

CIDA Meeting

CAO Kevin Webb and Program Officer Megan MacLean met with CIDA officials on Tuesday March 2, 2011. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the current status of the:

1. Program Contribution Agreement with the "Partnerships with Canadians Branch (PWCB)" that is providing funds for 8 Rotary Developing Country Programs; and,
2. Project Contribution Agreement with the "Afghanistan Pakistan Task Force (APTF)" that is providing funds for the Rotary Afghanistan School project and Public Engagement campaign.

A brief report on these two meetings follows:

1. PWCB Meeting:

The meeting with CRCID's new temporary Project Officer, Simon Leury, provided him with an organizational orientation of Rotary (including Rotary Basics) and CRCID due to only recently being assigned the CRCID file. This was followed by him providing us with a briefing on how CIDA was shifting its emphasis over the next few years.

- a. There will be less focus on providing organizational support for the partners, which is of extreme interest to CRCID as it is currently very dependent upon CIDA funding for organizational support. This further emphasizes the need to develop more sustainable sources of revenue.
- b. There will be less emphasis on public engagement and development education but increased emphasis on Capacity Development of the offshore partners and beneficiaries. This is a shift in the CIDA definition of capacity development as a few years ago it included organizational capacity development.
- c. There is a shift to a "Call for Proposals" mechanism from the traditional mechanism of submitting a proposal 6 months prior to the termination of the current agreement. It is anticipated that this will result in improved efficiency and effectiveness by having the proposal reviewed and approved more quickly. For example, it took 18 months to get the current Contribution Agreement approved by CIDA. However, this new process is external to the CIDA Project Officer assigned to the file resulting in virtually no communication or opportunity between CRCID and CIDA to make any revisions to the proposal to ensure it meets the funding criteria.
- d. CIDA is now shifting their "semantics" from programs back to projects. While there will still be the need for focus; coordination; and, wherever possible integration it means the language will once again be more "Rotary friendly".
- e. The CIDA Financial Manager joined the meeting for approximately 20 minutes to discuss the revised 3-year budget that was initially submitted in July 2010. The proposed revisions to the budget focused on the Canadian Program (Public Engagement; Development Education; and, Capacity Development) and Program Management. The Developing Country Program budgets were NOT affected. He asked a few questions regarding the Canadian program budget that we were able to answer to his satisfaction. The budget was subsequently approved.
- f. The CIDA Environmental Specialists joined the meeting for about 30 minutes. They are very impressed with the progress CRCID is making with its Environmental policies and supporting tools and offered some suggestions for further improvement. They were also pleased that the CRCID Environmental Specialist would be conducting environmental monitoring missions of those programs with an environmental component. The first mission is scheduled for Guatemala this fall.
- g. Simon expressed an interest in accepting CRCID's invitation to attend at least one of the meetings during the May 13-15, 2011 AGM/PEM. This continues CIDA's shift towards being more engaged with their partners.

Overall, we were pleased with the tone of the meeting and the willingness of Simon to be supportive of CRCID. He did indicate at one time that they were spending more time with us than with their other partners but we didn't get a sense that this was a negative comment. I think it reinforces their perception that CRCID and Rotary are valuable partners with tremendous potential.

2. APTF Meeting:

This meeting was focused on providing the APTF team with an update on the public engagement campaign and the finishing touches on the school construction (computer lab & multi-purpose building).

This was followed by Tara Painter (APTF Project Officer) providing us with a briefing on how the Government was shifting its priorities in Afghanistan between 2011 and 2014.

- a. It is highly doubtful that the APTF would entertain another school construction project as they are shifting their emphasis in education to teacher training.
- b. The CIDA budget for Afghanistan will be slashed by 50% from \$200 million to \$100 million for the next fiscal year.
- c. They continued to be very impressed with the national Public Engagement Campaign as none of the other partners in the CIDA Afghanistan Challenge initiative undertook something this ambitious.
- d. Tara expressed an interest in giving a presentation during CRCID's Public Engagement Meeting scheduled for May 14th in Toronto. The focus will be on the Government of Canada's priorities for Afghanistan.
- e. Polio eradication in Afghanistan is one of the signature projects of the Canadian Government in Canada. There is a CIDA Project Officer responsible for this initiative and email communication has now been established to investigate the potential of Canadian Rotary receiving matched funding support for their contributions. It has already been determined that the Government is budgeting \$58.4 million between 2011 and 2014 towards this initiative in addition to the \$60 million committed between 2008 and 2011.

This was also a very positive meeting indicating that CRCID and Rotary are well-respected and valuable partners for CIDA.