



Report

Department for International Development

EVALUATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN
INNOVATION AND EVIDENCE PROGRAMME
(HIEP): FORMATIVE PHASE REPORT

Date: **October 2014**

Submitted by Itad

Report

Evaluation of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP)

Table of contents

Acronyms	iii
Executive summary	iv
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	8
3. Relevance	13
4. Efficiency	20
5. Effectiveness	27
6. Impact	36
7. Gender and social inclusion	44
8. HIEP theory of change	49
9. Summative phase methodology	50
10. Conclusions and recommendations	51
List of annexes	58

Tables

Table 1. Projects selected as case studies	9
Table 2. Summary of case study findings: relevance	14
Table 3. Summary of case study findings: efficiency	21
Table 4. Case studies selected for VfM analysis in summative phases	26
Table 5. Summary of case study findings: effectiveness	28
Table 6. Key elements of case study approaches to consider in summative phases relating to effectiveness	34
Table 7. Summary of case study findings: key recommendations	55

Figures

Figure 1. HIEP theory of change	7
Figure 2. HIEP management and influencing structure in DFID	31
Figure 3. Theory of change with HIEP case studies and strategies mapped against it	37

Boxes

Box 1. HIEP theory of change	3
Box 2. Scoring methodology used across the eight case studies	10

Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
ARD	Africa Regional Department
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CB	Capacity Building
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CHASE	Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department
CS	Case Study
DFID	Department for International Development
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ELRHA	Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance
FFF	Fit for the Future
GaSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
HERR	Humanitarian Emergency Response Review
HESC	Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication Project
HIEP	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme
HIES	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy
HIF	Humanitarian Innovation Fund
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MC	Management Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
R2HC	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises
RED	Research and Evidence Division
SAVE	Secure Access in Volatile Environments
SP	Social Protection
ToC	Theory of Change
VfM	Value for Money
VT	Virtual Team
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Executive summary

Introduction

The Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) intends to have impact on humanitarian actors' capacities to deliver improved response and resilience programmes that are effective at supporting vulnerable people. HIEP is a £48.3 million investment that is working towards three specific outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** International donors, including DFID, develop funding instruments and frameworks for investment into evidence, innovation and its applications.
- **Outcome 2:** Humanitarian actors change skills, behaviours, relationships, cultures and systems to promote the regular integration of evidence into humanitarian and disaster risk management (DRM) interventions.
- **Outcome 3:** Policy and practice actors invest in social, economic and political innovations that focus on benefits for poor people in humanitarian crises.

This formative stage of the evaluation aims to make an initial assessment of strengths and weaknesses of current HIEP design; to identify progress to date; to make recommendations to facilitate learning; and to provide a foundation for future summative evaluation. It is the first of a series that will be conducted by the Itad evaluation team between now and 2018. It is organised around four key questions agreed in the inception phase:

1. **Relevance:** How well has HIEP identified and responded to evolving priority needs and opportunities for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation?
2. **Efficiency:** Which management and implementation approaches have enabled HIEP to deliver better value for money (VfM)?
3. **Effectiveness:** Which approaches have been more effective in enabling HIEP to ensure the creation, support and application of high-quality and relevant humanitarian evidence?
4. **Impact:** What contributions has HIEP made to building and sustaining evidence-aware policy and practice by humanitarian organisations?

In line with the evaluability assessment carried out in the inception phase, the focus of the evaluation is on progress and results up to outcome level.

Background to HIEP

The Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) is part of DFID's commitments in response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) to:

- Make humanitarian research and innovation a core part of DFID's research and evidence work.
- Use innovative techniques and technologies more routinely in humanitarian response.

DFID developed a Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy (HIES) that outlined an approach to four key problems affecting humanitarian effectiveness that evidence and innovation can address:

- **Problem 1:** Decision-makers have inadequate access to reliable and tailored information about risk, especially as it affects the poorest.

- **Problem 2:** Inadequate synthesis and generation of evidence about which humanitarian interventions work best, and new ways to tackle humanitarian problems.
- **Problem 3:** Insufficient capture and systematic analysis about how to work with national and local institutions to manage disasters, especially in insecure settings.
- **Problem 4:** Inadequate systems and incentives to integrate evidence production and use routinely in humanitarian decisions and actions.

HIEP is the programme that puts the strategy into action. DFID has approved a total budget of £48.3 million for HIEP of which £36.4 million has been allocated to date. HIEP includes projects that seek to generate new evidence or synthesise existing evidence on what works in humanitarian action in key areas, including health in emergencies, disaster risk reduction, scaling up cash-based responses, working in volatile environments and urban resilience. There are also projects focused on support to innovation in the humanitarian sector. Projects are implemented with partners and include a range of approaches and ways of working, including the establishment of specific funds such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF), commissioning self-contained research projects and using evaluation as a means to generate evidence.

HIEP is an innovative programme in DFID being supported and implemented through cooperation across three departments: Research and Evidence Division (RED), Conflict, Humanitarian and Security (CHASE) and Africa Regional Department (ARD). The management of HIEP is a new departure in the management of humanitarian research in DFID. It is the most integrated programme to date in DFID's efforts to pool funding and involve lead advisers and programme management resources from different DFID departments. It is based on the assumption that this structure will produce more high-quality, relevant and used research by including skills from across DFID departments.

Methodology

The formative evaluation took place between January and May 2014. At the heart of the evaluation is a case study approach. The evaluation identified eight of the twenty projects so far allocated funding by HIEP to follow up to 2018. This formative phase was an opportunity to check the feasibility and appropriateness of that selection.

At this stage the evaluation reviewed the current status of case study projects and their strategies, plans and alignment with the overall HIEP theory of change. Most case study data was gathered through document review, interviews and group discussions with HIEP project teams and external stakeholders during January-mid-March 2014. Findings at case study level are based on data available at that point. Additional programme-level data was gathered through document review and interviews with DFID and external stakeholders in April 2014.

A theory of change was developed by the evaluation team with DFID in the inception phase, which is summarised below. This is being tested and refined over the course of the evaluation. In this formative phase, key questions and judgement criteria were developed based on the HIEP theory of change and the four overarching questions around which the evaluation is framed.

HIEP theory of change summary

Through its operations, networking, influencing and funding, *alongside* coherent and convincing evidence products, DFID will attract other humanitarian funders and practitioners to invest in new technologies, evidence-informed operational approaches and systems that the HIEP will produce.

This will influence skills, behaviours, cultures and systems among humanitarian actors to promote the routine integration of evidence into the financing, design and implementation of humanitarian interventions.

In turn, these enabling conditions, capacities and systems will support international agencies, national governments, public sector actors, civil society and private actors in fragile and conflict-affected states and countries vulnerable to disaster risks **to use context-specific applications of evidence and innovations** in their design, financing, planning and delivery of humanitarian policies, programmes and practices to manage risks and deliver rapid, effective responses in emergencies.

This will improve programmes so that lives are saved and communities recover quickly from economic and livelihood losses that arise from humanitarian crises.

Key findings

Relevance

There has been a robust process to identify and develop HIEP projects. HIEP projects respond to key problems identified in the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review and Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy (HIES). There were systematic and thorough processes to identify specific questions and evidence gaps and to inform the design of projects. These include good use of literature and evidence reviews, triangulating and strengthening initial evidence gap analyses with broad stakeholder engagement, and good use by DFID of proposal and inception phases to strengthen project designs.

The establishment of project advisory groups that combine a range of expertise, both academic and operational, provides a good structure to maintain relevance. The selection of projects is in line with existing DFID strengths and priorities which means there is expertise in house to support projects, as well as strengthening the likely relevance of HIEP outputs to future DFID programming.

Interviews with external stakeholders consistently found strong support for the subject areas that HIEP is addressing. There is some evidence of HIEP's harmonisation with other relevant institutional and sectoral initiatives, but more systematic scanning of the external environment could be beneficial to ensure HIEP relevance and responsiveness to future opportunities for investment and influence. This is particularly important in the midst of an evolving global agenda, with key events up-coming in 2015 and 2016, including the World Humanitarian Summit, the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

An issue that was raised across a number of interviews with external stakeholders was the extent to which lack of evidence or lack of access to it is a problem as opposed to other obstacles or resistance to its use. An analysis of HIEP funding allocation to date indicates that well over 75% has been allocated to the synthesis and generation of evidence about what works best in humanitarian operations. Only 11% of funding has so far been allocated to the problem identified by DFID of "inadequate systems and incentives to integrate evidence production and use routinely in humanitarian decisions and actions". In this regard, the new HIEP initiative to strengthen humanitarian evidence systems in East Africa and South Asia could be an important addition to the HIEP portfolio. Moving forward, it will be important both for the evaluation and the management of HIEP to monitor the overall balance in resources and allocation across the four problems HIEP seeks to address.

A second recurrent theme in external stakeholders' assessment of HIEP is the need to engage with national and regional stakeholders. Given the growing importance of country-based actors in humanitarian crises and disaster risk management it will be important that HIEP both is engaged with and guided by priorities identified by stakeholders based in regions anticipated to benefit from the programme.

Efficiency

The evaluation is using the 4E framework (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity) to evaluate value for money (VfM) in HIEP. Some aspects of the planned methodology at this stage were not possible due to the

lack of availability of key data, including most project budgets (for commercial reasons) and resourcing costs of HIEP. However, the evaluation was able to identify good evidence that VfM considerations were influential in resource allocation in HIEP. Attention to economy and efficiency has been strong during procurement processes, with some attention also to effectiveness. It is important to note that quality has been a key driver of resource allocation rather than a need to spend money within a particular financial cycle.

HIEP has committed over £36 million to projects to date. It had, as of May 2013, leveraged a further £6.2 million from other donors, largely UK research councils. This represents a leverage ratio of roughly 25%. So, for every £1 of DFID money spent, this has leveraged a further £0.25.

One of the clear challenges facing HIEP is how it can develop a more consistent approach to monitoring VfM both between projects and at programme level. Key areas for consideration include the use of standardised VfM indicators, assigning resource allocations to logframe outputs and outcomes and clearer guidance on how equity should be considered in VfM management across HIEP.

Effectiveness

There are solid plans to produce relevant evidence products. Critical relationships between DFID, project partners and key stakeholders are being established. Relationships are most developed at the international level, with national and regional connections at a much earlier stage of development. The planned outputs provide the building blocks for the programme's potential success. HIEP project teams are developing research uptake plans, which should support evidence being debated, brokered and endorsed by operational actors. These are all key processes to support the effectiveness of HIEP.

The inter-departmental design of HIEP is proving to be an effective structure to bring together expertise and perspectives from across DFID. The virtual team has the potential to increase the impact of HIEP through collective learning and joint activities. HIEP is also building links with other parts of DFID with related skills and interests, e.g. the Innovation Hub. Many of the building blocks for the success of HIEP projects are in place.

However, initial data available at this stage suggest that the budget for communication, which is key to HIEP success, are tight, often at around 10% or less of total budgets. This is countered to a certain extent in some projects by their participatory approaches that engage stakeholders in the design and research process. But activities to support the uptake of evidence and innovation are likely to be needed beyond the planned contracts with partners, which often run just up to 2016. The planned activities of DFID's own personnel are also unclear at this point, though research uptake strategies being developed at the time of the evaluation may have made these more explicit. Furthermore, there is no HIEP programme-level communication budget.

A key to maximising HIEP results is the HIEP Secretariat. The Secretariat has a range of roles, which include supporting and finding ways for cross-department working to be effective, building relationships at strategic level within and outside of DFID, communication of HIEP and its agenda within and outside of DFID, as well as key programme management roles. The current staff achieve impressive results given the current resourcing constraints. Staff capacity of HIEP amounts to just over two full-time equivalent staff which, given the current and future workload, appears to be inadequate.

Furthermore, while some structures are in place to monitor HIEP (e.g. regular Management Committee meetings, annual reviews and partner reporting templates), some key tools required to monitor the effectiveness of HIEP, such as the populated logframe, were not finished at the time of the formative evaluation. This limits the effectiveness of management systems.

Impact

There is a strong alignment between the aims and strategies of individual HIEP projects with the overall programme theory of change that will be necessary to achieve HIEP's planned outcomes, e.g. the project's plan to promote debate about findings, link with key networks and build relationships with potential ambassadors and champions to promote evidence and innovation.

However, HIEP outcomes are extremely ambitious and go beyond the uptake of specific evidence produced by HIEP projects. HIEP intends to achieve change at the humanitarian system level in how humanitarian actors, including donors and operational organisations, support and use evidence and innovation. The programme rests on assumptions that DFID's influence as a respected humanitarian donor, investor and actor can attract others to change policies, investments and operations.

The analysis underlying the programme also describes the need to overcome likely and known barriers, such as organisational resistance to change. Interviewees within and outside of DFID raised questions as to whether the current HIEP approach, strategy and resourcing is adequately addressing change at this level. There is not yet a strategy for how projects and HIEP activities at the programme level will work together to maximise their potential collective impact.

The evaluation found that with adequate resourcing and planning, at least up to 2018, there is potential to achieve some progress in relation to all three outcomes. However, there is a need for clearer articulation of the specific ambitions of HIEP, greater analysis of and planning for the specific contexts in which HIEP aims to bring about change, and for planning and resourcing of activities over and above individual project research uptake activities.

Gender and social inclusion

There is a good focus on gender and social inclusion (GaSI) in DFID documentation. This includes an emphasis on engagement with affected communities, commitment to disaggregated data, and development of a mixed portfolio of targeted research and activities that address specific issues affecting women and girls in humanitarian crises. However, a lack of HIEP guidance to project teams on how to assess and monitor gender and social inclusion has resulted in inconsistent approaches across the programme. Greater guidance and monitoring can strengthen the approach. Also, further review by DFID internally is likely to be necessary to ensure HIEP's ability to meet any new accountability and transparency requirements of the International Development Gender Equality Act (2014).

Overall

The focus of HIEP programme development so far has understandably been on the establishment of the individual HIEP projects along with key partnerships and stakeholder relationships. This is creating a solid foundation for HIEP to be successful. Plans for robust, relevant evidence, support to innovation and key relationships are in place. It is now timely to start developing more detailed programme-level plans. Particularly important is the development and implementation of an influencing strategy for HIEP and also the further development of the virtual team to ensure opportunities are taken, challenges addressed and resources are in place to maximise the potential collective impact of HIEP.

Recommendations

The formative evaluation identified seven key recommendations to support the development of HIEP to maximise its potential success. In addition, specific recommendations for each case study are detailed in the report.

Recommendation 1 – Clarify level of ambition of HIEP to support transformative change in the sector

It is urgent in 2014 for the HIEP Secretariat and Management Committee to clarify the level of HIEP's ambition in relation to transformation and change in the sector (i.e. at the outcome level) so plans, strategies and resourcing can be developed accordingly.

Recommendation 2 – Resourcing HIEP

Before the end of 2014, the Management Committee should review the overall balance of how resources are being allocated to and within HIEP, and make adjustments taking into account decisions made in relation to Recommendation 1 and the level of ambition of HIEP.

Recommendation 3 – Galvanising the collective power of HIEP virtual team

By December 2014, the HIEP Secretariat should develop a plan and identify the resources needed to support the development of the strategic role of the HIEP virtual team.

Recommendation 4 – Monitoring HIEP

By December 2014, the Secretariat and Management Committee should put in place systems to monitor HIEP more effectively, including a populated logframe, establishing systems to track efficiency and economy across HIEP.

Recommendation 5 – Achieving change in humanitarian contexts

By Quarter 1 2015, the HIEP Secretariat should develop a strategy for HIEP engagement with regional and country stakeholders.

Recommendation 6 – HIEP's approach to gender and social inclusion

By Quarter 1 2015, the Secretariat should develop a plan to strengthen HIEP's approach to implementing its commitments to gender and social inclusion.

Recommendation 7 – Learning from HIEP

By the end of Quarter 1 2015, the HIEP Secretariat should develop a strategy to ensure learning from projects is captured and shared across the HIEP virtual team, partners and externally in key subjects (e.g. methodological challenges in integration of gender and social inclusion issues in humanitarian research; ethics in humanitarian research).

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the formative evaluation of DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP). It is the first of a series of evaluations that will be conducted by the Itad evaluation team between now and 2018. Given its formative nature the evaluation is focused on supporting ongoing learning and improvement in the HIEP. Its objectives are threefold:

1. Provide an initial assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation of HIEP to date;
2. Provide recommendations on the design of HIEP and facilitate learning within the HIEP virtual team (VT); and
3. Inform the design and implementation of the future summative evaluations scheduled for 2015 and 2017/18, respectively. Data collection was carried out between January and May 2014. The first phase in January-March focused on the eight HIEP projects that had been selected as case studies for the evaluation. From mid-March to the end of April, further data gathering and analysis were undertaken at the level of the HIEP programme and focused on issues such as the programme's management structure.

The primary audiences for this formative evaluation report are: the virtual team responsible for the delivery of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy and Programme; DFID's Research and Evidence Division (RED); and DFID's Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE).¹

The report is organised in 10 sections:

- **Section 2** outlines the methodology for the formative evaluation. This is detailed more fully in Annex 1.
- **Sections 3-6** present findings against each evaluation question of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact, respectively. Each section includes emerging findings at the project and programme levels; comments on the strengths and challenges of HIEP approach; highlights focus areas for future evaluation stages and makes recommendations to HIEP regarding programme design. Case study scorings are included for relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, but not for impact because it is too early in the programme process for these to be meaningful. All initial scorings and data supporting them are included in the case study reports (Annex 2).
- **Section 7** focuses on findings regarding gender and social inclusion.
- **Section 8** discusses the theory of change and any adaptations the findings to date suggest.
- **Section 9** discusses the implications of the findings for the methodology during the summative phases.
- **Section 10** concludes and makes final recommendations relating to the programme and the evaluation.

¹ Original terms of reference for the evaluation of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme.

1.2 Background to the evaluation

What is HIEP?

The Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) is part of DFID's commitments in response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) to:

- Make humanitarian research and innovation a core part of DFID's research and evidence work.
- Use innovative techniques and technologies more routinely in humanitarian response.

Following the HERR, DFID developed the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Strategy (HIES), which identified four key problems:

- **Problem 1:** Decision-makers have inadequate access to reliable and tailored information about risk, especially as it affects the poorest.
- **Problem 2:** Inadequate synthesis and generation of evidence about which humanitarian interventions work best, and new ways to tackle humanitarian problems.
- **Problem 3:** Insufficient capture and systematic analysis about how to work with national and local institutions to manage disasters, especially in insecure settings.
- **Problem 4:** Inadequate systems and incentives to integrate evidence production and use it routinely in humanitarian decisions and actions.

