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Submission to the Independent Review on Aid Effectiveness

This submission was prepared by Desta Pratama, Caroline Tupamahu, Zusanna Gosal and Mila Shwaiko on behalf of the Eastern Indonesia Knowledge Exchange (BaKTI-Yayasan Bursa Pengetahuan Kawasan Timur Indonesia)

BaKTI Foundation started as a part of the Support Office for Eastern Indonesia (SOEI), a multi donor program administered by the World Bank. AusAID was one of the international institutions that funded this program. In 2010, SOEI completed its operations and BaKTI became an independent institution. As a non profit foundation, we are supported mainly by AusAID and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency).

Our mission is more effective development in Eastern Indonesia. We work with development actors (local governments, local government development agencies, CSOs, academics and donors) in 12 provinces in Sulawesi, Maluku, Papua and Nusa Tenggara. Over our more than six years of work in eastern Indonesia, we often work together or cross paths with other programs that are funded by AusAID, providing us with a window into how AusAID works in eastern Indonesia and its impact on development stakeholders.

What's positive about AusAID

There are so many development challenges in eastern Indonesia, and we believe that many of them need to be answered with specific and creative approaches. For example, in Papua, in order for information on the RESPEK Program (Papua village-based community empowerment) to reach the most remote locations on the island, a specific strategy and vast resources had to be deployed, which AusAID supported.

Another example of an AusAID supported program we believe is valuable is the capacity enhancement of the knowledge sector (academics, universities, research) program, which was created to support the development planning process in the region. Researchers must become more than just survey or research contractors, they must become active partners for local government planning agencies. This will take a lot of informal, yet planned and structured effort to achieve that goal.

Unique institutions like the East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Resource Center or the SMERU research institute also provide a lot of insights and practical policy recommendations on poverty and development in eastern Indonesia. AusAID support these efforts in Indonesia and we are happy to see that AusAID are open to new and locally tailored ideas to answer development challenges.

Recently, the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Decentralization (AIPD) launched. We see AIPD as an institution that offers new answers to challenges in the health, education and infrastructure



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sectors. The fact that so many local stakeholders were involved in every stage of AIPD development is a good thing in our eyes. This approach should be used by all AusAID supported programs.

Another thing that should be appreciated is the scholarship schemes (ADS, ALA) and the emphasis on awarding scholarships to people from eastern Indonesia. These give an invaluable opportunity for researchers, students and public servants in eastern Indonesia to pursue a graduate degree in Australia.

Some inputs for AusAID

There are so many development initiatives, funded by various donor organizations and governments at a national and local level, in eastern Indonesia. Based on our observation, often a new project will use similar approach as a previous project did, working on the same issue, with similar objectives and community targets. This repetition happens not because the previous program was successful in achieving its objectives and delivering benefits to the community, but more because of the unavailability of information on previous projects and inadequate consultation with local stakeholders. Unsurprisingly, often the 'repeated' project fails, and achieves similar results.

AusAID need to increase exchange of knowledge on development programs with other donor organizations to anticipate that particular issue. There should be a comprehensive and accessible database of programs or projects that have been completed or are still ongoing, along with the result and impact evaluation for the last 20 years in eastern Indonesia. AusAID, along with other donor organizations, should pave the road in constructing this particular database.

From this database donors and AusAID in particular can learn from each other's experiences to avoid repeating mistakes of previous programs. At the end of the day, the communities are the ones who benefit most from this.

In order to support this database, AusAID should consider having regular meetings with AusAID funded projects in eastern Indonesia. This forum would provide a lot of insights and opportunity for fellow AusAID funded projects to learn from each other. In the future, this regular meeting can transform to a formal network or workgroup if needed.

In terms of AIPD, we understand that the program focuses on four provinces in Nusa Tenggara and Papua. It would be great if AIPD could also open up formal networks in other provinces in Sulawesi and Maluku. Again, these networks will open up knowledge exchange possibilities that lead to better understanding of local needs and contexts.

We see that the current trend in eastern Indonesian development on the part of local governments is a focus on synergy and unity. For example, just over three years ago, the Provincial BAPPEDA (Development Planning Agencies) came to Jakarta, bringing only each province's own interests and agenda. Now, the heads of BAPPEDA from the 12 provinces come to Jakarta bringing the region's interest and agenda. There are also formal forums and commitments that unite development



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stakeholders from the 12 provinces. These initiatives have already produced a lot of inputs for development policy in the region.

Another input for AusAID is specifically for the scholarship scheme. We see that there are still too few scholarship awardees that come from eastern Indonesia. On one hand, this is probably due to the rigorous selection process, but on the other hand, we know that many potential candidates have considerations that deter them from even applying. The custom and tradition of people here sometimes make it hard for them to leave their family to study abroad or to leave their current job because then their family will not have any income.

Perhaps AusAID can consider providing a scholarship scheme for graduate studies in domestic universities in Indonesia. We believe this would increase the reach and impact of this scheme, especially for public servants and young lecturers in eastern Indonesia.