

# AFP Sustainability Policy

(February 2016)

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## Contents

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1. Introduction
2. Rationale
3. Scope and Purpose
4. Applicable Humanitarian Standards and Guidance
5. AfP Policy Objectives
6. AfP's Approach
7. Reporting, review and relevance to other AfP guidelines and policies
8. Conclusion

Annex 1. Afp Objectives and Indicators Table

Annex 2. Glossary

Annex 3. Resource and Reference List

### 1. Introduction

Ensuring the sustainability of change efforts is integral – not only in empowering communities but in ensuring the continuation of benefits after the assistance has been delivered or the program completed.

Sustainability can be defined as *sustaining the flow of benefits into the future*<sup>1</sup> and takes into consideration both:

- the concept of sustainable development – which recognises that support must meet the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations<sup>2</sup> and;
- the principles of sustainable programming such as partnership, efficiency, effectiveness, empowerment and consultation.

### 2. Rationale

Act for Peace (AfP) is committed to supporting sustainable change through our work with partners. This approach respects the accountability we have to the communities we work with and ensures that our work supports an enabling environment for positive impacts that continue even after the project is completed. This approach also maximises the impact of the resources shared by supporters or donors.

AfP determines that sustainability in our work equates to delivering effective, efficient and impact-focussed humanitarian assistance and development programming with a clear focus on capacity building in order to support locally-led change that continues after the project or program ends. AfP acknowledge that sustainability is enhanced where development and humanitarian assistance takes into consideration the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations.

Consistent with Environmental Management and Capacity Building of Partners Policies, AfP are committed to maximising sustainable benefits for communities long after our assistance has ended. AfP achieves this through building partner capacity and leveraging additional resources such as government services as state authorities are the primary duty bearers to their citizens, the private sector and other donors.

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<sup>1</sup> AusAID 2000

<sup>2</sup> UNISDR, 2009

AfP is committed to sustainability of change for the following reasons:

- Sustainable development enhances the capacity of individuals and communities to determine their own future and to increase the utilization of available local financial and human resources. Development that is imposed or remains dependent upon outside support is not sustainable<sup>3</sup>.
- Assistance that does not reflect the principles of sustainability may adversely affect the capacity of communities to achieve safety, dignity and justice and undermine the longevity of impact.
- As a partner-focused organisation, AfP has an opportunity to extend the impact of its assistance utilising sustainable development principles such as capacity building, mutual accountability, empowerment and efficiency.
- Effective development and humanitarian assistance that aims to transfer knowledge, skills and experience to local partners ensures benefits can be maximised and sustained independently of financial assistance.
- As an ecumenical, faith-based organisation, AfP has a unique opportunity to promote dialogue, advocacy and action in a sustainable development framework, recognising the crucial role that faith based groups play in empowering local communities and providing essential services.

### 3. Scope and Purpose

This policy commits AfP’s work to sustain the flow of program or project benefits into the future. This means ensuring that our efforts not only take into account the economic, environmental and social needs of current and future generations but also that we are delivering effective, efficient, economical and impact-focussed humanitarian assistance and development programming with a clear focus on capacity building in order to support locally-led change that continues after the project or program ends. Where AfP cannot apply its sustainable development approach in crisis situations such as rapid-onset disasters and conflicts, it will ensure a principle-based approach, until such times as early recovery programming is possible.

### 4. Applicable Humanitarian Standards and Guidance

As a member of ACT Alliance, AfP endeavors **at all times** to uphold the ACT Principles of Transformational Development which guide our efforts at promoting the sustainability of change<sup>4</sup>. These principles inform all of AfP’s work, with an emphasis on the key work of our partners in the development continuum including empowerment and strengthening local systems. AfP also adapts the ACT Alliance’s Organisational Capacity and Assessment Tool and the MANGO Financial Health Check in order to identify partner strengths and any gaps regarding capacity to lead sustainable projects.

<b>ACT Alliance principles of ‘transformational development’<sup>5</sup></b>
Participation
Empowerment
Capacity development

<sup>3</sup> Act for Peace Values and Principles

<sup>4</sup> ACT Alliance, [http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development_ENGLISH.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development_ENGLISH.pdf)

Non-discrimination
Gender equity
Cultural and spiritual Sensitivity
Reaffirming human rights
Advocacy
Promoting peace, reconciliation and rights relationships
Effective communication
Environmental sustainability
Over-consumption and lack of sharing

As a member of ACFID, AfP is similarly obliged to provide ‘sustainable, fair and equitable solutions that address the root causes and symptoms of poverty and disadvantage<sup>6</sup>’ – sentiments that are also enshrined in the global Sustainable Development Agenda<sup>7</sup>.

