

# Host Organisation Information Pack

## Introducing Australian Volunteers for International Development

The Australian Volunteers for International Development program was launched by the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs in May 2011. The program draws together all AusAID-funded international development volunteering initiatives into one program with one name, common branding and a shared web-portal. A single name and unified branding will contribute significantly to the coherent presentation and effective reach of the volunteer program in Australia and overseas.

The Australian Volunteers program places skilled Australian volunteers in developing countries in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Australian Volunteers work with local counterparts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in the communities in which they work through skills and knowledge exchange, institutional strengthening and capacity building.

### Austraining International

Austraining International is a specialist project management and international development organisation delivering projects worldwide. Since its inception in 1991, Austraining has managed over 300 bilateral and multilateral projects throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and the Middle East.

Austraining International is one of the three volunteer partner organisations selected to implement Australian Volunteers for International Development program, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative. With extensive experience in international volunteering, Austraining works with Australian Volunteers International and Australian Red Cross to deliver more than 1000 volunteers annually around the globe.

As part of Australian Volunteers for International Development, Austraining mobilises skilled volunteers on short and long term assignments across Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Austraining works with World University Service Canada (WUSC) and the Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) in the delivery of its volunteer programs

Skilled volunteers, through Austraining International, work with local counterparts to:

- Reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development results in the communities in which they work.
- Undertake skills and knowledge exchange, institutional strengthening and capacity development

Austraining manages over 150 new skilled volunteers annually and is responsible for all aspects of the program, including promotion, recruitment and selection, mobilising, allowances, in country management and community engagement.

Volunteers work with local staff in Host Organisations (HOs) in the public and private sector, including non government organisations (NGOs), International NGOs, government agencies and educational institutions. Volunteer assignments are from one month to 36 months in duration and in a range of priority sectors including Education, Health, Environment, Governance, and Rural Development. Volunteers must be above the age of 18. There is no upper age limit.

## Where does Austraining International send skilled Australian Volunteers?

Austraining mobilises skilled volunteers to the following countries:

- Bangladesh
- Bolivia
- Cambodia
- Dominica
- East Timor
- Fiji
- Ghana
- Indonesia
- Kiribati
- Kenya
- Laos
- Mongolia
- Nepal
- Peru
- Philippines
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Thailand
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Vietnam

## What kinds of assignments are there?

Australian Volunteer assignments range across a variety of sectors including Education, Environment, Gender, Governance, Health, Infrastructure, Rural Development and Trades.

The Australian Volunteers program responds to the needs of partner countries and host organisations and ensures no volunteer assignment replaces local staff. The Australian Volunteers program also works in line with the Australian Government's overseas aid program priorities when sourcing volunteer assignments.

Australian Volunteer assignments have long term sustainable development goals. Austraining does not send volunteers in response to emergencies.

## How long are Australian Volunteer assignments?

Assignments can be from one month to three years in length, depending on the needs of the Host Organisation.

All potential volunteers are asked to contact the HO/APO before accepting an offer to agree on the duration of the assignment. Any subsequent extension of assignment must be agreed by both the volunteer and HO/APO, and approved by Austraining.

## Who can become an Australian Volunteer?

Australian Volunteers have the desirable qualifications, specific skills and experience required to complete the outcomes of the assignment for which they are selected. Volunteers have the personal attributes to adapt to a lifestyle which will be of a different standard to Australia.

Australian citizens, permanent residents and New Zealand citizens who hold a Special Condition Visa (SCV) aged above the age of 18 are eligible to apply for the Australian Volunteers program. There is no upper age limit. The Australian Volunteers program works in line with AusAID's program priorities when sourcing volunteers.

## Mobilisations

Mobilisations are when Australian Volunteers depart Australia to go on assignment. The Australian Volunteers program provides the opportunity for volunteers to be deployed throughout the year once all pre mobilisation requirements have been met. Mobilisation dates are determined via consultation with Host Organisations and In-Country Managers.

## Host Organisations

The Australian Volunteers program places volunteers with organisations in the Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Host Organisations (HOs) can be government departments, non-government organisations (NGOs), INGOs, educational institutions and private companies.

