



BUILDING THE EVIDENCE TO REDUCE POVERTY

The UK's policy on evaluation
for international development

*Department for International Development (DFID)
June 2009*





On behalf of the Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) I welcome this new DFID evaluation policy.

Design of the policy drew heavily on advice from IACDI and discussions with IACDI members. The committee sees it as a critical step in strengthening DFID's central function for independent evaluation and also in spreading a stronger culture of evaluation and learning from experience across the Department.

The adoption of this policy by DFID responds to a key recommendation made by IACDI, as set out in my annual letter last year to the Secretary of State. Its implementation will trigger action on most of the other recommendations we have made to date.

The policy sets an ambitious agenda for evaluation in DFID. IACDI will carefully monitor implementation of the policy, and seek to ensure through our advice that it is properly resourced and that DFID follows through on the commitments it sets out.

David Peretz

Chair of the Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact

The Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact was created in 2007 to oversee the independence, quality and use of all evaluation in DFID (www.iacdi.independent.gov.uk).

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Summary and Key Messages



SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES

Evaluation – a shared effort to improve development and get results

- i Development is about achieving results that make a difference for the poor in their daily lives. Evaluation is a key instrument both to inform decision makers and to hold DFID to account for its choices and actions. To make a real difference, evaluations must deliver credible and impartial findings and recommendations which are reflected in DFID’s policy and programming. We will therefore seek to achieve high standards in our evaluation work and to ensure active follow up by management.
- ii Evaluation takes place in the context of understanding that attributing development outcomes to particular interventions by DFID is a challenge, and this policy sets out realistic expectations of what can be achieved in evaluation.
- iii Evaluation is a key component of DFID’s Results Action Plan and our steps to strengthen evaluation processes is closely coordinated within DFID with other work programmes to strengthen DFID’s aid effectiveness and measurement of results.

DFID’s commitment to independent evaluation

- iv The UK will safeguard the principle of independence in evaluation of its international development work, since it is essential to the credibility and usefulness of the function.
- v An Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) was created in 2007 to oversee the independence, quality and use of all evaluation in DFID (<http://iacdi.independent.gov.uk/>). The Chair of IACDI writes annually to the Secretary of State for International Development (copied to Parliament’s International Development Committee) reviewing all DFID’s evaluation work and making recommendations for improvement. IACDI also approves the forward work plan for DFID’s Evaluation Department.
- vi This policy sets out a mandate for DFID’s Evaluation Department as well as the evaluators commissioned by all parts of DFID. DFID’s centrally commissioned evaluations must be fully independent, while our decentralised evaluations must conform to international principles of impartiality (*Annex 3 – p39*).

New partnerships for evaluation – putting developing countries first

- vii** The UK is fully committed to the principles of ownership and mutual accountability and results orientation set out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and recently reconfirmed and amplified in the Accra Agenda for Action.
- viii** These principles imply that the evaluation of development cannot be just for donors, nor is it just about aid. The UK will seek to promote a much stronger role for developing countries in the evaluation of development policies, programmes and projects.
- ix** The UK will look for ways to help developing countries build their capacity and skills for independent evaluation, so they can play a more equal role in DFID's own evaluations. DFID will use country systems for evaluation whenever possible, letting partner countries take the lead. DFID will also support initiatives for partner countries themselves and other independent agencies to carry out their own evaluations of DFID policies and programmes, as well as of their own development activities, endeavouring to make use of the resulting findings.
- x** The UK will also harmonise its approach to evaluation with other donors, undertaking joint evaluations where possible, and only commissioning DFID – specific evaluations when other alternatives have been explored with partners.
- xi** But in all evaluations, including those led by DFID, a trade off is sometimes required on independence and working in partnerships, where different partners have different standards.
- xii** The UK will actively seek to integrate into its evaluations issues of policy coherence and the global environment for development that have been under-evaluated in the past.

Building a culture of learning and evaluation

- xiii** DFID will work with partners whenever possible to integrate review and evaluation into programmes at the outset, agreeing responsibilities and resources including for any 'baseline' studies required.
- xiv** DFID will significantly increase the amount of evaluations that are commissioned across the organisation, focusing on our large spending areas and public commitments as well as lesson learning from innovative programmes and partnerships.
- xv** DFID senior management will take a strong lead in championing and sustaining an evaluation and learning culture in which the use of evidence is valued.

- xvi** Evaluation is only one part of DFID's wider commitment to learning. Evaluation will be embraced within a wider knowledge and information strategy to ensure all evidence based information is brought together to increase potential for learning.
- xvii** DFID will proactively publish evaluation findings wherever possible, to comply with our international commitments to transparency (*Annex 3 – p39*).

**Driving up
the quality of
evaluations
– setting
standards and
developing skills**

- xviii** In all its evaluation work, including with partners, DFID will promote relevant international quality standards (*Box 1 – p10*). Evaluation Department also has an important role in supporting decentralised evaluations, including helping to set standards, providing support and advice, and reporting on quality.
- xix** Evaluation Department will take a strong lead in helping DFID staff and consultants to access relevant training and advice, and will develop professional competencies and skills expected of specialist evaluators and managers who are engaged in commissioning studies.

**More and
better impact
evaluations for
international
development**

- xx** The UK is committed to more and better impact evaluation of international development. Impact evaluations are rigorous research studies which are designed to look specifically at whether development interventions have resulted in specific outcomes on the ground.
- xxi** DFID's approach to impact evaluation involves:
 - *Supporting and leading a shared international research collaboration with developing countries and partners such as the Gates Foundation and the World Bank to generate high quality impact evaluations that are relevant to and useful to developing countries;*
 - *Founder members of the International Initiative on Impact Evaluation (3ie), the new organisation set up to support rigorous impact evaluation of international development.*
 - *Leading the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) which has recently published authoritative guidance on impact evaluation approaches.*
 - *Designing rigorous impact evaluations into the planning stage of many programmes that we fund or help to fund.*

**Implementation
and delivery**

- xxii** The 10 Point Implementation Plan attached to this policy sets out the critical actions we will be taking over the next five years, and how we will monitor progress, in order to deliver the policy objectives. For each of the policy pillars and key objectives, we have set out actions and responsibilities.
- xxiii** Resourcing the policy implementation has been fully considered by DFID's Management Board and includes use of programme resources for an expansion of decentralised evaluations, additional administrative resources to Evaluation Department for changes to their role in key areas, and significant investment in rigorous impact evaluation.
- xxiv** DFID's guidance on evaluation and review will be updated to provide staff with clear and accessible advice on how to implement the policy. We are also updating DFID's Blue Book – the internal manual of tools and procedures – to incorporate changes on evaluation. This explains what is expected of programme managers in light of the new policy direction, and what standards are to be attained.
- xxv** As part of the implementation, staff will receive support on results and evaluation including access to a helpdesk facility, training programmes, guidance and use of DFID and international resource centres. This will help them to build their capacity and skills on monitoring and evaluation.



