

**Department for International Development (DFID)
Evaluation Department**

**LIST OF POTENTIAL EVALUATION TOPICS FOR
2009-2012:**

Consultation Draft

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DFID is in the process of defining a new policy for evaluation focused on strengthening partnerships and driving up quality and independence. The draft policy has been put out for public consultation and can be viewed at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/consultations/>.

The Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI <http://iacdi.independent.gov.uk/>), who oversee evaluation in DFID and approve the workplan for the Evaluation Department, have recommended that we take this opportunity to hear the views of partners on the selection of topics to be prioritised for evaluation over the coming three year period.

Below is a list of thematic topics that DFID's Evaluation Department is considering for evaluation in the period 2009-2012. Current resources allow approximately half the number of topics on this list to be covered, with some flexibility built in to respond to arising opportunity.

Your comments are invited on:

- the topics you consider highest priority;
- the topics you consider lowest priority;
- any topics you consider very important that we have not listed here.

We will take account of your feedback. In March IACDI will approve a final list of topics to be evaluated over the three year period, and within that list a work plan of evaluations to begin in 2009/10.

How this list was developed

A long list of topics for potential evaluation was generated internally in DFID and by Members of IACDI, which was then followed by a prioritisation exercise.

In selecting thematic topics, the following basic principles were applied:

- We adopt a portfolio approach, covering a broad selection of issues on which DFID is engaged, and striking a balance between evaluations which seek to address 'big issue' questions such as climate change, growth or HIV and AIDS; and shorter, more focused studies;
- To enable us to improve *how* we work, the portfolio includes process evaluations, as well as those which focus more on assessing outcomes and impact;
- We need to build flexibility into our work plan to maximise arising opportunity, such as more joint evaluations with partners, or responding to shifting priorities.

The prioritisation criteria

We used the following criteria to prioritise topics for evaluation, scoring them according to what degree they ranked against the following:

- It covers progress against key DFID performance targets (accountability against DFID's Departmental Strategic Objectives and Public Service Agreement targets);
- It covers important **published DFID policies and external commitments**;
- It covers an area of **high recent DFID expenditure**;
- It covers an important area for **lesson-learning**, for example areas of work due to be scaled up. This includes the need to be **timely**, feeding into key decisions, DFID policy cycles and/or international events (for example, DAC or UN summits, global campaigns)/
- It responds to demand for evaluation from **significant outside stakeholders** (eg, civil society groups in the UK or internationally; parliamentary committee enquiries; the NAO); **Your comments will feed in here.**
- It is designed in a way to fit with **Paris Declaration principles** (joint /country-led);
- **It adds value** to other high priority existing or planned work including those priorities shared internationally by key partners. Normally this means that some years will have elapsed since the theme / sector was last evaluated by DFID or externally.
- It is feasible, **'evaluable'** and fits with the **balance of work** in our programme;

More details of the original long list are available from DFID's Evaluation Department. Contact evaluationfeedback@dfid.gov.uk if you would like a copy.

Balance of work within DFID's Evaluation Department

It is important to note that this topic list does not include the full range of work centrally undertaken by the Evaluation Department. We also support **decentralised evaluation across DFID, international capacity building programmes in evaluation, and a range of multi-institutional impact evaluation initiatives.**

As well as thematic evaluations, Evaluation Department undertakes **Country Programme Evaluations**. DFID is committed to independent evaluations of its country and regional programmes, and currently 4-5 country programme / regional programme evaluations are undertaken per year, covering some middle-income as well as low-income countries. The country evaluation programme for 2009/10 is already committed, and those for subsequent years will depend on factors such as DFID country office planning cycles and possibilities for joint and country-led evaluations. The Evaluation Department also undertakes regular **syntheses of lessons from its country programme evaluations**, including regional lessons, states in fragile situations etc.

Resources

This is a rolling programme of evaluations. DFID's Evaluation Department has a complement of 5 thematic evaluation managers, with sufficient capacity to be able to start a maximum of 4-5 major new topics every year together with approximately 3-4 short (low-resource) studies. We have already committed ourselves to work on some of the topics listed (for example, phase 2 of an ongoing evaluation, or a public commitment

by the Minister to evaluate a particular area). This is marked in the table. Projected resource levels for the selected topics are indicated as: High (c. £500k); Medium (c. £250-£350k); or Low (up to £200k). However, these are only preliminary estimates. Only after scoping an evaluation topic thoroughly is it possible to set firmer cost figures. Costs for joint evaluations also depend on contributions pledged from other donors.