Reasons why these issues have not been addressed, highlighted by DFID's strategy, include the following factors:

- Funding in the humanitarian system tends to be short-term and geared around emergency responses, so there is less funding available for long-term evidence production and support to innovation;
- A driver of humanitarian practice is field action (learning by doing), often in highly pressured, uncertain and volatile situations, so technical operational expertise and experience is the main basis for decision-making;
- There is a perception that certain types of research in emergency settings are not feasible and/or ethical;
- Research and evidence products may not be tailored or sufficiently structured to be relevant to the specific operational needs of stakeholders; and
- Technical staff competencies in different organisations may not be geared towards sourcing and appraising evidence as the basis for decisions and actions.

The consequences are that humanitarian practice is not being refreshed and prepared for future challenges through systematic capture and analysis of field experience, empirical testing of existing and emerging practices, technological innovations or future-focused research.

HIEP aims to address these problems. DFID has approved a total budget of £48.3 million for HIEP of which £36.4 million has been allocated to date.² HIEP's aim is that:

² This funding does not include additional funds leveraged from USAID, ESRC, Wellcome Trust and Sida, for example.

*Actors in fragile and conflict-affected states and countries vulnerable to disaster risks use context-specific applications of evidence and innovations in the design, financing, planning and delivery of humanitarian policies, programmes and practices to manage risks and deliver rapid, effective responses in emergencies.*³

The programme ultimately intends to have an impact on humanitarian actors' capacities to deliver improved response and resilience programmes that are effective at supporting vulnerable people.

HIEP is working towards three specific outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** International donors, including DFID, develop funding instruments and frameworks for investment into evidence, innovation and its applications;
- **Outcome 2:** Humanitarian actors change skills, behaviours, relationships, cultures and systems to promote the regular integration of evidence into humanitarian and DRM interventions; and
- **Outcome 3:** Policy and practice actors invest in social, economic and political innovations that focus on benefits for poor people in humanitarian crises.

A **theory of change** was developed by the evaluation team with DFID in the inception phase, which is presented in Figure 1. A summary of the theory is summarised in Box 1 below.

Box 1. HIEP theory of change

HIEP theory of change summary

Through its operations, networking, influencing and funding, *alongside* coherent and convincing evidence products, DFID will attract other humanitarian funders and practitioners to invest in new technologies, evidence-informed operational approaches and systems that HIEP will produce.

This will influence skills, behaviours, cultures and systems among humanitarian actors to promote the routine integration of evidence into the financing, design and implementation of humanitarian interventions.

In turn, these enabling conditions, capacities and systems will support international agencies, national governments, public sector actors, civil society and private actors in fragile and conflict-affected states and countries vulnerable to disaster risks **to use context-specific applications of evidence and innovations** in their design, financing, planning and delivery of humanitarian policies, programmes and practices to manage risks and deliver rapid, effective responses in emergencies.

This will improve programmes so that lives are saved and communities recover quickly from economic and livelihood losses that arise from humanitarian crises.

³ In the HIEP logframe, this is termed the impact. In discussion with DFID during the inception phase, it was agreed the overall impact of HIEP as articulated in the theory of change should relate more directly to vulnerability and is summarised as "Humanitarian actors have the capacities to deliver improved disaster risk-management, emergency response and resilience programmes and operations that are effective at supporting the most vulnerable people". However, this does not feature in the HIEP logframe.

1.3 How is HIEP structured?

HIEP is an innovative programme in DFID being supported and implemented through cooperation across three departments: Research and Evidence Division (RED), Conflict, Humanitarian and Security (CHASE) and Africa Regional Department (ARD). The management of HIEP is a new departure in the management of humanitarian research in DFID. It is the most integrated programme to date in DFID's efforts to pool funding and involve lead adviser and programme management resources from different DFID departments. It is based on the assumption that, by including skills from across DFID departments, the programme structure will produce more high quality, relevant and used research.

HIEP is organised on a 'hub and spoke' model, with the HIEP Secretariat acting as a hub and the lead advisers and programme managers in a number of departments acting as spokes to manage projects and influence and advocate for more use and uptake of research. The Secretariat is made up of four staff (2.2 full-time equivalents). It is headed by the humanitarian head of profession who is senior research adviser in the Research and Evidence Division and overseen by a Management Committee made up of representatives from the three participating departments of DFID.

Projects have been developed and approved by the HIEP Management Committee on a rolling basis over the past 18 months. To date, 19 projects have been approved, however, some projects such as the Education in Emergencies Initiative are still in development. A full list is attached in Annex 6. Projects are implemented by a wide range of partners from civil society, universities and research institutes. The programme is funded through three business cases.

The wider context in which HIEP is being implemented

HIEP is being developed and implemented in a complex context. This phase of the evaluation takes place as efforts gear up in the international system for key events to develop the humanitarian policy framework, including the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. These events highlight the overlapping of the humanitarian, climate change and development agendas, as well as the growing prominence of the subjects of resilience and innovation in the sector, both of which feature on the events' agendas. They also highlight the challenges and potential of the growing complexity of the international system with the growing number of humanitarian actors among governments, the private sector and civil society.

Prominent humanitarian crises in 2013-14 in Syria and the Philippines have highlighted the significance of local and national stakeholders in humanitarian crises, an issue DFID has also promoted in recent policy statements. Challenges of access and preparedness have also been highlighted by these crises. At the same time, less high-profile crises continue both on a large and smaller scale, reinforcing the complexity of the issues humanitarian responses face and the importance of the inter-linkage of preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery approaches.

In terms of the 'evidence landscape' DFID's analysis of the need for HIEP is supported by other research in the sector such as ALNAP's recent work on the quality and use of evidence in humanitarian practice.⁴ It finds that despite progress over the past 20 years, there appears to be continued room for improvement in the quality and use of evidence in international humanitarian action. Increased focus on results and humanitarian effectiveness (e.g. in the World Humanitarian Summit) make for a context that has some openings to promote evidence in humanitarian programme decision-making.

⁴ Knox Clarke, P. and Darcy, J. (2014) *Insufficient evidence? The quality and use of evidence in humanitarian action*. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.

The second element of HIEP, humanitarian innovation, is also receiving increasing attention in the sector. Some organisations have been explicitly promoting innovation through their own agency initiatives (e.g. Oxfam in the WASH sector, Plan Sudan and OCHA through its Humanitarian Research and Innovation Fund). The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 has ‘Transformation through Innovation’ as one of its four themes. While there is no database that tracks donor investment in humanitarian research and innovation, neither have any reports identified current levels of investment; anecdotal evidence suggests that, currently, DFID is one of a very small number of donors investing in humanitarian evidence and innovation.⁵

Together these upcoming trends and opportunities make for a challenging but encouraging context in which to move forward efforts for greater support for and use of evidence and innovation in humanitarian programming. Further details of the relevance of HIEP’s overall programme and individual components in relation to other initiatives in the sector are detailed in Section 3 on Relevance.

1.4 The formative evaluation phase

This formative evaluation is taking place in Year 2 of the programme. It is the second of four phases of the evaluation:

- The inception phase was completed over summer 2013;
- Formative phase: January to May 2014;
- Summative phase: short-term outcomes and learning from September 2015 to February 2016;
- Summative phase: intermediate outcomes and learning from October 2017 to May 2018.

The timing of the formative phase was established in line with the guidance of DFID to be early enough to capture the first stages of the programme and to be able to feed into the developing of its next stages. The timing provided some challenges, detailed more fully in the Methodology Section and Annex 1, but linked mainly to the various case studies being at different stages of implementation, so there was not a uniform set of products available for each. Some products, such as inception reports, which for some case studies were still in formation, would have been valuable inputs to the formative phase.

Other items, which it had been anticipated would be available in the formative evaluation phase (e.g. HIEP influencing strategy and populated logframe) were not complete by its end. However, overall there was agreement before the beginning of the formative phase that this timing would be appropriate to feed into the programme’s development and programme team’s learning.

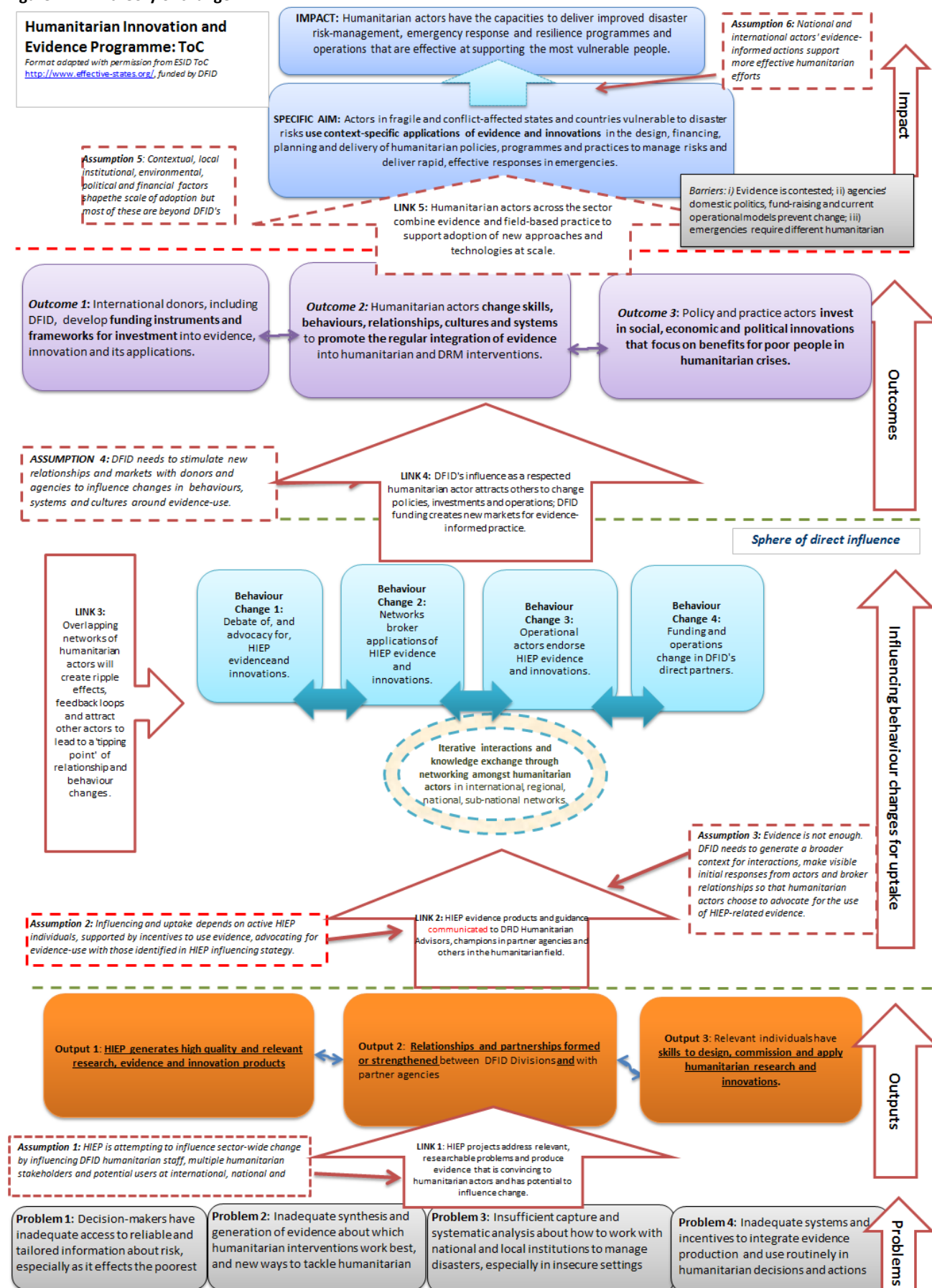
The evaluation was undertaken by a team from Itad. The team included lead evaluators for each case study. The full team and their roles are detailed below:

- Teresa Hanley – team leader, lead on Case Studies 4 and 6, lead on Outcome 2
- Tasneem Mowjee – lead on Case Study 3, lead on Outcome 1
- Isabel Vogel – lead on Case Studies 5 and 8, lead on Outcome 3
- Anna Paterson - lead on Case Study 2 and also on Management of HIEP

⁵ Other examples identified by the evaluation team include Sida, which is reported to be developing a strategy on research and innovation, and OECD-DAC (though not a donor) invests in humanitarian research to improve donor funding practice.

- Andy Featherstone – lead on Case Studies 1 and 7
- David Fleming – case study support for Case Studies 1, 3, 6, 7
- Emily Richardson – case study support for Case Studies 2, 4, 5, 8
- MaryAnn Brocklesby – specialist advisor on gender
- Valsa Shah – specialist advisor on value for money
- Roger Few – quality assurance advisor (external)
- Julian Barr – quality assurance advisor (internal Itad)
- Rob Lloyd – project manager and quality assurance Itad

Figure 1. HIEP theory of change



2. Methodology

2.1 Evaluation questions

The overall HIEP evaluation is organised around four key questions agreed with DFID in the inception phase:

- **Relevance:** How well has HIEP identified and responded to evolving priority needs and opportunities for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation?
- **Efficiency:** Which management and implementation approaches have enabled HIEP to deliver better VfM?
- **Effectiveness:** Which approaches have been more effective in enabling HIEP to ensure the creation, support and application of high-quality and relevant humanitarian evidence?
- **Impact:** What contributions has HIEP made to building and sustaining evidence-aware policy and practice by humanitarian organisations?

The formative evaluation process was organised around these questions and used an adapted version of the overall evaluation matrix (Annex 1.2) to guide data collection and analysis. The matrix details judgement criteria and indicators for each of the four evaluation questions.

2.2 Main elements of the evaluation approach

2.2.1 Theory-based design

The overarching design of the evaluation is theory-based. It is built around a theory of change for HIEP that was developed by the evaluation team with DFID in the inception phase (Figure 1). Through the formative and summative phases of the evaluation the theory is being tested and refined to build understanding of how better evidence use and innovation in the humanitarian sector can be encouraged and supported. The theory of change provides the basis for the indicators and judgement criteria, which are in the evaluation matrix and are used to assess the strength of the strategies HIEP has developed to achieve change.⁶

2.2.2 Case studies

At the heart of the evaluation is a case study approach. Eight HIEP projects (case studies) are being used to test and refine the HIEP theory of change and to provide an in-depth understanding of how best to support evidence generation and use in specific humanitarian contexts. The case studies are being followed over the course of HIEP and will be evaluated at each of the three phases of the evaluation. The criteria used at the inception phase to select the case studies were as follows:

- Represent major financial investments from HIEP (though not be confined to where the biggest expenditure lies);
- Represent new ways of working for DFID;
- Enable focus on some key countries;
- Enable focus on some key stakeholders, e.g. key donors and implementing agencies;

⁶ Annex 1 includes the evaluation matrix, which shows the connections between judgement criteria, indicators and the theory of change.

- Represent a range of starting points in the HIEP timescale with an emphasis on projects that start early in the programme lifecycle;
- Enable the evaluation process to examine the contribution of the projects to the overall programme aims/outcomes (i.e. levels of the theory of change);
- Represent a range of different research types (primary, secondary, evaluation, operational, etc.); and
- Represent a range of different models of project structure.

Given that most HIEP projects are in an early stage of implementation, it is too soon to use the case studies to assess the extent to which outcomes are being achieved. Therefore, for the purposes of the formative evaluation, the case studies were used as an opportunity to gather more detail on the projects, their design and their early stages of development. The case studies are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Projects selected as case studies

Project	Stage of implementation Jan-March 2014	Main Partner(s)	Budget (£ million)	Dates ⁷
1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	Implementation	GFDRR	1.6	8/13-8/15
2. Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response	Various	Includes CaLP	5.5	TBC
3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	Implementation	Wellcome Trust and ELRHA	6.5	6/13-12/16
4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	Being contracted	Oxfam and Tufts	1	6/13-6/16
5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	Implementation	ELRHA	7.7	12/12-12/16
6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	Inception	Humanitarian Outcomes	1.6	9/13-6/16
7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	Inception/implementation	IFRC and OPM	1.2	3/14-9/15
8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	Being contracted	Valid	2	6/14-6/17

The methodology for conducting the case studies followed a number of key steps:

- A document review was undertaken of key reports such as project proposals, design documents, logframes and annual reports;
- Phone and face-to-face interviews were conducted with key DFID staff involved in the project and partner staff;

⁷ Some dates are tentative and being finalised in inception processes.

- Workshop and/or group discussions were conducted with DFID and key partner staff regarding intended outcomes, existing networks and pathways for influence of key stakeholders;
- Phone interviews were conducted with key external stakeholders relevant to the project;
- An analysis was undertaken against the case study framework judgement criteria and the HIEP theory of change. Through this analysis key learning on the four evaluation questions was also noted; and
- The project plans and strategies were scored according to their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. A high/medium/low scoring scale was used to reflect how relevant, efficient and effective the plans and strategies were (see Box 2 for more details on the scoring methodology).

All interviews were guided by interview guides and checklists and used across each of the eight case studies. Data gathered through document review and interviews were documented and organised using information grids based on the evaluation matrix. These have been stored on the team Dropbox folder and back-ups created on the Itad server. Interviews were recorded whenever possible. To ensure consistency in approach and support, cross-case analysis case study reports were produced using a common report format (Annex 1 has tools and formats used). Findings were triangulated by drawing on multiple sources of data, including documentation and interviews with DFID and partner staff, as well as interviews with external stakeholders.

Box 2. Scoring methodology used across the eight case studies

In order to provide a systematic way of making judgements across the case studies, supporting comparison between cases and revealing patterns, a scoring methodology was used to assess the strength of current plans and progress at project level in achieving relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact (full process detailed in Annex 1).

For each case study the scoring followed the following four-step process:

1. The evidence that had been collected against each of the four evaluation questions was synthesised and conclusions from the data were developed.
2. An assessment was made of the strength of the evidence supporting the conclusion. For example, a reported intention by a project team to develop strategies to address an area scores lower than a project that has a documented and resourced plan to do this. This was done because some data were not available to the evaluation team (e.g. project budgets in certain cases).
3. A performance score was then assigned for each of the evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact) based on the progress that has been made to date, the depth of the strategies that are in place, and the strength of the supporting evidence. A five-point scoring scale was used:
 - a) High – A detailed strategy exists with strong evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy;
 - b) Medium – A good strategy exists with some evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy;
 - c) Low – Covers the issue but with limited evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy;
 - d) None – No strategy in place; and
 - e) There is not enough evidence to make a judgement.
4. Scores were then reviewed by another case study lead member and adjustments made. The team leader then reviewed the scores to ensure consistency across case studies.

