



Report

The politics of the results agenda in DFID

1997-2017

Craig Valters and Brendan Whitty

September 2017



Overseas Development Institute

203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7922 0300

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7922 0399

E-mail: info@odi.org.uk

www.odi.org

www.odi.org/facebook

www.odi.org/twitter

Readers are encouraged to reproduce material from ODI publications for their own outputs, as long as they are not being sold commercially. As copyright holder, ODI requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication. For online use, we ask readers to link to the original resource on the ODI website. The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI.

© Overseas Development Institute 2017. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial Licence (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Cover photo: Paul Frederickson, 'Big Ben', 2017

Acknowledgements

This research benefited from the support of a wide range of people, both within the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and in the course of collecting material for Brendan Whitty's PhD. For the former, this research was supported by an internal Research and Innovation Fund. The latter was funded by the University of East Anglia, School of International Development.

The authors are grateful for the extremely detailed and constructive peer reviews. These include formal peer reviews by Simon Maxwell, Cathy Shutt and Nilima Gulrajani. Gideon Rabinowitz contributed significantly to an early draft of this paper and provided useful comments on the final draft. Further reviews were provided by ODI colleagues, including David Booth, Freddie Carver, Helen Dempster, Joanna Rea, Mareike Schomerus and Leni Wild. Jamie Pett provided useful research assistance. Most importantly, we thank all the respondents who gave their time so generously to us. In addition, we would like to thank Amie Retallick for production support, Sean Willmott for graphic design and George Richards for proofreading.

Responsibility for all errors or omissions rests with the authors.

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
List of boxes, figures and tables	5
Abbreviations	6
Glossary	7
Executive summary	8
1. Introduction	14
2. What are results and why do they matter?	16
2.1. Defining results, evidence and value for money	16
2.2. New Public Management and the UK government	16
2.3. Why results matter in development	17
3. The story of the results agenda in DFID	18
3.1. Prologue: 1964-1997	18
3.2. 1997-2007	19
3.3. 2007-2010	23
3.4. 2010-2012	26
3.5. 2012-2017	30
4. What have we learned?	35
5. The future of UK aid and results	38
References	41
Annex 1: Interviewees	47

List of boxes, figures and tables

Boxes

Box 1: Evidence-based policy	25
Box 2: Cross-government spending and results	32

Figures

Figure 1: 20 years of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID)	12
--	----

Tables

Table 1: Key DFID appointments since 1997	18
---	----

Abbreviations

BAR	Bilateral Aid Review (2011)	NAO	National Audit Office
BDR	Bilateral Development Review (2016)	NHS	National Health Service
CPRD	Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostic	NPM	New Public Management
CSSF	Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund	ODA	Official Development Assistance
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	ODM	Overseas Development Ministry
DFID	Department For International Development	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
DRF	DFID's Results Framework	PbR	Payment by Results
GNI	Gross national income	PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategies
FCPD	Finance and Corporate Performance Division	PSAs	Public Service Agreements
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact	QAU	Quality Assurance Unit
IDC	International Development Committee	RBM	Results-based management
IDTs	International Development Targets	RCT	Randomised Control Trial
MAR	Multilateral Aid Review (2011)	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	VFM	Value for money
MDR	Multilateral Development Review (2016)		

Glossary

Accra Agenda for Action: Designed to strengthen and deepen implementation of the Paris Declaration (see below).

Budget support: A form of financial aid in which funds are provided to foreign governments in support of a specific programme, or directly to their Exchequer to spend on other priorities.

Evidence-based policy: Using rigorous information to support policy decisions. Now a staple of public policy-making, it emerged, in part, due to its success in exercising control over the medical profession.

Make Poverty History: This 2005 campaign sought to put pressure on a group of the most highly industrialised countries to commit to more and better aid, debt cancellation and trade justice.

Paris Declaration: This 2005 declaration sought to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It gives a series of specific implementation measures and establishes a monitoring system to assess progress.

Project: A standalone aid intervention in a specific country.

Programme: A more expansive aid project, typically covering numerous issues or sectors.

Results: Used colloquially to signify developmental aims or ends. In development jargon it can mean anything from outputs to outcomes to impact.

Results agenda: A political agenda for foreign aid, associated with fixed target-setting. DFID has always focused on results in some form, but we argue that a new explicit focus on aggressively implementing RBM emerged in 2007.

Results-based management: Using measurement and target setting to drive improved performance.

Value for money: Broadly speaking, optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes. It emerged as a tool to audit performance starting with the Planning Programme Budgeting System in the United States in the 1960s.

Westminster: British parliament.

Whitehall: UK central government.

Executive summary

It has now been 20 years since the United Kingdom's (UK) Department for International Development (DFID) was created. In that time, its budget has grown dramatically. The leaders of the New Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments have all supported aid spending, including through times of doubt and scrutiny from sceptical politicians, the public and media outlets.

The seven Secretaries of State and four Permanent Secretaries have sought to make their mark on the department, often through reforming how it is managed. One of the most dominant shifts in recent years is towards the 'results agenda'.

Used colloquially, 'results' simply means developmental aims or ends. Yet the results agenda has come to represent a political agenda for foreign aid, associated with fixed target-setting, which has changed the way DFID operates around the world.

In this paper we ask and seek to answer a number of questions. What exactly is the results agenda in the UK context? Where did it come from? Why did it emerge? How have people reacted? And what can we learn from this experience? To answer these questions, we interviewed more than 60 people, including former Secretaries of State, senior civil servants and international development experts.

The answers to these questions matter. They tell a story of what different UK governments have sought to achieve with aid, how they have communicated that to the public, and what implications this has had for how aid is managed. When put together, they show that the results agenda was politically understandable. It has made DFID more focused on what it can achieve. Yet it has oriented DFID's vision to the short-term and narrow results of projects rather than wider processes of change. It has shifted the balance towards prioritising accountability to UK taxpayers over poor people abroad. It has been premised on the misleading idea that aid projects can be planned and implemented with certainty about the outcomes.

These conclusions have far-reaching implications for how effective UK aid is, and will be in the future.

The story of the results agenda in DFID

We have identified four main periods of time in which there were discernible differences in how DFID was managed for results.

