Department for International Development

DIGITAL STRATEGY
2012-2015

December 2012

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Foreword

By the Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for International Development

I am delighted to launch DFID's first digital strategy. We explain how our Department is using digital channels in international development and we set out our aspirations for incorporating digital into our policy making and aid programmes to help lift the world's poorest people out of poverty.

Digital offers our staff and our development partners around the world a new and more efficient way of getting instant feedback on how our projects are working on the ground. Digital enables us to publish results online for others to see, share and learn lessons. Digital also has huge potential for reducing transaction costs, for delivering results more quickly and for exposing fraud and corruption.

For many citizens in the countries where we work, particularly in parts of Africa, using mobile phones is the norm, particularly for online banking. In fact, we find that some countries are leapfrogging the UK in their innovative use of technologies to transform people's lives. We must learn from their experiences. Great progress has been made using mobile to deliver better services to more people, changing lives for the better. In our strategy, we highlight examples of where we can build in digital to our programmes in health, agriculture, and education.

At DFID, we can also make better use of digital communication, such as social media, to explain to the UK public how we are spending the overseas aid budget carefully and achieving results in areas such as improving women's lives, getting children into school and vaccinating babies against preventable diseases.

Citizens expect to engage with each other and with their governments online. Digital is not optional any more. We must offer the people, organisations and businesses who interact with us online the best possible experience – one that is simple, clear and fast. We must also embed the Civil Service Reform Plan in the way we work to develop the skills and capabilities in our staff to take up the opportunities offered by digital.

Now is the moment when we can really grasp the opportunities that mobile and internet technology offers to change the ways that citizens and governments interact, to generate economic opportunities, and to transform service delivery.

Executive summary

By 2015 digital processes and thinking should infuse all aspects of DFID's work - driving greater efficiency and transparency and improving DFID's influence in an increasingly networked world.

The key areas of this strategy deal with:

- digital leadership
- building digital skills and capacity.

This is with a view to the future when we as an organisation will be well equipped both to use digital technologies in our own programmes, and also to negotiate for improved conditions which will support the access to and diffusion of digital technologies worldwide.

What do we mean by digital?

By 'digital', we mean content or communication that is delivered through the internet – whether the user is on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, mobile phone or a digital device not yet invented.

"What is at stake isn't just great technology and innovation, it's about helping people to build their own future"

- Prime Minister David Cameron

We aim to transform our organisation to become digital by default. This means ensuring digital is the first way that is considered when carrying out a transaction – whether that be requesting a service, transferring money, monitoring a programme or sharing data/information. It does not mean excluding those who have limited or no access to the internet – alternative means of accessing services and information must also be provided where appropriate. Above all, it means an integrated approach to delivering a service or tackling a problem in the best way, using the most appropriate channels and technologies.

Our approach to digital

We propose a simple approach for realising the benefits of digital based around being better connected in a fast moving world:

- **Extending networks, listening and evaluating** - keeping in touch with stakeholders and beneficiaries to help shape, monitor and evaluate policies and programmes. We will be able to talk to more people and get a wider range of informed feedback that will strengthen and improve the quality of our decisions.

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- **Incorporating digital into both design and delivery of programmes** - making procurement simpler and quicker, going beyond existing suppliers to smaller companies and country experts, and investigating more options for digital money transfer directly or via intermediaries. Quicker feedback can reduce waste and the opportunities for fraud and corruption.

- **Communicating even more effectively and transparently** - digital is the fastest way of communicating with partners and governments around the world, supplementing and enhancing face to face contact. More transparent use of data and project information will help to inform, engage and build trust with the UK public and media on Britain's support for international development.

Priorities

To achieve our vision of an organisation where the digital culture is user-centred, innovative and responsive, we have identified six priorities:

1. Providing greater transparency to our activities

Transparency is vital in everything we do. We are committed to providing greater transparency in our work so that the public can hold us to account. Transparency is critical to improving the effectiveness and value for money of aid. Making information about aid spending easier to access, understand and use means that both UK taxpayers and citizens in poor countries can more easily hold DFID and their own governments to account for using aid money wisely. Transparency invites better feedback from beneficiaries to donors and taxpayers, and helps us understand what works and what doesn't. Our approach is to encourage governments to be more open and this helps reduce waste and the opportunities for fraud and corruption.

2. Open policy making

[The Civil Service Reform Plan](#) makes a commitment that open policy making will become the default. We will build on the relationships and networks that already exist among the leading members of the development community and we will explore a range of technology enabled mechanisms that will help us bring in new voices and make the whole process more transparent. We will learn what works, what tools to use, how to evaluate, and how to do this consistently for different types of consultation. We will use the next year to carry out specific exercises, evaluate, and share results.

3. Improving the digital elements of programmes

Using technology can change people's lives and increase citizen feedback and participation. This will in turn improve the delivery of vital services that people most want, such as health or water, and boost economic opportunities.

By giving citizens access to information and services quickly and affordably, we can ultimately make them self-sufficient.

We will use digital networks to identify and share best practice, helping us to develop better programmes. We will explore how technology can support all stages of the programme management process, including more effective ways of gathering feedback (in particular from beneficiaries), investigating confidential ways of reporting fraud and corruption, enabling close to real time reporting which should highlight if things are going wrong.

