

DECEMBER 2010

PUBLICATION NOTE: (added March 2011)

This How to Note was prepared as an internal document to guide DFID staff in the drafting of Operational Plans. It covers some sections of Operational Plans which are not being published because of their sensitive nature or because they are only meaningful for internal management purposes.

Preparing an Operational Plan

What is the purpose of an Operational Plan?

Operational Plans should outline the role each unit plays in delivering the DFID Business Plan. The Operational Plans will collectively provide the necessary detail of how we will implement the Business Plan and enable the central aggregation, monitoring and management to ensure delivery.

DFID's Business Plan for 2011-15 has now been agreed by HM Treasury, Number 10 and the Cabinet Office. The [Business Plan](#) was published on 8 November 2010.

Operational Plans will be the single layer of planning across the organisation below the DFID Business Plan. They will translate the outcomes of the Spending Review 2010 as well as the Bilateral Aid Review (BAR), Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) and Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) processes, into plans that set out the operations of different units of DFID for the next four years.

Operational Plans should provide confidence to the unit and to management that financial and human resources are organised to deliver the results they have committed to, and that they have developed plans to implement DFID's agendas on Value for Money, Evaluation and Transparency.

The plans are internal management tools, but some sections will be made available publicly (see below).

What is an operational unit?

Director Generals are responsible for determining the appropriate level for operational planning in their Directorates.

For Country Programmes the operational unit is usually the country office (or regional programme). For International and Policy divisions the operational unit is the department. Corporate Performance Group is deemed to be a single operational unit. For the full list of operational units see Quest Document 2866154: [List of units completing OPs by Directorate](#).

What should an Operational Plan include?

The allocation process and the Reviews will provide units with the overall shape of their programme. Operational Plans will concisely set out:

- **Why** the operational unit is important in delivering DFID's objectives
- **What** the operational unit will deliver in terms of SRP actions and results (a summary will be provided in the body of the OP and a full Results Framework must be annexed)
- **How** the operational unit will deliver these results including summary resource requirements, contributions to DFID efficiency targets and business change objectives

More detail is provided later in this guidance. This guidance is not intended to cover all the planning processes that will be necessary to inform the Operational Plans: it focuses on what units need to include in their Operational Plans. Links will be provided where other relevant guidance exists to the planning processes that will inform the writing of the Operational Plan.

Operational Plans are not intended to be exhaustive and will not cover the full extent of all work undertaken by individual operational units. Appropriate planning and monitoring arrangements below the operational plan level should be determined by operational unit heads. Relevant processes should be proportionate and ensure a clear line of sight to the Operational Plan and DFID Business Plan.

What is the timetable for developing Operational Plans?

Operational Plans must be signed-off and submitted by mid-February 2010. The process for obtaining sign-off for the Operational Plans will be determined by individual Directorates and will be communicated to operational units by their Director or DG.

After sign-off, there will be a process of central review both to ensure that the results sections are consistent with any aggregate statements of DFID delivery and that any derived reporting against the plan will help meet external reporting requirements. We will also need to ensure that the individual budget and workforce sections are within overall organisational constraints.

Quality assurance for the remaining sections (1, 2, 6-10) will primarily lie with the Directors/DG responsible for signing-off the OPs.

What is the process for consulting on Operational Plans?

It is up to individual operational units to decide if and how to consult with other internal and external partners when developing its Plan. Country offices may wish to consult, for example, with partner governments and other key stakeholders.

Will Operational Plans be revised?

In line with DFID's own Business Plan, Operational Plans will be refreshed annually. We do not envisage full scale revision over the spending review period except where

there is major external change, but we recognise that detailed information for the outer years of the current settlement may not be available at the outset.

How will we monitor and report progress against our Operational Plans?

We will be developing a formal monitoring framework for measuring progress against plans from April 2011. Our working assumption is that this will follow the broad outline of the [current quarterly management report](#) but with an enhanced results section to measure progress against DFID's business plan indicators and any formal public statements of aggregate results. We will also continue to track a range of common key performance indicators drawn primarily from central systems to help measure operational efficiency and measure progress towards business change objectives.