1997-2007: Clare Short's 'contribution and partnership' approach

In 1997, New Labour won the national election by a landslide, giving international development a new lease of life. Their government created DFID and a seat in Cabinet for Clare Short, DFID's first Secretary of State. Labour's large mandate gave space for Clare Short to develop a radical agenda for the new department, which shunned the use of aid for the national interest. The new agenda was founded on principles of partnership, country ownership and a joint international commitment to shared poverty reduction targets. Budget support was popular. These new approaches were premised on a diagnosis: that projectised aid was too narrow and simplistic, that too many interventions were imposed by outsiders, and that a lack of coordination undermined efforts to support lasting change. Despite this well-evidenced diagnosis, the solutions to these problems had not yet been tested at scale, and sometimes struggled to be put into practice.

Moreover, Clare Short's approach had to fit within New Labour's vision for modern government; a vision which required the central management of departments to set and track objectives. Initially, DFID managed to largely avoid this approach, in part due to its low visibility and widespread public support for the anti-poverty agenda. Under pressure from the Treasury, results management was eventually adopted but focused on international commitments. Where project level results management did exist, it was not expected to be methodologically robust. In addition, the department shied away from attributing country level change to their activities, in keeping with the government's focus on 'shared goals'.

In 2003, in the wake of the invasion of Iraq, Clare Short resigned. She was replaced by Valerie Amos who stayed in office for less than six months. Hilary Benn became Secretary of State in October 2003, and lasted until 2007. While he largely continued with Short's approach, cross-government debates about DFID's independence grew. Yet 2003 to 2007 was a heady time for development. The Paris Declaration sought to institutionalise shared principles of assistance. Hilary Benn and Gordon Brown (then, Chancellor of the Exchequer) made the political commitment that aid spending would reach 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by 2013. The UK's huge ambition at this time reflected a belief that through these approaches it was possible to Make Poverty History.

2007-2010: The financial crash and results commitments

From 2007 the story shows an erosion of the new agenda carved out under Clare Short in order to justify the 0.7% commitment. The bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008 marked the start of the financial crash. The UK economy began to suffer, yet DFID's budget grew, and commitments to 0.7%, and country- and sector-spending targets, were maintained. As the financial crisis set in, public support for aid declined. During New Labour's final three years, the new Secretary of State Douglas Alexander and the ministerial and civil service leadership of DFID felt the department lacked the control and evidence to support its spending. Voices from Whitehall and Westminster also insisted that the project level accountability apparatus was insufficient.

As a result, civil servants deepened results-based management (RBM) reforms. These were focused on the project management process – and cohabited awkwardly with the ongoing public adherence to the Paris Declaration. Changes to log frames (the primary reporting and accountability tool for DFID) meant projects were now reviewed on whether they had achieved pre-planned targets and delivered outputs, rather than if they were on track to reach an outcome. These changes were part of what was to become a long retreat from Clare Short's 'contribution and partnership' approach.

2010-2012: Andrew Mitchell's results agenda

The Conservative-led coalition government came into power in 2010. The new Prime Minister, David Cameron, sought to establish the principles of 'One World Conservatism', in part through ring-fencing aid spending. Viewed historically, this was a remarkable position to take. While in government in 1970 and 1979, the Conservatives sought to cut official development assistance (ODA), and bring it under the control of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Yet in 2010, they continued Labour's policies on aid volume and broad purpose, despite significantly cutting many other departmental budgets. DFID was put under even more pressure to deliver.

Andrew Mitchell, following five years as shadow Secretary of State, was appointed in May 2010. He immediately positioned results, evidence, value for money and transparency at the centre of aid management. For him, this is what a politically centre-right development policy looked like. Political communication and results reporting became deeply entwined. DFID's central office set targets, and country offices had to bid for funding based on the results they thought they could achieve. Budgets would be assessed and managed accordingly. Establishing these ambitious reforms was to be a focus of the following years. Mitchell wanted the department to move away from a focus on spending to what aid could achieve.

Given the government's economic position, and legitimate concerns about project level rigour and accountability, for many these reforms reflected necessary changes. Yet they also provoked concern. They put

country offices under pressure to deliver very specific results, despite operating in countries and sectors that were not under their control. This led to a narrower aid focus, replacing principles of contribution and partnership with projectised aid. DFID's experience was not unique. A number of Western donors were also moving in this direction – a product of domestic factors, and a growing international scepticism of the existing paradigm.

2012-2017: Digesting the reforms and political pressure

The next Secretary of State, Justine Greening, was appointed in September 2012. She continued these reforms, while also increasing the role of private finance, preferencing UK-based contractors, and a further and stronger emphasis on the national interest. At the same time, her staff sought to digest and balance some of the results agenda's more problematic implications – initiating internal reforms aimed at stripping back bureaucracy, and allowing staff more time to focus on real-world delivery. In 2014, the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI), a body that Andrew Mitchell set up, critiqued the results agenda for encouraging a focus on short-term economy and efficiency over long-term, sustainable impact.

In July 2016, David Cameron resigned and Theresa May became Prime Minister. The new Secretary of State, Priti Patel, re-emphasised aid in the national interest, including for new trade deals. The general election on 8 June 2017 does not seem to have disrupted this agenda. Despite this, the last five years demonstrate that some civil servants within DFID are beginning to find a path towards more flexible programming, albeit within the basic constraints of deep political pressure and the results agenda.

What have we learned?

Four key findings have emerged from this analysis:

Secretaries of State often greatly influence how DFID is managed based on their personal and political party ideology, rather than primarily the complex realities of aid implementation

Secretaries of State can have a significant effect on the management of the department. This can mean crucial elements of development policy are driven by personal and party political pressures, rather than primarily by the complex realities of aid implementation. The point is perhaps obvious: like every government department, DFID is first and foremost a taxpayer-funded government body. However, these pressures have sometimes led to the adoption of ambitious, untested approaches and management systems ill-suited to DFID's ambitions. Secretaries of State are also governed by the wider political climate: Clare Short and Hilary Benn were free to define an ambitious agenda at a time of international optimism, while Douglas Alexander, Andrew Mitchell and others have been responding to growing scepticism.

DFID staff interpret these new agendas differently, based on their professional interest and expertise

DFID staff are often politically astute and understand the need to work with, and around, political pressures. These reforms gave influence to some professionals, such as statisticians and economists, while marginalising others. Some had their views on aid empowered, while others felt it went against their idea of development good practice. The civil servants in the latter camp have sought to comply with the letter of the results agenda, while maintaining space for flexible programming. The recent reforms challenging the over-bureaucratisation of DFID show how civil servants often keep policy alternatives alive in the midst of significant political pressures.