As with any new methodology, the team faced challenges in its application. One of the key issues faced was that HIEP projects are at very different stages of development, so not all judgement criteria are relevant to all projects. The formative evaluation, however, has presented a good opportunity for the evaluation team to “road test” the process. We propose to continue to use this methodology in the summative phases of the evaluation.

2.2.3 Programme level

Alongside the eight case studies, data were also gathered and analysed at the level of the overall HIEP programme (the programme level). The programme was analysed across six themes: the three key outcomes from the HIEP theory of change, gender and social inclusion, VfM and programme management structures and processes⁸. Programme-level activities included:

- Document review (e.g. of Management Committee minutes, business cases and annual reviews, policy refresh documents – see Annex 4);
- Interviews, including six with the HIEP Secretariat and Management Committee and 17 external stakeholders. A snowball sampling strategy was applied, where initial interviews identified through DFID and the evaluation teams' contacts led to the identification of other relevant stakeholders. External stakeholders were selected to represent a range of types of organisations (operational, academic, policy, donor) and ensure they had knowledge across the three outcome areas. Interviewees included donors, operational agencies, including international organisations, and research/academics (list of interviewees in Annex 5);
- An analysis of programme and case study data from the perspective of gender and social inclusion, VfM and programme management;
- An analysis of case study scores so as to reveal patterns, distinct elements and learning; and
- An analysis of case study findings and programme data by evaluation question and judgement criteria based on the programme framework (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact).

2.2.4 Contribution analysis

A central analytical method at the case study level is contribution analysis. However, as explained in the inception report, this method will only be applied in the summative phases, once outcome-level changes have started to materialise. To lay the foundation for contribution analysis, this formative evaluation looked at case study alignment with the HIEP theory of change.

2.3 Challenges and constraints

The evaluation team experienced a number of challenges in the implementation of the formative evaluation, which placed constraints on the analysis that was possible and led to adaptations to the planned process. One notable issue was that projects were not as developed as much as anticipated (e.g. two projects were still in contract discussions during the case study period and two were in inception phase). Another issue related to access to data: key data necessary to support the analysis, including project budgets and proposals, were either not made available to the team for commercial reasons or were not made available because they were still being developed (e.g. populated logframe).⁹

The use of certain data-collection tools also presented challenges: we conducted a survey with the HIEP virtual team, but this suffered from a very low response rate; and we also planned workshops with case study teams, but these were not possible in most case studies due to the geographical dispersal of DFID and partners. Instead, the team increased the number of one-on-one interviews conducted. While this allowed a

⁸ Six additional reports were produced that collate the data in relation to these six thematic areas – three outcomes, VfM, management, and gender and social inclusion. The main points are included here in the report.

⁹ The cut-off point for data collection was put at 20 April (revised from earlier dates).

similar quantity of data to be generated as would have been through the workshops, it was considerably more resource intensive.

These constraints limited some of the planned activities for the formative evaluation, including the construction of overall costs of HIEP as a model for comparison with other programme management styles and analysis and comparison of case study budgets. The early stage of some projects also means that influencing or research uptake strategies are nascent and the planned HIEP influencing strategy has not been developed yet. This has limited the potential to identify key stakeholders for some case studies and at programme level. An analysis of the relationships of the HIEP programme and projects with key stakeholders will be reviewed again at the first summative evaluation phase. Despite these constraints, the process has been valuable in establishing a baseline for the individual project's status in relation to the HIEP theory of change.

Moving forward into the summative phases, we think many of the above constraints can be addressed by building in time for contact with DFID during 2014-15 before the first summative evaluation phase, to ensure data can be secured (e.g. financial data) and to liaise with case study teams and HIEP Secretariat when influencing strategies are available to identify key stakeholders for consideration in summative phases. We have built this into the revised evaluation workplan.

A key aim of the evaluation is to build learning and to feed into the development of HIEP, as well as to provide an independent assessment of the programme. To this end, the timetable of the evaluation is developed in consultation with DFID to ensure it best meets the needs of DFID as the principal user. In the summative phases, it is intended also to share the draft case study reports with DFID teams and the partners for fact-checking as occurred in the formative phase, but also to ensure findings and recommendations reach them more quickly.

2.4 Findings

The following sections present the key findings from the evaluation. It is structured around the four key evaluation questions (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact) and gender and social inclusion. Each subsection follows a broadly similar structure, starting with an articulation of the evaluation question followed by a summary of the key findings. Following this there is a detailed exploration of the findings, strengths and challenges, recommendations for improvement and reflections on where the summative phases of the evaluation should focus.

3. Relevance

Evaluation question 1: How well has HIEP identified and responded to evolving priority needs and opportunities for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation?

Key findings: *There has been a robust process to identify and develop HIEP projects. HIEP responds to key problems identified in the HERR and HIES. There were systematic and thorough processes at the project level to identify specific questions and to inform the design of projects. There is some evidence of HIEP harmonising with other relevant institutional and sectoral initiatives, but this is not currently documented. More systematic scanning of the external environment would be beneficial to ensure HIEP's relevance and responsiveness to opportunities.*

This section considers the extent to which HIEP has so far identified and responded to evolving priority needs and opportunities for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation. It also considers the extent to which processes are in place to support ongoing responsiveness to emerging opportunities and needs. It concludes with recommendations for improving HIEP relevance.

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Summary of case study findings

Table 2 below summarises the findings from all eight case studies on progress that has been made and the plans that are in place for achieving relevance. In each of the eight case studies, projects were assessed against the following judgement criteria:

- Extent to which the project has responded to needs identified in HERR and HIES and other emerging needs and opportunities to invest in humanitarian evidence and innovation;
- Extent to which the project design is appropriate to address identified needs and opportunities; and
- Extent to which the project fits/harmonises with other relevant institutional, sectoral and country-based initiatives and opportunities.

In each case study, the evidence collected was reviewed and an overall performance score for 'relevance' was assigned (see Figure 3 for more details on the scoring methodology). Final scores are listed in Table 2 below. Further detail on each of the case studies can be found in the individual case reports (Annex 2).

Table 2. Summary of case study findings: relevance

Case study number and title	Score*	Key findings from the case studies on relevance
CS1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed strategy with strong evidence of progress. Addressing key problems as identified by UK UNDP-Chaired Political Champions for Resilience.¹⁰ There is a lack of clarity about whether and how the project findings from Pakistan will be transferred to other fragile and low-income countries. It will be important to design a process that is sufficiently adaptable to ensure its relevance in a different context. No information is available on the approach that will be taken to disaggregate data sets.
CS2. Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This set of projects addresses a key priority recognised in the humanitarian sector, HERR and DFID. Strong concept notes and proposal for nutrition project. Relevant mix of issues being considered across the projects. Would benefit from more focus on practical reasons why cash is not taken up on a larger scale and also gender and social inclusion issues.
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This fund and research aim to address issues which are squarely focused on the health evidence problems identified in the HIES. Extra analytical work was conducted reviewing gaps in the existing evidence. The first round of the fund stimulated proposals from 32 countries, but there were limited Southern-based proposals, despite efforts to promote the fund through town hall meetings in Delhi and Nairobi, which may limit linkage with regional and country-based initiatives.
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project relates directly to the HIES-identified problem of lack of synthesis of evidence. Some external stakeholders question the basic assumption underlying the project (i.e. the extent to which <u>access</u> to evidence is the problem). The project focuses on the supply side of evidence and success (e.g. in relation to research, uptake is to a large extent dependent on linking with communication activities within and outside of HIEP).
CS5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good strategy with some evidence of progress or potential to ensure relevance. Addresses priority issues highlighted by HERR (i.e. innovation and technology). External stakeholders confirm HIF is a unique initiative addressing a key need. The HIF will benefit when stronger links are formed with other projects in the HIEP portfolio.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good strategy to ensure relevance with some evidence of progress. Excellent processes used to ensure relevance including literature review, methodology conference and wide consultation with key stakeholders including potential users at international and national levels.
CS7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed strategy to ensure relevance with strong evidence of progress. Clear problem identified and refined through literature review. Good engagement with stakeholders (e.g. through webinars). Development of typology of approaches for capacity building for disaster risk management and proposed list of countries that take account of these suggests that efforts have been taken to ensure the relevance and transferability of the research findings. Limited evidence that the project links to broader sectoral initiatives within DFID, but engagement with key stakeholders including GFDRR, UNDP and IFRC is positive.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good proposal with some evidence of progress or potential to achieve relevance (e.g. directly relates to HIES identified needs). External and internal stakeholders agree that the project has potential to make

¹⁰ An informal grouping of senior representatives and political leaders that advocates greater emphasis on and investment in disaster risk reduction.

		<p>an important contribution, but that the methodological challenges of synthesising practical findings from five country studies, as well as the risks and costs of safely conducting the research in highly insecure settings, are significant challenges to delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still being contracted, so approach and methods developed by the contractor during the inception phase will be key.
<p>*Explanation of scoring scale: High – Detailed strategy with strong evidence of progress or potential to achieve relevance; Medium – Good strategy with some evidence of progress or potential to achieve relevance; Low – Covers the issue, but with limited evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy; None – No strategy in place; Too early to say – There is not enough evidence to make a judgement.</p>		

3.1.2 Extent to which HIEP has responded to needs identified in HERR and HIES and other emerging needs and opportunities to invest in humanitarian evidence and innovation

Analysis of the case study project proposals found that all projects addressed one or more of the HIES problems. Thorough and systematic processes were followed to identify focus areas for HIEP and the projects. This included making good use of evidence and literature reviews (e.g. CS2, 3, 5, 6, 7). Projects have also employed good methods of consultation to test and refine the questions they are asking (e.g. methodology conferences (CS6) and webinars (CS7)).

The focus areas of HIEP, which include resilience, cash-based responses, risk, innovation, health and evaluation, all link directly to HERR-identified priorities. They are subjects where DFID has existing experience, expertise in the subject, profile in the sector and relationships that provide opportunities to build on. The focus areas are relevant to DFID priority areas and policy priorities as they currently stand (e.g. cash-based programming, resilience, fragile states). However, given that there is a humanitarian policy-refresh process underway in DFID, any changes in this will need to be monitored.

During the inception phase, the evaluation team heard that focus areas for HIEP were guided by a mix of factors including: areas identified by the HERR; areas where DFID considered itself to have some comparative advantage (e.g. due to previous work in this area, such as on cash or with the focus on innovation beyond humanitarian work of DFID); and pragmatic reasons (e.g. taking up and building on pre-existing or new opportunities that fit within the HIES objectives, such as the Research into Health in Emergencies (CS3)).

Interviews with external stakeholders consistently found that they viewed the HIEP projects and programme focus areas as relevant and to be addressing areas that are priorities for the humanitarian sector. External stakeholders from operational agencies agreed that projects have the potential to offer new insights (e.g. due to multi-country approaches (e.g. CS6, 7, 8)), openness to a range of applications (CS3, 5) and through scale of investment (CS6, 3, 1). The focus on insecure and fragile environments was particularly welcomed and a context that external stakeholders emphasised where there is limited evidence to guide decision-making.

In relation to innovation, the need for it is now broadly recognised, seen in initiatives in other organisations: Oxfam in the WASH sector, Plan Sudan and OCHA through its Humanitarian Research and Innovation Fund, as well as its focus in the World Humanitarian Summit. However, there are very few formal innovation processes and funds. Funding for innovation is more limited and DFID's investment in this area is supported by external stakeholders. For example, the HIEP-supported Humanitarian Innovation Fund (CS5) fills a gap. The HIF is seen as a pioneer by evaluation interviewees, who recognise it as an important dedicated, independent innovation funder in the humanitarian field.

3.1.3 Extent to which the programme design is appropriate to address needs and opportunities

The scope and scale of HIEP overall and individual project budgets was consistently acknowledged by external stakeholders as a significant investment into evidence and innovation in the sector. HIEP addresses a gap in funding for this type of systematic evidence generation. This gap was particularly highlighted by interviewees in operational organisations, who emphasised the lack of opportunities to secure such resources and the constraints on their own unrestricted income for support for evidence and innovation. However, they also point to the scale of the problems to be addressed and so caution that expectations of how much HIEP can achieve need to be realistic.

Case studies found that there had been careful consideration given to the selection of countries in projects employing a case study or focus country approach. External stakeholders interviewed for case studies in particular supported the country selections in CS6, which is undertaking research in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Somalia; CS1, which has an initial focus on Pakistan; and CS8, which is focused on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen. These country selections were considered to be appropriate, with the potential to provide rich context-specific data, but also potentially to provide findings that will be at least illustrative to other contexts.

Projects that take a country-focused approach, however, do raise the challenge of producing customised, tailored findings, rich with contextual detail vis-à-vis findings and learning, which can be adapted and applied to other contexts. This is an issue DFID and partners with country-focused projects are aware of and is something that both DFID and project research uptake strategies will need to consider.

There is also strong evidence at case-study level that project design processes, particularly during inception phases, have engaged potential users of the findings of the projects. This is important because of the rationale underlying the HIEP and the role this engagement can play in ensuring research is relevant and used. For example, in CS2 UNICEF and the World Bank are involved in the social protection programme and ACF and Concern in the cash and nutrition project; in CS7 on capacity building and DRM, the project partners engaged with a wide range of donors and implementers in the design of the project include UNDP, World Bank/GFDRR, Canadian Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and Tufts University; similarly, in CS6, consultation was conducted with ICRC and other international organisations, DFID humanitarian advisers and NGOs in the four focus countries; and lastly, in CS8, DFID's own country offices have been involved in the project development process.

Wide stakeholder engagement has also helped to refine the specific focus of projects. For example, in CS5 the HIF WASH gap analysis included consultation with over 900 people across 40 countries and 45 organisations, including donors, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, as well as affected populations, which fed into the accelerated innovation approach it has adopted. Likewise, in CS6 Humanitarian Outcomes consulted with nearly 200 stakeholders in the inception phase. This had a notable influence on its planned research methodology. Effective engagement processes, such as holding a methodology conference (CS6) and webinars (CS7), have helped to refine project designs and build external stakeholder confidence in the projects.

Case studies also revealed a number of examples of where DFID has made good use of inception phases to strengthen project design. For example, there are clear improvements in the way that CS7 addresses gender from the draft to the final inception report, following comments from the advisory group.

3.1.4 Extent to which the HIEP harmonises with other relevant institutional, sectoral and country-based initiatives and opportunities

The case studies highlighted strong evidence of linkages between projects and other sectoral initiatives particularly at the international level. Examples of this include engaging key stakeholders in consultation processes and on advisory groups (e.g. engagement with OCHA in CS6); linking with other innovation

initiatives, such as USAID and the World Humanitarian Summit for CS5; developing partnerships with key networks (e.g. links with the cash learning partnership in CS2); and HIF having connections to the WASH Cluster, key stakeholders in humanitarian response.

Across the HIEP, links to region and country-based initiatives and opportunities are not yet well developed, but it is anticipated that these will be a feature as the programme develops. For example, plans are in place in CS7 to conduct stakeholder-mapping processes in focus countries, and in CS6 to engage with country coordination mechanisms. However, country-level engagement may also highlight a challenge: in order for engagement to be meaningful there needs to be a degree of flexibility in project designs to take on board country priorities and input, which can be difficult to manage. The evaluation team will monitor for this issue in future summative stages of the evaluation.

DFID's project selection and overall focus on innovation resonates with the emerging agenda on innovation in the sector. A key part of the emerging agenda on innovation is to share learning on what investment in innovation would look like at a humanitarian system level, and identify a small number of issues that investors in humanitarian innovation could cluster around to build more momentum. These would need to consider the system elements already highlighted – i.e. the value chain, the ability to innovate, the ability to pay for potential innovations, the operational capacity of the public sector to implement innovations, and the architecture of the potential commercial market (infrastructure, credit, regulation, stability), all of which shape the take-up of new technologies or innovative processes.¹¹

At this stage in the evaluation, there is strong evidence to suggest that, for the HIEP innovation-related projects, there are strategies in place to produce innovation-related outputs that are coherent, of high quality, highly likely to be innovative and convincing to sector stakeholders.

3.1.5 Extent to which HIEP responds well to emerging needs and opportunities to invest in humanitarian evidence and innovation

The overall HIEP budget is £48.3 million, of which £36.4 million has been approved. This gap in committed funds provides some space for flexibility as needs and opportunities emerge. Interviews with the HIEP Secretariat suggest that they and the project teams are scanning for opportunities to invest in humanitarian evidence and innovation, though this is not captured systematically and tends to be opportunistic. There is evidence of some proactive measures to take up potential opportunities. For example, DFID has applied to be represented on panels at the World Humanitarian Summit 2016.

3.2 Strengths and challenges of HIEP's relevance

3.2.1 Strengths

HIEP has put in place robust and systematic processes to ensure it addresses key problems in the humanitarian sector and that project designs are appropriate. These include good use of literature and evidence reviews, triangulating and strengthening initial evidence-gap analyses with broad stakeholder engagement, and good use by DFID of proposal and inception phases to strengthen project designs. The establishment of project advisory groups that combine a range of expertise, both academic and operational, provides a good structure to maintain relevance. Finally, the selection of projects in line with existing DFID strengths and priorities means there is expertise in house to support projects, as well as strengthening the likely relevance of HIEP outputs to future DFID programming.

¹¹ 'Evidence review – Environmental Innovation Prizes for Development,' Bryony Everett.
<http://www.dewpoint.org.uk/Asset%20Library/Your%20Files/A0405%20Evidence%20Review%20Environmental%20Innovation%20Prizes%20for%20Development%20FINAL%20for%20web.pdf>

The HIEP programme is responding to priority needs. There has been broad engagement of humanitarian stakeholders and potential users particularly at the international level. This should enhance the programme's relevance and stimulate acceptance and uptake of the evidence being generated. Engagement at regional, country and local level has been more piecemeal.

The HIEP Secretariat has to an extent been scanning the humanitarian and evidence horizon, looking for opportunities, and has taken opportunities when they present themselves. However, there is scope to broaden this process and make it more systematic, possibly involving the HIEP Management Committee and virtual team.

Overall, HIEP is on track to ensure that HIEP projects address relevant, researchable problems and produce evidence that is coherent and convincing to humanitarian actors and has the potential to influence change.

3.2.2 Challenges

The formative evaluation has highlighted two key challenges for HIEP related to relevance of its activities:

a) Balance between problems addressed by HIEP – An issue that was raised across a number of interviews with external stakeholders was the extent to which lack of evidence or lack of access to it is the problem. DFID's own analysis in Business Case 3 refers to other reasons as also important, such as the political context for the limited use of existing evidence not being conducive.

