



Department
for International
Development

Operational Plan 2011-2016

Asia Regional Team

Updated December 2014

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Introduction

In 2013 the UK became the first G7 country to meet the United Nations target of spending 0.7% of gross national income on international development. The Department for International Development (DFID) uses that investment to help countries to lift themselves out of poverty and leave poverty behind. Operational plans set out to the public how we plan to deliver results across policy areas and for every country we work in. These plans clearly explain why, and how, DFID is targeting its resources and what we expect to achieve; covering the period up until March 2016.

DFID is focused on spending in the right ways, on the right things, in the right places. The portfolio of our projects is already shifting to deliver a more coherent, focused and ambitious approach to economic development. We are helping to build strong and investable business environments in developing countries and improving access to finance for entrepreneurs.

Improving the prospects for girls and women in developing countries is a priority. Investing in girls and women is the smart thing to do, as well as the right thing. By unleashing their potential, we see returns for girls and women themselves, their families and communities, and for their economies and countries. No country can successfully develop if it leaves half its population behind.

Life-saving humanitarian assistance remains one of DFID's most fundamental responsibilities. When disaster strikes or conflict erupts we are first on the ground to support the most vulnerable people. We are also increasing our efforts to help those countries that are at higher risk of natural disasters to become more resilient in the first place.

DFID continues to drive value for money in everything we do on behalf of the British taxpayer. We have improved our procurement and programme management, increased our internal audit oversight and we are ensuring that staff have the skills to deliver the Department's priorities.

On the international stage we are working hard to agree a new set of global development goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire next year. We are determined to secure a clear and inspiring set of goals for the post 2015 development framework that leave no one behind.

Increasingly we will take new and innovative approaches and we will work with new partners. This will include businesses who are increasingly major development players. During my time as co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, DFID played a key role in encouraging different development actors to work together and use internationally agreed principles for aid and development effectiveness.

As our operational plans set out, our approach to international development is ambitious and innovative. We are determined to ensure that every pound DFID spends has the biggest possible impact on the ground. Ultimately by investing in developing countries, we can end aid dependency for good and build a better, more prosperous world for us all.

Context

Despite reasonable growth rates, the Asia Pacific region is home to 743 million people living on less than \$1.25 per day, and 1.6 billion on less than \$2 per day (40% of the population) (UNESCAP 2013). The core countries of the Asia Regional Programme are among those with the worst poverty rates in Asia (e.g. 76%, 60% 53% on less than \$2 per day in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal respectively). The development challenges are complex and multidimensional – with significant economic, political, social and environmental drivers.

The entire region is climate vulnerable. In South Asia alone, more than 750 million people - 50% of the population in Asia - were affected by at least one natural disaster over recent years, resulting in 230,000 deaths and US \$45 billion in damage (Asia Development Bank, 2010). Girls and women face substantive discrimination, violence and limited opportunities, as do lower caste, religious, ethnic, and other minorities – often meaning people are unable to benefit from economic growth. For many communities geographic isolation, conflict, and discriminatory institutions and social norms exacerbate exclusion from services, jobs and development opportunities. Trade and investment across the region is constrained by poor transport and energy infrastructure, and inadequate cross-border connections. Increasing numbers of poor people are living in urban areas (often in informal settlements) and face substantial challenges, with difficult living conditions and limited rights. The poorest are more susceptible to under-nutrition, early and forced marriage, communicable diseases and the risk of maternal death. Poverty also drives people to take jobs in other countries where they can be exploited and have few legal rights.

Working regionally to improve impact

Some of DFID's largest country programmes are in Asia – including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal and Burma, with smaller bilateral investments in Central Asia, and a climate-focused programme in Indonesia. The bilateral programme in India ends in 2016, moving to a relationship of technical cooperation/returnable capital, and DFID Vietnam closes the same year.

The purpose of the Asia Regional Programme (ARP) is to complement these country programmes in order to improve the impact of frontline delivery. Working regionally can create the conditions that unlock progress on regional constraints to poverty reduction, and unleash potentially large development benefits for example by enhancing trade between countries in the region or improving how joint natural resources are managed. Regional programming can also pilot new approaches and build the evidence base needed to leverage much larger investments from the private sector, multilaterals and national governments.