DFID has consistently been drawn back to central government accountability standards which sit uneasily with development work

Secretaries of State have enabled DFID to escape or entrench the full implications of central government accountability standards. Governments have increasingly assumed that DFID needs higher levels of scrutiny than other departments. Yet working within a country and working abroad are different: they require different (but still rigorous) forms of management and accountability. Any fit-for-purpose results agenda cannot rely on fixed targets set in London. This will skew practice away from local needs, and narrow DFID's ambitions for deep-rooted behavioural change. Nor can it claim sovereign authority – this deep-rooted change cannot be 'delivered' by the UK alone.

The commitment to 0.7% has both protected and exposed DFID

The commitment to 0.7% was made before the financial crisis and the subsequent fiscal policies of the Coalition government. DFID's budget increased considerably at a time when many other budgets were being cut, which in part explains the political logic for results-based reforms. Yet this money was increasingly spent in fragile states, with a diminishing administrative budget relative to spending. Questions around the ability of DFID to achieve results in such conditions were side-lined.

What's next for UK aid and the results agenda?

The future of UK aid itself is uncertain. There have been contained calls, including from former DFID ministers, for DFID to be subsumed under the FCO or another government department. The UK's ongoing exit from the European Union has put the economy on unsteady ground, while isolationist political movements in Europe and the United States have grown in popularity (Emmerson et al., 2016). These trends implicitly threaten internationalist commitments to aid spending. Yet there continues to be strong cross-party political support for aid, evidenced in

the bill passed in 2015 which enshrined the 0.7% GNI commitment. Each party has found ways to justify it in line with their different ideologies, ranging from historical reparations to the national interest.

This research suggests three ways forward for DFID and the UK government on the international development results agenda.

Create a results agenda that is fit for purpose

The assumption that we can predict, with certainty, what our interventions will achieve, needs to change. Rejecting this world-view means taking results more seriously, not less. Interventions need to be based on the best available information, with regular testing to see if they are on the right track, rather than being overly focused on pre-planned numbers. A revitalised results agenda could be based on a diversity of approaches, depending on the context and problem being tackled. Measuring outcomes will still be crucial to this, but should be treated with caution in management and planning processes. DFID could also spend more time considering whether its aid spending is strategic across the portfolio with the right mix of risks. This is in addition to whether it adds up to more than the sum of its parts in each country the UK government works, as well as its collective efforts with international partners.

Be more honest with the British public about aid

According to Andrew Mitchell, 'there's absolutely no reason why this should be complex for the public. It's the job of politicians to explain complex things to the public in a way that they understand.' Results, evidence, value for money and transparency all matter – but we need a more nuanced conversation about what this looks like in places where change is complex, politically challenging and uncertain. A more honest conversation about aid and development is required – how, where and why it works, why results aren't always tangible and easy to show, and why it sometimes fails. Narrow number-oriented promises of what aid spending can achieve – which are hard to contextualise anyway – might be replaced with a better articulation of UK strategy and its impact. It could be based upon an understanding of the various challenges around the world, and how aid is part of a shared commitment to tackling them. Yet politicians could also guard against letting the public's view of aid overly influence the day-to-day management of UK aid spending.

Support reform in how DFID is managed

Reformers within DFID are seeking positive change through ensuring flexibility, encouraging greater learning, and focusing on the causes of poverty and conflict. These reformers require support from politicians and the wider development community. Furthermore, the implications of the commitment to 0.7% for the department's management need to be analysed. Increasing spending in fragile states,

while adhering to rigid results commitments, was risky. Whatever one's views on whether aid spending needs to meet 0.7%, it has implications for aid management and effectiveness. Yet DFID's approach to managing its funding and results requirements has matured over time. Initial evidence suggests other government departments lack the accountability and transparency required for aid spending.

Conclusion

The basic premise of the results agenda, that the focus should be on what aid can achieve, is surely uncontested. It is built around domestic political realities and genuine accountability concerns. Despite this, the results agenda has often failed to create the space for a detailed conversation about what aid can achieve in different places. What is necessary is a management system that fits the ambition of UK aid.

We hope that in telling this story, we have opened a space for those pursuing a results focus to critically reflect in two ways: firstly, on the necessary balance between being accountable to UK citizens and poor people abroad, and secondly, on the very idea that aid projects can be planned and implemented with certainty about the outcomes. On both these fronts, it is possible and necessary to think and work in a different way.

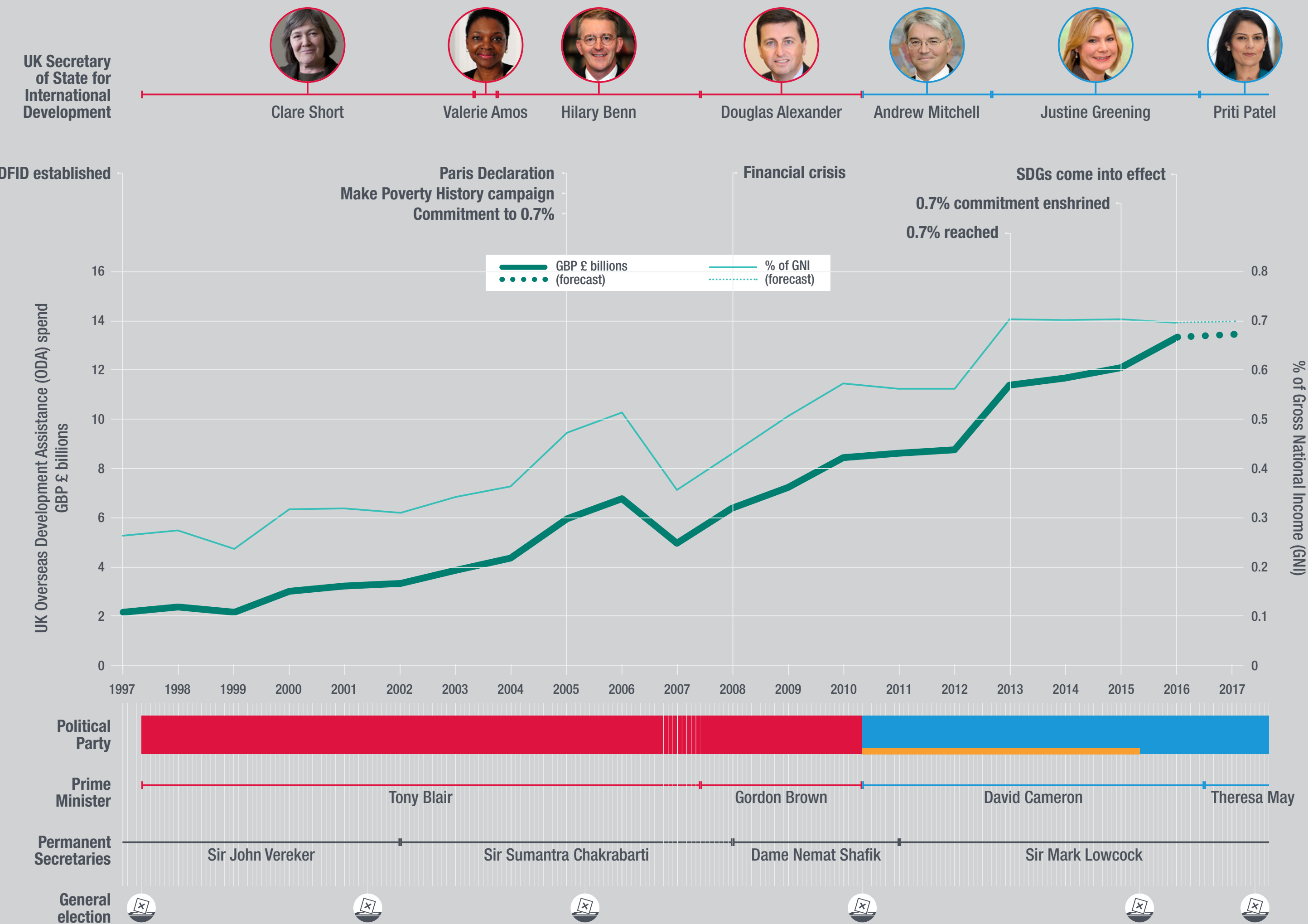
Our paper calls for political leadership to resist the temptation of promising more and better results and value for money, given the implications that this has for target-setting in aid management. The flux and flow of political agendas for aid spending will continue. However, much has

