



Department  
for International  
Development



# Evaluation Annual Report

## 2016/17



December 2017

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# List of Acronyms

3DE	Demand Driven Evaluations for Decisions
BEAM	Building Empowerment and Accountability in Malawi
CEDIL	The Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning
CLEAR	Centre for Learning on Evaluation Results
DFID	Department for International Development
DIME	Development Impact Evaluation
EGAP	Evidence in Governance and Politics
EQUALS	Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service
GEFA	Global Evaluation Framework Agreement
GLAM	Global Learning on Adaptive Management
IE	Impact Evaluations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OGDs	Other Government Departments
RED	Research and Evidence Division
SEQAS	Specialist Evaluation and Quality Assurance Service
SIEF	Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

# Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Evaluation Report, which covers DFID's evaluation activities between April 2016 and March 2017. In a fast-changing world, our aid needs to become even faster, more effective, more innovative and better value. Evidence from evaluations is absolutely key to helping DFID to learn what works, who it works for, in what context and why. In DFID, evaluations are helping us to improve the quality and value for money of our programming, make decisions to stop programmes that are not working and scale up those that do work and contribute to the wider evidence base on what works to effectively reduce poverty in developing countries.

In 2016/17, DFID's strong de-centralised evaluation system was complemented by the work of the central Evaluation Department. Together the de-centralised evaluation model and the Evaluation Department generated robust evidence in under evaluated thematic areas to inform programme and policy design, built partner capacity and promoted the use of evaluations.

During 2017/18, the Research and Evidence Division will establish a new Evidence Department, bringing together evaluation with other units supporting the creation and use of evidence. As part of the creation of the new Evidence Department in 2017/18, we will refresh the 2014 Evaluation Strategy. The refreshed Evaluation Strategy will bring greater coherence to DFID's approach to how evaluation evidence is used in decision making.

This report was written by the Evaluation Department in line with the DFID [Evaluation Policy \(2013\)](#)<sup>1</sup> and Strategy (2014-19) and provides information on DFID's ongoing efforts to continuously improve the focus, quality and use of evaluations for learning and evidence informed decision-making. It highlights our achievements as well as areas we will focus on in coming years. Notably, the achievements outlined in this report for 2016/17 document the progress made towards the key outcomes in the DFID 2014-19 Evaluation Strategy.

*Sian Rasdale*  
*Head of Evidence Department, Research and Evidence Division*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-evaluation-policy-2013>

# Highlights from 2016/17

In a fast-changing world, our aid needs to become even faster, more effective, more innovative and better value. In 2016/17 a number of key evaluation initiatives helped to inform and learn from innovative aid delivery mechanisms, support Other Government Department's (OGD's) delivery of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and drive forward better value aid:

- Evaluation Department launched the Global Learning for Adaptive Management (GLAM) programme to improve the way development interventions access, use and learn from better and faster monitoring and evaluation evidence;
- A new and improved Global Evaluation Framework Agreement (GEFA) was launched in September 2016 to ensure more competition, innovation and choice in DFID's evaluation supplier market;
- DFID is the UK Government's lead department in the evaluation of Official Development Assistance. This year saw the Department strengthen that position by extending its services to OGDs, co-ordinating learning and sharing best practice across ODA-spending departments and investing in the development of new learning, methods and tools.

## Working with Other Government Departments and Joint Funds

DFID has extended its evaluation offer to OGDs, with DFID driving high quality evaluations of programmes funded by the UK aid budget:

- A new cross-government group was established by DFID to share learning and support monitoring and evaluation of programmes that are funded by the UK aid budget;
- The Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning (CEDIL) was established to help DFID and aid spending OGDs overcome the challenges of undertaking impact evaluations, particularly in fragile and conflict affected states, to assess and improve our aid programmes;
- DFID also offers technical support, quality assurance, (via the Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service, EQUALS) and procurement support (via the GEFA) to OGDs that also spend the UK aid budget;
- DFID's Evaluation Cadre is open to staff across government. The cadre offers training and technical development opportunities.

## Learning Opportunities

DFID has continued its commitment to internal evaluation lesson learning and sharing:

- In 2016, the "What did we learn" seminars were launched across DFID with a focus on sharing learning and presenting different methodologies and discussions on what the lessons mean for future DFID policies and programmes;
- Evaluation summaries were produced for each evaluation published during 2016/17, capturing the what, how, why and who for each evaluation. The summaries provided accessible evaluation findings that are shared with policy and programme staff to inform their decision making;

- A series of seminars on evaluation methodologies and approaches that aimed to strengthen knowledge and understanding were well attended by DFID staff and staff from other aid spending departments and joint funds.

## **Evaluation Use and Influence**

Evaluation Department has had a strong focus on strengthening the influence and use of DFID's evaluation portfolio in the past year:

- A theory of change was developed to underpin the potential influence of evaluations;
- Work towards an Evaluation Use and Influence strategy commenced;
- Evaluation Department launched the GLAM programme to improve the way development interventions access, use and learn from better and faster monitoring and evaluation evidence.

# 1. Evaluation in Numbers

Under DFID's decentralised evaluation model, decisions on whether to evaluate programmes and interventions lie with individual spending units. The numbers of evaluations and spend on evaluations is therefore variable across DFID and is subject to continuous change.

## Evaluations published

DFID has committed to publish all completed evaluations in line with the UK government's transparency commitments. DFID evaluations are published on DFID's [open data site](#)<sup>2</sup> and on the UK government external [website](#)<sup>3</sup>. For 2016/17, 26 completed evaluation reports were published, with management responses published for 24.

## Ongoing evaluations

Based on DFID's management information system, there were 244 ongoing evaluations in DFID in 2016/17 (Table 1). While the number of evaluations ongoing in DFID fell in 2016/17, the proportion of DFID funds being evaluated rose. This suggests that DFID offices are focusing on evaluating higher value programmes. DFID evaluations concentrated on DFID's bilateral expenditure i.e. programming delivered directly by DFID, rather than core funds provided to other development agencies and organisations. Core funds provided to other development agencies are evaluated according to those agencies policies, and are not typically commissioned by DFID.

