

Operational Plan 2011-2015

DFID BURMA

May 2011

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Introduction

- The UK Government is determined to help reduce the inequalities of opportunity we see around the world today. We believe that promoting global prosperity is both a moral duty and in the UK's national interest. Aid is only ever a means to an end, never an end in itself. It is wealth creation and sustainable growth that will help people to lift themselves out of poverty.
- In May 2010, the International Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell, commissioned the Bilateral Aid Review to take a comprehensive and ambitious look at the countries in which DFID works through our direct country and regional programmes. The review focussed on the best ways for the UK to tackle extreme poverty, ensuring that we make the greatest impact with every pound we spend. In parallel, through the Multilateral Aid Review, DFID assessed how effective the international organisations we fund are at tackling poverty.
- On the 1st March 2011, the key outcomes of the reviews were announced, including the results that UK aid will deliver for the world's poorest people over the next four years. The Bilateral Aid Review has refocused the aid programme in fewer countries so that we can target our support where it will make the biggest difference and where the need is greatest. The Multilateral Aid Review findings enable us to put more money behind effective international organisations which are critical to delivering the UK's development priorities. In addition the independent Humanitarian Emergency Response Review looked at how the UK can build on its strengths in responding impartially to humanitarian needs and help ensure future disaster responses can be better prepared and coordinated.
- DFID is committed to being a global leader on transparency. In the current financial climate, we have a particular duty to show that we are achieving value for every pound of UK taxpayers' money that we spend on development. Results, transparency and accountability are our watchwords and guide everything we do. DFID regards transparency as fundamental to improving its accountability to UK citizens and to improving accountability to citizens in the countries in which it works. Transparency will also help us achieve more value for money in the programmes we deliver and will improve the effectiveness of aid in reducing poverty.
- The UK Aid Transparency Guarantee commits DFID to making our aid fully transparent to citizens in both the UK and developing countries. As part of this commitment we are publishing Operational Plans for country programmes. The Operational Plans set out the vision, priorities and results that will be delivered in each of our country programmes.
- We will concentrate our efforts on supporting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, creating wealth in poor countries, strengthening their governance and security and tackling climate change. The prize, in doing so, is huge: a better life for millions of people, and a safer, more prosperous world

2) Context

Burma has suffered 48 years of military rule and more than 60 years of internal conflict. In a region containing some of the fastest growing economies in the world, Burma has become one of the poorest countries in Asia. Data about poverty in Burma is difficult to obtain and some of it is unreliable, but there is evidence of widespread poverty. A third of the population (16.5 million people) do not have enough money to meet their basic food and living needs. Where reliable data exists, it shows the country is not on track to meet many of the Millennium Development Goals. It has some of the worst health indicators in Asia, and suffers amongst the highest rates of malaria, malnutrition (especially amongst children) and tuberculosis in the world.

Burma is ethnically diverse. It has struggled since independence in 1948 to find peaceful way to manage this diversity. Ethnic tensions continue to be a source of conflict, particularly along the eastern border with Thailand. The impact of conflict includes human rights abuses, severe poverty and displacement. An estimated half a million people are Internally Displaced in eastern Burma alone, and 140,000 live in refugee camps in Thailand.

Elections in November 2010, the country's first since Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won at the polls 20 years ago, were not judged to be free and fair by most of the international community. The new constitution, now in force, makes provisions for the first time for a degree of devolution and space for local decision-making. However, there is no guarantee that this will happen in practice.

Economic and social policies have so far failed to release the country's huge economic potential. Liberalisation of the economy since the end of the socialist period in the 1980s has progressed slowly, despite the country being well-placed to take advantage of markets in India, China and countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Economic growth has accelerated in recent years, largely as a result of the discovery and exploitation of natural gas, but remains modest, and it has not brought significant benefits for the large number of poor people. The benefits from oil, gas, mining, timber and other natural resources are controlled by a small elite. The banking sector is weak, over regulated and has virtually no reach outside major urban areas. As a result, the country's majority rural population cannot access the credit they need. The agricultural sector, once the rice basket of the region, and still the main source of income for 70% of the population, is now unproductive, uncompetitive and low-value. There is a growing number of landless people (15 million) dependent on seasonal, non-farm work which is inadequate across the year.