been learned about how to effectively manage for poverty reduction. The more this can be included in political discourse, the better.

This story brings the UK's international ambitions into the light. Part of the political question is: are we looking to buy results, or make deep-rooted changes? Do we wish to help build institutions so that countries can take on development challenges themselves, or do we want to deliver results ourselves? A long-term approach to development questions which interventions make the most sense, even if some, like budget support, have fallen out of favour. Whether through bilateral or multilateral aid, or working through international institutions, a long-term lens changes the terms of the debate.

Finally, if one looks squarely at the UK's ambitions, whether in 1997, 2007 or today, it is clear that aid should only be a small part of the picture. For the kind of interconnected challenges faced in the world – from climate change, to conflict, to poverty and inequality – aid will often be a marginal driver of change. If the UK's ambition is to make deep-rooted changes, they will need to work with international systems where there are opportunities for traction. But it also means looking at how decisions in the UK affect others: whether in the form of working towards a green economy, reconsidering the UK's role in the arms industry, supporting pro-poor bilateral and global trade relations, or tackling domestic and international tax justice issues. These steps are what is required to move away from a narrow understanding of results, to a cross-government and global approach which collaboratively tackles the causes of the world's most urgent challenges.

Figure 1: 20 years of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID)



1. Introduction

International development interventions can do good, supporting improvements in the lives of poor people. However, they can also do harm, skewing recipient country interests, incentives and institutions. For these reasons, any aid spending must be held accountable for what it does, or does not, achieve. But what is the best way of managing aid spending to support results?

This question is not exclusive to international development. Results-based management (RBM) has been popular for decades. In the United Kingdom (UK), it has been used in major government departments, including the National Health Service (NHS). Economist Tim Harford describes how in the 1990s, ambulance staff were given a target of reaching all life-threatening cases in urban areas within eight minutes. This set up a range of bad incentives – such as rerouting to a different patient once that time was up – and a surprising number of responses within seven minutes 59 seconds (Harford, 2016). Evidently, target setting can skew effective practice.

The purpose of this paper is to identify how and why the results agenda emerged in the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The primary focus is on the politics of this story, how it has intersected with DFID's management, and the responses to these changes.

The story begins in 1997, when a New Labour government created DFID as an independent department. Secretary of State Clare Short forged an anti-poverty agenda based on principles of partnership and contribution to shared international goals. During this time, DFID managed to avoid the more stringent control and upwards accountability mechanisms to which other major government departments were subjected.

From 2007 the story shows an erosion of the new agenda carved out under Clare Short in order to justify the 0.7% commitment. The UK economy began to suffer, yet DFID's budget grew. Public support for aid declined. During the final three years of New Labour, the new Secretary of State Douglas Alexander and the ministerial and civil service leadership of DFID deepened RBM reforms.

Andrew Mitchell accelerated the agenda, and in 2010, the term became synonymous with the further reforms he put in place. These reforms provoked major concerns. In 2014, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) critiqued the results agenda for encouraging a focus on short-term economy and efficiency over long-term, sustainable impact. Ongoing internal reforms in DFID appear to showing a path towards more flexible programming, albeit within the constraints of strong political pressure and the results agenda.

The story shows how crucial elements of development policy are driven by party political pressures, rather than primarily by the complex realities of aid implementation. It outlines how DFID staff members have interpreted RBM reforms differently based on their professional interests and policy beliefs. Furthermore, it highlights how DFID has consistently been drawn back to central government accountability standards – and these have sat uneasily with the realities of development assistance. Finally, the commitment to 0.7% at a time of austerity has both protected and exposed DFID.

The well-known challenges of RBM are exacerbated in development interventions – it is much more difficult to control the impact of money spent outside UK territory. The primary recipients of aid are not UK taxpayers, meaning accountability is muddled. Our best knowledge of how to get development interventions right requires pushing back against some of the main tenets of the results agenda: fixed plans, reliance on measurement over other forms of appraising value, and excessive control and centralisation. None of this suggests a lack of accountability or scrutiny of the department, nor that DFID cannot adopt ways of working that mirror other government departments. But it means being sensitive to difference. It means having a results agenda fit for international development.

It is timely to present this story. There is growing pressure—from politicians, the public and the media—for aid spending to prove its worth. According to the International Development Committee (2017), 'foreign aid is the most scrutinised part of UK Government spending'. It needs to get results for developing countries, and be in the national interest – that is, to benefit the UK (UK government, 2015). It is time for a serious conversation about what results DFID and the UK government can achieve and how they might manage their interventions to do so. We hope this paper can provoke that conversation.

