MONITORING POLICY DIALOGUE: LESSONS FROM A PILOT STUDY

By Sadie Watson and Juliet Pierce

September 2008

Preface & Acknowledgments

'Policy dialogue' with other development partners has become an increasingly important part of DFID's work, particularly as DFID's focus has moved to tackling wider development challenges such as growth, conflict, climate change and reforming the international system. Influencing partners to work together towards shared aims requires a significant investment in staff time, technical knowledge and skills. Monitoring and evaluating policy dialogue work is important for DFID, both to learn lessons on how to improve approaches and to learn how to deploy DFID's limited administrative resources most effectively.

In 2007, Sam Sharpe, Director of DFID's Finance and Corporate Performance Division (FCPD) identified the need to investigate methods for more systematic monitoring of policy dialogue, and proposed undertaking a pilot exercise of tools and processes. The board agreed and asked Simon Parrish (Business Transformation Unit, FCPD) to develop a tool for this. Evaluation Department (EvD) was asked to help evaluate this pilot. The evaluation was carried out by Sadie Watson and Juliet Pierce of PARC, and managed by Lynn Macdonald of EvD with input from Denise Dudgeon of EvD.

The evaluation found that taking a systematic approach to planning and monitoring policy dialogue (setting clear policy objectives and monitoring progress against these) was useful, particularly for improving teamwork. However, the specific tools being piloted had a mixed reception. Further experimentation is needed to decide whether DFID should adopt a centralised tool for monitoring policy dialogue.

We are grateful for the inputs of:

- *Pilot teams:* Camilla Bowen; Chris Carter; Mark George; Daniel Graymore; Will Guest; Teresa Kondratowicz; Lottie Murphy; Sian Notley; Jeremy Orton; Camilla Otto, Lisa Phillips; Siobhan Stanger; Matthew Sudders; Tom Wagstaff; Kemi Williams; Andy Willson;

- *Other organizations who shared information on their systems,* Gwen Barry (CAFOD), Colin Butfield (World Wildlife Fund), Lisa Donnelly (Tearfund), Steven Doughty (OXFAM), George Gelber (CAFOD) Sally Golding (Christian Aid), Louisa Gosling (Save the Children Fund), Bethan Grillo (Price Waterhouse Coopers) , Chris Kaye (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Lesley-Anne Knight (CARITAS International), Tony Lass (Cadbury) Henry Northover (Water Aid), Teresa Perchard (Citizens Advice Bureau), Tom Sharman (Action Aid), Vanessa Wilson (DEFRA),

- *DFID staff who were interviewed, including* Owen Barder, Pauline Hayes, Mandeep Kaur-Grewal, Helen Mealins, Andrew Steer, Nick York, Tamsyn Barton

- *And the following for providing advice and comments into the design of tools and evaluation of the pilot:* Charles Agnew, Dominic D'Angelo, Owen Barder, Jeremy Clarke; Mark Fitzpatrick, Pauline Hayes; Gerard Howe, Bill Kilby; William Kingsmill, Laurie Lee, Enrique Mendizabal (ODI), Mike Morris, Camilla Otto, Elizabeth Robin; Joanne Simpson and Mike Smithson Dawn Lindsay; Robert Wilkinson; Andrew Kidd, Mary Hunt

Full responsibility for the text of this report rests with the authors. In common with all evaluation reports commissioned by DFID's Evaluation Department, the views contained in this report do not necessarily represent those of DFID or of the people consulted.

Nick York
Head of Evaluation Department

Full responsibility for the text of this report rests with the authors. In common with all evaluation reports commissioned by DFID's Evaluation Department, the views contained in this report do not necessarily represent those of DFID or of the people consulted.

Executive Summary

S1   In 2007, a tool and process was developed for improving the recording and impact of policy dialogue initiatives across DFID. It was based on an adaptation of current project cycle management (PCM) requirements for programme spending. A pilot was devised to test the proposed tool and process in terms of:

- Assessing the value in recording and monitoring policy related activities in a similar way to that of spend activities;

- Finding the most effective and useful approach in terms of process;

- Identifying succinct ways to capture intentions and to measuring performance;

- Clarifying the type and level of support and guidance required to roll the process out across DFID.

S2   The ten participating pilot teams represented different aspects of DFID's policy work, conducting different types of policy dialogue activities. The consultants were asked to monitor and evaluate the six month pilot. They were also asked to review approaches to managing and monitoring policy dialogue and influencing activities in other organisations.   This report highlights some lessons and observations from the pilot. It outlines some emerging issues and provides some pointers for DFID to consider as it continues to develop into an organisation where policy dialogue and influencing are increasingly important aid tools.

S3   The review highlighted that there are some examples of good practice in policy dialogue *planning* within DFID, although the systems and tools used vary, and valuable lessons are not being systematically captured. However, there is little evidence that teams are *reviewing and evaluating* this type of work.

S4   There has been much discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of using logframes for helping to manage policy dialogue initiatives. The rationale for using a logframe approach in the pilot was that it was a recognised tool in the DFID Project Cycle Managmenet approach. *It became clear early on in the study that a number of staff had not had experience or training in such approaches and tools*, and therefore neither saw the value in them, nor knew how to apply them to managing their policy dialogue work.

S5   Those that were already familiar with the logframe found it to be a *very useful tool for strategising, monitoring and sharing their approach with their colleagues.* The advantages and disadvantages of using the logframe tool for this type of work can be found in Table 5.

S6   Both staff from some of the pilot teams, and people doing similar work within other organisations have used a *number of different tools to help them plan and manage their policy dialogue initiatives.* These include scenario planning, outcome mapping, using timelines, After Action Reviews and the use of Microsoft Project Software. *These were all considered valuable and useful.*

S7   The pilot highlighted the *tension between valuing and adopting a Project Cycle Management approach and attempting to embed the system within ARIES/PRISM* (DFID's central monitoring systems). Completing forms and filling in boxes made people feel as though it was a bureaucratic exercise rather than recognising the value of the process of reviewing, planning and learning.   Some of the potential risks and benefits of recording Project Cycle Management information on PRISM have been outlined in section 4.1.a of the report.

S8   All respondents noted that it would be *difficult to carry out a rigorous cost-benefit analysis for policy dialogue activities.* However, there is a recognition that DFID staff should be able to quantify approximately the staff and other resources that go into this activity and then to relate this to the progress they are achieving. Such an effort would encourage prioritisation and allow managers to justify the use of finite resources.

S9   The review also highlighted the *weak stakeholder management systems within DFID.* In an organisation that is characterised by high staff turnover, this runs the risk of affecting its ability to build relationships and influence effectively.

S10   DFID has several information systems and several reporting systems. It will be important to ensure that *any system for monitoring policy dialogue activities is well integrated with these.* Since these departmental reporting systems tend to be pitched at a fairly high level or to fall within personal development plans it is important that any new system captures the texture of policy dialogue work at the "middle level", to ensure that it does not fall off DFID's radar. The report discusses the issue of types and levels of policy work to include on the new system.

S11   Deliberations around the pilot have raised the question of how far "old" ways of working that are characterised by DFID spend programmes will increasingly give way to "new" ways of working characterised by policy dialogue. If the institutional culture is changing should new ways of working be tied into older systems? This question goes much wider than the pilot and involves issues of staff skills, recruitment priorities, induction and training, management and management information systems. We believe the concepts of project and *project cycle management, embedded into team working within DFID, are still the right ones to traverse this institutional cultural change.*

S12   *Not all policy work lends itself to Project Cycle Managmenet.* It would be difficult to apply this approach to some of the reactive work to defend policy stances that is being done by policy teams. However, more proactive policy work implies a desired outcome in the future, such as changed attitudes by key players, or researching and developing policy and getting it implemented. This type of work does lend itself to a Project Cycle Managmenet approach, with a budget for the staff and other inputs, and an estimation of interim outcomes along the way to the intended overall outcomes and impact.

S13   There is therefore a *need for a basic core system on PRISM/ARIES and access to a range of Project Cycle Management tools.* New staff need routine Project Cycle Management training with an indication of how different planning tools can be varied to accommodate the challenges of their policy work. Leadership will also be key to supporting policy teams and to embedding this initiative across DFID.

Major Recommendations

S14   **Systematising policy dialogue monitoring**: It is recommended that DFID staff plan and monitor policy dialogue initiatives systematically and use this as an opportunity to improve practice through greater accountability and learning.

S15   **Integration with Management Information Systems**: It is recommended that a minimum of core information on policy dialogue initiatives be stored on the centralised system

S16   **Follow up work:** It is recommended that the Conclusion, Recommendations and Issues to Consider are presented to, and discussed by DFID senior managers and the Development Committee to enable decisions to be made for the next steps.

Issues to Consider

S17   **Selection of tools:** DFID should consider providing staff with intensive logframe training and/or a choice of other tools to plan, monitor and review their initiatives.

S18   **Induction and additional support:** Staff working on policy dialogue initiatives will require support to apply project cycle management to their policy dialogue work with a range of support mechanisms.

S19   **Leadership:** In the short term, high level leadership will be required to revise ARIES, embed any potential new system, and encourage basic compliance with the new system. In the long term, the organisation should be aiming to reach a point where the policy dialogue reporting system becomes institutionalised alongside the systems established for programme spending.

S20   **Stakeholder Management:** Given the high staff turnover within DFID and the importance of building relationships and understanding stakeholders, continued consideration should be given to how DFID as a whole can manage its interface with its key stakeholders better.

S21   **Proportionality:** It is not appropriate for all policy dialogue initiatives to be captured on the system in the same way. We have suggested a typology of policy work and the level of DFID resources used, indicating types that require basic planning and monitoring, and those which should use more in depth planning and sophisticated or intensive monitoring and evaluation.

S22   **Existing Performance Frameworks:** Consideration should be given to how the policy dialogue planning and monitoring system would complement and contribute to existing performance frameworks and line management processes to be effective.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Boxes

List of Annexes

Annex 1: Proposed PRISM / ARIES Template

Annex 2: Options Matrix

Annex 3: Tools for Planning and monitoirng policy dialogue

Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ARIES	Activities Reporting Information E-System
CAB	UK Citizens Advice Bureau
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIIR	Catholic Institute for International Relations (Progressio)
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DSO	Departmental Strategic Objectives
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECAD	Europe and Central Asia Department (DFID)
EMAAD	Europe, Middle East, Americas, Central and East Asia Division (DFID)
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth office
GFDD	Global Funds and Development Finance Institutions (DFID)
INGOs	International Non governmental Organisations
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENAD	Middle East and North Africa Department (DFID)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PCM	Project cycle management
PRD	Policy and Research Division (DFID)
PRISM	Performance Reporting Information System for Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PWC	Price Waterhouse Coopers

1. Background

Policy dialogue within DFID

1.1	In 2007, a pilot tool and process was developed for improving the recording and impact of policy dialogue initiatives across DFID. The approach was developed in response to an increasing recognition across DFID of the need to systematise support for planning and monitoring "policy dialogue activities", often referred to as "policy influencing".

1.2	Since DFID has been reappraising its comparative advantage to consider where it can best add value and have greatest impact on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the international aid community, policy dialogue work has been growing. The Policy and Research Division houses a number of teams working on different aspects of national and international policy. Other parts of DFID work on institutional strategies geared to influencing the policy of other bilaterals, multilaterals and the UN agencies. Special teams are set up to influence global policies on trade and global public goods. At the country programme level, policy dialogue is a natural adjunct to other aid modalities such as budget support.

1.3	Policy dialogue is therefore a significant and growing part of DFID's work, making demands on limited DFID staff time. At a time when the staff headcount and administrative budgets are being reduced, staff resources need to be allocated with even more care between competing priorities.

1.4	DFID is also addressing a number of challenges to measure and better report on its impact, to improve management of its interface with key stakeholders and to strengthen its communication functions. All these areas have implications for strengthening the effectiveness of policy dialogue. The final impetus to introducing systems to plan, manage, measure and record information about policy dialogue has been the desire to continually improve the quality of policy dialogue work overall, in order to continually improve DFID's aid effectiveness.

Current monitoring and management systems

1.5	These mechanisms do not currently monitor the use of DFID staff time, rather staff are largely trusted to get on with the job within the boundaries of Departmental Plans and weekly or monthly team meetings. Policy dialogue work is largely delegated to individuals and teams, managed through the line manager, and involving broad brush reporting on key Public Service Agreement (PSA) related issues at departmental level. Individuals and teams largely create their own spreadsheets and frameworks to manage their policy dialogue work. However, the grainy texture of policy dialogue work is not being recorded in any standard corporate fashion and lacks the accountability audit trail associated with programme spending.