Chapter 1



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Improving development effectiveness

- 1 DFID leads the British government's fight against world poverty and supports accelerated progress against the Millennium Development Goals. With an aid budget set to rise to 0.7% of GNI by 2013, it is more important than ever that DFID's work is rigorously evaluated, to ensure aid resources are used to best effect. DFID is also tasked to work with other UK government departments to address global issues crucial for poverty reduction such as trade and investment, climate change and conflict. Evaluating these wider 'policy coherence' issues is also important.

What is evaluation?

Box 1

DFID uses the definition of evaluation agreed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and widely accepted by the international development community:

"The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation, and results in relation to specified evaluation criteria."

DFID's *central evaluations* are those commissioned by our Evaluation Department, where possible in collaboration with development partners. They should have the following characteristics:

- *governance arrangements that ensure independence, quality and transparency;*
- *a systematic approach, following international evaluation principles and criteria (Annexes 2 and 3);*
- *usefulness for policy and decision making and for public accountability;*
- *going beyond the immediate objectives of the programme to ask why and how it works, including investigating the theory and assumptions behind the intended effects and checking for unintended effects;*
- *publication;*
- *dissemination and stakeholder discussion for learning and wider decision making.*

DFID's *decentralised evaluations* are those commissioned by our staff responsible for managing DFID's programmes, policies and partnerships, or by their development partners, or by independent agencies with a watchdog function. DFID is committed to promoting quality, transparency, impartiality and, wherever possible, independence in such evaluations, recognising that standards will not in all respects be the same as for centralised evaluations. For both centralised and decentralised evaluations we take our Paris Declaration Commitments to promoting country leadership seriously, so trade offs may have to be accepted between this and achieving the highest standards.

In practice there is a gradation both in DFID and our partner organisations between 'reviews' and full evaluations. DFID's objective is to raise the standards for all of these, and gradually increase the proportion that can fairly be called an 'evaluation'.

Evaluation should not be confused with other aspects of results management such as monitoring and audit – these terms are explained in *Box 2 (p14)* and in the OECD-DAC glossary <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>

- 2 The aim of evaluation for DFID is to provide reliable and robust evidence from experience to improve the effectiveness and impact of programmes aimed at poverty reduction. Evaluation also provides a vital element in DFID's framework of accountability for performance and results, both to the taxpayer and to development partners, and to the poor and excluded who should be the ultimate beneficiaries of DFID's work. A key component of evaluating development effectiveness is to examine DFID's work with partners, including powerful partners such as the development banks, as well as DFID's influencing work on large global issues such trade and climate change. DFID will build on its previous work in this area in collaboration with other government departments and interested agencies to develop and improve methodology for evaluation of its policy influence.
- 3 Development outcomes are affected by many factors, and it is not always possible to attribute a specific outcome to a DFID intervention. A combination of research and evaluation will sometimes be needed to show a plausible link between DFID funding and an outcome, working closely with partners' evaluation and research programmes where there are overlaps.
- 4 This policy must be seen in the wider context of DFID's *Results Action Plan*, which includes the improvement of monitoring systems. DFID's work to improve our evaluations will be complemented by better standards across the board in monitoring reviews.

The international context for development evaluation

- 5 The framework for providing international development assistance has changed considerably following the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness agreed by more than 100 donors, agencies and developing countries in 2005. While the UK has been at the forefront of driving implementation of the Paris commitments, radically accelerated action is needed internationally to meet the targets set for 2010.
- 6 The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action builds on the Paris Declaration and sets out key actions to accelerate progress. Amongst these are commitments to use countries' own monitoring and evaluation systems to the maximum extent possible, to reduce the burden of fragmented donor requirements on developing country institutions, to increase the transparency of information on aid, and to increase the use of independent evidence and public scrutiny over the performance of aid at country and international levels. This policy sets out the broad implications of these commitments for evaluation in DFID and the key changes in the way we will work.
- 7 DFID has also pledged to manage its evaluations consistently with its international commitments on working in fragile states and in conflict. These commit donors to work in ways that support the development of stable and just states and 'do no harm' to people potentially affected by conflict and insecurity. It is important that DFID also takes account of environmental and political sensitivities in such situations.

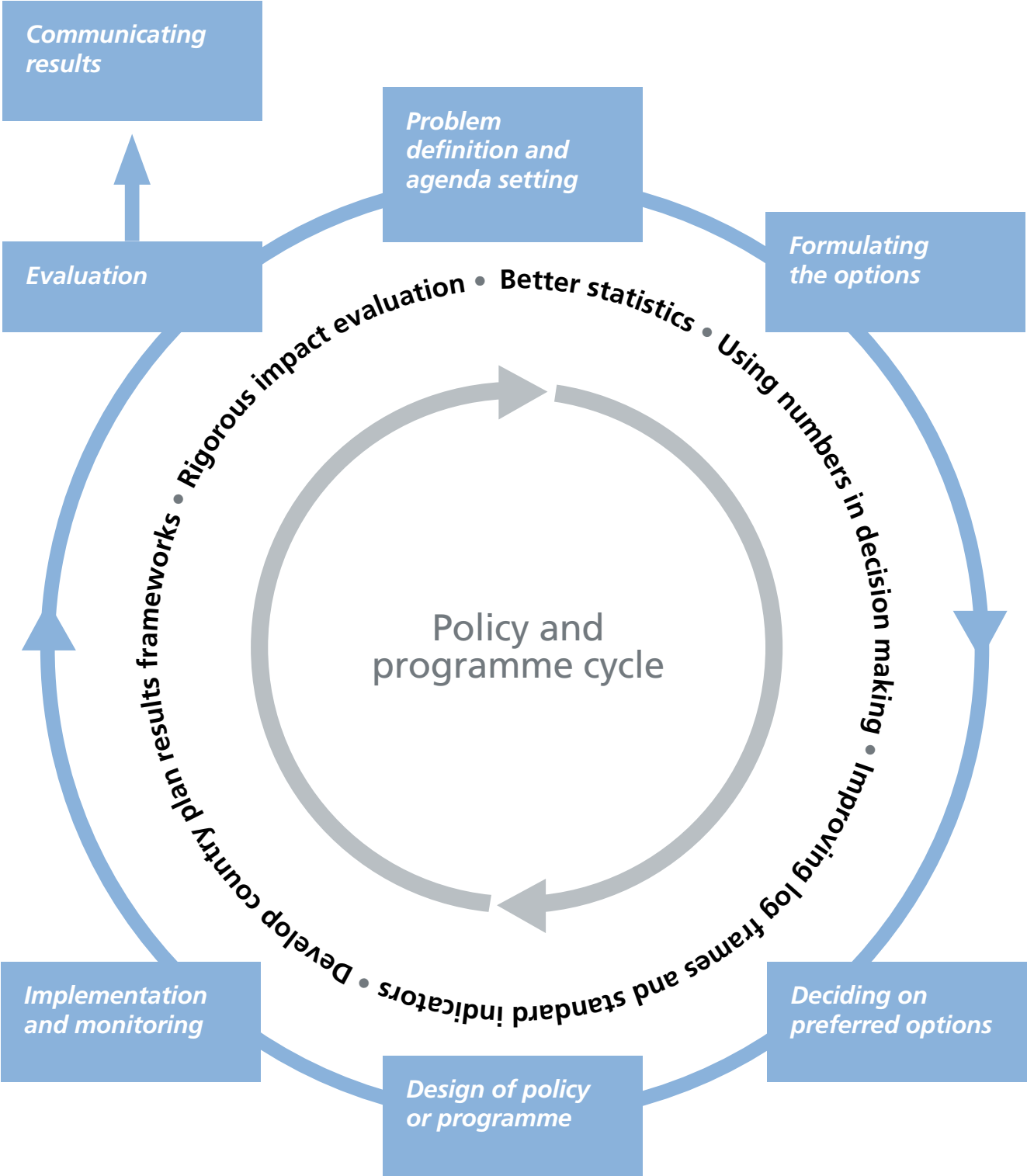
Why we need independent and high quality evaluation