Government budgets have not been published for many years, but estimates from international organisations show extremely low levels of investment in basic services for the people. Over 40% of public expenditure is allocated to the military, while **government spending on basic health care and education combined is less than US \$1 per person each year.** Skills at all levels have been in decline for 20-30 years. The state machinery can still deliver its leaders' priorities, but these are focused on narrow national security goals, personal enrichment and political control. A growing voluntary sector provides some of the services which an effective government would normally provide. This was particularly evident following Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

Burma's people also receive very little aid from the international community. Since 2004, the UK has led the way in demonstrating how higher levels of aid can make a real difference to poor people in Burma without supporting the regime. As one of the few donors with a permanent presence in Burma, our expert staff play a critical role in ensuring what aid is given is used effectively.

3) Vision

Overview

The UK does not have a normal aid relationship with Burma. We work within the framework of the European Union's (EU) sanctions policy (called the EU Council Decision), which suspends non-humanitarian aid to Burma, except for certain sectors (health, education, livelihoods, environment and civil society). The UK has been active in shaping the EU's sanctions policy, which is a response to the regime's failure to respect human rights and give sufficient priority to poverty reduction. In the absence of significant progress in these areas our approach is unlikely to change. We will continue to work within EU policy on aid to Burma. We will provide our aid only through the United Nations and trusted international and local non government organisations (NGOs). None will go through central government. We will coordinate policy with other donors, and work with them through multi-donor funds. We will support efforts to develop national and local strategies that meet people's development needs, and where people have had a say in their design. Where those strategies exist, we will align our support with them.

The UK's experience in the last six years shows that it is possible to increase aid in this way, while ensuring it reaches the poor. As well as the direct health, education and livelihoods benefits they will bring, our planned activities will be designed in ways that contribute to longer-term change in Burma. A particular priority will be to support examples of constructive, cooperative voluntary action by a range of local organisations and individuals, and to find ways that our aid can give Burmese people more choices over the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Alignment to DFID and wider UK Government priorities

Aid is a key part of UK government policy towards Burma. This plan has been developed in close coordination with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

- Our plan targets the key areas where change may be possible and where aid can be instrumental: the rural economy; civil society; and, service delivery at a local level .
- Our programmes will be designed not only to meet basic needs, but to maximise their contribution to longer-term changes that address the root causes of conflict and fragility in Burma.
- Our plan has a strong focus on girls and women, with targeted interventions to reduce maternal mortality and increase women's access to credit. A Gender Annex gives further details of this part of our strategy.
- As part of the Bilateral Aid Review we decided not to take forward new work on climate change in the immediate future, in light of other priorities and the limited scope to achieve tangible results. Several of our programmes contribute to climate change mitigation or adaptation, and some do both.

What we will stop doing

- We will stop our post-Cyclone Nargis relief programmes (£5m in 09/10 – 10/11) and focus on longer-term recovery programmes in the Cyclone-affected areas.
- Two of the multi-donor funds we supported in 09/10 (the Three Diseases Fund and the UNICEF Education Fund) will be redesigned and strengthened this year. The focus of our health programming will change once the Global Fund returns in 2011.
- We have already closed many smaller and/or poor performing projects (reducing our portfolio by 38% from 21 in 2008/09 to 13 in 2010/11).
- At the moment DFID Burma has few commitments beyond the end of the 2010/11 financial year, and none beyond March 2012.

4) Results

Headline results

Pillar/ Strategic Priority	Indicator	Baseline (including year)	Expected Results (including year)
MDGs – Health	Number of women and men who receive appropriate treatment to contain the spread of drug-resistant malaria, through DFID funding.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	500,000 (Cumulative to end of 2014). 250,000 women, 250,000 men.
MDGs – Health	Number of pregnant women who receive at least 4 antenatal care visits, as a result of DFID funding.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	57,500 additional women (cumulative, by 2015).
MDGs – Health	Number of unintended pregnancies averted, through DFID funding.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	153,000 unintended pregnancies averted, by the end of 2014.
Wealth Creation/ Poverty, Hunger & Vulnerability	Number of women reached with access to financial services as a result of DFID support.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	110,000 women by 2015
Wealth Creation	Number of women and men who have produced more food, through DFID support.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	74,000 men, 18,000 women by 2015
MDGs – Education	Number of girls and boys assisted to overcome barriers to accessing and completing primary school, through DFID support.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	227,000 children by 2015 (113,500 girls and 113,500 boys)
MDGs - Humanitarian	Number of people in conflict-affected communities supported with humanitarian aid, through DFID support.	52,000 people by 2010 (27,000 women & girls, 25,000 men & boys)	155,000 people by 2014 (80,000 women & girls, 75,000 men & boys)
Governance & Security	Number of people supported to have choice and control over their own development, through DFID support.	Nil at 2010 (Output indicator)	94,000 people by 2015 (inc. 76,000 women).