The Programme focuses on:

- (a) issues with a **clear cross-border dimension** (e.g. trade);
- (b) **regional public goods** – where action in one part of the region has a much wider positive impact (e.g. tackling climate change); and/or
- (c) where working in two or more countries **brings economies of scale** and other advantages (e.g. nutrition).

The Asia Regional programme also has capacity to respond quickly to regional programming needs as they arise, such as UK investment in reconstruction and climate change resilience in the Philippines following typhoon Haiyan.

Vision

Overview

The Asia Regional Programme (ARP) aims to address the regional barriers to and opportunities for poverty reduction in DFID's priority countries in Asia. It prioritises investments that can help countries transition out of poverty and impact the lives of poor people in a sustainable and lasting way.

To date the programme has focussed on four thematic areas, covering 5 of the 8 pillars of the 2011 Bilateral Aid Review including health, wealth creation, climate change and governance and security. Following a review of priorities in early 2014, which included consultation with DFID country offices and an assessment of DFID's added value in the region, a decision was taken to focus in particular on economic connectivity and climate resilient growth, and this focus will develop during 2015/16 and beyond.

Greater cross-border trade and regional integration will increase growth and create jobs, help address huge energy constraints, and reduce incentives for cross-border conflict. Similarly, better management of shared ecosystems, including trans-boundary rivers, will address the critical interconnected challenges of food security, water and power in the region – also mitigating conflict risks (e.g. water and food insecurity). In addition, minimising the risks from climate change will help to protect economic growth and the incomes of the poor from extreme weather events and other related shocks and stresses (e.g. landslides, change in growing seasons etc.). All programmes have a particular focus on addressing barriers that may prevent girls and women from accessing opportunities or realising their potential.

Alignment to DFID and wider UK Government priorities

ARP contributes directly to the Structural Reform Programme and DFID priorities for economic development, reproductive health, nutrition, climate change, and girls and women. All our offers have a strong focus on UK Government/National Security Council priorities including: Afghanistan-Pakistan trade and integration; trade facilitation and increase in trade volumes; organised crime; women's empowerment; climate change and natural resource management; MDGs; and regional security. The Asia Regional Team also provides Asia-relevant advisory support to DFID's policy agendas such as on gender, growth, climate change and health, as well as supporting country operational results through regional support to professional advisory cadres.

Results 2011/12 - 2015/16

Headline results (those with a * directly attributable to DFID. In all other cases, DFID is contributing to the results)

Pillar/Strategic	Indicator	Baseline	Progress towards results (including year)	Expected (end year included)
Health	Number of maternal deaths averted	0 (2011)	Programme is on track to meet increased targets	10,342 (June 2015, cumulative) 12,677 (2015/16, cumulative)
Health	Number of poor people in the Greater Mekong sub-region at reduced risk of contracting and spreading drug resistant malaria.	0 (2013)	Inception phase, with good progress on political leadership	3.5 million (March 2016)
Poverty, Vulnerability and Hunger	Number of national programmes which better integrate a multi-sector approach to food security and nutrition.	0 (2010)	Goal of 8 exceeded, 21 achieved (June 14). Ministers approved 5 year 2nd phase (Jul 14). Results framework will be refreshed in 2014/15.	21 national programmes (March 2015, cumulative).
Governance and Security	Number of women and girls supported to reduce the risk of being trafficked from India, Bangladesh and Nepal	0 (2010)	Too early to report on numbers. Pilot activities completed; delivery teams recruited; and community activities underway.	100,000 (2017/18)
Climate Change	Number of people supported to cope with the impacts of climate change (indirectly)	0 (2012)	Too early to report on numbers. Partners creating baselines and setting up Monitoring & Evaluation systems. Expected to achieve.	250,000 (2014/15)
Climate Change	Amount of funding leveraged and influenced by climate change programmes	0 (2012)	\$24.65 million (directly) direct funding milestone exceeded. On target to achieve indirect milestone.	2014/15: \$35 million, of which \$20 million directly leveraged and \$15 million indirectly influenced. 2015/16: \$100 million, of which \$20 million directly leveraged, \$80 million indirectly influenced.
Climate Change	Number of policy responses implemented or piloted that promote climate compatible development.	0 (2010)	This is a composite indicator made up of multiple ICF programmes. The programmes are on target to achieve the intended result.	20 policy responses by 2014/15