**Table 1: Statistics on Evaluations of DFID programmes.**

	2015/16	2016/17
Number of ongoing evaluations	285	244
% of DFID programmes being evaluated	17%	16%
% of DFID total spend being evaluated	19%	21%
% of DFID bilateral spend being evaluated	28%	33%

Source: DFID Management Information

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<sup>2</sup> [www.devtracker.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.devtracker.dfid.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

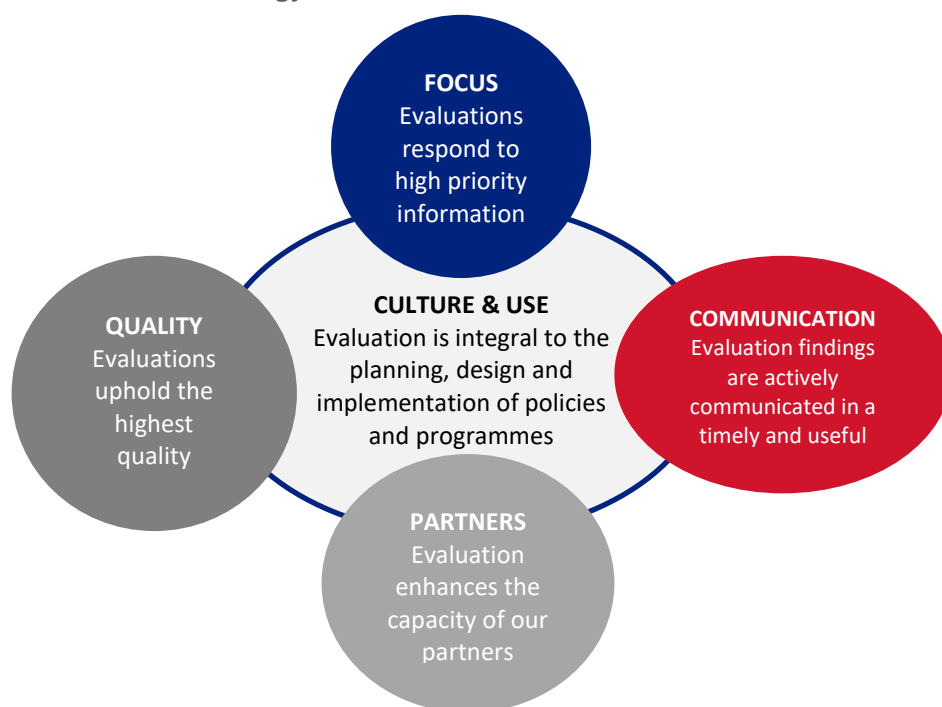
# 2. Evaluation Strategy

## DFID's Evaluation Strategy 2014-2019

[DFID's 2014-2019 Evaluation Strategy](#)<sup>4</sup> aims to strengthen DFID's evaluation system and ensure it continues to produce high quality evidence for learning and improvement of development focused programming. Ensuring that evaluations are relevant, high quality and effectively communicated is key to creating a culture in which evaluation is integral to policy and programme design, implementation and continuous improvement.

The Evaluation Strategy defines five outcomes (Figure 1) through which DFID seeks to fulfil its evaluation goal of reducing poverty by generating evidence and knowledge that informs effective decision making. In 2017/18, DFID will begin to refresh the evaluation strategy in line with wider departmental changes.

Figure 1: DFID Evaluation Strategy Outcomes.



## Strategic priority areas

The Evaluation Department has supported a number of strategic priority areas for DFID, including disability inclusion, payment by results, countering violent extremism and advancing evaluation methods.

Evaluation Department established a new [Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning](#)<sup>5</sup>. CEDIL is a world first international flagship centre for impact evaluation

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-evaluation-strategy-june-2014-to-2019>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cedilprogramme.org/>



methods, which will develop new evaluation approaches and methods to support DFID and OGDs to measure and demonstrate impact and value for money of development interventions which we currently cannot evaluate because of a lack of suitable and robust methods available for the challenging contexts we operate in. This high quality, inter-disciplinary academic centre will innovate in the field of impact evaluation; design, commission and manage evaluations to test these innovations; and promote the uptake and use of evidence from the evaluations. A key part of CEDIL's role will also be to build capacity to improve the supplier base upon which DFID and OGDs can draw for difficult evaluations, and build capacity of DFID staff to commission, manage and quality assure evaluations using innovative methods.

A scoping study was commissioned to seek insights into how donors can support the voices of people with disabilities to be heard and reflected in country-led evaluation processes and systems. [Findings](#)<sup>6</sup> were published in late 2017 and will improve DFID's ability to commission, manage and support disability inclusive evaluations.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://cedilprogramme.org/publications/>