4) Results (continued)

Evidence supporting results

The availability of good quality evidence in Burma is generally low. Our ability to engage in large scale, systematic data collection and impact assessment is limited due to capacity constraints and access restrictions. Because data is difficult to obtain and some national data is unreliable, our headline results refer to the direct results of UK-funded programmes, measured through our programmes' monitoring & evaluation (M&E) systems, rather than national data on impact. Our plan is based on the experience of several years of expansion of our aid, which has shown that it is possible to deliver aid, to achieve results and meet needs despite the difficult context. Based on this experience, the results presented in this framework are realistic and achievable, based on partner estimates of what their programmes can deliver, as long as there is no major deterioration in the humanitarian situation, and subject to the detailed design of new programmes.

In **health**, there are strong indications of the emergence of artemisinin-resistant **malaria** in eastern Burma. Studies in several sites in 2009 are now supported by similar findings in Burmese migrant populations in Thailand. Further worrying results from a study on the Burma-China border need investigation. The overall strategy to address it will require flexible funding through different donor channels. Donors have agreed to follow a common M&E framework, to ensure the collective impact of our work can be monitored and evaluated.

Systems for independently monitoring the impact of our work on **education** are well established and provide reliable data.

The programmes we are designing to support **wealth creation** and reduce **poverty, hunger & vulnerability** have been proven successful in other contexts. Not all have yet been tried at this scale in Burma, but initiatives on credit and agriculture have generated good results. Our main investment (a multi-donor livelihoods fund) has been designed with robust M&E systems built in to measure the impact of more innovative work.

The quality of evidence supporting our proposed **humanitarian** aid is mixed. The impact of aid to refugees is relatively easy to measure by NGOs working in the camps. Aid to communities inside Burma affected by conflict is less easy to measure, as access to these areas is more restricted.

There is evidence of impact on communities from long-standing **governance and security** programmes by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and NGOs. This shows the benefits that self-reliance group membership has had on women's economic opportunities and on their ability to influence community decision making. Support for larger voluntary organisations or networks and coalitions has started more recently, but has shown that it is possible to strengthen the effectiveness of such groups and in some cases to influence policy at local and national level..

Value for Money (VFM) rationale

Given the uncertain political situation and levels of fragility, investment in Burma carries a significant level of risk. But the potential rewards of successful investments are also significant, given the high levels of need and the relatively low levels of aid per capita. Our aid has also attracted more significant funding from other donors and so increased impact (for example our investments in the Three Diseases Fund helped secure the return of the Global Fund for HIV, TB & Malaria, which will significantly improve results in tackling these diseases). Results identified in this plan have been prioritised on the basis of:

- The significant levels of need, and the benefits that can be delivered to Burma's people, which outweigh the costs.
- The potential global impact of aid to Burma – particularly the containment of the emergence of drug-resistant malaria.
- The potential to attract other resources by working together with other government and private donors to develop programmes that they can fund.
- The potential for different activities to contribute to longer-term processes of peace-building and give people a greater say in their own development. In particular, the extent to which activities support local voluntary, constructive, cooperative action by a range of local organisations and individuals.
- Attention to a balanced portfolio of large, multi-donor funds and smaller, more flexible aid modalities.

5) Delivery and Resources

The DFID Burma team comprises a decentralised office with UK and local staff in the British Embassy in Rangoon and support staff in our Embassy in Bangkok. Officials in Rangoon work closely with FCO colleagues. The team in Rangoon is further supported by staff in London to respond to the considerable public and political interest which Burma attracts. London staff also provide technical advice on economics, social development, statistics and results. We anticipate that we will require additional support to the programme team in a range of technical disciplines to deliver this Operational Plan.

