



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



**AUSTRALIA – SOUTH ASIA
(REGIONAL)
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP
PLAN 2024–2029**

Section 1: Introduction

Australia's partnership with South Asia (Regional)

Australia's engagement in South Asia is characterised by strong people-to-people links, cultural ties and increasing trade and investment. South Asia is the southern subregion of Asia, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Australia is an engaged Indian Ocean partner, with strong relationships across the region, including with our closest partners: India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Our partnership with India is deeper and more consequential than ever, and we are working to deliver on our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Strong relationships are important for navigating the shared challenges and opportunities our region faces.

Australia's objective is that the nations of our shared Indian Ocean region are able to exercise sovereignty and have options and agency in the areas that count. This covers responses to climate change, connectivity, infrastructure and inclusion. To position ourselves to offer meaningful choices, we have taken stock of Australia's place in the South Asia region and our shared priorities.

Australia is working through partners in South Asia to create a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Our regional development contributions focus on supporting long-term stability and economic growth by addressing transboundary challenges affecting infrastructure, energy transition, environment, ocean management, water resource management, agriculture and trade. Australia is also committed to working through regional institutions, chiefly the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), to promote greater cooperation on maritime safety and security, climate change, fisheries management, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, women's economic empowerment and the blue economy.

The Indian Ocean connects our communities to the world. It is vital for our trade, and is central to the sustainability of our environment. Our engagement in the region, working with partners bilaterally and through IORA, shows the importance we attach to maintaining a peaceful, stable and prosperous region.

More than 1.5 million Australians claim South Asian heritage, and South Asian migrant communities are among our fastest growing. We share and foster close people-to-people ties through Australia Awards, the New Colombo Plan and the Australian Volunteers Program. Expertise through Australian Government agencies is highly valued and sought after, particularly in agriculture, infrastructure, energy transition, environment, ocean and water resource management, and trade. Australian-supported technical assistance and training are expanding trade, investment and connectivity in South Asia.

Purpose of the Development Partnership Plan

Australia's [International Development Policy](#) presents a long-term vision for how the development program will meet the critical needs of our partners, support sustainable development and help lift people out of poverty. Australia seeks relationships based on respect and partnerships that create economic and social value for us all. To achieve this, Australia supports our partners to:

- build effective, accountable states that drive their own development
- enhance state and community resilience to external pressures and shocks
- connect with Australia and regional architecture
- generate collective action on global challenges that impact us and our region.

The Australia – South Asia (Regional) Development Partnership Plan 2024–2029 (DPP) translates into action the regional development priorities Australia shares with South Asia. The DPP sets out agreed objectives, how we will work with partners to deliver shared outcomes, and how progress will be monitored. It also identifies where

Australia can add value to regional development priorities in South Asia and how Australia will work with other development actors, ensuring the Australian Government contribution to development ambitions in the region is well coordinated.

The DPP reflects the full spectrum of Australia's development support – Australian Government regional Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as significant bilateral and global ODA and non-ODA development activities. A commitment to ongoing dialogue and engagement with government and non-government actors in support of a genuine and respectful partnership underpins this DPP. A mid-cycle review of the DPP will be undertaken.

The DPP sets a high level of ambition for our cooperation in expanding Australia's efforts and emphasis in several areas. Key changes to Australia's approach include:

- increasing support for economic growth through skills development and connectivity infrastructure
- elevating our commitment to stronger regional cooperation that builds on our shared Indian Ocean region and historical people-to-people links with South Asian countries
- strengthening our development activities on responding to the impacts of climate change and advancing gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI).

Preparing the Development Partnership Plan

The DPP complements Australia's bilateral partnerships in the region. It draws on experience from longstanding investments to focus on where Australia can best add value through regional and multicountry collaboration, including on transboundary challenges.

Preparation of the DPP was underpinned by principles of consultation, accountability and responsiveness to regional priorities. Between December 2023 and February 2024, consultation was undertaken with Australian Government agencies, multilateral partners, civil society and development contractors. This complemented regular, ongoing discussions with government officials through existing programs and forums. Diverse perspectives were considered to ensure Australia is focusing on where we can achieve most impact.

