

## **Development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy**

**What is your name?**

Anne Russell

**What is the name of your organisation?**

Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association

**What are the contact details for your organisation?**

The Secretary, rffada, PO Box 6795 Cairns 4870  
M 0412 550 540  
E [elizabeth@rffada.org](mailto:elizabeth@rffada.org)  
W [www.rffada.org](http://www.rffada.org)

**What is the main focus of your organisation?**

The rffada is a health promotion charity working with people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and their parents and carers; lobbying government for support and funding; networking with organisations delivering similar services in Australia and overseas; training service providers.

**What is your role in the organisation?**

Executive Officer

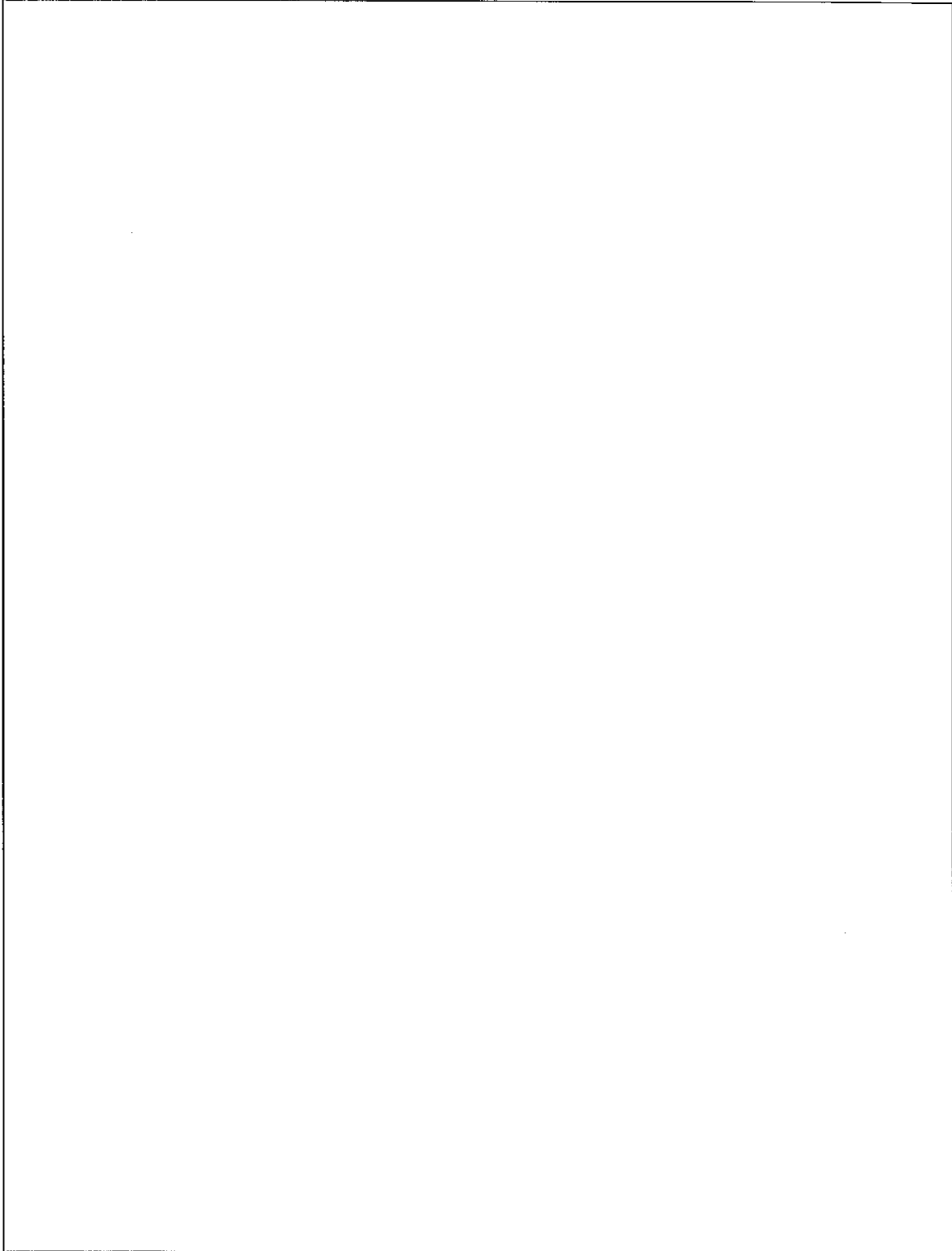
**What is your email address?**

[elizabeth@rffada.org](mailto:elizabeth@rffada.org)

**To assist you in responding to the following questions a Background Paper has been developed by the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy (NATSIPDS) Working Group. This can be accessed from the NIDAC website**

