with ACFID Secretariat and other stakeholders
- October – Refinement and finalisation. Handover Workshop
- By November 2026 – Deliverables complete

5. How to apply

Applicants are requested to submit the following via email to Acting EET Director, afitzpatrick@acfid.asn.au by July 20th 2026.

- Company/Consultant Profile, including CV of personnel involved.
- Proposed methodology – your understanding of our needs and context



- Project Plan Outline – key milestones and proposed timeline
- Budget – detailed pricing (including professional fees, additional expenses that may be incurred, and GST). To note ACFID’s expected budget is between \$20,000 - \$30,000
- References – one or two recent clients for similar work and case studies or examples of similar work

6. Selection Criteria

ACFID will select the Consultant based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience and capability
- Relevance and quality of proposed methodology
- Understanding of ACFID’s needs and the sector and context we work in
- Value for money
- Capacity to meet the project timeline
- References and track record
- Preferable – experience using Monday.com for MEL frameworks

For any questions or queries, contact Anne Fitzpatrick afitzpatrick@acfid.asn.au