HOs are required to provide volunteers with an appropriate workspace and any resources required to fulfil their assignment. Any work related travel expenses will also be covered by the HO (including accommodation, travel and per diems). HOs designate a supervisor for the Australian Volunteer and/or counterpart(s) with whom they work directly.

All HOs undergo a site inspection by the In-Country Manager to assess their suitability and capacity to host volunteers.

# Developing an Australian Volunteer Assignment

Once you have identified a need within your organisation and would like to host an Australian Volunteer you should contact your In Country Manager to develop an Assignment Proposal. You can find In Country Manager contact details at [www.volunteering.austraining.com.au](http://www.volunteering.austraining.com.au)

The In Country Manager will help you develop an assignment that fit the priorities of the Australian Volunteers for International Development program in your country. You can also work with an Australian Partner Organisation to develop the assignment if you have one.

Your assignment proposal should:

- have clear, achievable and sustainable development outcomes
- outline support strategies for the volunteer while on assignment

Your In Country Manager will advise you when you need to give them your completed Assignment Proposal.

## Assignment Approval

The Austraining In-Country Managers will guide you and your Host Organisation to develop assignments considering the following factors:

- **Country Quotas** – the Australian Volunteers Program supports a certain number of assignments in each country, each financial year.
- **Country Volunteer Strategy (CVS)** – the Australian Volunteer program has a strategy for the sectors and geographical areas it places volunteers in each country. A minimum of 75% of assignments must align directly with AusAID's priorities. For more information regarding the priorities please contact the In Country Managers.
- **Capacity Building Focus** – assignments are designed to build the capacity of the Host Organisation in line with the Millennium Development Goals by working alongside and building the capacity of local staff as opposed to replacing them.
- **Sustainability of Outcomes** – the volunteer should work towards outcomes that will continue to benefit the HO's work upon the volunteer's departure.
- **Host Organisation** – should have the capacity to host a volunteer. A Host Organisation is required to provide an appropriate workspace and any resources required for the Australian volunteer to achieve their assignment outcomes. A supervisor and/or counterpart will be nominated to work directly with the volunteer.
- **Realistic Expectations** – there must be realistic expectations of what the volunteer will be able to contribute during their assignment. Expectations should match the requested skills and experience of the volunteer and the length of the assignment.

In Country Managers will advise Host Organisations whether an assignment has been approved.

## Contributions

The Australian Volunteer program encourages contributions to the Program in support of volunteer assignments. These contributions can be provided by Host Organisations or Australian Partner Organisations and may be financial or as a Gift in Kind. These contributions demonstrate the HO and APO's commitment to supporting the volunteer, an acknowledgement of the value of that volunteer within their strategic objectives, and to support the achievement of assignment outcomes.

Financial contributions directly offset costs which would otherwise be borne by the Australian Volunteer program and enable the Program to maximise the number of volunteers mobilised.

Austraining understands that not all organisations will be in a financial position to provide extensive support and contributions will be assessed on a case by case basis. The level of contribution offered will not affect the sourcing or approval of the volunteer assignment. For one-off contributions, organisations will be invoiced in a lump sum, shortly after volunteer mobilisation. Organisations will be invoiced quarterly for ongoing contributions.

Examples of contribution types:

- Cost of flights to or from Pre-Departure Briefing in Australia
- Pre-departure medical costs
- Insurance costs
- Cost of flights to or from the country of assignment
- Living allowance
- Provision of suitable accommodation as a Gift In Kind
- Language lessons
- Assignment support allowance to purchase necessary work materials
- Cost of airfares, medical costs or living allowances for dependants (children/spouse)
- Resettlement allowance
- Post-assignment medical costs
- Cost of flights to and/or from debrief

## Indicative costs of a selection of Contributions

Contribution type	Indicative cost
Pre-Departure Medical Costs	\$1,000.00
Insurance Costs	\$215 per month
Settlement Allowance	\$1,000 for assignments over 6 months \$500 for assignments up to 6 months
Suitable Accommodation	Gift In Kind
Resettlement Allowance	\$1,200 for assignments over 6 months
Post-return Medical Costs	Up to \$500

# Australian Partner Organisations

## What is an Australian Partner Organisation?

A main feature of the Australian Volunteers program is the involvement of Australian Partner Organisations (APOs). The Australian Volunteers program provides the opportunity for Australian organisations to strengthen relationships with organisations in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, or to create new long term partnerships.