**A. Goal/s or objectives of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy**

- 1. What do you consider should be the main goal/s or objectives of the new Strategy?**



## B. Principles

The overarching approach of harm minimisation guides the National Drug Strategy 2010-2015 and is based on the three pillars of:

1. **demand reduction** to prevent the uptake and/or delay the onset of use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; reduce the harmful use of alcohol and the use of tobacco and other drugs in the community; and support people to recover from dependence and reintegrate with the community;
2. **supply reduction** to prevent, stop, disrupt or otherwise reduce the production and supply of illegal drugs; and control, manage and/or regulate the availability of legal drugs; and
3. **harm reduction** to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

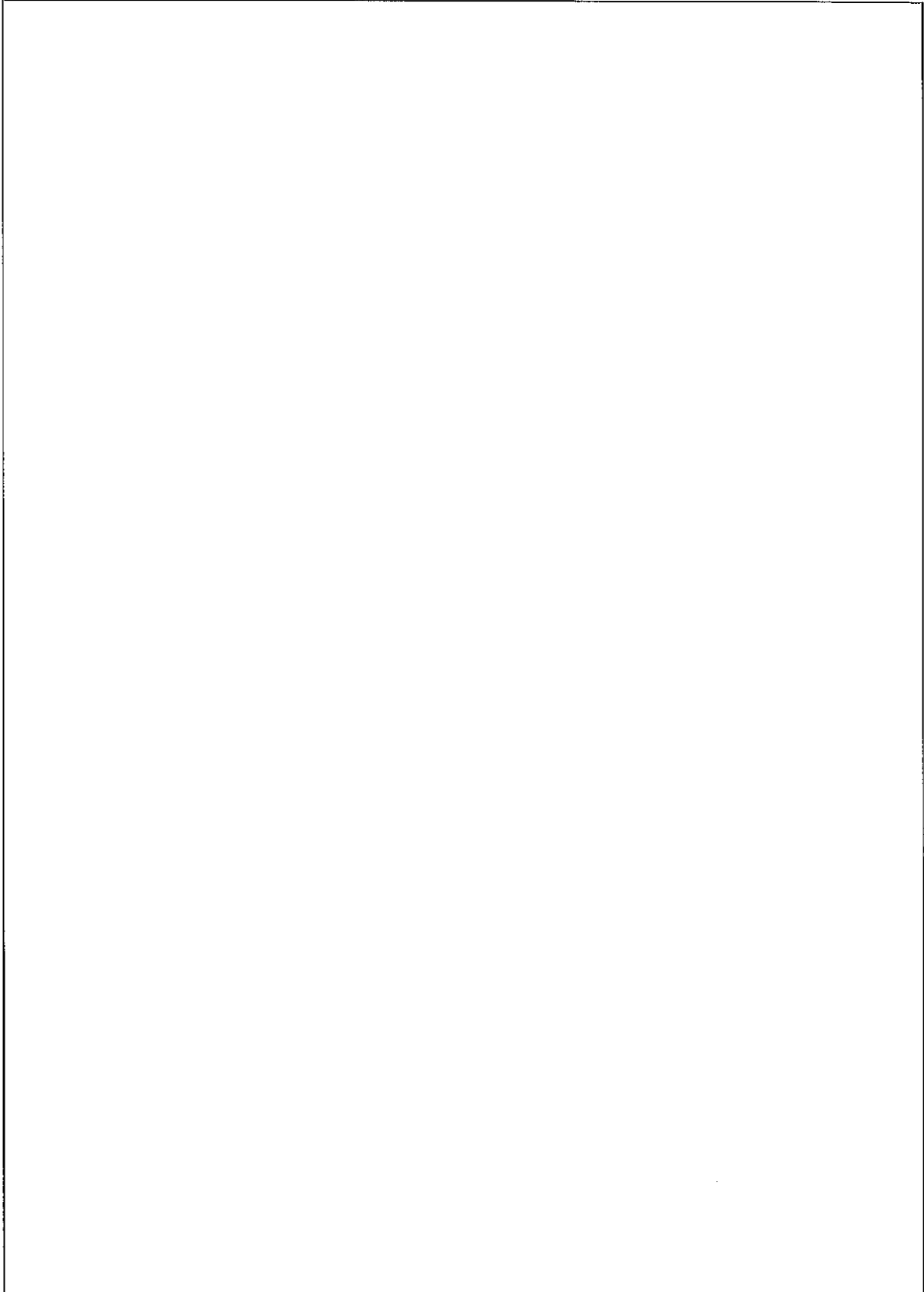
Acknowledging these broad principles and also recognising the diversity of populations and locations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs NATSIPDS Working Group who has responsibility for developing the NATSIPDS has identified four additional principles that could potentially underpin this Strategy:

1. **Holistic Approaches** - Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs must be addressed as part of a comprehensive, holistic approach to health that includes physical, spiritual, cultural, emotional and social wellbeing, community development and capacity building.
2. **Whole-of-government effort and partnerships** - Whole-of-government effort and commitment, in partnership with community controlled services and other nongovernment organisations, is needed to implement, evaluate and continuously improve comprehensive approaches to reduce drug-related harm among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
3. **Indigenous ownership of solutions** - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be centrally involved in planning, development and implementation of strategies to address the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in their communities, and should have control over their own health, alcohol and other drug, and related services.
4. **Resourcing on the basis of need** - Resources to address the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs must be available on the basis of need, and at the level required to reduce the disproportionate levels of drug related harm experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

1. Are these principles appropriate? (tick selected choice) Yes  No

2. Why / Why Not?

**3. Are there other principles that should underpin this Strategy?**



## C. Broad Priorities for the Strategy

The NATSIPDS Working Group has also identified what it sees as some of the key priorities, issues and specific population groups that could be discussed in the Strategy. These include:

- Broad social and structural determinants related to harmful substance use including whole of government matters such as intergenerational social disadvantage; employment and welfare dependence and social and economic participation (including education, employment);
- Local service delivery issues, including workforce issues such as the ability to attract and retain staff across the range of disciplines necessary to provide effective and sustainable interventions, particularly in remote areas;
- Supporting children, youth and women – including children exposed to alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy and early childhood; and
- Transference and poly-addiction (not only between substances, but other issues such as gambling).

### 1. Are there any other key priorities, issues and/or populations that should be included?

Yes. The media works with people who have been affected prenatally by alcohol. In the discussion paper, this condition is mentioned only briefly and almost in passing. The condition, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is a very pervasive condition and because there are no diagnostic clinics, FASD specialists or medical professionals willing or able to make a diagnosis, this condition has not received the support it requires. FASD should be a key strategy in this paper as it is likely to be the primary issue which precipitates issues such as mental health problems, substance use disorders, inappropriate sexual behaviours, trouble with the police, trouble in employment, problems parenting and recidivism. This condition needs to be given priority in 4 key areas.

1. Diagnosis or at the very least - identification of those people who are likely to be suffering from this condition. Non-medical identification can be done by taking a history of the client. (strategies which will make a huge difference to people with FASD will not hurt those people who do NOT have FASD but the reverse is NOT true). Inappropriate strategies and interventions can cause an exacerbation of the secondary disabilities which include: suicide, mental health disorders, substance use disorders, trouble in employment, trouble with the police, problems parenting.
2. Training service providers, medical professionals, families, and young people in prevention and management of people with the condition
3. Providing support to women at risk of delivering babies who have been prenatally exposed to alcohol
4. Providing support to the families who are living with a family member with the condition. Providing appropriate support, strategies, interventions and accommodations can make a real difference to the lives of the people with the condition and their families

## **D. Actions, including reviewing the Complimentary Action Plan**

It is important that any actions identified in the Strategy provide detailed guidance to governments, communities and service providers; clearly articulate the overarching objective and link strongly with the underpinning principles. It is also important that they are concrete and assessable through national performance indicators and milestones.

The NATSIPDS Working Group has agreed that a small number of Key Result Areas or priorities are needed to focus action on achieving results.

The Complimentary Action Plan (the CAP) identified six key result areas for targeted action, which might be useful to review in looking to the new Strategy:

1. Enhanced capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities to address current and future issues in the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and promote their own health and wellbeing.
2. Whole-of-government effort and commitment, in collaboration with community controlled services and other non-government organisations, to implement, evaluate and continuously improve comprehensive approaches to reduce drug-related harm among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
3. Substantially improved access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the appropriate range of health and wellbeing services that play a role in addressing the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
4. A range of holistic approaches from prevention through to treatment and continuing care that is locally available and accessible.
5. Workforce initiatives to enhance the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled and mainstream organisations to provide quality services.
6. Sustainable partnerships among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, government and non-government agencies in developing and managing research, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of information.

1. **Are the Key Result Areas of the CAP still the most important? (tick selected choice)**      Yes       No

**If not, what do you think the most important Key Result Areas should be?**

## **E. Measuring Progress**

Monitoring and reporting was identified as a weakness of the CAP, which can to an extent be addressed with effective performance measures and milestones.

