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Key findings

S1 This evaluation examines the performance of the DFID country programme in Kenya from 2000 to 2006, to derive lessons for DFID in Kenya and elsewhere.

S2 Following the disappointments of the Moi era, the Kenya country programme has been largely successful in delivering what it set out to achieve. The strategy itself was aligned with Kenya’s needs and significant development results have been achieved particularly in education and health. In delivering this outcome DFIDK adopted a cautious approach to aim instruments mainly involving projects but moving towards Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) or sector budget support where the fiduciary risk allowed and there was evidence of Government of Kenya (GOK) reforms.

S3 The evaluation draws on secondary data, project reports and qualitative interviews. Apart from the education sector, rigorous quantitative or survey based evidence about development outcomes arising from DFID’s programme is limited. This report notes the need to invest more systematically in impact evaluation to support policy advice. But from the reviews and studies that have been done, a positive picture has emerged.

S4 Project performance at completion indicates that just over 60% of the sample examined of portfolio was deemed to have been wholly or mostly successful. This is broadly in line with DFID’s global performance (60-70% over the period 2003/06).

Key findings

S5 DFID strategy during the period was set out in a Country Strategy Paper (CSP) in 1998 and Country Assistance Plan (CAP) in 2004. The CAP draws constructively on drivers of change analysis for orientation but gives little detail about programme content or justification for sector engagement. References are made in both the CSP and CAP to DFID’s historical programme in Kenya, and there is mention of comparative advantage, but without any supporting analysis. In common with other CAPs of the same era it lacks measurable objectives and indicators.

S6 Governance is rightly seen as an overarching theme. The governance strategy was well articulated, to work both on demand and supply-side issues.

S7 Service delivery is given a very light treatment in the strategy and the programmes in health and education are not explained in any detail, despite their large share of the budget. DFID supports long-term programmes to help tackle the underlying causes of poverty. DFID also works with multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Commission.

S8 Support to education included strategic Technical Assistance (TA) to support the development of a SWAp, continued long-running and highly regarded programmes in primary education and an innovative and effective funding mechanism for learning materials in the form of per capita grants at school level.

S9 The approach to pro-poor growth emphasised service delivery, continuing historical engagement in agriculture and lands with a move into policy engagement, but with no clear unifying theme. The governance strategy was well articulated, to work both on demand and supply-side issues.

Programme content and process

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General budget support:

- National statistics, and make impact evaluation part of sector strategy for DFID’s engagement with the MDGs.
- Support for public financial management has contributed to improved linkages between plans and budgets. Corrupt procurement practice remains an impediment, with slow uptake of a new procurement law.
- Support for governance has made a difference in view of the changing performance. Since then, non-budget support financial aid has been used effectively in education, but general budget support has been withheld under continuing concerns about public governance and high-level corruption.

Pro-poor growth:

- Whether or not to re-engage in water sector strategy with uncertain ownership. DFID’s historical experience is not informing the programme, and there is a scope for integration with other private sector work. Small scale support to environmental policy has been effective, but arms length engagement in water and sanitation has left concerns about the poverty orientation in the sector, given its key importance for the MDGs and rural poverty.

Lessons

1. Governance issues have defined and constrained many aspects of the programme. The decision to have a predominantly project portfolio was an appropriate approach. Handling difficult issues of high level corruption has tested the office and they have responded by taking a leading role amongst the donor community. The relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has strengthened and a joint strategy has been prepared that has increased the coherence in approach between the FCO and DFID.

2. A positive feature has been the efforts to address and link the demand and supply aspects of governance simultaneously. DFID’s work with civil society and the private sector has also been a useful counterweight to white paper. Trying to tackle governance with comprehensive reforms has not yet brought success. Experience in education suggests improving sectoral governance may be more feasible than generic system wide change.

3. Consistent and clear policy influence through long-term TA has led to a good environment to move forward with a health sector SWAp and has brought stability to the NACC. For short-term gains the twin track approach of scaling up insecticide treated bednets and financing supplies of condoms was effective.

4. Project support can successfully underpin SWAp development – the education programme shows the benefits of taking the longer view, designing to scale, building robust systems and capacity within government, alongside support to policy development. Joint impact evaluations have provided valuable lessons and evidence to support policy development. Good progress has been made at confronting corruption by eliminating discretionary spending at the centre, decentralising to the lowest practical level and providing high quality training to senior officers.

5. The absence of a coherent approach across agriculture, natural resources, water supply and sanitation, and private sector development has left a programme that has a disjointed set of activities and is taking on new areas of work, such as social protection before consolidating areas of proven experience.

6. Support in agriculture and water were mostly satisfactory. The shift upstream to land policy has been effective, but support to agriculture needs clearer direction in the face of an ambitious

S18 Project results in agriculture and water were mostly satisfactory. The shift upstream to land policy has been effective, but support to agriculture needs clearer direction in the face of an ambitious potential with public service reform and considering how to link the reforms to financial performance incentives through the budget.

Harmonisation:

- to use the Kenya Joint Assistance Strategy and the Harmonisation, Alignment and Coordination initiative to explore innovative ways to harness resources to bring other development partners into joint working and sector leadership roles.

Support to evidence-based policy:

- to maintain the effective programme of support to national statistics, and make impact evaluation part of sector strategy for DFID’s engagement with the MDGs.

Recommendations

S26 Eight recommendations are made in the report. Six are for DFID Kenya and two for headquarters.

- Pro-poor growth: the office should develop a coherent pro-poor growth strategy which responds to the challenge of growing inequality.

Drivers of change:

- in view of the changing political landscape and response to anti-corruption, DFID should persist with the drivers of change approach and continue their efforts to extend political analysis further down to sector level as part of strategy development.

Governance:

- build on experience, exploit the potential with public service reform and consider how to link the reforms to financial performance incentives through the budget.

Harmonisation:

- to use the Kenya Joint Assistance Strategy and the Harmonisation, Alignment and Coordination initiative to explore innovative ways to harness resources to bring other development partners into joint working and sector leadership roles.

Support to evidence-based policy:

- to maintain the effective programme of support to national statistics, and make impact evaluation part of sector strategy for DFID’s engagement with the MDGs.

General budget support:

- that DFID provides to the government of Kenya a clear statement of position about the commitments and action required by GOK that will enable consideration of budget support in future.

Two recommendations are directed towards DFID Headquarters. Country programme prioritisation:

- DFID should develop guidance that provides a coherent basis to assess priorities for engagement, recognising advisory support as a development input rather than just an administrative cost.

Improved programme monitoring, that DFID introduces a results framework with monitorable indicators in the CAP and links to periodic sector or portfolio performance reviews where individual projects do not reach the £1m threshold.
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Drivers of change: in view of the changing theme across the sub-sectors and linkage to private sector development.

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DFIDK support to governance has made a successful story, especially on governance and the social sectors. As the recommendations note, however, we have no cause for complacency. Many difficulties remain in managing the programme sustainably, such a challenging environment.

One of the most urgent needs across all themes is one such possibility. We will look into the Bangladesh instrument to see whether this might offer entry points in Kenya.

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**Key findings**

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