# 3. How evaluation made a difference

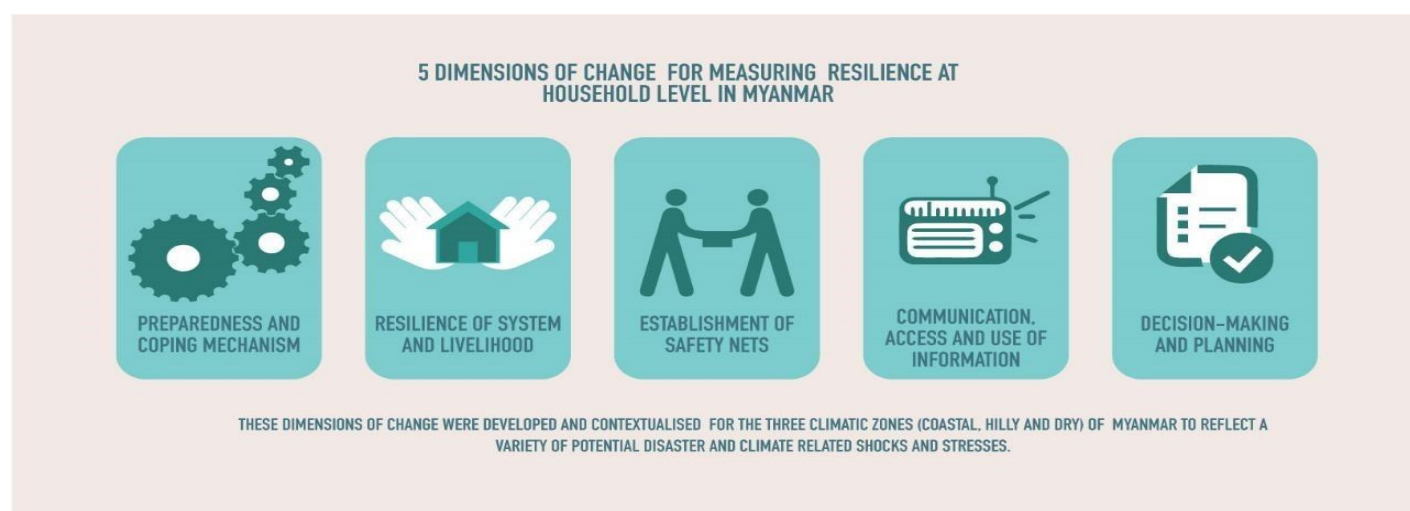
Evidence from evaluations is key to learning what works for whom, in what context and why. Evaluations help DFID drive value for money of spending on development through stopping programmes that do not work; scaling up programmes that do work; informing and improving national policies; and making current DFID programmes more effective. As well as helping improve the quality of DFID’s portfolio, DFID evaluation evidence is used across HMG and globally to improve efforts to reduce poverty. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) also uses DFID evaluations as part of the evidence base for their reviews of UK aid spending.

## Improving effectiveness of UK AID

### *Example: Building resilience to climate-induced shocks and stresses*

Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) programme is helping people from 13 countries in South and Southeast Asia and in the African Sahel become more resilient to climate-induced shocks and stresses. Multiple evaluation activities are helping the team and partners better understand drivers of resilience, presenting experiences and learning, and measuring impact. Evaluation work in Myanmar has provided invaluable insights into how we understand resilience in that context (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Five dimensions of change for measuring resilience at household level.



## Improving global aid

*Example: Informing the development of a regulatory framework for inspections of Kenyan health facilities*

The [Development Impact Evaluation \(DIME\)](#)<sup>7</sup> programme is working with the Kenyan Government and World Bank partners to evaluate a high-stakes inspection system to improve patient safety and quality of care in all public and private health facilities in Kenya. The evaluation has supported development of a new regulatory framework for inspections. It has also helped develop the materials, standards, and protocols for national scale-up, and helped to develop a web-based monitoring system that reports progress, performance, and challenges in real time.<sup>8</sup>

## Making existing and future programmes more effective

*Example: Building Empowerment and Accountability in Malawi.*

In 2011, DFID, Irish Aid and the Royal Norwegian Embassy established a multi-donor facility focused on Building Empowerment and Accountability in Malawi (BEAM) known as the Tilitonse Fund. An independent impact evaluation was designed based on a theory-based approach<sup>9</sup>. Data collection methods included: a survey of civil society organisations, a longitudinal qualitative case study approach, and triangulation with secondary sources of evidence. The evaluation led to a number of changes in how the programme was delivered:

- Partners were supported to think and work more politically;
- Learning was more strongly incorporated into how the programme was delivered – allowing it to adapt and respond to monitoring data and changes on the ground;
- Capacity building was expanded to look at new more innovative approaches, such as long term mentoring.

In addition, DFID used the evaluation to frame the design of a new accountability programme and the establishment of Tilitonse as a local foundation. As a result, it is expected that the Tilitonse Foundation will focus on mutual problem solving through coalitions of change.

*Example: Reducing malnutrition in over 650,000 households through information and cash transfers.*

In Nepal, nearly half of all children under five years old are stunted and the country has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. Working in partnership, the DFID funded [Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund \(SIEF\)](#)<sup>10</sup> researchers rigorously evaluated the effects of a programme that provided information about nutrition and parenting versus providing the same information with an unconditional cash transfer. Trained community volunteers led

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/dime>

<sup>8</sup> Related further information: [Bedoya et al, \(2017\)](#); [Daniels et al, \(2017\)](#); [Wafula et al, \(2017\)](#).

<sup>9</sup> A theory-based approach to evaluation is a way of structuring and analysing an evaluation. Theory-based evaluations use a theory of change to map out the results that an intervention or programme is expected to achieve. Further information on theory-based approaches is available on <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/centre-excellence-evaluation/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sief-trust-fund>.

monthly meetings to teach mothers about the importance of breastfeeding, vitamins and nutritious food. Results showed that women improved their knowledge of proper practices and their practices for feeding and interacting with their young children, and this change in knowledge and practice was still sustained two years later.

In families where women also received a cash transfer, children showed cognitive gains as well, but these gains were not sustained two years later. The Government of Nepal's Poverty Alleviation Fund, which is tasked with reaching the country's poorest and most remote communities, has already adopted the training model and materials, benefitting a wide population of which 76% were women and 65% were ultra-poor, and from over 650,000 households.

*Example: Improving early childhood development in 80,000 households in Niger.*

About three quarters of people in Niger live on less than USD 2 per day, the fertility rate of 7.6 children per woman is among the highest in the world and more than a third of children under the age of five are stunted because of malnutrition. In 2011, the Government of Niger established a safety net programme combining cash transfers for women in poor rural households with monthly parental training in village assembly meetings, small-group meetings and home visits on nutrition, health, child protection, and psycho-social stimulation. The SIEF-supported evaluation provided information that helped the government improve the programme before it was even rolled out:

- When the evaluation team's baseline survey found that children's cognitive development was weaker than expected, the government reworked the programme to give more emphasis to cognitive development;
- When the impact evaluation team identified that the programme's targeting mechanism to identify poor families was not working well, the government made changes to ensure that the poorest would be adequately identified;
- Once results were in, showing that children whose mothers were in the programme had improved socio-emotional development, but not better cognitive or physical development, the government made changes to improve delivery of nutrition and development messages,
- After some health clinics turned mothers away when they brought their children in to be checked for possible malnutrition, the government committed to training health workers so they understand the importance of seeing all children who are brought in;
- The government is now scaling up the programme to reach 80,000 households, or more than 500,000 people, and evidence provided by the evaluation has been critical to making the programme more effective.