Policy dialogue pilot

1.6   DFID's 'Catalyst' Board[1], which had responsibility for introducing new systems, approved an initiative to look at the possibility for bringing policy dialogue and influencing work within the scope of DFID's current PCM system. The objectives of this were laid out in a concept note as follows:

- To increase the effectiveness of DFID's policy dialogue activities

- To measure and demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of DFID's policy dialogue activities

Design principles included:

- Accountability and demonstrating results

- Knowledge sharing and lesson learning

The propositions to be tested were that:

- DFID could measure how much resources they put into policy dialogue, and the extent to which this deployment of resources had been successful

- That the current "spend"-focussed PCM approach and tools could be extended to capture "non spend" policy and influencing activities.

Box 1: Management Information Systems in DFID

1. **PRISM** (Performance Reporting Information System for Management) is a corporate management information system database which contains details of DFID programmes and projects including spend and performance. It also includes lessons learned from annyual reviews and Project Completion Reports.

2. It is planned to replace PRISM with **ARIES** (Activities Reporing Information E-System). It aims to improve the way that DFID manages, reports and monitors information by integrating programme and financial informationand linking projects to county objectives. It will also be linked to **QUEST** to enable users to access stored documents.

3 QUEST is a DFID-wide system for storing documentation. It is intended to provide access to all DFID information and records.

4. **Teamsite** is a space on DFID's organisation-wide intranet for teams to share information with their collegues.

1.7   The pilot designers chose a "light touch" version of the traditional project cycle management tool kit, (see Box 2) aiming to help policy teams to record their policy dialogue efforts by articulating

---

[1] The Catalyst Board was closed in March 2008

the overall strategy and intended outcome, and then monitoring their activities in relation to the intended outcome. The pilot required a concept note and logframe to be developed, with a cut down and slightly adapted version of the standard PRISM monitoring/reporting form. The form was intended to act as a tool to encourage both the process of analysis and the recording of that analysis by the policy dialogue teams. This was intended to help policy dialogue teams to reflect and improve on their planned implementation process in the light of events.

1.8   Additional information about each initiative was to be captured to enable some aggregated analysis of policy dialogue work across DFID. This included areas such as: the degree of focus on policy dialogue amongst other allied aid instruments, the type of policy dialogue (use of research, secondments etc) and projected staff input.

1.9   An activity log was also designed to enable teams to capture and reflect on their particular policy dialogue activities. This system was intended to assist with standardising meeting notes and back to office reports, linking to other documents on QUEST, a DFID-wide system for storing all documentation and information.

1.10   The pilot encouraged teams to review their initial strategy on a quarterly basis using the current project scoring method with a narrative assessment

> **Box 2: PCM for DFID "spend" programmes**
>
> 1. Traditional "spend" programmes are recorded and monitored using DFID's internal management information system (PRISM) Spending of over £1 million is approved via a process requiring a Concept Note, leading to a Programme Memorandum including stakeholder assessments, a risk assessment and a logical framework (logframe). The logframe expresses intended impact (purpose) and how that would contribute to a wider development goal. It prioritises outputs (result/outcomes) and clarifies their associated indicators of progress.
>
> 2. Programme Memoranda also include explanations of management arrangements and monitoring and evaluation plans. All these approval documents are stored on PRISM.
>
> 3. Review forms are used to record progress and final outcomes systematically on PRISM over the course of the programme.

to show progress towards purpose and outputs, and the degree to which this could be attributed to DFID efforts. A project completion report was to be completed at the end of the project to consider what short term impact was achieved and how this was achieved, with a space to capture and share lessons learned.

1.11   The use of a concept note and associated logframe aligned this work with other departmental performance frameworks and systems. As elsewhere, the logframe was intended for use as a "living document", amended in the light of contextual changes.

1.12   The policy dialogue "tool" built on previous work done by the Europe, Middle East, Americas, Central and East Asia Division (EMAAD) and others within DFID. The tool was essentially a prompt for thinking that would lead teams to record their thoughts on the system.

1.13   The pilot involved 10 DFID departments and ran for six months, from November 2007 to April 2008. Most of the participating teams had volunteered to be part of the pilot, some had not. The teams represented different types of policy dialogue activities within the organisation, including activities not currently captured in existing systems. A summary of those who participated and the work they were reporting on is outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1. Participating teams in the policy dialogue pilot

Policy Dialogue Team and Project	What they are doing	Approach type
Division: Europe and Central Asia Department.Middle East, Americas, Central and East Asia Division *Project:* Effective and Governance Facility established in the European Neighbourhood *Team:* European Neighbourhood Team	Encouraging EC to establish effective Governance Facility	• Support to policy dialogue forums • Use of Secondments
Division: Europe and Central Asia Department/Global Funds and Development Finance Institutions *Project:* Developing EBRD's role in poverty reduction in the ECA Region *Team:* Part of a wider EBRD influencing team in DFID and cross Whitehall	Encouraging the Bank to be more focused on poverty reduction	• Subsidised consultancy • Working up policy research to inform others to influence • Secondment e.g. UK delegation • Personal contact
Country Office: DFID China *Project* Working with China on International Development Issues (Africa)	Encouraging China to have a greater impact on poverty reduction in developing countries (particularly Africa)	• Seminars & Research • Senior visits • Meetings • Small projects
Department: International Trade Department *Project:* Enhanced Integrated Framework (Aid for Trade)	Encouraging the mainstreaming of trade into national development plans/PRSPs	• Trust fund • Co-financing
Department: International Trade Department *Project:* Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)	Encouraging EC to make EPAs "developmental"; working partnership with Commission and African, Caribbean and Pacific regions; Advising ACP negotiators; providing funds to ACP regions to help them research & negotiate own deals	• Support to forums • Secondment • Co-financing trade agreement • Use of Ministerial visits
Division: Donor Relationship Department *Project:* Working with Italy to influence future Italian role as chair of G8, in agenda setting on development priorities for the G8 *Team:* Part of donor relations team	Responsive – work is driven by Ministers. Dealing with Italian Government to influence future Italian role as chair of G8	• Responsive meetings • Ministerial visits • Consultation • Information sharing/support to policy dialogue forums
Division: Policy and Research Division *Project:* Environmental Transformation Fund *Team:* Sustainable Development Group	To seek support and finance for the World Bank Climate Investment Funds from other donors, recipients and civil society. To secure a G8 deliverable on the funds, including financial pledges from at least 4 other donors	• Meetings • Ministerial activity • Negotiations • Lobbying • Consultation • working as part of a cross Whitehall Team both proactively & responsively
Division: Policy and Research Division *Project:* Construction Sector Transparency Initiative *Team:* Business Alliance Team	Their work tends to be driven by political expedient (within a broad policy remit)	• Primarily reactive
Division: Policy and Research Divison *Project:* Influencing Whitehall departments on migration and development *Team:* Migration Team	Influencing Whitehall (Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office) to input a development perspective into UK migration policies	• Support to policy dialogue forums • Secondment • Working across Whitehall
Division: Policy and Research Division *Project:* Gender Equality Action Plan *Team:* Equity and Rights Team	Action plan to influence practice across DFID UK and country	

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1   The consultants were asked to evaluate the six month pilot process, review approaches to managing and monitoring policy dialogue in other organisations (with an objective of learning from best practice), and provide recommendations for implementing effective monitoring processes across DFID for policy dialogue.

2.2   The evaluation team reported back regularly throughout the process to allow for constant feedback and re-alignment of the consultants' workplan with other DFID developments.

Approach to reviewing the work of the pilot teams

2.3   An initial review was carried out with five of the ten pilot teams in November 2007, which revealed that engagement with the pilot was mixed. Some of the templates and strategy documents had not been properly completed, and the information recorded was patchy. It was agreed that unless the data and adherence to the process were improved, it would be difficult to draw useful conclusions about the utility of the tools provided, and therefore difficult to propose a useful steer for taking the initiative forward. The consultants therefore offered to provide more focused support to the pilot teams to ensure completion of the documentation so that they could also gain a better understanding of the problems that the teams were experiencing. This support was to be demand driven and in practice varied from clarification about the purpose of the pilot, to logframe development, how to use the reporting tools, and methodologies for planning influencing activities.

2.4   Interviews were then carried out with the remaining 5 pilot groups and the information that they captured on the system was analysed. These first interviews were open ended and followed a line of enquiry that included:

- finding out how the group had found the process of developing concept notes and logframes in planning their work, and using the reporting tools

- understanding why they had not felt able to complete particular parts of the documentation

- finding out what further support they felt they needed in order to complete these.

2.5   At that stage the consultants detected major difficulties with initial strategic planning in relation to the pilot policy initiatives. Many of the staff responsible for the pilots were relatively new to DFID and had received no training in PCM or logframes upon which the pilot's tools were based. Some were concerned about the purpose of the pilot. A workshop was therefore held in January by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to both provide some training in policy dialogue planning and managing, and to give the pilot teams a chance to ask questions and share experiences.

2.6   At the workshop and in a further email from DFID senior managers, the pilot teams were encouraged to complete the pilot and to conduct at least one review of their work and report their findings on PRISM before the final evaluation interview with the consultants.

2.7   Interviews were also conducted with senior managers and managers of the pilot teams to find out what kind of information they were seeking in their line management of teams involved in policy dialogue work. These interviews also enquired about how the work of the pilot teams related

to other planning and monitoring mechanisms such as departmental business plans, and other performance frameworks.

2.8   Representatives from each pilot group were interviewed once again in April 2008, and the information they had saved onto the pilot area of PRISM was re-analysed. The consultants used a semi-structured interview process that drew out information around the following questions:

- What have you found useful and why?

- If you have not been able to complete the documentation, why is this?

- What have you found difficult and why?

- What emerged from using the documentation to review progress?

- In what way could this be useful to DFID corporately?

- Is there anything else you would recommend?

2.9   Finally, a workshop was held on 8th April to which representatives from each pilot group were invited. This workshop was intended to act as a focus group to provide feedback on the pilot instruments and process, to test some of the evaluation's findings, and to discuss emerging issues and potential recommendations.

2.10   The evaluation team reported back regularly throughout the process to allow for constant feedback and re-alignment of the consultants' workplan with other DFID developments.

Review of practice in other organisations

2.11   The consultants were also asked to contact other organisations to see if there was any emerging best practice in this area that DFID could build on. Feedback was obtained from a cross section of organisations, including bilateral agencies, multilateral agencies, International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs), UK Government Departments and the private sector. This information was gathered through meetings, telephone interviews and extensive email exchanges.

2.12   The consultants also carried out a brief review of published and unpublished documents on monitoring policy dialogue and advocacy (see list of references). The findings from this have been integrated into the report, and have informed our recommendations and conclusions.

2.13   As part of the review, we have also drawn from experience in other parts of DFID and referrals to previous work done by other consultants, when this was brought to our attention.

2.14   Lessons learned from this exercise have informed the recommendations.

Synergy with other parallel DFID initiatives

2.15   It became evident early on in the study process that there were two other initiatives taking place in DFID that the policy dialogue pilot would benefit from engaging with, namely the Strategy Unit briefing note and the Oversease Development Institute (ODI) Policy Influencing Training Programme.

2.16   The DFID Strategy Unit wrote a briefing note about the challenges involved in monitoring influencing activities that takes stock of current approaches within and beyond DFID, and makes some recommendations for taking work forward (Clarke, 2008). There was continual exchange of information between this process and the consultancy which included sharing contacts and information about the other agencies and commenting on findings.

2.17   DFID's Learning and Development Services Department has also been providing support for staff to improve their policy dialogue work through engaging the assistance of an ODI team working on these issues. ODI has collated a range of planning tools and developed a workshop to introduce these tools and help DFID staff to apply them in their own policy dialogue strategising context[2]. ODI has also provided useful references for the literature review. We have used some of the ideas from the training course to feed into our recommendations, and would propose to ensure that the findings from this consultancy are integrated into future training proposals.

2.18   The ODI training introduces a range of stakeholder analytical tools, considers the applicability of outcome mapping, encourages teams to think who and what would be credible sources of information for those they wish to inform and influence and looks at the role of communicating and networking in promoting policy dialogue.

---

[2] See http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Tools/Index.html for further information on ODI's work in this area

3. Findings from the Pilot

3.1 This section highlights the findings from the evaluation of the policy dialogue pilot and draws on our interviews and meetings with the pilot teams and an analysis of the information committed to PRISM at the beginning and end of the pilot. It then draws on the interviews with other DFID staff to ascertain their view of the policy dialogue pilot.