Australian Partner Organisations can be Australian government departments, non-government organisations (NGOs), educational institutions and private companies that have or wish to establish links with organisations working in development in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Host Organisations can work together with the APO to develop Australian Volunteer assignment proposals, assist in sourcing potential volunteers and provide mentoring, advice and support to volunteers and HO staff throughout the assignment process. In some cases the APO may be the Australian office of the Host Organisation.

Host Organisations do not need an Australian Partner Organisation to submit an assignment.

For examples of APOs currently involved with the Program, please visit [www.volunteering.austraining.com.au](http://www.volunteering.austraining.com.au)

## What is the role of an Australian Partner Organisation?

An APO works with the HO and the volunteer to:

- Develop assignment proposals.
- Source candidates by promoting assignments to their networks.
- Provide an assignment specific pre-departure briefing for the Australian Volunteer.
- Act in a mentoring role to support the Australian Volunteer whilst on assignment (engaging in regular email contact and providing advice and assistance).
- Provide an assignment specific debrief on the Australian Volunteer's return.

## Creating new partnerships

Austraining International can help Host Organisations to create partnerships with Australian organisations. Please contact [partnerships@austraining.com.au](mailto:partnerships@austraining.com.au) for more information.

# Example Assignments

Here are some examples of the kinds of assignments which may be suitable:

## **Agriculture, Veterinary**

- Rural Development Officer
- Veterinary Science

## **Business, Marketing, Tourism, Art and Design**

- Business Development Officer
- Museum Curator
- Tourism Development Officer

## **Community, Social Development**

- Community Development Officer

## **Disaster and Emergency Management**

- Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor

## **Education, Training, Library**

- Science Teaching Facilitator
- Librarian Trainer

## **Engineering, Architecture**

- Environmental Project Management Engineer

## **Finance, Economics**

- Finance System Officer

## **Health**

- Infectious Disease Project Officer
- Speech Pathologist

## **IT, Knowledge Management**

- Information Management Officer

## **Law and Justice**

- Legal Support Officer

## **Management, HR, Admin**

- Administration Officer
- Human Resources Trainer

## **Media, Communications, Public Relations, Fund Raising**

- Communications Officer
- Media Marketing and Research Officer

## **Natural Science, Environment**

- Climate Change Support Officer
- Regional Water Management Officer

## **Skilled Trades**

- Carpenter Trainer

## **Sport**

- Netball Sport for Development Officer

# Volunteer Selection Process

Successful volunteers will have:

- ✓ Technical qualifications and skills to fulfil the objectives of the assignment
- ✓ Cultural awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others
- ✓ An understanding of the challenges of working in a cross-cultural environment
- ✓ Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- ✓ Confidence in problem solving
- ✓ Adaptability and flexibility to deal with challenging situations
- ✓ A commitment to and understanding of capacity building and sustainable development
- ✓ A willingness to exchange knowledge and build capacity of individuals and organisations

## The Selection Process

Austraining International has a staged selection process. The selection process is based on merit and refers to the Australian Equal Opportunities Act.

At any stage of the selection process Austraining International reserves the right to withdraw a volunteer assignment.

Australian Volunteers assignments are advertised on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. Once candidates have submitted their applications the selection process is in 8 stages:

### Selection

- Stage 1: Assessment of written application against assignment selection criteria
- Stage 2: Online Psychological assessment and telephone interview with a Psychologist
- Stage 3: Referee checks
- Stage 4: HO review and approval (more than one candidate may be put forward)  
APO approval

### Candidate notified whether they have been successfully selected

- Stage 5: Pre departure Briefing requirements (including attendance at a Pre Departure Briefing)
- Stage 6: Criminal History Check
- Stage 7: Medical
- Stage 8: Visa

Austraining select candidates with the right skills and experience for the assignments. At Stage 4, Host Organisations receive the preferred candidate's application and may choose to interview the candidate before final approval is given.