# 4. Reducing Global Evidence Gaps in International Development

The Evaluation Department is investing in programmes that undertake rigorous impact evaluations. These programmes deliver robust, evidence-based solutions to ongoing development problems, and identify cases where spending is not delivering as planned. By doing so, these evaluations help to speed up poverty reduction, and improve value for money in the global aid system. Outputs including academic articles, policy notes, blogs and dissemination events ensure that findings and learning are widely accessible beyond DFID. This section of the Annual Report provides further insights into the programmes that the Evaluation Department manages and supports.

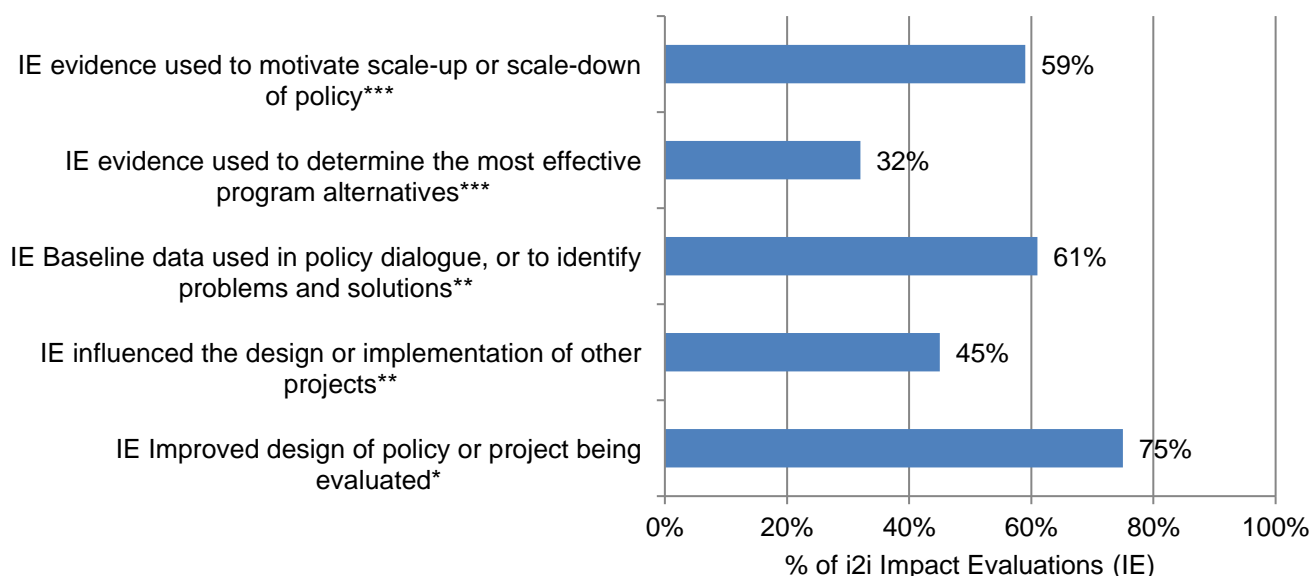
## Development Impact Evaluation

The World Bank Development Impact Evaluation unit is evaluating more than 110 programmes being undertaken by the World Bank, DFID, national governments, and a range of other organisations. DFID provides funding to DIME via the i2i Trust Fund. Topics covered are governance, shared prosperity, climate change, conflict and fragility, and gender. On DFID programmes, DIME is:

- Testing the most effective way to deliver a £150m water sector programme in Tanzania;
- Testing the most effective way to implement a £36m jobs programme for DFID Nigeria.
- Examining the impact of multiple large governance interventions in DRC, to improve future programmes in this area.

The graph below (Figure 3) shows how DIME evaluations are having policy influence e.g. 59% of evaluations are used to support project adoption/scale-up/scale-down/continuation or cancelation decisions, and 75% helped to rationalise policy design. Studies are also of high quality, with over 80% of those completed being cited in academic literature.

**Figure 3: DIME i2i Policy Influence Indicators by Evaluation Phase.**



Based on data reported by to DIME in Dec 2016 by managers of projects being evaluated with i2i funding;

\* applicable after Concept Note review

\*\* applicable after baseline results are available and discussed

\*\*\* applicable after final results are available and discussed

## The Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund

There is a lack of rigorous evidence on how best to deliver human development interventions to achieve the desired impacts. Impact evaluations employ experimental methodologies to produce robust evidence to inform policy decisions, yet they are often complex and require strong evaluation expertise. DFID funds the World Bank's Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund to address lack of evidence by funding a set of at least 60 high-quality impact evaluations in the human development fields of health, early-childhood development, education and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). In the past year, 9 of these impact evaluations have been completed, delivering robust evidence to policy makers and answering crucial development questions.

SIEF supports capacity development in evaluation through workshops and wide-reaching publications. In 2016 they released the second edition of ['Impact Evaluation in Practice'](http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sief-trust-fund/publication/impact-evaluation-in-practice)<sup>11</sup> handbook for policymakers and development practitioners. The handbook is downloadable for free from the website and provides a comprehensive introduction to impact evaluation and how to use it to design evidence-based policies and programs. SIEF is also providing crucial thought-leadership and creating new tools to overcome the difficulties of measuring early childhood development.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sief-trust-fund/publication/impact-evaluation-in-practice>.