An analysis of HIEP funding allocation to date indicates that so far more than 75% has been allocated to the synthesis and generation of evidence about what works best in humanitarian operations. Only 11% of funding has so far been allocated to problem four identified in the HIEP theory of change (i.e. "inadequate systems and incentives to integrate evidence production and use routinely in humanitarian decisions and actions"). While part of the programme's strategy is to support "learning by doing", e.g. through support to the IFRC research unit and involvement of DFID humanitarian advisors, this approach is quite limited in the scope of its ambition of addressing obstacles and incentives for routine use of evidence. The new HIEP initiative to strengthen humanitarian evidence systems in East Africa and South Asia that was considered in the April 2015 Management Committee meeting could be an important addition to the HIEP portfolio. Moving forward it will be important both for the evaluation and the management of HIEP to monitor the overall balance in resources and allocation across the four problems HIEP seeks to address.

b) Global engagement – A second recurrent theme in external stakeholders' assessment of HIEP is that it appears very "Anglo-centric". This perception is backed by DFID's 2013 Annual Review of the three HIEP business cases, which found all major grants had been allocated to UK or US agencies. To some extent this issue will be addressed when the project partners at the more detailed level are more widely publicised (e.g. those receiving R2HC grants in CS3 or the country-based partners in CS6). In addition, in CS3, R2HC is specifically planning to increase the number and strengthen the quality of proposals from Southern organisations in its next round of grants. Given the growing importance of country-based actors in humanitarian crises, a priority also highlighted by DFID, it will be important that HIEP both is, and appears to be, guided by priorities identified by stakeholders based in regions anticipated to benefit from the programme. While the evaluation recognises the challenge for country-level stakeholders to be engaged in a representative way, finding ways to include perspectives from the regional and country levels will strengthen programme-level discussions and go some way to address perceptions of HIEP's Anglo-centric perspective.

3.3 Implications for summative evaluation

The formative phase has raised a number of issues related to the 'relevance' of HIEP, which will be important for the evaluation team to consider in the future summative phases:

- The responsiveness at project and programme level to new opportunities and needs for investment in humanitarian evidence and innovation. This is particularly key in the midst of an evolving global agenda with key events up-coming in 2015 and 2016, including the World Humanitarian Summit, the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and the development of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- How the processes for scanning for opportunities have been systematised at the level of the HIEP programme;
- The extent to which the projects and programme are able to remain flexible given the fast moving and unpredictable arena in which HIEP works and the primacy that stakeholder engagement and consultation plays in the HIEP strategy;
- HIEP linkage with other initiatives particularly at the regional and country levels; and
- The transferability of research findings from specific country contexts.

3.4 Recommendations to HIEP

- Consider the establishment of an external stakeholder advisory group for the programme that includes regionally- and country-based stakeholders (e.g. from regional organisations such as ASEAN or CDEMA and including key national disaster management players, such as representatives of National Disaster Management Agencies).
- Systematise methods for scanning for opportunities at the project and programme levels. Make greater use of the HIEP virtual team, humanitarian cadre and other advisers for this.
- Review the extent of programme content and resourcing that addresses problem 4 of the HIEP theory of change, which relates to incentives to produce and use evidence routinely.

4. Efficiency

Evaluation question 2: Which management and implementation approaches have enabled HIEP to deliver better value for money (VfM)?

Key findings: *There is good evidence that VfM was influential in resource allocation in HIEP. Attention to economy and efficiency has been strong at procurement level with some attention also to effectiveness. The approach to equity has been inconsistent. There is room to strengthen VfM monitoring as the programme moves to implementation stages at project and programme levels.*

The evaluation is using the 4E framework (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity) to evaluate HIEP, as described in the inception report. The focus of this section of the report is on the economy and efficiency aspects of VfM given that other sections are dealing with effectiveness (Section 5) and equity (Section 7 gender and social inclusion). However, where there are resource allocation aspects to effectiveness and equity they are considered here.

The focus of this formative phase in the evaluation is on taking stock of what has been put in place in these early stages of the programme cycle in terms of VfM processes and frameworks, and the extent to which these will ensure that VfM assessments can be conducted at a later stage. Where possible, attempts are also made to make a preliminary assessment of VfM at the project and programme levels, with recommendations for changes going forward. As explained in Section 2.3, some aspects of the planned methodology at this stage were not possible due to the lack of availability of key data, including most project budgets (for commercial reasons) and resourcing costs of HIEP (i.e. staff time).¹²

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Summary of case study findings

Table 3 below summarises the findings from each of the eight case studies on VfM. Each of the projects were assessed based on the following judgement criteria:

- Extent to which HIEP has optimised use of resources to achieve results; and
- Extent to which trade-offs between long-term and short-term results and any conflicting demands for resources considered and resolved.

In each case study the evidence collected was reviewed and an overall performance score for 'efficiency' was assigned (see Figure 3 for more details on the scoring methodology). Given the gaps in the data, it is important to note that scores are based on the evidence available to the evaluation team at the time of writing. It is also important to note that the relevance of indicators varied considerably between case studies due to their different stages of implementation.

¹² This was due to a poor survey response rate. The summative phase will find alternative ways to collect data through consultation with the HIEP virtual team and Secretariat, which was also under pressure during the evaluation due to staff sickness and absence.

Table 3. Summary of case study findings: efficiency

Case study number and title	Score	Key findings from the case studies on efficiency
CS1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy is being assured by team's use of World Bank guidelines for procurement. • Some evidence of intention to ensure VfM effectiveness (e.g. output-based payments). • Limited evidence available of VfM monitoring and reporting taking place so far. • Proposal suggests that monitoring the leveraging impact of the intervention at different levels should be the primary measure used to assess VfM but this is not expanded on in the evaluation strategy (effectiveness).
CS2. Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response	Low/ Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong open procurement undertaken for larger Social Protection (SP) project through open competition, not the case for smaller CaLP £90,000 project. • SP project has a focus on quality of research, but not linked to input costs. • Very little evidence of VfM reporting in quarterly reports (CaLP).
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	Medium/ High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good VfM guidelines used by partner for programme management and grantees – focusing on economy and efficiency. • Relatively low administration costs indicating good economy. • Risk that pressure of spend cycles may compromise long-term VfM effectiveness, though possibly offset by co-funding model (DFID funds spent first). • Risk of potential trade-offs between the economy, efficiency and effectiveness (i.e. lean administrative structure) may be at a cost to effectiveness. • Good evidence of monitoring of VfM (e.g. quarterly report includes VfM).
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project decision-making process considered issues of economy and efficiency. • Less evidence so far (project being contracted at time of case study) to see how effectiveness and equity have or will be covered. • Good use of benchmarking costs (e.g. systematic reviews with DFID's own unit). • Some evidence that the project has optimised use of resources to achieve results (e.g. through open procurement process, though this has been a very slow process).
CS5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	Medium/ High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner-developed guidance for grantees and successful proposals are scrutinised for VfM. • Proactive and good approach to VfM. Strong focus on economy and efficiency, and some on effectiveness in decision-making and monitoring. • There is potential to develop approaches to VfM and innovation (e.g. use of failure rates elaborated, though not clear if these currently link to VfM monitoring).
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of focus on effectiveness during procurement (e.g. consideration of organisational capacity, partnership approach). • The procurement process has considered issues of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and to some extent equity, so if successful has good potential to provide VfM. • Partner attention to VfM (e.g. cost-sharing opportunities considered). • Good use of DFID procurement systems. • No access to budget data during case study.
CS7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	Low/ Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some limited evidence of VfM monitoring and reporting. • Some evidence of reporting on economy in decision-making. • Relatively high administration costs – administration costs are 25%, including a 6.5% contribution to headquarters. On top of this, each research institution adds another layer of administration overheads. • Additional planned result to build IFRC capacity in research management (effectiveness).

CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerations of economy, efficiency and effectiveness have been prioritised, with much less evidence on how equity is considered. Flexibility has been explicitly built into the project, as DFID stakeholders have flagged the risk of incurring additional costs due to operating in insecure environments and have allowed flexibility in the terms of reference for no-cost extensions due to the volatility of security situations. Also, a real-time evaluation of an emergency during the funding period has been allowed for. Some evidence that the project has optimised use of resources to achieve results (e.g. through open, competitive procurement processes and benchmarking of costs). Limited evidence because contractor's documentation has not yet been made available due to the early stage in contracting.
<p>*Explanation of scoring scale: High – Detailed strategy with strong evidence of progress or potential to achieve efficiency; Medium – Good strategy for efficiency with some evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy; Low – Strategy and plans covers the issues, but with limited evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy; None – No strategy in place; Too early to say – There is not enough evidence to make a judgement.</p>		

4.1.2 VfM in decision-making and management at project level

The case studies found strong evidence that there had been careful consideration of economy within DFID procurement processes to identify partners and award contracts. Case studies found a number of examples of costs being reduced through the procurement process. For example, the costs were reduced in CS4 for communication, and in CS7 those associated with stakeholder engagement were adjusted. There was some consideration of effectiveness in the procurement process, but limited with inconsistent attention to equity. Only two of the case studies reviewed (CS6, 8) found evidence of efforts to consider equity.

The Annual Reviews of HIEP business cases found good procurement practice across projects. The formative evaluation case studies, however, also revealed inconsistencies in the rationale for when open and closed or limited procurement processes were applied. For example, CS4 and CS8 both used open procurement processes, whereas CS6, with a similar budget, used a much more limited procurement process though based on a judgement by DFID that it required much more specialist skills and thus a more limited process was appropriate.

An important aspect of VfM is the extent to which alternative arrangements or modes of delivery are considered. Across the case studies the practice of doing this was mixed. This was most pronounced in relation to management arrangements where the case studies revealed four projects that explored alternatives at the initial proposal stage (CS2 (part), 4, 6, 7 (via IFRC)), and four that did not (CS1, 3, 5, 8).

The case studies also revealed that while both DFID and some partners are conscious of VfM and have systems and processes in place to address it (CS3, 5, 6, 7), project partners reported that they received very limited guidance from DFID regarding how to ensure VfM. So, while evidence was found of projects monitoring economy and reporting on this to DFID, there was no evidence of the use of consistent tools or indicators across projects (e.g. ratios of administration overheads, evidence of incentives to keep them low, consistent use of benchmarks). There are also no consistent indicators used for monitoring efficiency.

The evaluation also noted that in the HIEP virtual team there do not appear to be many economists or evaluation advisers involved at the project level. This may reduce pressure for monitoring VfM and could be a reason for the inconsistent application of VfM across projects. Evaluation advisers are, however, part of some of the more recent established project advisory groups, so this may support greater scrutiny of VfM in future stages.

It is clear from this stage in the evaluation that there is more that can be done to ensure the consistent application of VfM approaches. The extent to which greater consistency across projects and partners is

realised will be a focus in the summative phases of the evaluation when full access to budgets is also anticipated.

4.1.3 VfM in decision-making and management at programme level

Consistent criteria have been applied by the Management Committee to assess proposals¹³ and a review of Management Committee meeting minutes and interviews found that there is clearly an awareness of VfM. However, in the proposal assessment process there is currently no formal requirement to ask explicit VfM questions, such as: “Can we get the quality we want at a lower price?” That said, there is evidence from interviews with the HIEP Secretariat and others that the Management Committee does consider VfM by asking such questions as: “Is this really a gap in the evidence?” and that project budgets have been adapted – both increased and decreased – to focus on priority areas for HIEP and where the perceived evidence gap is greatest.

The Annual Reviews of the three HIEP business cases state the following as cost drivers for HIEP: staff salaries, uptake and communication activities, travel, security, workshops and IT. The largest cost driver was consultancy rates. Interviews found that this had been a key focus in Management Committee decision-making. In the long term, the hope is the market will become more competitive and rates will come down. The HIEP is an attempt to develop the market and the Annual Reviews felt it was already bringing new players into the market through projects such as through the HIF and R2HC Funds and the co-production models their grants support.

It is important to note that quality has been the key driver of resource allocation rather than a need to spend money within a particular financial cycle. For instance, the project “Protection: what works” has invested considerable effort in ensuring appropriate partnerships and support from key stakeholders are in place before moving ahead with the project. Similarly, CS5, HIF, can roll over funds to the next round if insufficient quality proposals are received. Also, CS3, the co-funding with Wellcome Trust for R2HC, seeks to allocate resources in line with quality considerations rather than financial cycles. This clear focus on quality also supports VfM.

While VfM considerations are clearly being integrated into the decision-making about what HIEP funds, the lack of consistent economy and efficiency ratios across HIEP projects mentioned above will pose challenges to DFID in monitoring economy and efficiency at programme level. Moreover, broader VfM will be particularly challenging to monitor given HIEP’s focus on evidence use, communication and influencing work. The current processes for monitoring effectiveness at the programme level are through the logframe reporting, quarterly reporting by the HIEP Secretariat to the Management Committee and the business case Annual Reviews.

Although the logframe is comprehensive, it has not yet been populated, so has yet to become a tool for monitoring. In addition, there are no resource allocations against logframe outputs and outcomes. These will be necessary to generate in order to consider programme-level VfM. In terms of equity, Management Committee interviews suggest that concerns over equity, gender and social inclusion were deeply ingrained in the Management Committee, but their consideration is not consistently documented in HIEP. This is discussed in more detail in the gender and social inclusion section of this report (Section 7).

¹³ Management Committee assessment criteria from HIEP proposal format:

- a) Is the proposed intervention in line with the strategy? (10%)
- b) Is the proposal relevant and is it likely to yield significant operational benefits in the short, medium and long term? Is the theory of change credible? (20%)
- c) Is the intervention well designed? In the case of research and evaluation, what measures are in place to ensure methodological rigour? (30%)
- d) Are risks clearly identified and is there a clear strategy to mitigate potential risks? (15%)

Overall, while there are challenges around how VfM will be consistently monitored and reported on at the programme level, the current evidence indicates that VfM considerations are prevalent in HIEP programme thinking and are proving influential in the resource allocation to and within HIEP projects.

4.1.4 HIEP's ability to leverage additional funds

HIEP has committed over £36 million to projects to date. It had, as of May 2013, leveraged a further £6.2 million from other donors, largely UK research councils. This represents a leverage ratio of roughly 25%. So for every £1 of DFID money spent, this has leveraged a further £0.25. This leverage ratio assumes the money is additional – i.e. it would not have been spent on humanitarian evidence and innovation in the absence of HIEP. The case studies highlight funds being leveraged from a wide range of sources (e.g. Wellcome Trust committed £3.25 million, the Canadian International Development Agency donated CAD 200,000 and the Swedish International Development Agency SEK 3 million (£378,924)). The ability of HIEP to attract supplementary resources to fund evidence generation in the sector presents a very positive story in terms of HIEP's VfM.

4.1.5 Benchmarking and HIEP management model

In the formative phase of the evaluation, the intention was to compare the administrative costs of running HIEP to a counterfactual model – the RED project with ESRC on Raising Learning Outcomes. In this RED model, the total administrative resources are 7% of the total resource envelope. A more detailed breakdown of these budgets will be sought in the summative phases to clarify the specific tasks covered by these resources. Due to the absence of equivalent data from HIEP, notably the time spent by DFID staff on HIEP projects, it was not possible to conduct a meaningful comparison in this phase of the evaluation. This will be followed up in the summative phase and alternative approaches to the survey introduced to obtain the relevant data.

4.1.6 Risk

Risk analysis is included in each project proposal considered by HIEP and was a substantial section in the proposed new business case considered in January 2014. However, minutes of the Management Committee meetings show that there has not been an overall discussion of HIEP and risk management. Interviews found that there is awareness in the HIEP Secretariat and Management Committee of this gap and plans are in place to focus on risk in an upcoming Management Committee meeting in 2014.

4.2 Strengths and challenges of HIEP VfM

4.2.1 Strengths

The evaluation identified a number of key strengths in this preliminary VfM assessment of HIEP. These include strong evidence that VfM has been carefully considered in decision-making at the project and programme levels, and the fact that HIEP is leveraging substantial additional resources for support to humanitarian evidence and innovation.

4.2.2 Challenges

One of the clear challenges facing HIEP is how it can develop a more consistent approach to monitoring VfM both between projects and at the programme level. Key areas for consideration include the use of standardised VfM indicators, assigning resource allocations to logframe outputs and outcomes and clearer guidance on how equity should be considered in VfM management across HIEP.

In relation to economy, HIEP could consider the collection of data on key cost drivers at the project level, such as those identified in the Annual Reviews – i.e. staff salary (including consultancy rates), uptake/communication activities, travel, security, workshops and IT. The unit costs of each of these cost drivers should be collected across projects every six months. These should then be reported in project

reports and aggregated at the programme level. This is consistent with the requirements of Annual Review processes. At the programme level, monitoring the following costs will also be important:

- Support and operational costs as a percentage of the HIEP budget (office, admin, travel, transport); and
- Communications costs as a percentage of programme budget.

In terms of efficiency at the project and programme levels, HIEP may also find it useful to track key milestones, for example:

1. Internal and external approval times for procurement;
2. Time taken to complete studies in relation to that planned; and
3. Time taken from inception report finalisation to final evidence outputs in relation to that planned.

These data on time taken to achieve various milestones are a good measure of efficiency, especially when benchmarked internally and between projects over time. They can provide good indications of overall efficiency and allow management to observe bottlenecks at the programme level and act on them in an adaptive way.

4.3 Implications for summative evaluation

4.3.1 VfM analysis at the case study level

In the inception phase it was highlighted that up to five case studies would be identified in the formative phase for closer VfM work in the summative phases of the evaluation. This is to generate learning on the different management models being adopted for HIEP projects and the range of contexts in which they are operating. The five case studies are outlined below with details of the management models that will be considered in future VfM assessments. A word of caution, however: it will only be possible to take this more in-depth work on VfM forward if case study budgets and other relevant data are made available to the evaluation team.

Table 4. Case studies selected for VfM analysis in summative phases

Case study number and title	Rationale
CS1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner – GFDRR Country focus with a learning-by-doing approach in the programme. Potential to explore costs of bringing about change in one country.
CS3. Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner – ELRHA Model of contracted out management; fund with multiple rounds. Co-funding with Wellcome Trust provides an opportunity to explore benefits of co-funding (e.g. in relieving pressure to spend in line with financial cycles). Lean management costs – consider any implications for effectiveness.
CS5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner – ELRHA Innovation focus provides an opportunity to explore VfM in innovation and management of it (e.g. agreed failure rates as part of VfM considerations). Two-track approach in the Fund with more focused, proactive WASH fund and open HIF call for innovation provides potential for comparison. Lean management costs – consider any implications for effectiveness.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner – Humanitarian Outcomes “Traditional” contracted-out project to single provider though additional partner arrangement also made by Humanitarian Outcomes. Potential to explore costs of research in volatile and insecure environments.
CS7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner – IFRC and OPM Evidence of high administration costs, but also an additional result anticipated of increased capacity in IFRC to manage research. This provides an interesting angle to consider costs and effectiveness.

