

International Program Development & Humanitarian Assistance Policy

1. Purpose

This policy guides the types of work that Tearfund will fund or support, and where our resources are allocated. It includes a framework for Tearfund's involvement with a controlled number of Care, Rehabilitation and Recovery Projects.

2. Scope

Recognising that locally based organisations are best placed to work within their local communities, Tearfund chooses to operate in partnership with Christian non-government and civil society organisations in South and South-East Asia, the Pacific Region and East and Southern Africa to support community initiatives in development, advocacy and humanitarian assistance¹, occasionally collaborating with other Tearfund Family Partnerships to work in other regions as needed.

This policy is primarily for use by the International Program Team, the International Program Allocation Committee, and other funding committees. It covers international development work. Development work in Australia with First Peoples is covered in a separate policy.

3. Policy

3.1 Foundations

a) *Motivation*

Tearfund is motivated by its understanding of God, the words and actions of Jesus, and the mission that he passed on to the Church. We believe that God loves all people and offers them new life in Christ. The Bible shows us the values and characteristics of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom has not yet been revealed in all its fullness and, until it is, we believe that God seeks to involve us in the work of bringing about his Kingdom here on earth.

Tearfund's vision is for a just and compassionate world in which all people have the opportunity to achieve their God-given potential. Seeing this vision come to fruition involves working for justice and hope with and alongside people living with poverty and advocating for just social and political structures that promote the dignity and security of all people. We are aware of the interconnectedness of human society with the whole of creation and acknowledge our responsibility to work towards its restoration.

b) *The work we support*

Tearfund works to support opportunities for people living with poverty to engage in processes to change their lives and their circumstances. These include development and humanitarian projects that give precedence to the rights, interests, self-determined priorities and capacities of the poorest and most marginalised people. We seek to address both the symptoms and the causes of poverty through projects that produce tangible, lasting changes.

c) *Partnership*

Tearfund reflects this purpose through working in partnership with like-minded organisations including local, national and international development and humanitarian agencies, churches and community-based groups.

Tearfund seeks to build partnerships characterised by:

- shared Christian identity and values;
- a common vision for human rights and poverty-focused, community-based development work;
- the practice of trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility in organisational relationships;

¹ See Tearfund's "Country Focus Framework"

- mutually accountable relationships;
- a mutual desire to learn and develop as organisations;
- a shared commitment to improve the effectiveness of work and, ultimately, its impact in poor and marginalised communities.

Tearfund is committed to working with partners including emerging community organisations, recognising that these partnerships may require more time and resources than those with established organisations. These partnerships can however bring unique strengths that Tearfund and larger NGOs may lack, such as deep contextual knowledge and crucial local relationships.

Tearfund sees good governance as an essential component of organisational life and works with partners who operate under accountable governance structures such as legally constituted Boards of Management. Where legal registration is not possible, partners will still operate under recognised and accountable governance structures. An organisation's governing body is finally responsible for the organisation and its program and should be actively engaged in the key roles of mission and value setting, policy formulation and financial oversight.

Tearfund will normally commit to a long-term relationship with its partners, recognising that the development of both communities and organisations takes time. Tearfund also recognises that time is required to build mutually trusting relationships within which both organisations can learn from one another. In usual circumstances, Tearfund's partnership will be linked with the implementation of development projects which will vary in time commitment. While making long-term commitments to partners and partnerships, Tearfund acknowledges that many of its partnerships will end at some stage. In usual circumstances, Tearfund will seek to understand the impact of concluding partnerships on both communities and partners. Whenever possible Tearfund aims that current project cycles are able to be concluded before the partnership and funding support is ended.

Tearfund and its partners are committed to work in accordance with the Micah Global Guidelines on Partnership².

Tearfund also works in accordance with the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct (www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct).

d) Faith and Political Affiliations

Tearfund partners in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy activities with organisations who are motivated by their faith in Christ and their desire to demonstrate God's love and commitment to create communities of justice and mercy with and through the poor. We rejoice when people's lives are enriched by faith in Christ. However, we will not allow the use of development and humanitarian assistance funds for evangelism to achieve this end. Project activities cannot be undertaken with the intention of converting individuals or groups from one faith or denominational affiliation to another.³

Tearfund also does not support its own or partner staff, or contracted representatives (when using their agency name or resources in paid time) being involved in party political activities or facilitating the support of a specific political party, candidate or party-political organisation in a local, regional or national election. Under South Australia's strengthened anti-protest laws, staff and representatives must ensure any personal protest activity is lawful, non-obstructive, and clearly separate from their organisational role. While Tearfund supports issue-based advocacy, individuals must avoid actions that could breach local law or appear party-political, as this may create legal or reputational risk.