AfP acknowledges the guidance on sustainability provided by AusAID and subsequently DFAT in the *Promoting Practical Sustainability* policy which articulates that sustainability can be measured by looking at: participation; management and organisation; financial awareness and training; social, gender and culture considerations, environmental considerations, economic considerations and existence of an exit strategy<sup>8</sup>. AfP is also guided by DFAT’s aid policy framework<sup>9</sup> that reinforces the importance of sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region as well as DFAT guidance on environmental management, gender equality and inclusion of people with disabilities. AfP notes the standards, guidance and indicators provided in analyzing the performance of Australian Aid, particularly in relation to the assessment criteria effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of programs.

Further, AfP acknowledges the best practice sustainable program guidance laid out in the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation*, and the ICRC’s *Framework for Sustainable Development*.

## 5. AfP Policy Objectives

The core objective of this Policy is to shape effective, efficient and sustainable programs that empower partners and communities to build just, equitable and inclusive societies that enhance and sustain peace now and into the future. It will guide AfP to ensure:

- AfP assistance sustains benefits into the future and takes into account the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations.

## 6. AfP’s Approach

**AfP promotes sustainability by:**

- **Adopting a rights-based approach:** As a rights-based organisation we believe that for poverty to be eradicated, the conditions, structures and systems that perpetuate poverty, injustice,

<sup>6</sup> <https://acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/31950216.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australias-new-development-policy-and-performance>

the abuse of human rights and the destruction of the environment must be rejected<sup>10</sup>. Our commitment to sustainability, therefore, is underpinned by the knowledge that empowering communities through our work to achieve their own rights, and to hold duty-bearers to account in upholding rights, ensures the flow on of benefits long after our financial, capacity building or other assistance has ended. See AfP's Human Rights Policy for how AfP integrates a rights based approach into programming. See also AfP's Gender, Disability, Child Protection and Humanitarian Protection Policies.

- **Building the capacity of partners:** Principally, therefore, we promote sustainability by strengthening partner agency capacities to deliver self-sufficient and transformative development. By ensuring the integrity of partner systems and encouraging them to work closely with communities to ensure their safety and dignity, we recognise that our efforts not only take into consideration the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations, but that our impact is magnified and extended beyond the end of the program or project cycle. The principles that support the sustainability of change as implemented by a focus on partner capacity building are: working in partnerships based on mutual ownership, accountability, participation, equality, ecumenism, and alignment of strategic goals. Further detail on how AfP builds the capacity of partners in an operational sense can be found in AfP's Capacity Building of Partners Policy.
- **Promoting sustainability in program and project management:** We recognise that the sustainability of AfP programs and projects rely on linking our ambition for transformative community development with exemplary processes that create a culture of best-practice project design and implementation. AfP commits to promoting program sustainability by: working through long-term partnerships, recognising that our local partners are best placed to proportionally respond to the challenges and opportunities they face in their own local context and supporting, empowering and accompanying local partners and the communities they serve; managing resources - financial, human and environmental - efficiently and effectively; ensuring that AfP's commitments are aligned with our comparative advantage and existing capacities; and encouraging participatory program and project development through mutual goal setting to understand the context and promote local ownership of programs, solutions and monitoring indicators.

**Improving environmental management processes:** to ensure that AfP does no harm, supports communities to build resilience and promotes sustainable resource management. See AfP's Environmental Management Strategy for more information.

- **Mainstreaming gender considerations across programs:** recognising the importance of empowering women and girls within the sustainable development agenda. See AfP's Gender Policy for more information
- **Integrating community-based protection:** and/or community-based disaster risk reduction models that supports local solutions and builds resilience. See AfP's Humanitarian Protection Strategy for more information.
- **Working in partnership and ecumenically to advocate for sustainable development outcomes:** We work in collaboration with ACT, ACFID, CAN and/or the World Council of Churches (WCC) in developing partnerships and/or shared advocacy that promotes

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<sup>10</sup> [http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development_ENGLISH.pdf)

sustainable development and redistribution of resources or the removal of restrictions on human rights.

## 7. Reporting, review and relevance to other AfP guidelines and policies

This policy should be reviewed by February 2019. This policy supports, and should be read in conjunction with, the following AfP policies: AfP’s vision, mission and values, AfP’s Code of Conduct, AfP’s Gender Policy, AfP’s Disability Inclusion Strategy, AfP’s Human Rights Strategy, AfP’s Environmental Management Strategy, AfP’s Value for Money Policy, AfP’s Risk Management Policy, AfP’s Capacity Building of Partners Policy and AfP’s Risk Management Framework. These are given effect through the standard operating procedures contained within AfP’s Operations Manual.