Pillar/Strategic	Indicator	Baseline	Progress towards results (including year)	Expected (end year included)
Economic Development	Reduction of time taken for goods to cross 4 key regional border posts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raxaul-Birjung - 2.3 Days • Bratnagar - Jogbani 5 Days • Kolkata - 7 Days • Benapole-Petrapole - 7 Days 	Financing secured to improve cross border facilities between Nepal and India and progress is on track to achieve target. Progress on regulatory reform at all borders and additional work on India/Pakistan (Wagah) land borders	Reduction of 10% across the 4 key borders (2016/17)
Economic Development	Amount of cross border energy connectivity (MW)	3,248 MW (2012)	Financing secured for CASA line; work ongoing for India-Pakistan and Nepal- India transmission lines. Fully on track	6,000 MW (2018/19)
Economic Development	Cross border investment deals facilitated	0 (2012)	Good progress to 3 cross border deals. Expected financial closure by 2016. Results framework refreshed in Nov 2014.	3 cross border investment deals successfully facilitated (2016/17)

Headline Results

New programming and portfolio shifts

New analysis undertaken in 2014 identified two key areas of opportunity: strengthening economic connectivity and integration across the region, and supporting climate resilient growth. ARP will transition to a stronger focus on these areas through 2015/16. This will require:

- Effective cross-government working - the team's access to senior management in the International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and with leaders in the region, coupled with the increasing importance given to economic cooperation as part of the National Security Council's (NSC) agenda, will be important in facilitating the political leadership needed for success;
- A combination of analysis, leverage, technical assistance, and capital resources to enable IFIs and other strategic partners to focus more effectively on improving regional connectivity, and climate resilient growth. This will include: (i) building more coherence and demand between country and regional programmes, and; (ii) integrating political-economic analysis, gender and social inclusion and resilience approaches into programming;
- Work to deliver existing commitments on health, but then to aim to transition responsibly out of health as an area of regional programme engagement. ARP will continue to be active on food and nutrition security (FNS) and on human trafficking, particularly of girls and women;
- Changes to team structure to ensure both the skills mix and capacity needed to manage larger programmes in focus areas robustly and as efficiently as possible.

The final period of this Operational Plan sees a significant scaling up of staff and financial resources focused on economic development, and in particular on economic connectivity and urban programmes as critical drivers of economic growth and poverty reduction in Asia. Programmes are currently under design and are expected to start from 2015/16, and will therefore generate impact and results in future business planning periods (beyond this current Operational Plan). The scale up is focused around connectivity infrastructure, clean energy generation and urban growth.

Evidence supporting results

The quality of evidence to support headline results is inevitably variable, given the size, geographical scope and range of interventions proposed.

In the **Poverty, Vulnerability and Hunger** pillar there is robust international evidence for the direct nutrition interventions (Lancet Nutrition Series, 2013) which this programme promotes, as part of a multi-sectoral approach to tackling under-nutrition. Although programming for specific interventions is necessarily context specific, there is good evidence that long-term improvements in food and nutrition security require action to address multiple underlying political, socio-cultural and economic causes.

Health: Estimates for the incidence of unsafe abortion and consequent mortality are uncertain, especially where it is legally restricted, or legal but difficult to obtain data. However, the Asia Regional Prevention of Maternal Death from Unwanted Pregnancy (PMDUP) programme is generating new estimates. Evidence for the cost-effectiveness of interventions to avert maternal deaths is strong (DFID Reproductive, Child and Newborn Health Framework for Results, 2010). The threat of resistance to artemisinin combination therapy (ACT) for malaria treatment is an urgent global public health concern. Experience from the development of resistance in the Greater Mekong sub-region to past malaria drugs (chloroquine and SP), and subsequent global spread, demonstrates the enormous cost, morbidity and mortality consequences of inaction (DFID Malaria Framework for Results, 2010).