## Evidence in Governance and Politics

Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) is a network of researchers and practitioners focused on experimental research on topics of governance, politics, and institutions. EGAP is undertaking evaluations to find out what works in 3 important areas of governance programming: Domestic revenue mobilisation, Natural resource management, and Conflict prevention & resolution. DFID's investment in EGAP funds 3 groups of 7 studies. In each group, all studies test a similar aid intervention. Comparing results lets us learn about the conditions in which the interventions do and do not work. This gives a strong basis for choosing to use them in future. Each intervention being studied is chosen to improve aid effectiveness:

- Tax Payment – Will help DFID to improve tax payment levels in partner countries, helping to reduce the need for aid resources over time;
- Natural Resource Management – Will help DFID to improve water and forest management in partner countries, helping to reduce environmental destruction, pollution and global warming;
- Community Policing – Will help DFID to improve stability and justice in conflict-affected areas of partner countries, improving our work on conflict reduction and migration.

EGAP will help to improve governance programmes and policy by producing reliable knowledge on what works in these areas, and whether it will work elsewhere. The programme will pioneer the innovative '[Metaketa](#)'<sup>12</sup> evaluation method which should generate reliable, transferable evidence about the conditions under which key governance interventions work.

EGAP got off to a successful start in 2016/17 with 17 high-quality evaluations, covering a range of developing countries, selected via three open competitions. Policy findings are due in 2019. This is an important support to developing effective evidence to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 16 on governance issues, and other Goals requiring improved governance.

### 3ie

Whilst evaluation evidence on what works in development has increased, it is patchy with high quality evidence still scarce in a number of development sectors. DFID's support to [3ie](#)13 has helped fill important evidence gaps in policy and programming. 3ie's key achievements this year which were supported by DFID include the following:

- A systematic review on the effectiveness of education interventions ([Snilstveit, et al., 2016](#)<sup>14</sup>) which synthesises evidence on the effects of 21 different types of education interventions on children's school enrolment, attendance, completion and learning. The review offers governments and international agencies useful pointers for helping them identify effective education programmes to meet the education SDG.

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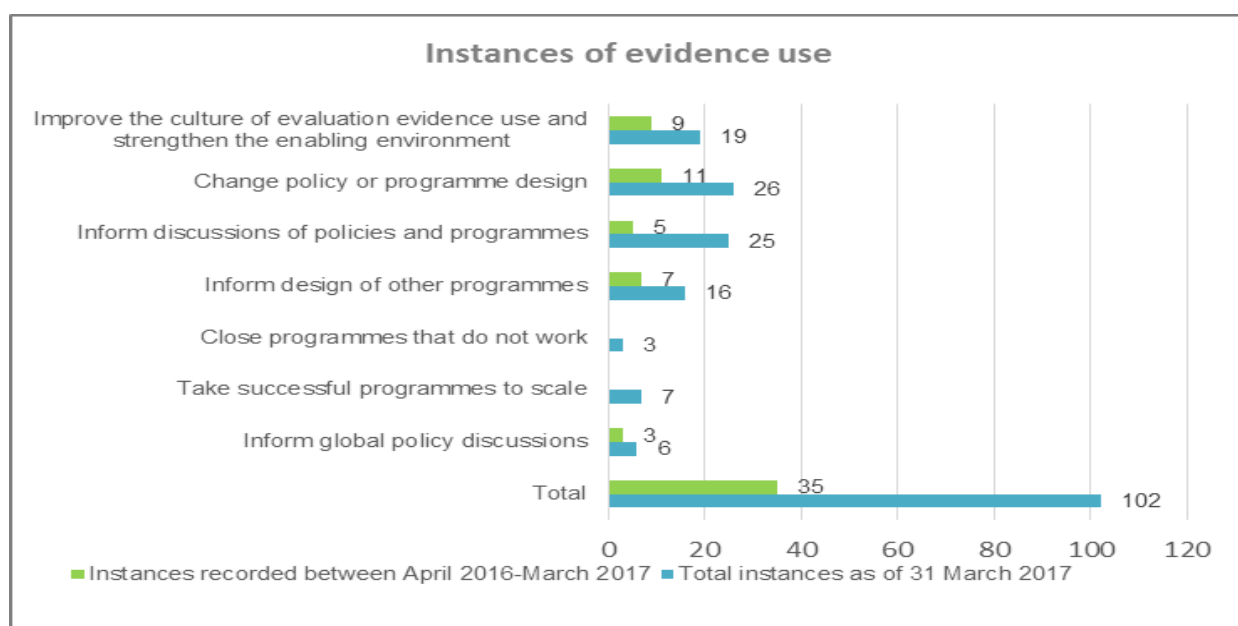
<sup>12</sup> <http://egap.org/metaketa>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.3ieimpact.org/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer\\_public/2016/09/20/srs7-education-report.pdf](http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer_public/2016/09/20/srs7-education-report.pdf)

- [Publication](#) 15 of 24 impact evaluations, 26 systematic reviews, 6 systematic review summary reports, 18 briefs, 3 working papers, 3 evidence gap maps and reports, 1 scoping report and 1 replication paper;
- Evidence from these studies and reviews have been used to change policy and programme design, inform design of other programmes and improve the culture of evaluation use. Figure 4 provides details of the 35 instances of evidence uptake and use from 20 studies reviews, of which 12 studies are supported by DFID;
- 21 capacity building events on quality assurance, methods, gender and equity responsiveness, ethics, and measuring evidence uptake and use.

Figure 4: 3ie reported instances of evidence use.



## Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results

[The Centre for Learning on Evaluation Results](#)<sup>16</sup> (CLEAR) is a global Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacity development programme that brings together academic institutions and donor partners to contribute to the use of evidence in decision making in developing countries. This programme helps people in developing countries and civil society hold their politicians and parliaments to account through better, more robust evidence of what works, what does not and what could be done better so they can make better programme and policy decisions. Key achievements include:

- 10 capacity-building initiatives delivered by the [Anglophone Africa CLEAR Centre](#)<sup>17</sup> (5 of which involving 172 participants on topics such as programme planning, evaluation design, and theory of change);
- Critical support provided to Senegal Evaluation Association, (by the [Francophone Africa CLEAR Centre](#)<sup>18</sup>) resulting in strengthened capacity and improved evaluation

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/publications/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theclearinitiative.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theclearinitiative.org/regional-centers/anglophone-africa>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.theclearinitiative.org/regional-centers/francophone-africa>



services, a strong and growing community of practice, and a new generation of young evaluators;

- Collaboration with the government of Tamil Nadu by [CLEAR South Asia](#)<sup>19</sup> to improve evaluation practices and protocols, improve data collection and help increase the demand for both.