## 8. Conclusion

The present policy represents AfP’s current overall organisational understanding of the issue of sustainability of programs, objectives and indicators for measuring effective implementation and our delivery approach which includes our core focus areas for achieving this policy goal. Various tools and guidelines to help put the policy into practice already exist and/or will be developed in response to demands expressed by staff and partners.

## Annex 1: AfP Objective and Indicator Table

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AfP assistance sustains benefits into the future and takes into account the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs are designed through participatory consultation and implemented through long-term local partners.</li> <li>Program assessments and M&amp;E activities examine the sustainability of programs and projects and encourage an environment of learning.</li> <li>Partners apply appropriate risk management and accountability strategies to maximise the impact of programs and promote sustainable outcomes.</li> <li>Act for Peace ensure resources are delegated in reference to best value for money choice to ensure maximisation of resourcing for sustainable outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and humanitarian project design documents and reports consider sustainability of project activities.</li> <li>Every three years an organisational Capacity Assessment and Partner Satisfaction Survey is undertaken with each partner in order to assess capacity building priorities.</li> <li>Partner plans and project design documents include phase-out strategy.</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Glossary

**Advocacy:** A set of organised actions aimed at influencing public policies, social attitudes and socio-political processes that enable and empower the marginalised to speak for themselves<sup>11</sup>.

**Capacity Development:** Development which is imposed and/or remains dependent upon external support/ and/or results in unequal dependency is not sustainable. Transformational development enhances the capacity of those people and communities whose rights have been violated to overcome poverty and injustice and determine their own future by increasing their skills, knowledge and access to resources. New values and skills are also required by those with resources and power to transform the culture of over consumption and lack of sharing of available resources.

**Empowerment:** Empowerment embodies the ideal of individuals and communities overcoming unjust power relations to achieve their human rights. Transformational development promotes styles of relationships, strengthening of community institutions and building of technical capacity which fosters empowerment.

**Project:** A project is a specific geographical and time-bound activity aiming to achieve identified objectives.

**Program:** Programs include a program/body of work that may include several projects delivered either in the same geographical area (eg a country program), or within the same sector (eg a DRR program). Whilst programs may have set objectives and indicators several partners may participate in and several projects with differing timelines and objectives may make up a program. Programs may also include specific advocacy initiatives.

**Sustainable development:** development which that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Sustainable Development Goals:** The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are an intergovernmental set of aspiration Goals with 169 targets.

**Resilience:** Resilience refers to the capacity of an individual, household, population group or system to anticipate, absorb, and recover from hazards and/or effects of climate change and other shocks and stresses without compromising (and potentially enhancing) its long-term prospects<sup>12</sup>.

**Vulnerability:** The characteristics and circumstances of a community, system, or asset, that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of climate change and other hazards. Vulnerability can be determined by the interplay between exposure and sensitivity to a range of interrelated social, economic, political, governance and environmental factors<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/94-how-is-advocacy-defined.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECB-toward-resilience-Disaster-risk-reduction-Climate-Change-Adaptation-guide-english.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECB-toward-resilience-Disaster-risk-reduction-Climate-Change-Adaptation-guide-english.pdf>

### Annex 3: Resource and Reference List

1. ACFID Code of Conduct (2015) - <https://acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct>
2. ACT Alliance Code of Good Practice - <http://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-code-of-good-practice/>
3. ACT Alliance 'Our Understanding of Development' guidance - [http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development_ENGLISH.pdf)
4. DFAT, Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australian-aid-promoting-prosperity-reducing-poverty-enhancing-stability.aspx>
5. DFAT, Making Performance Count, <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/framework-making-performance-count.pdf>
6. DFAT, Value for Money Principles, <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/who-we-work-with/value-for-money-principles/Pages/value-for-money-principles.aspx>
7. ICRC, Framework for Sustainable Development, <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/report/sustainable-development-icrc-framework-2012.htm>
8. OECD, Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/Busan%20partnership.pdf>
9. World Bank Guidance on Sustainable Development - <http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/sd.html>
10. UN Sustainable Development Agenda - <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
11. WCC Guidance - <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/tveit-in-striving-for-sustainable-development-role-of-religion-is-hope>
12. UNSDSN 'Getting Started with the SDGs' - <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/151211-getting-started-guide-FINAL-PDF-.pdf>