Human trafficking: Evidence is weak on the impact of integrated approaches to reducing trafficking and increasing fair employment for women in source and destination countries. Some small projects have demonstrated evidence of success, particularly for criminal justice interventions. Stronger evidence exists from countries in South East Asia (e.g. in Philippines and Cambodia) that better monitoring and protection of women and girls through labour migration systems can significantly reduce trafficking. The Work in Freedom programme will generate new evidence on 'what works' to help address these evidence gaps.

Economic Development: There is strong evidence that poor connectivity and openness to trade depresses economic growth and poverty reduction; and that poor connectivity is driven by low investment, a poor regulatory environment, and complex politics across the different Asian sub-regions. Research shows that intervention is required at different levels to intensify collaboration to address the complexities of the region. Strong evidence also suggests that cutting border delays is critical to reduce barriers for trade if it is to have positive impacts on welfare. Without greater connectivity and trade openness, the region will grow below its potential and income poverty will only reduce slowly. More evidence is needed on how best to reduce co-ordination failures and to effectively connect poor populations to economic opportunities.

Climate Change: There is strong evidence that South Asia's poor are highly vulnerable to climate risks, with women, children and the elderly most affected, and that South Asia is experiencing the impacts of climate change, and that these will get significantly worse (IPCC 2014). Asia has experienced the most weather related disasters (2000-2008), suffering 30% of total global economic losses. Risk of death through flooding is highest in Asia. Targeting adaptation and resilience building efforts at the most vulnerable has been shown to lessen climate impacts. Increasing access to information, diversifying livelihoods, improving access to land/credit and improving the governance of land and water have been shown to be key areas for engagement, regionally. For example, integrated watershed management in India has shown expected rates of returns of up to 27%. Evidence is good on the need to target the most poor in vulnerable areas, such as cities, riverine environments, and other marginal areas such as the mountains, and ensuring the enabling environment exists to take this forward.

Delivery and Resources

The Asia Regional Programme (ARP) is **delivered by the Asia Regional Team (ART)**, which reports to the Asia, Caribbean and Overseas Territories Division (AsCOT), but works across both AsCOT and West Asia Department. ART is guided by the Asia Regional Board, which consists of the Directors and Deputy Directors of both AsCOT and West Asia Department.

Financial resources are increasing - from originally £60 million over 4 years from 2011/12 (£49m RDEL - Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit - and £11 million ICF – International Climate Finance) to approximately £77 million (£57 million RDEL and £20 million ICF) over that same 4 year period. Resources are likely to grow further in 2015/16, with a strong shift to capital and non-fiscal capital expenditures (returnable funding), consistent with new analysis that recommends focussing on economic development and climate resilient growth. The increase in ICF resources up to 2015/16 reflects the increased resilience focus for ART and a focus on innovation with the private sector through the new partnerships with ADB, Rockefeller Foundation and USAID on building urban resilience.

Instruments of delivery

Much of the Asia Regional programme is delivered through high level policy dialogue and technical assistance to bring together and support government officials, private sector, civil society and development partners across the region. The vast majority of this work is managed through MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) with multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, International Finance Corporation and International Labour Organisation. There is a particular focus on leveraging the resources of multilateral agencies, international financing institutions and other regional bodies. The remaining ARP resources are managed through direct contracting with suppliers, and accountable grants with not for profit organisations.

Multilateral Organisations

The South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative uses a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) through the World Bank which is responsible for management, implementation, monitoring and reporting on activities. The World Bank has also set up a Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the delivery of the South Asia Water Governance Programme.

The Asian Development Bank delivers a number of MDTF programmes including Tackling Drug Resistant Malaria and the Protecting the Urban Poor from Climate Risks programme.

The South Asia Regional Trade and Integration Programme is largely delivered through Trust Fund arrangements with the World Bank, International Finance Corporation and Asian Development Bank.

