Partners in Aid

PROJECTS POLICY

1. Background

Partners in Aid believes that an appropriate way of achieving its goals is through having strong relationships with a small number of overseas partner organizations which it can trust to work effectively with local stakeholders. Accordingly, Partners in Aid works by forming long-standing partnerships with a small number of local not-for-profit organisations that are acting as agents of change in their local communities and are seeking thereby to achieve improvements in the health and wellbeing of those communities.

Projects are the primary instrument by which Partners in Aid works with their Partner Organisations to realise its mission. Project proposals are only considered by the Partners in Aid Board if they come from organisations with which a Partnership Agreement has already been signed. Partners in Aid currently partners with organisations in India, Bangladesh and the Philippines and collaborates with these organisations to deliver projects which achieve our vision of enduring, capable communities and which deliver on our Mission:

> - to improve living standards, capacity and resilience in developing communities with a focus on the Indian sub-continent.

> -to fund and facilitate social and environment projects and child education sponsorship with local partners.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guiding principles and steps involved in initiating, developing, approving, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects.
(Note: The only projects/programmes funded by Partners in Aid which prioritize children are the two child sponsorship schemes. Processes enabling children to participate in the development of the schemes and to make complaints if they so wish are outlined in the Child Sponsorship Policy document.)

3. Scope

This policy applies to all projects which are funded by Partners in Aid and jointly initiated by the organization and a Partner Organisation. It does not apply to activities undertaken outside a project agreement.

4. Procedures

4.1 To be considered by the PIA Board, any project proposal must be in accordance with PIA vision, mission and values statement.

4.2 Development of projects is based on the initial submission of a proposal by one of PIA Partner Organizations (see Appendix 1). The proposal is then reviewed by the Project Committee, based on Partners in Aid policies and relevant best practice, and the checklist outlined in Appendix 2. This review will be documented and placed on the project file. Where appropriate, the proposal will be also reviewed by someone with expertise in the context, locality and/or approach proposed for achieving intended outcomes, and especially in any technical issues being addressed in the proposal. If changes in the initial proposal are considered desirable or necessary, an exchange of ideas will then take place between Partners in Aid and the Partner Organisation.

4.3 Once finalised, the proposal must be presented to the Board of Partners in Aid and the governing body of the Partner Organization for approval. Once the approval of these bodies has been given, a contract will be signed with Partner Organisation for the full or partial funding of the project (Appendix 3). Each project will have a Partners in Aid Board Member allocated to liaise with the Partner Organisation.

4.4 Monitoring reports must be forwarded to the Board Member by the Partner Organisation at an agreed frequency, not greater than annually.

4.5 An evaluation should be completed by the Partner Organisation at the end of the project period, or at agreed intervals, to allow the Board to determine that the objectives have been met and guiding values followed.

4.6 Projects may be terminated by Partners in Aid at any time in the event of criminal activities or misappropriation of project funds; financial wrongdoing, the appearance of the organisation on key personnel or on the list of groups proscribed as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code on the Australian National Security website; or the DFAT Consolidated List of targeted financial sanction against persons and entities.

4.7 Projects may also be terminated after consultation with the Partner Organisation, if project/s being fully or partially funded by Partners in Aid are consistently failing to meet mutually agreed outcomes and/or impacts, or funding provided by Partners in Aid is consistently not being spent in accordance with the agreed budget.

4.8 All Project Agreements will contain a clause indicating that funding is dependent on donors' contributions being sufficient to meet the agreed amount.

4.9 In event of Partner in Aid funds being insufficient to sustain the Project at some stage after the Project Agreement has been signed, every effort will be made to minimise the impact on the Project of the inability to meet the intended budget.

5. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 The Partners in Aid Board member designated to liaise with the Partner Organisation will endeavour, circumstances permitting, to visit the Partner Organisation, project site, and to speak with at least some of the beneficiaries, once a year, in order to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation. Should annual visits not prove feasible, one visit must be made during the project cycle, unless safety considerations preclude such a visit.