Operational units should also ensure regular monitoring and reporting against their own detailed results frameworks or equivalent

Will Operational Plans be evaluated?

A proportion of Operational Plans will be evaluated. Further details on how the OPs subject to evaluation will be selected and the method of evaluation will be issued in due course. Teams should also be aware of the new context DFID is working in, in particular the creation of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI).

In section 7 Operational Plans will cover the work units are doing to embed evaluation in their own work, and how they will evaluate their projects and programmes over the lifespan of the OP.

Will Operational Plans be published?

In the spirit of transparency, and to comply with related requirements, all Operational Plans will be published. They are primarily intended for use in internal management **not** as public-facing documents, but when drafting the OP units should keep in mind that they will be made publicly available. We propose that some sections be withheld or restricted and these are indicated on the attached template. Individual operational units may also wish to explore alternative communications options to build stakeholder engagement with the Plans.

Country Offices are committed under the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee to publishing a summary of their OPs in local languages. This summary will be composed of sections 1-4 of the final Operational Plan, with a standard DFID-wide introductory slide that will be provided centrally. Once the OP has received sign-off from the relevant Director, the Country Office should proceed with translation of these sections.

Do I have to use the template provided and complete within the limits given?

Yes. The PowerPoint template has been designed to be sufficiently flexible to apply across the board. You should ensure that you complete the template in Arial font size 10 within the specified slide limits and using the required headings where given.

Creating your Operational Plan

This How To Note provides guidance applicable to all units completing Operational Plans. The Operational Plan PowerPoint template is available at Quest Document Number 2854930: [Operational Plan Template](#). Please contact the Aid Effectiveness and Value for Money Department if you have any queries.

Guidance on writing an Operational Plan

Operational Plans consist of 10 sections:

1. Context	}	<i>Why</i>	p.5
2. Vision			p.6
3. Structural Reform Plan actions	}	<i>What</i>	p.7
4. Results			p.8
5. Delivery and Resources	}	<i>How</i>	p.10
6. Delivering Value for Money			p.13
7. Monitoring and Evaluation			p.14
8. Transparency			p.15
9. Communications			p.16
10. Risk			p.17

1. Context (1 slide limit)

When drafting Sections 1 and 2 operational units should, where possible, avoid repeating general statements made in the Vision section from the overall DFID Business Plan. These sections are designed to say specifically how the unit fits into the wider organisation. We envisage that for the publicly available documents a standard introductory slide will be added providing an overview of DFID’s context and vision to aid stakeholder understanding, but this is not deemed necessary for internal purposes.

In section 1, a brief analysis of the context specific to the unit should be provided, with reference to supporting documents as necessary.

Points for inclusion as applicable:

- Where units fits in the wider picture of DFID work, HMG engagement and activity (including FCO in-country), and what other donors are doing
- Evidence of need at an overview level (quality of the data describing context and background, which establishes the case for the programme)
- Partner country development priorities
- Regional dimension of engagement

Note: Analysis documents including, but not limited to, Country Governance Analysis and Fiduciary Risk Analysis, remain an essential part of country planning. For this round of operational planning, country offices are not automatically required to complete new analysis documents, but should draw on evidence in their existing analysis documents. However, responsibility to ensure analysis and information is adequate lies with the country office and where there has been a significant change

in context, country offices are strongly advised to update the summary and recommendations sections to provide assurance that key changes in context are reflected in the results proposed in operational plans. Revised guidance will follow at a later date on the required/suggested timing for refreshing analysis documents.

2. Vision (1 slide limit)

Please complete using the following subheadings, again with reference to relevant supporting documents as necessary:

Overview

A high-level overview of the proposed work for the full spending review period and what the unit hopes this will achieve linked to theories of change.

A theory of change sets out the causal chain from inputs to outcomes and the assumptions that link each step in the chain. Theories of change go beyond logframes by (a) drawing out how and why change will be achieved (b) paying attention to process as well as results. The vision outlined by the theory of change may relate to a variety of high level goals such as the route out of aid, the route out of fragility or conflict, the route out of poverty and the route out of inequality.

