

August 2024 aid news

by Development Policy Centre

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Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting 2024,
Tonga

Photo Credit: Twitter/AlboMP

Australian aid

The government has released **an unclassified version** of its assessment of Israel's response to the April killing of Australian aid worker Zomi Frankcom and her World Central Kitchen colleagues in Gaza by the Israeli military. Foreign Minister Penny Wong **has said** Australia will press for “full accountability” for Frankcom's death.

Marking World Humanitarian Day, ACFID and other civil society groups **paid tribute** to the more than 450 humanitarian workers killed globally in 2023 and 2024, of whom over half have been killed in Gaza since the 7 October attacks by Hamas.

Australian health experts and advocates **have called upon** the government to act on the worsening mpox outbreak in Africa and “expedite resources towards mobilisation of an effective, internationally coordinated and equitable response that will contain this outbreak, accelerate research, and safeguard vulnerable populations in the region”. The outbreak **has been declared** a “public health emergency of international concern” by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the new, deadlier strain of the virus **has been detected** in Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Sweden.

Marking the one-year anniversary of its 2023 International Development Policy, the government **restated its commitment** to improve DFAT's development capability and culture, build bipartisan support for its nominal increases to aid funding, and strengthen development impact with a focus on gender equality and climate change. It **also announced** \$35 million over four years for a promised Civil Society Partnerships Fund to “address the challenges of shrinking civic space in many parts of the world”.

As part of the implementation of the 2023 policy, DFAT has published the development partnership plans for **Indonesia (2024-28)** and **Papua New Guinea (2024-29)** and **19 of the 20 program evaluations** completed in the first half of 2024.

DEVPOLICYBLOG

Addressing the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Tonga, the UN Secretary General António Guterres **issued a fresh warning** about the rate of climate-induced sea level rise and called on G20 nations like Australia to “step up and lead, by phasing out the production and consumption of fossil fuels and stopping their expansion immediately”. Australia **secured endorsement** of the \$400 million, five-year Pacific Policing Initiative and Australia and Tuvalu announced the **entry into force** of their Falepili Union Treaty.

Prior to the Leaders Meeting, Australia and New Zealand **announced a joint contribution** of \$42.6 million toward the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing program. The **program design** envisages a possible scale-up to \$100 million to \$120 million over eight years “through additional donor funding and/or in-kind support” and “assumes some form of contribution from partner government[s]”.

Denying Australian media reports that it is planning to sell state-owned electricity assets to China, the head of PNG’s major state investment firm **has highlighted** the challenges associated with meeting the targets set out in the PNG Electrification Partnership announced by former PNG Prime Minister Peter O’Neill and the governments of Australia, New Zealand, the US, and Japan in 2018.

Austender has published its 2023-24 data on active DFAT aid contracts valued at over \$100,000 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Top ten DFAT aid contracts by value, 2023-24

Supplier Name	Description	Start Date	End Date	Value (A\$)
DT Global Asia Pacific Pty Ltd	Economic and Social Infrastructure Program (Papua New Guinea)	December 10, 2018	December 9, 2026	407,000,000
Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) Pty Ltd*	Design and Implementation Services Delivering the Indonesia Infrastructure Program (Phase 2) (Indonesia)	September 1, 2016	June 30, 2026	330,000,000
Australian Volunteers International	Provision of the Australian Volunteer Program Support Services (Canberra)	July 17, 2017	June 30, 2027	290,400,000
TAFE Queensland	Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC 3)	April 24, 2018	March 31, 2025	276,387,091
DT Global Asia Pacific Pty Ltd	Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Development (Indonesia)	March 1, 2018	February 28, 2026	255,200,000
Abt Associates Pty Ltd	Australia Timor-Leste Partnership for Human Development (Timor-Leste)	May 16, 2016	May 15, 2026	252,187,189
DT Global Asia Pacific Pty Ltd	Transport Sector Support Program Phase 3 (Papua New Guinea)	October 1, 2023	September 30, 2028	223,850,000
Abt Associates Pty Ltd	Papua New Guinea Australia Transition to Health Program (Papua New Guinea)	August 1, 2020	June 30, 2025	220,000,000
Abt Associates Pty Ltd	Australia - Papua New Guinea Subnational Program (Papua New Guinea)	March 23, 2022	February 28, 2026	218,982,396
GHD Australia Pty Ltd	Provision of Coordination Services (Global)	December 12, 2017	June 30, 2025	175,890,000

*Cardno Emerging Markets was acquired by DT Global Asia Pacific in 2022.