4.3.2 Comparison of HIEP management model, costs and alternatives

The formative phase carried out some initial work to explore the potential of creating a stand-alone model to compare costs of the HIEP management model with an alternative. It should be possible to create a cost-comparison model, though a broader VfM comparison will not be feasible given the limited possibilities to compare effectiveness and impact. Current observations are that HIEP management costs are very lean. The future VfM analysis at the summative phases will consider this further at programme level and for selected case studies.

4.3.3 Efficiency and value for money (VfM): reformulating the evaluation question

In the inception phase, the agreed evaluation question under efficiency was: “Which management and implementation approaches have enabled HIEP to deliver better value for money (VfM)?” This question remains a relevant question to address; however, to place it under a title of efficiency is confusing to some extent given that VfM has a broader definition. In the summative evaluation phases it is proposed that this section be retitled VfM.

4.4 Recommendations to HIEP

- Introduce systems to monitor VfM more systematically across the programme:
 - Develop a system to track economy and efficiency across HIEP. Consider the regular collection and analysis of economy and efficiency indicators by all project teams and of key indicators at the programme level.
 - Link the logframe outputs and outcomes to total resource allocations.
 - Clarify how equity should be monitored across projects.

5. Effectiveness

Evaluation question 3: Which approaches have been more effective in enabling HIEP to ensure the creation, support and application of high-quality and relevant humanitarian evidence and innovation?

Key findings: *There are solid plans to produce relevant evidence outputs and some key relationships are established already. Stakeholder relationships are most developed at the international level, with national and regional connections at a much earlier stage of development. There is some evidence of plans in place or in development at the project level to support debate, brokering and endorsement of HIEP-generated evidence, necessary to support HIEP outcomes. The inter-departmental design of HIEP is proving to be an effective structure to bring together expertise and perspectives from across DFID. The virtual team has the potential to increase the impact of HIEP through collective learning and joint activities. The focus until now has been at the project level, but it is timely to develop the programme-level approach in more detail. There are resourcing concerns to ensure HIEP potential is maximised.*

This section considers the progress of HIEP in achieving effectiveness and assesses the strengths and challenges of current HIEP strategies. It develops the basis for the summative phase case study analysis by laying out the models and approaches that will be explored further in the summative phases. It concludes with recommendations to strengthen HIEP effectiveness.

5.1 Key findings

5.1.1 Summary of case study findings

Table 5 below summarises the findings from each of the eight case studies on effectiveness. Each of the projects were assessed based on the following judgement criteria:

- Extent to which project plans to produce HIEP outputs;
- Extent to which social inclusion/gender-sensitive strategies are in place to ensure behavioural changes;
- Extent to which project aims contribute to HIEP outcomes and overall aim; and
- Extent to which the management approach enables creation, support and application of evidence and innovation.

Further details are in the individual case reports (Annex 2).

Table 5. Summary of case study findings: effectiveness

Case study number and title	Score	Key findings from the case studies on effectiveness
CS1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed strategy for project with Pakistan focus. Strengths include the establishment of multi-stakeholder national working group; focus on learning by doing; partnership with GFDRR, a key actor in the sector. Lack of clarity regarding how the project will engage with stakeholders outside Pakistan.
CS2. Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong evidence of plans in this cluster of projects to produce quality and relevant evidence products. Some relationships with key organisations and networks in place or under development. Lack of shared influencing strategy for these cash-related projects. The case study found that bringing about changes in the skills and systems of key aid agencies to ensure that they shift to the use of cash-based approaches when appropriate is clearly a challenge for DFID, so it will need to develop a strategy, potentially in partnership with other donors, for bringing about this change.
CS3. Research for health in humanitarian crises (R2HC)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good plans in place to ensure quality and relevance of research (through co-production) and to support more Southern-led partnerships in the next call. Good links established with key organisations, e.g. UNHCR, Wellcome Trust. Some evidence of a strategy, but not documented to deal with emerging challenges. More attention is needed to develop influencing strategy. Limited documented evidence of attention to gender and social inclusion.
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	Being contracted (Too early)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solid plans in place to support the creation of high-quality and relevant evidence. Explicit focus on the supply side of the process means excellent processes to link with uptake processes will be important. The project strategy is to link with existing trusted channels and processes, such as training, which are likely to be beneficial. There is a very broad definition of potential users in project documentation at this stage – further focus in the inception phase will be important.
CS5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good strategy with some evidence of progress or potential for success. The HIF team acknowledges that there is a gap in uptake and mentoring of innovations through to the next stage. More needs to be done to develop plans to activate the HIF's intended role to convene and synthesise learning about innovation to influence the wider humanitarian sector.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good strategy to produce high-quality and relevant products. Good process to build links with key stakeholders and to engage with relevant networks and key players (e.g. ICRC, IASC members, DFID humanitarian advisers). Some potential to use DFID influence as donor and leader in the system. Targets for change (e.g. for research uptake very broadly defined). Process to engage with stakeholders outside of focus countries unclear.
CS7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed strategy with strong evidence of progress. Strong alignment with HIEP theory of change. Project documentation makes reference to issues of gender and inclusion, which emphasises the importance of disaggregating data sets. Clarity needed on how the process of change articulated in the project

		theory of change will be supported by DFID post-2016 (e.g. how improved knowledge base on capacity building for DRM will translate into changed donor (including DFID's) and practitioner approaches to DRM.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	Being contracted (Too early)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project intends to support the creation of high-quality and relevant evidence and to support its application in practice, although the specific strategies are not yet in place. Key advantage of multi-country approach. External and DFID stakeholders acknowledge the project's potential contribution to resilience practice, if its research can be achieved.
<p>*Explanation of scoring scale: High – Detailed strategy with strong evidence of progress or potential to achieve effectiveness; Medium – Good strategy for effectiveness with some evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy; Low – Strategy and plans covers the issues, but with limited evidence of progress or potential to achieve strategy; None – No strategy in place; Too early to say – There is not enough evidence to make a judgement.</p>		

5.1.2 Extent to which progress has been made towards achieving outputs

The case studies found that all projects have clear plans to produce relevant and quality evidence and innovation products (Output 1 in the theory of change). For instance, all of the case studies plan to generate research reports, CS6 is also planning to produce monitoring and evaluation toolkits, and CS3 frameworks for ethical research. In addition, there are good measures in place at the proposal stage to quality-assure research processes; for instance, through clear assessment criteria used by the HIEP Management Committee when reviewing proposals. This considers project design and measures to ensure methodological rigour. Similar quality assurance structures have been put in place in some projects (e.g. CS3 uses panels with academic and operational agency representatives to judge proposals and CS6 has internal peer review processes to review outputs).

All case studies also aim to establish cross-institutional relationships (Output 2 in the theory of change). For instance, all projects have built cross-departmental relationships within DFID, e.g. through membership of selection panels and advisory groups. The evaluation found that time has been put into supporting the development of cross-departmental relationships within DFID; however, projects found that accessing lead advisers in CHASE was at times difficult. Advisers themselves requested more guidance on the time inputs required for HIEP to be able to plan accordingly. In addition, HIEP has established appropriate partnerships with key agencies. Partners have been carefully selected and potentially bring key resources, e.g. research management capacity (Wellcome Trust and Humanitarian Outcomes), an operational perspective (IFRC) and access to networks (CaLP).

There is only limited evidence that skills have been built or plans are in place to build skills in the design, commission and application of humanitarian research (Output 3 in the theory of change). This finding is supported by the Annual Review of HIEP business case one, which noted that the humanitarian cadre "in some cases is designing and leading evaluation and research studies for the first time". The evaluation found very limited evidence of support or training being provided to project teams to develop new skills, such as research management. Interviewees from CHASE suggested further support for project team members in research management and uptake would be beneficial.

5.1.3 Extent to which strategies are in place to bring about behavioural change and contribute to outcomes

The HIEP theory of change details the importance of engaging key stakeholders and, in particular, stimulating four behaviour changes. These are that: through DFID-influencing activities HIEP evidence is debated; networks broker applications of evidence; operational actors endorse the evidence; and finally, DFID change its funding and operations based on the evidence. These changes are seen as key to support the HIEP outcomes. Case studies found that detailed influencing plans are still under development.

Stakeholder engagement is a key strategy being deployed by HIEP to bring about change. At this stage, this is most developed with international stakeholders. Some projects have stakeholder engagement plans in their focus countries (CS1, 6, 7). Town Hall meetings conducted in CS3 have achieved some engagement at regional and country level. However, on the whole, stakeholder engagement at the regional and country levels is less developed.

All case studies that have completed their inception phase demonstrated good engagement with potential users of project outputs through measures such as consultation processes, recruiting staff of key organisations to project advisory groups and through the establishment of cross-institution working groups. The case studies identified plans or at least intentions to ensure evidence is debated and advocated for, e.g. through linking with network brokers such as ALNAP and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy; and building connections with operational actors to endorse the evidence being generated. These links are not formalised at this stage in most cases. The expectation and process by which DFID behaviour may change as a result of individual projects is less clear at this point in the programme.

At the project level, research uptake strategies are being developed as part of the inception processes. These last up to the end of the partner contract and cover the partner's activities. Partners were confident that they had adequate time over the course of their contract for initial engagement with key stakeholders around evidence. However, it is likely that further support will be needed to sustain debate, brokering and advocacy for evidence beyond this. It is not clear how that will be resourced and whose responsibility it will be.

The level of resources that projects are allocating to strategies to support behaviour change is unclear. The evaluation had only limited access to case study budgets for reasons of commercial sensitivity. An analysis of initial proposals to the Management Committee and interviews with project partners suggests that the communication budgets are tight, often at around 10% or less of total budgets. This is countered to a certain extent in some projects by their participatory approaches that engage stakeholders in the design and research process. However, given the ambitious outcomes of HIEP to achieve change in the humanitarian system over and above the production of quality outputs, greater attention to resourcing of these activities to support behaviour change is likely to be needed.

5.1.4 Extent to which the HIEP management model accelerates or inhibits the achievement of results

Interviewees from across the participating DFID departments, RED, CHASE and ARD, were positive about the HIEP management model. The three-department cooperation, which brings together expertise and perspectives from different parts of DFID, is thought to be strengthening the programme (e.g. through focusing on relevant research questions). More than half the humanitarian cadre is involved in HIEP, which should build DFID's internal commitment to use research findings.

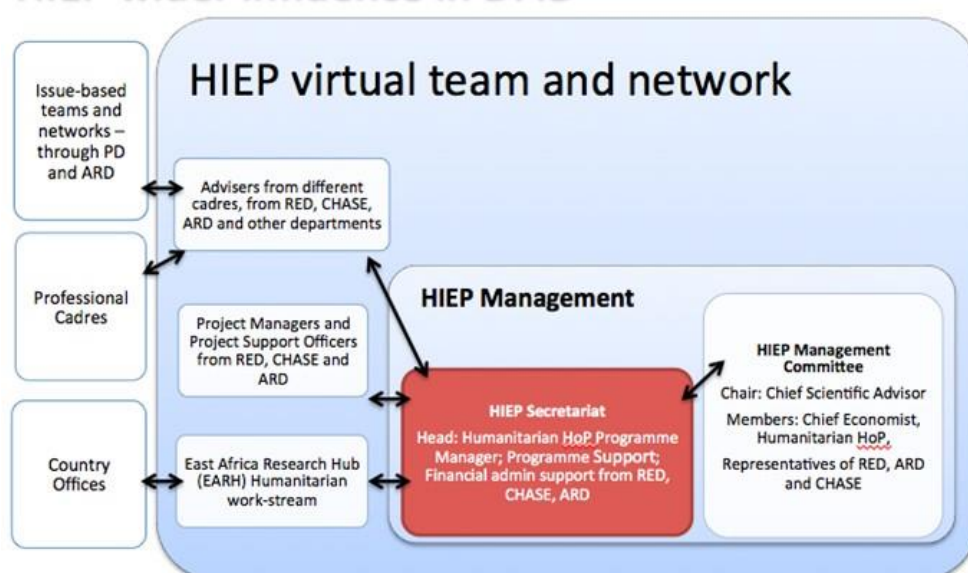
Monitoring of effectiveness at the HIEP programme level is through regular reports to the Management Committee, annual reviews of business cases, annual reports by projects, logframe reporting and this evaluation process. The logframe has identified key indicators across the whole programme by which to track effectiveness, but so far there are no targets established. The logframe remains unpopulated, despite being complete since the inception phase of this evaluation. So far, it has not been a tool to monitor effectiveness.

At the project level, partners are collecting data and reporting against their agreed project logframes. Of the logframes reviewed, the evaluation found that all are gathering data relevant to effectiveness. However, it is unclear what the plans are for data collection beyond partners' contracts, which is when many results would be expected to be identified. This will have serious consequences for demonstrating that evidence has been taken up and of any wider change.

As noted in the inception report, the HIEP management structure has been described by DFID as a ‘hub and spoke’ model, with the HIEP Secretariat acting as a hub and the lead advisers and programme managers in a number of departments acting as spokes. The hub and spoke metaphor reminds us how crucial the Secretariat is to the smooth running of the other parts of the management structure, as shown in Figure 2 below. Such a model requires a strong hub to maintain coherence and maximise the potential of the collective group.

Figure 2. HIEP management and influencing structure in DFID

HIEP wider influence in DFID



Many of the actions resulting from the recent HIEP Annual Review process (e.g. populating the consolidated logframe) are the responsibility of the Secretariat. Similarly, many of the recommendations that have emerged from this formative evaluation are also directed to the Secretariat. Now that the HIEP portfolio is being populated, the Secretariat has additional work in supporting lesson learning and common reporting among lead advisers; in collating data to report against the HIEP logframe; and in passing managerial material up to the Management Committee to allow it to perform a management function. The HIEP Secretariat, in addition, has roles in communication and building relationships at the strategic level within and outside of DFID, as well as key programme management roles.

Staff capacity of HIEP amounts to just over two full-time equivalents (FTE),¹⁴ which, given the current and future workload, appears to be inadequate. The Secretariat is being creative in finding ways to access resources to support the programme (e.g. through linkage with other DFID resources such as the Innovation Hub), but core resources are extremely tight and too dependent on one or two people, most notably the head of programme. While recent staff absences due to sickness have exacerbated this capacity constraint, the extent to which the Secretariat was overstretched was already evident in delays in populating logframes and developing the HIEP influencing strategy, and the limited support that has been provided to the development of the virtual team.

Although we understand the pressures that are affecting DFID budgets, we recommend adding resources to the HIEP Secretariat. In the words of one key informant, “It would be [a] great loss if DFID, seen as world

¹⁴ Current capacity is made up of 0.6 FTE research analysis; 1 FTE programme manager; 0.2 finance officer; 0.4 head of programme. This equals 2.2 FTE. It is anticipated that this may change in the next 6 months to a total of 1 programme manager; 0.4 research analyst; 0.5 finance officer; and 0.4 FTE of head of programme, totalling 2.3 FTE.

leader in resilience and policy, did not come up with a couple of people to properly run a programme which is seen as a flagship”.¹⁵

5.1.5 Extent to which the programme maximises the potential impact of its component parts

HIEP does not currently have a programme-level influencing strategy, though one was under development at the time of writing. This has the potential to support collective work to engage key stakeholders on HIEP agendas over and above individual projects. This will be necessary to achieve HIEP outcomes (see Section 6). That said, the HIEP lacks a programme-level communication budget, so even once an influencing strategy is in place, there is no formal budget to implement it beyond individual project plans.

The development of a virtual team for HIEP provides a platform to build learning across the programme and plan for collective activities to further the HIEP agenda. However, meetings have been irregular with unpredictable attendance. There are no minutes or agendas for past meetings but it is reported that attention has so far focused on administrative details in getting the programme up and running. Some clusters of projects are emerging (e.g. on cash and also on innovation) that have the potential for greater impact through collective influencing plans.

The evaluation team found mixed views from project teams regarding the HIEP theory of change, with limited awareness and commitment to it among some project teams. Some view HIEP as primarily a funding pot and are unclear what contribution the project they are working on is supposed to make to the programme as a whole. Given the focus on individual project development so far, this is not surprising. However, greater promotion, awareness and commitment to the HIEP strategy across project teams is needed. This will help maximise potential results by ensuring that all project teams have a common view of the overall aim of the programme and how their projects fit within it.

The evaluation found a shared commitment across HIEP to DFID’s role to fill the evidence gaps with high-quality, relevant evidence produced through engagement of academic and operational communities. There is also shared commitment to the overall aims of HIEP to see sustained, evidence-based policy and practice in the humanitarian sector. However, there were more mixed views regarding how far DFID and HIEP should be involved in enabling change in the sector, which is described in HIEP outcomes and goes beyond the uptake of HIEP-generated evidence (this is discussed more fully in the impact section).

5.1.6 Enabling and inhibiting factors

Some DFID systems, notably financial systems, do not facilitate cross-departmental working. These have been time-consuming to overcome and absorbed much of the HIEP Secretariat’s time. The level of resources needed to overcome this challenge appears not to have been foreseen.

There are learning processes in place within some projects that are enabling projects to be more effective. For example, CS3 has undertaken a learning review and CS5 has already planned activities to support and strengthen Southern-based proposals for the next round of grants based on its experience in the first round R2HC grants.

5.2 Strengths and challenges of HIEP effectiveness

5.2.1 Strengths

The evaluation identified a number of key strengths in HIEP’s design that should support future effectiveness. These include: the establishment of plans to produce high-quality and relevant evidence and

¹⁵ Interview 99.

innovation outputs; the establishment and development of key relationships and partnerships; the development of strategies at the project level to engage stakeholders and support the debate, advocacy and brokering of HIEP evidence. In some projects, key stakeholders are being engaged through advisory groups, though their potential roles as ambassadors or champions are not yet defined or formalised. Within DFID there has also been strong engagement with DFID humanitarian advisers at both the individual project and programme levels.

5.2.2 Challenges

A serious challenge facing HIEP is the limited capacity of the Secretariat. This is currently undermining the programme's ability to be more than the sum of its projects. In addition, the time periods in which projects are working may not be sufficient to embed evidence adequately in fora and networks that broker, debate and promote evidence. In addition, regional and country-level stakeholder engagement is still at an early stage in development; in order for HIEP to achieve its intended outcomes these will need to be developed. This may also require activities beyond partners' current contracts.