- 8 Independent evaluations, working in tandem with DFID's monitoring and review systems, help ensure the accountability of DFID to the UK Parliament and public. Their particular value is in providing impartial, unbiased information through which citizens are empowered to challenge decision makers. Citizens in developing countries, who have a right to see that resources are put to effective use, are also given a stronger voice through participating in evaluation processes and being kept informed of, and making use of, findings.
- 9 Evaluations are also a key information source for decision makers in development agencies. Timely, relevant and rigorous evidence from independent evaluations can help to:
 - *identify what works and what is most cost-effective in tackling poverty, to maximise the impact of resources used;*
 - *demonstrate what returns we are getting from resources invested in development.*

DFID's co-ordinated approach to results: where evaluation fits in

- 10 Evaluation is an essential element of DFID's own accountability and performance management framework. External scrutiny of DFID is also provided in the UK by the National Audit Office, central government and Parliament (especially the International Development Committee) and internationally by systems such as the OECD-DAC peer reviews of development agencies.
- 11 DFID has published a Results Action Plan (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/results-action-plan08.pdf>), which includes actions to strengthen evaluation. Senior management have recently strengthened institutional arrangements to ensure greater results focus, challenge, accountability and quality assurance of DFID's work.
- 12 DFID has several high-level committees which help strengthen the process through which feedback from evaluation feeds into policy and programming. The Head of Evaluation and/or the Chair of IACDI sit as observers. These committees include:
 - *the Investment Committee which looks at DFID's value for money. This considers portfolio reviews of particular sectors as well as DFID's systems for assessing value for money;*
 - *the Development Committee which is responsible for development policy, which considers the results of DFID's policy and thematic evaluations;*
 - *the Country Peer Review Committee which reviews new Country Assistance Plans, including how they have responded to DFID's Country Programme Evaluations.*
- 13 The Results Action Plan also puts in place measures to strengthen the quality of data and evidence on which evaluation judgements are made. This includes focusing on strengthening DFID's monitoring and information systems and those of its partners, particularly in developing countries, to strengthen data sources and to assist in the expansion of baselines. For example, DFID is contributing to the international Statistics for Results Facility, launched at the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008.

How the Results Action Plan is improving delivery in DFID



Definitions and distinctions

Box 2

What's the difference between monitoring, evaluation, audit and research?

DFID's Monitoring, Evaluation, Internal Audit and Research functions work together to deliver DFID's Results Action Plan, promote synergies, ensure a clear division of labour and avoid duplication. DFID's website has details on the mandates and activities for each area. Where appropriate, joint studies can be carried out, for example by Evaluation and Audit Departments.

- **Monitoring reviews** – are annual or final reviews of progress made in projects, programmes, policies and partnerships. They are normally commissioned by DFID project managers in conjunction with partners. Guidance is provided by DFID to its staff on when independent evaluation should be employed in place of reviews, focusing on accountability for public commitments, large programmes and the potential for lesson learning from innovative programmes.
- **Audits** – review the policies, procedures and operations established to ensure: achievement of objectives; assessment and management of risk; reliability of internal and external information; reporting and accountability processes; safeguarding of DFID assets and efficient and economic use of resources; compliance with applicable laws and regulations, behavioural and ethical standards. There is a strong focus on compliance, reporting, procedures, risk and safeguarding resources. They would usually take as given the agreed policies and objectives.
- **Evaluations** – are mainly concerned with results and effectiveness of DFID's policies, programmes and partnerships – they ask questions about: what, why and how results are achieved; how the programmes are working; who benefits/loses, effects on poverty (including intended and unintended effects); whether the policies and objectives are relevant to the ultimate aims of reducing poverty.

- **Research** – is wide-ranging and not necessarily limited to DFID interventions. It seeks to answer the general question 'what works and what doesn't in development?', while evaluation generally focuses on the development effectiveness of a specific programme, policy or partnership, and DFID's own performance. DFID's Research Strategy (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/Research-Strategy-08.pdf>) includes support to operations research and impact evaluations. There are considerable overlaps between research and impact evaluation which DFID needs to identify and plan for.

What is IMPACT evaluation?

Impact evaluation is a specialised type of evaluation which uses research methods to give us rigorous evidence on whether a policy, programme or project has actually changed people's lives and whether outcomes are directly attributable to the interventions. For example, how do changes in nutrition and availability of health services delivered by a particular programme affect maternal mortality and health outcomes for young children in rural areas?

Some development practitioners and researchers have promoted impact evaluation through experimental methods and randomised control trials as carried out in medicine. We recognise the usefulness of this type of work and support an increase in rigorous impact evaluations more generally, but as one tool in the evaluation tool box, which must sit alongside evidence gathered through other evaluation methodologies. The UK supports the use of impact evaluations to tackle the key questions for policy makers in developing countries using a range and mix of the best available methods. Impact evaluations are supported by DFID's Evaluation Department through its support to international initiatives, as well as by DFID's Research Department and operational divisions.

The content of this policy

- 14** This policy provides the framework for DFID’s independent evaluation of the UK’s contribution to international development, and to set standards to apply to all evaluations undertaken.
- 15** The intended audience for this document includes (i) DFID staff and evaluators who need to know what is expected of them when engaging in evaluations (ii) external stakeholders and DFID partners who want to know the role evaluation plays in independent scrutiny of DFID’s programmes. A process of external consultation has ensured that the comments and suggestions from stakeholders in the UK, in developing countries, and wider global partners have been taken into account.
- 16** This document sets out four key policy ‘pillars’ for developing the evaluation function in DFID:
- (a) *strengthening evaluation independence;*
 - (b) *building new partnerships for evaluation with developing countries, across Whitehall and with our international partners;*
 - (c) *strengthening a culture of learning – in particular, improving links between evaluation, lesson learning and decision making, and an increase in decentralised evaluations;*
 - (d) *improving quality and increasing capacity.*
- 17** The commitments in this policy are reflected in DFID’s 10 Point Implementation Plan (*Annex 1*). This sets out in more detail how we will deliver on implementing the policy commitments, what it means for key business areas, and how progress will be assessed.