It should also cover how the unit supports aid effectiveness, including a country-led approach by DFID and its funding partners; alignment with partner country development priorities and facilitating more effective use of all available development finance, including from other donors and the private sector.

Alignment to DFID and wider HMG priorities

The OP should clearly spell out how the programmes aligns to the Structural Reform Plan, the DFID Business Plan and wider HMG priorities, including NSC, as appropriate. DFID's Structural Reform Priorities are:

- Honour international commitments
- Introduce transparency in aid
- Boost wealth creation
- Strengthen governance and security in fragile and conflict affected countries
- Lead international action to improve the lives of girls and women
- Combat climate change

In ***fragile and conflict affected countries*** Operational Plans should demonstrate that they have used the peace-building/state-building framework to underpin their overarching strategy as well as for the identification, prioritisation and design of interventions across all pillars. Linkages should be made between service delivery and wealth creation interventions and the governance and security pillar. Due consideration and reference must be given to:

- addressing the causes and effects of conflict and fragility (the central lens for all engagement), and:
- supporting inclusive political settlements and processes
- developing core state functions
- responding to public expectations.

All fragile and conflict affected states need to take account of the SDSR process and the forthcoming HMG Strategy on Building Stability Overseas. For NSC priority countries in particular OPs will have to be fully consistent with HMG joint strategies.

On **girls and women**, units should consider the Structural Reform Plan Commitment to ‘Lead international action to improve the lives of girls and women’ and the new gender strategic vision being developed around four areas (‘pillars’): Direct assets for girls and women; Delaying first pregnancy; Getting girls through secondary school; and Preventing violence against girls and women.

They should provide a strong narrative on how the lives of girls and women will be significantly improved and sustainably transformed in each of the pillars’ results areas. In doing so they should explain how the unit will develop strategic interventions that target girls and women directly, support the building of evidence on girls and women, mainstream gender across programmes and ensure all interventions related to girls and women are linked across the four pillars/work areas.

Interventions should be informed by the most recent gender and social exclusion analysis and the specific enabling environment. For further guidance please see Quest Document 2866229 [OP guidance on Delivering Results for Girls and Women](#).

On **climate change** units should provide a short narrative in their vision outlining how the interventions are ‘climate smart’ and contribute to delivering low carbon climate resilient growth.

What we will stop doing

Provide a brief summary of current programmes or activities that will cease during the lifetime of the plan.

3. Structural Reform Plan actions

Please list in the template table provided the Structural Reform Plan (SRP) actions that you are either directly responsible for, or contribute directly to.

The DFID [SRP Tracker](#) available on Insight contains a list of all Senior Responsible Officers which should help determine those actions for which each unit is **responsible**. The template also request units to identify **direct contributions** to SRP actions. For example, some SRP actions may specify that new programmes are to be developed across a number of units, generally country offices. In which

case, all relevant country offices or other operational units should include reference to their specific contribution in the Operational Plan.

A list of all SRP actions can also be found in the [DFID Business Plan](#).

4. Results (2 slide limit)

DFID is committed to embedding a strong results culture across the organisation and encouraging our partners to do the same. This means getting better at defining what we want to achieve and monitoring and evaluating what we do.

Headline results

In conjunction with sections 2 and 3 this section should provide management with an overview of your programme of work and intended results.

The Headline Results section of your OP should set out a small number of headline results (maximum of eight) that cover a wide cross-section of your portfolio and best capture your programme in summary. Each unit has the freedom to determine the most appropriate results for them to include here: the template allows for both quantitative and qualitative results to be included. All headline results should be drawn from the full results framework and be underpinned by clear methodologies and metadata.

The type of results you select should be relevant for your particular work area but aligned with DFID's overall Business Plan and objectives. For example we would expect country offices to select results that are based on their accepted results offers, drawing where possible from the list of impact indicators in the DFID Business Plan. International and Policy divisions may wish to select results which more directly address their influencing work, except where their work clearly contributes to delivery of development outcomes or outputs. Corporate Performance Group results are likely to relate to improvements in operational efficiency.

