

DFID Syria Humanitarian Programme Process Evaluation 2014
Management Response (June 2015)

Theme	Recommendation	Level	Accept/Reject	Response	Status
Strategic Alignment	1. DFID should incorporate various possible future trajectories for Syria and the wider region in its strategy.	SCU, MENAD and DFID	Accepted	The Syria strategy was superseded in 2014 by country specific operational plans. These were underpinned by a series of scenarios for the region.	Ongoing
Strategic Alignment	2. The strategy should be framed in terms of outcomes.	SCU, MENAD	Accepted	The Syria strategy was superseded in 2014 by a series of country specific operational plans. The country operational plans set high level objectives which are equivalent to outcomes.	Completed
Strategic Alignment	3. SCU and MENAD needs to develop a more clearly adaptive approach to programme management, as envisaged by DFID's 'End to End Review' and new Smart Rules.	SCU, MENAD	Accepted	The DFID Syria team was part of the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) pilot taking part in MENAD. In addition the DFID Syria Team attended corporate training on this and shared good practice across MENAD on a range of programme issues, including due diligence and monitoring. The team quickly adopted the revised Smart Rules and has used them to improve programme delivery.	Completed
Strategic Alignment	4. DFID needs to focus more on the overall Value for Money of operations and on the verifiability of this Value for Money.	SCU, MENAD	Accepted	The DFID Syria Programme Hub has implemented a value for money strategy which included developing specific guidance for the programme management team to be able to assess VfM at the project proposal stage, as well as commissioning three VfM related reviews: one for in-kind versus cash/vouchers based food interventions; one for winter kits; and one for administrative costs.	Completed
UK Policy & Humanitarian Principles Grant Allocation & Management Process	5. The logframe and ToC should be revisited and more clearly set out, so that they can act as the foundation for the portfolio's design and M&E processes.	SCU, MENAD	Rejected	This recommendation refers to the consolidated logframe for the two Syria crisis response umbrella business cases. These are complex in terms of number of countries, partners and sectors and allow for flexible programming to respond to an evolving situation. The logframe is deliberately simple and focuses on key indicators common across the portfolio. It is informed by a results database which captures all partner results and aggregates them against a broader set of common indicators to allow for further analysis. The database is underpinned by partner project specific logframes which are used to manage the individual grants funded under the business cases. From June 2014, the team has started to fund new programmes under agency specific business cases. The umbrella business cases will finish in 2016 and substantive revisions to the logframe are therefore not planned.	Completed

UK Policy & Humanitarian Principles Grant Allocation & Management	6. Since resources are a constraint and workload high, DFID should consider moving towards providing as much as possible of its assistance as un-earmarked funds through organisations in which it has confidence, while retaining (limited) geographically-focused funding enabling local actions. This approach would alleviate some of the burden on staff to monitor a wide range of programmes.	SCU, MENAD	Partly	DFID already adopts a range of funding models providing core support to multilaterals as well as country specific funding. The balance is reviewed as part of the five year bilateral and multilateral aid reviews.	Completed
UK Policy & Humanitarian Principles	7. At the same time, DFID should develop its approach to third party monitoring in order to verify (possibly on a rolling sample basis, and possibly jointly with other key donors) the overall international response and its partner's results. This monitoring should support real time adaptive programming.	SCU, MENAD	Accepted	DFID has launched a tender for third party monitoring.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	8. DFID needs to create more coherence in its management structure and performance and increase its core skill levels. More effort needs to be made to recruit and retain experienced programme managers.	SCU, MENAD and DFID	Accepted	As part of a broader process of restructuring across MENAD, decision making was decentralised to country teams in November 2014. Since the review, two Programme Manager posts have been created as well as an additional post of A2 Team Leader for Results and Risk. All of these have been filled with experienced staff.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	9. While a matrix management structure is unavoidable, reporting and operations need to be as simple as possible. The current split across MENAD between staff working in the same countries between humanitarian and development (which is activity based) should be replaced by a structure that focuses on areas of work (institutions and geographies). This would then align more closely with how funding is managed through business cases.	MENAD	Partly	A restructure (partly informed by this evaluation) took effect in November 2014 as part of the building a stronger MENAD initiative. The new structure unifies staff working on humanitarian and development projects within a country, under one line manager for each country: Lebanon; Jordan; Syria; Iraq. Each country team is supported by a Programme Hub in London.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	10. Time needs to be invested managing all staff working in the same region as a unit, listening, and creating coherence.	SCU, MENAD	Accepted	See response to recommendations 8 and 9.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	11. Decisions should take place as close to the point of delivery as possible. DFID should seek to place as many staff as possible in the region and in country. Programme staff in particular; if they cannot be permanently placed in the region, they need to be more regularly cycled through.	SCU and MENAD	Partly	See response to recommendations 8 and 9.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	12. We were told that the key constraint to locating staff closer to the point of delivery was funding; this constraint needs to be addressed and funds allocated to allow staff to work more	DFID MENAD	Partly	See response to recommendations 8 and 9.	Completed

	regularly close to the point of delivery.				
Grant Allocation & Management	13. Internal communication needs to be improved and particular obstacles, such as the lack of access to secure communications for contracted staff in the field, need to be overcome. A culture of top-down paper- and email-based communication needs to be challenged.	SCU and MENAD	Accepted	See response to recommendations 8 and 9. In addition, local staff have been hired in Lebanon and Jordan to provide administrative support and communication has improved across all teams.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	14. During our review, DFID agreed with our finding that the Programme Board should be less of a burden and its role and remit should focus on ensuring overall coherence and supporting delivery. We understand it has made changes consistent with this.	MENAD	Accepted	The terms of reference for the board has been reviewed periodically and the board now meets quarterly rather than monthly and focuses on more strategic issues such as risk management.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	15. DFID needs to corporately develop a clearer understanding of what an appropriate model should look like, (different from business as usual). This will require learning lessons from its response to the Syrian and other contexts (such as Iraq, Bosnia and the Balkans, Afghanistan, Congo).	DFID	Partly	The DFID Syria team is committed to sharing learning across DFID to help other teams better prepare for and manage future response to crises whilst recognising that each context is very different.	Ongoing
Grant Allocation & Management	16. Ideally the model should identify triggers, establish the principle of 'planning for the worst and hoping for the best', and link the level and type of administrative resource required to the possible size and nature of the overall committed programme.	DFID	Partly	The DFID Syria team has shared these recommendations with CHASE for their consideration.	Completed
Grant Allocation & Management	17. Resourcing should take account of the increased burden of working across multiple sites and disciplines. Ideally this would result in an agreed outline plan that can be quickly operationalized in the event of future need.	DFID	Partly	See response to recommendation 16.	Completed