These consultations and ongoing engagement will underpin the DPP's vision for increased cohesion across bilateral, regional and global ODA and non-ODA development activities, as agreed in the strategic objectives. This will occur through improved reporting and more regular communication between Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) geographical areas and across government.

Section 2: South Asia development context and Australian partnership

Asia, including South Asia, has been at the forefront of global economic transformation in recent decades. South Asia's population is projected to grow by 5.6 per cent in 2024 and 2025, a higher rate than any other developing country region.¹

Economic progress, driven by the world's largest populated region, has resulted in most South Asian economies becoming lower middle-income countries. Between 1981 and 2019, the extreme income poverty rate in South Asia reduced from 58 per cent to 9 per cent, representing considerable progress in poverty reduction.² Gains have been achieved across the development spectrum: the adult literacy rate increased from 47 per cent in 1990 to 74 per cent in 2021 and infant mortality reduced from 169 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1980 to 33 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2021.³ Economic progress has also increased demand for skills development particularly in vocational, professional and tertiary education.

Despite substantial development gains, growth in South Asia has been neither inclusive nor equal, and considerable challenges remain. According to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, 389 million people in South Asia live in poverty and poor outcomes in education and health persistently hamper efforts to reduce poverty.⁴ Inequalities, especially in relation to income, have been worsening consistently in the region. Women have been worst affected, and South Asia recently recorded its worst decline in gender equality in two decades.⁵

Development challenges in the region have been exacerbated by a spate of damaging disruptions, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic, economic shocks, growing indebtedness, and the fuel and food shortages caused by the war in Ukraine. The protracted humanitarian crises in Afghanistan and Myanmar, and political instability in neighbouring countries, risk destabilising the entire region. South Asia also faces increased internal displacement risk due to urbanisation and the high numbers of vulnerable people exposed to multiple natural disaster hazards. Climate change is compounding many of these challenges, as governments grapple with the complexities of the global energy transition and communities face increasingly frequent extreme weather and climate-related events.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact have exacerbated people's vulnerability to poverty and regressed hard-earned development gains. In South Asia, as in many parts of the world, development program implementation slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Progress of the region against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has stagnated in the wake of the pandemic, with only 7 of 169 targets on track to be achieved.⁶

South Asia is the least integrated region in the world in terms of trade and connectivity (for example, transport, infrastructure and digital payments). Despite the existence of trade agreements between South Asian countries, they are yet to yield gains: trade between South Asian countries makes up only 5 per cent of the region's total trade compared with 60 per cent within Europe and 50 per cent within East Asia and the Pacific.⁷

Australia has increasing links with South Asia, accelerated by a growing diaspora and the imperative for economic diversification. Greater regional cooperation has the potential to boost intraregional trade by USD44 billion annually, help expand hydropower and clean energy capacity threefold by 2040, and result in electricity supply savings of approximately USD9 billion per year.

With some countries in South Asia working through debt stress, regional trading and connectivity ambitions may be longer-term goals. With ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia is providing essential advice and assistance on social protection to countries in our region, to support a return to prosperity, support leadership in regional institutions, promote stability and enhance resilience over the long term.

The Indian Ocean and South Asia are important for global trade, but at times the region's countries experience political instability, reinforcing the importance of Australia's bilateral and regional development efforts to bolster regional stability and support resilience.

Climate change

South Asian countries (especially Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan) are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, facing rising sea levels, flooding, drought and extreme temperatures. More than 750 million people in South Asia have been impacted by one or more climate-related disasters in the past two decades.⁸

Changes in rainfall patterns, increased extreme weather events, rapid urbanisation and growing industrial demands are leading to extreme water vulnerability across South Asia. High levels of water scarcity in agricultural areas and over-extraction of groundwater are leading to reduced crop yields, affecting farmer livelihoods and exacerbating poverty. Poor quality water and mismanagement of water resources are causing increases in waterborne diseases.

As the driest continent, Australia has significant experience in water resource management, circular economy approaches, and managing transboundary water allocations and markets. We have a decades-long history of working with South Asian governments as a region to support improved water management in rural and urban settings for more climate resilient communities and cities. Through various partners, Australia is helping mitigate the impact of floods and cyclones, and agencies such as the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) are building on longstanding research in resilient farming systems, flood prevention, natural hazards mitigation and biodiversity loss reduction. The regional DPP will have a greater focus on climate change as a cross-cutting theme in all investments and on water security.

