DFID Management Response to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recommendations on:

How DFID Learns, April 2014

ICAI Recommendation	Accept/Partially Accept/Reject	Action already taken	Action to be taken	Target date
Recommendation 1: DFID needs to focus on consistent and continuous organisational learning based on the experience of DFID, its partners and contractors and the measurement of its impact, in particular during the Implementation phase of its activities.	**Accept**	• Research and Evidence Division (RED) has been developing stronger two-way links with country offices and Policy and Global Programmes Directorate so that research and evaluation are informed by their priorities and there is a more coordinated approach to learning. • Evaluation Department has been piloting an approach to impact evaluation where partner governments are in the lead and involved in implementation, to test if this approach will lead to greater learning, impact and adoption of findings. • Policy Division is sharing case studies of open policy making and learning with the Civil Service Policy Profession.	1. The Department will integrate lesson learning and knowledge sharing into DFID's operational framework.	December 2014

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Recommendation 2: All DFID managers should be held accountable for conducting continuous reviews from which lessons are drawn about what works and where impact is actually being achieved for intended beneficiaries .	**Accept**	• The Department has been reviewing roles and responsibilities and proposing ways of better integrating lesson learning into our processes. • A substantial evaluation programme is now in place in support of the Beneficiary Feedback Pilot Programme. The aim is to provide robust evidence on the best approaches.	2. DFID is already creating a new role in relationship to programme management – the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO). Part of their role will be to share learning from live programme reviews, including lessons learnt from intended beneficiaries.	January 2015
Recommendation 3: All information commissioned and collected (such as annual reviews and evaluations) should be synthesised so that the relevant lessons are accessible and readily useable across the organisation. The focus must be on practical and	**Accept**	• RED is piloting Evidence Briefs to improve the communication of synthesised evidence. The aim is to link evidence products with DFID policy teams and ensure these products are better signposted. • RED is developing a suite of online learning modules around the use of evidence that are to be made available on Civil Service Learning in June.	3. The Department will identify exemplar case studies that illustrate practical lessons learned and innovative approaches capable of wider application across DFID programmes, starting in October 2014.	October 2015

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easy-to-use information. Knowhow should be valued as much as knowledge.		• Evaluation Department is producing Evaluation Briefs which synthesise learning from DFID evaluations within discrete policy themes. It is also supporting policy teams in conducting thematic evaluations synthesising learning across a number of programmes.		
Recommendation 4: Staff need to be given more time to acquire experience in the field and share lessons about what works and does not work on the ground.	**Accept**	• Evaluation Department has begun to re-design the curriculum and competencies required from DFID staff working on evaluations to include field work opportunities with DFID as well as our partner programmes. It is piloting a model of sending DFID staff to undertake field work assignments with our partners.	4. All offices will consider how best to ensure their staff spend enough time in the field in their own country. We will also consider how to deepen the field experience of staff working in hostile environments and in HQ.	May 2015
Recommendation 5: DFID needs to continue to encourage a culture of free and full communication about what does and does not	**Accept**	• Through the Amplify programme with IDEO.org and OpenIDEO, DFID's Innovation Hub is experimenting with human-centred design and open source collaboration with over 50,000 online 'problem solvers', in order to	5. The Permanent Secretary will issue a reminder on the Civil Service Code and the need for objectivity in use and presentation of evidence.	July 2014

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work. Staff should be encouraged always to base their decisions on evidence, without any bias to the positive.		develop new solutions to ten wicked development challenges. The first challenge – "how might we make low-income urban areas safer and more empowering for girls and women?" - was launched in February 2014. We will learn through rapid prototyping on the ground and share lessons online to spread learning and generate further innovation. • The Evaluation Professional Development Conference planned for October 2014 will discuss 'failure' and lessons learnt from our evaluations with the explicit purpose of encouraging open discussion of what does not work.		