To inform our decisions we will convene a digital advisory panel which will invite experts with a range of different technical and implementation experience to share their knowledge. We also aim to recruit a non-executive director with experience in the technology sector

In practical terms, we will test how digital can offer value for money solutions for the implementation of aid programmes, for example pinpointing the distribution of anti-malarial bednets using geolocation tools, using mobile phones for distribution of cash transfers to poor communities, or giving health workers access to instant online training via their mobile phones.

We will make sure these approaches are people-centred and that they are designed and delivered in the country they are intended to benefit. We will establish which approaches are effective through a variety of methods such as pilots, seed-funding and challenge funds, not forgetting the importance of continued evaluation. We will look for opportunities to use digital analytics to monitor and improve the effectiveness of our programmes and share the results online.

4. Improving the capabilities of our staff: listening, networking, influencing and engaging

The Civil Service Reform Plan acknowledges that we need to develop the right capability and skills in our staff. To reach our objectives we need to ensure not only that our programmes are designed and delivered in the most effective way, but also that all our people are fully confident and competent in working with digital tools and channels. This will both enable them to be both effective in carrying out the processes associated with their job, and to participate effectively in the international development community – whether that be engaging with key stakeholders or reaching new audiences who have an interest in how international development works.

In order to build on the good practice that already exists in pockets across the organisation, we intend to deliver revised and invigorated training for staff in order to attain the required levels in the Civil Service competency framework and our IT skills framework. We will include digital in core training for senior management and equip them with the expertise to lead by example. We will identify and support a network of digital innovators who will work across the department with the goal of sharing best practice.

5. Getting access to resources and the right tools

To make sure we have access to the best expertise and advice on how digital can support development, we will build relationships with and seek advice from experts around the world. This will ensure our ministers and senior management team have the best evidence on how using technology can accelerate development.

We already have a Digital Leader on DFID's executive management committee. We will establish a digital operations unit, reporting to the Digital Leader, which will coordinate the current activities of communications, systems delivery and programme design, and take responsibility for overseeing the delivery of this strategy.

Many of our staff are already digitally literate and active at home and in their communities. We want them to be equally engaged with digital in their work. We will encourage staff to use their digital skills and experience in the workplace, and ensure they have the appropriate tools to access digital channels.

6. Improving the quality and consistency of transactions

Dealing with DFID at any level should be as easy and efficient as possible - whether you are a multinational organisation that needs to understand our policy priorities, a small NGO that wants to obtain funding for a particular project, a student looking for a scholarship, a teacher looking for support in teaching global citizenship, or a citizen of a developing country who wants to know the practical side of what has been promised so you can hold your own government to account. You should be able to find the information you need or access a service as efficiently and effectively as possible, for example by using an application on a mobile phone.

Better interfaces with partners and more efficient processes will save time and money, which will in turn mean more resource for the front line to save lives and achieve an end to absolute poverty.

Scope

DFID's vision and set of digital objectives are different from other UK government departments as our main priority is delivering Britain's overseas aid, rather than delivering services to UK citizens. Our mission is to lead Britain's fight against global poverty, delivering UK aid to change the lives of those most in need in the world's poorest countries.

This strategy is about the way we engage and communicate with stakeholders and beneficiaries. It is about bringing new voices into the debate about the future of international development. It is about speeding up evaluation and feedback cycles so that programmes that are not working can be adjusted and further investment can be made in ones that are. It is about using digital channels and common standards to increase

"Technology and innovation will be a constant theme in my work at DFID, and I expect to see the department making the most of the latest advances in technology and research"

- International Development Secretary Justine Greening speaking at the Open Up! Conference, November 2012

transparency and the visibility of programmes both internally across the organisation and externally with our global audience. And finally, it is about not being left behind: using digital tools effectively is something DFID cannot afford not to do.

In developing digital programmes, we will follow the standards set by the Cabinet Office and Government Digital Service (GDS) as laid out in the Government Digital Strategy, and ensure this is reflected where appropriate in any revisions of our Departmental Business Plan, IT Strategy, and Open Data Strategy.

Actions for delivering this strategy will be set out in a delivery plan and roadmap, and the departmental business plan. Progress will be reviewed regularly by the executive management committee and the strategy refreshed at least annually.

Our global audience

DFID has two headquarters offices in the UK and works in 28 priority countries overseas. Our digital agenda is broad in scope, and encompasses the many ways the organisation carries out its business, interacting with many different audiences.

We need to ensure when planning and implementing aid programmes that digital technology is integrated where appropriate and that we take account of

the different social, cultural, economic and geographical contexts. For example, infrastructure and connectivity may be extremely limited in some areas and access to mobile phones may be much higher for men than women. We need to identify what works and what doesn't in the various countries and regions in which we work.

We also know our digital approach to communications with the UK public could encourage more two way and sustained public engagement and the opportunity to extend and deepen our engagement with particular audiences especially young people, diaspora and faith groups. We will explore further the opportunities digital channels give us for connecting the UK public directly with the people we are helping.