Partnerships are key to DFID's effectiveness in Burma. They enable DFID to enhance its impact and extend its influence. At the moment all DFID resources are channelled through third parties, primarily the UN, the British Council and NGOs; none goes through Government systems. DFID has successfully encouraged other donors to increase their funding for key development priorities. We have provided the leadership to construct multi-donor funding mechanisms into which others have contributed. Examples include the Three Diseases Fund and our work on health, livelihoods and education in the Irrawaddy Delta following Cyclone Nargis. Our share of overall development assistance to Burma is high in terms of aid volumes (we estimate that the UK was the largest bilateral donor in 2009, though ODA figures to Burma are unreliable) and higher still in terms of policy and programme leadership. We will intensify our efforts to encourage other donors to expand their programmes in Burma, or to start new ones. We are likely to remain in the top four or five of funders in the medium term, alongside the EC, Australia and possibly Japan and the US. In the unlikely event of significant political transition we would expect to see a decrease in DFID's burden share as, for example, the multilaterals, such as the World Bank, and other EU member-states step up their activity.

The two key UN delivery partners for us are UNICEF and UNDP. In both cases, our assessments locally match those of the Multilateral Aid Review (MAR). UNICEF demonstrates strong delivery in this fragile environment. UNDP plays an important governance and gender role within its restricted mandate. Both of these organisations could work more effectively with each other and parts of the UN and we will press them to improve this. A significant proportion of our scaling up will potentially be channelled through the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) which was not assessed as part of the MAR. Maintaining its effectiveness will be a priority for us.

Our staff numbers (we have the largest donor mission in-country) mean that we have the capacity and some responsibility to provide technical and policy leadership. Support on maternal & child health and to strengthened civil society are good examples. UK leadership is appreciated by others and helps to extend wider UK influence. However, it also imposes greater demands on DFID programme staff and these are reflected in our proposals for organisational design. The political context for our work in Burma restricts our current choice of aid instruments. The EU Council Decision on Burma, of which the UK is a strong proponent, requires implementation to be through the UN, NGOs and through decentralised cooperation with local civilian administrations. In the event of a major improvement in government accountability and respect for human rights our choice of aid instruments would widen. Although we cannot anticipate significant political change over this Plan period, we are making some investment in preparing the ground for the day when we can consider alternative delivery options.

5) Delivery and Resources (continued)

Pillar/Strategic priority	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		TOTAL	
	Resource £million	Capital £million	Resource £million	Capital £million	Resource £million	Capital £million	Resource £million	Capital £million	Resource £million	Capital £million	Resource £million	Capital £million
Wealth Creation	2	0	9	0	5	0	6	0	6	0	26	0
Climate Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Governance and Security	2	0	2	0	3	0	4	0	5	0	14	0
Education	2	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	3	0	10	0
Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health	2	0	3	0	11	0	21	0	25	0	60	0
Malaria	4	0	9	0	6	0	9	0	6	0	30	0
HIV/Aids	6	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	0
Other Health	3	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	7	0
Water and Sanitation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poverty, Hunger and Vulnerability	3	0	5	0	3	0	5	0	4	0	17	0
Humanitarian	8	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	5	0	17	0
Other MDG's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Global Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	32	0	36	0	36	0	55	0	58	0	185	0

5) Delivery and Resources (continued)

Efficiency savings

Delivering Programme Efficiencies		
Category	Details	Residual cost in the SR period £'000
Strategic Reprioritisation	The Delta region will remain a geographical focus for DFID Burma. However, support to communities affected by Cyclone Nargis in 2008 will be mainstreamed within larger programmes over the Plan period.	5793

Administrative cost savings

Over the course of this Operational Planning period our programme will almost double. To support delivery of this increase the number of full-time equivalent Frontline staff will increase by about one third. Frontline costs will therefore increase over the Plan period from £767,000 in 2010/11 to £1,171,000 in 2014/15. Although previous increases in staffing have been managed within a relatively flat Administration budget, the addition of significant numbers of new staff will mean that Administration costs increase from £61,000 in 2010/11 to £67,000 in 2014/15.

We will continue to achieve economies of scale by delivering an increased programme with the same administrative team: The number of administrative staff employed by DFID Burma will decline as a proportion of our staff headcount from 26% to 20%. Administration costs as a proportion of total Frontline and Administration costs will decrease from 7.4% in 2010/11 to 5.4%. Core administration costs will represent 0.12% of our Programme spend by 2014/15.