The International Labour Organisation leads the Work in Freedom programme on human trafficking, in partnership with local organisations in India, Nepal and Bangladesh, as well as international partners.

Other delivery mechanisms and partners

The Prevention of Maternal Death from Unwanted Pregnancy programme is delivered by a consortium of NGOs, following a competitive tender and design process covering 5 countries in Asia, and 9 in Africa. Following the 2014 resource Allocation Round (RAR), a planned funding increase for this programme was cancelled.

The Climate Proofing for Growth and Development programme has also recently contracted a competitively procured consortium to deliver the programme.

Other country activity

ART works actively to ensure that regional programming is complementary to and adds value for DFID bilateral programming. Regular communication and consultation is undertaken with country offices during the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

Maximising the impact of our people

To maximise the impact of the limited operating costs available, ART is shifting programme management roles to staff appointed in country. This is considerably better value for money than creating a similar team in HQ,

and allows the entire programme management team to work as one unit. It has been possible to increase the programme management capacity through this process.

DFID also continues to invest in the learning and development needs of staff through recommended courses, cadre related continuing professional development activities, and in line with the latest corporate guidance.

Planned Programme Spend

Pillar/Strategic	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16 (provisional*)
	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Total Resource and Capital £000
Wealth Creation	1,565		5,044		8,121		6,700		
Climate Change	1,120		1,914		8,012		9,048		
Philippines - resilience							6,200		
Governance and Security	530		164		1,835		1,520		
Education									
Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health	3,663		4,854		5,782		9,100		
Malaria					4,438				
HIV/Aids									
Other Health									
Water and Sanitation	205		198		550				
Poverty, hunger and Vulnerability	1,068		107		278		1,400		
Humanitarian									
Other MDGs									
Global Partnerships									
Total	8,151	0.00	12,281	0.00	29,016	0.00	33,968	0.00	55,600**

*Expenditure figures for 2015/16 are indicative. DFID works in a variety of challenging environments, including fragile and conflict affected areas. Humanitarian work is often reactive and can be scaled up or down. An element of flexibility within funding allocations is necessary to ensure that we can balance the need for long term planning alongside the ability to respond where necessary to changing requirements ** 15/16 provisional figures do not include the expectation of securing further resources under the category of non-fiscal capital for two economic development programmes currently under design.

Planned Operating Costs

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 (provisional*)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Frontline Delivery Costs – Pay	367	413	472	554	
Frontline Delivery Costs – Non Pay	26	9	154	244	
Administrative costs - Pay	87	187	173	93	
Administrative costs – Non Pay	9	15	14	19	
Total	489	624	813	910	910

*Expenditure figures for 2015/16 are indicative. DFID works in a variety of challenging environments, including fragile and conflict affected areas. Humanitarian work is often reactive and can be scaled up or down. An element of flexibility within funding allocations is necessary to ensure that we can balance the need for long term planning alongside the ability to respond where necessary to changing requirements

Planned Efficiency Savings

Strategic Reprioritisation	Termination of Gender Policy Fund (600,000 in 2010-11)
Further examples of Programme efficiency	Shifting staff previously paid from admin budget to front-line
Funding key posts for programme delivery from the programme budget	Ensuring the scale-up of work is managed effectively without increasing the Admin resources required.

Delivering Value for Money

Maximising the impact of every pound we spend on poor people's lives

ART ensures strong value for money (VFM) across our portfolio by:

- basing programme design on the best available evidence of what works;
- taking an approach that helps leverage resources from others;
- exploring new financing approaches (such as the use of non-fiscal CDEL instruments);
- ensuring best commercial practice in procurement, contract management and partnerships; and
- employing strong programme management that reviews progress and risks, and adapts programming as required (including the use of VFM triggers).

In addition, all programmes are approved and reviewed by the Asia Regional Board, a process which includes assessments of VFM.