Chapter 2



CHAPTER 2 STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENCE

The UK's commitment to independent evaluation

- 18** High-quality evaluation depends on evidence that is objective, trustworthy and credible. To provide a solid anchor for evaluation independence throughout DFID, the mandate for evaluation in DFID is set out formally in *Box 3*. The quality of all evaluation in DFID is monitored by a central Evaluation Department (EVD), and underpinned by a body of centrally commissioned evaluations. This is further reinforced by the role of the Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI – <http://iacdi.independent.gov.uk/>), created in 2007. IACDI reports annually to the Secretary of State on the independence, quality and use of evaluations in DFID, and its recommendations have considerable weight.
- 19** It is important to recognise that independence does not mean isolation; those people involved in, responsible for and affected by the delivery of the projects and programmes being evaluated should make an active and meaningful contribution to the process. *Box 1 (p10)* discusses the need to balance independence and quality against other aims such as country leadership of evaluations.

Mandate for evaluation in DFID

Box 3

The mandate of evaluation in DFID is two-fold:

- (A) to inform policy and strategic decisions with evaluation evidence that helps to improve the development impact of DFID's programmes;**
- (B) to strengthen DFID's framework of accountability to taxpayers and partners for performance and results.**

To deliver on this mandate, the Head of Evaluation Department is responsible for:

- (i) assessing whether DFID programmes and activities are producing the expected results through commissioning, carrying out and publishing independent evaluations;
- (ii) recommending actions aimed at improving DFID's development effectiveness and impact based on evaluation findings. This may include
 - (iii) commissioning periodic assessments of the overall effectiveness of DFID's work, or of a substantial part of it, drawing on the results of more specific evaluations;
 - (iii) reporting annually to the Management Board and IACDI on evaluation in DFID. The Annual Report may include an assessment of the number and quality of central and decentralised evaluation processes and studies, follow-up to evaluation findings and recommendations, as well as overall lesson learning for DFID;
 - (v) promoting and supporting best practice in development evaluation;
 - (vi) setting up systems and protocols to promote leadership and participation of developing country partners, including civil society, in evaluations of DFID-supported projects and policies, and helping them to build their own evaluation capacities and systems;

Mandate for evaluation in DFID

Box 3 cont.

(vii) ensuring that evaluation is carried out in a way that adds value to DFID's overall work, respects the constraints within which DFID staff work and is responsive to the priorities of DFID's operational divisions.

To ensure that the evaluation function's independence, integrity and influence are protected, it is overseen by the Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact, and the Head of the Evaluation Department reports directly to the Director General for Corporate Performance. These arrangements will be kept under review.

The Head of Evaluation is empowered to:

- *Select evaluation topics that are relevant to DFID's development effectiveness in agreement with the Independent Advisory Committee;*
- *Ensure the quality and timeliness of evaluations produced and published by the Department;*
- *Protect the independence of the Evaluation Department evaluators and evaluation consultants contracted by the Department;*
- *Negotiate adequate resources for the evaluation function, within overall DFID resource frameworks in consultation with IACDI;*
- *Participate in key DFID decision-making committees such as those reviewing new policies and country programmes, to help ensure that evaluation results and recommendations are adequately considered in DFID's major decision-making processes.*

For all evaluations commissioned by DFID, whether centrally or by programme managers throughout DFID:

- *Common principles, criteria and quality guidelines are to be followed (Annexes 2 and 3);*
- *All evaluators will have full access to existing information and data that they need for their work;*
- *Appropriate safeguards on confidentiality and ethical standards are to be observed in the publication of evaluation findings;*
- *DFID staff and other stakeholders have the right to comment (in a timely fashion) on the factual accuracy and balance of draft reports. For central evaluations, final judgement on disputed wording will be made by the Head of Evaluation;*
- *DFID staff will create fora with internal and external stakeholders to share and discuss findings and feed into future decision making;*
- *Evaluation Department will publish evaluation protocols that set out the principles and procedures for carrying out evaluations, including those set out above. These will be informed and shaped by following internationally recognised guidelines such as those of the UK Evaluation Society.*



Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3 NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR EVALUATIONS

A more inclusive approach to partnership working

- 20** Strengthening a partnership approach to evaluation means:
- *a stronger role for developing countries, including their governments, parliamentarians and civil societies;*
 - *closer working across the UK Government on evaluations which affect all our work;*
 - *working better on evaluation with our international partners, including multilaterals, global and regional funds and partnerships, and international civil society organisations.*
- 21** DFID will increasingly look to partners taking the lead in evaluations where appropriate, particularly in partner countries to comply with our Paris Declaration commitments. We will work with others to promote high standards of quality and independence, and support partners where necessary to achieve these, recognising that it will take time to develop skills and capacities and to establish sustainable institutions able to undertake quality evaluations.

A stronger role for developing countries

- 22** Evaluation of development activities is not just for donors, nor is it just about aid. The UK is strongly committed to the principles of country ownership and mutual accountability while also recognising that we are operating in a changing environment for development with global challenges. The UK will work with others to promote a much stronger role for developing countries, including civil society, in the evaluation of policies, programmes and projects affecting development.
- 23** DFID will continue to work with the OECD-DAC and other established evaluation networks, but will also look to engage with a wider range of in-country and regional partners, assessing and evaluating the quality of its partnership working as part of this process.
- 24** DFID will seek to reduce the number of missions from evaluations and the burden of reporting on developing countries, focusing on strengthening and using their own systems wherever possible.
- 25** DFID will promote the representation and involvement of an inclusive range of partners, including national and local civil society organisations as appropriate, in evaluation governance structures.

- 26** DFID's reviews and evaluations will endeavour to take account of the views of people affected by policies and programmes supported by DFID, including poor, disabled and marginalised women and men, and will work to ensure that feedback mechanisms and subsequent decision making processes take account of these views.
- 27** Developing country partners need the institutional framework and the technical capacity to commission, design and manage evaluations in order to move towards the agreed international objective of increased reliance on country-led evaluations. It is equally important that there is an adequate pool of skilled national male and female evaluation consultants available in the countries in which we work, with very strong knowledge of local contexts. DFID has already made significant investments in international capacity building for evaluation, including support to international training courses and development evaluation associations. We will expand and enhance this support in collaboration with our partners, strengthen partner capacity and continue to increase the use of developing-country evaluators. Within the framework of wider OECD/DAC cooperation and other international efforts in this area, Evaluation Department will develop a specific strategy for DFID support to international capacity building in evaluation.

Partnerships across the UK government

- 28** We will actively seek to integrate into our evaluations issues of policy coherence and the global environment for development that have been under-evaluated in the past. Evaluating policy coherence refers to the need to assess other policies and programmes which affect the intervention being evaluated, for example security, humanitarian, trade and military policies and programmes. DFID is tasked to work with other UK government departments on evaluating these issues. Policy coherence is one of the standard evaluation criteria adopted by DFID (*Annex 2 – p37*). The Head of Evaluation Department leads the cross-Whitehall relationship and is active in a working group on improving impact evaluation across government.
- 29** DFID's country programme and thematic evaluations will look at issues of policy coherence across UK government wherever appropriate. DFID will consult with cross-Whitehall stakeholders on evaluation terms of reference at the planning stages, particularly in relation to the most sensitive operational contexts.
- 30** Evaluation Department will establish clear guidance and protocols for evaluation design and communication in collaboration with other relevant government departments.