OUR AUDIENCES

BENEFICIARIES
People who receive UK Aid through programmes and projects

CONTRACTORS
Businesses, suppliers, partners

THE UK PUBLIC
Especially taxpaying citizens and young people

THE DEVELOPMENT 'SECTOR'
NGOs, governments, academic departments, think tanks and some journalists and bloggers

THE MEDIA
Journalists, bloggers, news and documentary makers, both specialist and generalist

What we do now and opportunities for change

This strategy uses the Government Digital Service definitions of transactional and information services:

- Information services cover the publishing of information to assist citizens and businesses in their engagement with government
- Transactional services allow the exchange of information, money, permission, goods and services between citizens/businesses and government

Information activities

Digital Communications

We currently use a range of channels to communicate departmental priorities to our global audience including UK taxpayers. We have a website, which will move onto the single government website in March 2013, and a range of accounts in the leading social media channels, including Facebook, Flickr, Youtube, Twitter, Google+ and Pinterest. Our Digital Team within DFID's Communications Division manages these accounts, and they can be used to endorse the work of our partners and promote the activity of individuals as appropriate. We have developed a community of staff bloggers over the last 5 years which provides a human face to the department.

CASE STUDY:

Hannah Ryder – DFID blogger

Hannah Ryder joined DFID as an economist in 2011. She became a DFID blogger soon after and her blog has since won a global competition for women bloggers and been selected in the Guardian's 2012 Ethical awards. This has helped to publicise the work of DFID to a wide audience, far beyond DFID's traditional core stakeholders. She writes about her work in a personable, accessible way, trying to illustrate broad development themes by linking them to everyday issues that everyone can relate to.

"I think blogging is an exciting and accessible way to make DFID's work more relevant and accountable to the public"

It is important for an organisation with staff based in offices around the world to use digital to make internal communication as effective as possible too. We are redeveloping our intranet to make it simpler, clearer and faster to find DFID information and to complete tasks. Our aim is to increase staff efficiency and to decrease calls to our helpdesks. Our approach is closely aligned to our overall digital strategy.

We are making better use of our intranet as a platform to collaborate across the whole organisation, to share and learn lessons and to improve our knowledge management.

What will we do better?

We will improve our measurement and analysis of the different channels we use, with the aim of providing better information to teams about audiences and enable more effective targeting.

We will be more strategic about listening to and understanding conversations in social media, and use the insight gained to inform the policy-making process and to collaborate more effectively with partners.
We will continue to build a centre of expertise and experience in our dedicated communications teams, by identifying and providing training on a range of specific listening tools and approaches.

Influencing and advocacy

Beyond our corporate accounts which broadcast and engage according to the priorities and issues we choose, there are pockets of digital experience across the organisation as staff use social media under their own names to establish their professional profiles and play a role in advancing DFID's communication goals.

This follows the social media guidelines published in May 2012, which apply to all civil servants and are based on six principles:
- Communicate with citizens in the places they already are
- Use social media to consult and engage
- Use social media to be more transparent and accountable
- Be part of the conversation with all the benefits that brings
- Understand that government can't do everything alone
- Expect civil servants to adhere to the Civil Service Code (online as well as offline)

What will we do better?

We will improve our guidance on the use of social media channels for all staff, and promote it widely.

We will establish a community of social media champions, which will build on these early experiences, and move towards an environment where all staff are confident in using digital tools to listen and monitor, and many are fully competent in engaging with external debate in their own name. This model will be explored over the next 6 months.

As a first step, we will identify a small number of colleagues who already have a high level of digital skills and will work with them to encourage their teams to adopt new digital approaches.

Open policy making: Consultation and feedback mechanisms

Sector experts currently listen to and participate in on-going conversations about issues important to their field – whether this is via writing content for academic newsletters or journals, or participating in debates at conferences. There are examples of experience where teams have used a combination of traditional and digital means to consult, but this is not widespread, and the results have not been formally evaluated and shared across the organisation.

What will we do better?

Policy making should be a constant process of dialogue and engagement. The appropriate use of digital channels will allow us to gather advice from the widest and most relevant voices, and will help to build confidence that we have the right solution.

Digital technology, in particular mobile, offers opportunities in the countries where we work to get data back from projects quickly which will support faster and better decision making. Such feedback loops would ensure funding support is appropriately timed - for example, ensuring projects that monitor elections receive funding in step with the electoral cycle in their country.

We will run pilot projects in a number of developing countries and through the Global Poverty Action Fund to test ways of seeking feedback from the people directly affected by aid projects. These pilots will test various mechanisms to give and receive feedback, including the use of web and mobile technology. Results of the pilots will be used to influence future project design in country programmes to ensure that the voices of those who receive UK aid - both governments and their people - are considered.

We will enable citizens to hold their governments to account by improving local transparency and better informing people about what services and other entitlements they should be receiving. We will also use digital means to get feedback on the performance of suppliers in countries.

We will establish recommendations for how feedback could be incorporated into the international aid data standard.