The poorest and most vulnerable bear the brunt of climate change impacts. The region is projected to have the world's largest food-insecure population by 2050.⁹ Some 347 million children in South Asia face severe water shortages, affecting their wellbeing and growth and exposing them to food insecurity, malnutrition and waterborne diseases.

South Asian governments have ambitious responses to meet United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement goals, although meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions targets will require an estimated USD2.7 trillion in climate investments.¹⁰ Climate financing in South Asia must increase at least tenfold in the next decade to meet the required investment.¹¹ Australia will continue working with the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to leverage loans and private sector investment in transport and green energy infrastructure to help South Asian countries narrow their financing gaps and work towards their energy transition goals.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)

Although there has been some progress to increase inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups in South Asia – including women and girls, people with disability and people experiencing other forms of marginalisation and discrimination – there are still myriad challenges facing these groups.

South Asia has one of the lowest rates of female labour force participation globally, exacerbating gender inequality and creating opportunity losses in household incomes, and national productivity and economic growth. While women in South Asia now have improved access to financial services, with ownership of financial accounts increasing from 24 per cent to 66 per cent in one decade, structural barriers in the labour market remain.¹² The average South Asia labour force participation rate is 78.9 per cent for men and only 39.9 per cent for women.¹³ The gender pay gap is particularly pervasive in South Asia; some countries report disparities of more than 30 per cent.¹⁴

Gender-based violence rates are some of the highest in the world. The prevalence of lifetime intimate partner violence is 35 per cent higher than the global average.¹⁵ Rates of early and forced marriage (44 per cent of all child brides come from South Asia), teenage pregnancy, human trafficking, and sexual harassment and abuse in workplaces and schools are all high.

Discriminatory laws and sociocultural norms continue to marginalise and exclude people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities from education, health services, housing, employment opportunities and access to resources.

The prevalence of disabilities in South Asia is varied and under-reported. There are limited accurate, disaggregated data available on disability prevalence in South Asia. Information on barriers to participation and access is difficult to find. Health inequalities are usually more acute for people with disability.

Australia is well placed to help advance gender equality and inclusion in South Asia. DPP consultations confirmed that Australia is viewed as a leader in promoting GEDSI. Through our regional programs we will provide platforms to share lessons across the region and support local leaders to build networks to drive change. The South Asia DPP will mainstream GEDSI considerations across current and new investments, including through targeted GEDSI activities; monitoring, evaluation and learning; and ensuring training is inclusive. We will actively encourage our partners to increase their focus on GEDSI. The DPP mid-cycle review will consider progress on GEDSI, including lessons from complementary efforts in bilateral and global programs.

Section 3: Joint objectives of the Australia – South Asia (Regional) development partnership

The overarching goal for the Australia – South Asia (Regional) development partnership is a prosperous, resilient and stable South Asia region. Through the consultation process, we reflected on the goals and strategic direction of our current and future programming, as well as how we can best shape the direction of our work in the region. This is shown in our two development partnership objectives and how we will work together to progress each objective, as summarised in Table 1 and set out in detail later in this section.

These objectives reflect our regional focus in South Asia and support the priorities presented in the International Development Policy. Current and future investments will contribute to the objectives. They will be coordinated with other development partners and the regional program will remain consolidated. A mid-cycle review of this five-year DPP will be undertaken to track progress and make adjustments as required. The objectives also show an evolution in regional programs responding to the transboundary priorities of transport and trade, and water, energy and food security, from the previous investments.

This DPP is part of an integrated effort that complements DFAT's bilateral programs in South Asia and global programs, as well as non-ODA activities. DFAT global programs delivering efforts around the world, including in South Asia, provide complementary support to regional and bilateral programs, including in health, education and social inclusion. For example, the Indo-Pacific Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights COVID-19 Surge Response program (SRHR C-Surge), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Partnership for Education, and Water for Women promote gender equality through multicountry health, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs.

Our development partnership in South Asia encompasses strong engagement across the Australian Government, including the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Defence, Austrade, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of Education, ACIAR and CSIRO. We intend to increase engagement across the Australian Government further over time, as we consciously seek to build institutional links and strengthen partnerships between people. We will achieve greater coherence through regular dialogue, via design quality assurance, and through monitoring and evaluation processes.

Table 1: Australia – South Asia (Regional) development partnership

Goal: A prosperous, resilient and stable South Asia

Objective	Objective 1 Enhance economic growth, regional cooperation and linkages	Objective 2 Contribute to a climate resilient South Asia region
Outcomes	Outcome 1.1 Economic growth: Supporting regional economic growth through increased infrastructure investment and private sector cooperation Outcome 1.2 Enduring relationships and cooperation: Strengthened South Asian architecture, linkages, and collaboration between institutions and individuals, including with Australia Outcome 1.3 Skills and mobility: Increased skills development and mobility opportunities through scholarships and short courses in focus areas	Outcome 2.1 State capacity: Improved partner government capacity to manage the impacts of climate change Outcome 2.2 Community resilience: Improved access to climate resilient water, sanitation and hygiene, and disaster preparedness Outcome 2.3 Gender equality: Enhanced women's participation in climate resilience interventions
Focus areas	Objective 1 focus areas • Australia Awards Scholarships, Fellowships and short courses • Regional integration and regional architecture • Maritime safety, security and environment • Economic and social infrastructure • Transport connectivity • Private sector investment • Energy transition and security	Objective 2 focus areas • Water security • Climate-smart agriculture • Resilience and nature positive outcomes • Gender equality, disability and social inclusion • Alumni • Governance

Ways of working

We will work with partners to progress the objectives set out in Table 1 through:

- flexibility and responsiveness
- partner-driven and locally led development
- a coordinated and complementary approach across all investments
- strengthened monitoring, evaluation and learning
- a mainstreamed approach to climate change and GEDSI.

Objective 1: Enhance economic growth, regional cooperation and linkages

Australia will work with partners to support regional economic growth through increased infrastructure investment and a stronger focus on integrating climate considerations in accordance with G20 infrastructure principles. To achieve this, Australian finance, backed by World Bank and IFC expertise, will leverage loans and private sector investment in transport and green energy infrastructure. Through the South Asia Regional Infrastructure Connectivity (SARIC) program, our partners will assist governments to prepare a pipeline of transport and energy projects that connect economies in the region that are eligible for public and/or private financing. The program will also provide training to build skills and networks that contribute to connectivity projects. The regional program is complemented by bilateral economic growth activities managed by our posts in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

We will help strengthen regional architecture, linkages and collaboration between institutions and individuals, including with those in Australia. Australia is a committed member of IORA, which seeks to address regional challenges and uphold international rules and norms, including maritime domain awareness and maritime law enforcement, through workshops. These workshops build capacity in the Indian Ocean region on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We will initiate a maritime leadership program, which will help build the skills, leadership and confidence of the region's senior operational leaders. We will also launch a civil maritime security postgraduate program, bringing together emerging policy leaders to deepen their expertise in international maritime law and security. We will work with India to co-lead IORA's Working Group for Maritime Safety and Security over the next two years.

Increased skills development and mobility opportunities will be delivered primarily through Australia Awards Scholarships, Fellowships, short courses and professional development opportunities. We will continue to invest in these activities to build skills, support development and enhance linkages within the region and with Australia. This will create more opportunities to invest in the education of the region's future leaders and workforce and to better harness the expertise of alumni from our programs.

In addition, non-ODA contributions will include support for greater collaboration between Indian Ocean countries on maritime safety, security and environmental protection. This will include training on maritime domain awareness, protection of the marine environment and international law through partners such as CSIRO, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Australian universities. The Department of Home Affairs leads on refugee and migration support in South Asia. ACIAR is directly contributing to efforts on food security, especially in Pakistan. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is directly working on plastics pollution to enhance environmental protection.

Key development partners – China, the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea and the United States – invest significantly in South Asia's economic growth and integration. Australia will continue to coordinate with these partners where we can – and with others such as the United Nations, World Bank, IFC and Asian Development Bank – to ensure our investments are targeted and avoid duplication.

Objective 2: Contribute to a climate resilient South Asia region

Action on climate change is central to Australia's national development priorities. Australia's International Development Policy recognises that measures to adapt and build resilience to climate impacts are urgently needed to defend against climate-induced loss and damage. We are committed to considering climate risk in our programming and aligning our investments with partners' Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.

Australia's development programming in South Asia will enhance state and community resilience through a focus on water security and managing the impacts of climate change, as disasters grow more severe and outpace our collective ability to manage risk (for both mainland and maritime countries). Australia will work with partners to

deliver investments that can cope with and adapt to risks, including on environment, the blue economy, water resource management and climate change.

Australia will help improve partner government capacity to mitigate and/or adapt to the impacts of climate change, building on the legacy of the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio, which aimed to improve the management of water, energy and food resources in three major Himalayan river basins. The South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI) will provide technical assistance and training to India, Nepal and Pakistan to improve access to climate resilient and safe water and sanitation services for disadvantaged communities in South Asian cities and strengthen city-level water governance.

Global programs supported by DFAT, including the Green Climate Fund, Climate Resilient Communities and Australian Water Partnership, will also contribute to the achievement of this objective. The regional program will explore co-contributing to these programs to expand their reach and impact in South Asia.

Our climate-related investments will contribute to South Asia's connections with Australia and regionally. Through Australia Awards scholarships and short courses, we will advance this connectivity to create more opportunities for the region's future leaders in climate resilience and green energy transition.

Australia will enhance women's participation in climate resilience interventions by integrating GEDSI across all regional climate change-related investments. This will create more equitable and sustainable outcomes. It will also ensure our work to improve water security and management and our related policies, strategies and service delivery are inclusive and integrated across the region.

We will continue to share our government, civil society and private sector expertise with South Asia. For example, we will share learning through agencies such as ACIAR and CSIRO and through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to deliver support that strengthens climate resilience. Our focus will include policy engagement and investment in agriculture, biodiversity, natural hazards mitigation, resilient farming systems, flood prevention, and food and water security.

Key development financing partners include the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the World Bank Group, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. Given the scale of resources mobilised and coordination required between programs, our support will prioritise targeting areas in which we can most effectively add value, build on existing initiatives, partner strategically, and invest with purpose and for the long term.

Section 4: Delivering our partnership

Locally led development

Our South Asia regional investments are demand-driven and support governments and local actors in agreed priority areas. The delivery of our programs (such as SAWASI, SARIC and Australia Awards) is shaped by the knowledge and expertise of local staff working with DFAT and our implementing partners. This enhances local ownership and the sustainability of results. A strong network of locally led development focal points at our posts in South Asia will bolster our efforts to support local leadership by sharing lessons and helping tailor strategies to each unique context. Future South Asia investment designs and evaluations will include participation of local leaders to ensure appropriate expertise is utilised in the planning, design and measurement of activities.

Consultation

DFAT is committed to continuing DPP discussions with civil society, multilateral organisations and development consultants to assess risks and challenges, and share mutual learning and updates on progress. Through participation in regional forums and conferences, such as IORA and the Indian Ocean Conference, Australia will engage stakeholders in discussion about our regional programs and areas of mutual interest such as connectivity, water security and climate change. Multilateral partners convene intergovernmental meetings and provide feedback on advocacy points to ensure our programs remain fit for purpose. This will be supplemented by robust ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The Australian Government holds senior official discussions with partner governments where topics such as development cooperation, trade and the bilateral relationship are discussed. DFAT will also hold annual Australian Government roundtables on the progress of the DPP.

Evaluation and learning

Table 2 outlines the DPP consultation, evaluation and learning plan, which includes three investment level evaluations, annual stakeholder consultations with government, business and civil society, and a mid-cycle review of the DPP during the first three years of implementation.

Table 2: Consultation, evaluation and learning plan

Objective	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27
Objective 1 Enhance economic growth, regional cooperation and linkages	Mid-term evaluation of South Asia Regional Infrastructure Connectivity (SARIC) program	Consultations and regular monitoring missions for non-Official Development Assistance Indian Ocean Rim Association activities	Mid-term evaluation of Australia Awards in South Asia and Mongolia (AASAM) investment
Objective 2 Contribute to a climate resilient South Asia region	Mid-term evaluation of South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI) investment Learning events/regional workshops – AASAM and SAWASI with partners and beneficiaries	No formal reviews currently planned	Learning events/regional workshops – AASAM with partners and beneficiaries
Cross-program	Stakeholder learning roundtables (thematic focus on climate resilience in South Asia, and drawing on research by partners)	Stakeholder learning roundtables (thematic focus on gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and drawing on research by partners) Mid-cycle review of development partnership plan	Stakeholder learning roundtables (thematic focus on regional forums, and drawing on academic research)

Performance and results

The Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) at Table 3 provides a selection of indicators and expected results for the first three years of the DPP. The PAF will be updated periodically including at the mid-cycle review point, at which time indicators and results for the second half of the DPP will be identified.

Table 3: Performance Assessment Framework

Objective 1: Enhance economic growth, regional cooperation and linkages

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 1.1 Economic growth: Supporting regional economic growth through increased infrastructure investment and private sector cooperation	Number of infrastructure projects supported that meet G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investments, or similar internationally agreed standards (Tier 2)	11 projects (4 supported by World Bank; 7 supported by International Finance Corporation (IFC))	11 projects (4 supported by World Bank; 7 supported by IFC) ^a	Not applicable	SDG9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
Outcome 1.1	Strengthened capacity of regional mechanisms (Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)) to support economic growth and private sector cooperation	The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum supports improved regional business-to-business and government-to- government engagement Progress with the implementation of IORA trade and investment facilitation regional cooperation activities	The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum supports improved regional business-to-business and government-to- government engagement	The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum supports improved regional business-to-business and government-to- government engagement	Not applicable

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 1.1	Improved policies and regulations in the infrastructure sector (Tier 2)	Improved policy settings for infrastructure in relation to gender equality, disability and social inclusion and safeguards	Improved policy settings for infrastructure connectivity and access to green electricity markets	Improved policy settings for infrastructure connectivity and access to green electricity markets	SDG9
Outcome 1.1	Additional private funds leveraged to support sustainable development (Tier 2)	Not applicable	~USD100 million ^b	Not applicable	SDG9
Outcome 1.2 Enduring relationships and cooperation: Strengthened South Asian architecture, linkages, and collaboration between institutions and individuals, including with Australia	Number and percentage of alumni participating in mutual collaborations between their country and Australia, after completion of an Australia Award (Tier 2)	4 alumni (25%) participating in mutual collaborations between their country and Australia, after completion of an Australia Award	4 alumni (26%) participating in mutual collaborations between their country and Australia, after completion of an Australia Award	6 alumni (29%) participating in mutual collaborations between their country and Australia, after completion of an Australia Award	SDG4: Quality education
Outcome 1.2	A strengthened IORA	Development of IORA's climate change strategic agenda Strengthened capacity of regional officials in restoring blue carbon ecosystems under the IORA Indian Ocean Blue Carbon Hub through 1 annual meeting and 2 training programs	Development of IORA's climate change strategic agenda Strengthened capacity of regional officials in restoring blue carbon ecosystems under the IORA Indian Ocean Blue Carbon Hub through 1 annual meeting and 2 training programs	Implementation of IORA's climate change strategic agenda	SDG17: Partnerships for the goals

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 1.3 Skills and mobility: Increased skills development and mobility opportunities through scholarships and short courses in focus areas	Number of people who successfully complete a tertiary or technical/vocational course or work-related training (Tier 2)	200 (50% male; 50% female)	200 (50% male; 50% female)	200 (50% male; 50% female)	SDG4
Outcome 1.3	Australian support (including through technical assistance, capacity building and data/information sharing) contributes to partner countries' resilience and ability to manage their maritime domains and marine resources (Tier 2)	14 regional and 8 bilateral courses or workshops on maritime security delivered to IORA member states Scoping of a maritime leadership program and a civil maritime security postgraduate program	4 regional and 4 bilateral courses or workshops on maritime security delivered to IORA member states Finalise operational requirements for the maritime leadership program and the civil maritime security postgraduate program	4 regional and 4 bilateral courses or workshops on maritime security delivered to IORA member states Commence first-year intakes for maritime leadership program and civil maritime security postgraduate program	SDG4

a These projects are a continuation of projects from 2024–25.

b The investment from which this indicator is derived ends in 2025–26.