3.2 Program Approach

a) Community Development

Tearfund allocates the majority of its resources to projects with a community development approach that represent feasible responses to people's rights and fundamental needs. Tearfund understands that community development is a complex and uncertain process that requires time. Consequently, Tearfund

² Document available on request form Tearfund Australia

³ See Tearfund's Integral Mission and Evangelism Policy

seeks to remain flexible and responsive as projects unfold. Not all members of a community share the same concerns. Neither are they all able to be directly involved. While recognising this, projects should use strategies that are inclusive and ensure a broad participation of community members. Tearfund expects that implementing partners will work with project participants, including any children expected to be involved in the project, in the development, implementation and monitoring of projects, including creating opportunities to provide feedback and complaints, so that communities have ownership of the development work. Tearfund is committed to the inclusion and representation of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion, including but not restricted to race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, socio-economic status and political persuasion⁴.

Such projects will:

- recognise and build on the existing strengths and coping capacities of communities, recognising that people are experts within their own economic and social environment.
- promote an environment where people in the community can discuss their hopes for the future, analyse strengths, identify problems and become aware of their rights and how to achieve them.
- enable people to express and review relevant beliefs, knowledge, resources, constraints and costs prior to planning solutions.
- strengthen communities' ability to plan appropriate responses, access resources, implement action plans, manage and monitor progress and evaluate the entire process.
- be appropriate to local conditions, including cultural and traditional practices, build on indigenous knowledge and technologies, and, as far as possible, maximise the use of local materials.
- encourage and enable all sections of the community, including the most marginalised people, to participate in their own development processes.
- recognise and engage with existing power structures to promote and advocate for fully inclusive development.

Tearfund prioritises projects that enable an integrated response to a range of interconnected problems, and ongoing implementation of development initiatives by local people is expected. Tearfund supports investments in small-scale community infrastructure where these are essential to and embedded in community development approaches that invest in people, and where ongoing maintenance is the responsibility of these groups or will be assumed by local government. Projects supported by Tearfund are designed to be sustainable within their physical environment. They incorporate sound environmental and ecological practices and, where applicable, serve to maintain and/or restore natural resources. However, Tearfund is generally not able to support activities that involve funding major capital outlays, large-scale infrastructure works, government service provision, salaries of expatriate workers, unsustainable levels of technology, or ongoing institutional costs. Tearfund does not support welfare activities.⁵

Tearfund has separate guidelines and application process for the purchase of vehicles.

b) Complex Operating Environments

Tearfund is committed to supporting work in complex areas of high risk and difficulty. Factors such as remoteness and inaccessibility, the likelihood of disaster, conflict or political instability and long-term systemic injustice add significantly to the complexity, cost and danger of project work. Yet these high-risk places are often the places with great challenges and few opportunities. Tearfund works with partner organisations to identify and manage risks and operate as effectively as possible within high-risk environments.

⁴ See Handbook for Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion

⁵ Welfare activities are typically:

- implemented independently of other sustainable community development activities;
- include no strategy for integration into broader community development programs;
- provided on an individual or family basis, rather than on a community basis, and are unconnected to emergency needs; and
- implemented on a long-term basis with no clear exit strategy.

c) Emergency Preparedness, Mitigation and Humanitarian Response

Tearfund is committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. Tearfund is also committed to applying the Core Humanitarian Standard. We seek to meet the Sphere Standards (www.sphereproject.org) as appropriate.

While Tearfund allocates the majority of its resources to long-term development work, it also supports responses its partners make to humanitarian emergencies. Apart from the immense and immediate suffering they cause, disasters deepen poverty and create obstacles to development and sometimes reverse development gains. Tearfund supports both short-term emergency responses that enable disaster-affected people to survive, as well as medium-term recovery and rehabilitation projects. Priority is given to responses that involve communities, partners and locations that are supported by Tearfund in long-term development projects.

Recognising the connection between poverty and the impact of disasters, Tearfund encourages its partners to integrate disaster mitigation and preparedness into their mainstream development programming. It also supports specific disaster mitigation and preparedness activities in disaster-prone regions and in regions threatened by changing climatic, environmental and economic conditions. In humanitarian response, Tearfund will give priority to proposals likely to prepare communities to engage in longer-term development initiatives such as those that prepare at-risk communities for disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Care is taken to minimise the risk of relief inputs undermining local markets and communities' existing resilience mechanisms. When requested, and in exceptional circumstances Tearfund may enable the flexible use of development funding to enable partners to adapt to fast-changing situations or crises. Tearfund will coordinate its response to large-scale international disasters and emergencies with impacted partner organisations, members of the Tearfund Family and the Integral Alliance.

d) Advocacy

Tearfund encourages its partners to incorporate advocacy activities into development projects. Advocacy is intended to influence the behaviour and decisions of individuals, groups, companies and governments whose actions affect poor and marginalised communities. Priority is given to strategies that strengthen communities to conduct their own advocacy and enable them to access their rights. Tearfund also supports partners in specific research and campaigning activities intended to influence government and corporate policies and resource allocations in favour of the poorest and most marginalised people.

e) Capacity Strengthening

Tearfund is committed to working with partners to strengthen and grow their organisations and people, build their technical and management skills, and increase the effectiveness and sustainability of their work. Tearfund's approach to capacity strengthening is strengths based, recognising that leaders within partner organisations are (with appropriate support, facilitation, resources and networks) able to identify their own solutions and ways forward. It also recognises that all organisations have capacities but these can vary significantly.

Tearfund also recognises that organisations change over time and their contexts are dynamic and complex. Capacity strengthening therefore seeks to focus on people as the centre of how organisations work, and recognising how they are shaped by shared values, leadership, power dynamics, motivation and self-reflection, which are all related to long-term sustainability.

Tearfund encourages project plans and budgets to include in-service and short-course training that add to the skills of project staff and community volunteers, equipping them to do their work more effectively.

Due to its commitment to good development principles and to the well-being of people within development projects and communities, Tearfund has some expectations of minimum partner capacity and organisational systems requirements. Tearfund provides support for partners to develop these where they don't already exist.

f) Enterprise Approaches

Tearfund believes partner organisations have the local understanding and capacity to address poverty and marginalisation through a variety of sustainable and diverse approaches. We work with partners interested in creating and developing commercially viable enterprise approaches to address social and/or environmental challenges in their communities.

g) Care, Rehabilitation and Recovery

In exceptional cases, Tearfund will consider funding Care and Rehabilitation projects. These projects usually concern groups or communities of people who are both amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised people in the areas where our partners are working, and who require additional support for a period of time to enable them to participate in longer-term development activities. Such groups may include children. Supporting our partners as they work with such communities is important so as to enable full participation in longer-term development projects.

Care Rehabilitation and Recovery projects may be comparatively expensive and require external funding. Tearfund recognises that the people and communities at the heart of these programs will often require care and rehabilitation prior to, and overlapping with, their involvement in more participative, collective and sustainable activities. It is also recognised that there often exists a continuum of authentic and holistic responses that extends from care, rehabilitation and recovery through to more developmental activities.

The following guidelines are applied to Care, Rehabilitation and Recovery projects:

- 1) Funding submissions that are to be considered under this policy will be clearly identified as such.
- 2) Funding for Care, Rehabilitation and Recovery projects will be for a maximum of 5 years.
- 3) Care, Rehabilitation and Recovery projects that are presented to the relevant funding committee will meet the following criteria:
 - i. be consistent with international learning and good practice, safeguarding principles and respect for participants of the program,
 - ii. have the potential to be innovative,
 - iii. have the potential to provide critical learning to Tearfund and its partners,
 - iv. will show evidence of core community development approaches, including participation, ownership, listening and effective monitoring and evaluation.
 - v. will build strong local linkages by engaging relevant sector networks, accessing government services and involving local communities and civil society bodies, including local churches, to the fullest possible extent.
 - vi. will work towards a viable strategy to build program sustainability, which could include handover to local government authorities or civil society, and local financial support.

h) Maximising Value

Tearfund is committed to allocating its resources in order to produce the greatest possible benefit for people living with poverty and recognises that cost benefit and efficiency vary greatly across and between our portfolio of projects. Tearfund examines administration, salaries, capital expenditure and other support costs closely to ensure that they are appropriate to the operating context. Proposals need to indicate why particular technical approaches and cost structures have been selected. For its part, Tearfund works hard to keep its own operations as efficient and cost effective as possible.

3.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Tearfund and its partners are committed to reflect and learn from the work we do together and improve its effectiveness. Tearfund encourages its partners to work closely with participants to understand not only what is being done (project activities), but also how people's lives and situations are changing as a result (project outcomes). The value of the work does not lie in project activities themselves, but in the changes that occur in people's lives and situations.

Projects are regularly and systematically monitored to track progress toward their objectives, to identify associated outcomes and to indicate when planning and budgetary adjustments are required. Tearfund understands that contexts are dynamic and expects that project plans will be responsive to changes in context and emerging opportunities. Project monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be designed with the involvement of the community as central and provide real time feedback to how projects are designed and delivered.

Periodic reporting to Tearfund documents both project activities and quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Usually, an external evaluation of project effectiveness is conducted within a project cycle. Mid cycle reviews are also encouraged. Where a project is to continue, evaluation learnings and recommendations should be incorporated into the design of the next phase.

4. Related References

- Advocacy Policy
- Disability Inclusion Policy
- Gender Policy
- Human Rights Policy
- Integral Mission and Evangelism Policy
- International and First Peoples Program Expenditure Policy
- Partnership Manual
- Program Manual
- Public Communications & Transparency Policy

5. Definitions

Tearfund: In this document 'Tearfund', 'the organisation', 'we', 'us' or 'our' means Tearfund Australia.

6. Change History

This policy will be reviewed according to the policy review schedule (outlined in the *Key Tearfund Documents Development and Management Policy*) and in line with Tearfund Family standards.

Date	Modification
November 2025	• Care, Rehabilitation and Recovery Policy included in this Policy. Links and wording updated.
September 2021	• The Guidelines for Development and Relief Assistance have been one of Tearfund's guiding documents since the early 1980s. Although until now termed "Guidelines", they have been the equivalent of a Tearfund Policy and were last approved by the Board in November 2017. This latest version removes duplication with other documents and fits the existing guidelines into the standard Tearfund Policy format.