Experience of the Pilot process

3.2 From the start of the pilot up to the consultants' initial contact with the teams, it was found that on the whole there had not been very good engagement with the tool and pilot process at all. Not all pilot teams had been willing volunteers. There was some resistance to getting involved and complying with documentation requirements, there was almost no encouragement from line managers, and the pilot was not always a priority in all the team members' personal plans. As a result, other work took priority. For some, the pilot created extra work that duplicated other reporting systems rather than adding value to the work. With reducing staff headcounts, changing ministerial demands and in politically high profile areas like climate change and aid for trade, time pressures were a real issue for many staff.

3.3 The templates and strategy documents required for the management information system (PRISM) were often not completed and the information that had been captured was patchy. Some felt that they needed more guidance in completing the different sections of the PRISM template. Many had little experience of developing a logframe or writing a strategy document of the kind used in PRISM. Most were reluctant to be tied down to indicating their intended outcomes or impact where many factors beyond their control could affect the outcome, or where responsibility for achieving ultimate impact might be attributable to others rather than DFID.

3.4 High staff turnover has troubled the pilot, personnel have changed, teams have changed and sometimes been disbanded. In some cases junior or new staff inherited responsibility for completing the pilot documentation from others who had worked on the original Concept Note and Logframe. They felt that they had not been properly inducted into the purpose or context in which they were supposed to complete the data entry.

3.5 With support, by the end of the pilot, all the teams had tried using the pilot materials to at least prepare and record their strategy and create a logframe. All except three went on to use the templates to record some information in the activities log. One of the three 'exceptions' instead used their own spreadsheet to monitor activities.

Experiences with the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach

3.6 Some teams had queries around whether logframes and the activity log were the best tools to use or to make compulsory. Those who were less familiar with the logframe approach struggled to see its benefit and utility and, in practice, did not use it as the framework for assessing progress, or measuring impact. One team found it difficult to develop and make use of a logframe, as the team members did not necessarily share the same view of the outcomes.

3.7 Others felt that logframes served the process very well, particularly those staff who had been trained and had the most experience of logframes and DFID planning and review mechanisms. It encouraged and even compelled structured thinking about influencing activities, particularly when it

could be used flexibly to take account of changes during project delivery. Another noted that the value of the logframe lay in its capacity to summarise ideas and make the intention of the policy dialogue explicit.

3.8 A number of teams felt that "projectising" their policy dialogue work and using a logframe was not appropriate as the work tended to be non-linear, unpredictable and opportunistic. However, everyone recognised the need to be thinking about the impact of their work and being accountable for what they were doing. Although some were using other systems such as Microsoft Project software for planning and reporting, they noted that these systems tended to monitor inputs rather than encourage review of outcomes.

3.9 Few of the pilot teams conducted formal reviews, and none commissioned external reviews. Where they did review, they tended to concentrate on activity, rather than outcome reporting. They reflected on progress in relation to activities, rather than outcomes in relation to the logframe outputs and purpose. Some used regular team meetings or one to one meetings with either colleagues or the line manager as their mechanism for reviewing the progress of the policy dialogue initiative. Most of the teams attached more importance to reviewing in order to report against other frameworks such as the departmental workplans or frameworks that reflected larger initiatives of which the pilot activity was a part, particularly where cross-Whitehall frameworks existed. This suggests that any framework for monitoring policy dialogue initiatives needs to be clearly linked into existing frameworks that staff report against.

3.10 Where teams had conducted reviews, they found them useful. One team for example found that the review process highlighted the fact that the team did not continue to share the vision of what the policy dialogue initiative was intended to achieve. As a result of the review process one team was able to articulate that their most useful form of policy dialogue work was based on the long term personal relationships built up within the target institution.

3.11 As a result of reviews, only one team recorded a score against the logframe as requested. Whilst two had attempted to score their project, they felt that this was difficult and would be subjective, without a peer challenge function.

3.12 Some felt that that a few of the chosen pilot projects had been artificially devised to fit the pilot timescale of 6 months and were therefore derived from elements within wider longer term strategies. At that level the pilots were felt to be too small a piece of work to treat in this way and the resulting effort required to plan, review and record at that level was disproportionate. Similarly, the small size of the pilot may not have been a priority for more than one member of the wider team. Moreover, not all teams felt that the tool or process used was appropriate to their "type" or "level" of policy dialogue, and they were keen that the appropriate level and type was clarified before any compulsion was applied.

3.13 Some of the work of the pilot projects did not fit neatly into predictive project cycle management because it was a more reactive type of work. This type of policy work had more of a watching brief or policy service orientation, which meant that the team members were primarily responsive to either the demands of the Ministerial team or the needs of country offices. This form of policy work was not conducive to predictive planning through strategy formation, and probably should not have been included in the pilot.

Experience of recording on PRISM

3.14   There was a view that some elements of the pilot PRISM tool duplicated existing reporting systems that were already being used, and that these alternatives were valued more highly by staff and their line managers.

3.15   On the other hand, some valued the pilot tool's contribution as a source of potential institutional memory and found that it served the purpose intended as a regular audit trail and review mechanism.   One respondent noted that activity logging provided a useful process for the team to reflect on what led to a particular tipping point.   In those situations activity logging and reviewing were seen as useful for bringing disparate information together and "telling the story" to new people joining the team.   Others, however, felt that that Teamsite (DFID intranet) and QUEST (DFID-wide document library) already provided this function.

> **Box 4: Fields in PRISM that were difficult to complete / often not completed**
>
> 1. Estimating the actual number of staff days
> 2. Estimating other costs
> 3. Allocating a design score
> 4. Providing a risk assessment
> 5. "Performance" review tab

3.16   On the whole, most found completing the activity log challenging, as it was difficult to encourage colleagues to input information on activities, mainly because this was time-consuming without appearing to add value. This task was often delegated to more junior team members to complete, therefore at best only information about meetings was captured rather than details of all the activities undertaken by the team as part of the policy dialogue.   There was also a feeling that the activity log duplicated information that already existed on QUEST such as back to office reports and emails summarising key meetings which were sent to interested colleagues. The pilot format on PRISM did not make it easy to cut and paste information across from these emails.

3.17   One team found the lesson learning section useful in the performance assessment area of PRISM, and saw the potential for knowledge sharing and learning about what others had done in a similar area of work.

3.18   There were some technical difficulties with the PRISM tool itself.   For example it was not possible to edit text that had already been entered and this acted as a deterrent to completion.   The fields that people struggled with most were those that were intended to help with an estimation of input costs and the relationship between opportunity and risk.   Missing these fields illustrates that the area of cost-benefit analytical aspect may be a difficult one to encourage in any future version.

> **Box 3: Examples of reporting duplication**
>
> 1. Where the required pilot concept note duplicated an existing strategy
>
> 2. Where the pilot logframe duplicated the existing performance framework or logframe equivalent
>
> 3. Where the pilot activity list duplicated an existing Excel list of activities that was held on QUEST

3.19   More broadly, concern was expressed by a few that recording the information on the system would have Human Resource Management as its main purpose at a time of administrative cost cuts.   Some pilot staff were therefore anxious about encouraging the roll out of a tool that would be insufficiently developed to provide a fair means of estimating the optimum use of staff time.   This led to fear of helping to devise an imprecise scalpel to apply to themselves and their colleagues.

Summary of Pilot findings

3.20   The extent to which the teams found the pilot useful was directly related to whether it added value to their work, in terms of the effort put in and the actual benefits. One of the pilot teams found the process particularly useful, whilst two teams barely engaged in it all. The rest of the pilot teams found some aspects useful and others not so useful.

3.21   Factors that affected a team's assessment of value included:

- Their understanding and appreciation of the purpose of the policy dialogue tool

- Their understanding and familiarity with current DFID project cycle management

- The type of policy dialogue initiative they were involved in

- The level of managerial support behind the pilot

- Whether the work involved added value to their own work.

Wider views from across DFID of the policy dialogue pilot

3.22   Representatives from DFID senior management were interviewed in order to get a picture of what they thought was the purpose of the policy dialogue pilot. They highlighted three main areas:

- Impact

- Cost–benefit

- Improving policy work

3.23   There was a view from some that impact in relation to policy dialogue should be clarified and stored on management information systems alongside the effects of programme spending. Where necessary, policy dialogue impact should also relate to reporting against Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs), especially where this cuts across DFID's line management Departmental reporting systems.

3.24   Some senior managers were also interested in capturing information about policy work in relation to cost-benefit analysis to assist prioritisation decisions at a time of reducing staff resources. At least assessing cost inputs could provide a picture of the human resources and other resources involved in different pieces of policy dialogue work and the relative progress and importance of these pieces of work and their added value, to inform management decisions.

3.25   Finally, senior staff recognised that staff needed support to improve policy work.   It was noted in discussion of the findings in this report that a suitable system on ARIES could be useful to prompt staff to think through their strategies, analyse who the key stakeholders are, communicate effectively and then review progress and make adjustments but there were concerns about how to manage the introduction of this. Key findings from the experience of policy dialogue PCM from DFID Country Offices

3.26   DFID China was the only example of country office level policy dialogue included in the pilot. Feedback from the DFID China team found that the new tools provided by the pilot were

useful for them. The team were already familiar with logframes and understood how to use them as a flexible tool that could take account of the volatile environment in which policy dialogue takes place. The constituent elements of the work in the China pilot were already "projectised", with individual programme memorandums to show the approach being taken. These were adapted into the concept note required by the pilot. The particular value noted by the China team was in bringing the work of different sectoral advisers together, enabling them to look at their shared intended outcomes and then helping them to complement and synergise their efforts to influence the Chinese Government as the key development partner.

3.27   The County Assistance Planning processes and DFID's development of guidance on developing country Performance Frameworks already provide a mechanism for country teams to think through and report on their policy influencing work. Policy dialogue forms a regular part of country level work, especially as a vital adjunct to budget support. Regional Assistance Plans have already shown the importance of strategising and reporting on policy dialogue in relation to key regional organisations. The work of Europe, Middle East, Americas Central and East Asia Division (EMAAD) has already influenced the development of the pilot, by trying to capture the storyline of how the DFID Latin America team, with its scant human and financial resources set out to influence the International Finance Institutions[3].

3.28   A brief review of four country programmes[4], gathered through responses to a short questionnaire, showed that outcomes from influencing work are being monitored through results frameworks, which in turn form part of the country performance framework required by DFID to account for results and management inputs. The Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania country programmes provide examples of this. The resources spent to enable cost-benefit analyses of specific pieces of policy work are not recorded.

3.29   The DFID Nigeria Quarterly Strategic Review[5] draws together impact level information and checks that projects/programmes are doing the most they can to influence others to achieve real impact. They use the "DFID engagement strategy" to manage influencing work. This process sets out key contacts for each team, messages to convey, and the person who should contact these selected contacts. Teams update information monthly, with reports on progress, messages being refined and contacts prioritised.

3.30   DFID Tanzania also captures their influencing work in their results framework, focussing on outcomes. These are underpinned by plans showing how planned activities will achieve these outcomes[6].

3.31   However, since country level reporting on policy dialogue is at a highly aggregated level, it may not be able to capture the details of sectoral or thematic policy dialogue work. For example, according to Hickey's investigation of policy dialogue around social transfers in three DFID country

---

3 EMAD Multilateral Development Banks Virtual Policy Team, 2007
4 A short questionnaire was distributed by Jeremy Clarke as part of the Strategy Unit study and this study.
5 DFID Nigeria's performance framework and reporting systems are a good example of how a country team is developing their policy dialogue work by making use of current DFID systems. In Nigeria, the DFID country team has developed a joint reporting framework with the World Bank
6 These questions were distributed by Jeremy Clarke as part of the Strategy Unit study and this study.

offices, formal strategies of policy influencing were not defined, which made it difficult to define related tactics and evaluate progress (Hickey, 2008 in press).

3.32   Country teams as well as the pilot teams raised the difficulty of attribution, since DFID's efforts are rarely disconnected from the efforts of other partners. They also emphasised the opportunistic nature of policy work which does not always lend itself to rigid pre-planned strategies and underlines the importance of keeping outcomes in view. The risk of measuring progress towards results in terms of formal meetings held was noted. Less obvious interactions like chance phone calls or meetings in corridors may well have been the factors that really made a difference in building trust, respect and preparedness to listen to policy advice.

3.33   Although only four country teams responded to the questionnaire, they show that the system of developing country assistance plans and country performance frameworks is encouraging the planning, monitoring and recording of progress against defined outcomes in DFID's policy influencing work. More specificity may be required in future to enable more detailed cost benefit analysis of specific areas of policy dialogue. This could be the subject of a future study as experience with country level performance frameworks develops.