CLEAR's services have been consistently rated high (4 or 5 on a 5 point scale) on quality (87% for 2016), usefulness (83% for 2016), and increase in knowledge (85% for 2016).

## The Clinton Health Access Initiative's: Demand Driven Evaluations for Decisions

The '[Demand Driven Evaluations for Decisions](#)'<sup>20</sup> (3DE) programme works with national health policymakers to identify and prioritise their needs for evaluative evidence. 3DE subsequently works with policy-makers to interpret and use evidence to inform the development of relevant and effective health care policies. The main areas of work for the 3DE programme over the last year have been: i) continued engagement with government officials to understand needs and timeframes for evidence, ii) designing studies, developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks and other activities that are credible, ethical and highly relevant to the needs of government officials, and iii) delivering studies in ways that support the creation of timely and useful evidence to inform decisions. Evaluations of programmes planned or in early implementation stages in 2016/17 include:

- Rwanda: A home-based management programme that aims to provide palliative care services and support to help people manage chronic conditions that are related to malaria;
- Zimbabwe: A programme that provides Vitamin A supplements in certain districts;
- Zambia: Health clinics which organise separate day services for HIV positive mothers and their HIV exposed infants to receive group based support services.

## Working with Other Government Departments

### [New cross-government group](#)

In 2016/17 DFID created a new cross-government group that aims to share learning, and best international practice to support monitoring and evaluation of programmes that are funded by Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

The group has discussed topics including 'design of global indicators for large and diverse portfolios', 'strategies to increase the quality of evaluation plans and findings', and 'how to design M&E strategies to maximise organisational learning'. The group works together to share insights and collectively solve challenges. This is improving the quality of M&E across ODA spending government departments.

M&E Advisers working for a variety of Departments spending aid including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office, the Department of Health, and the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy participate in these meetings.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.theclearinitiative.org/regional-centers/south-asia>

<sup>20</sup> <https://clintonhealthaccess.org/3de-manual/>

DFID also offers technical support, quality assurance, (via the Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service, EQUALS) and procurement support (via the Global Evaluation Framework Agreement, GEFA) to OGDs with ODA spending responsibilities. Furthermore, staff from across government can accredit to DFID's Evaluation Cadre which offers training and technical development opportunities.

“Evaluation Department’s cross-Whitehall group on M&E is an excellent and much-needed initiative. It will make learning across Government on development evaluation much more effective.”  
Deputy Head, Other Government Department

“Input and advice has been absolutely invaluable in helping us understanding the evaluation methodologies and approaches.”  
Policy Adviser, Other Government Department

# 5. Evaluation Quality

## Maintaining the Highest Quality Standards

Ensuring that DFID's evaluation portfolio upholds the highest quality standards has always been a priority for Evaluation Department. In 2016/17 this focus was further strengthened with the introduction of a new Quality Assurance service (EQUALS) which will now also provide technical support to evaluation advisers and evaluation commissioners. The way that DFID procures evaluations was improved, with a new procurement framework launched, attracting a wider and more diverse market of evaluation contractors.

Focus was also placed on developing the skills of DFID's cadre of Evaluation Advisers, with a diverse range of training and events to discuss innovative methodologies, strengthen our approach to evidence based adaptive programming and further develop evaluation skills and evaluative thinking across DFID.

## DFID's Evaluation Cadre

DFID has a dynamic and growing evaluation cadre comprising of evaluation specialists as well as generalists with varied experience and training in evaluation. The cadre model awards levels of accreditation depending on staff skills and experience. Of the 203 people accredited 38 are employed in Evaluation Advisory roles, the remainder are staff who have acquired recognised evaluation skills and are applying them in their advisory and programme management and policy roles.

The evaluation accreditation model and evaluation competencies are designed to ensure professional standards are maintained and staff skills are aligned with the requirements to strengthen the quality of DFID evaluations. Cadre members are supported through tailored learning and a professional development curriculum.

### Evaluation Cadre in Numbers<sup>21</sup>

- 203 staff accredited to evaluation, including 13 members of staff working across other government departments;
- 38 Evaluation Advisers (24.5 full time equivalents) working across DFID;
- Working across 10 global locations.

## Increasing skills and knowledge of evaluation

The Continuous Professional Development strategy for the evaluation cadre sets out the delivery of a range and mix of methods including learning on the job, mentoring and line management, peer learning, formal training, workshops, and immersion opportunities.

The highlight of the year saw more than 80 staff come together in Oxford for the joint statistics and evaluation professional development conference which focused on 'flex and adapt' and showcased flagship work in adaptive programming. A range of evaluation training courses were delivered during 2016 reaching to both cadre and non-cadre staff including three Principles of Evaluation courses, two impact evaluation and RCT courses

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<sup>21</sup> Figures correct at time of writing, October 2017.

(delivered by DIME and 3ie), and a training course on quality in qualitative evaluation (delivered by NatCen).

A series of external speakers were invited into our offices to present on evaluation topical issues, leaders in the field of evaluation including Michael Bamberger, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, and Chris Blattman presented insightful and thought provoking topics. "Causality Conversations" provided a space for staff to learn about techniques used in quantitative approaches to evaluation. Staff across DFID were also introduced to evaluation concepts and processes through the cross-DFID training courses that periodically run throughout the year which helps build an appreciation of evaluative thinking across the organisation. A series of methods seminars was run with practical tips for commissioning, quality assuring and managing evaluations which employ different approaches.

