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

DFID's Support to Agricultural Research

ICAI Recommendation	Accept/ Reject	Action already taken	Action to be taken	Target date
Recommendation 1: DFID should ensure its agricultural research and development programmes collaborate better to deliver research outputs to farmers as quickly as possible and at scale to maximise the benefits for poor people.	Accept	• 40% of the Agricultural Research budget is already spent on getting research outputs to farmers at scale. This has been a major area for new programming in the last 2 years. • Research and Evidence Division (RED) has established Research Hubs in South Asia and East Africa as part of RED's links to DFID Country offices in the region and to Regional Teams. The Hubs' functions include supporting the collection and use of evidence by DFID country programmes and the development of DFID research programmes that address key regional priorities and working with the RED Teams on centrally commissioned research. • In July 2013 DFID announced support for the new Agricultural Technologies Catalyst programme developed by the UK Technology Strategy Board. This offers funding to academics and businesses looking to work together to use the best of UK science to develop new technological solutions to global food security challenges. The first call for proposals was launched on 9th October. • The Agriculture team works closely with a wide range of DFID departments such as Policy Division, the Innovation Hub and DFID country offices. There is close collaboration with DFID country offices in Asia, particularly DFID India, Bangladesh and Pakistan in the design and management of the Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA) programme.	• In collaboration with the two RED regional Research Hubs, we will undertake a stocktake of the demand for agricultural research findings within DFID country programmes in order to improve the uptake of research by country programmes	March 2014

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		• The Agriculture Team is working with Policy Division and G8 New Alliance Partners to develop and test new approaches to scaling up seeds and other technologies in Africa, in line with UK G8 commitments.		
Recommendation 2: DFID should develop explicit 'theories of change' to map out the steps and partnerships needed to ensure research outputs lead to improved food security and nutrition for poor people and women.	Accept	• Most on-going programmes have a theory of change, although there is scope to strengthen these further, particularly in terms of the assumptions at the level of development outcomes. For some programmes (eg the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Strategic Research Collaboration, or the responsive programmes with Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) , theories of change are more appropriate as a tool for research design at the sub-project level rather than at the level of the DFID Business Case. • At a programme level we have continued to invest in projects that will take new technological innovation resulting from DFID research to scale. Over 40% of the programme budget is spent on these programmes which will generate evidence to support more effective investments in translational research and innovation • We will continue to invest in testing new and innovative ways to address translational gaps and innovation failures which will enable more rapid adoption of technology by small-holders.	• We will review the agricultural research programme priorities paper to ensure that we have the right balance between investments and partnerships to develop new technology and those needed to get technology into use.	March 2014
Recommendation 3: DFID should aim to increase agricultural productivity, while minimising negative	Accept	• We do not fully agree that DFID should "focus strongly" on environmentally sustainable agriculture. We agree that this is one objective but this has to be balanced against the need on the part of farmers and	• The Agriculture team will develop a new Business Case in 2014 to support targeted research on sustainable intensification in Africa,	June 2014

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environmental impacts. It should focus strongly on environmentally sustainable intensification of agriculture.		governments for rapid productivity gains. We will continue to maintain a balance of investments targeting productivity gains and environmental sustainability, in collaboration with other stakeholders and research partners, but we recognise that in many situations both of these objectives are not easily achievable, and so there is some degree of trade-off between them. • DFID has several programmes which explicitly develop approaches and tools for the sustainable intensification of agriculture (for example the Strategic Collaboration on agricultural research with BMGF). • Most of the CGIAR (formerly the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) development research programmes look at issues relating to sustainable intensification and we are working with the CGIAR to establish a series of indicators for their research which includes sustainable management of natural resources. These will be used to measure the performance of the current research portfolio and to prioritise CGIAR research in the future	leveraging other funder's research investments in Africa Rising and Vital Signs. This will help governments and development partners to better understand the conditions and institutions that will support sustainable intensification and the complex trade-offs faced in promoting this as an objective.	