4. Findings from Other Organisations

4.1   The review team interviewed staff from a number of other organisations in order to gather lessons and insights, and to see how these could be applied to DFID systems.   These included a sample of INGOs, Private Sector Organisations, Government Departments and Bilateral Organisations.

4.2   Most organisations understand the terms *policy dialogue or influencing* differently to DFID, and described processes around either (mainly) advocacy or campaigning type of work (INGOs), public relations or marketing work (Private Sector) or communications and raising public awareness (other Government Departments).   The type of work DFID does on policy dialogue was most comparable with other bilateral agencies; however, despite numerous efforts the consultants had limited success in contacting other donor staff who could tell them what their experience was of planning or monitoring policy dialogue.

4.3   Specific examples of good practice from the various organisations have been referred to in relevant sections throughout this report.   This section primarily draws from the interviews and summarises the *extent to which other organisations are planning, monitoring and recording policy dialogue initiatives.*   References for the tools mentioned in this section can be found in Annex 3.

4.4   Measuring and recording the process and impact of policy dialogue and influencing was widely acknowledged to be difficult by all those external organisations consulted.   On the whole, more emphasis has been placed on planning, communication and stakeholder management as an aspect of advocacy or campaigning, rather than evaluating the impact of those campaigns. Monitoring has often been characterised by informal team discussion of progress, after–action reviews or impact stories, with less emphasis on recording information systematically on centralised systems or instituting knowledge sharing, lesson learning and accountability.

4.5   The bilateral and multilateral agencies seem to be grappling with similar issues to DFID, and despite a greater focus on policy dialogue in much of their work, they still tend to continue to place a higher emphasis on "spend" activities in their performance assessment systems.   Neither the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) nor AusAID, for example, systematically document their policy dialogue activities, nor do they have specific guidelines or models[7].   The World Bank encourages its staff to monitor their success in advocacy as part of the self–assessment process.   However, there is no formal procedure for applying cost benefit analyses or tracking influencing strategies in the World Bank[8]. The World Bank respondent noted the importance of doing more to track non–lending activity, noting however that the Bank uses evaluation and impact assessment to examine results at the end of an initiative[9].

---

[7] Email communication
[8] HPD Lesson Learning in Influencing Study (2002),
[9] Email communication

4.6   The INGOs interviewed had a good understanding of some of the available planning tools such as adapted logframes (Tearfund), force field analysis (WWF) and Power Mapping (Water Aid), and often used these in their advocacy and campaigning planning[10].

4.7   Some organisations use a combination of approaches and methods for monitoring. Tearfund, for example use a logical framework approach with indicators, together with an account of progress made and an explanatory narrative in their project documents. They also ask for qualitative changes that indicate that the policies and practices of those in positions of power have been influenced. These can be gathered in the form of stories, testimonies or quotes (Micah Network Reporting Guidelines, 2006).

4.8   The World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF) use a combination of logframe, policy mapping tools and force-field analysis in their influencing planning process. They expand the logframe onto Microsoft Project to map on key external dates and set up stringent budgeting procedures for people and resources.

4.9   Save the Children provide tools and templates for recording and documenting advocacy work. The Toolkit includes a framework for keeping a record of activities relating to the Advocacy Initiative, a format for recording meetings in relation to the advocacy objectives and progress, and an introduction to different methods for evaluation. However, this is very much a toolkit rather than a corporate system.

4.10   Some also provided staff with guidance and toolkits for planning and monitoring policy dialogue[11]. The Save the Children Advocacy Toolkit provides optional tools for planning, monitoring and evaluating advocacy[12]. In Water Aid, the Advocacy Sourcebook contains sections on aspects of advocacy that can be monitored and evaluated, the challenges of monitoring and evaluating advocacy and a useful checklist for reviewing progress. ActionAid also provide a resource pack for planning, reflection and learning[13]. This provides guidance on different aspects of monitoring including designing monitoring systems, collecting data, defining and choosing appropriate indicators and the importance of good planning. It also provides an overview of some the building blocks that are integral to planning, reflection and learning processes (including critical thinking, participation, facilitation, questioning and listening, sharing and accountability).

4.11   There were also examples of good monitoring practice. Action Aid set objectives, indicators and strategies, reflect on these and ask external stakeholders to give feedback on how effective they are being. Action Aid takes the position that that assessing the outcomes of advocacy effectively depends on being explicit about intended outcomes at the planning stage, and has developed tools for this[14]. Water Aid staff share information about their progress during advocacy campaigns informally but regularly within the relevant teams. WWF routinely "projectise" this type of work, use Microsoft Project software and report against it every two weeks. None of them held the information on a central system other than as Impact Reports or Stories of Change.

---

10 Interviews
11 Action Aid, Save the Children and Water Aid
12 De Toma, Constanza & Louisa Gosling, 2005, Advocacy Toolkit
13 ActionAid, Critical Webs of Power and Change.
14 ActionAid, Critical Webs of Power and Change.

4.12 The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Price Waterhouse Coopers Accountants (PWC), Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) seemed to be more systematic about recording policy dialogue equivalent information centrally. The CAB's annual report is based on a sound central recording system which reports the focus of its policy work, its activities and results[15]. The respondent at PWC noted that her organisation is committed to recording activities and client/stakeholder interaction for universal internal accessibility. The FCO is developing systemic stakeholder and scenario planning tools and systems for monitoring effects. The FCO projectises this kind of influencing work, adopting a 7–step approach to project cycle management[16].

4.12 The table below outlines some of the tools and systems used for planning, monitoring and storing information on policy dialogue.

Table 2. Summary of some of the tools and systems used for planning, monitoring and storing information on policy dialogue★

	Tools used to plan/strategise	Systems & methods for monitoring	Central information systems
DEFRA	• Scenario planning • Outcome mapping • Use a "Project Initiation Document" that justifies activities, rationale, ToR, scope, resources • Set milestones in MS Project • Stakeholder mapping and work with communications people	• Report on outcomes from campaigns • Report against milestones set in MS project	• Annual report • Shared stakeholder database that can quickly check who receives what and when
FCO	• Stakeholder analysis • Different scenarios and possible outcomes • Analyse the trade off between effort and return and estimate probability to show the cost benefit	• Traffic lights showing progress against stakeholders in influencing objectives	• System in development and not agreed yet
British Council	• Influencing maps • Stakeholder power/potential matrix	• Performance scorecards of impact	• Corporate project monitoring system
PWC	• Projectise influencing work	• Client satisfaction surveys (through telephone interviews). Client citations are gathered systematically	• Survey information is stored internally • Information gateways (managed by full time

---

15 The impact of our social policy work in 2006/07, Citizen's Advice Bureau
16 Stakeholder management: Analysis and influencing, I. M. Tully, Strategy adviser, policy planning staff 31st Oct 2007

		• to help monitor overall impact of influencing work	Knowledge Managers) • Databases by client and competency area • PWC staff can see all interactions that the organisation has had with a client
Action Aid	• Plan advocacy work as part of the organisational planning process when they set specific indicators e.g. planning for a specific meeting. Set out policy change goals (and indicators), objectives in support of policy change goals (indicators), activities, policy mapping, team members and roles in projects	• Monitor advocacy work (projectise) • Do evaluations for specific campaigns –set objectives, indicators and strategies. They meet every 2 months and look at the effect of influencing • They also ask for external stakeholders to give feedback	• No central system • Want to emphasise the learning and qualitative aspects of the initiative
Save the Children	• Advocacy toolkit provides optional tools for planning advocacy	• Global Impact Monitoring (very high level)	• The Learning and Impact Assessment Team are trying to systematise monitoring throughout the organisation
Tearfund	• An adapted logframe	• They monitor influencing through the Transformational Indicators Report which is used to help Tearfund assess progress towards achieving its long term vision • Moitor outcomes through "Stories of Change" • They do not monitor inputs/activities • Currently developing a tool (in draft at point of print) which captures different levels of engagement	• Stories and case studies that focus on impact in a non quantitative way • A central reporting and monitoring framework exists. This is not a database, rather more a management information system. • They do not aggregate information.
CAB	• Identify from client feedback where policy change most needed • Plan through firstly making a pitch to colleagues (why do this, timescale needed, prioritising influencing strategy etc) then pitch to Chief Executive and Director of Policy, then circulate for comment. This is then approved by Chief Exec and published (although some issues require more subtlety)	• Monitor change through a case study approach	• Annual Impact report presents aims, activities and results by issue • Case studies are held on the internal system
Christian Aid	• Plan advocacy work	• Report against advocacy work	• Do not have a system to keep information centralised
WWF	• Campaigning and advocacy is often based on a long period of research – tend to be long campaigns (some 30-40 years) • Use policy mapping tools and force-field analysis • Logframe • Policy mapping tools • Microsoft Project –expand the	• Quarterly reports with campaign team plus 2 weekly reports that take about 20 mins to write to the file	• Share information on campaigns on a shared drive

	logframe onto Microsoft Project Software with budgets		
Water aid	• Use tools such as Power Mapping • Mapping interlinkages and pressure points • Plan using a template that has outcomes, principle players and risks	• Use narrative reporting methods for reporting (eg debriefing to inform re-planning)	• No system so far

⋆ All of the information in this table is based on one to one semi-structured interviews with staff from each organisation. A comprehensive review of each organisation has not been carried out for the purpose of this report

4.13   The private sector was highly pragmatic in using policy influencing to effect company benefits, assigning teams and expecting results in the shortest time, bidding for, and assigning resources to do the job, and making use of telephone conferencing to keep international teams briefed on developments. Planning and monitoring for accountability was not a priority.

4.14   It was clear from the brief review of other organisations that many struggle with similar issues and are currently thinking through how they might plan and monitor policy dialogue initiatives better. Some noted that it would be useful to meet with DFID to share any good practice across the wider development community.

5. Tools and Process for Policy Dialogue Monitoring

5.1   The work identified several key elements that characterised the policy dialogue monitoring process, or were important practical tools for managing the process. Some of these elements are specific to DFID, some are universal and applied by many organisations. This section explores these key tools and processes in detail, identifying lessons and possibilities from both DFID's work, and from the experience of other organisations.

"Projectising" policy dialogue

5.2   The Policy Dialogue Pilot set out to test the extent to which policy dialogue interventions can be "projectised" – or managed through a project cycle management (PCM) approach. This implies an approach where initiatives are planned, monitored, adjusted accordingly, and evaluated. It requires project managers to strategise and map out a pathway to their end result, stating intended interim outcomes or milestones along the way by applying similar disciplines to "spending" activities.

5.3   Lack of experience and knowledge of tools and processes for project cycle management hampered some staff from adopting a project cycle management approach. Some see traditional project management as part of the "old" DFID world, feeling that current policy work is too unpredictable to apply the same tools. The table below compares the traditional approach which is part of the DFID culture, the cut down version as applied in the pilot, and other systems being used for managing policy work.

Table 3.   PCM and different types of DFID projects and programmes

Process / stage	DFID "traditional programme spend" initiatives	Policy dialogue initiatives in this pilot exercise	Other DFID policy dialogue initiatives
Planning and documentation	Over £100,000 = submit logframe, a concept note, project memorandum with a logframe, risk assessment, review plan and costs summarised in a project header sheet with a start and end date	No differentiation of requirement by level, all require a concept note logframe and project overview sheet, including a risk assessment and input costs, start and end date	Part of inter-governmental departmental strategies and frameworks, DFID Departmental or country office planning & performance frameworks. Initiatives that do not register in the above tend to use their own systems e.g. individually designed spreadsheets; Microsoft Project software
Management	Regular financial and monitoring reports, at least quarterly	Weekly or monthly meetings Activity log	Weekly, monthly or occasional meetings, frequency depends on intensity and profile of the work and perhaps the size of the team
Review	Annual Reviews Midterm output to purpose reviews normally involving external people. End of project completion reports	Reviews required and reporting on a cut down version of the routine annual reporting form as in column 1	No system
Evaluation	Reports by external evaluators	Option for evaluation	No system

5.4   The table above shows that policy dialogue initiatives currently have different corporate requirements to "spending" and projects. The table also highlights the gap in the review and evaluation process in current policy dialogue work.

5.5   The value of the project cycle management lies not simply with its requirements for recording information on the DFID management information system, but for the way in which this would encourage systematic planning, rigour in the approval process, a basis for monitoring and recording the reason for changes in approach, and finally for providing key data to enable evaluation and impact assessment. The pilot highlighted the tension between valuing and adopting this approach to PCM and attempting to institute it, through embedding the system within PRISM / ARIES. Requiring forms to be completed has been regarded as a potentially bureaucratic box ticking exercise rather than the recording of valuable thinking processes. However, it is hard to see how more rigorous planning and monitoring of policy dialogue can be instituted without any consistent form of documentation.

