

AusAID's Strategic Plan required the delivery of a website to its members which supported enhanced information sharing and interaction.

Overview

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is the Australian Government agency responsible for managing Australia's overseas aid program. AusAID is an Executive Agency within the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio and reports to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Australian Development Gateway (ADG) website, a World Bank funded initiative, was created in 2004 to make Australian research by Australian institutions more accessible to developing economies and to ensure Australia was aware of the Government's aid plans. The main objectives of this AusAID digital initiative were to provide relevant and quality information and knowledge, and facilitate sharing of information among its members.

Post tender submissions, NRC was awarded the AusAID contract for ADG Phases I, II III & IV, solution design, implementation, content management and support.

The Problem

The initial website (phase I & II) included design and implementation by NetReturn Consulting and was launched in 2004. Since that time the requirements of the ADG have expanded, beyond public sector to also include knowledge contributions from the private sector, academia and civil society.

In addition, the use of social networking has grown in popularity where the technology capabilities to support online knowledge sharing, from informal social networks to professional communities of practice and e-learning, have become a crucial part of the Government's plan (phase III) to interact with the population.

The Government realised that the current platform needed to be updated utilising the latest technology to ensure information could be presented in a structured but dynamic way, where relevant content was easy to find and share with members, within an IT managed, quality controlled framework. In addition to supporting new requirements such as tender processes, AusAID needed to increase its member base and enhance the ability to interact with them digitally.

The Solution

In conjunction with AusAID, NRC performed a consultative investigation which included a user needs assessment for the improvement of the current website and back end systems. This research culminated in a NetReturn Consulting solution design to meet AusAID's objectives around automation, content management and improved member experience, including the ability to share information.



NRC worked with AusAID & implemented a solution encompassing automation, content management & the ability to share information, to plan & on budget.

AusAID membership and user experience significantly increased.

The new platform supports improved site usability, increased visitor sessions, multiple resource libraries, accessibility for people in low bandwidth countries, the ability for people and organisations to post details relating to tenders, projects and job vacancies, all on an enterprise grade, supported and redundant platform.

Existing technology investments where possible were integrated with new investments including a new open source Content Management System (CMS) to achieve the Government's plan. NRC provided overarching project management of the site build, integration of various systems, maintenance and support.

Business Benefits

The new platform has met the Government's objectives. Within three months of launch and with little publicity, the ADG generated over 30,000 visitor sessions, accessing over 270,000 resource pages, and included visitors from low bandwidth Asia Pacific countries. Over 500 people and organisations registered their details and availability in the "People and Organisations" section and 12 companies uploaded over 100 of their latest development job vacancies to the site.

Further, IT have alleviated costly manual processes and fixes as a result of the implementation of an integrated, enterprise grade platform ensuring they can focus on planning to meet future needs of the AusAID community. In addition, with the choice of an open source CMS, AusAID will not face future licensing issues.



Costly & inefficient processes were eliminated, ensuring AusAID can focus on meeting future user needs.