Host Organisations and Australian Partner Organisations will be informed in writing whether or not a volunteer has been selected for their assignment. HOs and APOs will then be asked to sign an Assignment Agreement which outlines the HO and APO roles and responsibilities.

## Pre-Departure Briefing

Before departing for their assignments, Australian Volunteers attend a three-day Pre-Departure Briefing which includes:

- Insurance information
- Medical information
- Security and emergency information
- Australian Volunteers for International Development policies and procedures
- Media briefing
- Community engagement training
- Capacity building training
- Cross cultural training.

Australian Volunteers pays the costs of attending Pre Departure Briefing (airfares, accommodation and meals).

# In Country

## What do Host Organisations provide?

A Host Organisation is required to provide Australian volunteers with:

- appropriate workspace
- equipment required to fulfil their assignment outcomes
- work related travel expenses (such as travel, accommodation and per diems)

Host Organisations may also need to provide other support such as helping to get a visa for the volunteer.

A Host Organisation will identify:

- a supervisor for the volunteer
- a counterpart for the volunteer (someone who will work alongside the volunteer)

Host Organisations provide an orientation program within their organisation for the volunteer when they first arrive and ensure that Host Organisation staff understand the role of the volunteer within the organisation.

In Country Managers support Host Organisations to ensure a successful volunteer placement.

## In Country Support

Host Organisations and volunteers are supported by an In-Country Manager (ICM) who lives in that country. The In Country Manager helps Host Organisations and volunteers with any issues during an Australian Volunteer assignment.

When volunteers arrive in country the In Country Manager arranges an Orientation Program (including banking, shopping and transport options.)

The In Country Manager works with Host Organisations to help volunteers with:

- safe, affordable and appropriate accommodation
- language training
- visas

Australian Volunteers are encouraged to discuss assignment issues with their Host Organisation. The In Country Manager will also offer support regarding personal or professional issues during the assignment.

## Holidays and Travel

Australian volunteers are entitled to five working days of paid leave for every three months of service. Volunteers must negotiate with their Host Organisation to arrange leave.

Volunteers may choose to travel within their host country, return to Australia or travel internationally during their volunteer assignment but must pay any costs beyond those provided for by their volunteer allowance.

## Security and Emergencies

Austraining International's first priority is the safety and security of Volunteers. Austraining monitors the security situation in all the countries where we have volunteer. Austraining operates in line with recommendations from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to determine the safety and security of Volunteers.

Host Organisations should discuss security issues with volunteers and should be aware of Austraining International Volunteer Development Program emergency protocols.

If a volunteer's safety is threatened the Austraining International will evacuate the volunteer. Depending on the type of emergency, a volunteer:

- may be able to return to his or her assignment after the situation is resolved
- may be offered an assignment in a different location
- may have his or her assignment terminated.

# Volunteer support

The Australian Volunteer program will provide volunteers with:

- Pre-Departure Briefing
- Pre-departure medical examination and vaccinations
- Insurance (travel, medical and professional)
- Travel to the host country and back to Australia
- Personal and Professional support from the In-Country Manager (ICM)

## Allowances

- Living and Accommodation allowances
- Settlement allowance
- Resettlement allowance
- Assignment support allowance (by application)
- Language allowance (by application)

## Partners and families

There are opportunities for couples and families who want to volunteer together. The Australian Volunteers program offers support for approved dependants (partners and children) who accompany a volunteer on assignments which are longer than 12 months. This support will be assessed according to each situation and may include airfares, insurance and a small living allowance.

# Contact Details

**For further information please contact your In Country Manager:**

Austraining International In-Country Manager Contact Details can be found at:

[www.volunteering.austraining.com.au](http://www.volunteering.austraining.com.au)

Austraining International

info.volunteering@austraining.com.au

Phone: +61 (0)8 8364 8500

Fax: +61 (0)8 8364 8588

[www.volunteering.austraining.com.au](http://www.volunteering.austraining.com.au)