Regional programming can remove constraints hindering national progress. It can deliver economies of scale, and it can help to generate public goods which benefit multiple countries. These factors – inherent to many of our Asia regional programmes – all enhance the VFM of our work. There remain a number of challenges in delivering VFM in regional programming, which requires that we take a dynamic approach. Working across a region, often through multilateral and other partners, and in pursuit of long-term gains, can make early identification of results challenging. Generating demand, responding to new opportunities, and adjusting to changes in context across multiple countries requires carefully managed inception phases and flexibility to refocus programming and adapt as necessary. Similarly, unit costs of delivery may vary considerably across countries with very different delivery environments, capacities and levels of market maturity.

At a programme level, investment in maternal and reproductive health is recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as highly cost-effective. The PMDUP programme is performing well in delivering results (scoring A+ at the last Annual Review in 2013), and calculates a cost per couple year of protection of £6.48 and cost per DALY of £15.63. The lead supplier (Marie Stopes International) has developed a detailed costing model to assess cost-effectiveness across different countries and delivery channels, and is using this tool to optimise delivery. The SAFANSI programme supports both highly cost-effective direct nutrition interventions, and addresses policy and evidence barriers to address underlying causes of poor food and nutrition security. The World Bank uses well developed procurement and consultant recruitment processes to ensure inputs are competitive. Moreover, the programme leverages funding from other partners (e.g. SAFANSI 2 will influence how \$500m of WB lending is spent). The regional malaria programme (TDRM) similarly uses Asian Development Bank procedures to benchmark inputs. The programme contributes to the global public good of eliminating drug resistant malaria, with potentially enormous returns on investment.

For economic development, the VFM of increasing regional integration is huge and has very sizeable rates of return. The Asian Development Bank estimates that cost savings per tonne of traded goods could be reduced by between 30 to 70 percent in five years through a series of trade and logistics interventions. This would then feed through to considerable increases in trade flows.

By providing a political vehicle to unblock investments in integrated power and irrigation projects, and to reduce costs of droughts and floods, the South Asia Water Governance programme's VFM is also potentially highly positive given it plays a key role in helping to unlock and improve the sustainability of World Bank investments. Broader climate change investments in infrastructure, disaster risk management and integrated planning also bring greater VFM by reducing peoples' vulnerability and protecting economic growth.

ART has taken action to improve the cost effectiveness of its programme management. This includes locating programme management staff at lower cost in region (Delhi), identifying efficient management of programme portfolios through multilateral partners, and exploring opportunities for FLD secondments to implementing partners (see section on workforce planning above). The addition of non-fiscal capital resources may provide a further opportunity to increase VFM; these may allow the development outcomes associated with increased connectivity and, possibly, if the team moves into this area, clean energy generation to be purchased at a lower overall price for UK taxpayers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

How: We will monitor the Operational Plan using our Results Tracker, which includes baselines and target results at pillar and portfolio level. Progress will be informed by annual project reviews, project completion reports, as well as more frequent reporting as available. We also report results towards International Climate Finance.

Each programme has a rigorous monitoring strategy in place with robust results frameworks. Results will also be informed through third party reviews and assessments in select cases to verify results. Tools will be used for tracking beneficiary satisfaction, such as the Community Perception Index (CPI) and participatory assessments with recipients of cash transfers.

Who: Programme implementing partners will be responsible for monitoring their programmes and reporting on results. For example, the World Bank will monitor SAFANSI using their network of 30 Food and Nutrition Security experts working in the region. The Asia Regional Team lead advisers and programme managers monitor all programmes on a regular basis through annual reviews and quarterly meetings. Each programme has a nominated Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) who is accountable for delivery and performance.

When: ART will monitor programmes annually, with more frequent updates quarterly or monthly as agreed with programme partners. The office results framework will be reviewed at least every 6 months, and the operational plan reviewed/refreshed annually.

What: DFID will collect qualitative and quantitative information that provides evidence to assess progress at impact, outcome (including headline indicators), and output levels. DFID will also ensure that this evidence base is used to improve the quality of future programming and supports the challenge of programme appropriateness.