5.2 In the course of the visit, if feasible and appropriate, the Board member carrying out the monitoring and evaluation visit will complete the checklist outlined in Appendix 4.

5.3 Based on the response to whichever of the above questions are applicable, plus the results of general discussion and observation, the Board member will submit a report to the Project

Subcommittee on return to Melbourne for review and discussion of lessons learnt and need for any recommendations to be made to the Partner Organisation.

5.4 In the course of monitoring visits, any relevant experiences and technical knowledge that Partners in Aid Board and Project Coordinators have acquired will be shared with Partner Organisations to facilitate capacity building. They will also seek out new ideas and approaches that can perhaps be passed on to other Partner Organisations. If the Partner Organisation is experiencing problems in project implementation, Partners in Aid will make every effort to try and find an appropriate solution to these problems.

5.5 Project Coordinators will also discuss the requirements of the Child Safeguard Policy and Code of Conduct and Partners in Aid's expectations during regular project visits. A simple checklist recording current adherence to these expectations will be completed and reported to the Board following the project visit. This will occur in the first instance within 12 months of adoption of this policy.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed after 3 years.

7. Relevant PIA Policy Documents

PIA Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

PIA Child Sponsorship Policy

PIA Risk Management Policy

8. References

The *DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, OECD (2000).

World Bank. *Performance Monitoring Indicators Handbook*. World Bank Technical Paper No. 334. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ (last sighted 24 April 2017)

Metzger, L. and Guenther, I. (2015). 'How to Assess the Effectiveness of Development Aid Projects; Evaluation Ratings versus Project Indicators'. *J. of International Development*. Vol 27, No. 8, pp.1496-1520.

Appendix 1: Project Proposal Application Form

1. THE PROJECT

    i.   Name of NGO responsible for project implementation:

    ii.   Project Goal:

    iii.   Project Purpose:

To ……….

……….

    iv.   Dates of start and proposed finish: Start _____

                             Proposed finish_____

(If project has no set finish date, please indicate number of new communities/people it is anticipated to involve per year)

2. PROJECT SITE AND ITS PEOPLE

    i.   Total population in affected area: _____ people, or _____households

    ii.   Are there any indigenous people in the community: No   Yes:

        iia. If yes, approximately what % of the residents are indigenous? ____%

        iib. Is there anything that will make it difficult for indigenous residents to participate in and /or benefit from the Project activities?

        iic. If so: What, if any steps being taken to overcome / minimize these difficulties?

    iii.   Are there any disabled people in the community:
            No   Yes

iiia. If yes, approximate number:_____ persons

iiib. If yes: Is there anything that will make it difficult for them to participate and /or benefit from the Project activities?

iiic. If so: Are any steps being taken to overcome / minimize these difficulties?

3. PROJECT CONTEXT

i. Please describe briefly the main problems facing affected community/ies, including main cause/s of poverty.

ii. Please indicate the 3 main causes locally of mortality (death) and morbidity (illness):

	Morbidity	*Mortality*
Adults		
Children		

iii. Please describe briefly any gender-specific household, community or organizational roles that may affect/be affected positively or negatively by the project implementation or outcome (e.g. collection of water for domestic use by women):

4. ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN PROJECT DESIGN

i. What steps have been taken to ensure that all primary stakeholders have been able to make an informed input with respect to participation in the planning of this proposal? (e.g. initial training; information sessions, etc)

ii. What steps were taken, where relevant, to ensure gender, religious and ethnic equality in participation in project design, as well as the participation minority or potentially vulnerable group/s in the affected communities?

iii. What consultation about project design has taken place with members of communities / other stakeholders who may be affected by the project and what strategies were used in the consultation process (e.g. PRA, focus group discussions, interviews of community leaders, etc.)?

   a. *Consultation with community leaders:*

   b. *Consultation with men in the community:*

   c. *Consultation with women in the community:*

   d. *Consultation with indigenous members of the community (if any):*

   e. *Consultation people with disabilities in the community (if any):*

   f. *Consultation with other primary stakeholders*

   g. *Consultation with children if the development initiatives are likely to affect them in any way (e.g. involve more time away from home of both parents, leaving children to look after younger siblings.)*

iv. Is there a plan for enabling primary stakeholders to continue to have input with respect to ongoing project implementation?

5. KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Total number of potential beneficiaries:

Male (or no. of households)	Female (or no. of households)	Children (under 14)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED BENEFICIARIES	NUMBER	OUTPUT	ANTICIPATED OUTCOME	ANTICIPATED IMPACT
	Particular Group (e.g. Farmers' Association – please specify)				
	Men				
	Women				
	Children				
	Indigenous Peoples				
	Other (e.g. people with disabilities – please specify)				
	Particular Group (e.g. Farmers' Association – please specify)				

	Men				
	Women				
	Children				
	Indigenous Peoples				
	Other (e.g. people with disabilities – please specify)				
	Particular Group (e.g. Farmers' Association – please specify)				
	Men				
	Women				
	Children				
	Indigenous Peoples				
	Other (e.g. people with disabilities – please specify)				

(Please attach further pages as necessary)

6. RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT

Please complete the following table:

RISK	DESCRIPTION	PROBABILITY	SEVERITY	ACTION TO MINIMIZE RISK

Note: Probability = how likely is it to happen? (low, moderate, high)
Severity = how bad would the results be if it did happen? (low, moderate, high)

7. SUSTAINABILITY

   i.   Please list steps being taken to ensure sustainability (training in operation and maintenance of newly constructed infrastructure, training in budgeting for asset maintenance, etc.)

   ii.   What impact, if any, will project activities have on the environment – now or possibly in the future?

   iii.   If any possibly negative impacts on the environment have been identified, what steps will be taken to mitigate these impacts?

   8. **BUDGET BREAKDOWN (Please attach a budget indicating key expenditure items)**

For use by Project Sub-Committee only:

Issues (if any) to be explored further with Partner Organisation:

Issues (if any) to be explored with technical expert:

Key Performance Indicators. (To be agreed between PIA and Partner Organisation)

Appendix 2. Checklist for Evaluating Proposals

1. PROPOSED OUTCOMES / IMPACT

1. Are the objectives and purpose of the project consistent with the mission, vision, values and guiding principles of PIA?

2. How relevant are the anticipated outputs/outcomes/impacts of the project to mitigating the key causes of poverty in the recipient community/ies?

3. Will the project benefit or exclude any of the most vulnerable members of the recipient community/ies including any people with disabilities?

4. Is the proposed budget warranted, given the number of beneficiaries anticipated and the proposed outcomes?

2. PARTICIPATION OF PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Is there evidence to suggest that primary stakeholders will be provided with the necessary information to make an informed input into decision-making?

2. Is there some evidence that all impacted members of the community, including women, different ethnic and religion groups, children (if relevant), different castes and socio-economic groups, etc. have been given the chance to have an informed input into decision-making about the project?

3. Have any barriers to the inclusion of any relevant group in the affected community/ies been identified? If so, how will these barriers be overcome?

4. What strategies are in place to enable primary stakeholders to contribute their ideas, feedback and complaints in the course of project implementation, so that they have a voice in and ownership of the initiative? Is there an action plan for primary stakeholder participation?

3. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

1. Is the implementation strategy consistent with best practice as applied to the particular context in which the project will be implemented?

2. Does the project timeframe seem to be reasonable? Does it take into account seasonal weather, labour commitments of recipient men and women, etc?

3. Is a review of the project proposal by someone with specialist expertise required?

4. RISKS

1. Have the risks been evaluated?

2. Are the risks at an acceptable level?

3. Do the proposed actions for mitigating risks appear realistic?

5. SUSTAINABILITY

1. What mechanisms does the project incorporate to facilitate sustainability? Are these adequate?

2. Have impacts on the environment been considered – if so, are there any negative impacts, and what steps will be taken to mitigate them?