CASE STUDY:

Online consultation

Two years ago, DFID ministers commissioned a series of aid reviews with the aim of informing strategic policy making for the future. The bilateral and multilateral aid reviews, alongside the humanitarian and emergency response review together set out how we will work in partnership with individual countries, with international institutions, and how we will respond to disasters.

These reviews were carried out in a way well publicised across the international development community, using a combination of face to face, media driven and social media channels. Online forums fed into the debate alongside contributions from open meetings and more traditional written submissions. We are now in a period of implementation as we focus the aid programme around delivering the commitments made as a part of these reviews.

Digital advice in programme design

Currently, our digital and communications specialists provide advice to DFID staff wherever there is a digital element of a project to ensure they are achieving value for money and that they take advantage of open source software to keep costs down. Our procurement team review such projects to ensure that is the correct procurement route is followed.

What will we do better?

To inform our decisions we will convene a digital advisory panel which will invite experts with a range of different technical and implementation experience to share their knowledge. We also aim to recruit a non-executive director with experience in the technology sector

To take advantage of the opportunities in programme design for low cost communication, feedback and dissemination offered by social media, we will create the role of Digital Service Adviser to provide advice and guidance if there is any significant digital spend in a programme. We will check that communications, evaluation, programme and procurement teams are well-equipped to provide and seek advice. This will ensure the right shape to the programme, that the correct procurement procedures are followed and that it achieves value for money.

CASE STUDY:

A new way to approach programme design

In September 2012, DFID's Trade Policy team commissioned three 'hack days' in London, Cape Town and Lagos. Working with ReWired State, RLabs and Co-Creation Hub, teams of volunteer 'hackers' – software developers, web designers, data analysts and statisticians were challenged to 'hack' various trade data sets and come up with interesting, easy to use websites or mobile apps that would make trade data accessible to citizens.

The project was a pilot to test assumptions about the relationship between trade tariffs and consumer prices, but already one of the tools produced has attracted seed funding for further development.

Single government website (GOV.UK)

By March 2013, the DFID website will have moved onto the Inside Government section of the single government website. Our content will continue to inform anyone who wants to find out about DFID's policies and results to see where and how they fit with the work of other UK government departments in delivering the UK's aid programme.

What will we do better?

We will work closely with the Government Digital Service to ensure the needs of our global audience are met by the new website.
We will ensure that visitor insight and feedback is part of developing new areas of policy content, ensuring that evidence is in place to support new content before it goes onto GOV.UK
We will use statistics and user journey information provided by the GOV.UK platform to review content and make changes based on that evidence.

Transparency

We have made significant improvements in becoming a more transparent organisation, in line with the Coalition Government's standards for transparency, as set out by the Prime Minister in May 2010. Full details of our plans and activities in this area can be found in our Open Data Strategy.

The strategy outlines how open data can have an impact on development by enabling people to track aid spending and see the results that are being achieved. It was published in June 2012 along with those of other UK Government Departments under the White Paper on Open Data.

In June 2010 we launched the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee. It commits us to publishing detailed information about new DFID projects and policies in a way that is comprehensive, accessible, comparable, accurate and timely.

We are committed not only to publishing our own data transparently, but also in creating, endorsing and encouraging others to comply with international standards. We want to go further, ensuring maximum traceability – not just of our funds, but all public money spent on overseas development, including what happens when it is allocated and spent by third parties.

We have taken the lead on publishing our monthly expenditure on all transactions over £500, while most other central government departments are currently publishing transactions over £25,000.

DFID's projects information database contains details of projects that have been operational or completed since 2009, in line with the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee. Each project contains financial details, the country and sector and how the project is divided up. All new projects now include annual reviews, completion reports, business cases and intervention summaries.

Open data

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is a major international open data initiative involving donor countries, developing country governments, non-governmental organisations and experts in aid information. In February 2011 the participants agreed a common open international standard for publishing information on aid. There are now 29 donor and 22 partner country signatories, covering 75% of global aid. Twenty-four organisations are currently publishing data to the standard.
DFID had a significant role in leading IATI and was the first organisation to publish information to this international standard.

What will we do better?

We are piloting a new aid information platform that will make information accessible through a web platform for users to search, browse and export UK aid data, providing the ability to drill down through the aid delivery chain. The platform will be released as open source code so that others can reuse and repurpose the data for their own needs. We will also provide an application programming interface (API) to enable others to access the data and create applications.

We will further develop the published data on DFID aid projects to include results so that the public can understand what is achieved from specific aid projects. The first results delivered against the 25 centrally monitored indicators in DFID's Results Framework have been published as reusable data. Other results are published within project documents and we will include project-level results in IATI data. Project performance scores using DFID's

new scoring model will be released as reusable electronic data by February 2013.

We will provide more detailed location information (also known as geocoding) for individual projects using recognised international methodology, with a view to applying this methodology to all new aid projects by March 2014.

We will investigate how to define a [Linked Data](#) approach for aid data, based on the IATI standard, and will conduct a study by October 2013, exploring implementation by March 2014. This will provide greater traceability of aid spend.

CASE STUDY:

Transparency and the new aid information platform

In November, the Ministry of Budget in the Democratic Republic of Congo began to import data into their budget planning system directly from DFID's published open data. The data included information on current and planned aid projects in DRC, published to the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard. This replaced specific spreadsheet reports that were previously sent directly from DFID DRC to the Ministry. This shows the potential of open standard data for easier sharing with partners.