## The Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Service

The Evaluation Department established the Evaluation Quality Assurance Learning Service to provide independent technical support and quality assurance services for evaluations. The remit of EQUALS is similar to its predecessor programme, the Specialist Evaluation and Quality Assurance Service (SEQAS), with additional services offered from EQUALS. The most recent [Annual Review](#)<sup>22</sup> of this programme is available online.

The majority of EQUALS work is the quality assurance of key evaluation products – terms of reference, inception, baseline and final reports. DFID staff can also access short and long-term specialist technical evaluation advice, including evaluability assessments of programmes, support on developing evaluation methodology or programme theories of change and participation in technical evaluation steering committees.

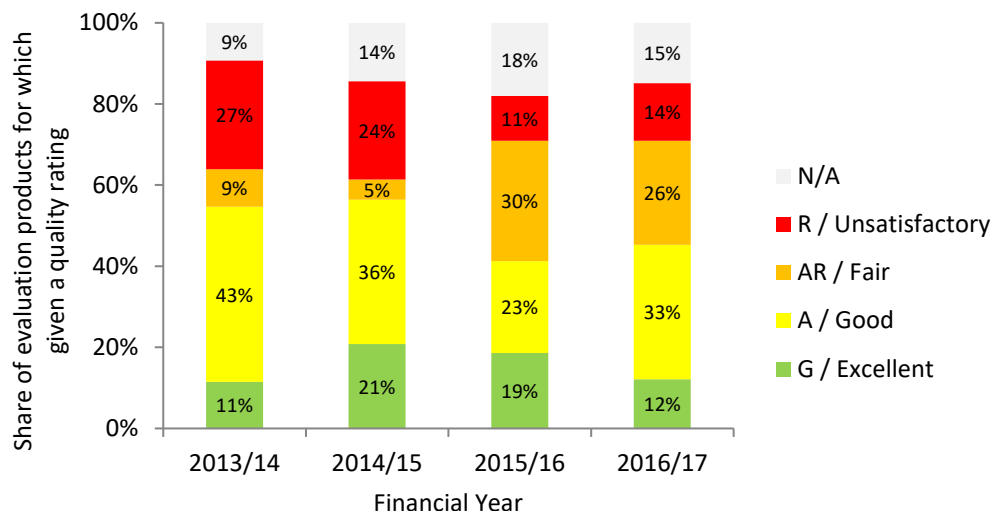
EQUALS' primary user is DFID, though this service is also now available to OGDs who spend UK aid budgets. Between October 2016 and the end of March 2017, EQUALS processed 70 requests from DFID, comprising of 51 Quality Assurance requests and 19 requests for evaluation technical assistance. The chart below shows the longer-term trend showing how quality assurance ratings of DFID's evaluation reports have changed over time. For example, the number of 'Unsatisfactory' evaluation products reduced from 27% in 2013/14 to 14% in 2016/17.

DFID also commissioned a learning review in 2016/17 to study the use and influence of evaluations in DFID.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati\\_documents/15548249.odt](http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/15548249.odt)

Figure 5: SEQAS/EQUALS ratings for key evaluation products reviewed.



## The Global Evaluation Framework Agreement

The Global Evaluation Framework Agreement is used by evaluation commissioners to contract evaluators. The GEFA is managed by DFID’s Procurement and Commercial Department with technical inputs from the Evaluation Department. It represents a framework of evaluation suppliers who have been pre-qualified, reducing procurement times for individual evaluations that use the framework as opposed to going out to open market. The original GEFA awarded 72 contracts from April 2013 – September 2015.

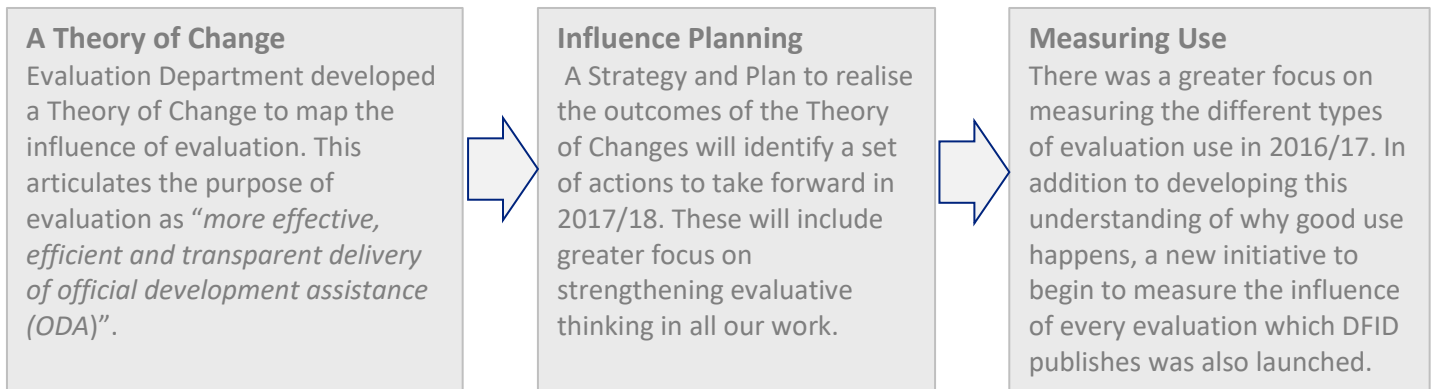
A new and improved GEFA was launched in September 2016 following an extensive procurement exercise to expand the market and ensure the framework reflects programmes’ needs. There are now two lots of the new GEFA: 14 suppliers on ‘Lot 1’ for impact evaluations and 18 suppliers on ‘Lot 2’ for performance evaluations.