Methods and structure

This paper draws on more than 60 interviews with key civil servants and political leaders who were involved with DFID between 1997 and 2017. Wherever possible, the names of our interviewees and the date of the interview are provided. The interviews were conducted by Craig Valters under ODI's Research and Innovation fund, and by Brendan Whitty for his PhD at the University of East Anglia. This paper begins with an explanation of what results are and why they matter. Section three is split into chronological periods. In each period, we analyse the

political climate, the policies and management reforms proposed in response, and the internal and external critiques. In section four we outline what we have learned, looking specifically at the roles that Secretaries of State,

DFID staff, government accountability standards, and the commitment to 0.7% have played in shaping the results agenda. Finally, we draw conclusions on the future of UK aid and the results agenda.

2. What are results and why do they matter?

In this section, terms related to the results agenda are defined, its precursors are reviewed, and some critiques are identified.

2.1. Defining results, evidence and value for money

In this paper, the following distinctions are used:

- **Results:** Used colloquially to signify developmental aims or ends. In development jargon it can mean anything from outputs to outcomes to impact. Critiques of the results agenda are sometimes viewed as an attack of the focus on ends, when in reality they are often concerned about how the agenda inhibits this focus in practice.
- **Results agenda:** A political agenda for foreign aid. DFID has always focused on results in some form, but we argue that a new explicit focus on aggressively implementing RBM emerged in 2007. Most people associate it with Andrew Mitchell, the Coalition Government and its Conservative successor.
- **Results-based management (RBM):** Using measurement and target setting to drive improved performance. The tools and processes associated with RBM have been used widely within, and beyond, the UK in diverse sectors. Many similar terms are used, such as managing for results, managing for outcomes, performance management and results management (Mayne, 2007).

Other agendas have also played out in the UK aid sector during this time.

- **Evidence-based policy:** Using rigorous information to support policy decisions. Now a staple of public policy-making, it emerged, in part, due to its success in exercising control over the medical profession. It has a long history within the UK government (Cartwright and Hardie, 2012; Mulgan, 2005; Pawson, 2006; Sanderson, 2006; Solesbury, 2001). Picciotto argues that it was applied to the development industry in response to a stalemate between prominent development economists Jeffrey Sachs and William Easterly about the macro-economic effects of development aid (2012: 215).
- **Value for money (VFM):** Broadly speaking, this refers to the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes (NAO, 2017). It emerged as a tool to audit performance starting with the Planning Programme Budgeting System in the United States in the 1960s.

In the UK, 'VFM audits' grew in the 1980s (Barr and Christie, 2015; Power, 1994; 1997). Since 2010, it has been widely used in the UK international development sector and linked to the wider results agenda.

Results, evidence and value for money overlap and entwine with each other in different ways in practice, even if they have different historical and philosophical backgrounds.

2.2. New Public Management and the UK government

In the 1980s and 1990s, a new form of public administration known as New Public Management (NPM) took root across the richer countries. In a key article, Christopher Hood (1995) outlined NPM's key elements:

- the adoption of formal measurable standards and measures of performance and success;
- the shift from partnership-based management to contractual relationships with service providers;
- the emphasis on effectiveness and frugality;
- the shift to commercial language and cost-based thinking;
- the greater emphasis on output controls and their monetisation; and
- the role of managers vis-à-vis professionals.

NPM has changed the very nature of the work some people undertake (Dent, 2006; Power, 1997). As a result, professions have reacted differently to its imposition: from reframing to their own ends, rejecting it outright, and separating it from their day-to-day work (Bezes et al., 2012; Kirkpatrick et al., 2005). These changes have not always been for the better. NPM can reduce noble goals into simplified indicators and targets, shift people's understanding of what they are achieving, and often does not deliver on its stated goals to improve outcomes (Hood and Peters, 2004). These challenges are reflected in our story.

By 2007, NPM had fallen out of fashion (Goldfinch and Wallis, 2010). Yet, several of its tenets and practices remain deeply rooted. We suggest the focus on results (understood in the literature as an 'audit society') remains a crucial part of the ways of working and standards of accountability

in central government (referred to here as ‘Whitehall’) (Power, 1997). Indeed, in section four we argue that the results agenda in part reflects a reversion to Whitehall accountability standards.

2.3. Why results matter in development

RBM debates have a long history in the development sector, linked to its emergence in donor countries (Vähämäki et al., 2011). For its proponents, it is a way of ‘systematically gathering and analysing information to understand whether institutions, policies and programmes are effectively and efficiently producing the expected results’ (OECD, 2013: 14). Drawing on Kusek and Rist (2004), Shutt outlines the following RBM arguments (2016: 23):

- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it.
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it.
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

At this level of abstraction, it is hard to see how one could disagree with these arguments. However, how this gets turned into operational decisions around data use in management matters. What counts as ‘success’ or ‘results’? What you measure must accurately capture what you – or, more importantly, those you are seeking to support – value. This presents conceptual, methodological and moral challenges that cannot be treated simplistically.

Several critiques of RBM’s implementation have emerged that unpack these issues: that in practice, it rewards plans rather than progress, encourages a focus on measurable targets rather than transformational change, impedes learning and creates unnecessary bureaucracy (Mosse, 1998; Ramalingam, 2013; Natsios, 2010; Shutt, 2016). Here we outline three areas that have to be taken seriously when considering how aid is managed, and how results are understood and implemented:

1. Power and local ownership

Donors and practitioners have long been criticised for ignoring, or being ignorant of, power relations (Eyben et al., 2015). These critics emphasise that trust-building with local counterparts is more important than templates and targets. During the past four decades, this has also been framed as a participatory approach (Chambers, 1974; 1988; Carlsson and Wohlgemuth, 1999; Groves, 2015). The importance of ‘country ownership’ is well acknowledged (Booth, 2011). More recently, there have been calls to ensure that development problems and interventions are ‘locally-led’: defined, debated and refined by people in those countries aid seeks to support (Wild et al., 2015). Many of these authors are wary of how the results agenda creates barriers to better understanding of context, relationship-building and local ownership. Furthermore, accountability for results typically flows upwards to donors, rather than to citizens in aid recipient countries (de Renzio, 2016).