Units are encouraged to use the following two sets of indicators (where appropriate) when populating Operational Plans, and to discuss any issues relating to the set of recommended indicators with pillar leads throughout this process. Units should draw on the underpinning technical guidance for these sets of indicators, which will be posted on our TeamSite when available.

- [DFID Business Plan indicators](#)
- [Operational Plan recommended indicators](#)

Where it is not appropriate to use the indicators identified above, the following guidance on standard/suggested indicators may be useful:

- [Standard indicators](#)
- [Suggested indicator toolkit](#)

Full Results Framework (annexed to your OP)

All units are required to provide a full Results Framework using the appropriate standardised template agreed with FCPD together with their submitted OP. This is critical to allow for the central aggregation and monitoring of DFID's Business Plan indicators, standard indicators and other results for which central aggregation and monitoring will be required in future. We do not intend to publish the full Results Frameworks in recognition that they are living documents.

Country Offices should use the template available at: Quest document 2864330 [Detailed Country Office Results Framework \(EXCEL VERSION\)](#).

International Departments should use the template available at: Quest document 2867792 [International Divisions Operational Plan Results Framework: template and guidance](#).

Links to these are also provided on the Operational Plan teamsite.

We recognise that the Results Framework is a living document and only need be completed based on known information at this stage, but the document should be used regularly and updated frequently as and when further details become available.

General guidance on Results Frameworks

Results frameworks should follow good practice:

- Indicators should be clear and specific
- Baselines should be measured at an early stage
- Milestones and targets should be stretching but achievable
- Good quality data should be available for all indicators
- Sources should be separately identified
- Country level results frameworks should be fed by project logframes

Where the indicator is drawn from a standard set you should ensure that it is consistent with existing guideline methodologies. In all cases you should include the main data source and reference to a full technical description of the indicator and full meta-data. Wherever possible, partner country data sources should be used.

Wherever indicators relate to people where possible these should be sex disaggregated in your overall results framework and ideally referenced in the main operational plan.

Identifying expected DFID results is more straightforward when DFID is the only provider of funds. Where results are planned to be delivered through joint funding results should generally be estimated on a pro-rata share of expected outputs, based on DFID's proportion of the overall inputs to the output.

At this stage of the planning cycle it may be difficult to provide firm estimates of overall expected results from joint programmes (indeed most DFID only initiatives will be subject to full investment appraisal). Your expected results at this stage should thus seek to strike the appropriate balance between overall ambition and current level of programme certainty.

Useful Resources:

- [Interim Guidance on Measuring and Managing for Results in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States](#)
- [How To Note: Guidance on using the revised Logical Framework](#)
- [How To Note: Standard indicators](#)
- [DFID Briefing on the Results Chain](#)

Evidence supporting results

This section should provide a brief overview of the feasibility and realism of proposed results referencing the underlying theories of change and strength of evidence underpinning core assumptions.

Reference should be made to sources of evidence and how evidence generated elsewhere was utilised.

The plan should set out in which pillars the evidence base is strong, and where there is insufficient evidence to support core assumptions.

The content of this section should inform the content of Section 7 on Monitoring and Evaluation. Work to address weaknesses in the evidence base should not be set out here but in section 7.

VFM rationale

Units should outline the VFM considerations taken into account in determining high level priorities in terms of results expected to be achieved and associated risk in delivery. Value for Money considerations for specific interventions should be considered as part of the Business Case process and therefore not included here.

Work to embed and improve VFM over the period of the OP should be addressed in Section 6 rather than covered here.

5. Delivery and Resources (5 slide limit)

Overview

The first slide should be used to provide an overview of the unit's structure, design and means to deliver its programme.

The mechanisms, procedures and partnerships by which the OP will be delivered should be set out and accounted for. According to unit and context, this should include reference to partners within DFID, OGD partners, as well as all national and donor counterparts in country.

The following should be addressed in this section:

- What do you expect the main delivery routes for the OP to be and what is the rationale behind this choice?
- What other non-delivery partners do you anticipate working with, to what ends and why?
- Where you envisage working with multilateral organisations, please set out how you will mitigate against any risks identified in the published MAR assessments.