DFID is developing a prototype aid information platform, aimed at making DFID's IATI standard data much more accessible and easy to understand. The UK has also called on other governments, donors and partners to publish aid data in the IATI format, to make aid spending as transparent as possible.

Research

Innovation, new technologies, science and a strong evidence base are essential for improving and sustaining the best development and humanitarian outcomes for the poorest. They help us enhance the ways in which we currently work and make decisions based on the best value for money. DFID is committed to commissioning world class research which directly improves people's lives, and ensuring that it is readily available to those who can use it around the world. DFID also aims to use the best evidence, from any source, in its own decisions, and to evaluate programmes so that we can learn lessons from them.

We require that all research produced as a result of public money from the research partners we fund is freely accessible on our [Research for Development (R4D) database](). R4D provides access to more than 30,000 DFID-funded research documents and project information, and 3,000 research organisations working across the world.

In July 2012, we put in place an [Open and Enhanced Access Policy]() for the research that we fund. The policy mandates making all DFID funded research available in open-access sources. The policy will offer users worldwide greater online access to the outputs of the research that we fund, including academic articles, reports and datasets. We expect this policy to increase the uptake and use of DFID research, especially amongst researchers, policy makers and practitioners in developing countries, by removing price barriers to research outputs and increasing their availability and visibility. The policy applies to new research commissioned after 1 November 2012.

What we will do better

Through better digital engagement we will enhance access to the research that we fund. We will support our researchers to promote the open, digital availability of their work as well as ensuring that our research partners are putting the open and enhanced access policy into practice.

We will continue to develop the R4D database to deliver what users need. We will ensure the contents are made available in the different aggregated databases used by researchers. We will work to improve the way in which our research programmes use social media tools to direct different types of user to the information that is most relevant to them. We will also actively work with the programmes we support that use data repositories to make these open access and comply with international standards

CASE STUDY:

Technology already supporting development: iCow

iCow is a 'cow calendar' tool, developed by [Su Kahumbu](), a farmer in Kenya, which was made possible with help from the Indigo Trust, USAID and support through [GALVmed](), which receives UK aid and funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Through mobile phone technology, it provides Kenyan farmers with early warning systems on crop and livestock diseases; essential data on productivity; or quality assurance of suppliers such as artificial inseminators by digital tracking their performance.
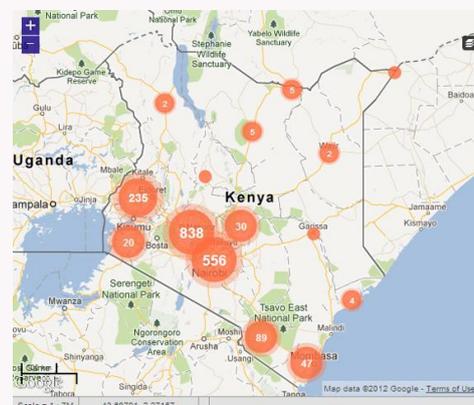
Responding to enquiries from the public

We offer an enquiry service where individuals can contact us by phone, email, letter or online form to ask their question. Most enquiries can be resolved quickly and easily by pointing enquirers to the relevant page on the DFID website, if they have to access it. For those people who contact us who do not have access to digital communications, we are able to provide them with information either by phone or by letter.

Requests under the Freedom of Information Act are received and dealt with mainly by electronic means and we accept requests from the What Do They Know? website. A selection of responses to FOIA requests are posted on the DFID website. Data on our performance in dealing with FOIA requests is published centrally on the Ministry of Justice website.

Surveys asking for customer feedback from public enquiries have demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction from users of the service. We will ensure that issues frequently raised continue to be published on our website.

See Annex 2 for details.

Monitoring and evaluation

There are two current models for evaluating our work: externally, reviews are commissioned by the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI), and within the organisation we are building strong evaluation skills in operational teams, thereby developing a culture where rigorous evaluation is a routine and accepted part of the policy and project cycle.

What we will do better

Monitoring and evaluation plans should be built in before programmes start. They need to consider how programmes will be adjusted to respond to developments in technologies and what works best, and how lessons learned can be shared across DFID and the sector.

We will explore how digital mechanisms can improve the way we commission and gather feedback, in particular looking at how the process can be speeded up. This will enable decisions to be made earlier in the life of a project. We will look at how digital approaches such as real time tracking of delivery can improve monitoring of projects and provide evidence to challenge corruption.

Transactional services

We have relatively few transactional services compared to other government departments ([see GDS study on transactions](#)). These transactions include:

- Procurement
- Contracts
- Funding schemes
- Scholarships
- Recruitment
- Overseas pensions

Procurement

We have had a fully electronic tendering procedure for over five years and this provides a robust and auditable record of all interactions to provide transparency in all competitions.

The [DFID Supplier Portal](#) is the online supplier-centred view of information and financial details for individuals and organisations who wish to supply DFID with goods or services. Suppliers are required to register online within the portal and are then able to take part in OJEU competitions electronically. They also have self-service access to monitoring payments without having to contact staff in the department.