5.6   Professional staff should be able to summarise the purpose of their policy dialogue, predict a likely pathway to success and use that to review progress and explain any necessary changes to the original planning. They cannot be held accountable for reaching the outcomes entirely as predicted, but they should be able to explain why results have not been achieved or what other factors have led to success. There are both risks and benefits to insisting on recording this information on PRISM / ARIES. These are summarised in table 4 below.

Table 4.   Potential Risks and benefits of recording PCM information on PRISM / ARIES

PCM without a reporting requirement	Recording PCM on PRISM / ARIES
Some Potential Benefits • Staff have more time to do planning, monitoring and re-planning in their own way • Appreciation of the process and learning without time being spent to complete PRISM / ARIES documentation	**Some Potential Benefits** • Provides prompts for different aspects of PCM • Encourages staff to be systematic • Provides a record of the rationale for prioritising this work • Sustains the policy dialogue approach over periods of staff changes • Maintains the institutional memory through changes of approach • Provides data for subsequent evaluation and lesson learning • Can provide aggregated information for corporate accountability/results based management • Provides evidence for case studies and stories of impact
Some Potential Risks • People may not adopt the approach, as there is no official reporting requirement • People may forget to do certain aspects of PCM • There would be a need to have other mechanisms in place to encourage staff to do PCM • You lose the potential of wider lesson learning and data aggregation • Lack of experience of PCM or lack of line management support may prevent the work from being valued or carried out properly • Lack of consistent information for aggregation or comparison	**Some Potential Risks** • People lose sight of the importance of PCM as a management process and focus on form filling • They feel as though it is bureaucratically imposed, thus become alienated from process • Inaccurate information is recorded under duress • May take time away from "doing" the work • May prevent staff from taking risks for fear of being held accountable • Lack of experience of PCM, mean that invalid information is collected

5.7   From our interviews with the policy dialogue teams, we felt that the adapted PRISM form provided a prompt for the key aspects of PCM. Having said that, without training and line management back up to complete the forms, some aspects of PCM may not take place, for instance reviews would not necessarily be completed as there are no sanctions. This was also the experience with spending programmes until spending blocks were imposed.

5.8   Moreover, in the context of staff time pressures, it is crucial that any new systems are seen to add value to their work and the combined impact of DFID. Price Waterhouse Cooper's experience shows that effective information systems can be appreciated by staff even when they require regular inputs, as long as staff are beneficiaries of the information as well as suppliers.

5.9   It is the view of the consultants that policy dialogue can and should be projectised in a proportional way. The information required on the system should be a reasonable minimum and may be much less than that required for spending programmes. If sharing and storing the information on the system ensures focus, sustains the approach over periods of staff change and provides a mechanism for review then it will be valuable. However, it is not enough to rely on an information system to ensure staff complete different parts of the project cycle management process. Institutionalising a continually improving process of policy dialogue requires training, mentoring,

line management and the provision of alternative tools to supplement or even replace logframes, together with an understanding of why it is important and how it will help people to do their jobs.

Logframes and linearity

5.10   One of the premises for "projectising" policy dialogue work in the pilot was that staff would adapt the tools that they are currently using for "spending" activities. One of these tools is the logframe. Pilot teams were asked to complete and submit a logframe with their PRISM submission and concept note. Arguments were made for and against the use of the logframe. Some of the benefits and disadvantages of using a logframe for policy dialogue PCM are outlined in the table below.

Table 5.   Advantages and Disadvantages of logframes for Policy Dialogue work

Advantages of using logframe for policy dialogue PCM	Disadvantages of using logframe for policy dialogue PCM
It can be a good way to communicate important aspects of a project	A single vertical logic is too rigid for policy dialogue (there are often several possible trajectories)
It provides a useful forum for discussing and brainstorming as a team	It does not provide enough space for assumptions and risk to capture the fluidity, complexity and significance of the external environment.
It is a useful way to summarise a project on one page	Some people find the vertical logic and one page matrix difficult to read and too general to be meaningful unless you are familiar with subject.
Indicators can be mapped against a timeline	It does not deal well with progress over time
Davies (2001) found that some INGOs such as CIIR and Tearfund found the logframe was useful as it helped integrate advocacy activities with other project based activities within their organisation.	The stages tend to be generalised categories of events that don't reflect typical advocacy events, and there are often large gaps in the story in the movement from narrative to the assumptions column.(Davies)
Many DFID staff do know how to use the logframe in other contexts	Not all DFID staff have been trained in the logframe approach
It helps structure the systematic analysis required to ensure programme design or strategy is appropriate to meet stated objectives	It doesn't capture opportunistic reactions to external factors
It provides a useful platform for M&E	It doesn't capture individual competencies, skills and relationships that are key to successful dialogue
When used flexibly it can be a useful management tool	It is often used in an inflexible way, for a process that requires high degree of flexibility
It is a good prompt to encourage project managers to consider indicators and means of verification at the beginning of an initiative	Often it is just completed as the last part of a project submission process (therefore not owned or used as a management tool)

5.11   Adapting the logframe to suit the requirement of policy dialogue project management can be helpful. For example, it does not have to take the tabular format in the first instance, and there are a number of visual layouts that can be explored to encourage programme development teams to use the logframe as a design tool that also takes account of the timeline. A number of INGOS use an adapted logical framework that outlines the chain of cause and effect (Davies, 2001). For example Tearfund use two additional logframe columns: "*allies and opponents*" and "*policy targets*"[17].

5.12   There are advantages and disadvantages to using a logframe approach to manage policy dialogue initiatives. It is the view of the consultants that where staff find it useful they should use it, and where they find others tools more useful they should use them. However, there are two key issues that are worth highlighting. Firstly that it should not be assumed that all staff have received logframe training (particularly newer staff or those without country based experience). Secondly, that the logframe should not be used as a straitjacket that inhibits consideration of the complex nature of policy dialogue. It should be supplemented with other tools such as timelines, scenario plans, and stakeholder maps.

Tools used by other organisations for planning and managing policy dialogue

5.13   Ways in which other organisations plan and mangage their policy dialogue initiatives have been described in Section 4 above. DFID staff could be offered some of these either as an alternative to the logframe, or to complement the logframe. Some specific examples that DFID could consider have been described below

5.14   **Scenario planning** is a planning tool that can help teams to think through what the range of key actors may do and how DFID should act in a range of potential circumstances. The FCO use a form of Scenario Planning to define immediate outcomes and longer term outcomes. This enables them to address scenarios and set out the range of possible influencing outputs and outcomes.

5.15   **Using timelines** to map influencing activities against a timeline to capture predictable event opportunities like significant meetings where DFID may be able to contribute key evidence to encourage policy change.

5.16   **Outcome Mapping** is a methodological approach that has been developed by the Evaluation Department in the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada. It can be used to assess the intermediate changes that need to be attained in order to reach a specified vision. It takes account of 'boundary stakeholders' who may be susceptible to influence and who may in turn be more able to influence the intended audience. It is used to plan a path of change for an initiative, including defining the ultimate vision or change that constitutes success. It focuses on monitoring three key areas, including outcomes achieved in terms of the behaviour of partners, programme strategies and the organisational aspects of the initiative. Outcome mapping is particularly interesting for policy dialogue initiatives as it accepts social change as non-linear, complex and longer term (Noij, 2007).

---

[17] Interview

5.17   **Most Significant Change Technique** or **Stories of Change** can be a useful method for monitoring, evaluating and learning from past experience. ActionAid use narratives and critical stories of change as a tool for reporting impact, whilst CAFOD also uses an adaptation of Stories of Change to highlight good examples of successful policy influencing[18].   Section 5.32 to 5.37 elaborates more on a case study approach.

5.18   **Microsoft Project** software can also provide a useful facility for showing a critical path, outlining milestones and highlighting what factors are dependent on others. Some agencies, such as Water Aid and the UK Government's Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) make use of this software.

5.19   As with the logframe, most of these tools are used at the planning stage, but less often for monitoring. However, they can really come into their own for monitoring if they help staff to think through what there intended outcomes are, how they will get there and what indicators of success look like. What is key, is that there is a process put in place whereby staff report back against their intended plans, outcomes and indicators. From the interviews with other organisations, and within DFID, this monitoring element does not appear to happen automatically.

5.20   To summarise, there are plenty of good tools and methods that DFID staff could build into their project cycle management process. They do not necessarily have to be applied exclusively. Giving staff the choice and training them in the different methods will help equip them to manage their policy dialogue processes effectively.

Attribution and Impact

5.21   Attribution can present a problem in the complex area of policy influence. Multiple factors and multiple actors may have an effect on policy change and no single agency could or should seek to claim prime responsibility for impact. The important point here is that if DFID is contributing resources to a particular policy dialogue process, then it should be able to name the kind of outcomes and impact it is hoping to achieve and map the effects of its contribution. In most cases it will be impossible to achieve high level results without working with others. Nevertheless DFID should be able to make the case for how well it has used its comparative advantage to affect contributory changes. In some cases the desired outcomes and impact may not be achieved at all, or are achieved by unexpected interventions which have nothing to do with DFID's efforts. These events should be acknowledged so that any useful lessons can be learnt.. It should also be acknowledged that policy change, like most development, is a risky business. The realistic objective is not to reach every target set, but to reach a good percentage of them and manage risk well. Managing risk should be considered and incorporated into managing policy dialogue.

5.22   There is a danger of setting outcomes too high in the planning process so that the relationship between DFID's efforts and the changes being sought may not seem plausible. DFID's policies and partnership papers (for example Institutional Strategy Papers) sometimes set inputs and outputs too 'far away' from one another. Filling the missing middle by laying out the interim steps is a useful way of linking DFID's contribution to high level outputs in a more understandable way.

---

[18] Interview

Stakeholder management

5.23   Some of the pilot participants felt that there were benefits from sharing information on policy dialogue initiatives through a central system. For example, the activity logging section on PRISM / ARIES could hold information of value to others in the organisation, such as the outcomes of meetings and which stakeholders have been involved in them.   However, most of those interviewed did not see the value of developing individual activity reporting into a more comprehensive stakeholder management system. They simply sent emails, for example on results of key meetings, to those whom they thought might be interested.

5.24   DEFRA and PWC both use stakeholder management systems that serve slightly different purposes. Following lessons learned from the foot and mouth crisis, DEFRA has developed a comprehensive stakeholder management database. They use a simple database that is updated regularly and has a communications function which is linked to email, faxes and SMS data so that information can be sent out quickly if necessary. They can quickly check who received what and when, to make sure that they do not overload stakeholders.

5.25   DEFRA has also recognised the importance of segmenting stakeholders. Their policy dialogue teams hold workshops to map stakeholders, working with communications people who act as facilitators across the Department. This enables them to advise who the top stakeholders are, and who they should be communicating with regularly. They also know who the key people in relation to particular themes and who should be consulted at what point in the policy cycle.

5.26   PWC also use a centralised system where all documents relating to a particular client are stored together, and any PWC employee can see all the interactions colleagues have had with that client[19]. Each client has a specific account manager and all interactions with that client are known to that person, who can be sought out for advice. Interestingly we were told by a PWC staff member that PWC staff do not generally find recording their activity information with particular clients to be a chore without benefits, since they regularly make use of the rich data on the client database to assist their own work.

5.27   The Citizens Advice Bureau, by contrast, rely heavily on institutional memory to make effective contact with relevant stakeholders. This seems to work well for them, as they tend to retain staff in the same jobs for long periods of time within their policy group. Each staff member has built up an extensive thematic network of relationships and a sound knowledge base in that thematic area to make use of around particular policy issues.

5.28   DFID is an organisation characterised by high staff turnover (for example, three of the ten pilot team representatives have left DFID since we first engaged with them). Staff are being rotated to other parts of the organisation regularly. Some external respondents pointed out their frustration with the need to try to re-brief new DFID staff at meetings and the tedium of re-establishing new relationships as staff change. Given that successful policy dialogue often requires developing relationships, and having knowledge about the subject area, consideration could be given as to how DFID can make the most of the existing knowledge about stakeholders and past communications for more effective policy dialogue. DFID's report on influencing work in EMAAD (EMAAD, 2007)

---

19 PWC are currently involved in a contract to look at DFID Stakeholder Management systems

found that one of the areas that DFID needed to strengthen was to develop a more coordinated communications strategy in engaging with partner institutions. DFID top management has also recognized this, and following a recent stakeholder survey (DFID, 2008) they have given the task of improving stakeholder management to a senior civil servant.