To inform this section, units may wish to refer to the following information:

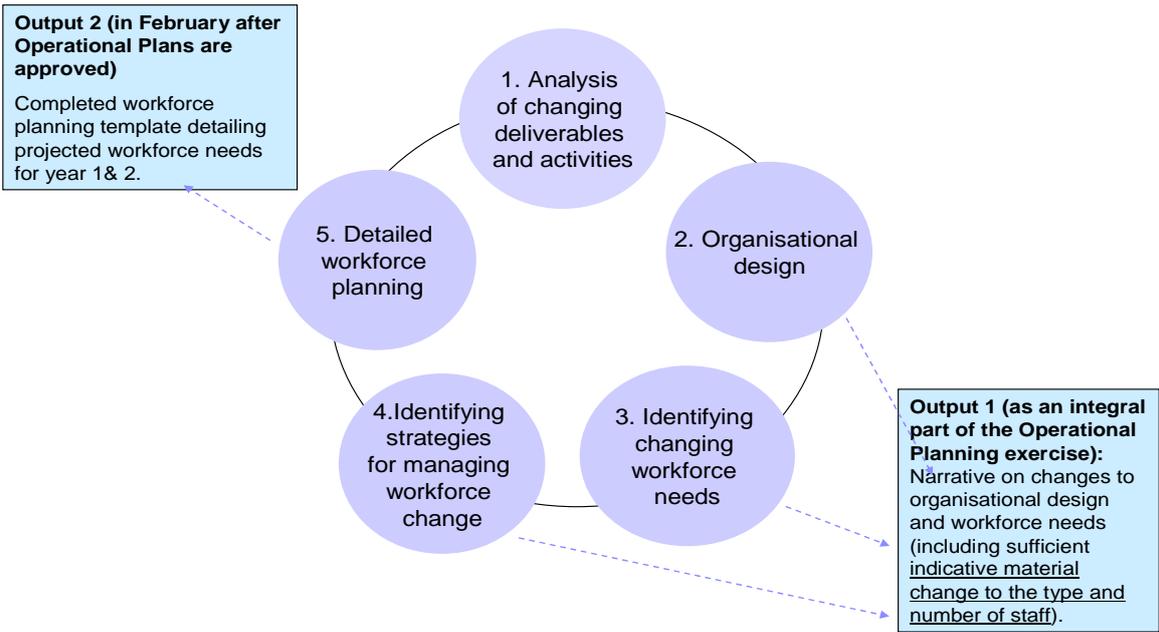
- [How to Provide Technical Cooperation Personnel \(How to Note\)](#)
- [Implementing DFID’s strengthened approach to Budget Support – Technical Note](#)
- [Budget Support Refresh \(detailed Proposal – submission\)*](#)
- [Budget Support Reform \(TMG submission\)*](#)

For Country Offices, the three partnership commitments for conditionality should be the basis on which to make judgements about whether to align with a particular partner government’s priorities and whether to use their systems for aid disbursement. These are:

- commitment to poverty reduction
- human rights and other international obligations
- strengthening financial management and accountability

Workforce Planning (1 slide)

Process for identifying changing organisational and workforce needs



This section asks for a description of the workforce requirements, team/department structures, roles, numbers and types of staff that will be required to achieve the strategic goals of the business unit, as identified in this operational plan.

The description should take into account the need to deliver efficiencies across the organisation (e.g. constraints arising from one third reductions in core admin budget across DFID) and, in some areas, the anticipated growth in front line delivery staff (particularly changes to professional and advisory skill requirements).

In a one slide narrative you should identify:

- How structures, roles and the indicative number and types of staff are likely to change over the SR period (particularly the increase in frontline delivery staff and the required reduction in admin funded posts);
- How the proposed changes will be implemented and achieved and over what timescale;

The overall anticipated number of FTE staff by operating cost budget type (frontline delivery, admin, capital) and their costs for each year covered by the OP should be recorded in the Operating Cost table on slide 9 of the OP template.

Further guidance and the key questions you need to address (highlighted) are available [here](#) (Quest Document No 2856284).