See Annex 2 for details.

What will we do better?

We would like to extend our current online system to include small procurements that fall below the EU threshold to engage better with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and get better value for money. We also want to provide information about procurements in each of the countries where we work to enable non-UK companies to bid.

We carry out commercial capability reviews in our country offices. The outcomes of these will ensure that countries find solutions to their own unique challenges and that common lessons are learned and shared. We will work to make sure digital solutions are identified at all points of the contracting process – from identifying the right organisations to bid, to crafting new models of contracts, through to monitoring delivery. Besides the changes already underway as a part of the commercial capability reviews, we recognise the need to broaden the range of suppliers of digital services, including more SMEs.

Cabinet Office will offer leaner and more lightweight tendering processes, as close to the best practice in industry as our regulatory requirements allow (see [action 10 of Government Digital Strategy](#)). We look forward to working closely with Cabinet Office to explore this.

We will improve the access and functionality of the Supplier Portal so that it provides a consistent and user-friendly interface for suppliers. This interface should be separated from the technology supplier that operates the 'back end' functions.

We would like a single-point supplier registration system across the whole of government with an interface into the finance and procurement systems of each department. This would make it easier for companies and global organisations to register to do business across all government departments by removing the current requirement for suppliers to register multiple instances on specific department systems. It should enable prospective supplier companies to log in to the portal using devices such as tablets and smart phones and to receive contract alerts matched specifically to their areas of business interest.

We are also recruiting procurement specialists who will draw on digital expertise and advice from the Government Procurement Service as required.

Contracts

DFID publishes details of contracts awarded on the cross-government Contracts Finder website on which 50-60,000 companies are registered. Contract notices over the OJEU threshold are also displayed here.

See Annex 2 for details.

Funding schemes

We run a variety of funding schemes enabling organisations, companies and individuals to apply for funds to meet specific development goals. Applications (in the form of concept notes and proposals) are currently made by downloading forms from our website and emailing completed forms to DFID.

DFID's Civil Society Department manages some of these funds directly, while others are managed by external fund managers. The team recognises that their current focus is on publishing information about the funds and the application process. As yet there is limited digital engagement or community building with the beneficiaries of these funds.

In contrast, many of our civil society partners and other organisations have put digital at the core of their listening and influencing approaches - including online consultations and feedback.

See Annex 2 for an illustration of the range and diversity of these funds, their financial value and who manages them.

What will we do better?

We will increase the use of digital communication and social media to provide greater openness both with partners and beneficiaries of funds. We will also do more to highlight the positive results achieved by these funds. To do this, we will require that fund recipients publish their results in the internationally agreed format (IATI) on the aid information platform so that others can freely access and re-use the data. We will also explore opportunities to get partners to report back on results to UK taxpayers.

We will work with Government Digital Service and other departments to develop a cross-government technology platform for the administration of grants and funding schemes that would meet the needs of applicants to our funds. We recognise that some partner organisations in low bandwidth countries may still need to apply for funds in other ways.

Scholarships

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) offers Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships for postgraduate study and professional development to citizens of other Commonwealth countries, and nominates UK citizens for Commonwealth Scholarships in other Commonwealth countries.

DFID, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Scottish Government provide funding for these awards to The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC), which is responsible for managing Britain's contribution to the CSFP. The CSC supports around 750 awards annually. Potential students can apply for awards via an electronic application system on the CSC website.

Moving the website and the award application process to GOV.UK will provide easy access to other related processes for applicants, such as applying for a visa and living in the UK.

See Annex 2 for details.

Recruitment

It is now common practice for international organisations to use online recruitment tools to attract, sift and select the best candidates for vacancies. DFID has since June 2009 been making best use of online recruitment software to manage our recruitment function both internally, cross government and externally.

What will we do better?

From 26 November 2012, the Civil Service will use a single online interface for all jobs. This will mean the job applicants have a single, consistent experience of dealing with government rather than having to learn how to input their job applications into multiple systems.

We are evaluating the impact, cost and benefits of expanding our online presence to reach a wider group of potential applicants through digital media networks. We have recognised that moving to the single government website will change the way we engage with potential applicants. We need to consider how to better target our audience through digital channels.

See Annex 2 for numbers of transactions.

CASE STUDY:

Social media recruitment campaign

In 2012, DFID launched a new graduate development scheme. We planned to recruit 30 recent graduates to work in our two headquarter offices for 50 weeks to gain experience of international development.

As well as advertising the posts on the DFID website, the recruitment team made use of Facebook to communicate with potential applicants. This became a very valuable recruitment tool and created a high level of engagement with universities and students (including 13,500 'likes' on Facebook).

The benefits of using digital media such as Facebook and Twitter were twofold:

1) Our recruitment drive on Facebook successfully reached potential applicants who were volunteering overseas in the DFID-sponsored International Citizen Service, or who were travelling, working or studying abroad.
2) Using social media rather than placing advertisements in newspapers and magazines drove down costs and had a much wider reach than traditional print media.

