Partners in Aid

AUSTRALIA

PROJECT POLICY
(This policy is complemented by the Project Management Manual)

Version control & review

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1. Background

The mission of Partners in Aid is to support sustainable projects in developing countries by partnering with local NGOs to enable communities to build their education, health and income-generating capacity.

We believe that an appropriate way of achieving our mission is by establishing strong relationships with a small number of overseas partner organisations which have the same values as Partners in Aid, and which we can trust to collaborate effectively with local stakeholders. Accordingly, Partners in Aid seeks to form long-standing relationships with overseas NGOs that are acting as agents of change in their local communities, seeking to achieve sustainable improvements in the health and wellbeing of those communities.

Projects are the primary instrument by which Partners in Aid collaborates with their partner organisations to realise its mission.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guiding principles and processes involved in initiating, developing, approving, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects supported by Partners in AID.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all projects which are wholly or partly funded by Partners in Aid and jointly initiated and implemented by an overseas NGO and Partners in Aid. It does not apply to activities undertaken outside a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

4. Sourcing Proposals

Project proposals submitted to Partners in Aid for consideration may come from three sources:

- existing Partner Organisations,

- an NGO with which a member of Partners in Aid has previously collaborated, and

- requests from Partners in Aid to an NGO with which Partners in Aid has not previously collaborated to submit a proposal.

The latter requests are usually a result of a Partner in Aid decision to work in a country in which it has not previously worked. When this occurs, if possible, one or more Partners in Aid representatives will make a preliminary visit to the relevant country. A list of NGOs to visit may be drawn up in advance from any personal recommendations of appropriate NGOs to visit and an internet search for NGOs in the relevant country, with particular attention being paid to their international reputation and the nature of the projects they undertake. The NGOs on the list will then be contacted and, where feasible, visited. During that visit, the discussion will focus on projects they have undertaken in the previous two years, along with their organisation's policies, including financial policies and procedures. A report on the NGOs visited will then be made to the Board, along with recommendations on which NGOs, if any, should be invited to submit a proposal.

If the Board decides to consider supporting a project proposal from one of the NGOs visited, or from an NGO with which a Partners in Aid member has previously collaborated effectively, this project will be considered to be a pilot project and a possible runup to forming a partnership. A successful pilot project, however, will not guarantee that a Partnership Agreement will be entered into with the implementing agency.

5. Procedures

1. Evaluation of Proposals

5.1.1   Prior to submitting a full project proposal, an NGO will be asked to submit a brief concept paper which the Partners in Aid Board can use to determine if the proposed project is consistent with Partner in Aid's mission, guiding principles and project-related strategies. Consideration will also be given to whether the proposed outcomes and number of beneficiaries appear to warrant the budget.

5.1.2   If the Board decides to proceed further with the proposed project, the implementing NGO will be asked to submit a full proposal using the proposal form outlined in the Partners in Aid Project Management Manual. The proposal should include details of any prior consultation that has taken place with primary stakeholders that shows that the project design reflects a genuine community need and demand. It should also indicate how any vulnerable people in the community, such as those with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, etc. have been involved in this consultation and will benefit from project outcomes.

5.1.3 The Partners in Aid Project Advisory Group will be responsible for appraising the project for Partner in Aid support. Before it does this, contextual information should be collected, including information on potential risks, and the proposal reviewed in the light

of this information: (i) to ascertain that all key information required for effective project evaluation is available, (ii) to ensure that adequate safeguarding processes have been included in the implementation plans, and (iii) to determine whether there are any concerns or possible areas for enhancement with respect to the project. Information wiwll also be collected on the NGO's policies and management procedures to ensure that it is capable of effectively managing the project. Any issues arising will be discussed with the NGO submitting the proposal. The Partners in Aid treasurer will be consulted as to whether Partners in Aid would be able to fund the project, if approved.

4.   If the Board, on the recommendation of the Project Advisory Group, decides to support the project, a project coordinator will be appointed. Throughout the project cycle, this person will be responsible for ensuring that all of the required Partners in Aid project documentation is completed and downloaded into SharePoint, and that appropriate monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by and in association with the NGO.