Evaluation

ART is committed to investing in the evaluation of priority programmes to generate evidence on “what works” as well as “what doesn’t work”. Evaluations will measure and assess the degree to which outcomes and outputs were achieved, analyse what factors enabled this and why, and assess value for money. Evidence and lessons will help improve the quality and impact of our programmes, as well as informing similar interventions in other parts of the organisation and more widely.

The team is planning to conduct assessments for priority programmes, such as the South Asia Water Governance (SAWG) programme to ensure that evaluations are feasible and how they can best be implemented to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

Examples of evaluations include:

- The maternal health programme (PMDUP) includes a multi-country evaluation with rigorous quantitative impact evaluation of selected programme components in two countries in Asia (India) and Africa (Zambia), using quasi-experimental design.
- An independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the regional nutrition programme (SAFANSI) in its first three years of operation directly informed the design of the recently approved Business Case for a new programme of work.
- The Work in Freedom programme tackling human trafficking has a significant evaluation component in India and Nepal, including experimental trials to assess effectiveness of interventions targeting potential women migrants.
- Evaluations for climate change and economic development programmes are factored in across the portfolio, and play a key role in decision making on progress. A results framework paper was developed for the ICF/climate change programmes. Proposals will be presented to the Asia Regional Board.

Building capacity of partners

ART will work with partners to ensure robust logframes, monitoring and evaluation systems are in place. We will seek to strengthen capacity of regional institutions to monitor existing programmes through appropriate technical assistance. ART will support partners to apply lessons from monitoring and evaluation to reorient interventions as required.

Transparency

Transparency is one of the top priorities for the UK Government. It helps people see where money is going and for what purpose. It helps improve value for money and makes governments everywhere more accountable to their citizens. DFID is a world leader in aid transparency and has an ambitious vision for both DFID and its partners. We will ensure that we play our part in continuing to work towards that vision – set out in a suite of commitments the Aid Transparency Guarantee (ATG), Aid Transparency Challenge (ATC) and DFID's Open Data Strategy.

Actions to ensure DFID meets its commitments in the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee

ART considers transparency to be fundamental to improving accountability and providing value for money to the UK taxpayer. ART will take the following actions to ensure that we meet all the commitments of the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee (ATG):

- All required project documentation will be published on the Development Tracker website. This will be high quality, comprehensive, accessible, comparable, accurate and in plain English. We will allocate dedicated staff time to achieving this.
- All budgetary information will be entered correctly on ARIES including quarterly forward budgets for all committed projects within the spending review period.
- Correct business processes will be followed and documented on the Quest system and available as records for FOI readiness.
- In addition to the work being done by our Country Offices, we will meet the standards set out in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and encourage the Multilateral Organisations we work with and NGO partners to do the same.
- We will increase accessibility to information about our regional work, and where possible provide summary programme information in local regional languages. We will also provide the people affected by our programmes the opportunity to feed their experiences back to us, for example through the DFID website public enquiry point.
- We will publish programme products in regional languages where useful and relevant.
- We will seek similar levels of transparency from our partners (CSOs, contractors, other donors).
- We will help government and citizens use availability of rich data.

Annex A: Changes to Operational Plan

Page Number	Change made to operational Plan	Reason for change
5 & 8	Health: The number of maternal deaths averted result increased from 7,780 to 10,342 (2014/15). Cumulative total of 12,677 anticipated for 2015/16.	Additional Financing approved by Ministers for FY 14/15. Method to calculate maternal deaths averted has been updated (and is consistent with other donors)
5,7 & 8	Health: Addition of Tackling Drug Resistant Malaria programme and headline indicator: number of people at reduced risk of contracting or transmitting drug resistant malaria.	Ministers agreed new regional programme in response to urgent regional and global public health need.
5 & 8	Climate Change: In September 2013, the target for funding leveraged or influenced was revised from \$100m to \$35m for 2014/15.	This has been revised because of a delay in the start-up of the programme due to strengthening of the value for money of the procurement and delays in approval from the relevant authorities. It is expected that \$100m target will be reached by the following year, 2015/16.
5 & 8	Economic Development: The results indicator wording has been amended to include names of the four border posts at which this programme will contribute to reducing the time taken for goods to cross.	To provide more detail on where the specific improvements are to be expected.
9 - 12	The delivery and resources section has been updated.	To reflect revised budget allocations
14	Monitoring and Evaluation: Text updated to provide more detail.	To reflect more information on the evaluations mentioned (e.g. countries identified) and new corporate processes, such as Senior Responsible Officers.
16	Girls and Women: Added a section outlining how the Asia Regional Programme is tackling discrimination against, and supporting opportunities for, women and girls in the region.	To reflect the strong priority focus given to women and girls by the Department, and by the Asia Regional Programme.
Multiple	Text throughout this Operational Plan has been updated, including context, vision, evidence and resources.	This reflects a number of important developments over the past year, such as ministerial agreement to focus the regional programme following further analysis of the key regional drivers of poverty and the opportunities for intervention.