5.3 Implications for summative evaluation

5.3.1 Comparison of and learning from case study models

In the summative phases of the evaluation, particular elements of each project's model will be considered. This will support some degree of comparison, as well as learning as to what works in different contexts. These are summarised in Table 6 below. In five case studies, this analysis will be taken further, with detailed analysis of resourcing as part of the VfM assessment referred to in the previous section.

Table 6. Key elements of case study approaches to consider in summative phases relating to effectiveness

Case study number and title	Key elements to consider in relation to effectiveness
CS1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of “learning-by-doing” approach adopted to capacity building. Effectiveness of one country (Pakistan) focus project design for results beyond Pakistan. Benefits of a relationship with key player – GFDRR.
CS2. Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of partnerships in accessing networks of all partners: CaLP network (FFF project); DFID’s own internal networks (e.g. social protection community of practice includes country offices, regional departments; partnership with UNICEF and World Bank communities of practice – social protection project). Potential effectiveness of cluster approach of DFID projects. Effectiveness of DFID strategies to engage donors (e.g. co-funding).
CS3. Research for health in humanitarian crises (R2HC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of advisory group active as network/champions. Impact on co-producers (e.g. changes in agencies’ own use of evidence). Effectiveness of co-production model in supporting quality of evidence (e.g. due to increased access to field and operational data often unavailable).
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of products and processes that can link supply-focused project (e.g. provision of systematic reviews) into policy and practice change processes (e.g. training programmes for humanitarian workers). Effectiveness of approach to access to grey literature. Quality of grey literature and its implications for quality of products (e.g. extent of disaggregated data). Benefits of partnership between operational and academic organisations.
CS5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to compare different approaches – HIF Open Call and WASH process based on gaps analysis and accelerated innovation approach. Opportunity to learn about types of management needed to support mentoring, brokering relationships with “next stage” investors and convening across sectoral boundaries.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to explore the feasibility of research in insecure locations. Effectiveness of country-focus in four focus countries for products valued by potential users in and outside of these contexts. Effectiveness of membership of advisory group on individuals’ roles as champions in their own organisations and sectors.
CS7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges and ways to establish a balance between flexibility in the project to engage country stakeholders and methodological rigour across countries (case study approach). Effectiveness of strategy to translate evidence into policy and practice change of practitioners and donors, including DFID.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility and added value of cross-country model. Opportunity to explore how DFID’s own practice can influence wider change.

5.4 Recommendations

- Put in place mechanisms to monitor effectiveness. Complete the populated logframe with targets and baseline data. Use the process to check the extent of a consistent understanding of HIEP across the team and Management Committee of aims in this phase up to 2018.
- Complete the HIEP influencing strategy.
- Review HIEP resourcing of project and programme influencing, and research uptake strategies to ensure

they are adequately resourced.

- Make more strategic use of the virtual team. Develop further the use of the virtual team to promote HIEP communication externally and learning internally. The virtual team could be offered training days to address skills development aims of the programme. Record attendance, agenda and main points of discussion at virtual team meetings.
- Review the resourcing of HIEP Secretariat and opportunity cost of not increasing it.
- Build the virtual team's understanding of the HIEP theory of change, including how individual projects contribute to the overall outcomes (see Figure 3 in Section 6).

6. Impact

Evaluation question 4: What contributions has HIEP made to building and sustaining evidence-aware policy and practice by humanitarian organisations?

Key findings: *There is a strong alignment between the aims and theories of change of individual HIEP projects and the overall HIES and HIEP theory of change. However, there is not yet a strategy for how project results and HIEP activities at the programme level will work together to maximise the potential collective impact. The theory of change describes the assumptions that projects will create a ripple effect to bring about change and that change will be supported by DFID's influence as a respected humanitarian donor, investor and actor to attract others to change policies, investments and operations. This effect needs to be sufficient to overcome barriers detailed in HIES and the theory of change such as organisational resistance to change. Evidence suggests that with adequate resourcing and planning at least up to 2018 there is potential to achieve some progress in relation to all three outcomes in the theory of change. However, there is a need for clearer articulation, and greater analysis of and planning for the specific contexts in which DFID aims to bring about change.*

This section considers the strength of HIEP strategies for achieving impact. As outlined in the inception report for the purpose of this evaluation, “impact” will be taken to mean change at the level of the three HIEP outcomes. Given the early stage of the programme, the analysis at the level of the eight case studies focused on the clarity with which anticipated change has been articulated. The formative phase We considered the strength and challenges of the strategies that are in place to achieve each of the three outcomes.

6.1 Findings

6.1.1 Extent to which HIEP has articulated what change will look like in DFID and key organisations/targets

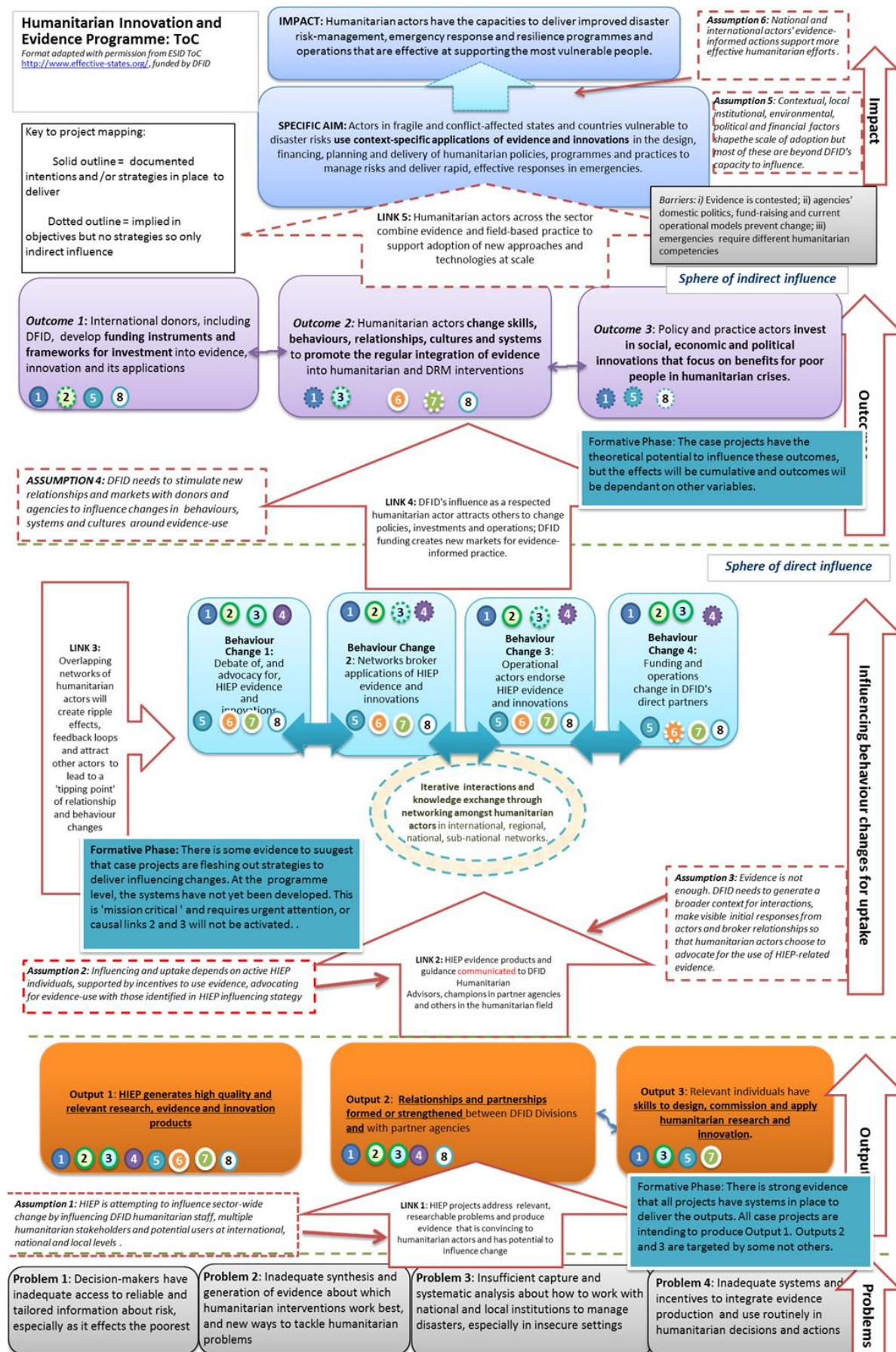
HIEP aims to bring about change in the humanitarian system. The impact, aim and outcomes are currently very broadly defined in the HIEP theory of change and logframe. The HIEP logframe, which has indicators at the outcome level, is not yet populated with either a baseline or targets. The draft revised HIEP strategy presents the HIEP vision but does not detail specific targets for this phase of HIEP to 2018. Thus, the programme's level of ambition and specific targets for change by 2018 are not clear.

6.1.2 Extent to which HIEP has developed plans to achieve outcomes

The evaluation undertook an analysis of case studies' own individual theories of change. This was important, given that many projects had been developed and begun before the HIEP theory of change was established. The analysis shows a strong alignment in plans and thinking at the project level with the HIEP aims and theory of change. This is illustrated in Figure 3, which summarises a mapping of the HIEP case studies against the HIEP theory of change and shows where each case study plan matches the HIEP overall plan to produce outputs and changes.

Each case study was considered against the theory of change. By review of the existing documentation and through interviews it was possible to identify where there is a match between the case study plans and the HIEP overall theory of change. The mapping indicates which case studies are aligned with which outcomes in the theory of change. Interviews found clear thinking among most of the HIEP virtual team about the long-term nature of the process to bring about change at the outcome level. However, planning for influencing change at the project level so far only runs up to 2016. While this time period is sufficient to produce the planned evidence outputs and to support initial debate and advocacy around research findings, there is currently no documented plan for how evidence will be promoted beyond this point. It is recommended that this issue be addressed in the HIEP programme-level influencing strategy that is being developed.

Figure 3. Theory of change with HIEP case studies and strategies mapped against it



Below, each outcome is discussed in turn. The current situation in relation to each outcome is considered, providing some qualitative data to complement the planned quantitative baseline the HIEP Secretariat will establish in the logframe and the strategy and progress in relation to each outcome is then discussed.

Outcome 1: *International donors develop funding instruments and frameworks for investment into humanitarian and DRM evidence, innovation and its applications (e.g. longer-term funding instruments to support capacity strengthening of national and local-level research, technical and practitioner communities).*

a) Current situation

There is no clear baseline for current funding of investment into humanitarian and DRM evidence, innovation and its applications. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that DFID is one of the very few donors making significant investment into this area. Other examples identified by the evaluation team include Sida, which is reported to be developing a strategy on research and innovation and OECD-DAC (though not a donor), which invests in humanitarian research to improve donor-funding practice. External stakeholders consistently praised DFID's investment in this area and identified HIEP as necessary and significant.

b) HIEP strategy and plans

The HIEP theory of change makes it clear that coherent and convincing products are necessary to attract other donors to support evidence-informed operational approaches and systems. All case studies found evidence of plans to produce such products.

HIEP is increasing investment into evidence and innovation in a number of ways. Some projects directly aim to increase funding for the production and application of evidence (e.g. CS1 in Pakistan seeks to increase investment into the production and use of risk information). Co-financing is another strategy being used to increase investment into humanitarian evidence. The CS3 on R2HC is a good example of this with co-financing coming from the Wellcome Trust.

Similar examples include CS7, where co-financing comes from the Swedish and Canadian governments, and a project (not a case study) where there is ESRC investment into HIEP research to understand urban risks in Africa. This last project aims to support decision-makers with evidence to better target their investments. DFID has also sought to build links with key donors such as ECHO, e.g. on approaches to cash-based responses (CS2). Finally, HIEP projects establish new structures such as the HIF to which donors can directly contribute. Thus, products and some relationships important to achieving Outcome 1 are being developed.

At this stage, it is unclear whether these donors will go on to invest in evidence generation and innovation outside of these specific projects, and develop funding instruments and frameworks as envisaged by the outcome statement. Moreover, it seems likely that DFID will need to engage with donors over and above the HIEP-funded projects in order to deliver the outcome of increased investment in evidence generation and application, and in innovation. It will be important to explore these factors in the summative phases of the evaluation.

In terms of HIEP's engagement with other donors, practice has been ad hoc and largely opportunistic. DFID is prioritising engagement in the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, which will certainly be an opportunity to encourage donors to increase their investment in evidence and innovation, particularly as innovation is a theme for the summit, though it will also be a crowded marketplace of agendas.

Overall, some of building blocks to achieve Outcome 1 are in place (e.g. relationships with some key donors and new products for investment such as HIF). However, the overall strategy and level of ambition for this outcome is not clear. It is anticipated this will be detailed in the HIEP influencing strategy and the evaluation will follow this in future phases.

Outcome 2: *Local, national and international humanitarian actors show changes in skills, behaviours, relationships, cultures and systems to promote the regular integration of evidence in the debating, design, financing, planning and implementation of humanitarian and DRM interventions.*

a) Current situation

A recent survey on evidence use in DFID, a target for Outcome 2, provides valuable baseline data for DFID's current integration of evidence.¹⁶ A key finding was that good professional incentives are in place to use evidence (e.g. business cases have higher evidence demands once over £40 million). Staff also rated their skills to find and appraise evidence as intermediate or advanced and noted that the biggest barriers to using evidence are finding it easily and having enough time to consider it. Troublingly, there were inconsistent views regarding whether evidence has a positive impact on programmes. This could be a major barrier to increasing evidence use. Other barriers to evidence use included political considerations and pressures to spend.

External stakeholders confirmed much of the HIES analysis of current use and obstacles to the regular integration of evidence into humanitarian interventions. They highlighted the importance of political economic analysis to understand blockages to evidence use in particular sectors, organisations or countries. The issue of the capacity at the national level in government and NGOs to use evidence was also raised. Interviewees also highlighted the increasing risk aversion in humanitarian operational organisations and the challenge of engaging senior-level personnel in the issue of evidence use. An interesting point made by a number of senior operational managers interviewed was that at times of humanitarian crisis they want access to people with knowledge rather than documentation.

The evaluation also identified a number of initiatives at the organisational level with complementary aims to HIEP (i.e. to build evidence and its application in decision-making). Examples include Oxfam's development of a strategic aim to be a "Thought Leader" in areas of humanitarian response where it has expertise; Save the Children's UK Monitoring, Effectiveness, Accountability and Learning Unit, which aims to promote use of evidence; and IFRC training programmes to build skills and competencies of staff and volunteers through a number of professional development programmes, including certified courses linked with academic institutions. Leaders of these initiatives are potential natural allies for HIEP.

b) HIEP strategy and plans

All the case studies confirmed that projects plan not only to produce evidence, but also to support the uptake of the specific evidence they produce. Projects are employing a range of strategies to influence behaviours (e.g. co-production (CS3), capacity building (CS1) and wide stakeholder engagement (CS6)). Strategies to achieve change are based to a large extent on stakeholder engagement in projects. However, in some cases the evaluation found a sense of powerlessness among DFID staff to bring about change where there is known institutional resistance to change (e.g. to increase cash-based responses in some international organisations).

At this stage HIEP engagement is focused primarily on international actors, with some exceptions (e.g. CS1). As mentioned previously in Section 3, key challenges for the future include how HIEP can deepen its engagement with regional and country-level stakeholders, increasingly important actors in humanitarian crises.

At the programme level, DFID is promoting messages supporting integration of evidence through participation in key fora such as the World Humanitarian Summit. Recent presentations have also been made at events organised by ALNAP and the University of Manchester. The HIEP Secretariat is trying to build

¹⁶ DFID Evidence Survey, produced by Evidence into Action team, November 2013.

collective commitment among DFID humanitarian advisers to promote some key messages about the importance of evidence in humanitarian decision-making; however, this is at an early stage as the programme awaits more evidence to be produced through the HIEP projects. The absence of a communication budget for HIEP at the programme level is problematic as this will limit the extent of external communication around HIEP progress, findings or messages that is possible.

There are opportunities being taken to influence decision-making in DFID. The Head of HIEP, for instance, has participated in key decision-making fora such as the Board overseeing the DFID's Syria response. HIEP Secretariat's engagement with humanitarian advisers at their annual professional development meeting, as well as through regular virtual meetings, have also provided important opportunities to engage them in HIEP. These positive steps aside, at this stage there do not appear to be any specific plans in place to address the key challenge highlighted by DFID's own survey of lack of time to find, absorb and apply new evidence.

Overall, some of the key building blocks are in place to achieve Outcome 2. In particular, there are plans to address relevant evidence gaps, enable key stakeholder engagement and develop key partnerships to support the uptake of specific HIEP-produced evidence. However, strategies for ensuring behaviour changes, addressing barriers to evidence use, providing incentives and promoting the **regular integration of evidence** with relevant changes in behaviour, culture and skills are undeveloped at this stage. These are beyond the scope of any individual project and require additional inputs from HIEP at the programme level.

Outcome 3: *Local, national and international actors show changes in behaviours to invest in social, economic and political innovations that focus on benefits for poor people in humanitarian crises, and in broader risk-reduction efforts.*

a) Current situation

Innovation is an area receiving increased attention in the humanitarian sector. The innovation literature¹⁷ and our stakeholder interviewees highlight certain conditions that are needed to enable innovation: firstly, innovation is context-specific and is often locally driven in response to local problems; secondly, innovation usually involves a reconfiguration of relationships and linkages between actors; and thirdly, for investment in innovation private investors need to see the business opportunities in innovation and its application, and public investors need to see the overwhelming social benefit opportunities.

External stakeholders highlighted current gaps that are slowing innovation in the sector. These include the lack of systematic monitoring to capture evidence and learning; lack of standardised approaches to test innovations and produce evidence of effectiveness; limited promotion of results across the humanitarian system; limited brokering of partnerships to develop innovations, especially with private-sector actors; and the lack of funding and technical assistance for second-stage development and beyond. These are some of the crucial elements of an "innovation system" for humanitarian innovation, which has not yet emerged.

b) HIEP strategy and plans

All HIEP projects are expected to produce research findings and evidence that are highly relevant to policy and operations. They are all, to some degree, therefore intended to inform operational practices in the sector, all of which could include innovations in practices, approaches and technologies. However, a mapping of the case study projects against the HIEP theory of change illustrates that, at this formative stage, only CS1, 5, 8 – those explicitly tackling innovation – are intending to influence Outcome 3 of the HIEP, and of these the HIF (CS5) has the most developed plans in place to achieve Outcome 3.