**Partnerships
with
multilaterals,
global and
regional funds
and civil society
organisations**

- 31** DFID channels over half of its funding to and through multilaterals, joint funds and civil society organisations at international and at national level.
- 32** DFID relies as much as possible on the evaluation systems of these partner organisations, using the evidence they generate. DFID works with partners to ensure that these systems are also independent and meet international standards, for example through the UK being represented on appropriate boards, and through peer review and capacity building of evaluation functions if needed.
- 33** Where high-level strategic evaluations of multilateral institutions or joint funds are required from time to time, DFID will undertake them jointly with the relevant multilateral or global fund and other partners, to maximise ownership, share costs, maximise quality and influence, and minimise burdens of reporting. DFID will follow and promote the evaluation principles outlined in the Global and Regional Partnership Program Evaluation Sourcebook (Independent Evaluation Group [IEG], World Bank).
- 34** DFID will also work with others to commission independent evaluations of how effectively DFID engages with our key multilateral and NGO partners at every level, including through DFID's Institutional Strategy Papers.



Chapter 4



CHAPTER 4 A CULTURE OF LEARNING AND EVALUATION

Strengthening arrangements for decentralised evaluation

- 35** DFID will seek to expand and sustain a strong culture of decentralised evaluation across the department, with a greater understanding among staff and the partners with whom they work of the positive contribution evaluation makes in shaping public policy, and in strengthening DFID policy and programme decision making.
- 36** Programme managers will increasingly build reviews and evaluations into the planning stage in negotiation with partners and will be offered easy access to support and resources to help them manage evaluations well.
- 37** The Director General (DG) for Regional Programmes will chair a DFID panel once a year to determine priorities for decentralised evaluations in the next 12 months, to ensure that decentralised evaluations focus on the most strategically important areas where learning is most likely to be useful. The panel will focus particularly on the pipeline of new programmes about to start, to ensure that evaluation is built into programme design from the outset.
- 38** The benchmark for the proportion of total bilateral programme expenditure to be evaluated is set at between 50% and 75% by the end of the five year period.

Defining incentives

- 39** DFID senior management will provide strong leadership to keep evaluation high on the agenda and to support evaluation throughout DFID. DFID will strengthen incentives for staff to prioritise evaluation, within the context of the *Results Action Plan*, including, for example, recognition in staff performance management systems and through the management chain. We will collect, showcase and where feasible reward examples of best practice.

Building skills to increase potential for learning

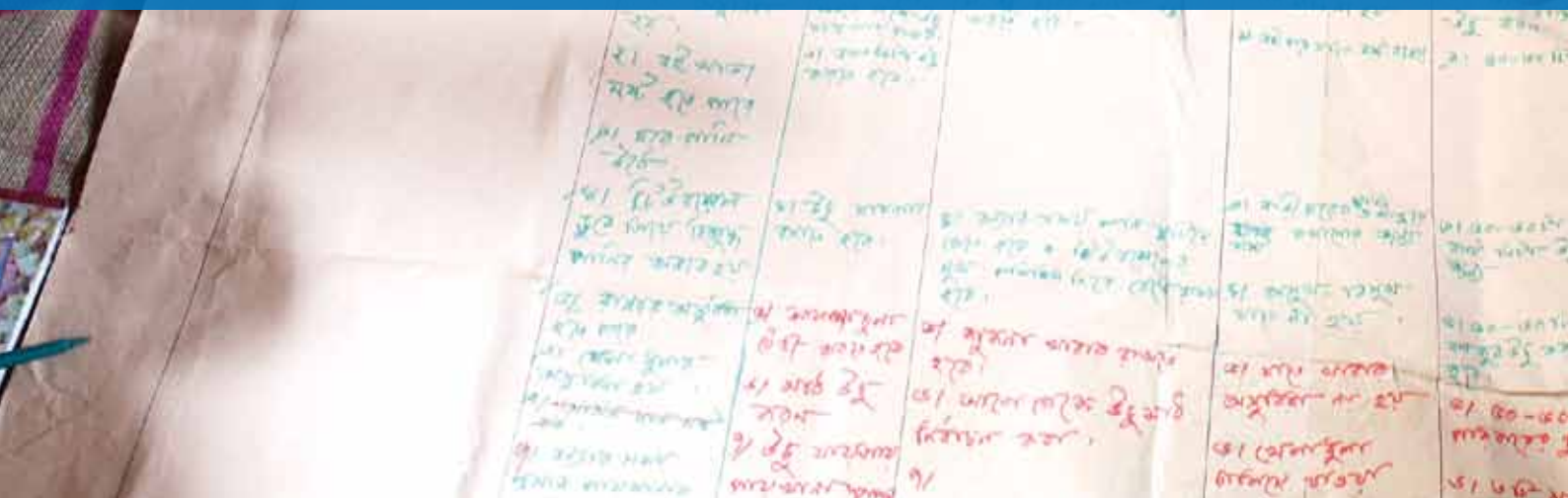
- 40** DFID's Evaluation Department has the role of promoting evaluation and demonstrating the standards staff need to deliver against and the skills they will need to use in accessible and practical ways. We will update our evaluation guidance for staff and integrate evaluation into general staff learning and development, including through defining professional competencies for evaluation management.
- 41** DFID will ensure that opportunities for learning are maximised and that evaluation processes and the language used in evaluation are accessible and easy to understand, avoiding over-complexity and jargon.

Collective learning and evidence based decision making

- 42** Evaluations are only one source of information and evidence for decision makers, and it is important to integrate them into wider lesson learning systems in DFID and among our partners. Improving information and knowledge management is one key factor in ensuring that evidence gathered from evaluations and other sources feeds into policy and programming.
- 43** DFID is currently undertaking a programme aimed at improving behaviours, processes and systems around the management and sharing of knowledge and information across DFID (KIM Programme). Evaluation is one focal area that will be addressed. Evaluation Department will play a central role in gathering, synthesising and centralising information from evaluations both by DFID and other donors, working closely with other departments in DFID. We will also work with partners such as UK civil society organisations to share information and experience on lesson learning, and how evaluation can best be integrated into it.
- 44** DFID also recognises the importance of evaluation systems being supported by strong data/information management systems in developing countries and in partner organisations. DFID programme teams will continue to tackle capacity issues in this area as part of the wider work of the *Results Action Plan*.
- 45** DFID will assign senior management leads for each major evaluation to ensure that there is a strong management response to findings and recommendations, and that those recommendations which are accepted are followed up. Follow up of evaluations will be tracked centrally by Evaluation Department and reported in its Annual Report.
- 46** DFID will continue to strengthen follow up processes, ensuring a proactive approach to feedback, creating appropriate fora for discussions on findings which feed into policy and funding decisions. Learning will be shared for wider benefit, encouraging citizens of developing countries to use evidence when appropriate for accountability purposes.
- 47** DFID will professionalise the communication of its evaluation findings to increase the traction of recommendations and ensure accessibility to a wider audience. We will strengthen tracking systems in support of this.



