



DFID Response

10 April 2018

DFID Response to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recommendations on: Building Resilience to Natural Disasters, February 2018

DFID welcomes this Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) report. DFID is committed to taking early action to help the most vulnerable prepare for shocks and access support when disaster does strike. Investing in building the resilience of countries, communities, and people saves lives, protects livelihoods, safeguards development gains, and helps UK aid money go further.

We welcome ICAI's conclusion that **"DFID has taken a well-considered approach to mainstreaming resilience and its programming has generated good results"**. We also welcome ICAI's recognition of the positive impact of DFID's influencing work, the department's global leadership on parametric insurance, and DFID's "important contribution to building the global knowledge base and the value for money case for investing in resilience". **We agree that progress and momentum must be maintained.**

The review focused on DFID's humanitarian and climate-related programmes; however, as the report notes, building resilience is not confined to these areas. DFID recognises the important linkages between programmes specifically targeting resilience, and those across other sectors, including social protection, health, water, education, and agriculture. **We welcome ICAI's recommendations for strengthening connections further and sharing learning** between teams and programmes.

It is important to emphasise that **building resilience is context-specific**. DFID welcomes ICAI's positive conclusions about our approach to empower and support teams to "develop solutions that best suited their portfolios and country context". Our responses to the report's recommendations will therefore seek to **maintain flexibility and further embed resilience across relevant processes, programmes, and teams** at central, country programme, and local levels.

Recommendation 1: In partner countries with significant risks from natural disasters, DFID should keep its risk assessments and resilience strategies up to date, working where possible in conjunction with national governments and other development partners.

Accept

DFID recognises that country contexts and risks are constantly shifting and DFID will continue to adapt its programmes accordingly. DFID will continue to strengthen the way risk and resilience are embedded in planning and programming across all vulnerable countries.

We will further **embed risk and resilience into existing processes and tools**. Work is already underway to refresh risk assessments and explore the interactions between risks to build the evidence base to inform decision making, including DFID business plans. For example, the UK is investing in:

- risk management tools to inform programme design, such as the Index for Risk Management (InfoRM); as well as insurance mechanisms such as African Risk Capacity; and,
- climate science and modelling which will help us to better understand and predict risk, for example, through the Science for Humanitarian Emergencies and Resilience (SHEAR) programme.

We welcome the report's acknowledgement that DFID plays an important role in coordinating development partners and building local capacity. **We will continue to work with other partners to conduct joint risk analysis and planning where possible, and press others to do so too**. One way we will do this is through the payment by results mechanism for multi-year core funding (2017 – 2020) for UN humanitarian agencies. This will incentivise improvements in how agencies individually and collectively manage risk, use risk analysis to target investment in emergency preparedness in high-risk countries and to respond faster and better.

Recommendation 2: DFID offices in high-risk countries should adopt a portfolio approach to resilience, articulating how their efforts in different sectors and areas will work together to build resilience.

Accept

We agree that it is important for all programmes in high-risk countries – whether explicitly or indirectly building resilience – to support common objectives. In line with our mainstreamed approach, and recognising the context-specific nature of resilience-building, we believe that **the most practical and sustainable way to strengthen complementarity of resilience work is as part of existing business planning processes**.

DFID uses a range of tools to ensure that offices have a coherent narrative and evidence-based rationale for their programmes. The **Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostic** (CPRD) is a key tool that informs country programme business planning. The CPRD tool and supporting guidelines are currently being refreshed. As part of this update, we will look to further **embed systematic disaster resilience and preparedness analysis across country offices' planning processes**.

DFID's internal guidance on portfolio design and business case development includes advice on considering how programmes will build resilience. This guidance also includes specific advice on addressing climate and environmental risks. In consultation with teams, **we will review and strengthen guidance where appropriate as part of future updates**.

Recommendation 3: DFID should develop its guidance on how to measure resilience results, providing options that can be adopted by country offices according to their contexts and needs.

Partially Accept

DFID always monitors the outcomes of its programmes to ensure our work is helping those most in need, while also providing value for money for the UK taxpayer. As ICAI notes, the highly context-specific nature of resilience makes it difficult to measure in a unified way. DFID has empowered its country offices to adapt programmes to local situations. Work is already underway to develop context-specific indicators and support cross-departmental learning so that teams can develop and exchange methods of tracking resilience – quantitative or qualitative – which are most appropriate to their programmes (see also our response to recommendation 5).

DFID's global leadership on resilience is partly delivered through our **Building Resilience and Adaption to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED)** programme. In addition to directly supporting 7 million people through project interventions across the Sahel, East Africa and South Asia, this programme will enable us to test and refine methods for measuring resilience impact and disseminate learning. We have recently invested an additional £30million in the BRACED programme and have extended it by 21 months.

DFID has seconded a staff member to the **Global Resilience Partnership (GRP)**. This evolving partnership of the UN, the World Bank, governments, regional organisations, and private sector organisations, will build international consensus and support for resilience planning. DFID was also closely involved in the setting up of a global community of practice on resilience measurement.

Recommendation 4: DFID should undertake a stocktake of its work on resilience in high-risk countries to assess the contribution of its programming and influencing activity to building resilience and disaster preparedness, to inform its country strategies. This could be done periodically, or following significant natural disasters.

Partially Accept

DFID agrees that reviewing our performance is important and this ICAI review has provided a valuable opportunity to take stock of our work. **DFID already assesses resilience and preparedness in high risk countries following our responses to significant natural disasters.** These internal "lessons learned" reviews are conducted in partnership with other government departments where appropriate and are used to inform resilience and preparedness planning in the relevant country, regional, and response teams. Updates are provided to ministers as appropriate.

We believe that additional review would be most usefully and sustainably conducted within local contexts as part of established business processes, in conjunction with regular lesson sharing. We agree that cross-departmental coordination and oversight are important to ensure that momentum behind mainstreaming is maintained. We are therefore **bolstering technical networks and providing senior-level support** in a way that will add most value (see also our response to recommendation 5).

Recommendation 5: DFID should establish a community of practice to promote the continuing mainstreaming of resilience to natural disasters and provide technical and expert support to the dissemination of knowledge and evidence.

Accept

We welcome ICAI's recognition of the important contribution that DFID is making to learning what works for building resilience to natural disasters, as well the department's

role in building the 'value for money' case for such investment. We welcome ICAI's recommendations for further strengthening our efforts to harness and disseminate learnings.

- DFID is **establishing an internal community of practice**. As part of this, we have identified a contact list of resilience experts across the department who have made themselves available to offer peer-to-peer support. This will be supported by a committee of senior staff who will review on a 6-monthly basis.
- DFID has developed a set of **resilience learning materials** which are available to all staff. These learning materials will continue to be developed and improved with evidence gathered from DFID investments and programmes, such as BRACED and the Global Resilience Partnership. The use of these materials will regularly be assessed and tracked by staff.
- The cross-Government **COMPASS programme** is designed to enhance the monitoring framework and derive evidence and learning from International Climate Fund programming, much of which is aimed at supporting the resilience of the world's poorest. As part of this, DFID will be publishing the key deliverables, including evaluation reports and indicator methodologies, and disseminating evidence and learning to key stakeholders and interested parties.