As a result of the Facebook and website communications, the recruitment sessions at universities were very well attended. DFID received 4,500 applications and ultimately recruited 53 graduates. The recruitment campaign earned DFID a place in the Top 100 Graduate Employers (as voted for by students).

Overseas pensions

We are responsible for the administration of pensions to former colonial civil servants and their dependants. This service pays a top up to former employees of the Civil Service in Britain's former colonies into 106 different pension schemes. This is a finite and diminishing group of people – currently about 14,000 people - and it is estimated it will diminish to 0 by 2050 and by 2030 there will be an extremely small group of recipients. The total value of the payments was £98 million in 2010-11.

The service consists of automated monthly BACS payments and an annual exercise where pensioners make a declaration of entitlement. This is the one

transaction still carried out by post, and where legislation requires a hard copy signature.

The recipients of these pensions are an ageing population, with an average age of 84. Very few of them use online services and one third of them live outside the UK in 93 different countries, many of which have low bandwidth for internet access.

The process is reviewed regularly under the terms of a service level agreement (SLA) and recipients are surveyed regularly as to their satisfaction with the service they receive. The unit has received the UK Government's Customer Service Excellence award in recognition of their work.

See Annex 2 for numbers of transactions.

Organisational Capability

Skills and capability development

A digitally capable organisation should be one where services are centred around user needs, rather than those of the organisation, and where the staff have the skills to use

digital tools effectively. Staff should understand the opportunities and risks of greater transparency, participate in social media, look to automate processes and put themselves in the role of customers or users when commissioning new services.

We must ensure that our organisation has the skills to deliver on this digital strategy. We will look at the digital skills due to be set out in the Civil Service Capability Plan and supplemented by Civil Service learning modules. We will develop a programme for all staff, both UK based and those appointed in the countries where we work, which will include self learning, mentoring and support, building on the pockets of experience and expertise that already exist, and bringing in external support where needed.

We will review any technical restrictions or barriers to use of digital tools, and ensure staff have the appropriate access.

Our senior leaders will also champion the use of digital in the workplace, undertake the necessary training to improve their digital skills and have expert help in place to support them.

We will ensure that these new digital approaches are also adopted within DFID to improve our internal processes and make them as effective and efficient as possible. Digital channels available to staff to support their work are explored in more detail in our Knowledge and Information Management strategy, which is due to be refreshed in parallel with the implementation of this digital strategy.

New governance structure to support digital activities

DFID has a board level Digital Champion, who will take overall responsibility for delivering this strategy. To support the digital champion, a digital operations unit will co-ordinate the activities of teams throughout the organisation, providing both a co-ordinating and a challenge function. The unit will also ensure DFID makes best use of expertise from outside, while developing the capacity and capabilities of its own staff.

Annex 1: Government digital strategy principles and actions

Enhance departmental digital leadership

Action 1 – Departmental boards will include an active Digital Leader, who will lead on the development and delivery of departmental digital strategies.

DFID response: We currently have a Digital Leader who is both on DFID's Departmental Board and the Executive Management Committee. We will establish a digital operations unit, reporting to the Digital Leader, that will take responsibility for overseeing the delivery of this strategy. See pages 7, 24.

Action 2 – Services handling over 100,000 transactions per year will be redesigned, operated and improved by a suitably skilled, experienced and empowered Service Manager.

DFID response: Not directly relevant, as no service carries out that volume of transactions, however we will work with our corporate service teams to ensure that where current services need to be improved, streamlined or made simpler, we will ensure those involved in the process have access to the appropriate advice and guidance.

Develop digital capability throughout the Civil Service

Action 3 – All departments will ensure they have appropriate digital capability in-house, including specialist skills.

DFID response: To support our Digital Leader, we will establish a digital operations unit, which will co-ordinate the current activities of communications, systems delivery and programme design, and take responsibility for overseeing the delivery of this strategy. See pages 7, 24.

Action 4 – Cabinet Office will support improved digital capability across departments.

DFID response: We will work with Government Digital Service colleagues to ensure we have the skills and capabilities we need to deliver DFID priorities. We will develop a programme of skills development, which will include delivering the proposed Civil Service learning modules. See pages 7, 24.

Redesign transactional services to meet a new Digital by Default service standard

Action 5 – All departments will redesign services handling over 100,000 transactions each year.

DFID response: Not relevant currently, as no service carries out that volume of transactions, but where we do redesign transactions, we will ensure we

apply the user centred principles developed by the Government Digital Service.

Action 6 – From April 2014, all new or redesigned transactional services will meet the digital by default service standard.

DFID response: Although DFID does not currently have many transactions, this is still a priority area in which to achieve efficiencies. Any redesigned services will meet the Digital by Default service standard.

Complete the transition to GOV.UK

Action 7 – Corporate publishing activities of all 24 central government departments will move onto GOV.UK by March 2013, with agency and arms-length bodies online publishing to follow by March 2014.

DFID response: We have a transition manager in place and intend to meet this deadline. We have a transition manager in place and intend to meet this deadline. See page 14.

Increase the number of people who use digital services

Action 8 – Departments will raise awareness of their digital services so that more people know about them and use them.