# 6. Sharing learning from evaluations

A major focus in 2016/17 has been on strengthening the use and influence of DFID's decentralised evaluation portfolio. This has included improved systems to strengthen ex-post dissemination of learning from evaluation. All commissioners of completed evaluations are encouraged to share their findings across the Department, prompting discussion on what results mean for development practice and learning on what works, and in what circumstances. This conceptual learning from evaluation is being coupled with a greater focus on the instrumental use and influence of evaluations in the programmes and themes evaluated. This includes activities designed to improve the communication, ownership, timing and relevance of evaluations to programmes:

- Evaluation summaries - In 2016/17 Evaluation Department began producing internal summaries (known as 'digests') of every evaluation DFID published to create an easy reference point for learning from evaluations, sharing critical lessons and signposting new evidence to staff. The Annual Digest of all evaluations completed in 2015 was produced in 2016 and circulated internally;
- "What did we learn?" seminars - To strengthen the dissemination of learning from evaluation across DFID, 2016 saw the launch of Evaluation Department's "*what did we learn seminars*". Ten seminars were run in 2016/17 covering a range of topics including: Agriculture, Education, Social protection, and Trade;
- Evaluation reporting template - A new evaluation report template has been trialled in 2016/17, providing a simpler and more use-focussed way to communicate learning from evaluation. The template recommends that reports are no more than 25 pages long, with additional information, especially methodology sections in annexes. Priority is also placed on the readability of language used. The aim is to ensure DFID's evaluation reports are easier to use and understand – and to ensure contractors write for broader, non-specialist audiences;
- Using evaluations: use, influence and culture - One of the major focal areas for Evaluation Department in 2016/17 has been on strengthening the use and influence of DFID's evaluation portfolio. An independent review of the factors which influence use in DFID found that while the de-centralised structure contributed to commissioner's ownership of evaluation, and rigorous quality assurance mechanisms strengthened the quality and credibility of evidence, more still needed to be done to strengthen how influential evaluations are for DFID. Taking forward the learning from the review, Evaluation Department has been working on a range of innovative initiatives and will continue to work in 2017/18 to finalise the Evaluation Use and Influence Strategy and three-year Use and Influence Action Plan. Figure 6 summarises the work in this area.

**Figure 6: The evaluation use and influence process in DFID.**



# 7. The year ahead

Building on the significant achievements in 2016/17, DFID are now focusing on:

- Continuing to improve the use and influence of evaluations, through developing and implementing an Evaluation Use and Influence Action Plan;
- Developing and testing innovative evaluation methods and approaches to help ensure the quality of evaluations of UK ODA;
- Continuing to meet DFID evidence priorities through evaluations.

Within the Research and Evidence Division, DFID is creating a new Evidence Department in 2017/18. The Evidence Department will be home to the Evaluation Unit (the new name for the Evaluation Department) which will continue to complement and support DFID's decentralised evaluation model.

As part of the creation of the new Evidence Department, the 2014 Evaluation Strategy will be refreshed. The refreshed Evaluation Strategy will bring greater coherence to DFID's approach on how evaluation evidence is used in decision making and will be complemented by DFID's Evaluation Use and Influence Action Plan. A survey of evidence use across DFID staff will also feed into our understanding of how evaluative evidence is used across DFID and what support the organisation needs to increase use of this type of evidence.

There will be continued emphasis on using evaluation to support faster, more efficient and innovative delivery of aid including: through delivery of monitoring and evaluation of adaptive programmes, continued support to other government departments, establishing new evaluation approaches which can address challenges all government departments spending the aid budget currently face with evaluation (e.g. the challenging contexts of fragile and conflict affected states), and supporting rapid trialling. Finally, evaluation will continue to drive value for money improvement in UK aid. The importance of using evaluation findings to inform decision making will remain a strong focus for the new Evaluation Unit.



# Annex – Evaluations published (2016/17)

	Evaluation	Management response
1	<a href="#">Performance Management Funding of International Agriculture Research Centres</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
2	<a href="#">Improving the Collation, Availability &amp; Dissemination of National Development Indicators, including MDGs.</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
3	<a href="#">MTE Stamp Out Gender Based Violence in Zambia</a>	NA
4	<a href="#">Delivering Reproductive Health Results Programme</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
5	<a href="#">Strengthening Tanzania's Anti-Corruption Action Programme (STACA)</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
6	<a href="#">Climate &amp; Development Knowledge Network</a>	Embedded within report
7	<a href="#">Water &amp; Sanitation for Urban Poor</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
8	<a href="#">Twaweza Tanzania</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
9	<a href="#">Budget Support to the Government of Sierra Leone - Volume 1 &amp; Budget Support to the Government of Sierra Leone - Volume 2</a>	N/A
10	<a href="#">Results Based Aid in Rwandan Education</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
11	<a href="#">Security Sector Accountability &amp; Police Reform Programme</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
12	<a href="#">Trade in Global Value Chains Initiatives</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
13	<a href="#">On-Line Portals &amp; Repositories Evaluation - Volume 1 and On-Line Portals &amp; Repositories Evaluation - Volume 2</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>

	Evaluation	Management response
14	<a href="#">Health Partnership Scheme – Report and Health Partnerships Scheme - Annexes</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
15	<a href="#">Humanitarian Innovation Evidence Programme (HIEP)</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
16	<a href="#">Tilitonse Fund, Malawi</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
17	<a href="#">Impact Evaluation of DFID Programme to Accelerate Improved Nutrition for the Extreme Poor in Bangladesh</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
18	<a href="#">Results Based Aid in Education Sector in Ethiopia</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
19	<a href="#">Results Based Financing in Northern Uganda</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
20	<a href="#">CHARS Livelihoods Programme 2 Volume 1 and CHARS Livelihoods Programme 2 , Volume 2 - Annexes</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
21	<a href="#">Uganda Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE)</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
22	<a href="#">Youth Development &amp; North Uganda Youth Entrepreneurship Programme</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
23	<a href="#">Women Wealth &amp; Influence Project, Tajikistan</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
24	<a href="#">Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme, Zambia (AGEP) - Volume 1 and Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme, Zambia (AGEP) - Volume 2 (Annexes)</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
25	<a href="#">Global Trachoma Mapping Project</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>
26	<a href="#">India Education Portfolio</a>	<a href="#">Management Response</a>

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