



Summary of DFID's Regional Work in Asia 2011-2016

February 2015

Why we work across the Asia Region

Despite reasonable rates of growth, the Asia Pacific region is home to appalling levels of poverty, with 743 million people living on less than \$1.25 per day, and 1.6 billion (40% of the population) on less than \$2 per day.

The region faces many complex economic, political, social and environmental challenges that exacerbate levels of poverty. Girls, women and many minority groups have limited opportunities and face some of the highest levels of discrimination and violence in the world. The region is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which is increasingly impacting on people and their ability to earn a living. South Asia is one of the least connected regions in the world and levels of trade are amongst the lowest globally. Rates of undernutrition, early and forced marriage, and maternal death are amongst the highest in the world. Millions living in poverty resort to taking jobs in other countries, where they risk exploitation and have few legal rights.

The impact of DFID's work in these areas can often be enhanced by taking a regional perspective and running programmes that reach across borders. DFID's Asia Regional Programme aims to address the constraints to poverty reduction in our focus countries, for example by enhancing trade between countries or improving the management of joint natural resources, such as rivers. Our work aims to support regional public goods – where action in one country benefits others – and facilitate cooperation and trust between countries. Our programmes cover primarily Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Central Asia (Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic). Most of our support, including all our work in India, is through technical assistance.



Testing a flood warning siren in Nepal. Photo: Peter Crawford/Practical Action



An outreach worker providing advice on family planning methods in Pakistan. Photo: Marie Stopes International / Peter Barker

What we will achieve

The Asia Regional Programme will:

- Prevent 12,677 maternal deaths;
- Help 250,000 people cope with the effects of climate change;
- Support 100,000 girls and women to reduce their risk of being trafficked;
- Help to reduce malnutrition by supporting 21 national programmes;
- Reduce by 10% the time taken for goods to cross four key regional border posts; and
- Facilitate 3 cross-border investment deals.

The Asia Regional Programme has a budget of £77 million over 2011-2015.

Who we will work with

The Asia Regional Programme is delivered largely through international partners such as the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society organisations. We also work with other donors, governments and regional organisations. Partners have been chosen based on their strengths and track record for working on regional issues.



Safe migration training for women in Morang, Nepal. Photo: International Labour Organisation

How we will work

The Asia Regional Programme aims to achieve results that can improve the lives of poor people in a sustainable way. Our regional work complements DFID's country programmes, and enhances progress in key areas such as intra-regional trade, climate change and disaster risks, cross-border natural resource management and people trafficking, and also on improving maternal health, reducing undernutrition and tackling drug-resistant malaria.

More cross-border trade and regional integration will increase growth and create jobs, help address energy constraints, and reduce incentives for cross-border conflict. Better management of shared ecosystems, including rivers that cross into more than one country, will address the critical links between food, water and power generation in the region. Minimising the risks from climate change will help to protect economic growth and the incomes of the poor from extreme weather events.

Changing the lives of girls and women is a particular priority for our work in Asia. For example, we are:

- Improving working conditions and the economic empowerment of women by supporting safer migration, building skills and vocational training, and improving policies of national governments and trade organisations; and
- Improving girls and women's access to sexual and reproductive health services to decrease maternal deaths.

More than ever, in the current financial climate, we have a duty to show that we are achieving value for money in everything we do. We place a high bar on adding value in our work, and on complementing but not duplicating what our country programmes are delivering. Results, transparency and accountability are central to our work and we are determined to get value for money for every pound spent on development by us and by our partners.

More information

For a more detailed breakdown of the Asia Regional Team's Operational Plan, please visit:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-asia-regional-team-operational-plan-2014>

General Enquiries: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk

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