DFID response: We will communicate with our audiences to encourage them to use digital services when they become available, eg for recruitment and for feedback about how projects are working. Mentioned throughout this strategy.

Provide consistent services for people who have rarely or never been online

Action 9 – there will be a cross-government approach to assisted digital. This means that people who have rarely or never been online will be able to access services offline, and we will provide additional ways for them to use the digital services.

DFID response: DFID delivers very few transactional services but, where we do provide services, we will always look to be consistent and accommodate the needs of all users.

Broaden the range of those tendering to supply digital services including more small and medium sized enterprises

Action 10 – Cabinet Office will offer leaner and more lightweight tendering processes, as close to the best practice in industry as or regulatory requirements allow.

DFID response: We will adapt our procurement processes as needed to take advantage of the new leaner and more lightweight tendering processes in relation to procurement of digital services. See page 19-20.

Build common technology platforms for digital by default services

Action 11 – Cabinet Office will lead in the definition and delivery of a new suite of common technology platforms which will underpin the new generation of digital services.

DFID response: This is not relevant to the department at this time as DFID is not re-engineering any transactions.

Remove unnecessary legislative barriers

Action 12 - Cabinet Office will continue to work with departments to remove legislative barriers which unnecessarily prevent the development of straightforward and convenient digital services.

DFID response: We are not aware of any significant legislative barriers to achieving digital by default for our services. If legislative barriers do arise as we rebuild services, we will work with Cabinet Office to amend these.

Base service decisions on accurate and timely management information

Action 13 Departments will supply a consistent set of management information (as defined by Cabinet Office) for their transactional services.

DFID response: Not directly relevant at this time as DFID does not carry out transactions at the volume to be monitored by Cabinet Office, however the digital operations team will produce a dashboard which aggregates key measurements of DFID transactions and activities, to enable to the organisation to monitor and track improvements as services are developed.

Improve the way that the government makes policy and communicates with people

Action 14 – Policy teams will use digital tools and techniques to engage with and consult the public.

DFID response: We will review previous consultations and promote the techniques which have been successful across the department; ensuring policy teams have a programme of support and guidance to use them effectively. Plus we will pilot new ways of gathering feedback from the people directly affected by aid projects. See pages 11-13.

Annex 2: Transactions detail

The following is an illustration of the range and volume of our transactions.

1. Procurement

DFID Supplier Portal

Registered suppliers Nov 2012	5295
Volume of SMEs	2722
No of countries this is spread across	84
Volume of competitions	Corresponds with Contracts Finder
Value of competitions	Corresponds with Contracts Finder

Contracts Finder
Currently 117 contracts available to bid for (Nov 2012) for DFID's direct spend.
Approximately 50-60,000 companies registered.

2. Commonwealth Scholarships

Number of awards made annually	Approximately 750

3. Recruitment

Numbers of internal/external adverts and applications

Internal e-Resourcing System – Stages 1 (Internal) and 4 (External)

Stage	Date	Adverts Posted	Applications Received
External	1/04/10 – 31/03/11	46	1577
Internal	1/04/10 – 31/03/11	532	912
External	1/04/11 – 31/03/12	58	2193
Internal	1/04/11 – 31/03/12	535	549

Number of applications for Graduate Development scheme (via email)	4,484

4. Overseas Pensions

Transactions for 2010-11

Number of individuals receiving pensions	14,000

Number of payments	165,000
Number of pension schemes into which payments are made	106
Total value of payments	£98 million

5. Public Enquiry Point

Number of enquiries for financial year 2011-12

Phone calls	4000
Email enquiries	6936
Letters	1814
FOI requests	473

6. DFID Funding Schemes

Our funding schemes are structured and managed in a variety of ways. The sample below demonstrates the range of funding scheme types.

Name of fund	Managed by	Transactions per year	Value
Global Poverty Action Fund	TripleLine on behalf of DFID	3440	£120m over 3 years
Governance and Transparency Fund	KPMG on behalf of DFID	24 payments to KPMG who disburse funds to grantees	£130m over 5 years
Common Ground Initiative	Comic Relief on behalf of DFID	4 payments to fund managers who disperse to grantees	£20m over 3 years
Disability Rights Fund	DRF	4 payments to fund managers who disperse to grantees	£1,305,000 over 3 years
Girls Education Challenge Fund	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in alliance with FHI 360, Nathan Associates Ltd. and Social Development Direct Ltd		£328,091,400
UK Aid Match	DFID		£30m
Food Retail Industry Challenge Fund (FRICH)	DFID and Nathan Associates London Ltd		Grants between £150,000 and £1 million

Annex 3: References

Civil Service Reform Plan http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform

DFID's Open Data Strategy http://www.data.gov.uk/library/dfid-open-data-strategy

Open Data White Paper http://data.gov.uk/library/open-data-white-paper

Government Digital Service – Government Transactional Services http://transactionalservices.alphagov.co.uk/

Contracts Finder http://www.contractsfinder.co.uk/

DFID Supplier Portal https://supplierportal.dfid.gov.uk/selfservice/

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC UK) http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk

Civil Service Code http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values

DFID's Research for Development (R4D) Portal http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/

What Do They Know? http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/