Overall, DFID Burma's total Frontline and Administration spend will reduce as a proportion of our Programme spend from 2.6% in 2010/11 to 2.1% in 2014/15.

DFID Burma is co-located with the Foreign Office and British Council at the British Embassy in Rangoon. We share most of our administrative and office services with the FCO with charges largely determined through a centrally negotiated Service Level Agreement. A small number are negotiated locally. We will explore scope for additional administrative efficiencies but these may be limited.

6) Delivering Value for Money

DFID Burma works in a challenging, unpredictable environment, and its programmes are subject to high levels of scrutiny, so delivery of value for money is already a high priority. By balancing risk and diversifying our portfolio; working through a mixture of large-scale multi donor trust funds, UN agencies, international NGOs and local NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), we have demonstrated that aid can deliver results in Burma for the poor people who most need it. Within the donor community DFID Burma has led the way in demanding greater clarity of measurement of results, and improving value for money.

There are **challenges** to delivering this agenda over the operational plan period:

- Burma is a fragile and conflict-affected state where the costs of delivering aid can be relatively high.
- Access restrictions on UN and international NGOs, which are limited by Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to specific geographical areas, limit both the scope for competition between implementing partners and the scope for those partners to drive down unit costs by working at scale.
- National data is incomplete and of variable quality, making impact measurement more difficult.
- Limited access to areas affected by conflict makes measurement of impact challenging. But these are the areas with some of the greatest humanitarian need.
- Insufficient attention to economics and limited available information on economic impact.
- Measurement of the value of our work where the impact and outcomes do not lend themselves to quantification of benefits – for example development of more democratic and accountable institutions.

Actions

DFID Burma will strengthen its capacity to deliver value for money. In 2011/12:

- A new full-time economist based in Rangoon will strengthen our capacity for economic appraisal and cost-benefit analysis.
- A shared Evaluation Adviser post based in Hanoi, Vietnam will strengthen our expertise in the use of evaluation.

With these new resources and the existing resources in the team, we will:

- Integrate cost/benefit and value for money analysis into programme management at all stages: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Develop a value for money framework to assess the impact of our programme on longer-term changes in accountability, peace-building and transparency (by Dec 2011).
- Scope areas – subject to strict criteria on accountability, governance and transparency – where by shadowing or working through national systems we can deliver real improvements for poor people, economies of scale and greater value for money (ongoing).
- Design monitoring and evaluation frameworks that include targets and indicators for driving down implementing partners' unit costs.
- Enhance our use of local knowledge and experience in our programmes, to reduce the unit costs of that expertise and strengthen our contextual knowledge.

DFID Burma will continue to seek opportunities to strengthen value for money in its own **operations**. We will:

- Assess where we can share more services with the FCO in ways that deliver real cost savings and efficiencies (starting with our joint pay and conditions harmonisation review in 2011).
- Negotiate annually with the FCO locally to ensure a good deal for DFID for services provided under our local service agreement.
- Continue to conduct competitive tendering for contracts for goods and services procured locally.
- Proactively manage and monitor delivery of our learning and development plan objectives to ensure spend to budget.
- Monitor rigorously staff travel and ensure opportunities to conduct meetings via telephone or video conference are maximised.

7) Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

How. Each of our programmes will have an appropriate monitoring framework with key indicators linked to the Operational Plan Results Framework. In the large multi-donor funds we will build on the progress we've made in ensuring DFID's standards, and particularly our logframes, are adopted by all partners. Implementing agencies will be responsible for continuous day-to-day monitoring of progress. Annual Reviews for all projects over £1 million will be peer reviewed, and we will involve independent external reviewers at appropriate intervals through the life of the programme. Regular field visits undertaken by DFID Burma staff, in particular utilising the experience and insights of our local staff, will allow us to report on the impact on the ground.

Who. Overall responsibility for monitoring will sit with the DFID Burma Programme Team, working with Advisers and the new Economist and Evaluation Specialist. These resources will be augmented by external expertise when necessary. The Team will liaise closely with partners on their monitoring activities, ensuring that good quality reporting is provided to agreed timetables.

When. Monitoring is a continuous process. We will continue to rigorously track reporting timetables and proactively engage with partners to ensure that good quality information is provided to DFID Burma.

What. We will monitor programme progress against key deliverables, and develop a framework to assess their impact against longer term, transformational criteria.

Evaluation

DFID Burma's capacity in evaluation will be strengthened significantly with 50% of an Evaluation Adviser based in Hanoi, Vietnam. This new Adviser will have two priority objectives:

- Working with Advisers and the Programme Team to evaluate our programmes, learn lessons and ensure we design better, more cost effective interventions. We will set ourselves the benchmark that a minimum of 60% of the value of the DFID Burma programme will have evaluation built in from 2011/12 onwards.
- Develop an approach to process evaluation that can measure the contribution our programmes make to the changes that are important for the longer-term development of Burma.

We will ensure all of our partners plan and budget for appropriate evaluations when designing programmes we intend to part fund and these will be independent wherever possible.

Building capacity of partners

The variable quality of national statistics means we do not generally rely on them for monitoring purposes. We will continue to support opportunities to collect better survey data where they arise, and draw on the services of a Results Adviser to assess the quality of data from surveys that are planned and carried out. Where national data are not reliable, we will ensure that our partners gather sufficient programme-level data to show the impact of the programme activities.

We will continue to support partners in their efforts to secure access for monitoring, data collection and independent analysis, and to analyse this data. The Education, Health and Livelihoods sectors will be priorities for this work, but we will also develop more innovative M&E tools to measure the impact of our support for civil society.

8) Transparency

Transparency is one of the top priorities for the UK Government. We will meet our commitments under the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee: we will publish detailed information about DFID projects, including programme documents and all spend above £500. Information will be accessible, comparable, accurate, timely and in a common standard with other donors. We will also provide opportunities for those directly affected by our projects to provide feedback.

DFID Burma will take the following actions to ensure DFID meets its commitments in the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee. We will publish detailed information of all new programmes on the DFID website where this does not put local partners at risk (see below). Annual project performance reporting and end of project evaluation from April 2011 will also be published. We will ensure that wherever possible all information in the public domain is comprehensive, accessible, comparable, accurate and timely.

As well as publishing this Operational Plan in English, Sections 1-4 will be translated into Burmese. This is the first language of around two thirds of the people of Burma, is understood by most of the remainder, and is taught in local schools from an early age. We will consider the need for translation of specific project information into other languages, where there is a particular need to do so – for example for a public education project to reach a particular target group. In these cases our delivery partners would make arrangements for translation to local languages.

DFID Burma will promote accessibility to information in Burma in other ways too. A long-standing priority is to make our aid accessible to local civil society organisations (CSOs). As well as designing funding mechanisms with them in mind, we will continue to lead a series of donor-CSO dialogues and champion the principles for support to local civil society we developed in 2009/10. We will also continue to input into the Embassy's communication materials such as the *UK in Burma* website. We will meet the standards set out in the International Aid Transparency Initiative, and encourage our partners in civil society, multilateral organisations and other donors to do the same. We will ensure that large multi-donor funds to which we contribute make relevant information available on their website: the two largest funds that we currently support already do so. If opportunities arise in future to support greater government transparency, we would give priority to those in any support we give within the parameters of European aid policy on Burma.

We will not insist on transparency where it could endanger the safety and security of our implementing agencies or their beneficiaries. In all cases we will seek and be guided by implementing partners' and communities' view on what sorts of transparency would not compromise their security. We will also insist that international organisations funded by DFID follow the same principles in their dealings with local partners and communities.

We will increase opportunities for feedback by those benefiting from DFID programmes. As noted above, international donors need to be cautious in soliciting feedback from ordinary Burmese, who face high risks in making direct contact with foreigners. But there are things we can and do undertake. The major Trust Funds we support (3DF, LIFT) have established processes for feedback from Delivery Partners – and we will make sure these are maintained in the successor to the 3DF. Internet access and mobile phone coverage in Burma are very limited, but if they improve in future DFID will investigate options for building feedback from beneficiaries by internet or SMS into our programme monitoring. DFID does not have a dedicated communications officer in Rangoon. However we will allocate dedicated staff to ensure accurate and timely input of all relevant documentation and data. The requirement to meet our transparency obligations will be included in individual Job Objectives and individual performance will be assessed annually. Further support will be provided by the team in London. We will continue to work closely with FCO, with whom we share an objective on stepping up public diplomacy around the UK government's work in Burma.