

# Development Action

## Sustainable Development Fund Survey Results

November 2011

Development Action sent a survey to a wide range of international development NGOs in New Zealand.

The purpose of the survey was to gauge response to the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's contestable funding scheme for international development.

SDF focuses on sustainable economic development and replaces an earlier scheme (KOHA-PICD) which focused on poverty alleviation.

In particular, the survey focused on the decision-making body for funding allocation, the External Selection Panel (ESP).

The ESP was created by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and has operated for one funding round.

The ESP allocated \$24.8 million, 75% of which went to the Pacific, meeting an allocation target set by the Minister.

Controversy has surrounded the formation of the ESP, with questions raised regarding the level of development knowledge and expertise held by the three panellists.

As well, issues exist regarding the decision to allot funding based on a “balance of funding between NGOs and between countries” with special focus on meeting the Minister's funding targets.

The survey shows that most respondents would prefer funding allotments to be made based on the strength of the application, rather than political targets.

Also evident is the desire to keep SDF closed to private sector applicants. MFAT has recently hinted that this restriction could be lifted.

## Quick facts:

**72%** of respondents had little to no confidence in the ESP.

**69%** of respondents would be somewhat or definitely interested in explore funding from AusAID for projects to alleviate poverty.

**79%** of respondents felt the change to SDF has had a negative impact on their overseas communities.

# Question 1: Which statement most expresses your confidence in the External Selection Panel members appointed by MFAT Minister McCully to make final decisions on SDF allocations?

With regard to the External Selection Panel member's experience and knowledge of NGO development practice necessary to assess development project applications:

0%	They have my complete confidence.
14%	They have some of my confidence.
14%	I am indifferent.
29%	I only have a small degree of confidence.
<b>43%</b>	<b>I have no confidence in the ESP members.</b>

## Question 2: How best should SDF resources be allocated across the sector?

**71%**      **Based on the strength of application (e.g. a credible argument for need linked to a sound project proposal).**

**29%**      Based on balancing commitments (e.g. spreading funding more evenly across New Zealand organisations and countries).

Question 3: The International Development Group (IDG) has stated in a brief to the External Selection Panel that "[KOHA-PICD] was less robust in terms of transparency, focus and process."

In your opinion, is SDF:

0%	Far more transparent than KOHA-PICD.
7%	Somewhat more transparent than KOHA-PICD.
7%	About the same.
<b>50%</b>	<b>Less transparent than KOHA-PICD.</b>
36%	Far less transparent than KOHA-PICD.

Question 4: Has the change from KOHA-PICD to SDF had a positive or negative impact on the communities your organisation works with?

0%	Very positive.
7%	Somewhat positive.
14%	No change.
<b>43%</b>	<b>Somewhat negative.</b>
36%	Very negative.

Question 5: Choose the answer that best represents your opinion concerning the following statement:

"SDF should be open to private sector applications."

0%	Definitely agree.
21%	Somewhat agree.
0%	Indifferent.
29%	Somewhat disagree.
<b>43%</b>	<b>Definitely disagree.</b>

Question 6: Do you believe that linking your organisation's name with this survey could negatively impact your organisation's ability to get funding from SDF?

**75%**      **Yes**

25%      No

Question 7: Would your organisation be interested in applying for funding from AusAID to undertake overseas development work focused on poverty alleviation?

<b>46.2%</b>	<b>Definitely interested.</b>
23%	Somewhat interested.
0%	Indifferent.
31%	Probably not.
0%	Definitely not interested.

Development Action is not affiliated with any government agency or development NGO and is self-funded.

Approximately 80 organisations were sent the survey. 14 separate organisations completed surveys, a response rate of approximately 17.5%.

As agreed with participants, details of which organisation filled in the survey will not be released.

For more information on Development Action, and to see other research undertaken on SDF, visit our website **[www.developmentaction.co.nz](http://www.developmentaction.co.nz)**.