Annex B: Girls and Women

Gender inequality continues to hinder poverty reduction and human development, with girls and women facing substantial discrimination in health, education, economic opportunities, and politics. This is illustrated by the low ranking of several Asian countries in the 2013 UN Gender Equality Index: Bangladesh, Pakistan and India are in the bottom third, with Afghanistan a low 149 of 151 countries.

In Asia, gender inequalities begin at an early age: girls and women often face violence even before birth where preference for sons leads to female foeticide and infanticide, resulting in ratios as high as 130 males for 100 females in some parts of Asia (WHO 2011). Early child marriage is prevalent in South Asia with 46% of women married before the age of 18, and 18% before the age of 15, limiting their education and work opportunities, and frequently leading to early pregnancy that makes them more vulnerable to health complications (UNICEF 2014). South Asia has the second highest rates of maternal death, with India alone accounting for 17% of maternal deaths globally (WHO 2013a). Over a third of women (38%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partner. Outside the home, women's participation in the labour market in South Asia is amongst the lowest globally. They consequently lack economic independence, perpetuated by widespread illiteracy and low levels of education. Instead, women are often left to care for entire households when climate change or resource scarcities lead men to migrate for better jobs. Moreover, when women and girls migrate for work it is often to unskilled, poorly paid and precarious jobs, leaving them vulnerable to trafficking.

How the Asia regional programme is responding

The Asia Regional Team places strong emphasis on women and girls in all its programming, complementing country-led work on violence and education. In economic empowerment, the *Work in Freedom* (WiF) programme tackles human trafficking and promotes safe migration with the aim of helping 100,000 women and girls protect themselves from trafficking. By 2018, the programme hopes to economically empower 45,000 women by improving working conditions, and providing skills and vocational training. The new regional economic integration programme is placing particular attention on enabling marginalised women to gain greater access to markets and jobs through improved transport and energy connectivity.

In the health sector the *Preventing Maternal Deaths from Unwanted Pregnancy* programme (PMDUP) addresses the significant challenges of maternal mortality and through improved access to services, aims to prevent 12,677 maternal deaths in 5 Asian countries (by June 2016). This represents more than 20% of the UK government commitment to avert 50,000 maternal deaths between 2010 and 2015. The *South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative* (SAFANSI) improves nutrition outcomes specifically for girls and women, with additional indirect impacts of improving maternal health, learning outcomes, and ability to engage in the work force.

The South Asia Water Governance (SAWG), *Climate Proofing Growth and Development* (CPGD), and *Managing climate change risks for the Urban Poor* (Urban) programmes specifically assess gender impacts of climate change, as well as gendered approaches to strengthening climate resilience of both men and women. The pipeline programme on social protection and climate resilience will target women explicitly. Programmes aim to strengthen women's political roles in climate change decision making through enhanced participation in resource management and climate change decision making bodies.

All programmes are required to demonstrate how gender issues are integrated in programmes. Sex disaggregated data is collected wherever possible, and programmes are required to report on gender dimensions of their programme. This is monitored closely during the annual review process, with course changes corrected as required to ensure programmes reach both women and men effectively, and aim to address barriers that may prevent girls and women from accessing opportunities or realising

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