

Appendix 2. Non-Development Activity Policy

(Next review by June 2027)

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Original policy approved	July 2012	Previous review date	June 2021
Current policy reviewed by CEO	PI	Current version approved by Committee of Management on	June 2024
Responsible person	CEO	Scheduled review date	June 2027

Introduction

Assisi Aid Projects (Assisi) acknowledges that religious, welfare and political motivations can compromise development work.

The Australian government requires agencies to deliver development support for the sole purpose of strengthening communities' socio-economic and development capacities. Further, as signatory to the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct, Assisi is required to clearly articulate the distinction between welfare, evangelism, politics and development in its work.

This policy addresses compliance obligations relating to:

- 1. Commitment 7.3.2 of Quality Principle 7 in ACFID's Code of Conduct.**
- 2. Section 4 ('ANCP Development Activities') of the ANCP Manual, in accordance with Clause 6.1 (c) of the DFAT and Assisi Grant Agreement.**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate Assisi's position regarding welfare, evangelism and politics, and outline how Assisi will ensure that funds from DFAT and other donors are used exclusively for development purposes.

Scope

This policy applies to all of Assisi's staff, members, Governing Body members (including Committee of Management and subcommittee members), volunteers, interns, representatives, contractors, and visitors to project sites (hereinafter referred to as "personnel").

In addition, Assisi will support in-country partners to understand the principles of this policy, and to practically implement relevant procedures in their local context.

Policy

Assisi is committed to delivering development-focused programs and projects. Assisi does not deliver or financially support non-development activities. For clarity, the following paragraphs outline how Assisi defines development-focused and non-development activities.

Development-focused Activities

Assisi adopts ACFID's definition of development and humanitarian initiatives as 'activities undertaken in order to reduce poverty and address global justice issues'.

The concept of aid and development activities is distinguished by the following principles:

- Strengths based approaches which encourage people and communities to create solutions for themselves.
- Processes that seek to address the causes of poverty
- Processes that seek to empower rights holders to claim their rights and ensure that duty bearers exercise their duties
- Supporting systems and structures which enable people to move out of poverty
- Humanitarian response and emergency relief, disaster recovery and meeting the immediate needs of refugees and internally displaced people.

Non-development Activities

Welfare and development

Assisi adopts DFAT's definition of welfare activities as care and maintenance, which aims to maintain people in a particular condition on a longer-term basis. Welfare may be provided on an individual or family basis, and substantial and broad impact on social and economic conditions in the community is not normally expected from welfare programs. Welfare in this definition is:

- Not connected to emergency needs.
- Implemented on a long-term basis with no clear exit strategy.
- Implemented independently of other sustainable community development activities.
- Does not include a strategy for integration into a broader community development program.

Assisi ensures that funding is not used to contribute towards welfare and complies with any

relevant requirements of specific donors. In instances when private donors express a wish to support welfare activities, Assisi will explain to donors our policy and the rationale of supporting non-welfare development activities.

Religious activities and development

Assisi adopts DFAT's definition of religious activities as supporting or promoting a particular religion, including activities undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith and/or denomination to another.

Assisi does not fund programs and projects that include religious activities as part of their objectives. Project beneficiaries are not chosen on the basis of religious beliefs, and do not include religion as a precondition for participation in development activities.

Political activities and development

Assisi adopts DFAT's definition of political activities, in that funds cannot be used for:

- NGO staff being involved in party political activities.
- Using funds or resources to facilitate or support a specific political party, candidate, or party- political organisation in a local, regional or general / national election.
- Using funds or resources to facilitate or support independence or separatist movements.
- Using funds or resources to facilitate or support a particular politician or faction to gain power within a government or within a political party structure.

Assisi does not permit funding to be used for political activities. As part of their work, Assisi often encourages the empowerment and advancement of women economically, socially and politically. In these instances, Assisi is supporting women to have the skills and confidence to better represent the needs and voices of women from their community and is not to supporting a particular political agenda.

Procedures

In order to ensure that Assisi maintains its commitment to delivering development-focused programs and projects, in accordance with its own principles, as well as its obligations as a DFAT-funded ANCP partner and signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, Assisi will:

- Appraise all initial concept notes, project designs and partnership assessments to determine whether they include non-development components.
- Provide partners with Assisi's non-development policy.
- Outline in all Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with our partners that funds are not to be used for non-development activities, namely religious, welfare or political activities. Adherence to the conditions of the MOU will also be referred to in Project Agreements.

- Complete compliance checklists for all partners which determine whether the partner has its own non-development policy.
- Seek evidence from the partner to show their understanding of the difference and separation between development and non-development activities.
- Where compliance gaps are identified (i.e. lack of independent policy), provide Assisi's policy for use whilst partners are supported to develop their own non-development policy as part of their Capacity Strengthening Plan.
- Monitor the difference and separation of development and non-development activities during project visits and maintain ongoing discussions with partners on this difference and separation.
- Review all communications and fundraising materials prior to publishing to ensure it is clear all activities are development-focused.

Responsibilities

As outlined in the Policy Overview, there are roles and responsibilities that apply to all policies. In addition, the following apply specifically to this policy.

The Chief Executive Officer must:

- State clearly Assisi's commitment to development, rather than welfare, religion and politics, to project partners at the initial stages of project conceptualisation.
- Consider and approve/decline donations for welfare on a case-by-case basis.

Related Documents

ACFID – Code of Conduct

DFAT – ANCP Manual

DFAT – NGO Accreditation Guidance Manual

Assisi – Project Agreements