

AUSAID
AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS FUND
GUIDELINES

December 2008

For further information contact:

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IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

**PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE
WITH SECTION 6 OF THESE GUIDELINES**

1. Background

1.1 As part of its new *Development for All Strategy* the Australian Government is investing A\$45 million over three years under the aid program to help eliminate avoidable blindness in the Asia-Pacific region. As the first major Australian initiative aimed at reducing preventable impairments in the region, key components of the Avoidable Blindness Initiative (ABI) are consistent with *Vision 2020's Right to Sight* global initiative. This international commitment highlights that eye health and vision care require an adequately-trained, functional workforce with an enabling infrastructure and technology integrated into well-managed, well-monitored national health systems with the support of advocacy, information education and communication, and community participation.

1.2 The ABI aims to impact on: (i) reducing the incidence of preventable blindness; and (ii) improving the quality of life for people with low vision and blindness. Expected outcomes of the Initiative are improved access to and provision of comprehensive eye health care; increased policy engagement with local, national and regional organisations on eye health issues; and improved data collection and understanding of eye health issues. To achieve this, ABI outputs will include:

1. Developing strategic partnerships with a range of NGOs and other organisations working in eye health and vision care, building on and expanding existing work.
2. Strengthening existing eye care training institutions and the capacity of eye care workers.
3. Piloting a Vision Centre approach as part of the delivery of eye health and vision care needs in Asia.
4. Assessing eye health and vision care needs to inform future efforts to reduce avoidable blindness.

1.3 Avoidable blindness is an area in which Australia has considerable experience and expertise and Australian not-for-profit organisations have been identified as having a key role in implementing the ABI.

2. Objectives and Focus

2.1 As part of the development of strategic partnerships for the ABI (Output 1), AusAID is establishing a three-year-A\$2 million Avoidable Blindness Fund. The Fund will provide financial support to Australian not-for-profit organisations to scale-up and build on existing efforts and opportunities, lessons and successes in vision and eye health activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

2.2 Activities under the Fund will contribute to the objectives of the ABI, produce sustainable, measurable benefits, and be consistent with Australia's aid and foreign policy objectives.

2.3 Funding will be provided to activities that focus on one or more of the following:

- policy development related to eye health and vision care (e.g. in the health, employment and infrastructure sectors);
- support to civil society organisations advocating the rights of people with avoidable blindness and low vision (e.g. community education, raising awareness and eliciting government and community support to address issues of equitable inclusion and access);
- workforce planning and training at all levels, including for community and rural eye health workers;
- institutional strengthening for tertiary institutions to deliver eye health-specific curricula recognised by relevant professions;
- eye health service provision and rehabilitation, including clinical interventions;
- supply of appropriate equipment, spectacles, medicines and other assistive devices and technologies;
- provision and/or upgrading of infrastructure/facilities (e.g. access to theatres in hospitals); and/or
- development of a knowledge base for policy development and planning, including support for health management systems, surveys, data collection and interpretation of data and associated research.

Note: Priority will be given to activities that aim to strengthen the ability of counterpart organisations to reduce the incidence of preventable blindness and improve the quality of life for people with low vision and blindness after Australian assistance has ceased.

2.4 The primary geographic focus of the AusAID Avoidable Blindness Fund is the Asia-Pacific region.

3. Development Approach

3.1 To be eligible for funding, proposed activities must:

- Promote national ownership, improve coordinated responses, align with national priorities and systems, and harmonise with other international, regional and donor work.
- Where possible, use existing community structures, be implemented by local organisations acceptable to national or local authorities and be consistent with national development policies.
- Be implemented in a coherent, coordinated manner, supporting national Prevention of Blindness Committees, or their equivalent, and linking with *Vision 2020* regional coordination structures.
- Encourage partnerships between the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, civil society and communities in programs and activities that strengthen and build on local/regional experiences, expertise and linkages (in line with 2006 World Health Assembly Resolution [WHA 59.25 Prevention of avoidable blindness and vision impairment]).
- Ensure people with vision impairment understand and actively contribute to decisions about programming and implementation.

- Aim to strengthen counterpart organisations in developing countries to enable them to sustain vision health and rehabilitation activities after Australian assistance has ceased. Activities should, where possible, aim to strengthen institutional reporting capacity.
- Ensure that the specific needs of men, women and children, including people with disability, are addressed and that opportunities for women to participate as decision makers in determining objectives and types of activities are increased.
- Identify opportunities to build strategic partnerships through which Australia can strengthen effective leadership.

3.2 Support will NOT be provided for proposals that seek funding for:

- New activities;
- Activities that are determined reasonably to be contrary to the interests of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- Activities that do not clearly demonstrate how people with vision impairment understand and actively contribute to decisions about programming and implementation;
- Evangelism or missionary outreach, or similar activities by political organisations;
- Recurrent costs unless there is a convincing plan to ensure the recipients will be able to take over those recurrent costs within the life of the activity;
- Retrospective activities; or
- Travel expenses that exceed 20% of total project costs.

4. Eligibility of Recipient Organisations

4.1 Funding support will be available to Australian not-for-profit organisations that are currently involved in improving the quality of life for people with low vision and blindness and reducing avoidable blindness in the Asia-Pacific region. This includes: (i) members of *Vision 2020 Australia*; and (ii) NGOs accredited by AusAID and/or signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct.

4.2 Preference will be given to proposals from those organisations with:

- Absorptive capacity to scale-up and build on current operations;
- Specialist expertise in eye health and vision care;
- Demonstrated capability in policy analysis, development and implementation;
- A strong understanding of the policy context within which eye care is delivered, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the *Vision 2020 Right to Sight* global initiative;
- A commitment to developing existing links and strong relationships with organisations and governments in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Demonstrated commitment to working cooperatively with other organisations working in this area, including local and regional organisations to build their capacity;

- Good corporate governance structures including established and strong administrative and financial systems and risk management strategies;
- Coherence with AusAID policies, with a particular focus on gender and child protection; and
- A commitment to development effectiveness, sustainability, tangible outcomes, quality, applying lessons learned and sharing lessons with other stakeholders.

5. Funding

5.1 In applying for support under the Fund, Applicants should note the following criteria:

- Funding will be provided to Australian not-for-profit organisations to specifically scale-up and build on existing efforts and opportunities, lessons and successes in vision and eye health activities in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Activities must be a minimum limit of A\$100,000 and preference will be given to larger activities up to A\$300,000. Activities over A\$300,000 will also be considered.
- Funding support will cover activities to 30 June 2011.
- More than one proposal may be submitted from each organisation but the Fund will only make one grant available to each eligible organisation through the selection process.
- Proposals for joint funding from consortia will be considered.

6. Application and Selection Procedures

The Applicant Organisation:

6.1 To be eligible for assessment, proposals must be submitted to AusAID Canberra by 30 January 2009 in their final form (working documents are not sufficient). Proposals must clearly set out the strategy that will be adopted to ensure that the activity is identified as an Australian-supported initiative.

6.2 The applicant organisation should complete the **Activity Proposal** (at Attachment A in these Guidelines). This document includes the **Standard Budget Format (Annex 1)** that must also be completed. Applicant organisations should declare all other proposals or sources of Australian Government funding that may impact on the activity. If the organisation has not previously received AusAID funding, then a number of other documents must be provided together with the proposal. These include:

- a copy of the organisation's constitution or articles of association;
- an audited annual financial statement certified by a public accountant who is not a member of the organisation;
- a copy of the organisation's annual report, or a similar document; and
- an outline of its work program.

If such documents are unavailable then adequate explanation must be provided. If

neither document nor adequate explanation is provided, the proposal will be considered non-compliant and incomplete and will not be accepted by the Selection Panel. Proposals should be marked to the attention of the AusAID Avoidable Blindness Fund Manager, AusAID.

6.3 Applicant organisations should be aware that, as the Fund is likely to receive proposals for funding significantly in excess of the funds available, it is likely that not all eligible proposals will receive support.

Selection Procedures:

6.4 A single selection process will be held at the commencement of the three-year Fund. As broader strategic partnerships are developed for the ABI, subsequent decisions will be made by AusAID on the continuation of this Fund.

6.5 The Selection Panel, comprising nominated members of AusAID's Disability Taskforce and independent expertise, will consider proposals between 2-20 February 2009. The Panel will assess each proposal in terms of its potential to address the objectives of the ABI and provide good value for money. Selection panel ranking assessment format is at Attachment B. The Panel's recommendations will be forwarded to the AusAID Delegate for approval by 20 February 2009. On receipt of the Delegate's endorsement all applicants will be advised and funds for successful activities will be made available in March 2009.

6.6 Deadlines for the Fund are as follows:

Early December 2008	Proposals sought (via ACFID and <i>Vision 2020 Australia</i>)
30 January 2009	Proposals deadline (COB Canberra time)
2-20 February 2009	Selection process and AusAID endorsement of selection
by 27 February 2009	Successful proposals announced
March 2009	Funds made available to not-for-profit organisations

7. Activity Management and Reporting Requirements

General:

7.1 Organisations undertaking activities funded through the Fund will enter into a Funding Order (if AusAID-accredited) or a funding agreement (if non-accredited and signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct or if other not-for-profit organisations) with AusAID. Implementation, accountability, required outputs, funding and reporting requirements will be determined and recorded in the Funding Order or funding agreements. The AusAID Avoidable Blindness Fund Manager is responsible for

initiating Funding Orders or funding agreements with successful organisations.

7.2 The Australian Government may from time to time monitor, review and/or evaluate activities funded under the Fund. Such a review would be undertaken in consultation with relevant organisations.

The Applicant Organisation:

7.3 The implementing organisation must provide a **Completion Report** to AusAID Canberra for each activity. The report will provide information to measure the success of the Fund in meeting its stated goals and to properly account for monies granted. Specific reporting requirements will be outlined in Funding Orders / Funding Agreements for successful proposals.

7.4 All queries should be directed to the Manager, AusAID Avoidable Blindness Fund, AusAID.

ATTACHMENT A

**AUSAID AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS FUND
ACTIVITY PROPOSAL
(To be completed by the applicant organisation)**

The following formats should be used:

- Part A is a summary of the proposal that is used to record the activity in AusAID.
 - Part B is the format for providing details of the proposal. It should be succinct **should not exceed ten (10) A4 pages**, including the proposed budget plus attachments.
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PART A. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Activity Title:

Country/Region/Location (province, district, city, village)

Details of Organisation

Name:

Address:

Telephone No.:

Fax No.:

Email:

Principal Contact Officer:

Brief Proposal Outline

: Objectives

: Main activities (inputs)

: Expected results (outputs) - Include key indicators against objectives.

: Performance information (monitoring and evaluation) - Include qualitative and quantitative assessment against objectives.

Organisation Contribution:

AusAID Funding:

Other sources of funding and amount:

Expected Start Date:

Expected Finish Date:

Has AusAID previously funded this activity? **YES / NO**

If so, have the funds been acquitted? **YES / NO**

When? / /

If so, has a report been submitted to AusAID? **YES / NO**

When? / /

Declaration of Intent

I , *(authorised officer and position in Organisation)*, submit this application and undertake that all funds provided would be expended for the purposes for which they are provided.

Signature: _____

Date:

PART B. PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. INTRODUCTION

List the activity's main objectives, components, inputs and schedule. Summarise how the activity was identified and how the anticipated benefits will justify the costs and risks. How does this project fit with one or more of the objectives of the ABI?

2. ACTIVITY SETTING

2.1 Current situation

Briefly describe the present situation, the target group or institution and their needs and the causes of their needs. How was the target group involved in preparation of the proposal?

2.2 Current programs

What other related activities, if any, are being conducted by government or other organisations in the sector or area described in 2.1?

3. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Objectives

State specific activity objectives. Objectives should be stated in measurable terms.

3.2 Proposal description

Describe where the activity will be located. Set out components/tasks to be carried out to fulfill the objectives described in 3.1. Why is the proposal the most appropriate way to address the situation described in 2.1? Who will be responsible for each component/task? Indicate how target groups will play a role in the activity. Discuss the appropriateness of the activities to the social, economic and local skills level.

3.3 Activity Schedule

Provide the timetable for the major components/tasks.

3.4 Inputs and Costs

Summarise the inputs (people, materials, training etc.) required for each component/task listed in 3.3 and their costs (see [Annex 1](#)).

