
Sustainability Policy

March 2021

Board Ratification Dates	Feb 2016 Mar 2021	Reformatting and updating for reference to DFAT's Partnership for Recovery strategy.
Revision Date		
Reaffirmation Date		
Next Review Date and Cycle	Mar 2024	Every three years from date of ratification or last full review or earlier if required.

1. Policy statement

Act for Peace is committed to working in ways that generate sustained benefits for the communities and partners we work with long after the programs and projects we support come to an end.

Sustainability in our work comes through effective, efficient and impact-focussed humanitarian assistance and development programming that supports locally led change that continues after the project or program ends. Sustainability is enhanced where development and humanitarian assistance takes into consideration the economic, social and environmental needs of current and future generations.

Consistent with Act for Peace's Partnership and Environmental Management Policies, Act for Peace aims to achieve sustainability through supporting partners to build capacity and leveraging additional support and resources from the state as the primary duty bearer responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of their citizens and those on their territory.

This approach respects the accountability we have to the communities our partners' work with and ensures that the 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.

Act for Peace 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 utilisation of available local financial and human resources. Development that is imposed or remains dependent upon outside support is not sustainable¹.
- 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, Act for Peace has an opportunity to extend the impact of its assistance utilising sustainable development principles such as capacity building, mutual accountability, empowerment, advocacy, and efficiency.
- Effective development and humanitarian assistance that aims to share knowledge, skills and experience with local partners ensuring benefits can be maximised and sustained independently of financial assistance.
- As an ecumenical, faith-based organisation, Act for Peace has a unique opportunity to promote dialogue, advocacy and action, recognising the crucial role that faith-based groups play in empowering local communities and providing essential services.

2. Objective

The objective of this Policy is to ensure Act for Peace adopts, promotes and utilises sustainable development principles and approaches throughout its work in order to ensure lasting benefits for communities affected by conflict, disasters and displacement.

¹ Act for Peace Values and Principles

3. Principles and standards

Act for Peace endeavors at all times to uphold the ACT Alliance Principles of Transformational Development which guide our efforts to promote positive sustainable change². These principles inform all our work, with an emphasis on the key work of our partners in the development continuum including empowerment and strengthening local systems.

As a member of ACFID, Act for Peace is committed to provide 'sustainable, fair and equitable solutions that address the root causes and symptoms of poverty and disadvantage³' – sentiments that are also enshrined in the global Sustainable Development Agenda⁴.

Act for Peace is guided by the Australian Government's development policy, Partnerships for Recovery — Australia's COVID-19 Development Response⁵ that reinforces a focus health security; stability; and economic recovery the Indo-Pacific region as well as Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) complimentary policies and strategies, including on gender equality, disability-inclusive development, climate change action, humanitarian assistance and indigenous peoples⁶

Act for Peace notes the standards, guidance and indicators provided in analysing the performance of Australian Aid, particularly in relation to the assessment criteria effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of programs.

Further, Act for Peace 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*.

Policy in Action

Act for Peace implements this policy by:

- Adopting a rights-based approach:
- Building the capacity of partners
- Ensuring Environmental and Social Safeguards are central to the project and program cycle management process⁷
- Mainstreaming gender, diversity, and disability inclusion considerations across programs
- Integrating community-based approaches to protection and climate and disaster resilience
- Working in partnership and ecumenically to advocate for sustainable development outcomes

4. Scope

This policy applies to all partnership activities Act for Peace engages with, including projects and programs implemented by our partners. Where Act for Peace 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: Act for Peace's

- Vision, purpose and values
- Codes of Conduct

² ACT Alliance, http://178.62.114.239/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Our-Understanding-of-Development_ENGLISH.pdf

³ <https://acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

⁵ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/aid/partnerships-recovery-australias-covid-19-development-response>

⁶ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/aid-programming-guide>

⁷ In alignment with DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy (2019)

- Policies including: Code of Good Practice; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Environmental Management; Humanitarian Response; Human Rights; Value for Money; Partnership; and Risk Management

These are given effect through the standard operating procedures contained within Act for Peace's Operations and Finance Manuals.

5. Definitions and explanations

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.

Sustainability: can be defined as *sustaining the flow of benefits into the future*⁸ and takes into consideration both the concept of sustainable development; and the principles of sustainable programming including partnership, efficiency, effectiveness, empowerment and consultation.

Sustainable development: development which that meets the economic, social and environmental 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 prospects⁹.

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

⁸ AusAID 2000

⁹ <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECB-toward-resilience-Disaster-risk-reduction-Climate-Change-Adaptation-guide-english.pdf>

determined by the interplay between exposure and sensitivity to a range of interrelated social, economic, political, governance and environmental factors¹⁰.

Annex 1. Resource and Reference List

1. ACFID Code of Conduct (2019) - https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/ACFID_Code_Dec%202019_published_high%20res_0.pdf
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
4. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT): Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response - <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/partnerships-for-recovery-australias-covid-19-development-response.pdf>
5. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT): Environmental & Social Safeguards Policy (2019) - <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/environmental-social-safeguard-policy.pdf>
6. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (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>
UN Sustainable Development Agenda - <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
10. WCC Guidance - <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/tveit-in-striving-for-sustainable-development-role-of-religion-is-hope>
11. UNSDSN 'Getting Started with the SDGs' - <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/151211-getting-started-guide-FINAL-PDF-.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECB-toward-resilience-Disaster-risk-reduction-Climate-Change-Adaptation-guide-english.pdf>