Chapter 5



CHAPTER 5 DRIVING UP QUALITY

Setting principles and standards

- 48** In all our evaluation work, including with partners, DFID will seek to achieve best practice by setting and following its own principles and quality standards, built upon those set by the OECD-DAC, other international evaluation bodies and networks. For DFID, the concept of evaluation quality includes the process and use of an evaluation as well as the technical quality of reports. DFID's guidance for staff working on evaluation will be kept up to date, reflecting the content of this policy, and setting out standards in detail.
- 49** DFID will uphold the UK obligations and commitments to gender equality and human rights, making sure that these are increasingly mainstreamed into all of its evaluation work.
- 50** We will ensure local contextual knowledge is sought when planning evaluations, calling upon local knowledge and where possible making use of national evaluators to ensure evaluation planning takes account of the local context.

Building quality into our systems

- 51** Evaluations and reviews will, as far as possible, be built into the set up and design of policies, projects and programmes. This will be central to driving up quality and results orientation. DFID will set guidance which specifies when independent evaluation should be undertaken, focusing on our public accountability commitments, size of programmes and innovative programmes with particular potential for learning.
- 52** Drawing especially on its links with other donor agencies and its participation in key DAC networks, DFID's Evaluation Department itself will focus on a small number of strategically important programmes, policies and themes for evaluation. The criteria for selection of topics for evaluation and the evaluation work programme are approved by IACDI.
- 53** DFID's Evaluation Department will set standards for evaluations and make arrangements for the provision of adequate advisory and quality support role for staff and partners managing decentralised evaluations. It will conduct regular reviews of evaluation quality and recommend improvements in monitoring and evaluation systems.
- 54** We will strengthen our evaluation methods (*Annex 2 – p38*) and our systems for quality assurance of central evaluations.

- 55 Monitoring systems are the basic building blocks for evaluations. Within the framework of the *Results Action Plan*, DFID is strengthening systems for generating good quality information on outcomes and impacts, including developing standard indicators. This should improve the evidence base for evaluations, particularly for measuring practical outcomes.
- 56 In our drive for quality, DFID will strike a balance with other important objectives such as country leadership of evaluations, as well as the need to ‘do no harm’ and protect both evaluators and the people they are working with in situations of conflict, insecurity and humanitarian need.

More and better impact evaluation

- 57 The UK is committed to promoting more and better impact evaluation of international development.
- 58 Impact evaluation needs to be built into programmes at the design stage, which means engaging with politicians and officials in developing countries and programme managers to encourage their interest and understanding in this area. Impact evaluations are relatively expensive and data intensive – to make best use of resources they should be focused on key strategic issues and commissioned as part of an international research agenda. DFID is investing in and working with others to assist in leading new international collaborations on impact evaluation.
- 59 DFID’s Evaluation and Research Departments will work closely together in support of international initiatives on impact evaluation, and on integrating impact evaluation into research carried out.

Getting the right professional skills

- 60 Evaluation Department will define professional competencies and skills expected of specialist evaluators and those involved in commissioning, managing and using evaluations, taking account of norms being developed by national and international evaluation societies. DFID advisory cadres and programme managers will, as appropriate, include skills in evaluation management in their competency frameworks. DFID will also look at increasing its external support through resource centres.



Chapter 6



CHAPTER 6 PUTTING THE POLICY INTO PRACTICE

How we will deliver on this policy

- 61** Annex 1 (p32) outlines how these policy commitments will be taken forward by DFID. The implementation plan will be rolled out over a five-year period, reflecting resource availability and the other demands on DFID staff.
- 62** DFID will work to improve value for money on how our evaluations are conducted, including the recruitment and contracting of expertise and how we use our own staff. DFID will also use its influence to improve capability in the evaluation ‘market’ as well, including in developing countries.
- 63** Implementation of the policy will be monitored annually and progress reported in the Head of Evaluation's annual report and assessed by IACDI. A baseline assessment will be undertaken as the strategy is developed and an evaluation of the delivery against the policy undertaken after five years.
- 64** This is an ambitious policy, involving promoting change and building capacity in many partners as well as DFID, and it is important to be realistic about how much can be accomplished in five years. The baseline survey, mid-term review and five year evaluation will be invaluable in assessing the costs and benefits of the policy and in focusing evaluation efforts appropriately. The ultimate objective is to use evaluation resources in the most effective and efficient way to improve our collective efforts to reduce world poverty.



Annexes



ANNEX 1 10 POINT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

TURNING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

- i** This annex sets out a 10 Point Implementation Plan, showing how the new DFID evaluation policy will be put into effect in key areas from 2009–2013.
- ii** To implement the policy, managers across DFID will strengthen the focus of evaluation in their work. This includes factoring evaluation into the design phase of new interventions and negotiating with partners to plan evaluations, and requires upgrading evaluation skills and knowledge across the organisation. We are strengthening DFID's Evaluation Department's capacity to support 'decentralised' evaluations managed across the organisation, and to draw out and effectively communicate lessons learned to share across DFID and beyond.
- iii** Evaluation Department (EVD) will work across DFID, especially with Human Resources Division and Heads of Profession, to integrate evaluation appropriately into competency frameworks and training programmes for both advisers and programme managers.

OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

- iv** The Policy and the 10 Point Implementation Plan will be supported by updated entries in the DFID 'Blue Book' (the manual of tools and procedures) and enhanced Evaluation Guidance documents including EVD's business planning. These will show how we will approach evaluation and learning in each key area of DFID's business, and further clarify roles and responsibilities for evaluation in different parts of the organisation.

RESOURCING

- v** In DFID's major programmes, a significant and appropriate level of resource (likely to be between 1% and 5% of programme expenditure) will be allocated to evaluation

and to wider investment in monitoring and assessment of results. The actual amount will vary in practice depending on the size, importance and complexity of the programme. The benchmark we are aiming for is that by 2013, between 50% and 75% of DFID's expenditure through bilateral programmes will be subject to high quality evaluation and we will look to partners to achieve similar coverage of evaluation for programmes funded through multilaterals and civil society. All DFID's programmes over £1m are already subject to mandatory review and scoring in relation to success and value for money.

- vi** EVD will be allocated additional administrative resource to cover specific aspects of work to underpin the policy, primarily for the management of high quality studies, staff training, support, communication and information management. Costs will be minimised by incorporating evaluation into existing training programmes and working jointly with other DFID departments (for example Finance and Corporate Performance Division [FCPD] on the *Results Action Plan*). EVD is restructuring and building staff capacity to undertake this new role.

MONITORING PROGRESS

- vii** DFID's Management Board will regularly monitor progress against the 10 key areas, using the indicators shown. EVD will carry out a baseline study in 2009 to help refine the indicators and establish baselines and milestones. Progress will be discussed annually by the Management Board, and summarised in the Head of Evaluation's Annual Report. The annual letter from the IACDI Chair will provide an independent view on progress. There will be a mid-term review of the Policy in 2011/12 and an independent evaluation in 2014/15.

POLICY PILLAR A: STRENGTHENING EVALUATION INDEPENDENCE

Objective	Indicators - evidence of change	Principal responsibilities and actions
1. Strengthen the independence of central and decentralised evaluations.	<p>1a) Further progress on implementation of IACDI's 12 recommendations in the Chair's first annual letter. http://IACDI.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/annual-letter-and-press-release1.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DFID Management Board to review remaining IACDI recommendations regularly and take further action as appropriate.</i> • <i>EVD to set standards on independence including exercising the strengthened mandate set out in the policy.</i> • <i>EVD to report to DFID senior management and IACDI on the quality of decentralised evaluations.</i>

POLICY PILLAR B: NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR EVALUATION

Objective	Indicators - evidence of change	Principal responsibilities and actions
2. Meet Paris Declaration commitments to commission more evaluations jointly.	<p>2a) An increasing share of DFID project evaluations are planned together with partner countries and other delivery partners.*</p> <p>2b) At least half of DFID's Country Programme Evaluations are carried out together with country and/or international partners by 2012/13.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project officers and lead advisers work with partners to design evaluation into project agreements, including capacity building and use of country systems where appropriate.</i> • <i>EVD and relevant country programme staff agree joint and country-led approaches with country partners and with evaluation units in other donors.</i>
3. Improve evaluation of international partnerships.	<p>3a) Indicator(s) to include:*</p> <p>(i) fewer reviews by DFID of partner organisations – greater reliance on joint studies using partner systems;</p> <p>(ii) regular reviews of quality of international partner evaluation systems;</p> <p>(iii) assessment by IACDI of quality of DFID's evaluation of international partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DFID staff managing international partnerships to review and support greater use of partner systems for evaluation.</i> • <i>EVD to commission evaluation(s) of DFID's approaches to international partnerships with multilaterals and international NGOs.</i>

* shows where indicators will be refined by a baseline study to be conducted in year 1

<p>4. Integrate the principle of policy coherence into our evaluations, including strengthening our evaluation links with other UK government departments.</p>	<p>4a) Evaluation protocols agreed with other Whitehall departments by end 2010.</p> <p>4b) External scrutiny of DFID evaluation (by IACDI) notes significant and continuing improvement in coverage of policy coherence issues in DFID evaluations by mid term review.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EVD work with Whitehall partners to develop shared principles and protocols for evaluation.</i> • <i>Staff in EVD and across DFID who are evaluating programmes with a wider Whitehall policy dimension will incorporate policy coherence principles in their evaluation work, particularly relating to programmes with shared UK government targets.</i>
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POLICY PILLAR C: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Objective	Indicators - evidence of change	Principal responsibilities and actions
<p>5. Significantly increase number of decentralised evaluations in programmes and projects.</p>	<p>5a) Significant increase in the number of programme and project evaluations led by DFID staff and published/made available (from x to y to be established by baseline study).*</p> <p>5b) Significant increase in the proportion of DFID’s bilateral spend which is covered by recent evaluation.*</p> <p>5c) Geographical and sectoral coverage of evaluations accurately reflects corporate delivery areas in the range of decentralised evaluations undertaken by the time mid term review conducted.</p> <p>5d) DFID introduces a structured approach to evaluation of central policies from 2009/10, with all designated ‘flagship’ policies subject to full independent evaluation by 2013.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project officers work with partners to build evaluations into new projects where applicable.</i> • <i>Director General regional programmes decides annually, with advice from EVD and regional directors, which programmes are to be included in decentralised evaluation, so that available resources can be focused on areas of highest lesson learning and accountability.</i> • <i>EVD ensure that project evaluations are centrally collected and available to others.</i> • <i>IACDI monitor decentralised evaluation coverage and quality.</i> • <i>Development Committee identifies ‘flagship policies’ (requiring special UK scrutiny) or ‘other’ policies (covered under general joint thematic evaluations). For flagship policies, policy teams work closely with FCPD and EVD to design M&E frameworks and plans.</i>

* shows where indicators will be refined by the baseline study

<p>6. Support DFID staff to manage and develop their skills in evaluation and help to build M&E capacity in developing country governments and partners.</p>	<p>6a) Customer surveys indicate that DFID staff feel well supported on monitoring and evaluation.*</p> <p>6b) Increasing uptake of training programmes, use of helpdesk and resource centre facilities evidenced by difference between baseline study and mid term review.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EVD supports development of training and resource centres for DFID staff engaged in evaluation.</i> • <i>EVD and DFID country staff engage in strengthening capacity for evaluation in developing countries. To include international capacity building through IDEAS, World Bank and regional evaluation associations.</i>
<p>7. Establish clear mechanisms and incentives to use evaluations in decision making.</p>	<p>7a) Clear evidence presented annually that DFID's key oversight committees are using relevant evaluation evidence in discussions on new plans and policies.*</p> <p>7b) Clear evidence that evaluation findings are feeding into and impacting on decision making, to be set out in Head of Evaluation's annual report.*</p> <p>7c) Increasing take up of training; support to build competencies in evaluation increases by point of mid term review.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Key committees include Investment Committee, Development Committee, and Country Programme Peer Review Committee.</i> • <i>DFID's Finance and Corporate Performance Division will update DFID's 'Blue Book' of rules as necessary, working with EVD.</i> • <i>EVD will centrally collect information on DFID's evaluations to support policy and programme teams.</i>

POLICY PILLAR D: DRIVING UP EVALUATION QUALITY ACROSS DFID AND IN OUR KEY PARTNERS

Objective	Indicators - evidence of change	Principal responsibilities and actions
<p>8. Improve the quality of DFID evaluations and strengthen quality assurance processes.</p>	<p>8a) Regular IACDI assessments of quality of central DFID evaluations show improved quality, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) approach, design and evaluation questions; (ii) use of data and evidence; (iii) clarity of recommendations; (iv) consideration of gender. <p>8b) EVD's regular assessments demonstrate improving quality in decentralised evaluations.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EVD publicise agreed quality standards and recruit external quality assessors for all major evaluations.</i> • <i>DFID staff follow guidance set out and made accessible to them by EVD.</i> • <i>IACDI carry out regular assessments of EVD's evaluations.</i> • <i>EVD monitor quality of DFID's decentralised evaluations and monitoring reviews.</i>

* shows where indicators will be refined by the baseline study

<p>9. Increase staff skills in commissioning and management of high-quality evaluations.</p>	<p>9a) Evaluation management included in competency frameworks of professional advisers by end 2009/10, as an integral skill for project cycle management.</p> <p>9b) At least [50] DFID staff trained in evaluation management by 2012. ★</p> <p>9c) Annual staff and stakeholder surveys show that an increasing volume of accessible, quality guidance and technical support is being provided to meet staff and partners to carry out evaluations. ★</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EVD and Learning and Development (HR) will integrate modules on evaluation management into standard training programmes on project cycle management, results, induction.</i> • <i>EVD will work with Heads of Profession to integrate evaluation into adviser competency frameworks.</i>
<p>10. Support more and better rigorous impact evaluation.</p>	<p>10a) Successful set up and implementation of 3ie including delivery of agreed programme of rigorous impact evaluations – open and thematic windows. DFID contribution of £8.5m.</p> <p>10b) Publication of NONIE guidance on impact evaluation.</p> <p>10c) Delivery of rigorous impact evaluations of human development through DFID trust fund (£0.5m pa) with World Bank and Spanish Government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EVD to provide leadership on support of international systems for impact evaluation, with active engagement from DFID research, policy leads and country offices in identifying questions for evaluation, proposals and effective use of funding.</i>

★ shows where indicators will be refined by the baseline study

ANNEX 2 CRITERIA AND METHODS TO BE USED FOR DFID EVALUATIONS

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The internationally-agreed evaluation criteria listed below will be applied to DFID evaluations. It will not be appropriate to investigate every criterion in depth in every evaluation. DFID evaluators will be requested to provide an explanation of the criteria they have chosen (or not) to cover.