2.   Project Approval Process

5.2.1 Once the Board has approved a proposal, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be drawn up. (A draft is available in the Project Management Manual.) This MOU will, *inter alia*, specify intervals at which Partners in Aid will pay budget instalments and at which the implementing NGO will need to provide Partners in Aid with narrative and financial reports.

2.   The Project Coordinator will ensure that the signed MOU and the NGO's letter of consent to raise funds on their behalf and their Certificate of Registration have been obtained and downloaded onto SharePoint., or assisted to develop their own equivalent policies.

3.   If the NGO does not already have its own policies regarding Gender and Diversity, Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment, and Financial Wrongdoing, they will be asked to certify that they will observe the conditions outlined in the relevant Partners in Aid's policies when implementing the proposed project.

2.   NGO Reporting and Field Monitoring and Evaluation by Partners in Aid

5.3.1 The NGO will be required to submit quarterly narrative and financial reports (Proforma available in Project Management Manual).

1.   Other than in exceptional circumstances, no payment of scheduled financial project instalments will be approved by the Board unless satisfactory reports have been received.

2.   The Partners in Aid Project Coordinator will endeavour, circumstances permitting, to visit the Partner Organisation and the project site once a year, and to speak with at least some of the beneficiaries. Should annual visits not prove feasible, one visit must be made during the project cycle, unless safety considerations preclude such a visit.

3.   During these field visits, the Project Coordinator will:
   - carry out a periodic assessment of the NGO's financial system,
   - check whether Key Performance Indicators are being achieved,
   - check that the project expenditure matches the budget initially presented in the proposal or in an agreed contract variation,
   - check that lists of attendees at community meetings and trainings are gender disaggregated and indicate that both men and women and any vulnerable residents are participating in project planning and implementation,
   - check whether project participants have any complaints, and
   - complete the Partners in Aid's Project Monitoring Checklist (see the Project

Management Manual)

4. During the monitoring visits, any experience and technical knowledge relevant to the project that Partners in Aid have acquired from elsewhere will be shared with Partner Organisation to facilitate capacity building. New ideas and approaches that can perhaps be passed on to other Partner Organisations will also be sought. 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. On return to Australia, the Project Coordinator will submit a report to the Project Advisory Group and the Board for discussion of lessons learnt and whether there is a need for any recommendations to be made to the Partner Organisation.

6. Dispute Resolution

6.1 The parties shall endeavour to settle any dispute arising out of or in relation to any agreement with Partners in Aid by mediation administered by the Australian Dispute Centre before having resort to arbitration or litigation.

7. Project Conclusion

7.1 Before the project is phased out, Partners in Aid should assist in carrying out a full evaluation of the project outcomes.

7.2 At the conclusion of the project, a Grant Acquittal Form (Project Management Manual) must be submitted by the NGO to Partners in Aid to allow the latter to determine whether the objectives have been successfully met and the lessons learnt.

8. Termination of Projects Before the Completion Date

8.1 Projects may be terminated after consultation with the implementing NGO, 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.

2. All contracts for new projects will contain an anti-fraud and corruption clause and Projects may be terminated by Partners in Aid at any time in the event of evidence of criminal activities, fraud or corruption, or misappropriation of project funds, and/or the organisation or key personnel appearing 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.

3. All MOUs will contain a clause indicating that funding is dependent on donors' contributions continuing to being sufficient to meet the agreed budget. In the most unlikely event of Partner in Aid funds being insufficient to sustain the project at some stage after the MOU has been signed, every effort will be made to minimise the impact on the Project of the inability to meet the intended budget.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed after 3 years.

10. Relevant PIA Policy Documents

PIA Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Working with Children

PIA Child Sponsorship Policy
PIA Risk Management Policy
PIA Partnership Policy

See also:
PIA Project Management Manual

11. References

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

OECD (2000). Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms. World Bank. Performance Monitoring Indicators Handbook.

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

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