2. Politics and institutions

The criticism of aid as an ‘anti-politics’ machine has a long history, within both critical anthropology (Ferguson, 1994; Mitchell, 2002; Murray Li, 2007) and political science (Craig and Porter, 2006; Unsworth 2009). Carothers and De Gramont (2013: 272) have argued that the focus on proving results reduces ‘the flexibility and innovation in aid programming crucial to incorporating political goals and methods’. The problem with NPM is that it offers generalisable prescriptions for diverse political, social and economic contexts and problems (Gulrajani and Honig, 2016: 11; Haque, 1996).

3. Planning and complexity

Debates about blueprint planning approaches emerged in the 1980s (Booth, 2015; Therkildsen, 1988). The core criticism is that large-scale integrated planning is often overly technical and linear in approach, leading to large-scale failures. Partly in reaction, William Easterly (2006) made a strong call for development practitioners to be searchers rather than planners. As Ramalingam (2011) notes, all too often large-scale planning ‘increases the already considerable bureaucratic and administrative burden on aid agencies, rather than simplifying and reducing it’. The challenge is that it is not easy to predict how development processes will change on the basis of aid interventions, leading to recent calls to adopt adaptive management (Burns and Worsley, 2015; Ramalingam, 2013; Ramalingam et al., 2009).

Throughout our story, we will show where and how these different criticisms have emerged in relation to the results agenda.

3. The story of the results agenda in DFID

Table 1: Key DFID appointments since 1997

Name	Term of office	Political Party	Prime Minister	Permanent Secretaries
Clare Short	3 May 1997 – 12 May 2003	Labour	Tony Blair	Sir John M.W. Vereker (1994-2002)
Valerie Amos	12 May 2003 – 6 October 2003	Labour	Tony Blair	Sir Sumantra Chakrabarti (2002-2007)
Hilary Benn	6 October 2003 – 27 June 2007	Labour	Tony Blair	
Douglas Alexander	28 June 2007 – 11 May 2010	Labour	Gordon Brown	Dame Nemat (Minouche) Shafik (2008-2011)
Andrew Mitchell	12 May 2010 – 4 September 2012	Conservatives (coalition with Liberal Democrats)	David Cameron	Sir Mark A. Lowcock (2011 – 2017)
Justine Greening	4 September 2012 – 14 July 2016	Conservatives (coalition until 7 May 2015)	David Cameron	
Priti Patel	14 July 2016 – present	Conservatives	Theresa May	

3.1. Prologue: 1964-1997

Debates on management effectiveness within aid are not new. In 1964, Harold Wilson's Labour administration established the UK's first Ministry for Overseas Development (ODM). The ODM inherited many staff from the old Colonial Service, via the Ministry of Technical Cooperation (Seers and Streeten, 1972; Kirk-Greene, 2000). Although successive governments have continued to regard the provision of aid as morally important, the precise role and management of UK aid has been a matter of contestation. The function has at various times been incorporated into, made independent of, and then brought back under the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The latter move was made by conservative governments in 1970 and 1979, implying a greater focus on the national interest (Barder, 2005). From 1979 to 1997, international aid remained under the FCO, with a reduced budget susceptible to being used for British diplomatic and commercial purposes.

As a bureaucracy, ODM's managerial tools and processes shifted over time. The log frame was introduced in 1985. Although initially envisaged as a participatory planning tool, it was to become central to blueprint planning approaches in the sector (Therkildsen, 1988; Booth, 2015). Prior to the log frame, economists dominated the department and cost/benefit analysis was the central method of appraising and designing projects (Cracknell, 2000). Project completion reports were inconsistently used to assess impact (Ireton, 2013). In 1992, a process of decentralisation began, although country offices still responded to corporate strategies, targets and indicators (Warrener, 2004). The emphasis on economic issues and 'narrow technical appraisal' began to give way to social and environmental concerns (Ireton, 2013: 81).¹ At the same time, as Hulme (2007: 18) notes, 'RBM was on the ascendant in Business and Management Schools and the pronouncements of politicians and senior public servants, especially in the rich world.'

¹ Ireton (2013: 81) notes how this was reflected in the changing professional expertise in the department. In 1979 there was one social development advisor, but in the early 1990s there were nearly 50.

3.2. 1997-2007

New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern.

Labour Party, 1997

Politics: Clare Short's 'contribution and partnership' approach

The election of Tony Blair's New Labour in 1997 gave international development a new lease of life. His government created DFID and a seat in Cabinet for Clare Short, DFID's first Secretary of State. As Gulrajani notes, her appointment was quite 'serendipitous', also reflecting Tony Blair's need to provide a cabinet position for a vocal advocate of the left-wing of the Labour party (Gulrajani, 2010a: 18-19). With an international socialist background and considerable high level political support, Clare Short forged the development agenda that would govern the following decade.

Over the following years, Clare Short created a fresh strategic outlook for UK aid (Short, 2004). It was a radical vision: she set poverty reduction as the sole purview of the department, shunning the use of aid for commercial or strategic geopolitical aid interest (Barder, 2005; Lankester, 2013). The International Development Act 2002, replacing the Overseas Development and Cooperation Act 1980, enshrined her vision. UK aid was to further sustainable development or advance the welfare of people and be likely to contribute to the reduction of poverty. It also 'effectively made any attempt to "tie" British aid challengeable in the UK courts' (Williams, 2011: 134). DFID's new approach was also responding to civil society's calls for debt relief, an assumed appetite in society and wider concerns about globalisation.

Short was personally crucial in defining this approach, viewing prior aid orthodoxy as outdated (Short, 2004). The focus on reducing poverty was tailored through statements of proper state regulation and fiscal rectitude, in an 'impeccably New Labour' tone (Hewitt and Killick, 1998: 188). These statements fit with the overarching endeavour of contributing to international processes of change, while reflecting the need to make 'a clear break from the Conservative approach to aid whilst remaining palatable to Labour's right and the Treasury' (Whaites, 1998: 211).

Her reforms were carried through despite the 'institutional hostility' within Whitehall towards the new department (Barder, 2005; Short, 2004: 77).² These departments were concerned that DFID was getting a

special status. According to Clare Short, the first two years of DFID were characterised by a 'terrible struggle with the Treasury to win any increase in our budget' (Short, 2007). However, once the Department was established in Whitehall, the relative size of DFID's budget meant it did not get much attention from the Treasury (Young, 2001). Reforms were possible due, in part, to the relative disinterest of Alastair Campbell (the Prime Minister's influential Chief Press Secretary and Official Spokesman) and Tony Blair (Short, 2004: 77).