SHORTLIST OF POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR EVALUATION

TOPIC	PROJECTED RESOURCE LEVEL
<p>1. DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p><i>This covers different approaches and “aid instruments” such as general budget support, employed by DFID and our partners</i></p>	
<p>Participation in Phase 2 of the Joint Evaluation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This will evaluate the outcomes of the implementation of the Paris Declaration commitments, and seek to understand the Paris Declaration’s impact. <i>COMMITTED, 2009/10</i></p> <p>This includes the following potential subtopics: Mutual accountability, Transparency, Transaction costs (and the burden borne by partner countries), Ownership, Predictability of aid funds, Conditionality, and the implications of the Paris Declaration for delivery of the Millennium Development Goals.</p> <p>Link: Evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration</p>	<p>Medium / High (Joint donor)</p>
<p>Capacity Development interventions / Use of Technical Co-operation:</p> <p>Opportunity to participate in a joint study (led by Norway, starting 2009) on Capacity Development and effects on poverty alleviation at local / NGO level.</p> <p>Co-ordination and alignment of capacity development within an institutional development perspective.</p>	<p>(Joint) Medium Low / Medium</p>
<p>General Budget Support: impact on growth and poverty. Opportunity to join an evaluation led by the European Commission. DFID is participating in the preliminary work, which points to the methodological difficulties of attribution, both of effects and donor effort. Timing: EC-led joint evaluation starts 2009.</p>	<p>(Joint) Medium</p>
<p>Budget Support: UK policies, decisions and processes. Follow-up to 2006 joint evaluation and 2008 NAO study. Topic on borderline between evaluation and audit – could be done as a joint study with internal audit. To include DFID’s consistency of approach between countries, and issues like conditionality and human rights. Timing: flexible.</p>	<p>Low / Medium</p>
<p>Debt relief (DFID bilateral and GPEX): An evaluation of a significant area of expenditure (£144.8m in 2006/07). Timing: flexible.</p>	<p>Low / Medium</p>
<p>Sector Budget Support / Sector wide approaches: This topic is important but will be covered under specific themes such as agriculture and health.)</p>	

TOPIC	PROJECTED RESOURCE LEVEL
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2. GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN	
Public Sector Governance Reform (joint): Complex evaluation of an area of high DFID expenditure. <i>COMMITTED 2008/9</i> , approach paper being prepared.	(Joint) High
Social Exclusion – Effectiveness of DFID support in addressing the needs of marginalised groups, including disabled people: A stock take is currently underway. Timing and focus of a full evaluation will be proposed after this has concluded (July 2009).	Medium / High
DFID’s Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP, 2007-10): Evaluation to assess how DFID has responded to the GEAP, and the outcomes for poor people. Proposed timing: 2010/11. Link: DFID's Gender Equality Action Plan	Medium / High
DFID’s Humanitarian Policy: Launched in 2006, this policy covers a significant proportion of DFID expenditure. Evaluation of policy commitments; proposed timing: 2009/10. Link: DFID's Humanitarian Policy	Medium / High
Social Protection: Stock take to assess evidence of the effectiveness of DFID’s social protection programmes, building on previous work on social transfers (2008) and impact evaluations of several large programmes currently underway. Proposed timing: 2010/11.	Low / Medium
Interventions in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations: Evaluation of the effectiveness of UK interventions in difficult environments, following a portfolio review (2008) and NAO study (2008). Timing: flexible.	Medium / High
UK Government support to conflict prevention and reduction: Evaluation of an area of strong public interest – cross-Whitehall priority, with increasing expenditure. Strong parliamentary interest. Timing flexible.	Medium / High

3. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (HEALTH AND EDUCATION)	
Interim evaluation of DFID’s HIV/AIDS strategy (2008/12): <i>COMMITTED FOR 2011/12</i> . Commitment to evaluate set out in the strategy and to the International Development Committee. Link: DFID's HIV/AIDS Strategy	Medium