In February 2011, after Operational Plans have been approved, you will be asked, through Cabinets, to complete workforce planning templates updating data on current workforce (based on improved templates completed during the December 09 exercise), and then workforce needs for years 1 and 2 of the SR period. More detailed guidance on this will be issued in January.

Financial Resources (2 slides)

Please use tables in the template to provide financial breakdown for Programme Spend and Operating costs. For Programme Spend, country offices should not include in-country activities funded by other Business Units (e.g. PD-managed climate funds in Kenya), to avoid double counting.

Further guidance specifically related to financial allocations/breakdown and efficiency savings will follow in December when allocations are issued.

Efficiency savings (1 slide)

In the narrative portion of this section, you should set out for admin spend what your unit will stop doing, by when, and what was spent on the activity/area in 2010/11 spend.

Please use table provided in template to set out a breakdown of efficiency savings over the lifetime of the Operational Plan. Where FTE is not applicable, please enter N/A in the relevant cell.

The commissioning letter sent to units setting out their allocations will contain further details on efficiency targets.

6. Delivering Value for Money (1 slide)

All units need to consider how to embed and improve VFM in the delivery of their activities and objectives: it is recommended that they develop a full VFM strategy to do so. This does not have to be developed in the same timeframe as your OP, but if possible you should set out here a date by which this will be completed.

Value for Money rationale relating to the programme set out in this Operational Plan should be covered in Section 4.

This section should provide top messages/highlights of the unit's VFM strategy and action points for 2011-2015. Where a unit already has a VFM Strategy/Action Plan in place, a summary should be provided here. It should not be included in full.

First a brief analysis of key challenges (both anticipated and existing) to improving/embedding VFM analysis specifically should be provided.

Key actions to meet these challenges and improve VFM analysis in the future should then be set out, together with target dates and, where applicable, the relevant individual/team responsible for implementation. These should be clearly defined, concrete and tangible actions, rather than broad statements of ambition which will be difficult to measure progress against. As applicable, they should cover work with partners (multilaterals, NGOs, partner country governments etc) on VFM.

Departments in the International Divisions may want to highlight in this section any particularly important cost, results or wider VFM issues relevant to the multilaterals in question, or any key monitoring processes to be put in place to track results, costs, etc. in this multilateral.

In framing their strategy and action points units should consider as applicable:

- What skills, systems and structures need to be in place or improved to further embed VFM in the unit.
- How VFM will be addressed when managing Operating Costs.
- How VFM will be addressed at various stages of project cycle management when managing programme funds, for example:
 - At the design stage
 - Through procurement
 - At approval stage, including quality assurance arrangements

- Throughout implementation and reviews

To assist in drafting this section, examples of VFM Strategies/Action Plans can be found on the Operational Planning teamsite.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation (1 slide)

Monitoring

Formal refreshes of the Operational Plans will take place annually, in line with the expected annual review of the DFID Business Plan. In addition to this, monitoring against the Operational Plan and the Results Framework should be an ongoing feature of the unit's work.

In your Operational Plan you should set out:

- **How** you will monitor progress against your Operational Plan and Results Framework
- **Who** will be involved in monitoring
- **When** this will take place
- **What** action will result from monitoring and what will be produced (reports, updates etc)

The full detail of data sources (and indicators derived from them) together with milestones and targets should be contained in your full results framework.

Evaluation

Some units may wish to develop a fuller evaluation plan, in which case this should not be provided here but key points provided together with a reference.

You should consult with EvD pre-approval.

Please note: for units seeking firmer guidance from EvD on how to make choices about what to evaluate and the overall level to aim for on, this will be available by end December 2010.

This section should cover:

- What evaluations you currently have underway
- What evaluations you are planning
- In each year of the operational plan what proportion of your budget you envisage being subject to independent evaluation.
- Whether you anticipate needing a full time or shared evaluation post
- Actions to address shortcomings in terms of skills needed for the embedding evaluation agenda (assessing evidence, designing monitoring frameworks,

In terms of coverage of your office / department portfolio, you should consider the total value of those projects with evaluation built in (even if the evaluation is planned in year 3 and this is year 1) as a proportion of the total value of all projects. This can be done on an annual basis (in terms of expenditure) or lifetime budget.

It is envisaged that in most offices coverage will rise over the lifetime of the Operational Plan although no targets have been set at present. It is appreciated that until choices are made in light of BAR results and budget allocations it will not be possible to undertake these calculations and that some assumptions may be needed about which interventions will be evaluated before they are fully planned; these assumptions should be made clear and a link provided to the information on what evaluations are being planned.

DFID's embedding evaluation work includes developing a cadre of evaluation specialists and building up evaluation skills right across DFID's policy and operational teams, supported from EvD. Units could call on existing results, statistics and advisory staff where this is possible. Note that evaluation work is distinct from regular monitoring activity.

Building capacity of partners

This section should cover work to build capacity of partners in evaluation, evidence, measuring and monitoring results, statistics and data collection.

It is important for units to think about the environment in which they are working.

Relevant issues to consider are:

- Are partners receptive/ proactive/ hostile around monitoring and evaluation?
- What is their capacity level?

We need to build in a requirement of partners to demonstrate results and process in a format that is usable for both communications and for beneficiaries.

These issues may affect choices around data sources, evidence and results, monitoring and evaluation. They might also point to value in work to build capacity of partners, which DFID is keen to support where appropriate.

Your OP should consider which activities might be undertaken to help strengthen partners' focus on results and evidence, data collection and statistics, monitoring and evaluation. This can cover any relevant organisations with whom you work, including multilateral organisations and partner country Ministries.

8. Transparency (1 slide)

Transparency is a key priority for the new government. The UK Aid Transparency Guarantee commits DFID to publishing more information, making information more

accessible and promoting feedback, and leading the transparency agenda internationally, including by encouraging for full transparency in CSOs and multilaterals that we fund; donors; and partner countries. This includes a commitment to publish summaries of Country Operational Plans in relevant local languages.

You can find more information on the commitments under the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee [here](#).

Units should outline what actions they will undertake to ensure DFID meets its commitments of the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee, and as appropriate cover the below points:

- Ensuring information we publish is of high quality and in plain English (all units). This could include putting in place management incentives for information quality assurance.
- For relevant units, state the local languages information will be provided in.
- Encouraging our partners to be more transparent (applicable to all units which directly interact with other donors, CSOs, multilaterals and partner countries)
- Enabling access to information and feedback from beneficiaries. This could be from a corporate perspective or cover country level efforts to make comprehensive and timely aid information available to partner governments and the public, and support the capacity of local actors to use information to hold decision makers to account.
- What further information and datasets the unit will make available, beyond that required in the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee.

9. Communications (1 slide)

When used effectively, communications can help achieve SRP commitments and support the Department in demonstrating value for money and delivering on the transparency agenda. Your communications planning should include an overview of why/what you are communicating – and an outline of your approach for doing this.

Communications should have the underpinning consideration of how to demonstrate value for money and make information accessible to citizens of developing countries and the UK.

You should Speak with your DFID communications specialist (strategic communications) to get further guidance on completing this section. Some of the areas to consider are:

- Communication Objectives:
 - Separate to policy/operational objectives – they should focus on what you want to achieve by *communicating your work*.
- Key Audiences:

- Who do you want to communicate with, and equally importantly who wants to communicate with you. Where possible be specific - in-country, UK, stakeholders, etc.
- Messages and Content:
 - What are the broad messages you are trying to communicate?
 - Are any 'types' of content more effective for doing this – E.g. case studies? And if so, how are you ensuring these are being captured?
- Communications approach/activities:
 - What communication activities will you mainly undertake? E.g. social marketing for development, communicating results to the UK public, stakeholder engagement, etc.
 - How are you using branding (UKaid) in your communications?
- Timeline:
 - Key milestones with communications potential.
- Programme design (regional specific):
 - How will communications be incorporated into your local programme design and delivery at various stages?
- Evaluation:
 - How you will build the effectiveness of communications into your overall evaluation?
- Risks:
 - What are the communication/reputational risks and how you will manage/mitigate these?

10. Risk (1 slide)

As you develop your Operational Plan you should identify and assess key risks to the achievement of your objectives and consider what you can do to mitigate these risks.