¹⁷ See, for example, Research into Use Learning Outputs (<http://researchintouse.com/learning/learning20final.html>).

There is strong evidence to suggest that, for the innovation projects, there are strategies in place to meet the requirements to produce innovation-related outputs that are coherent, of high quality, highly likely to be innovative and convincing to sector stakeholders. There is strong evidence that the building blocks of Assumption 1 are in place – *engaging DFID humanitarian policy and operational staff, multiple humanitarian stakeholders and potential users at international, national and local levels from the start of the research process (see Figure 3)*. Stakeholder engagement seems strongest at the international level.

Apart from the specific Pakistan project, there is a weakness in terms of engagement of stakeholders at regional, national and local levels. This weakness, if not addressed, will start to activate one of the barriers: insufficient engagement of stakeholders in target locations. In terms of strategies, the innovation-related case studies have highlighted a weakness across the board in strategies for outreach. This includes the need for further support for the promotion and brokering of wider relationships with non-traditional actors, the private sector and through to would-be innovators and investors in national and regional settings. The reach of stakeholder networks is something that future stages of the evaluation should assess.

There is some evidence to suggest that HIEP’s message of “innovation with evidence” could become a foundation of the emerging humanitarian innovation system agenda if DFID is able to influence through the emerging “innovation cluster” of projects in HIEP and the World Humanitarian Summit process where DFID is already engaged. The HIEP Secretariat is meeting with other donors and agencies that are interested in innovation and developing a strategic and systems innovation agenda for the World Humanitarian Summit. Concrete activities to date include a DFID-convened workshop with OCHA last year.

In response to a number of separate initiatives to establish innovation hubs, the meeting aimed to build a more coordinated view. WFP, UNHCR, ECHO and UNICEF have held follow-on meetings with an expanding group, and a cluster of interested donors and agencies is beginning to emerge after three meetings. “Transformation through innovation” is one of the themes for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, so this will be a major opportunity for DFID and others to shape investment in innovation in coming decades.

Part of the emerging agenda within the group DFID is meeting with is to share learning on what investment in innovation would look like at a humanitarian system level and identify a small number of issues that investors in humanitarian innovation could cluster around to build more momentum. These would need to consider the key elements of an innovation system, i.e. the value chain, the ability to innovate, the ability to pay for potential innovations, the operational capacity of the public sector to implement innovations and the architecture of the potential commercial market (infrastructure, credit, regulation, stability). All of these shape the take-up of new technologies or innovative processes.¹⁸ DFID can play a key role to encourage and support the development of an “innovation system”.

The parameters of HIEP’s ambition at the programme level have not yet been defined in relation to Outcome 3. Analysis of HIEP’s activities, plans and strategy found there is evidence at this stage that work is underway to establish many of the conditions necessary to achieve some success in relation to Outcome 3. There is a strong alignment with the HIEP theory of change, but while DFID is playing an important role in furthering the innovation agenda in the humanitarian sector, significant challenges lie ahead that DFID will need to take into account for future planning to achieve HIEP Outcome 3.

¹⁸ ‘Evidence review – Environmental Innovation Prizes for Development,’ Bryony Everett.
<http://www.dewpoint.org.uk/Asset%20Library/Your%20Files/A0405%20Evidence%20Review%20Environmental%20Innovation%20Prizes%20for%20Development%20FINAL%20for%20web.pdf>

6.1.3 Extent to which HIEP plans to build capacity in Southern actors, to be able to access funding for research and also to support, produce and apply evidence and innovation

The impact of HIEP on Southern actors is important. A number of the HIEP logframe output indicators relate to Southern-led research and capacity building of Southern organisations. HIEP Business Case 3 refers to the intention to build Southern capacity to produce and use evidence. The growing importance of country-based humanitarian actors means their capacity to apply evidence and innovation is vital for HIEP eventual impact on operations and vulnerability.

Case studies found some limited evidence of plans in HIEP to build capacity of Southern actors. CS1 has a clear capacity-building remit for Pakistan stakeholders to use risk data, and the project being implemented in CS3 is introducing measures to support Southern organisations to submit bids. Other projects may have indirect capacity-building benefits (e.g. a number of projects are engaging with Southern partners as part of the research processes).

In the case of CS5, while HIF is not addressing Southern capacity building directly, it is encouraging Northern NGOs to partner with Southern organisations, and it has a small budget line to help support the development of an idea to proposal stage (the £250,000 innovations venture fund). The case studies found that most project teams see capacity building as outside of their remit and not a specific result they anticipate delivering or being judged against. These findings support the Annual Review of Business Case 3, which scored this output (1.4 of Business Case 3) a C (outputs substantially did not meet expectations).

Perhaps in recognition of these gaps, a major new HIEP initiative is being scoped, and a concept note was presented to the Management Committee in April 2014 to look at humanitarian evidence systems strengthening and capacity building at a regional and national level in East Africa and South Asia. An initial budget of £200,000 has been identified for the scoping. The paper proposes beginning with a scoping of research capacity gaps including evidence generation and use. This includes consideration of incentive structures and the political and regulatory context in which research is undertaken and, importantly, *used* by decision makers.

This initiative is a promising development in HIEP and should support the development of strategies to achieve change at the country and regional levels in East Africa and South Asia. As findings emerge from the study a full proposal will be presented to HIEP in early 2015.

DFID (CHASE) investment into the Humanitarian and Leadership Academy is another channel through which DFID will seek to build Southern-based capacity to use evidence. While outside the funding remit of the HIEP, programme engagement with this channel is an avenue the evaluation will continue to consider.

6.2 Strengths and challenges

6.2.1 Strengths

The evaluation has indicated a number of strengths in HIEP's current strategy for achieving impact: first, there is a strong alignment between project aims and theories of change and the overall HIES and HIEP theory of change. Second, evidence suggests that with adequate resourcing and planning, at least up to 2018, there is potential to achieve some progress in relation to all three HIEP outcomes if the appropriate plans and resources are put in place.

6.2.2 Challenges

A number of challenges face HIEP in achieving impact, notable among these is that there is not yet a clear articulation of the level of ambition of the HIEP outcomes (e.g. targets for 2018) nor strategy for how project- and programme-level activities will work together. The assumption in the HIEP theory of change is

that projects will create a ripple effect to bring about change, and that change will in turn be supported by DFID's influence as a respected humanitarian donor, investor and actor to attract others to change policies, investments and operations. Based on the available evidence, it is unclear whether the current strategy is detailed enough to overcome the likely significant barriers to evidence use within organisations. As such, there is a need for clearer articulation, greater analysis of and planning for the specific contexts in which DFID aims to see change.

6.3 Implications for summative evaluation

The detailed summative evaluation methodology will need to take account of the influencing strategy of DFID at the programme level and any more specific targets for outcomes that DFID develops, as recommended here.

6.4 Recommendations

- Establish time-bound targets and influencing priorities for each of the HIEP outcomes. This should include identifying the contexts (key organisations and countries) in which HIEP as a whole intends to achieve change. HIEP should analyse blockages to change in these contexts and develop plans articulating DFID's contribution to overcoming them. Strategies may include linking with potential allies already involved in building organisations' commitment to evidence and innovation.
- Support the development of a humanitarian "innovation system". This would include development of strategies for outreach, promotion and brokering of wider relationships with non-traditional actors, the private sector and through to would-be innovators and investors in national and regional settings, coordination in the system to support a humanitarian "innovations system" and a pathway from proof of concept to scaling up and mentoring to organisations to develop second-stage financing.

7. Gender and social inclusion

There is a good focus on gender and social inclusion in DFID documentation. This includes the emphasis on engagement with affected communities, commitment to disaggregated data and development of a mixed portfolio of targeted research and activities that address specific issues affecting women and girls in humanitarian crises. However, a lack of guidance to HIEP project teams and monitoring of gender and social inclusion have resulted in inconsistent approaches. Further review by DFID internally is necessary to ensure ability to meet accountability and transparency commitments.

The evaluation assesses the extent to which, and how, HIEP addresses gender and social inclusion issues. There was not a specific gender and social inclusion evaluation question, but rather it is integrated across the evaluation in the judgement criteria and indicators for each evaluation question. This section synthesises the findings from across the programme by assessing the extent to which HIEP projects:

- Considered how the gendered interests of all groups, including marginalised groups, are to be addressed in all aspects and stages of the research; and
- Ensured the intended research outputs addressed the differentiated interests of men, women and marginalised groups and were supported by HIEP policies, systems and processes applied by HIEP.

Given that this section is not directly addressing an evaluation question, it follows a slightly different structure from the previous four sections. Firstly, it discusses the strengths of the approaches being taken to gender and social inclusion across HIEP, then the challenges and areas for development. It concludes with recommendations on how HIEP's approach to gender and social inclusion can be strengthened.

In the formative phase the term gender and social inclusion has replaced the term gender and diversity used in the inception phase. This is done to ensure consistency with DFID's policy frameworks on gender and social inclusion issues wherein the term gender and social inclusion is more typically used. The underlying concepts and framework of analysis remain the same.

7.1 Key findings: strengths

HIEP's strategy has a broad statement of the importance of age and sex-aggregated data to guide and better target humanitarian interventions. The draft Strategy Refresh¹⁹ reaffirms that methodologically sex and age disaggregation is essential.²⁰ There is also a statement that, going forward, subsequent drafts of the strategy will ensure that gender features more strongly and clearly.

There is an expectation that projects, where appropriate, will tailor methodologies and develop systems and processes that ensure that research addresses gender and social inclusion (GaSI) issues at all stages. In directly procured research, HIEP follows RED modalities on GaSI, and within procurement gendered criteria are included in the tender assessment, although we did not have access to tender scoring sheets to verify this. Where research is commissioned through partners (e.g. in CS2 and CS5), partners apply their in-house criteria and policies to screen grantees. The head of the HIEP Secretariat stated that DFID chooses highly regarded and professional partners with a track record in ensuring disaggregation of data (e.g. Wellcome Trust).

¹⁹ An updated HIEP strategy was drafted and discussed at the HIEP Management Committee meeting in January 2014. This is being further developed following the discussions.

²⁰ "To provide for age and sex analysis and to inform more appropriately designed and targeted responses" (2014:5).

HIEP has linked into initiatives across DFID that address issues affecting women and girls during humanitarian crises. The draft Strategy Refresh highlights a key concern across DFID to reduce the risks of violence faced by women and girls.²¹ It also picks up on DFID-wide initiatives to put women and girls at the centre of development interventions through specific contracted projects (for example, the proposed work under CS2 R2HC to address sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises). The HIEP Strategy Refresh document highlights the strong need to engage beneficiaries directly involved in disasters and conflict in the systematic collection and use of data to inform decision-making. This directly addresses issues of inclusion.

The programme recognises the challenges of undertaking research in humanitarian contexts and there is evidence that some projects will produce products and learning that could be of benefit to others. For instance, as part of CS3, ELRHA commissioned work to develop an ethnical framework for conducting research in difficult environments, and CS6 has integrated gender considerations into its methodology for work in volatile environments. These have the potential to contribute to better evidence about what works in conducting gender-sensitive and ethical research.

HIEP includes a mixed portfolio of targeted and inclusive research addressing the specific issues affecting women and girls in humanitarian crises (e.g. gender-based violence) and the gaps in understanding differential vulnerabilities to disaster and crises. The Strategy Refresh commits HIEP to commissioning research that addresses the fact that relatively little is known about who is vulnerable to disaster exposure and risk and how, and also how in some cases girls and women may be more vulnerable than boys and men (Strategy Refresh, 18). Together, the evidence generated has the potential to contribute to more effective targeting of interventions aimed at empowering women and combating gender inequalities in humanitarian practice.

7.2 Challenges and areas for development

7.2.1 Lack of guidance to teams and partners

The three HIEP business cases do not directly discuss gender and social inclusion. There was no formal statement from HIEP about gender and social inclusion: why it is relevant to the business case and what HIEP is expecting in terms of gender-sensitive and socially inclusive research. Nor did HIEP make it explicit in its accompanying documentation and guidelines to potential project providers precisely what was expected from them in relation to gender and social inclusion. While DFID has a guidance note on gender mainstreaming and social inclusion in research,²² there was no evidence that proposals were required to use it to inform their proposals.

The ad hoc use of the guidance note is likely to lead to inconsistencies across the HIEP portfolio, since advisers and programme managers are not guided by a clear set of expectations of what is required. Without clear guidelines from HIEP, there can be no guarantee that projects will automatically address gender and social inclusion issues or contribute to portfolio coherence. In project-level interviews some project partners (e.g. in CS3) pointed out that they were not provided with formal guidance on gender and social inclusion. Nor were they asked by DFID to provide formal guidelines on gender and social inclusion in their own first-call tendering documents and guidelines to applicants. Consequently, they did not; resource constraints meant only mandatory requirements were included.

There is a working assumption in DFID that the professionalism of the research providers will ensure that data are disaggregated at the appropriate level and that GaSI issues will be addressed at the level

²¹ DFID, 2011 and draft Strategy Refresh, 2014:18.

²² DFID, 2009.

appropriate to the research focus.²³ However, case studies suggest that there are inconsistent approaches to gender and social inclusion across the project, including in intentions to gather disaggregated data, the extent of gender considerations in the development of methodology, and engagement with affected communities through gender-sensitive approaches. In the absence of consistent approaches, the synthesis and generation of evidence identifying what works in reaching the most vulnerable people – women and other marginalised groups – will not necessarily be robust.

Given the emphasis on disaggregated data, this implies that research providers will need to have in place strategies to engage with all social groups within their intended beneficiary communities, including marginalised and vulnerable women and men. However, there are, as HIEP highlights in its strategy document, particular challenges and ethical concerns in obtaining informed consent from beneficiaries for participation in research in humanitarian contexts. There is potential for learning across HIEP in this area. One source of useful learning could be the R2HC ethical framework being developed in CS3, which is intended to support and help ensure that health research conducted in such crises is ethically sound, by providing guidance and a review process for research protocols and their refinement.

The growing importance highlighted by HIEP and external stakeholders of a greater focus on national actors may have implications for the gender sensitivity needed in communication and stakeholder engagement processes, to ensure open involvement from men and women in different cultures and contexts. In the formative stage, it is not expected that case studies will have considered fully their communication and research uptake strategies. While research uptake and communication strategies are still being drafted, there are opportunities for programmes and projects directly involved in country-level research to: a) address the potential challenges for women and men to access and use research findings; and b) design stakeholder engagement processes that are inclusive and gender-sensitive.

7.2.2 Dealing with challenges in available data

Systematic reviews and other products such as literature reviews are planned products of some HIEP projects, notably CS4. Systematic reviews are a methodology to provide robust and unbiased summaries of the best evidence available on a given question. These use existing evidence and so may face challenges if there is not sufficient existing evidence based on disaggregated data. Strategies to address this potential gap in the data need to be considered in the early stages of the projects.

7.2.3 Strengthening attention to equity within VfM assessments

Within HIEP, all three business cases outlined VfM criteria that the Management Committee will be expected to apply to all individual investments. Across these criteria, none contained any equity-focused questions. Similarly, at the project level, as discussed in Section 4 on the extent to which VfM has been integrated into HIEP, DFID has not provided explicit guidance on how VfM was to be applied at the project level. In the absence of any direction, there is no guarantee that equity considerations will be reflected in the project's approaches to VfM. In future rounds of procurement, DFID should clarify for potential project partners its expectations with regard to the integration of equity in VfM offers.

7.2.4 Monitoring gender and social inclusion across the programme

There are gender-sensitive indicators included in the logframe and, where applicable, outcomes and outputs will be gender-disaggregated. At this stage, HIEP has yet to put in place mechanisms and processes to track the gender and social inclusion dimensions of the portfolio. The Strategy Refresh documentation notes a concern for sex and age disaggregation. However, there is no evidence, as yet, of disaggregation of population and data sets at the programme level.

²³ DFID staff interviews.

It will be particularly difficult for HIEP to track its impact on the capacities of Southern actors to be able to access funds and so on from a GaSI perspective without clear information from projects. It is not clear from the available documentation if project partners, where applicable, were asked to address the gender and social inclusion implications of their work with Southern actors or if this will be tracked in the new initiatives to strengthen humanitarian evidence systems in East Africa and South Asia. This will be considered in the summative phase.

The International Development Gender Equality Act (2014) promotes gender equality within the UK Government in the provision of development and humanitarian assistance. This is likely to have implications for HIEP and its partners, since consideration of gender was not previously a mandatory requirement. The Act will necessitate strengthened accountability and transparency in how HIEP manages the gender dimensions of the portfolio.

7.2.5 Emerging and sharing learning

There are areas that HIEP projects are addressing that may well produce learning useful to capture and share across the programme and possibly externally, for instance on:

- Methodological challenges in integration of GaSI issues in humanitarian research;
- Effective approaches to engaging women and other marginalised groups in research processes; and
- Building capacities to address GaSI in southern institutions.

So far, there is limited evidence that HIEP has linked into broader sector networks or initiatives that directly focus on evidence building around gender and social inclusion issues, such as the UN's IASC Sub-Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action. Linkage with these could be beneficial both for sharing HIEP's learning, such as on the issues suggested above, but also to ensure HIEP is informed by current thinking on gender.

7.3 Recommendations

The findings from the gender and social inclusion assessment suggest that there are a number of factors HIEP may need to consider and steps HIEP can take to strengthen consideration of gender and social inclusion.

- **Develop guidelines for research tenders on how to address equity in VfM assessments.** This should include a formal statement of GaSI expectations that research programmes address identified gendered/diversity knowledge gaps and guidance on what constitutes adequate disaggregated data.
- **Ensure monitoring and follow-up by advisers and programme managers so that that gender and social inclusion analyses appropriate to the research are carried out.** Determining what constitutes adequate disaggregated data and the level of GaSI analyses appropriate to the research focus requires a gender and social inclusion screening of proposed outputs and outcomes in relation to the theory of change at inception. However, this is more appropriate for individual grantees who have yet to produce their inception reports.
- **Support projects in the development of approaches to involve beneficiaries directly involved in disasters and conflict in the systematic collection and use of data to inform decision-making.**
- **Consider gender and social inclusion issues explicitly in communication plans with particular attention to country-level processes.**

- **Build and share learning across the programme on integration of gender and social inclusion considerations.**
- **Undertake an internal review across all of HIEP to ensure alignment with the International Development Gender Equality Act (2014).** Consider:
 - The relevance of approaches and methods and levels of disaggregation;
 - The extent to which programmes are engaging with the ultimate beneficiaries and how they determine the range of different social groups with which to engage;
 - Programmes and projects have strategies in place to address the gender and social inclusion dimensions of their partnerships and networks; and
 - The intended plans for addressing the gendered dimensions of capacity building with Southern actors, where applicable to the programme.