At the same time, Short's radicalism had to fit with New Labour's vision for modern government, a vision that prioritised tracking objectives set by central management. New Labour rejected what they saw as ideological approaches in favour of a pragmatic 'third way', based on 'evidence' (Giddens, 1998; Giddens, 2000; Legrand, 2012; Mulgan, 2005; Nutley et al., 2009). Suma Chakrabarti, a treasury official who was later to become DFID's Permanent Secretary, provided the idea of Public Service Agreements (PSAs). PSAs identified aims, objectives and indicators for a three-year period for each department.³ They sought to provide the government with a way of spending, without being seen as irresponsible. Value for money, understood as making efficiency savings, was a part of each PSA. Michael Barber, who led the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, argued that New Labour were the UK's first government to integrate targets into corporate culture, publish them, and allow the public to hold them accountable (Barber, 2008).

Clare Short determined that she would make the International Development Goals (IDGs) the 'framework' to which the department would contribute (Short, 2004: 53). The 1997 White Paper made clear that DFID's central mission was poverty reduction, by helping to achieve the targets within the IDGs (DFID, 1997: 6). Clare Short stated to us:

'When in year three or thereabouts the Treasury was willing to increase DFID's budget, they demanded a results system. We made a great effort to build the targets round the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals]. The Treasury set up a special unit of five or six people to monitor our progress.'

(Short, 2017; personal communication).

For Short, the targets were attractive, 'not because they acted as highly centralised, bureaucratic targets, but because they provided vision in high level politics' (ODI, 2007). She wanted to 'decentralise the department and improve our management of staff so that good thinking, high morale and decentralised authority would improve our effectiveness' (Short, 2004: 85).

² In her autobiography, Clare Short observes that the 'Foreign Office were furious that the old Overseas Development Administration (ODA) had got away from their tutelage' (Short, 2004: 78).

³ As Panchamia and Thomas (2014: 2) argue, the birth of the PSA's was somewhat accidental, rushed in by the then Chancellor shortly before the publication of the 1999 spending review. Our interviews also suggest that departments had a short time to develop a cumulative total of 600 targets.

Her changes were popular among academics and policy circles at the time, in part as they reflected broader trends to recognise the role of the state and move away from projectised approaches. The growing acknowledgement that aid conditionality did not work prompted a shift to narratives around ‘country ownership’ and the use of budget support and country systems, although these alternatives were not tested at scale (Burnside and Dollar, 1997; Dollar and Pritchett, 1998). Clare Short recently commented to us that,

‘Budgetary aid leads to governance reform because reliable and transparent systems have to be put in place so that the aid money mixed in with local money has to be accounted for. And building effective health systems, education systems that leave sustainable results is surely the objective.... Of course some countries are impossible for long term partnerships and budgetary aid. In these cases a more project driven perspective is necessary but it is crucial to be clear about what can and can’t be achieved with such interventions.’

(Short, 2017; personal communication)

Overall, as a former DFID staff member noted, ‘in the early years of the Labour government the licence to spend granted by the public to government was pretty freely given...the story of the next 15 years is the erosion of that licence to spend.’ (Former DFID staff member; interview) Yet during this time DFID became a big player in international policy-making. David Hulme (2007) suggests that Clare Short’s commitment was crucial to the success of the IDGs, the subsequent MDGs, and to getting partnership approaches on the agenda of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) through the adoption of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs) in 1999 (Christiansen and Hovland, 2003; Hulme, 2007).

Management: The new development agenda

In this time, new instruments were added on top of the management and accountability mechanisms that had existed under the ODA.⁴ A Performance Reporting and Information System for Managers (PRISM) was introduced in 1998, which established that all projects above £500,000 were to be evaluated and given a rating. Progress was measured against objectives and targets in the Policy Information Marker System (PIMS) and the Policy Objective Marker (POM).

Grander changes happened at the corporate level. Between 1997 and 2000, detailed indicators were developed to be achieved through international donor cooperation as part of the PSAs. They were linked to

contribution to global goals, with the IDGs at the centre. Only two objectives and indicators were directly under DFID’s control: first, to increase the proportion of bilateral projects focussed on low income countries; and second, to increase the proportion of bilateral projects likely to fully or largely meet their objectives (Maxwell, 2006). The PSAs therefore offered a second-hand account of success, aggregating the ratings provided through Project Completion Reports and Annual Reviews that were largely qualitative and reliant on officials’ views.

‘Value for money’ was sought by increasing the proportion of DFID’s bilateral programme going to low income countries and increasing the public scrutiny of where aid was allocated (Barder, 2005).⁵ Despite New Labour’s championing of ‘evidence’, most evaluations at the time focused on internal document reviews and interviews. Quantified analysis was predominantly used to understand the progress of a specific country or international commitment.

Response: Attribution and contribution

DFID was held to account by the House of Commons’ International Development Committee (IDC) and Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the National Audit Office, the Treasury as well as the media, NGOs and other external bodies. However, the new agenda’s focus on contribution to shared goals departed from the usual processes of results audit, and this caused discomfit amongst several of these key agencies and committees.

The IDC noted that, with current monitoring processes, attribution to DFID was impossible. They argued global indicators played a role in masking differences across diverse aid recipient contexts (IDC, 1998; 2000). Already unhappy with the increase in spending, the Treasury introduced new targets as part of the PSAs. This institutional pressure would continue throughout Clare Short’s leadership (White, 2002; The Public Accounts Committee, 2002).

Suma Chakrabarti, as the new Permanent Secretary in 2002, gave evidence to the IDC on these issues. He put DFID’s dilemma succinctly, arguing that setting objectives and measuring performance was ‘...particularly tricky because, unlike some of the parts of the public sector, we are a collective effort involving many players, other donors, but also many governments. Attributing success or failure to one part of the system is quite difficult in that process.’ (IDC, 2002).

At this point, scrutiny body objections never translated into enough pressure to radically change DFID’s approach (DFID official working on Corporate Planning and Performance; interview). Clare Short was in a strong position, with the support of Tony Blair and Gordon

4 These were developed as part of a concerted push from a coalition of civil servants within ODA to improve project design and management (Eyben, 2013; interview; Cracknell, 1989).

5 The proportion to low income countries increased from 78% to 90% (Poate and Barnett, 2003). The work of the Chief Economist from 2000 to 2005 was predominantly to assess where and how DFID’s money could be most effectively spent to reduce poverty.