Tracking activities – A useful "audit trail"?

5.29   Many of the pilot teams did not track their activities routinely or found it a difficult process, without obvious benefit to their work. However, the two teams that did systematically track activities (one using PRISM and the other using an Excel spreadsheet) did find the process useful. They noted that it provided an audit trail and reminder of what they had done, was a useful communication tool with colleagues and other stakeholders involved in the initiative, and helped them to think more carefully about next steps.

5.30   Since many policy dialogue activities tend to be ad hoc rather than planned, this implies that tracking what has actually been done can be a good way to help teams to review the efficacy and efficiency of their efforts. One of the Pilot Teamsfound this; they used an activity tracking chart for communicating and monitoring with other Whitehall Departments about the Environmental Transformation Fund. Other organisations, such as ODI and PWC, routinely log their activities.

5.31   Most staff already write up "back to office reports", and store them on QUEST, which suggests that developing a more standardised approach to integrate with this process would make sense. As a minimum it should be relatively straightforward for staff to save back to office reports in a way that easily enables other colleagues working on a similar topic, or with similar stakeholders to access it. In the light of the feedback from the pilot teams, it would be useful to present some optional tools for tracking policy dialogue activities. Where teams find it useful as an "audit trail" of what they have done in order to feed into their ongoing project management they should be given support to finding appropriate tools. The pilot activity log coud be one good model.

Case studies and success stories of impact

5.32   The two main objectives for developing the policy dialogue pilot process were; to "increase the effectiveness of policy dialogue"; and to "measure and demonstrate the impact of DFID's policy dialogue activities". Both of these imply an element of knowledge management, lesson learning and understanding what has worked well, and what has worked less well.

5.33   One approach for improving organisational monitoring would be to develop a *case study approach* to highlight and develop specific instances of where policy dialogue initiatives have been successful or less successful. This would provide examples of where DFID has contributed to real change *and* profile some of the PRD work. Collecting stories of impact, would provide an opportunity to communicate to others what DFID has achieved in the area of policy dialogue. However, it would not be appropriate for measuring and monitoring inputs and effort.

5.34   CAFOD achieve this through use of a "Stories of Change" approach for its Impact Reports. Tearfund also carry out one piece of research around a specific advocacy area annually. DFID's reporting on the IDA[20] Replenishment Process (described in Clarke 2008 and also covered in the ODI Training module for DFID) is one example of where DFID has adopted this type of approach. This provided a useful case study for a high profile piece of work, with examples of good practice in terms of influencing tactics, approaches used, outcomes achieved, methods for planning, strategising and monitoring the process and some lessons learned (ODI training programme, 2008; Clarke, 2008)

5.35   CAB takes this approach one step further, and use case study stories in an impact report[21]. They have well developed systems to collate case studies from all their advice centres. They then look at the policy implications, work on the issue and report impact, using the report to present aims, activities and results by issue, and monitor change through a case study approach. This report specifically highlights the difference that their policy work has made throughout the year at an aggregated level. These changes are linked to evidence provided by the Citizens Advice Bureaux, advocacy by everyone in the CAB service, and national campaigns.

5.36   The Canadian International Development Agency also refer to case studies of positive policy experiences in countries targeted for policy reform and workshops on policy change to improve organisational capacity and practice[22].

5.37   A paper from DFID's EMAAD[23] assessed tools and pathways to successful influencing based on a number of policy dialogue case studies. They used a basic questionnaire that asked for information around the programme's goal, indicators, focus on influencing, whether intended outcomes had been achieved, milestones, costs and inputs etc. The EMAAD report also noted the potential lessons that could be learned from "failed" influencing initiatives.

5.38   This inductive approach to monitoring is different from the current DFID PCM approach in that it does not rely on setting objectives, measuring results against them and then adjusting progress. Nor does it provide a pre-project cost benefit analysis or any assessment of inputs. However, it does provide opportunities to learn from successes or failures after the event and can be a good way to demonstrate where outcomes have happened.

The cost–benefit analysis of policy dialogue

5.39   Cost-benefit analysis is rarely attempted by DFID, INGOs or other donor organisations in the context of policy dialogue work (Clarke, 2008). DFID's Strategy Unit (Clarke 2008) found that the only organisation consulted who carried out a full value-for-money analysis in this area was Shell. However, although actual against intended benefits are less tangible to capture, actual staff

---

20 This refers to the funding negotiations prior to 'replenishing' the coffers of the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA). DFID set up a 2 person team to lead the negotiation and to promote four main DFID objectives related to the Paris Declaration, fragile states, and strengthening the international development system. http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,menuPK:51235940~pagePK:118644~piPK:51236156~theSitePK:73154,00.html for further information

21 The Citizens advice bureau, The Impact of Our social policy work in 2006/2007

22 Canadian Internatinoal Development Agency (2002)
23 EMAAD 2007

time input as a cost should be easier. In his paper, Clarke suggests that it is possible to adopt a simple cost effectiveness analysis in campaigning work where some basic information on the costs of activities are collected and these are compared to the outputs achieved and number of people reached (Clarke, 2008)

5.40   In practice the pilot teams struggled to quantify their planned investment in terms of staff time. This can be explained by two factors. Firstly that DFID staff are unused to considering staff time as a cost that should be quantified, and secondly when the path ahead is unclear it is difficult to estimate how much staff time and resources will needed to achieve the desired outcomes. In practice, managers make these decisions implicitly as they prioritise staff time against competing priorities, however, this is not always done on the basis of a transparent analysis. Recording time against policy initiatives would be a useful way of systematically reviewing the most effective use of staff resources over time.

5.41   The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offers an interesting model. When CAB staff prepare a policy campaign, they first do a pitch to their immediate colleagues (including information on why they want to do the work, based on systematically collected evidence from their advice staff working with the public, the timescales needed, and the strategy to be undertaken). This is then presented to the Chief Executive and Director of Policy for critical feedback, and finally to other colleagues for comment. The final draft with evidence is produced and documented on the system[24]. This brings policy dialogue work into a similar approval process as DFID has for spending projects, in that staff have to justify projected spend early on in the process.

5.42   Ultimately, cost-benefit decisions will depend on what information is available in order to make a judgement as to whether a policy initiative should be carried out or not. Management will be looking at whether the influencing effort is likely to yield high benefits in terms of Public Service Agreements[25], and whether the cost input is proportional in relation to these benefits, given competing priorities. Regular review information will be useful to provide information as to whether the initiative remains sufficiently on course to justify continued staff input. However, as mentioned above, there are so many other factors that will influence success (staff skills, external influences, luck etc) that cost-benefit analysis in this area is likely to remain a blunt tool.

DFID performance systems

5.43   DFID has its own organisational performance system that should encompass all work within DFID. In theory every staff member should see the link between their own efforts and delivering some contribution to the Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSO) and the Public Service Agreement (PSA). Figure 2 below shows how work on policy dialogue should report into the DFID performance system.

---

[24] Interview with CAB staff
[25] See http://www.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/psa-sda.asp for further information about the DFID Public Service Agreements

Figure 1.   How individuals and teams working on policy dialogue feed into DFID's performance reporting systems
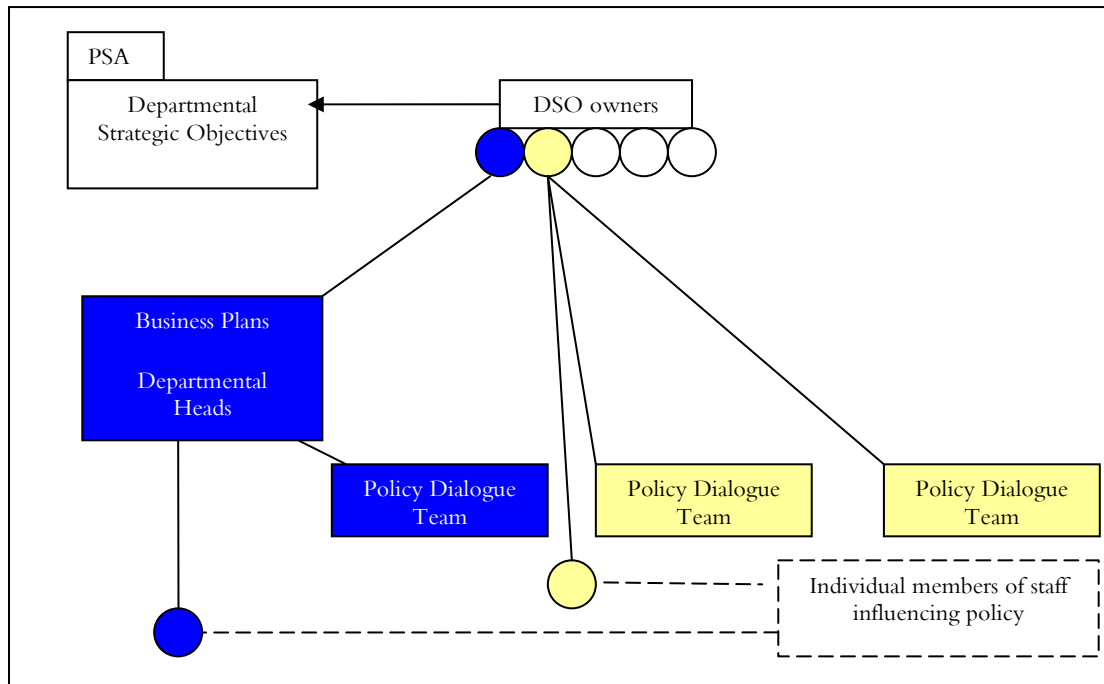
Key: The work highlighted in blue shows where the policy work should fall within and be reported through the Departmental Head's workplan. The policy work highlighted in yellow shows where policy work related to a particular Departmental Strategic Objective may be scattered across a number of different DFID Departments or Country Offices.
Source: Consultants' analysis based on DSO reporting system

5.44   The yellow scenario here implies that there may be several different policy dialogue teams and individuals contributing impact information of interest to the DSO owner, but this work may not be directly line managed by the DSO owner. The blue scenario shows a clear line management relationship where the Department Head would be interested in the progress that staff under his or her control are making for departmental reporting reasons, and because he or she also manages the resources that make that work possible. The Departmental Head would want to know about progress to report upwards and to justify the continued use of resources.

5.45   The regular line management reporting arrangements are already being challenged to find the right matrix reporting system to allow for cross DFID reporting against the DSOs. This is a particular challenge for Policy and Research Division because much of their work cuts across the lines.

5.46   If the work of policy teams is already being monitored effectively through an existing performance framework at Department, Country Office or cross-Whitehall level, there should be no need to duplicate arrangements. However reporting may be so generalised at Departmental or country level that it does not provide a useful monitoring and reporting system for the policy team to review its work critically. Individual performance reviews are also insufficient. It is the 'missing middle' that appears to need attention.

Dealing with sensitive issues

5.47   Two main issues arose in the course of this study. The first one was around how to capture on a centralised system the often intangible, sensitive factors that may contribute to a successful policy dialogue initiative such as personalities, relationships and "off the record" conversations. All

DFID's communications, whether email, on PRISM/ARIES or QUEST, are subject to public scrutiny (Freedom of Information), and as such staff recognise the need for caution in writing sensitive information down. Information of this kind is best shared in face-to-face staff discussion.

5.48   Secondly, it is sometimes counter productive to be publicly explicit about policy dialogue objectives. This is particularly so for staff in Country Offices, where a professional judgement has to be made about how far to be open about intentions. Publicly associating particular policy aims with the UK Government may mean that they lose support in some circumstances.

5.49   In the design of any new system for planning and monitoring policy dialogue, these two factors should be taken into consideration.

The "old" and "new" ways of working

5.50   DFID's organisational culture has been dominated by financial systems for monitoring spending and qualitative systems for assessing the effectiveness of that spending. Systems for designing, managing and monitoring projects all relate to project cycle management (PCM) with logframes as the predominant tool. Although DFID made some earlier attempts to look at how to measure the effectiveness of influencing work (Spicer, 2001) the findings were not incorporated into DFID's monitoring systems.

5.51   There appears to be an advantage to applying PCM-type processes to policy dialogue ("projectising"), as it encourages staff to see staff time as a finite resource to be managed with the same care as financial resources, distributed against agreed priorities. The rationale is that, since policy dialogue has a staff cost, it needs to be monitored as carefully as "spending" programmes.