The findings from the review will be useful in three ways. They will:

- Provide essential data for integrating gender and inclusion more strongly and clearly in the refreshed HIEP strategy;
- Establish a baseline from which DFID can track changes in the way programmes and projects adjust or refine their approaches to GaSI over the course of implementation; and
- Inform the 2014 and subsequent annual reviews of HIEP.

8. HIEP theory of change

The HIEP theory of change describes the overall impact to which HIEP seeks to contribute as well as its specific aim and the changes required to ensure that the impact and aim can be achieved.

The theory of change has been revised slightly at the formative phase to reflect the findings of the evaluation. This has mainly focused on clarifying the potential pathways for innovations supported by HIEP, as these were not clearly articulated before. It also clarifies that Behaviour Change 4 is expected to be observed among DFID's direct partners and grantees.

The evaluation team recommends that the HIEP Secretariat read this revised theory of change closely, as it outlines some key considerations in developing strategies for research uptake and for innovation uptake pathways. The full theory of change narrative and diagram is attached as a separate document (Annex 3).

9. Summative phase methodology

This formative evaluation has been an opportunity to test and refine the evaluation methodology detailed in the inception report. The original plan remains valid (e.g. in relation to the analytical framework using the HIEP theory of change and four evaluation questions, case study selection and approach and phasing of two summative evaluation stages).

There are now further details based on analysis of the selected case studies that have been detailed in earlier sections, adjustments to the evaluation matrix and workplan and development of some draft tools (e.g. stakeholder diaries).

Some further work will be needed on this in the 12-18 months between the end of the formative phase and the first summative phase in light of products still to be produced by HIEP, particularly the HIEP influencing strategy, populated logframe and some project plans and research uptake strategies. The final details of the methodology will be developed by July 2015.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations are grouped into five key areas and order of priority. The recommendations detail who is anticipated to act on them and the recommended time frame. Following the overall programme recommendations, there are also individual case study recommendations.

10.1 Programme-level conclusions and recommendations

10.1.1 Clarify HIEP's level of ambition in relation to transformative change in the sector

HIEP is addressing key problems relevant to improving humanitarian policy and programmes. There has been a robust process to identify and design HIEP projects, which has included substantial engagement with many key stakeholders, including potential users of HIEP outputs. There are solid plans in place to produce relevant, high-quality evidence, and in some projects the key relationships with external stakeholders needed to support uptake of evidence have already been established. Good inter-departmental relationships in DFID have been established, e.g. through cross-departmental representation on selection and advisory groups.

There is strong support from external stakeholders for the focus areas in which HIEP is building evidence and supports change, e.g. health in emergencies, disaster risk reduction and cash-based responses as well as support to innovation, which is seen as pioneering. These focus areas also correlate strongly with gaps identified by the HERR. The planned outputs provide a strong foundation for potential future HIEP success.

There is strong alignment between the aims, plans and theories of change of individual HIEP projects and the overall programme theory of change. There is evidence of plans being developed at the project level to engage with networks and “evidence brokers” to ensure evidence is advocated for, debated and also endorsed by operational actors. Relationships with other relevant initiatives are being developed. These are most strongly established at the international level at this early stage in the programme and should provide strong support to these stakeholders using the evidence generated by individual HIEP projects.

HIEP outcomes as defined in the theory of change are extremely ambitious. They go beyond the uptake of specific evidence produced by HIEP projects and aim to achieve transformative change in the sector. The ambitions of the HIEP programme go beyond the scope and capacity of individual projects. The programme outcomes describe change in how international and national humanitarian actors, including donors and operational organisations, support and routinely use evidence and innovation.

The evaluation found that some of the stepping stones necessary to achieve the outcomes are in place (e.g. in some key relationships at the international level, such as those with donors supportive to innovation, and in DFID's systems in place to produce relevant, robust evidence). But so far, plans to achieve change at the outcome level, which aim to support the routine use of evidence and increase funding for evidence and support to innovation, are undeveloped.

The focus and parameters of HIEP ambition up to 2018 are not yet defined, e.g. with specific time-bound targets for the programme or focus areas for where the programme as a whole seeks to achieve change, be it within specific geographical locations, sectors or institutions. An influencing strategy for HIEP planned for early 2014 was just being developed during the formative evaluation stage, which may address some of these issues. There is a need to clarify the level of ambition of the programme – be it transformative change or limited to specific research uptake in the sector.

A consistent concern raised by external stakeholders and by some directly involved in HIEP was of the challenge to overcome organisational resistance to change (i.e. the political economy of evidence use and innovation support). This is an issue explicitly referenced in the HIES and captured in the HIEP theory of change. The HIEP virtual team is aware of some of the barriers to overcome the regular uptake of and support for evidence and innovation. However, there is limited documented analysis of these obstacles in more specific

contexts and strategies for how DFID's influence as a donor and humanitarian actor and will be used at the strategic level. The influencing strategy will need to address this.

Recommendation 1: The HIEP Secretariat and Management Committee should clarify the level of HIEP's ambition in relation to transformation and change in the sector (i.e. at the outcome level) so plans, strategies and resourcing can be developed accordingly.

- ⇒ The HIEP Secretariat should urgently **complete the HIEP influencing strategy, which needs to articulate clear priorities** for where HIEP aims to contribute to change (e.g. geographical or institutional focus areas). It should include analysis of the potential obstacles in these specific contexts and ways to overcome them and use the development of priorities and targets as an opportunity to build a shared view of the overall aim of HIEP and the extent of the programme's ambition to achieve change. The Secretariat could also use the strategy development process to consider how to link with potential allies of HIEP (e.g. departments within organisations that support the greater use of evidence in decision-making) and ensure they are aware of HIEP activities and how they can engage with the programme.
- ⇒ Sustain and develop DFID's approach to **support coordination in the humanitarian system to develop a humanitarian "innovations system"**. This includes continuing to see ways to support innovations from proof of concept to scaling-up.

The Management Committee should review and endorse or amend the HIEP influencing strategy **before the end of 2014**.

10.1.2 Resourcing HIEP

The overall investment DFID is making into evidence and innovation addresses a significant gap. The evaluation found strong support among external stakeholders for DFID's substantial investment into this area of work. HIEP is a timely initiative with interest in innovation and an emphasis on evidence growing in the sector. Key opportunities for influence, such as the World Humanitarian Summit, are upcoming and DFID is linked to these.

Project plans and resourcing to support the use of HIEP-generated evidence and innovation are being put in place, with research uptake strategies being developed during the formative phase. However, these plans tend to be only up to the end of partners' contracts, usually around 2016. Further support for evidence uptake is likely to be needed beyond this point, particularly as many of HIEP's evidence products may only be finalised at this time.

HIEP resourcing is currently focused on the production and synthesis of evidence rather than investment into bringing about change in the system to make it more routinely supported and used, which is its stated aim. A consistent theme in external stakeholders' feedback on HIEP questioned the balance between investment in the production and synthesis of evidence and the focus on how to bring about change in the sector's relationship to evidence and innovation. The current allocation of programme resourcing indicates a more modest ambition to ensure HIEP invests in areas where evidence is needed and to support the use of specific evidence and innovation products.

Capacity at programme level (i.e. the HIEP Secretariat) is stretched and this may limit the potential impact of HIEP. The Secretariat fulfils a range of roles, including: the day-to-day management of the programme; building a three-departmental way of working; developing and galvanising the HIEP virtual team; influencing and communication roles within and outside of DFID; and building strategic relationship externally to support HIEP's aims. The Secretariat plays a key role in supporting HIEP to achieve more than the individual project results.

Current capacity within the HIEP Secretariat (the equivalent of just over two full-time positions) is extremely effective given its limited resources, but also significantly stretched. Based on the current evidence, it will struggle to deliver on the range of its roles.

Existing evidence raises serious questions relating to the sufficiency of resourcing for research uptake and wider influencing to achieve HIEP's potential.

Recommendation 2: Before the end of 2014, the Management Committee should review the overall balance of how resources are being allocated to and within HIEP, and make adjustments taking into account decisions made in relation to Recommendation 1 and the level of ambition of HIEP. In particular:

- Review the balance and levels of resourcing for HIEP over and above the production and synthesis of evidence. Consider the extent of HIEP resourcing, which addresses Problem 4 of the HIEP theory of change relating to incentives to use evidence.
- Consider extending the time period for resourcing research uptake activities beyond the current partner contracts and articulate DFID's own planned and needed resources for its role in this work.
- Consider ways to increase the resourcing of the HIEP Secretariat to ensure it has adequate capacity to support its programme management, communication and strategic-level influencing roles.

10.1.3 Galvanising the collective power of the HIEP virtual team

The inter-departmental design of HIEP is proving to be an effective structure to bring together expertise and perspectives from across DFID. This cross-departmental team and way of working is supported by all those interviewed in this evaluation. It is seen as an extremely positive approach that is contributing to establishing a highly relevant evidence agenda. The HIEP virtual team is a potentially influential cross-departmental platform to support HIEP within and outside of DFID.

While some administrative systems do not make such cross-departmental ways of working easy, the Secretariat has done a good job in establishing a potentially powerful platform to build learning and to progress the HIEP strategy. However, so far this virtual team has not been fully developed (e.g. with collective plans or consideration of common focus countries and stakeholders). HIEP virtual team members do not usually consider themselves as part of a collective group working towards common aims. There is also patchy knowledge of the programme's theory of change. More input by the HIEP Secretariat will be needed to develop the potential of this group.

Recommendation 3: By December 2014, the HIEP Secretariat should develop a plan and identify the resources needed to support the development of the strategic role of the virtual team. This should include:

- Events to promote understanding of the HIEP theory of change across the virtual team, including project teams and the Management Committee. Ensure all project teams have an understanding of how the individual projects relate and contribute to HIEP aims and outcomes.
- Training and learning events for DFID staff to build skills and, where appropriate, bringing in partners to share experiences and early results with DFID staff.
- The establishment of systematic processes to scan the external environment for opportunities for HIEP investment and influence, both at the project and programme levels, by the HIEP virtual team and humanitarian cadre and other advisers.
- Establishment of administrative systems to support the virtual team (e.g. record attendance, agenda and main points of discussion at virtual team meetings).

10.1.4 Monitoring HIEP

HIEP has established some processes and structures for monitoring HIEP (e.g. regular Management Committee meetings, partner project reporting and annual reviews). However, some of the basic tools for monitoring HIEP at the project and programme levels are still not in place (e.g. populated logframe, consistent indicators across HIEP projects and the programme overall to track economy and efficiency).

Furthermore, much of the data collection on activities and any emerging results are being collected by DFID's project partners. There is limited systematic data collection taking place at the programme level. There are not currently plans for how data on results will be collected after partner contracts end, which for many of the projects is in 2016. Given that many of the HIEP results are likely to be evident only after that time period, particularly because many evidence products will only be produced in 2016, current monitoring systems will not capture the results of HIEP. Finally, the inputs of DFID staff to support change are not captured systematically.

Recommendation 4: By December 2014, the Secretariat and Management Committee should put in place systems to monitor HIEP more effectively. This includes:

- Completing as soon as possible of the populated logframe with targets and baselines.
- Linking the logframe outputs and outcomes to resources to be able better to assess VfM (i.e. to know the cost of achieving results).
- Establishing a system to track economy and efficiency with, for instance, monitoring against key cost drivers and efficiency tracking against key milestones and indicators at both the project and programme levels.
- Ensuring plans are in place for the collection of results' data beyond the timespan of partner contracts and that capture the inputs of DFID staff at the programme level (e.g. stakeholder diaries).

10.1.5 Achieving change through national and regional stakeholders in humanitarian contexts

HIEP's strategy for change includes direct engagement of stakeholders with HIEP projects and/or ideas. So far, HIEP has developed good relationships with key stakeholders, particularly at the international level. Partners have been carefully selected and bring something substantial to the programme (e.g. networks of implementing partners (IFRC), research management skills (Wellcome Trust) and influence in the sector (GFDRR)).

Increasingly, the key actors in humanitarian response are national actors. These have been less connected to HIEP, so far. To be successful, HIEP needs to increase engagement with key actors at the regional and country levels by building strong links to ensure its relevance to them, their engagement in its processes and to be informed by their perspectives. In 2014-15, HIEP should build a strategy for country- and regional-level engagement.

Recommendation 5: By the first quarter of 2015, the HIEP Secretariat should develop a strategy for HIEP engagement with regional and country stakeholders. Consider the establishment of an external stakeholder advisory group for the programme, which includes regionally- and country-based members (e.g. from regional organisations such as ASEAN or CDEMA and national organisations including National Disaster Management Agencies). The HIEP Management Committee should consider this by February 2015.

10.1.6 HIEP's approach to gender and social inclusion

DFID documentation on gender and social inclusion shows a strong commitment to it in HIEP. HIEP has linked to initiatives across DFID that address issues affecting women and girls during humanitarian crises. The draft Strategy Refresh highlights a key concern across DFID to reduce the risks of violence faced by women and girls. HIEP includes a mixed portfolio of targeted and inclusive research addressing the specific issues affecting women and girls in humanitarian crises (e.g. gender-based violence).

HIEP has the potential to make an extremely valuable contribution to the sector in this challenging area, both through products of HIEP and by increasing understanding of how to undertake gender-sensitive research in challenging contexts.

However, there is a lack of guidance for partners, which means that gender and social inclusion are not consistently addressed across the programme. Equity is inconsistently considered in procurement processes. This may weaken the robustness of some evidence (e.g. due to lack of collection of disaggregated data) and effectiveness of the programme.

Recommendation 6: By the end of 2014 the Secretariat should develop a plan to strengthen HIEP's approach to implementing its commitments to gender and social inclusion. This includes:

- Developing guidelines for research tenders on how to address equity in VfM assessments.
- Supporting projects in the development of approaches to involve beneficiaries directly involved in disasters and conflict in the systematic collection and use of data to inform decisions.
- Consider gender and social inclusion issues explicitly in communication plans with particular attention to country-level processes.
- Undertake an internal review across all of HIEP to ensure alignment with the International Development Gender Equality Act (2014), which may have implications for HIEP and its partners.

10.1.7 Ensure learning from HIEP is gathered and shared

HIEP projects and programme are developing innovative approaches to evidence and innovation in humanitarian contexts. There is strong interest in the programme and in how it is resolving some of the issues and challenges that confront both the production of evidence in humanitarian contexts and bringing about change (e.g. ethical issues around community participation in research in conflict areas).

There are natural allies for HIEP in a number of organisations of people not necessarily involved directly in evidence production and support for innovation themselves, but supporting their organisation's commitment to it. There is room for much greater linkage with these.

Recommendation 7: By the end of the first quarter 2015, the HIEP Secretariat should develop a strategy to ensure learning from HIEP is captured and shared across the HIEP virtual team, partners and externally in key subjects. Possible areas of learning for consideration include:

- Methodological challenges in integration of gender and social inclusion issues in humanitarian research.
- Ethics in humanitarian research (CS3).

10.2 Case study-level recommendations

Table 7 below outlines the recommendations for each of the eight case studies. More detailed recommendations are included in the case study reports (Annex 2). The case study recommendations target the lead advisers and HIEP Secretariat. They are also relevant to project partners. They are for action by end of 2014.

Table 7. Summary of case study findings: key recommendations

Name and number of case study	Key recommendations
CS1. Improving the Application of Risk Modelling for Disaster Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify how lessons will be transferred to other countries. Clarify resourcing for four additional countries beyond Pakistan. Develop approaches for the collection and analysis of gender and disaggregated data. Consider how the project findings may affect DFID's own practice.
CS2. Expanding the use of cash transfers in emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase attention to the practical reasons why cash has not been taken up at a larger scale, including consideration of the political economy around cash programming and incentives. Build a strategy, potentially together with others, to support change in the skills and systems of key aid agencies to shift to larger-scale use of cash-based approaches. Ensure projects go beyond "the usual suspects" particularly to build engagement at the country and regional levels.
CS3. Research for health in humanitarian crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the communication and research uptake strategy, particularly in light of the wide range of types of problems being addressed by the project and research being supported.
CS4. Humanitarian Evidence Synthesis and Communication (HESC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaborate clearly in the inception phase how the project will engage key stakeholders to support the use of products, particularly in the South. Clarify processes to link evidence products the project plans will produce (e.g. systematic reviews) with initiatives within and outside of HIEP that build demand for evidence and integration in other processes (e.g. training and professional development for humanitarian workers).
CS5. Innovation: testing to proof of concept (Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop HIF as a holistic innovation mechanism, with more strategies and resources dedicated to the development and diffusion of "proof of concept" innovations. Consider increasing resourcing for HIF brokering, leadership and convening roles. Develop approaches to engage and support "non-traditional partnerships", including with the private sector and Southern actors.
CS6. Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plans for stakeholder engagement beyond those directly involved in the project at the international and national levels. Develop plans for research uptake and supporting organisational change beyond 2016. Ensure the project considers the organisational and political factors affecting access, as well as the "technical" aspects relating to different methods of delivery of assistance.
CS7. Strategic research into National and Local Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify plans for supporting medium- and longer-term research uptake and change beyond the timespan of the project or partner contract. Consider a structured process of reflection on the theory of change during the project.
CS8. Resilience Thematic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure wide stakeholder engagement in the project during the inception phase. Pay close attention to the production of context-specific learning and how-to-build learning that can be transferred to other contexts and organisations.

10.3 Evaluation – next steps

This formative evaluation is the first of three evaluations of HIEP that will be conducted. It has provided the means to:

- Make initial assessments of strengths and weaknesses of HIEP design and implementation to date;
- Make recommendations on HIEP design to facilitate learning within the HIEP virtual team; and
- Provide a foundation for the summative stages of the evaluation.

Specifically on the last bullet point, this evaluation has enabled the team to:

- Review the feasibility and suitability of the case study selection;
- Refine the summative phase methodology;
- Identify in greater detail the HIEP case study models that will support comparison and learning in relation to the evaluation questions on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact; and
- Develop draft tools for HIEP to track stakeholder engagement (stakeholder engagement diaries).

The next phases of the evaluation will be summative in nature. A workplan has been developed for these two future phases, which will take place in 2015-16 and 2017-18. This will be reviewed and refined over the course of the next 12-18 months during “check-in and update meetings” between the team, HIEP and projects to take into account developments at the case study and programme levels.