6. BUDGET

1. Does the project budget account for all expenses likely to be incurred during project implementation?

2. Are all the expenses in the budget consistent with Partners in Aid's guiding principles?

Appendix 3: Sample Project Contract

<div align="center">

CONTRACT BETWEEN XXX AND PARTNERS-IN-AID

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This contract is intended to extend the ongoing partnership between Partners in Aid and XXX relating to the implementation of the XXX Project.

It is understood that the overall goal of the Project continues to be….

This contract extends the partnership for [a further] 5 years, with the anticipation that a further extension may be made at the end of that period.

Partners in Aid will contribute a minimum of AUDXXX per year in XXX increments, starting in XXX, towards the implementation of the project, providing that no unforeseen circumstances result in there be insufficient donor money to continue supporting the project. Should this unlikely event occur, every effort will be made to minimize the consequences of the early cessation of funding.

XXX will in turn, undertake the following:

- Undertake to implement with due diligence the XXX Project according to the agreed proposal, or any mutually agreed variations.
- To complete and summit to Partners in Aid each quater a progress report together with a statement of expenditure, a plan of action for the next 3 months, and the anticipated costs associated with implementing that plan.
- To ensure that a responsible, independent person undertakes an annual audit of Project income and expenditure, and submits a signed copy of the audit to Partners in Aid.
- To ensure that no child labour will be used in the course of project implementation.
- To ensure that the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct will be observed throughout the life of the project.

Appendix 4: Checklist for PIA Project Coordinators' Monitoring and Evaluation Visits

Discussion with Partner Organization and, if possible, at project sites, to ascertain:

- that there is no evidence of funds being disbursed in a manner other than that outlined in the mutually agreed project proposal, or a subsequent mutually agreed variation;
- the overall effectiveness of any mechanisms set up to ensure future sustainability;
- whether any negative environmental impacts are occurring or likely to occur;
- that there is no evidence of any negative project impacts on the beneficiary communities or evidence of abuse, discrimination or exploitation effecting any project stakeholders in any way associated with the project, or, if this is not the case, that steps are being taken to address such impacts;
- that there are no negative impacts on women, people with disabilities, vulnerable people or, if any, indigenous people;
- that the Code of Conduct with respect to Child Protection is being observed.
- whether stakeholders have been made aware of the complaints process, and if there are any complaints that need to be addressed, especially on the part of children, and
- that the project is meeting the key performance indicators outlined in the proposal.

In addition, the following questions, based on those suggested by the DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance[1] will be addressed with Partner Organization and, if possible, at project sites where feasible and appropriate:

Relevance

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Participation

- To what extent have the beneficiaries participated in decision-making at different stages of project design and implementation (including children, if appropriate)?
- Have women had equal opportunity as men to participate in decision-making at different stages of project design and implementation?
- Was there any attempt in the design stage of the project to provide those likely to be impacted with the necessary information to enable them to have an **informed** input?

Overall Effectiveness

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?

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[1] The *DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, OECD (2000).

- What are/were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Is the project implementation on schedule? If not, what are the causes of the delay, and how can these be redressed?

Equity of Outcome

- Has there been any gender-specific impacts on men or women?
- If the project involved income-generating training or support, have women been able to benefit to the same or greater extent than men?
- Has the project disproportionately increased the workload of men or women in the community. If so, how do those experiencing this increased workload feel about it? Do they feel it has been worth it?
- As a result of the project, have either men or women, or both, been able to mobilise other members of the community to improve quality of life? If so, has this benefited men or women more, or both equally?
- Have any barriers to the inclusion of any segment of the impacted community/ies been identified? If so, how have they been mitigated?

*Impact (*The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.)

- What has happened/is happening as a result of the project or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- Have there been any unforeseen impacts on the environment – if any negative impacts are observed, how can these be mitigated?
- How many people have been affected?

Sustainability (Are the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after PIA funding has been withdrawn.)

- To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue after donor funding ceased?
- Have any mechanisms been put in place to increase the likelihood of successful project outcomes (e.g. training in asset maintenance, asset maintenance budgeting etc)?
- What are the major factors which have or may influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of successful project outcomes?