5.52   If DFID's priorities are changing away from projects towards larger scale disbursements and greater emphasis on policy dialogue, should the culture also change? What are the wider issues about the kind of staff skills required and the questions of retention, recruitment and training? Should new instruments be used that reflect the future rather than adapting tools from the past? Would it be helpful to change the language and talk of policy strategies and scenario plans rather than logframes? The answer depends on the rate of change required and the willingness and availability of senior managers to manage a change of base systems when DFID staff are already coping with so much other change, high staff turnover and constant departmental reorganisation.

6. Conclusions, Recommendations and Issues to Consider

Previously, DFID's internal systems and performance frameworks allowed for policy dialogue information to be captured across a variety of projects and programmes. However, this was not planned or undertaken in a systematic or consistent manner, so records for comparing policy dialogue efforts in relation to results were not routinely available for meta-evaluation or for broader lesson learning.

The 'policy dialogue monitoring pilot' evaluated in this report was developed to address this gap, by exploring whether policy dialogue monitoring could be integrated within DFID's existing and planned management information systems (PRISM and ARIES).

The following conclusions and recommendations are based on our evaluation of the pilot programme, and of our analysis of policy dialogue monitoring within other areas of DFID, and within other organisations.

Recommendations

1. **SYSTEMATISING POLICY DIALOGUE MONITORING:**
   Experience from the pilot and from other organisations indicates that, despite its often intangible nature, policy work can be successfully "projectised", with staff time and other resources committed against a clear strategy to achieve desired results. Implementing a monitoring process for policy dialogue will help staff to both learn and manage their projects better. This will ultimately contribute to more effective practice and better results.

   DFID already has a system of project cycle management and a culture of storing information on its management systems. We feel that although this system should not necessarily be followed slavishly, it can be adapted to the new culture where policy dialogue is increasingly becoming a predominant feature of DFID's work.

   It is recommended that DFID staff plan and monitor policy dialogue initiatives systematically and use this as an opportunity to improve practice through greater accountability and learning.

   Group responsible: DFID Senior Management

2. **Integration with management information systems:**
   It is recommended that a minimum of core information on policy dialogue initiatives be stored on DFID's centralised system (ARIES). See Annex 1 for a proposed revised version of the form used in the pilot. If completed effectively, this could:

   - Act as a prompt to encourage staff to consider certain key points of the project cycle management process
   - Provide information for accountability
   - Enable managers to have an overview of policy dialogue work across DFID for corporate Departmental Strategic Objective reporting and the management of human resources
   - Provide the basis for knowledge management that could be further developed for greater organisation learning
   - Encourage staff to focus on outcomes and the potential impact of policy dialogue work.

   Group responsible: FCDP

3. **Follow Up Work**

    <u>It is recommended </u>that the Conclusion and Recommendations of this study are presented to, and discussed by, DFID senior managers and the Development Committee to enable decision to be made for the next steps.

    Group responsible: FCDP

Issues to Consider

4. **Selection of tools:**

    Some staff are familiar with DFID's systems, and find the logframe approach useful for planning and monitoring policy dialogue initiatives. From our findings we noted that others do not find the logframe useful for policy dialogue work.

    DFID could consider providing staff with logframe training and/or be provided with a choice of tools to plan, monitor and review their initiatives. This may include some of the following:

    - Scenario planning
    - Outcome mapping
    - Logframing
    - Using more informal methods, such as after-action reviews and regular team meetings
    - Lessons and information about good practice in policy dialogue can be collected through developing specific case studies and evaluations

    The benefits and challenges of the various tools could be reviewed after an agreed period to see which are the most helpful.

5. **Induction and additional support:**

    Staff working on policy dialogue initiatives will require support to apply project cycle management to their policy dialogue work with at least some of the following support mechanisms:

    - Induction and training in PCM for policy dialogue (planning, monitoring and reviewing tools, methods and approaches).
    - Provision of support to plan, monitor and review the initiatives from line managers
    - Support to policy dialogue teams by either another member of staff or an external trainer to help them to think through their planning process and act as a challenge in their monitoring and reviewing process, wherever this is not being done by the line
    - A guide or manual that provides staff with some basic tools for planning and managing policy dialogue work
    - The development of skills and competencies for policy dialogue work across DFID

6. *Leadership:*

    A team with both sufficient resources and senior management representation, will be needed to guide the piloting of any new policy dialogue monitoring processes, including any change processes associated with rolling it out across DFID.

    In the short term, high level leadership will be required to revise ARIES, embed any potential new system, and encourage basic compliance with the new system. In the long term, the organisation should be aiming to reach a point where the policy dialogue reporting system becomes institutionalised alongside the systems established for programme spending.

7. **Stakeholder management:**
   Given the high staff turnover within DFID and the importance of building relationships and understanding stakeholders, DFID should *continue to consider how to manage its interface with its key stakeholders better.* Looking at DEFRA and PWC stakeholder management systems might be a good starting point for this.

8. **Proportionality:**
   In order to be proportionate in the balance between the policy dialogue work and recording information about it, the requirements for capturing data in the pilot have been revised. It is not appropriate for all policy dialogue initiatives to be captured on the system in the same way.

   We suggest a *typology of those which require basic planning and monitoring information to be stored on the system and those which require more in-depth planning and more intensive monitoring and evaluation.* Policy dialogue managers should agree with their line managers which areas of work should comply with basic monitoring requirements (Table 6, level 1) and those new areas of policy dialogue that should complete additional documentation (Table 6, level 2).

Table 6.   Planning requirements for different types of policy dialogue initiatives

	Type of activity		Size (resource input)		
	Reactive	Proactive	Less than 50% of one person	Between 50% of 1 person and 2 people	More than 2 people over a year
Minimum information	Captured in Dept Business Plan	N/A	N/A	Level 1 Basic core info[26]	Level 2 Adapted concept note & basic core info
Planning instruments	DSO /dept report	DSO /dept report	DSO /dept report	Approach data	Logframe, outcome mapping, scenario planning etc
Reviewing instruments	Line management meetings and reports	Line management meetings and reports	Line management meetings and reports	Proposed approach and intended milestones	Ditto

9. **Existing performance frameworks:**
   Consideration should be given to how the policy dialogue planning and monitoring system would *complement and contribute to existing performance* frameworks and line management

---

[26] See Annex 1 – the basic core information to be entered into ARIES/PRSIM

processes to be effective, including information about relevant DSOs for example.

10. Options matrix:

To assist with the planning process, an options matrix for the change process has been outlined in Annex 2. If it is agreed to proceed with rolling out some sort of monitoring, the following steps will be required:

- Communicate the role and purpose of the new process, and map out the change process. Both senior managers and policy team leaders need to agree on the basic levels of planning and monitoring necessary
- The implications of providing training, guidance and developing a toolkit need to be costed to agree what is feasible.
- Continue to test the new process with a wider sample of policy dialogue types including all new policy dialogue initiatives, supporting those teams with training and other support measures as outlined above. Evaluating pilots using different approaches and tools would provide a good picture of what works well and what works less well.
- Present a paper to DFID's Investment Committee with options for updating ARIES and Programme Guidance
- Managers should provide ongoing support to the policy dialogue teams and require quarterly review reports on the system
- A monitoring specialist should check compliance and review the emerging first round documentation in order to recommend and support improvements, evaluating the extent to which the developing system is considered useful and user friendly

References

AusAID, (2008) *Preparing an Annual Programme Performance Report* (Draft)

http://www.ode.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/guidance_program.pdf

Barr, J & Charlotte Vaillant. (2008) *DFID Country Programme Evaluations – Synthesis of 2006/2007 Evaluations*, ITAD Evaluation Report EV683

Brock, K & E. Harrison. (2006) *Linking research, policy and livelihoods: challenges and contradictions,* Department for International Development:
http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/influencing-policy

CAB, *The impact of our social policy work in 2006/07*:
http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/pdf_impact_social_policy_2006-2007.pdf

Canadian International Development Agency. (2002) *What We're Learning About Policy Dialogue*, Performance Review Branch

Chapman, J & A. Wameyo (2001) *Monitoring and evaluating advocacy: a scoping study: How NGOs assess advocacy and some recommendations*, ActionAid International:
http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/influencing-policy&id=22687&type=Document

Chapman J & Antonella Mancini Eds. (2005) *Critical Webs of Power and Change – a Resource pack for planning, reflecting and learning in people-centred advocacy*, Action Aid International

Clarke, J. (2008) *DFID Strategy Unit Issue Identification Brief Series No. 3. Measuring and Monitoring Influencing – what can DFID do?*

Davies R. (2001) *Evaluating the Effectiveness of DFID's Influence with Multilaterals Part A: A Review of NGO Approaches to the Evaluation of Advocacy Work*

Department for International Development (2005) *Monitoring and evaluating information and communication for development (ICD) programmes: DFID guidelines for the M&E of information and communication for development programmes*: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/icd-guidelines.pdf

De Toma, C & Louisa Gosling. (2005) *Advocacy Toolkit – A collection of tools to help plan, implement monitor and evaluate advocacy*, Save the Children

EMAD, Multilateral Development Banks Virtual Policy Team. (2007) *Estimating the impact of influencing across EMAAD – a preliminary "snapshot"*

Hickey, S (2008) *DFID Evaluation Working Paper, Promoting Social Protection and Social Transfers: DFID and the Politics of Influencing Draft Executive Summary* (forthcoming: DFID Evaluation Department)

INTRAC as a source of training: http://www.intrac.org/training.php?id=16

Jochen Jesinghaus, *Indicators for Decision-Making*, European Commission, JRC/ISIS, TP 361, I-21020 Ispra (VA): http://esl.jrc.it/envind/idm/idm_e_.htm

Kelly, L, *International Advocacy: Measuring performance and effectiveness*:
http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/distribution/20021030_kelly_linda.pdf

LEAP IMPACT: *Aims to improve the institutional performance of monitoring and evaluation practice related to information services, information products and information projects. It is open to all individuals and organisations interested in the evaluation of information*:
www.dgroups.org/groups/leap/impact/index.cfm

Mably, P (2006) *IDRC Working Papers on Globalization, Growth and Poverty, Evidence Based*

Advocacy: NGO Research Capacities and Policy Influence in the Field of International Trade: http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11727031851GGPWP4-NGO.pdf

Micah (2006), *Network Reporting Guidelines*, Tearfund

Mundy, J; Pearson, M; Walford, R; Smith, I; Edda (2002) *HPD Lesson Learning in Influencing Study*

Nash, R; A. Hudson; C. Luttrell (2006) *Mapping political context: a toolkit for civil society organisations: Guide to assessing political influence in the policy process*, ODI: http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/Political_Context_Toolkit_web.pdf

Odi Tools http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Tools/Index.html

Perkin, E; J. Court (2005) *Making networks work in international development and influencing policy*, Overseas Development Institute, London: http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/WP252.pdf

Price Waterhouse Coopers. (2008) DFID Stakeholder Survey http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/stakeholder-survey-2008-report.pdf

Spicer, Emma (2004) *Building Consensus on Poverty Reduction: A Review of DFID's Advocacy and Influencing Activities DFID Working Paper 1*

Triple Line & Acclaim, *Improving the impact of Advocacy Initiatives: Chapter 7 – Planning and Monitoring Advocacy Interventions, Civil Society Umbrella Programme*, DFID Uganda (unpublished)

Tully, I M (2007) *Stakeholder management: Analysis and influencing,* DFID

Watkins, F (2003) *Influencing and Partnership Network DFID – Influencing in DFID*, DRAFT report