3.5 Expected Benefits and Risks

List and quantify, if possible, the expected benefits of the activity. Include benefits to specific vulnerable groups such as women and children. Demonstrate how the activity contributes to Australian obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Consider any risks that might affect the success of the activities and what would be done in such situations.

3.6 Sustainability

Describe how activity outcomes will be sustained when Australian funding ends, highlighting national and regional partnerships that have been developed. Also describe the integration of cross-cutting development issues, such as gender, environment and climate change, HIV/AIDS, peace and conflict and food security, where appropriate.

4. PROPOSAL IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Implementing agency(s) and arrangements

Describe the implementing and coordinating agencies, their technical and administrative skills and their experience and expertise in relation to the proposal.

4.2 Performance information

Identify how the organisation intends to monitor and evaluate the activity's achievements against its stated objectives, including performance indicators, lessons learned and specific examples of the lived experience/s of people with vision impairment and blindness.

ANNEX 1**STANDARD BUDGET FORMAT**

	AusAID \$ AUD	Implementing Organisation \$ AUD	Other Funding Agencies \$ AUD
Inputs: Personnel			
Name/position/function/time dedicated to the proposal			
Staff costs			
Travel costs			
Performance information costs (monitoring and evaluation)			
Inputs: Non-Personnel			
Materials, equipment, freight, commodities, insurance <i>(attach a separate list of assets)</i>			
Training costs			
Other <i>(specify)</i>			
Support Costs			
Communications			
Report preparation			
Vehicle/transport costs			
Field costs			
Other <i>(specify)</i>			
TOTAL			

NOTE:

Personnel Costs - are staff dedicated to the proposal.

Non-Personnel Costs - are direct activity inputs, e.g. materials, equipment, training costs.

Support Costs – include communications, report preparation, vehicle costs and other costs directly attributable to the successful management of the proposal.

ATTACHMENT B

**AUSAID-NGO AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS FUND
SELECTION PANEL RANKING ASSESSMENT**

1. CONFORMING PROPOSALS

Following the application deadline of 30 January 2009, an initial screening of each proposal will be conducted by the Panel to determine compliance with the Avoidable Blindness Fund Guidelines. Failure to meet the Guidelines will result in a proposal being rejected and removed from further consideration.

2. EVALUATION OF CONFORMING PROPOSALS

The Panel will evaluate proposals in terms of their potential to address the objectives of the Avoidable Blindness Fund, as described in the Guidelines, including the provision of good value for money. The Panel may adjust assessments as a consequence of past performance information of the organisation, if relevant.

3. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal title:

Country:

Implementing organisation:

Proposal timeframe:

Contact:

4. SELECTION CRITERIA

(i) Extent to which the proposal aligns with the broad **development priorities** of the Development for All strategy and the specific priorities of the Avoidable Blindness Fund (refer paragraph 3.1 of the Guidelines). ***Weighting (25%)***

(ii) **Capacity** of the applicant organisation to deliver prioritised activities (refer paragraph 4.2 of the Guidelines). ***Weighting (20%)***

(iii) Extent to which the proposal meets the explicit **requirements** of the Avoidable Blindness Fund activities (as specified in the Activity Proposal, Attachment A, Part B of the Guidelines). ***Weighting (30%)***

(iv) Extent to which the proposal addresses **performance information** (refer paragraph 4.2 in Attachment A, Part B of the Guidelines). ***Weighting (15%)***

(v) Extent to which the proposal presents good value for money. *Weighting (10%)*

5. BONA FIDES OF APPLICANT ORGANISATION

Has the organisation previously received AusAID funding? **YES / NO**

If YES, have the previous funds been acquitted? **YES / NO**

If NO, has it submitted the following documents with its application?

- a copy of the organisation's constitution or articles of association? **YES / NO**
- an audited annual financial statement certified by a public accountant who is not a member of the organisation? **YES / NO**
- a copy of the organisation's annual report, or a similar document? **YES / NO**
- an outline of its work program? **YES / NO**

6. OTHER

Are there opportunities provided in the proposal to develop Australia's effective leadership on disability and development? **YES / NO**

Is the proposal politically sensitive? **YES / NO**

If YES, please provide details on how this risk will be managed.

7. PROPOSAL RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED / NOT RECOMMENDED

Signed:

_____ / / (Date)

Name, Position

