



RESEARCH FOR  
DEVELOPMENT  
IMPACT NETWORK

A collaboration between  
the Australian Council for  
International Development  
and Australian universities

## **RDI Network Committee Meeting**

**Swinburne University of Technology**

**5 September 2017, 9:00am-5:00pm**

**Attendees:** Tessa Hillgrove (Chair), Juliet Willetts, Jo Pradela, Thomas Soem, Jo Crawford, Kurt Seemann, Elise Klein, Saba Mebrahtu, Philippa Smales, Jenny Vaccari

**Apologies:** Rochelle Spencer, Peter Westoby, Mike Toole, Robyn Mildon

### **Agenda:**

- 1) [Welcome](#)
- 2) [Progress Update](#)
- 3) [Mid-term Review Management Response](#)
- 4) [Sustainability](#)
- 5) [Grant Year 3 Work Plan](#)
- 6) [AOB](#)

---

### 1) Welcome

#### Confirmation of the May minutes

Discussed whether a public version of committee meeting minutes should be created, for issue upon request and publication to the website.

**Decision:** Committee agreed to make meeting minutes publicly available on RDI's website

**Action:** Commencing from the September 2017 meeting, a public version of committee meeting minutes will be made available on the RDI Website.

Reviewed the actions of the May meeting to review/check status.

#### Updates on items discussed in May:

The committee was updated on the Pacific Research Program tender process: the successful applicant yet to be announced.

Networking events: Brisbane date confirmed with UQ as host, ISF are looking to host in Sydney in November, Melbourne tbc.

**Action:** Committee members to advise RDI Secretariat of other events that might contribute to Networking purpose.

#### Outstanding actions from May:

**Action:** Some Committee members shared how the ethical research guidance work of the RDI is being taken up within their organisations. Material to capture and demonstrate this uptake to be provided to the RDI Secretariat.

**Action:** RDI Secretariat to create communications resources for universities to support their engagement with the ethical practice module.

**Decision:** The minutes of the May Committee meeting were confirmed

**Action:** Future minutes to include a summary table of actions arising.

#### Introductions

All members of the committee introduced themselves, with new members welcomed to their first meeting.

## 2) Progress Update

Tracking successes, a contribution to RDI Network monitoring, evaluation and learning: committee members shared a significant success that the RDI Network experienced in the past 6 months.

Committee members shared their experience of participating in events associated with the Network, and the related ongoing dialogue these had started. They also shared the launch of important resources, and the uptake these were having within their respective organisations.

#### Updates: Key Strategic Activities underway

RDI Secretariat provided updates on a few key activities:

- Two ethics workshops have been held – positive feedback has been received. Noted these are aimed to reach small organisations. Fred Hollows Foundation is purchasing the module for internal use.
- A new guide to ethics approval processes for research in Asia and the Pacific has been published on the RDI website.  
**Action:** All Committee are to support the dissemination of [this resource](#) in the sector, and share with the RDI Secretariat the evidence of uptake to support RDI MEL.
- RDI Secretariat is working with the University of Sydney (via consultant, Anna Noonan) to explore the possibility of an Open Learning Resource based on the ethical practice module, for students from a broad spectrum of disciplines. RDI Network's involvement would be in the possible creation of case studies to support the Resource. These case studies would be publicly available.
- We have received a draft report of the review of development studies curricula in Australia, sub-group will work to finalise and publish by November (ACFID Conference).

- A draft of the research partnerships guidance and case studies is with the sub-group for feedback. Aiming for finalisation and publication by November (ACFID Conference).
- Committee discussed and commended the Conference Steering Committee for securing the participation of the Australia Awardees and scholarship recipients at the recent Conference *Partnering for Impact on Sustainable Development*. The Committee discussed the opportunity to continue engagement with this cohort into the future. **Action:** RDI Secretariat to ensure these individuals receive key RDI Network resources, including the recently released ethical approval processes fact sheets.
- The Committee noted several successful events run in the period and positive feedback from key stakeholders about these events.
- The Committee noted the successful governance refresh through the recent elections, with one NGO rep vacancy open until September 11 2017.
- Juliet Willetts reported on a piece of collaborative, applied research that RDI supported with ACFID's Development Practice Committee on MEL across scales. The draft report was provided to the Committee for their comments. Target audience from the Committee perspective was noted as M&E specialists and sector leadership. .  
**Action:** All Committee invited to provide feedback on the MEL across scales report (.  
**Action:** Those with M&E specialists within their organisations were invited to seek their input.

### 3) Mid-term Review Management Response

The purpose of the session was outlined; aiming to reach broadly-agreed consensus on content of a management response to the mid-term review. The Secretariat was given responsibility for taking the content of the discussions and providing the Committee with a draft for their feedback before finalisation.

The Committee was split into two groups, and groupings of recommendations were divided up to be discussed and refined, with actions and timeframes, based on the work done by Committee in advance.

Based on discussions, the Secretariat and Co-chairs of the RDI Network will produce a final version of the management response. The Management Response and Mid-Term Review will be available on the RDI website once finalised [www.rdinetwork.org.au](http://www.rdinetwork.org.au).

#### **Next steps:**

**Action:** RDI Secretariat will produce a draft based on the Committee's discussions. The Secretariat and co-Chairs will seek to finalise the response. RDI Committee members seeking an update on this process should contact the RDI Secretariat.

#### 4) Sustainability

The RDI Secretariat led this session using an interactive causal feedback loop activity, to generate a systems analysis of the RDI's main objectives and key intervention points.

Substantial inputs were generated through this process with progress being made in:

- identifying a range of problems in the system to which the RDI Network is currently seeking to respond;
- brainstorming the causes and impacts of those problems in the system;
- understanding some potential intervention points that could enable RDI to deliver on its objectives.

The discussion provided a strong starting point for looking at what the RDI Network should continue to prioritise both as desired outcomes and key activities. The Committee agreed this was a substantial discussion that required further unpacking. Committee members agreed to hold an extra-ordinary face to face meeting in November 2017 to further progress this area of work.

**Decision:** This proposition was agreed to.

**Action:** The RDI Secretariat will confirm the exact date on the basis of availability.

#### 5) Work plan for grant year 3

The Committee discussed a draft work-plan for the third year of the grant, to commence in November 2017.

Significant decisions taken on the draft work plan included:

- Further understand the opportunities for delivering the ethical practice workshops;
- Move forward with a learning focus on peer-review ethics processes;
- Undertake foundational study on the potential of a development studies association in the Australian context;
- Continue to increase RDI's linkages to researchers and research institutes in the region, including by profiling them on Find an Expert;
- Collaborate to produce another Development Bulletin;
- Continue to ensure sound MEL practice for the Network's activities and overall impact;
- Incorporate any decisions in the Management Response to the mid-term review into the work-plan, as appropriate.

Meeting closed at 5:10pm