Yogesh Kumar, *Monitoring and Evaluation of Advocacy Campaigns: Opportunities and Challenges*, Samarthan, Bhopal
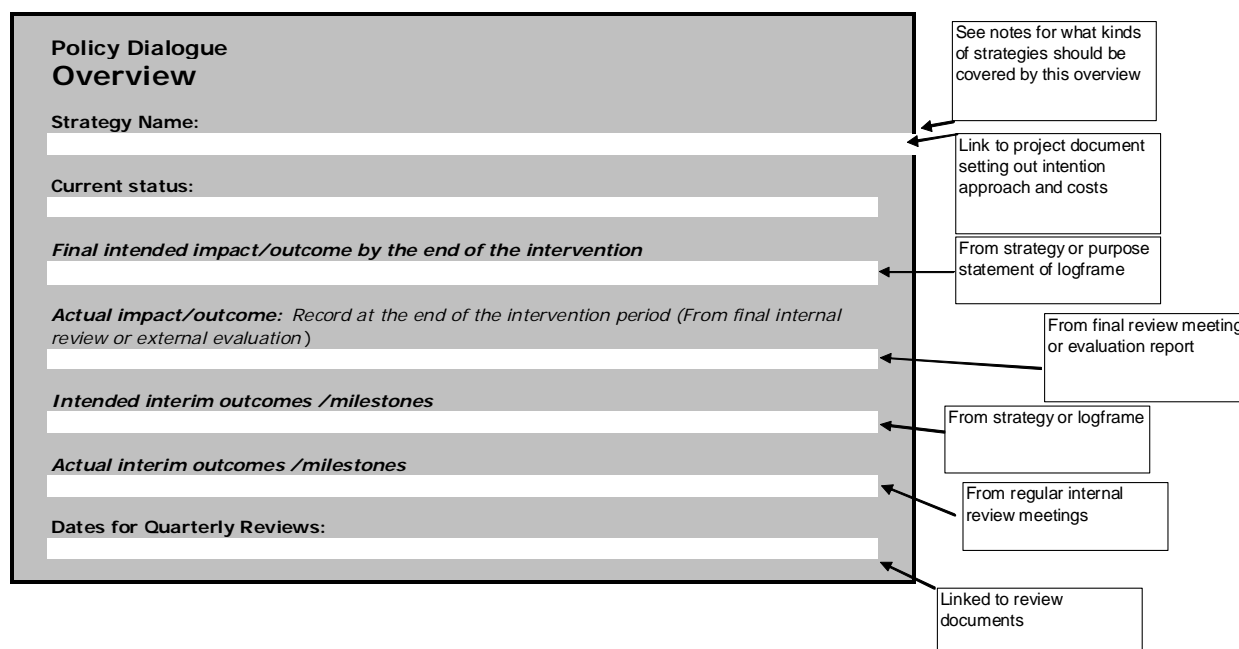
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/psa-sda.asp

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,menuPK:51235940~pagePK:118644~piPK:51236156~theSitePK:73154,00.html

ANNEX 1: PROPOSED PRISM / ARIES TEMPLATE

NB: These are snapshots based on the original form used by the Policy Dialogue Pilot. There are 3 individual forms:

- Overview form

- Strategy information form

- Activity information / activity log

Overview form:

Policy Dialogue	See notes for what kinds of strategies should be covered by this overview
Overview	
Strategy Name:	Link to project document setting out intention approach and costs
Current status:	
Final intended impact/outcome by the end of the intervention	From strategy or purpose statement of logframe
Actual impact/outcome: *Record at the end of the intervention period (From final internal review or external evaluation)*	From final review meeting or evaluation report
Intended interim outcomes /milestones	From strategy or logframe
Actual interim outcomes /milestones	From regular internal review meetings
Dates for Quarterly Reviews:	Linked to review documents

Strategy information form:

Policy Dialogue Strategy Information

Title of policy dialogue initiative :

Purpose: *Why is this work being done by DFID? E.g. Purpose statement from the logframe*

Expected impact: *What did you expect this work to achieve and how would this impact on poverty in concrete terms?*

Target Audiences for Influencing: *Multiple target audiences are allowed - fill the list down as appropriate*

1

2

3

Status of Policy Dialogue Element within the Strategy: *To distinguish projects where the main focus is policy dialogue with those that have an element of policy dialogue alongside other aid instruments such as budget support and technical assistance*

Start Date:

End Date:

Size *(staffing)* **:** *how many days input?*

Year	SCS		A Band		B Band		C Band	
	Est	Act	Est	Act	Est	Act	Est	Act
08/09								
09/10								
10/11								

Total staff cost:

Policy Team:
Policy Manager and current home Department in DFID:

Policy Officer:

Policy Staff:

Partner Institutions: *Who is the team working with outside DFID to influence the target organisations)?*

Non Staff Cost: *Estimated £ over life of project (including: travel and subsistence, other consultancy and communication costs)*

Country: *Does the strategy involve working with particular countries?*

Strategy information form (continued):

Main MDGs: *Multiple MDGs are allowed - fill the list down as appropriate. Also note if it is Principal or Significant*

1	Income Poverty and Hunger	*P or S?*
2		*P or S?*
3		*P or S?*

Main Departmental Strategic Objectives: *Multiple MDGs are allowed - fill the list down as appropriate*

1		*P or S?*
2		*P or S?*
3		*P or S?*

Risk: *State the level of risk*

Main Reason for the Risk Status Assigned Above

Approach: *What types of approach/activities are planned to engage in dialogue and to influence? Multiple aid instruments are allowed - fill the list down as appropriate*

1

2

3

Approach Description: *"The intended storyline" Describe in a few sentences how DFID's efforts (the approach/activities) are intended to achieve the impact*

Evaluation Date: *Date scheduled for any <u>external</u> evaluation*

Policy Theme: *Target area of policy*

Value for Money Score: Assign a score to the value of the estimated impact on poverty of implementing the policy change in relation to the cost and likelihood of being able to manage the risk *(Highest score is 1)*

Justification for the Value for Money Score: *Write a sentence to explain the reason for your score*

Activity Information / Activity Log:

Policy Dialogue *Audit Trail*
Activity Information

| What short term or long term goal prompted the visit/ meeting? |
| Who are you engaging with? |
| e.g. Country visit, Informal meeting, Conference/ Seminar, High level Meeting |
| How successful was this event in meeting its objectives? |
| How successful was this event in meeting its objectives? |
| Brief outlines of outcomes |

Activity Title*	Purpose*	Start Date*	Institutions*	DFID Lead*	Summary*	Activity Type	End Date	DFID Attendees	Other Attendees	Purpose Score	Purpose Assessment	Actions/ Next steps	Related events

* Denotes mandatory field

ANNEX 2: OPTIONS MATRIX

	Option 1 No change from existing practice	**Option 2** All significant policy dialogue initiatives to be planned, monitored and reviewed effectively, and staff to be save this information on a centralised system	**Option 2 a** – staff offered and encouraged to use a number of tools	**Option 2 b** – staff encouraged primarily to use the logframe and mirror of current "spend" PCM approach
Option scenario	• Most current managers of policy dialogue do not use a PCM approach • Teams use tools from different stages of project cycle management that they are familiar with. • The tools that they are using depend on previous experience of advisors • Adhoc planning and reviewing, and both are encouraged, but many in PRD do not review and evaluate policy dialogue initiatives • Likely to be more planning and reviewing in country offices, but less in UK offices	• Concept note, planning and monitoring tool, annual reviews will be required for larger initiatives • Planning and monitoring required for smaller initiatives • All policy dialogue initiatives of a certain size to be systematically planned, monitored and reviewed, and saved on the system	*Option 2 plus:* planning and monitoring tools to be offered include: • Outcome mapping • Scenario planning • Logframe • Adapted logframe • After action reviews The different approaches should be tested and evaluated	*Option 2 plus:* • Logframe will be the main tool used • Submission of PM, appraisal document, logframe • Evaluations of major initiatives where there are significant commitments of staff time & other resources This approach should be further tested and evaluated with a pilot.
Information saved and stored on ARIES	Other than larger initiatives, no corporate tracking of resources, outcomes or impact.	Basic template to be completed to start building up a picture of what resources are being committed to policy dialogue and potential outcomes and impact of work (see annex 1)	*See Option 2*	*Option 2 plus* • All policy dialogue initiatives to be recorded on PRISM in a similar way to "spend" projects, with an adapted template as outlined in this paper • Approval process, reviews & PCRs
Compliance requirements	Some high level reporting requirements (contribution to DSO) Some requirement if part of a large initiative (as for example with the China Country Programme work)	• All proactive activities with more than 50% of staff time (see table 6 in the report) to carry out basic planning and monitoring • Policy Dialogue included in HR performance management – at least 1 objective should be around policy dialogue with a clear plan as to what, how and when results are expected • Effective planning, monitoring and recording on the system to be part of Director Plans, and seen as a key corporate objective	*See Option 2*	*See Option 2*
Risk	• This option will have implications on the quality of policy dialogue work • Not capturing lessons, and reflecting on processes could make policy dialogue work increasingly inefficient • Lack of information about resources and outcomes from policy dialogue work	• Without high level commitment and backing, will not succeed • unless seen as integral to managing for development results agenda then risks not having buy in organisationally • Without clear messages about why policy dialogue needs to be tracked on ARIES, there	*Option 2 plus:* Offering too many tools may be confusing to some staff	*Option 2 plus:* • Even with good training and induction, not all staff find logframe thinking and approach useful, and find it too restrictive. • The merits of using logframes for policy dialogue work are

	Option 1 No change from existing practice	Option 2 All significant policy dialogue initiatives to be planned, monitored and reviewed effectively, and staff to be save this information on a centralised system	Option 2 a – staff offered and encouraged to use a number of tools	Option 2 b – staff encouraged primarily to use the logframe and mirror of current "spend" PCM approach
	• Lower staff morale as they are unable to see the benefits of their work • Lack of accountability and audit trail for policy dialogue work	is a danger that staff will not comply or buy in to saving the information on a centralised system • If it takes too long to roll out, it will lose impetus and not be seen as a priority		debatable – see section 4.1.(b) for advantages and disadvantages of the logframe • There would be a potential duplication of existing systems
Benefits	• In the short term this is the "easy" option as it will require less resources and staff time input • Staff will not be distracted from other ongoing change initiatives	• Will enable staff and managers to understand the impact of policy dialogue work and their contribution to it. • Will help staff to improve in their policy dialogue work, be smarter about engagement and do it more effectively • If ARIES/PRISM is used effectively will enable staff to be "smarter" about other policy dialogue initiatives. • Staff view their time as a finite resource, and therefore increase efficiency	*Option 2 plus:* • Offering several tools to plan, monitor & review policy dialogue initiatives reduces dependency on the logframe (given the findings that many PRD staff have little logframe experience & that logframes are not always the most suitable approach for this type of work) • Offering different tools allows for different approaches & ways of thinking to planning & reviewing	*Option 2 plus:* • Everyone will adopt the same approach, so there will be a common organisational understanding • It might be easier to be more specific about the process, and less confusing if fewer tools are used. • Tracking this work on PRISM will make it easier to monitor compliance
Human Resources required	No extra resources required in the short term.	• Champion to work with & support teams (based in CPGD with a member of EvD to monitor and collate lesson learning and impact across policy dialogue) • Senior manager to encourage compliance • Line managers to devote time to supporting staff • A high level champion also to ensure change process is on track, map what is happening when and what result s can be expected	*See Option 2*	*See Option 2*

Training required	• LDS/ODI training course is currently available to some
	• Country Programme staff currently receive logframe training, but this is geared towards "spend" projects
	• Staff may require support for planning and monitoring, and may engage consultants
		• Induction into basic PCM concepts and tools
		• Training in saving the information on ARIES and why it is important to be integrated into the PCM training
		• Champion or helpdesk to work with teams to:
		  o help plan & monitor and define outcomes and impact
		  o Facilitate reviews
		  o Offer appropriate tools (depending on type of work, staff competencies, familiarity with tools etc)
			Option 2 plus:
			• Teams to be encouraged to attend current training course offered by LDS/ODI which outlines the different tools
			• Training is more focused around monitoring and integrated with the PCM (and ARIES) system (note trainers must be well respected and good quality to ensure senior staff buy in).
				Option 2 plus:
				• PCM and logframe training for all (note trainers must be well respected and good quality to ensure senior staff buy in). This should be specifically geared to demonstrating how it can be applied to spend projects as well as policy dialogue work
				• Training in saving the information on ARIES and why it is important to be integrated into the PCM training

ANNEX 3: TOOLS FOR PLANNING AND MONITOIRNG POLICY DIALOGUE

A3–1

References for Tools for Planning and Monitoring Policy Dialogue

Planning (and can also be used as a basis for monitoring)
Outcome Mapping
http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.
Describes the Outcome Mapping tool and approach

Scenario Planning
http://www.well.com/~mb/scenario_planning/
Describes the Scenario Panning tool and approach

Power Mapping
http://www.bonner.org/resources/modules/modules_pdf/BonCurPowerMapping.pdf
Describes the power mapping tool for utilising networks

Force field Analysis
http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Tools/Toolkits/Communication/Forcefield_analysis.html
Provides an introduction to forcefield analysis

Reviewing
After Action Reviews
http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/aars-intro
Provides a good introduction to the After Action Review tool.

Most Significant Change
The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use" by Rick Davies and Jess Dart (2005). http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.htm
Provides a guide to Most Significant Change ("Stories of Change" is based on the Most Significant Change method)

Other useful toolkit references
Contanza de Toma and Louisa Gosling, 2005, Save the Children Advocacy Toolkit – A collection of tools to help plan, implement monitor and evaluate advocacy

Jenifer Chapman et al. 2005, Action Aid Internatinal, Critical Webs of Power and Change, Resource Pack for Planning, Reflection and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy