

IWDA INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY

IWDA STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTION REVIEW

JUNE 2023 -JULY 2024

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Executive Summary

The objective of the Stakeholder Perception Review is to obtain anonymous feedback from three different stakeholder groups that engage with IWDA to share their perceptions of IWDA's work - in terms of practice of its feminist and decolonial values and to verify its strengths and weaknesses in terms of their effectiveness and relevance in the varying spheres of their work. To give confidence to stakeholders to share their perceptions honestly with integrity all responses are treated as confidential and all identifiers have been removed including from the quotes in this report.

The feedback provides the basis for analysis from which common themes have emerged and where possible verified by other stakeholders. The findings of the research and the recommendations are to assist IWDA make informed decisions for areas of improvement as a learning organisation and contribute towards its annual strategic evaluation.

Three different stakeholder groups were identified by IWDA: **partners** from across Asia and the Pacific, **collaborators** and **resource** partners (majority Australian based) with a total of 26 groups invited to participate. Out of the 26, 12 organisations responded, including 6 partner organisations, 4 collaborators and 2 resource partners. All 12 and 4 participants also provided responses to the online questionnaire: 2 resource partners, 1 collaborator¹ and 1 partner. The partner organisations who responded to this year's survey were different to last year's cohort, and represented a spectrum of relationship with IWDA (new partners to well established partners); as well as provided a more critical as well as positive view of IWDA.

Though the sample size (12/ 26) is small, it reflects the care with which IWDA has taken to ensure it does not overburden its stakeholders, and we consider it presents a good geographical spread of perspectives, inclusive of diverse, cross-cultural and cross-sectoral groups (feminist and women's organisations, faith-based, LGBTQI, young leaders, researcher, philanthropic, development NGOs), size of organisations (community based, local/ umbrella NGOs, INGOs, movements and networks) and relationship history with IWDA (new to long term partnerships). Much of the analysis of perceptions is presented through IWDA's 4S framework of Stepping Up; Standing With, Stepping Back and Sitting With to improve and bring about transformative change. The choice of a Perception Survey in our view maintains a consistent and deliberate approach through which IWDA can additionally assess its own accountability and provide feedback into its annual strategic evaluation.

Overall, the summary findings of this stakeholder perception report confirms that IWDA continues to occupy a positive position of 'trust' and a 'partner that they value and respect' within Australia and the majority world of Asia-Pacific Region despite internal staffing and leadership changes. Partners placed high value on 'relationships' with individual staff at IWDA as well as IWDA as an organisation, 'transparency', clear mechanisms for 'communications', 'co-designing' and 'flexibility' in their relationship with IWDA. Respondents including partners and collaborators reaffirmed IWDA's relevance through IWDA's signature programs - including the Feminist Foreign Policy, and Equality Insights Rapid Survey and involvement in Women Deliver, which all play a crucial role in collectively advancing a feminist agenda, effectively

¹ One respondent who identified as a collaborator originally chose to provide feedback through the online survey; however, during the final report writing phase, they opted for an interview instead. This change adjusted the final tally to 8 interviews and 4 online survey respondents.

connecting partners with governments at national, regional and global levels. IWDA has also accompanied partners to effectively engage in several international platforms including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the Beijing Platform for Action. A funder however expressed some concern that convenings need to produce more than just outcome statements but rather to document more critically the impact of such processes and convenings for value for money.²

Along with its signature programs, IWDA's technical assistance to partners for institutional strengthening, risk assessment and capacity building, along with its technical support for feminist research, strategic planning and advocacy demonstrated a level of effectiveness and understanding of complex local situations including in countries that are going through crises and where violence is prevalent. Partners reflected on IWDA's support for local knowledge and researchers as an intentional decolonial practice around knowledge production. While in movement spaces, IWDA is seen practising a decolonial approach, knowing when to Step Back, and what to Sit With and continuing to be a learning organisation. IWDA continues to Step Up to act as an honest broker with funders, to push back on revolving compliance issues and advocate on behalf of partners. This ability is also based on a mature relationship with funders, clear communication and ability to troubleshoot with funders as issues arise.

Despite the overall positive feedback on IWDA there are a few key issues that require further interrogation and attention. An ongoing concern remains the high staff turnover within IWDA including leadership change which in some instances have coincided with staff turnover at partner organisations exposing both parties to new levels of risk. During transitional change the need for institutional memory and relationship retention to ensure continuity remains of high value to partners.

Some partners pointed out that IWDA is at a cusp - a question of where to next? Does it continue in its role as a funder - and what type of funder does IWDA wish to be? A central theme that emerged amongst nearly all the partners and confirmed by a resource partner was the issue of due diligence and compliance. On one end of the spectrum, a partner observed that IWDA had over the years become more and more systematic in its approach to funding, becoming internally focused on its own due diligence function and compliance, placing additional burden on the partner. Leaving the partner exposed to meet evolving compliance requirements which further delayed the disbursement of funds from IWDA resulting in program delays as well as staff not being paid on time. While on the other end of the spectrum, some partners felt that IWDA accompanied them well to meet the stringent compliance requirements.

There are also questions on whether IWDA has reached a saturation point in the number of partnerships and whether its focus should be on mobilising more resources within an already constrained environment to sustain the growth of the existing partnerships? Or does it become more of an implementer - driving independent critical research such as gender statistics and analysis, and advocacy? Both partners and collaborators agree that there is huge potential to leverage IWDA's partnerships to ensure cross collaboration at the national level and cross-regional sharing and learning spaces which is perceived as not happening at this point. In

² This reflection was presented as a comment by a respondent that identified as a resource stakeholder in the online survey.

addition, the potential for joint strategy for advocacy was highlighted as a potential opportunity that IWDA could pivot towards.

Methodology

The research methodology is designed to address the specific objectives outlined in the Expression of Interest Document, focusing on the collection of anonymous feedback regarding IWDA's work during the 2023-2024 review period.

Its primary goal is to assist IWDA in effectively gathering anonymous feedback from stakeholders. The insights gained from the findings presented in this report will inform decision-making processes aimed at optimising the design and delivery of the post-2025 Strategic Plan. Ultimately, the methodology seeks to enhance future programming and provide better support for IWDA's partners.

Overall Research Goals intended to correspond to the following priorities of IWDA which are:

- How well is IWDA delivering against their Strategic Plan (are we doing things right?)
- Whether the Strategic Plan is appropriate (are we doing the right things?)
- What should the next Strategic plan look like (how do we decide what is right?)

Research Objectives

The research sought to collect anonymous feedback from three major stakeholder groups: partner organisations that work with IWDA as grantees, which include women's rights and feminist organisations, collaboration partners, and resource (funding) stakeholders. The goal was to assess their perceptions of the value that IWDA adds to each cohort, how well IWDA aligns with its own values, and how this alignment impacts the effectiveness and relevance of IWDA's work. Additionally, the research sought to gain insights into stakeholders' views on IWDA's performance and to identify areas for improvement.

Research Design

The research design was primarily qualitative, utilising an **online survey** with a mix of open and close-ended questions to allow stakeholders room to provide detailed feedback. The survey was accompanied by a mix of one-on-one and group online focused group (where appropriate and upon interviewee organisations preference) interview/ talanoa format in place of face-to-face discussions. A mixed-methodology approach was utilised, incorporating some quantitative questions to gather additional context.

Sampling Strategy

A cross-sectional sample of organisations and individuals who engaged with IWDA during the 2023-2024 review period was selected based on IWDA's recommended list. We employed purposive sampling across three stakeholder groups to ensure a diverse range of perceptions, including partners, collaborators, and funding stakeholders. The sample size was determined by the diversity of stakeholders and their availability, guided by the Terms of Reference (TOR), which specified 6-8 partner organisations and 4-6 collaboration and resource stakeholders. IWDA provided a contact list, along with e-introductions and notifications about the survey conducted by IWDA staff on behalf of the review consultants.

Data Collection Methods

- a. Key informant focus interviews were conducted with individuals and groups from a subset of organisations identified through the sampling strategy. An online survey platform was also utilised to create a questionnaire that included both open-ended and closed-ended questions.
- b. **Open-Ended Questions**
Participants were asked to share their perceptions of IWDA's value addition, effectiveness, relevance, and the alignment with and practice of its values. They were encouraged to provide specific examples of what IWDA had accomplished effectively and to suggest areas for improvement.
- c. **Closed-Ended Questions**
Likert-scale questions were employed to assess stakeholders' agreement with statements regarding IWDA's effectiveness, relevance, and values.

Data Collection Process

Interview questions were rolled out to key informants. The online survey link was disseminated through email. Sufficient time was allocated for participants to complete the survey, and reminders were sent out as necessary.

Data Analysis

Open-ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes, patterns, and sentiments, as well as feedback that provided candid insights into IWDA's operational approaches, which contributed positively or negatively to informing IWDA's priorities. This analysis sought to address questions such as whether IWDA was doing things right, whether the right things were being done, and how decisions regarding what is deemed right were made. Quantitative data from the Likert-scale questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, percentage) to offer an overview of stakeholder perceptions.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from participants, who were clearly informed about the purpose of the survey and how their feedback would be utilised at the beginning of the interviews. This was also framed in the opening section of the online survey. Participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

Reporting

- a. Prepared a comprehensive report summarising the findings, including both qualitative and quantitative insights.
- b. Included key themes, direct quotes from participants, and a detailed analysis of stakeholders' perceptions of IWDA's work during the 2023-2024 review period.
- c. Provided recommendations based on the feedback received, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
- d. Provided an executive summary.

(Forward) Action Planning and Feedback

- a. The **research consultants** - to share the research findings with IWDA's Senior Program Quality Manager and other relevant IWDA personnel.

- b. **IWDA** - to inform their forward programming strategic plan based on the insights and recommendations from the research to enhance IWDA's effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with values in the future.

Findings

A total of 26 organisations, comprising 8 partner organisations, 10 collaborator organisations and 8 resource organisations were identified by IWDA, with e-introductions to each of the stakeholders organised by IWDA. Out of the 26 organisations, 12 responded and participated in the online face-to-face talanoa sessions and the online survey. Out of the 12 organisations that engaged, 6 are partner organisations, 4 collaborators and 2 were resource stakeholders.

Number	Partner Organisations	Collaborator Stakeholders	Resource Stakeholders	Tally
Total stakeholders identified and contacted	8	10	8	26
Target	6-8	4-6	4-6	14-20
Actual number of stakeholders that engaged	6	4	2	12

The sample size of respondents that engaged in this review is small warranting a note on overall quality of data. Based on learnings from the 2022/2023 review, IWDA has targeted a different cohort for each of the stakeholder groups for the purpose of this review, mindful not to overburden their stakeholders and to ensure diverse experiences and views are sought each year. Additionally we maintain that the cohort reflects good geographical representation of perspectives, inclusive of diverse cross-cultural and cross-sectoral groups (feminist and women’s organisations, LGBTQI groups, faith-based, philanthropic, development NGOs, researchers, consultants), size of organisations (community based, local NGOs, INGOs) and relationship history with IWDA (new - long term partners) to provide a rich but nuanced basis for analysis from which common themes have emerged which are presented below.

The findings in this stakeholder perception report confirm that IWDA continues to hold a positive reputation as a trusted and valued partner within Australia and the majority world Asia-Pacific region. However, there were concerns raised by Partners, Collaborators, and Resource Stakeholders regarding internal staffing and leadership changes, particularly in relation to IWDA’s adherence to its values.

These concerns were reflected in a shift in ratings, for those that engaged in the online anonymous survey (a total of 4 respondents) and additional reflections highlighted in the analysis segment of this report.

It is potentially of interest to also note that the types of respondents to the online survey varied between the two periods (as shown in the below table).

1. In 2022-2023, two partners, one resource stakeholder, and one collaborator provided feedback, while in the 2023-2024 review period, there was one partner, two resource stakeholders, and one collaborator who opted to participate in the survey.

Stakeholder Cohorts	Partner	Resource Stakeholder	Collaborator
2022-23	2	1	1
2023-24	1	2	1


The following is a brief summary comparison of findings from the online survey conducted for the 2023-24 review period and the previous 2022-23 review period.


2. In evaluating IWDA's adherence to its values, all four respondents who participated in the online survey provided an average overall rating of 6.5 out of 10. Specifically, one 25% of respondents (equivalent to 25%) rated it 5 out of 10, another one (25%) rated it 6 out of 10, another (25%) rated it 7 out of 10, and the final remaining one (25%) rated it 8 out of 10. This represents a noticeable shift in perception compared to the review period of 2022-2023. During that time, the ratings were higher, with one 25% of respondents (25%) giving a rating of 8 out of 10, two (50%) providing a rating of 9 out of 10, and one (25%) rating it 10 out of 10, resulting in an average rating of 9 out of 10.
3. In terms of effectiveness, all four respondents who provided feedback through the online survey rated IWDA's performance with an overall average of 7.5 out of 10. Notably, two 50% of respondents (50%) rated IWDA's effectiveness as either 7 or 8 out of 10. This marks a shift in perception compared to the 2022-2023 review period, during which participants provided a more varied assessment: one (25%) rated it a 7 out of 10, two (50%) rated it a 9, and one (25%) gave it a perfect 10, resulting in an average rating of 8.8 out of 10.

In terms of relevance, all four respondents who provided feedback through the online survey gave an overall average rating of 7.5 out of 10. Notably, two 50% of respondents (50%) rated IWDA's relevance either a 7 or an 8 out of 10. This marks a shift in perception compared to the 2022-2023 review period, during which participants gave a more varied set of ratings: one (25%) rated it a 7, two (50%) rated it a 9, and one (25%) rated it a 10, resulting in an average rating of 8.8 out of 10.

The following table presents the responses collected from an online survey assessing various aspects of IWDA's performance during the financial year from June 2023 to July 2024. The responses reflect participants' evaluations of IWDA's adherence to its values, effectiveness in collaboration with organisations, and the relevance of its work. The ratings provided range from 1 to 10, with the average scores highlighted for each category.

Rate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
IWDA's practice of its values during the financial year June 2023 to July 2024.											6.5
Effectiveness of IWDA's work with your organisation during the financial year June 2023 to July 2024.											7.5
Relevance of IWDA's work during the financial year June 2023 to July 2024.											7.5

 25% response

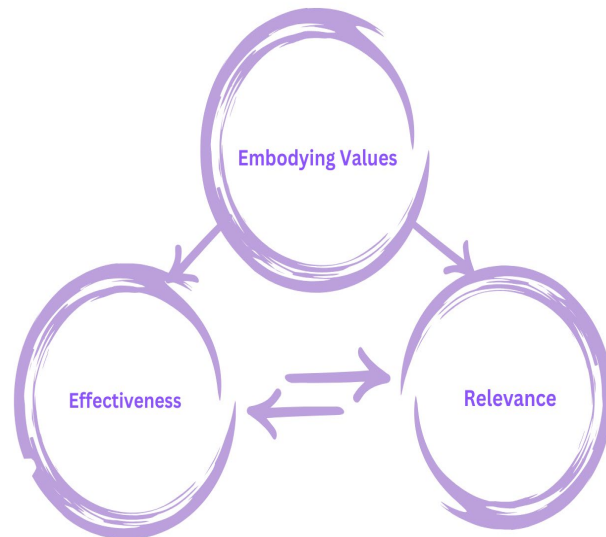
 50% response

Analysis

IWDA's approach consists of four key elements: Step Up, Stand With, Step Back, and Sit With. The three stakeholder groups involved have a general understanding of this approach, as well as IWDA's strategic priority areas. They have identified which of these strategic areas align with their organisational goals and what they are collaboratively working towards. Additionally, they can articulate how this collaboration contributes to other strategic objectives.

Interviewees shared clear examples, which we the research consultants have summarised below as part of the results. The following analysis is based on reflections from those interviewed.

The diagram presented illustrates IWDA's engagement practices with each stakeholder, emphasising their commitment to embodying their values. This dedication is reflected in the feedback shared by each stakeholder during their review.



Embodying Values

Overall, partners and collaborators—both from interviews and surveys—consistently affirmed IWDA's strong embodiment of their values. They rated IWDA highly, particularly in its commitment to feminist principles such as co-designing, co-responsibility, and co-leadership. Furthermore, they acknowledged IWDA's institutional policies, as well as their practical application of decolonial values. Many partners and collaborators shared rich anecdotes and reflections that went beyond the numerical ratings of the online survey, emphasising IWDA's active engagement in collaborative projects and partnerships that reflect these shared values.

A key element of decolonial values and practices is the need to de-center power that sits in the minority North particularly in relationships with partnerships in the majority South. Partners highlighted language use (eg translating documents from English to local language) as a key feature of decolonial practice as a key example.

“Yes, with their new positions and principles regarding decolonisation, we have actively partnered with them to address some recent processes they’ve implemented. We are now looking at their updated procedures, engaging in research, and collaborating with various partners. It’s important for us to avoid actions that do not contribute to solidarity and movement-building.

Their approach to knowing when to step up, step down, and navigate different situations is beneficial. It helps them understand how to effectively work with all of us, especially at (Coalition name redacted), where we have a diverse range of partners—some are new while others have been involved for a longer time. Their ability to engage with us appropriately, knowing when to escalate support and when to take a step back, is crucial for maintaining our existing relationships.

*Last year, our collaboration with Women Deliver was a fantastic experience. We worked with many different organisations in the region to ensure that Women Deliver had strong representation from the Pacific. This collaboration was successful, particularly with IWDA taking on the responsibility alongside DIVA to hold space for us, which was greatly appreciated.” – **Partner***

Institutionally IWDA is perceived to embody decolonial and feminist values through clear policies and procedures, while IWDA staff are perceived to put these values into practice. As a learning organisation, IWDA actively seeks feedback from its stakeholders to improve its engagement practice, knowing when to Step Back particularly in diverse settings to limit risk and reduce harm to movements and solidarity efforts. Worth noting the *Women Deliver*³ activity was emphasised as a clear example of the success of practice of values in a co-responsibility setting with a partner from the Pacific which continues to resonate in this reporting period. IWDA signature programs were cited by collaborators and partners that demonstrate both a co-designing and co-responsibility elements to them including the Feminist Foreign Policy and the Equality Insights Rapid Survey.

“I believe that for now, if you ask me, IWDA is gradually progressing with its focus on the four Ss. They are making an effort, and I think that’s commendable. It’s important for them to approach this with care and sensitivity, as they are not the kind of organisation that bulldozes through issues anymore. I think everyone in the organisation has come to realise that change is necessary.

It’s encouraging to see that we, and people from the region, are being represented in the organisation, from governance and leadership down to those working on various programs. Overall, I think this is positive. However, in practical terms, I notice that they are sometimes being overly cautious, which can lead to missing important opportunities as things develop.”
- **Partner**

³ IWDA and DIVA for Equality, with collaborative support from the Pacific Community (SPC), coordinated the Pacific delegation (a mix of CSO and Women MPs) to the 2023 Women Deliver Conference, held in Kigali, Rwanda from July 17–20, 2023. This multi-sectoral gathering focused on advancing gender equality under the theme "Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions," addressing critical issues like climate change, gender-based violence, and unpaid care work. The conference, held every three years, unites diverse stakeholders—including governments, philanthropies, youth, and human rights advocates—to discuss women's rights and shape global policy directions.

There is a caution to consider: in its efforts to embed its values, IWDA should avoid becoming overly risk-averse or cautious, as this could lead to missed opportunities. IWDA's strong stance on Palestine during this reporting period is viewed as an important achievement, demonstrating its ability to step up and stand firm when necessary. However, the reflection below initially emphasised passing concern regarding IWDA's perceived hesitation to publicly express its political position on Palestine, during a convening in this reporting period. The respondent went on to emphasise that their concern was quickly alleviated when IWDA released a joint letter in support of Palestine soon after.

"I also thought that IWDA taking a stance on Palestine and writing a letter was also an important achievement. I think, personally, today, any feminist organisation that doesn't take a clear stand on Palestine would be a failure". - Collaborator

Effectiveness

IWDA's effectiveness is perceived along three key areas:

- (a) (internal) institutional technical assistance to strengthen and support partners meet stringent compliance requirement by funders;
- (b) (external) provision of timely, appropriate external technical assistance including a critical feminist research agenda;
- (c) and its convening power to connect partners with governments and other stakeholders (e.g. UN Women) at the national, regional and global level.

"I believe that IWDA has already made significant progress. As I understand it, the organisation is at a pivotal moment in redefining its work and determining its future direction, whether that means taking on more of a funding role or something else entirely.

From our perspective, we've had a productive working relationship, and we greatly appreciate the support we've received, particularly in navigating new policies—especially those that DFAT often imposes on us. The training sessions, reporting requirements, and guidance have all been very helpful." – Partner

An interesting point to note is that stakeholders recognise that IWDA is currently undergoing a transitional phase, which involves changes in leadership, staffing, and strategic direction. Despite this, IWDA continues to step up its support for partners as they navigate relationships with funders and the increasing demands for compliance. IWDA's effectiveness in providing technical support—including content, capacity building, policy development, and accompaniment—has positively impacted the overall quality of reports submitted to funders.

A resource partner expressed appreciation for the quality of reports from IWDA partners. Additionally, IWDA's communication support was considered excellent by the same resource partner, and across various platforms has enhanced the visibility of its programs.

"They definitely strengthen overall program reporting. I feel confident to say that if partners

were reporting to us, we wouldn't get the same level of outcomes data or MEL reporting. Their communications are also excellent - social media presence, videos and the exposure they give to programs is excellent.”- Resource Stakeholder

Despite the positive feedback, IWDA will need to Sit With elements of relationship risks as perceived by partners during a period of transitional change especially when the transitional changes occur both at the IWDA level and partner organisations. Better documentation of partnerships and handover between staff was suggested as a possible remedy from a partner interviewed, in ensuring a smoother transition for IWDA staff and their corresponding partners given how much time is vested on both sides on building resilient relationships.

“One of the challenges we face, which is difficult to mitigate, is staff turnover. When there is high turnover, it becomes hard for us to stay updated on what is happening. This also affects the new employees at IWDA, as they struggle to catch up on the context of our work in (country name redacted).

We spend a lot of time trying to understand each other and rebuild relationships. At the same time, we need to ensure that new staff are informed about the work we are doing. It often feels like IWDA does not document enough about our partners, which would help newcomers read and gain a deeper understanding of our efforts.

I really appreciate the idea of IWDA creating shared spaces when new staff join. They could have lunch or snack talks where everyone shares updates about our partners. This practice should continue, but I worry that, post-COVID-19, these opportunities might decrease since some staff are transitioning to flexible hours and working from home more than in the office.

(Interviewer: When discussing staff turnover, are we referring to turnover within IWDA only, or is it broader than that?) Yes, I mean staff turnover within IWDA.”- Partner

Given the diversity and complexities of IWDA partnerships (from grassroots organisations, to newly emerging groups, to well established NGOs) and its expansive regional coverage - Asia and the Pacific and against a backdrop of transitional change within IWDA, a resource stakeholder acknowledged that there was an internal process that IWDA was going through to consider **how** to effectively support diverse partners meet donor compliance requirements.

“IWDA appears to still be trying to determine how it can provide the level of due diligence support that some partners require, given its location in the global north. Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to this issue, which remains to be addressed.

Strengthening the connections between the partnerships and advocacy teams could be extremely beneficial.

IWDA's advocacy and research initiatives have consistently proven to be very strong.” - Resource Stakeholder

The resource stakeholder made a suggestion for IWDA to consider as a means of enhancing their internal capacity to better support external partnerships. There was no further elaboration provided in their reflection. While a limited observation, this could be a valuable area for the IWDA teams to explore as they plan future initiatives that link programming efforts to bolster their external partnership support.

Additionally, the same stakeholder recommended that IWDA strengthen the connections between their own advocacy and research initiatives. While these initiatives are consistently robust and supported by diverse partnerships, their external visibility may not be as evident as highlighted by the resource stakeholder's reflection.

“There are potentially missed opportunities to leverage outcomes between IWDA country programs and partners. I sometimes feel like each program is delivered in isolation and connections aren't always made. I could be totally wrong here, but from the outside it seems like this sometimes.” - Resource Stakeholder

While another resource partner perceived that there could be yet another potential opportunity to strengthen IWDA's coordination role within a country particularly between country programs and partners which was also not externally evident.

“In my opinion, if IWDA is going to continue partnering with local or national organisations, it is essential that they understand the challenges faced by these organisations. It's also crucial to recognise that times are changing, and there are increasing expectations placed on donors, who must adhere to their own compliance agendas.

Moreover, those managing projects on behalf of these donors also have compliance requirements. If IWDA continues to partner with national organizations, they should assist us in fulfilling these compliance demands. This includes guiding us in the development and implementation of safeguarding policies.

I believe that this support is a valuable way for IWDA to help national organizations become more independent. Since IWDA advocates for decolonisation, facilitating greater independence for national organisations from international partners is a significant aspect of this mission.

In my view, one of the greatest contributions an NGO can make to a national organisation is not only to address compliance issues but also to enhance general project management. This includes developing a deeper understanding of project execution and financial management. Ultimately, the goal should be to empower national organisations to stand on their own feet.” - Partner

Within the existing partnerships and particularly with more established partners where there is a level of high trust and confidence in the relationship with IWDA, the views expressed above reflects a perception of IWDA's role as a conduit between donors and how that should be expressed as decolonial practices. This includes additional support from IWDA to meet the challenging compliance requirement of donors and to enhance project management. The

partners expressed a desire to diversify dependency on IWDA and DFAT funding to give partners a greater sense of autonomy, self-reliance and a sense of independence.

While in another case, IWDA is seen to be tapping into an opportunity. There is a clear gap in which a regional technical agency is not able to meet the demands of its member countries in the provision of gender statistics and analysis. IWDA stepping into this role presents a valuable opportunity to not only engage with governments in the Pacific but to inform policy and drive budgetary allocation through statistics and data that could bring about transformative change.

“I’m not sure whether to label this role as an advisor or something else. As you may know, our default support comes from SPC, which has always served as our primary counterpart. However, there are many specific countries that reach out to the SPC for assistance.

*Due to this demand, they have to prioritise their support. That's why I believe having the IWDA involved, especially in the area of gender statistics and analysis, could be incredibly valuable. I truly appreciate and encourage continued collaboration in this field. I think my boss also recognises the potential in the work we've done with this team”. - **Collaborator***

Relevance

IWDA’s long standing relationships, a form of social contract with partners, is built on deep knowledge of partners and context in which they operate in and particularly in complex areas including conflict zones, demonstrating co-designing innovative partnerships which centre partners from the majority world of Asia and Pacific within the Australian and international context. Partners in turn are mutually dependent on this funding relationship but seek a diversity of funding streams to enable a level of autonomy and self-reliance; to co-jointly shape and share advocacy spaces for partners to directly influence policy with government and other key stakeholders. IWDA’s decolonial practices were specifically highlighted by collaborators and resource partners as an ongoing process of learning and practice by IWDA. Localisation is understood as the ability of partners to determine their goals for themselves, seek resources that would assist partners to co-jointly build their own capacity to pursue collective outcomes including their own outcomes.

“We feel very proud because we have the ability to design initiatives ourselves. It's not only about IWDA creating a design and submitting a proposal to a donor. When the grant is approved, we collaborate on the design process, involving everyone, including the principal. We reach agreements during workshops about various aspects, including rules, risk management, and other policies. If we disagree on any policy, we can voice our concerns and discuss them thoroughly, which helps us make fair decisions.

*We consider this a partner-led program rather than a donor-driven one. IWDA genuinely cares about our well-being and safety, as well as our self-care initiatives. Last year, IWDA started supporting self-care plans for our partner organisations, and this has been incredibly beneficial. Given the challenging circumstances we live in, our staff now has access to counselling sessions and self-care resources, which significantly contributes to their overall well-being. This support has proven to be very useful for us.” - **Partner***

The process of co-designing is a demonstration of IWDA's ability to Stand With partners and accompany them in a process of learning and empowerment. It demonstrates IWDA understanding of the context in which partners operate in and IWDA's duty of care for partners to Step Up and provide the necessary policy frameworks (self-care) to support partners and their well-being.

"Even when there are translation or interpretation issues, they ensure that all documents are translated. During workshops, they are particularly attentive to translation needs. They always provide an interpreter, allowing us to communicate in our own language if we struggle with English or feel uncomfortable speaking it. Their concern for their partners is evident, even in small ways, which will make them even more effective in the future."

Partner

The English language both spoken and written, continues to be the dominant language for engagement between the minority North and the majority South relationships. As such IWDA's practice of translation into local language is part of a larger decolonial practice which enables partners to feel heard and empowers them to engage more critically with the content (whether it's on funding around compliance or feminist research and analysis).

The decentering of the English language allows for the relationship with IWDA to be mutually beneficial and to level the power-dynamics into more of an equal partnership.

"At the organisational level, IWDA has supported us by providing resources, both in terms of personnel and funding. This allows us to continue our work in line with our discussions with IWDA, while maintaining flexibility in our approach.

IWDA has also contributed to our human capacity development by offering training on development tools. These tools have been adapted locally, allowing us to use them in our own context. For instance, we have created a "Plan Your Power" tool kit, which is a feminist advocacy tool kit tailored for Cambodia. While some aspects of it remain unchanged, we have localised and adjusted portions to fit our language and specific needs. Additionally, IWDA has connected us with other organisations working on similar issues, helping to build a strong feminist network among partnering organisations.

At the management level, IWDA has strengthened our capacity to apply for proposals independently. We've learned how to manage and lead using a feminist leadership approach, benefiting greatly from IWDA's support in our internal management practices.

On a personal level, IWDA staff embody feminist principles and carry these values into their professional and personal lives. They have developed friendships with us, allowing for discussions that go beyond work and into personal development.

*Overall, our collaboration with IWDA has been mutually enriching. We have provided valuable insights to IWDA concerning critical thinking around partner engagement, equal partnership, and the decolonisation of funding practices." - **Partner***

While another partner continues to affirm the mutually enriched relationship between IWDA and themselves. Recognising the complex role IWDA plays in not only providing funds but also human resources to accompany partners in the majority world to safely navigate the world of funding. Providing appropriate, timely support that is relevant and open for IWDA tools to be adapted for local context including local languages. Whilst also connecting partners to other organisations working on similar issues to build stronger feminist networks. Partners identify and recognise the practice of embodied values by IWDA including its feminist and decolonial values.

Conclusive Remarks

Overall, the findings of this stakeholder perception report demonstrate that IWDA maintains a favourable position of **trust and respect** within Australia and the majority world of the Asia-Pacific Region. Stakeholders rated IWDA highly for efficacy and relevance, however were split on their perception on IWDA's embodiment of their values across three cohorts of stakeholders: Partner Organisations, Collaborator Stakeholders, and Resource Stakeholders with its feminist practices being perceived more positively while its decolonial practices require further effort

Respondents affirm that IWDA's unique position to Step Up and Stand With is derived from IWDA's core feminist values and practices, critical and timely analysis. While its decolonial approach in practice is reflected in its sustained support to partners to be (more) self-determining and have a level of autonomy and ultimately the ability to be independent - reflected by the ability of partners to determine their goals for themselves, to seek resources that would assist partners to build their own capacities including leadership and to pursue their own outcomes. The practice of deep listening to understand and appreciate local context, use of language (translation) point to examples of how to further IWDA's decolonial practices.

Its strength resides in the resilient relationships both formal and informal that diverse members of the IWDA teams (finance, program, advocacy and leadership) have with the different stakeholders. These relationships including personal friendships have been forged over the years are the basis upon which **trust and respect** has been built. Women Deliver, the Feminist Foreign Policy, Gender Equality Rapid Assessment were viewed by all 3 stakeholders as positive examples although two of these activities fall outside the reporting period. The success of these programs demonstrates how IWDA utilises location power to amplify their shared values with partners in the majority world. IWDA's communication continues to profile partnerships and programs high value for knowledge products.

Despite the overall positive feedback on IWDA there are a few issues that require further attention. IWDA will continuously need to sit with and acknowledge the power asymmetry that exists between IWDA and the different stakeholder groups but more specifically partner organisations in its efforts to further decolonise its practices. Deliberate attention to efforts to decenter power through deep listening, two-way communication, language shifts (from English to local) will continue to shape IWDA's practices.

Niggling perceptions of high staff turnover in IWDA particularly when it coincides with changes in staffing in partner organisations calls for greater scrutiny on IWDA's internal capacity to maintain some of its core functions particularly around due diligence. An identifiable area to

strengthen is better documentation of partnerships, a system of handover between staff to sustain the level of investment in relationships.

Within a resource constrained environment there is a need for clarity around sustained support for the existing partnerships, how to transition between new partners - and longer-term partners respecting their desire to diversify funding sources to reduce dependency on IWDA and DFAT. IWDA will need to delicately balance donor compliance demands and continue to ensure flexibility inbuilt into co-designing of projects for partners.

Annexure

Semi-structured interviews conducted for the financial year June 2022 to July 2023 review

Interviews with Partners

Questions for the FY 23/24

Qt1. Value Added by IWDA to partner organisations:

1. How has IWDA supported and contributed to your work this past year?

Probe (Strategy 1): through financial resource mobilisation (additional financial resources, or the same?); technical skills, access to power, flexibility?).

This question is aligned to IWDA's 4s Framework, specifically 'Step Up'

Qt.2 Effectiveness of support:

2.a. How has IWDA demonstrated effective solidarity to your organisation?

This question is aligned to IWDA's 4s Framework, specifically 'Stand With'

'Probe – through convening and movement-strengthening to advance a collective agenda (IWDA's Strategy 2)?

Probe -- through organisational strengthening (incl. learning) – enabling your org to deliver on your goals/strategy?

2.b. What could IWDA do differently to better support your work/your organisation?

This question aligns to the 4S framework, informing any of the four based on the responses.

Probe – through enabling locally-led, national, regional systemic change?

2.c. What should IWDA stop/start/continue doing and let go in the next 5 years?

This question also aligns to the 4S framework, informing any of the four based on the responses.

Qt.3 Living our values:

3. a. In the past 12 months, how did IWDA demonstrate their values?

3.b. Is there anything that surprised you, either positive or negative, in IWDA's work?

Probe – IWDA's FACT values (feminist, accountable, collaborative, transformative)

Probe – decolonial values (relational, ownership, co-designing, collective efforts, supporting local led efforts)

Qt.4 IWDA Relevance:

4.a. What do you value most about IWDA's approach / ways of working?

Qt.5 Communication and IWDA's accountability:

5.a. Do you know the different mechanisms that you can use to provide feedback to IWDA?

5.b. Do you feel comfortable providing feedback to IWDA? Are there any issues that you think IWDA needs to sit with?

Probe – Thinking of a specific issue – have you felt heard, have you been able to resolve it together?

Probe - Is IWDA doing things right? How?

Is IWDA doing the right things? In what ways? What can/should IWDA do differently?

5.c. How do you see your org partnering with IWDA in 2, 5, 10 years' time?

5.d. In what ways do you see your relationship to IWDA changing in future years?

5.e. How do you see your own organisation evolving in the next 5-10 years?

Interviews with Resource Stakeholders (funders)

<p>Questions for the FY 23/24</p>
<p>Q.1. What is your relationship to IWDA? Please describe the key interactions you've recently had with IWDA (Note: 2023-24 is the focus of this review but other interactions provide important context)</p> <p>The following prompt to be shared in flashcards - Which of IWDA's five strategies are most closely related to the work you do with IWDA?</p>
<p>Q.2.a. Do you see IWDA's approach continuing to align to your organisation's funding goals in the future?</p> <p>2.b. What do you think IWDA does effectively? Why/how? Probe - Is IWDA doing things right? How/In what ways?</p> <p>2.c. What do you value most about IWDA's approach / ways of working? Probe - Is IWDA doing the right things? In what ways? What can/should IWDA do differently?</p>
<p>Q.3.a. In the past year, how did IWDA demonstrate their values? Probe – IWDA's FACT values (feminist, accountable, collaborative, transformative) Probe – decolonial values (ownership, co-designing, collective actions) Probe – do IWDA's values make it a more effective organisation?</p> <p>3.b. In the past 12 months did IWDA do anything that surprised you (positive or negative) in their work? If so, what?</p>
<p>Q.4.a. How could IWDA be a more effective organisation?</p> <p>Q.4.b. How could IWDA make a more effective contribution to resourcing feminist movements and/or promoting systemic change towards gender equality?</p>

Interviews with Collaboration Stakeholders

Questions for the FY 23/24

Q.1. What is your relationship to IWDA? Please describe the key interactions you've recently had with IWDA (Note: 2023-24 is the focus of this review but other interactions provide important context)

Probe: Which of IWDA's five strategies are most closely related to the work you do with IWDA?

(Brief flashcards of the five strategies will be shared at this point to orient interviewees)

Probe - Is IWDA doing things right? How/In what ways?

Is IWDA doing the right things? In what ways? What can/should IWDA do differently?

Q.2. What, if any, achievements do you feel IWDA has contributed to in your joint area of interest?

Q.3. What do you think IWDA does effectively? Or should they stop / start / continue to be effective in their work?

Q.4. In the past 12 months did IWDA do anything that surprised you (positive or negative) in their work? If so, what?

Probe – IWDA's FACT values (feminist, accountable, collaborative, transformative)

Probe – decolonial values

Probe – do IWDA's values make it a more effective organisation?

Q.5.a. How could IWDA be a more effective organisation?

Q.5.b. What do you value most about IWDA's approach?

Q.6. What, if any, role do you see IWDA playing in your future work?

4. Online Survey Questions

Opening Statement

This survey is part of a two tiered anonymous feedback process, to enable organisations that engage with IWDA, including women's rights and feminist organisations, collaborators and Stakeholders to provide anonymous feedback on their work during FY 2023/24.

We are particularly interested in stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of IWDA's work, as well as the extent to which IWDA operationalises their values.

Your participation in this survey will help inform IWDA's ways of working moving forward.

We thank you for your time.

1. What is your relationship to IWDA? (set up multi-options)
 - My organisation receives funding under a contract held by IWDA
 - My organisation provides funding for a contract held by IWDA
 - My organisation collaborates with IWDA, without any funds being exchanged
 - Other (please specify)
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Statement 2

The next set of questions looks at IWDA's overarching approach to understand and leverage locational power so that IWDA knows when to:

STEP UP and use our power to leverage resources and access for women's rights organisations, and make our own contribution to feminist movements.

STAND WITH feminist movements in solidarity and amplify the work of Majority World actors.

STEP BACK when others are better placed to take the lead.

SIT WITH uncertainty, embrace communal learning and deep listening, and accept that time is needed to collectively discern the best course of action.

More information on IWDA's Strategic Plan is accessible here:

https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/IWDA_StrategicPlan_202325_Final.pdf

Statement 3

*This section looks at IWDA's **effectiveness** in providing support to partners, stakeholders and collaborators.*

2. Please describe the key interactions you've recently had with IWDA (2023-24 is the focus of this review but feel free to include other interactions as they provide important context)

3. Which of IWDA's five strategies are most closely related to the work you do with IWDA?

- STRATEGY 1: We resource diverse women's rights organisations primarily in Asia and the Pacific with money, skills and access
- STRATEGY 2: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality
- STRATEGY 3: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation
- STRATEGY 4: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence
- STRATEGY 5: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice

4. What, if any, achievements do you feel IWDA has contributed to in your joint area of interest?

5. What do you think IWDA does effectively? Why/how? Give key examples where possible.

6. Can you provide feedback on how IWDA can be more effective as a solidarity actor?

7. How has IWDA stepped up in terms of resource mobilisation?

8. Please rate the effectiveness of IWDA's work with your organisation during the financial year June 2023 to July 2024.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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9. Do you have any feedback on how IWDA could be a more effective organisation?

Statement 4

*This section looks at IWDA's **relevance** in providing support to partners, stakeholders and collaborators*

10. How (if at all) has IWDA contributed during the past year to your organisation's achievements?

11. Do you have any feedback on how IWDA could make a more effective contribution to resourcing feminist movements and/or promoting systemic change towards gender equality?

12. Could IWDA have done anything differently to provide more support to your work?

13. a. How has IWDA demonstrated 'standing with'?

b. What, if any, achievements do you feel IWDA has contributed to in your joint area of interest?

These questions is designed and framed against IWDA's Strategic Plan (i.e. Step Up, Stand with, Step back and Sit With)

14. What, if any, role do you see IWDA playing in your future work?

15. Please rate the relevance of IWDA's work during the financial year June 2022 to July 2023.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Statement 5

*This section looks at how well **IWDA embodies their values** with partners, stakeholders and collaborators.*

16. What do you value most about IWDA's approach to its work?

17. What were some examples where IWDA has (or should have) stepped back?

18. Please rate IWDA's practice of its values during the financial year June 2023 to July 2024.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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19. Are there any issues that you think IWDA needs to sit with?

This question is designed and framed against IWDA's Strategic Plan (i.e. Step Up, Stand with, Step back, Sit With)

20. In the past 12 months did IWDA do anything that surprised you (positive or negative) in their work? If so, what?

21. Please provide any additional feedback or comments on IWDA's work during the financial year June 2023 to July 2024.

End Statement

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your feedback is important and will help IWDA improve future ways of showing solidarity, collaboration and partnership.