<p>Evaluation of the implementation of <i>Working Together for Better Health</i>, DFID's 2007 health strategy: A high-profile area with high expenditure. Timing flexible.</p> <p>Link: DFID's 2007 Health Strategy</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Reducing Maternal Mortality: Effectiveness of donor interventions in the health sector to achieve MDG on maternal mortality. Would cover DFID Maternal Health strategy as well as specific topics such as human resources for health. Proposed joint evaluation, timing flexible.</p> <p>Link: Maternal Health Strategy</p>	<p>(Joint) High</p>
<p>Malaria: Evaluation of the management of interventions and partnerships on malaria, following the scaling-up of international resources for combating malaria. Would probably focus on analysis of partnerships and institutions (private sector, pricing, government capacity building), as many of the technical solutions are well-understood. Proposed joint evaluation, timing flexible.</p>	<p>(Joint) Medium / High</p>
<p>International Health Partnership: Joint evaluation of effectiveness of this multi-donor initiative, launched 2007. Timing flexible.</p> <p>Link: International Health Partnership</p>	<p>(Joint) Medium</p>
<p>From Commitment to Action: Education (2005) and Keeping our Promises: Delivering Education for All (2006). Prime Ministerial priority and major financial commitment (£8.5bn over 10 years). NAO review is scheduled for 2009, and evaluation of the 'Education For All Fast Track Initiative' due for completion in 2009. A limited evaluation would draw on results of these to focus on what lessons can be learnt for DFID policy and programming. Timing: flexible, after 2010/11.</p> <p>Link: Education (2005)</p> <p>Link: Keeping our Promises (2006)</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Girls Education: Towards a Better Education for All (DFID strategy 2005,). Evaluation of commitments in this strategy. This would draw on data available from other education and gender evaluations including the 'Education for All Fast Track Initiative', but concentrate on DFID's own commitments. Timing: flexible, from 2010/11. <i>(This proposal would be an alternative to the previous listing; we would not carry out both.)</i></p> <p>Link: Towards a Better Education for All</p>	<p>Low / Medium</p>
<p>(Education in conflict and post-conflict environments: Education in conflict areas has been the subject of many Parliamentary Questions. This topic could be addressed under a wider education evaluation or included under a wider fragile states study – this requires further scoping out.)</p>	
<p>4. GROWTH, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE</p>	
<p>Evaluation of the UK's Aid for Trade (AfT) work (2007-13): Preliminary work is being conducted in 2008/09 with a view to setting up an evaluation framework and baseline for this</p>	<p>(Joint)</p>

<p>area of work in 2009, together with work being led by the OECD-Development Assistance Committee. This would be preparatory work for an evaluation of this area in 2011/12 or 2012/13. PROVISIONALLY COMMITTED 2009/10.</p> <p>Link: UK's Aid for Trade</p>	Medium
<p>Evaluation of DFID's agriculture policy: Approach paper in preparation 08/09. Ministerial public commitment to evaluate policy in 2008 or 2009. PROVISIONALLY COMMITTED FOR 2009/10</p> <p>Link: DFID's Agriculture Policy</p>	Medium
<p>Evaluation of work on Climate Change: Climate Change is a ministerial priority, and high on the public agenda. The evaluation should also incorporate lessons from DFID's disaster risk reduction work. Proposed joint evaluation, timing flexible.</p> <p>Link: Climate Facts</p>	Medium / High
<p>Water and Sanitation: An important area of DFID's work, with a new policy launched in 2008. Proposed joint evaluation, to cover DFID's policy commitments. Timing flexible.</p> <p>Link: Water and Sanitation Policy</p>	Medium / High
<p>5. DFID'S PARTNERSHIPS</p>	
<p>Effectiveness of the UK/other donors' contribution to IDA (the World Bank's International Development Association): DFID has channelled £2.134 billion through IDA from 2008-10. This is an opportunity to join a joint evaluation led by France to consider how effective aid channelled through IDA has been in meeting UK/other aims (drawing on other evaluations of IDA's work) and how effective the UK was in influencing the Bank's priorities. Proposed timing: 2009/10.</p> <p>Link: World Bank International Development Association</p>	Low/ Medium
<p>Coherence of bilateral donor work with multilateral donors and global funds: A possible joint donor evaluation is under consideration within the OECD DAC evaluation network. Timing: flexible.</p>	Medium
<p>Effectiveness of DFID's work with civil society: A public commitment to evaluate this area was given, following an NAO review of DFID's work with civil society in 2006. Timing: proposed for 2010/11.</p> <p>Link: DFID's work with Civil Society</p>	Low
<p>6. DFID'S CAPABILITY</p> <p>(Some studies may be undertaken jointly with DFID's Internal Audit Department)</p>	

<p>Evaluation of DFID's Results Action Plan (RAP): There is a published commitment to evaluate DFID's Results Action Plan (2007/10). An evaluation could draw on data from other joint and DFID-focused evaluations.</p> <p>Link: DFID's Results Action Plan</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Evaluation of DFID's Research Strategy (2008/13): A very high spending area. An evaluation would draw on monitoring data being collated by the Central Research Department. Timing: flexible, possibly a mid term evaluation in 2011/12.</p> <p>Link: DFID's Research Strategy</p>	<p>Medium/ High</p>
<p>Evaluation of DFID's approach to development policy: Assessment of policy consistency, coherence with other government policy, communication and implementation mechanisms. Strong external interest. Could include a synthesis of lessons from evaluations of individual DFID policies. Timing: flexible.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Evaluation of the effects of a large rise in DFID's programme budget – and concurrent decrease in administrative budget – on the delivery of the aid programme. Timing: flexible.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Evaluation of DFID's influence: Effectiveness of DFID's work to influence the policies and ways of working of other donors and government partners (UK and elsewhere). This topic will likely be approached by including it as a study area in other thematic evaluations and then synthesising the overall lessons.</p>	<p>Low</p>