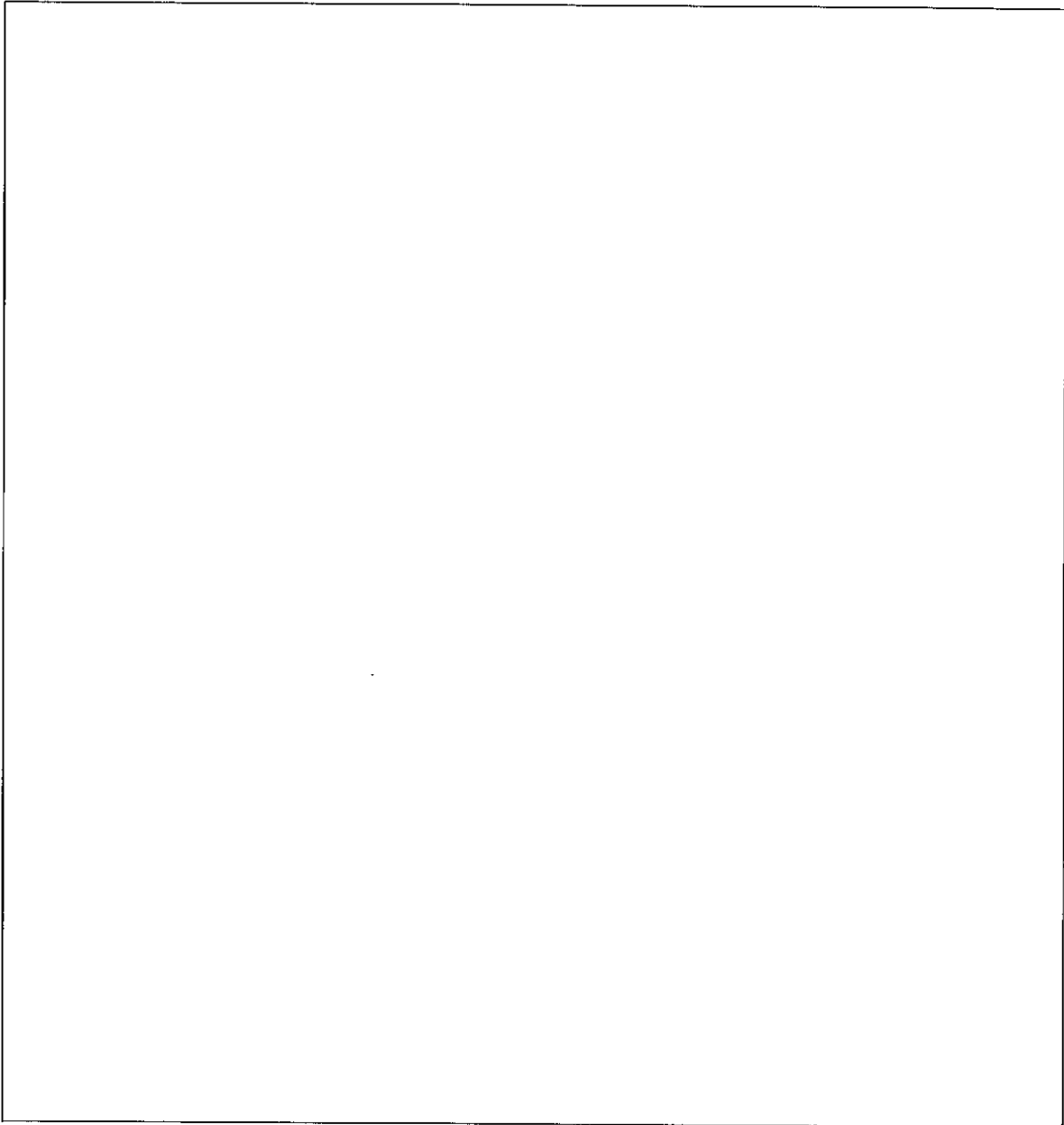
As custodians of the National Drug Strategy, it is expected that IGCD will be responsible for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Drug Strategy and for providing updates to Ministers on progress against its actions. In order to gauge whether the Strategy is being effective and that progress towards the overall objectives is being made, it will be important to have clear indicators and milestones against the actions and priorities.

### **1. How often should progress be reported?**

### **2. Thinking about the actions and priorities that are identified above, or that you have identified, what sort of indicators and milestones could be used to demonstrate progress?**

**F. Additional Comments**

- 1. Are there any other issues you would like to raise that might be helpful in informing the development of the Strategy?**



**Written submissions should be received by NIDAC by no later than COB Friday 7 June 2013. These can be sent to either:**

**National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee, PO Box 205, CIVIC SQUARE, ACT, 2608**

**Fax: 02 61622611**

**E-mail: [nidac@ancd.org.au](mailto:nidac@ancd.org.au) (please save this document to your computer before emailing it to us)**

**Receipt of NIDAC receiving your submission will be sent to the email address provided.**