Objective 2: Contribute to a climate resilient South Asia region

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 2.1 State capacity: Improved partner government capacity to manage the impacts of climate change	Number of government departments or agencies at the local/state or national level where technical assistance is provided	National level: 4 Subnational level: 18	National level: 4 Subnational level: 20	National level: 4 Subnational level: 22	SDG13: Climate action
Outcome 2.1	Number of new government projects, policies or initiatives reflecting technical assistance themes	5 new (additional) government projects, policies or initiatives reflecting flood mitigation and hydrological technical advice	5 new (additional) government projects, policies or initiatives reflecting water management and climate resilient infrastructure technical advice	5 new (additional) government projects, policies or initiatives reflecting water management and climate resilient infrastructure technical advice	SDG13
Outcome 2.2 Community resilience: Improved access to climate resilient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and disaster preparedness	Number of WASH structures constructed	305	294	292	SDG6: Clean water and sanitation
Outcome 2.2	Number of people using basic or safely managed drinking water services (Tier 2)	26,000 additional households	17,500 additional households	10,500 additional households	SDG6

Outcome	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Outcome 2.3 Gender equality: Enhanced women’s participation in climate resilience interventions	Percentage of women community members involved in governance processes to improve access to water services	20%	25%	30%	SDG5: Gender equality
Outcome 2.3	Percentage of women community members engaged in awareness sessions related to WASH	30%	35%	45%	SDG5

Cross-program

Theme	Indicator	Expected results 2024–25	Expected results 2025–26	Expected results 2026–27	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Gender equality	Gender equality effectiveness aggregate investment monitoring report ratings	70%	75%	77%	SDG5: Gender equality
Disability equity	Disability inclusion effectiveness aggregate investment monitoring report ratings	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	SDG10: Reduced inequalities
Localisation	Number of local personnel, sub-contractors and staff engaged – Managing Contractors (Tier 3) ^c	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	SDG17: Partnerships for the goals
Localisation	Number and dollar value of local contracts and grants – Managing Contractors (Tier 3) ^c	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	Results collected centrally	SDG17
Localisation	Percentage of bilateral investment designs and evaluations that include local participation (Tier 3)	50%	65%	80%	SDG17

c Targets are not required for this indicator. Actual results are collected centrally and will be published.

Annex 1: Supporting investments/activities in South Asia

Australian Government supporting investments/activities for Objective 1 – Enhance economic growth, regional cooperation and linkages (regional and global Official Development Assistance (ODA) and significant non-ODA development investments/activities)

Name of investment/activity	Duration	Key partners
South Asia Regional Infrastructure Connectivity program (SARIC) (regional)	2019–2025	World Bank; International Finance Corporation; Palladium; Adam Smith International
Australia Awards in South Asia and Mongolia (AASAM) (regional)	2021–2024 (extensions possible until 2030)	Palladium
Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) secondee support (regional)	2022–2025	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Northeast Indian Ocean maritime domain awareness needs analysis (regional)	2023–2025	Australian National University
Indian Ocean Maritime Security Project (IOMSP) (regional)	2023–2026	Australian Government Department of Home Affairs; Australian Border Force
International Finance Facility for Immunisation (global)	2010–2028	Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
Cyber cooperation program (global)	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

Australian Government supporting investments for Objective 2 – Contribute to a climate resilient South Asia region (bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as significant regional and global ODA, and significant non-ODA development investments/activities)

Name of investment/activity	Duration	Key partners
South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI) (regional)	2021–2025	Alluvium; Arup; Adam Smith International; World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan; World Resources Institute; Oxford Policy Management Australia
Indian Ocean and IORA maritime programming (regional)	2023–2026	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO); Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster, Australian National University; Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Name of investment/activity	Duration	Key partners
Advancing Australia's agricultural relationship with Bangladesh and Pakistan (bilateral)	2023–2025	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Agricultural research (27 projects) (bilateral)	2024–2025	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in partnership with universities and agricultural organisations
Humanitarian Emergency Fund (HEF) (global)	Ongoing	Humanitarian response partners (various)

Endnotes

¹ World Bank, *World Bank expects solid growth but risky outlook for South Asia* [media release], 3 October 2023.

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Right side (from top to bottom):

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- Port of Chittagong, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Credit: Ishara Davey, DFAT
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