General guidance on risk management principles can be found in MoneySight under Audit, Risk and Assurance – click [here](#) to view.

Risk is defined as uncertainty, whether positive or negative, that will affect the outcome of an activity or intervention. The term “management of risk” incorporates all the activities required to identify and control the exposure to risk that may have an impact on the achievement of DFID’s business objectives.

It is a priority to use risk management techniques to support decision making in DFID and help determine optimum use of resources. Risk should be clearly linked to achieving objectives and results. The level of risk taken should be appropriate to the degree of impact that can be achieved and within tolerances set by Management Board.

In fragile and conflict-affected countries, high risk programming will often be the norm. Offices should not be risk averse, because transformative programmes that yield high returns are more likely to be high risk. High risk programmes should always be carefully monitored.

Risks should be monitored regularly to ensure they remain valid, additionally consideration should be given whether any risks need to be escalated to Corporate Risk Register level. The Assurance Team should be alerted for any risks where trigger points have been reached by way of a ‘flash report’.

A risk scoring methodology using a 5x5 matrix has been recommended.

At Operational Plan level you should use the risk register template in the OP template to:

- identify core business risks which could prevent achievement of key objectives. To achieve a line of sight between Corporate and Operational risk you **must assign a risk category**. (See Quest Document 2866166 [DFID Risk Library](#) for **categories and risk examples**)
- identify triggers which will act as an early warning signal to indicate in advance if the risk is becoming closer to realisation
- set out mitigating actions being undertaken to reduce the risk
- record and rate the risk remaining once mitigating actions have been taken (residual risk) – see tables 1 & 2 below
- consider whether residual risk is within **your** overall appetite to risk in that category and whether the benefits of taking the risk more than compensate for the downside outcomes (ie is the programme potentially transformative?) *N.B. A paper on risk appetite is currently in draft. This will suggest that risk appetite is set in a number of categories. Once this is finalised, you should consider whether the level of residual risk which you have assessed is within the tolerances set by the Management Board. Please provide your own assessment in the meantime.*
- state proposed management action on the residual risk and comment if required
- identify a risk owner

Table 1: Probability of risk occurring

Traffic Light	Assessment	Interpretation
High	Is expected to occur, almost certain.	Greater than 80%
Medium/High	Will probably occur, measures may or may not exist to reduce likelihood.	Between 20 and 80%
Medium	Could occur, this is possible. Measures to reduce likelihood exist, but may not be fully effective.	Between 10 and 20%
Low/Medium	Might occur at some point in time. Conditions do exist for this to occur, but controls exist and are effective.	Between 5 and 10%

Low	Rare, may occur in exceptional circumstances. No or little experience for a similar failure;	Less than 5%
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Table 2: Impact of risk if it occurs

Grade of Impact	Description	Interpretation
High	May cause key objectives to fail. Very significant impact on organisational goals. Legal or regulatory implications. Significant reputational impact.	Significant impact on MDGs. Significant impact on country programme. Significant impact on staff safety Financial implications exceed £40m
Medium/High	Major effect. Risk factor may lead to significant delays or non achievement of objectives.	Impact on country level objectives/ programme. Financial implications.
Medium	Moderate effect. Risk factor may lead to delays or increase in cost.	Considerable impact for programme/project. Financial implications
Low/Medium	Some impact of the risk, fairly minor.	Some impact for programme/project Financial implications
Low	Fairly insignificant , may lead to a tolerable delay in the achievement of objectives or minor reduction in Quality/Quantity/ and/or an increase in cost.	Financial implications

Further useful resources:

- For fragile and conflict-affected countries, the Fragility and Development Team/CHASE can provide further guidance, including advice and information on specific areas under the four objectives of the PBSB framework. Contact the Fragility and Development Team. Please also see the Interim Guidance on Measuring and Managing for Results in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States which is available on the [Fragility and Development Policy Hub](#), where you'll also find further guidance on service delivery and political settlements in fragile and conflict-affected countries.
- For guidance on empowerment and accountability units should refer to the internal online resource which will be available from the beginning of January via the following link: <http://dfidblogs/innovations/>