- 1 Relevance** – the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.
- 2 Effectiveness** – a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.
- 3 Efficiency** – a measure of the outputs and outcomes, qualitative and quantitative, in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results.
- 4 Impact** – the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- 5 Sustainability** – concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Interventions need to be environmentally and institutionally as well as financially sustainable. Any assessment of sustainability should cover the concept of ownership.
- 6 Coverage** – which groups are included in/excluded from a programme, and the differential impact on those included and excluded. Related concepts include equity (including gender equity and disability) and social exclusion.
- 7 Coherence** – the need to assess other policies and programmes which affect the intervention being evaluated, for example security, humanitarian, trade and military policies and programmes, as well as the intervention or policy itself.
- 8 Co-ordination** – the intervention of a single agency cannot be evaluated in isolation from what others are doing, particularly as what may seem appropriate from the point of view of a single actor, may not be appropriate from the point of view of the system as a whole. Evaluating coordination includes assessing both harmonisation with other aid agencies and alignment with country priorities and systems.

Source: Drawn from OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, including for humanitarian evaluations

USING THE MOST APPROPRIATE EVALUATION METHODS

Assessing the impact of international development is uniquely challenging and we need to be able to draw on a range of tools and approaches from different disciplines, chosen to fit the questions we need answering but to a high standard of rigour.

Whatever method is used, the starting point is getting the best data we can find recognising resource constraints. The UK is one of several countries supporting international efforts to build statistical capacity in developing countries. We also need to be facilitating micro-level evaluations and research studies of specific interventions that will generate the primary data that can be used in synthesis work at the meta-evaluation level.

A key issue in choosing methods is usually how to ‘attribute’ the effects of development spending to the development interventions, separating them out from changes in the external environment, policies adopted by partner countries and other factors which influence outcomes. In most cases outcomes depend on contributions by other partners as well as DFID, making unambiguous attribution of outcomes to DFID interventions very challenging

Four key principles for our methods are:

- (a) designing evaluation in at the beginning so the right data can be collected early;
- (b) a ‘theory-driven approach’, which seeks to establish how a policy or programme is supposed to work as part of a clear conceptual model which can be tested;
- (c) using both quantitative and qualitative methods;
- (d) evaluating joint interventions jointly with other partners, with the aim of distinguishing DFID’s contribution from overall effects.

ANNEX 3 EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

The following principles are endorsed by DFID for all our evaluations. They are based on international principles and standards¹.

THE BASICS

Usefulness

Reviews and evaluations need to be designed and managed to meet the information and decision making needs of the intended users.

Cost-effectiveness

Evaluations will be managed as effectively as possible to maximise their benefits while minimising use of scarce resources and unnecessary time demands on stakeholders.

Accuracy

Reviews and evaluations should identify and convey valid and reliable information and reflect inputs from a variety of stakeholders.

Credibility

Credibility depends on the process being systematic, transparent and inclusive, as well as on the skill and experience of the reviewers or evaluators and those managing the process.

AN ETHICAL APPROACH

Impartiality

Reviewers and evaluators are expected to make balanced judgements, reporting and analysing success and failure alike. If stakeholders have very different views this should be made clear in the evaluation. Impartiality is not the same as independence.

Transparency

DFID will proactively share and public information about upcoming/ongoing evaluations and publish all completed evaluations at international and country level (subject to agreement of partners). Where necessary and appropriate under freedom of information rules, information which violates personal data or breaches confidentiality may be withheld.

Propriety and ethics

Reviews and evaluations should be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results. DFID endorses the DAC guidance for conflict and humanitarian evaluation and the principle of “do no harm”.

PARIS DECLARATION AND ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION PRINCIPLES

Ownership and Alignment

DFID’s policy is to base performance frameworks for its projects and partnerships on agreed joint frameworks, based on partners’ own frameworks and systems. Evaluations in partner countries should be equally led by the partner and use partner country data systems wherever feasible. In line with Accra commitments, DFID will use its evaluations to increase the capacity of a wide range of development actors to take an active role in dialogue on development policy and the role of aid.

Harmonisation

DFID’s policy is to carry out joint evaluations with other partners for all joint programmes and elsewhere where this minimises transaction costs for partners. Where possible we will delegate authority for managing evaluations to lead partners or jointly established bodies. DFID will wherever possible use findings and recommendations from evaluations led by others.

Managing for results

DFID will promote design of evaluations in a way which supports national systems and capacity, including better linking of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Mutual accountability

DFID will actively support independent and recipient-led evaluations of our interventions and performance and make use of their findings and recommendations. We will strengthen mechanisms for partners to input into the design of our evaluations.

¹ Based in particular on: OECD-DAC evaluation principles (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/32/41029845.pdf) and draft quality standards (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/7/38686953.pdf); Global and Regional Partnership Program Sourcebook (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGLOREGPAPRO/Resources/sourcebook.pdf>); Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

International development is about helping people fight poverty. This means people in rich and poor countries working together to settle conflicts, increase opportunities for trade, tackle climate change, improve people's health and their chance to get an education. It means helping governments in developing countries put their own plans into action. It means agreeing debt relief, working with international institutions that co-ordinate support, and working with non-government organisations and charities to give communities a chance to find their own ways out of poverty.

WHY IS THE UK GOVERNMENT INVOLVED?

Getting rid of poverty will make for a better world for everybody. Nearly a billion people, one in six of the world's population, live in extreme poverty. This means they live on less than \$1 a day. Ten million children die before their fifth birthday, most of them from preventable diseases. More than 113 million children in developing countries do not go to school. In a world of growing wealth, such levels of human suffering and wasted potential are not only morally wrong, they are also against our own interests. We are closer to people in developing countries than ever before. We trade more and more with people in poor countries, and many of the problems which affect us – conflict, international crime, refugees, the trade in illegal drugs and the spread of diseases – are caused or made worse by poverty in developing countries. In 2007/08 we spent £5.3 billion on aid to poorer countries and our budget will increase to £7.9 billion by 2010/11, rising by an average of 11% a year at today's prices. Going forward to 2013, the government has pledged to increase our aid to the equivalent of 0.7% of the UK's gross national income, from 0.36% in 2007/08.

WHAT IS DFID?

DFID, the Department for International Development, is the part of the UK Government that manages Britain's aid to poor countries and works to get rid of extreme poverty. We are working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals – a set of targets agreed by the United Nations to halve global poverty by 2015.

With 64 offices overseas, DFID staff work in some of the most difficult places in the world to protect the vulnerable and help countries recover from conflict. We work with organisations like the United Nations, European Union and the World Bank to find international solutions to international problems. We give money and other help to governments in developing countries to support their own action plans to reduce the number of people living in poverty. And we fund charities, including the British Red Cross, VSO and Oxfam, to work directly with communities.

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