Source: Austender - DFAT, Australian Aid Program, 2023-24 • Created with Datawrapper

The ANU Crawford School will host a “Gender, Climate and Diversity Forum” on 24 September. The call for papers welcomes submissions which present research or innovative programming in these areas. Submissions should be sent to Annabel Dulhunty (annabel.dulhunty@anu.edu.au) by 6 September.

Regional/global aid

During a visit by Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka ahead of the Forum Leaders Meeting, China’s President Xi Jinping **reportedly agreed** to invest in Fiji’s tourism, agriculture and fisheries industries and support a road upgrading project on Vanua Levu, the country’s second-largest island.

The Biden administration **will provide** funding to the Philippines to temporarily host a “limited number” of Afghans (reportedly, around 300) being considered for resettlement in the United States.

The WHO and UNICEF **have called for** a humanitarian pause to the conflict in Gaza to allow for the delivery of over 1.6 million vaccine doses following the detection of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus in July. According to the WHO, Gaza has been polio-free for the last 25 years and its reemergence “represents yet another threat to the children in the Gaza Strip and neighbouring countries”.

Famine **has officially been declared** by the UN’s Famine Review Committee (FRC) in at least one refugee camp sheltering hundreds of thousands of people in the Darfur region of Sudan. Although the finding is limited to the Zanzam camp near the city of El Fasher, the FRC report warned that “many other areas throughout Sudan remain at risk of famine as long as the conflict and limited humanitarian access continue”.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) **has approved** a bailout of US\$3.4 billion for Ethiopia to support its economic reforms over the next four years and help it deal with mounting balance of payments and fiscal challenges after it defaulted on its sovereign debt repayments late last year.

The German government’s **final draft federal budget** for 2025 includes cuts to funding for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (-46%), UNFPA (-18%), and UNICEF (-8%). The budget maintains Germany’s contribution to the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA) at US\$1.4 billion, the same as its 2022 contribution, ahead of IDA’s upcoming replenishment.

Books, articles, reports, blogs, podcasts etc.

The World Bank’s *World Development Report* for 2024 focuses on overcoming the

“middle-income trap”, noting that “the total population of the 34 middle-income economies that transitioned to high-income status since 1990 is less than 250 million, the population of Pakistan”. There are currently 108 countries, containing around 6 billion people, that remain in this income category.

The Overseas Development Institute has published a new [series of essays](#) exploring Sri Lanka’s ongoing recovery from its economic, fiscal and political crisis in 2022 and its path forward.

The latest edition of the [Belt and Road](#) podcast looks at China’s economic, development and environmental footprint in northern Laos and the [China in Africa](#) podcast previews the upcoming China-Africa Summit.

In [the journal Economies](#), Bedassa Tadesse and his colleagues look at the effectiveness of mainstreamed gender equality aid across 118 countries.

In [the latest edition](#) of the *Journal of International Development* (open access), Stephen Brown from the University of Ottawa looks at the tensions between country ownership and LGBTQI+ inclusion in “hostile environments”.

In [their new book](#), the ANU’s Luke Glanville and the University of Manchester’s James Pattison ask how governments and leaders might prioritise multiple and sometimes competing global priorities like poverty, climate change and health.

Disclosures:

Material for this update has been collected by Devpol staff; editorial responsibility lies with Cameron Hill. Devpol’s work on Australian aid is supported by the [Gates Foundation](#). The views represent those of Centre staff only.

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The Development Policy Centre is part of the Crawford School of Public Policy under the College of Law, Governance and Policy at The Australian National University.

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