Brown. Despite initial tussles with the Treasury and an ‘electrification of PSAs’ in the government, she persisted with her own approach (Morrissey, 2002; Panchamia and Thomas, 2014: 3). Clare Short describes the Treasury targets as causing ‘considerable unhappiness, but we shaped them around the focus on the International Development targets that we had already put in place and put a lot of effort into reassuring the staff that it did not mean a change of direction’ (Short, 2007).

The lack of specific reporting on results led to a growing internal as well as external discomfort. One DFID economist referenced an internal review that found that ‘in a surprising number of log frames the only number was the page number’. Barrie Ireton, the Director General of DFID between 1997 and 2003, stated that the department made a ‘shift from measuring project outputs to development outcomes and made attribution of other effort of any one donor or recipient even more difficult’ (Ireton, 2013: 262). A statistician said project completion reports and annual reviews were sometimes ‘almost anecdotal’ (DFID Statistician, FCPD; interview).

Yet Richard Manning, who first joined DFID’s predecessor in 1965 and moved on in 2003, said ‘when I left DFID I was relatively satisfied with how we were using the idea of results.’ Equally, Adrian Wood, who was Chief Economist from 2000 to 2005, said that:

‘DFID was constantly engaged in self-appraisal... There were a lot of external reviews of DFID’s performance, including by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Every country office had plans and records. People were very definitely held accountable by their superiors.’

(Wood, 2016; interview)

Rigour was being applied to DFID’s overall contribution across the world, rather than to specific projects. Adrian Wood said: ‘The central question was how effective was DFID aid in reducing poverty? And what were we contributing? And how could we use our aid money in ways that increased our contribution?’ (Wood 2016; interview) As Clare Short stated to us,

‘Clearly if country programs achieve well or badly against each of the MDGs in countries in which DFID is working, this provides important results and it is not difficult within these results to delve into DFID achievement in particular areas. A debate on effectiveness could take place on how to assess success within this framework.’

(Short 2017; interview)

While many academics welcomed DFID’s ambitious approach, some were concerned about a lack of operational detail (Hewitt and Killick, 1998; Maxwell and Riddell, 1998; White, 1998). The new ownership-focused approach, embodied in the PRSPs, had not been tested by donors at scale (Booth, 2003; 2005). The problem was defined, but the solution was not. Policy-makers still did not have an evidence base for what might work to generate such ownership, beyond individual case studies. One former DFID staff member suggested:

‘It would be a bit of a caricature—but not unfair I think—through the 1990s and early 2000s, there was quite a strong feeling that we knew what needed to be done to deliver development. And the problem was that we just weren’t bringing enough money and resources into it, and that the capacities in developing countries were weak. But I think people were increasingly beginning to say that maybe there’s still quite a lot to discover about what worked in development. And that maybe some of the things to which we had attached quite a lot of thought and that had become part of the conventional wisdom maybe didn’t stand up to scrutiny.’

(Former DFID official; interview)

3.2.1. Post-script: 2003-2006

In March 2003, the UK’s involvement in the invasion of Iraq triggered Clare Short’s resignation. DFID had the strong support of Tony Blair at this time, driven in part by his growing enthusiasm and idealism about influencing change in Africa, but also as a way of offsetting criticism of his support for military interventions (Gallagher, 2009). Short was replaced briefly by Valerie Amos, and then by Hilary Benn.

Clare Short’s legacy endured: Hilary Benn himself suggested that he continued DFID’s work with a similar strategic outlook (Hilary Benn; interview). The same was suggested in a new White Paper (DFID, 2005). The Chair of the IDC from 2005 to 2015, Malcolm Bruce, recalled:

‘When I arrived the DFID budget wasn’t expanding very rapidly. We had a traditional programme targeting the poorest countries and people. There wasn’t a sense of need to change that fundamentally... There was a bit of Clare Short’s momentum carrying forward.’

(Bruce, 2016; interview).

Yet in 2004 two things happened that would have a major effect on DFID and the results agenda.

Firstly, Hilary Benn and Gordon Brown (as Labour’s finance minister) agreed to increase aid sequentially in order to reach 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by 2013. This ‘would represent the most sustained increase in aid as a share of national income for 40 years’ (Barder, 2005). As Hilary Benn told us, ‘Domestically at the time

there was a great body of political support for development and aid.' This was the lead up to the Gleneagles Summit of 2005, and mobilisation around the 'Make Poverty History' campaign. This campaign sought to put pressure on a group of the most highly industrialised countries to commit to more and better aid, debt cancellation and trade justice.

Secondly, in 2004, the department concluded a structural reform process. Previously, projects had been managed by generalists who could call upon teams of specialists. The latter were grouped into 'cadres', which had a history reaching back to the colonial times. The Chief Advisers of these cadres had seats on influential project committees and had management responsibility for their advisers. Critics described these as 'powerful baronies' (Barder, 2013; interview) and 'silos' (Unsworth, 2015; interview). These structural reforms reduced the power of the Chief Advisers, by taking away their line management responsibilities. It gave members of professional cadres project management roles. This was a classic NPM move: getting professionals to take on project management processes, which then subordinated their expertise to measurement and target-setting.

While both were to be important, neither influenced the management processes in the short-term. Our interviews suggested there was an increasing scrutiny from the internal management board and the Treasury, but as one advisor put it, DFID were 'one step ahead of the game' (DFID official, FCPD; interview). Under Suma Chakrabarti as Permanent Secretary, DFID came out on top of the Whitehall capability reviews. He stated to us:

'I believed in development outcomes. The only way to get people motivated around a PSA is if it describes things they actually care about. If you don't, it doesn't motivate staff. We were fortunate to have such a clear set of outcomes.'

(Chakrabarti, 2016; interview).

At this time, as Gulrajani (2010a: 28) notes:

'The levels of trust engendered in DFID permitted operational flexibility to 'break all the Treasury rules,' including the ability to make ten-year budget commitments despite a three-year budget cycle, increased delegated authority to field offices, to embrace risk and innovation as an opportunity for a greater returns, and to engage in situations where the obstacles to poverty alleviation are more political than technical.'

Both Chakrabarti and Benn supported the approach based on contribution to international targets and partnership. Among transnational and domestic civil society organisations, DFID's stock continued to rise, in part due to the mutually beneficial relationships developed as part of the Make Poverty History campaign (Gulrajani, 2010a). The Canadian government praised DFID as a global leader (Greenhill, 2005) and *The Economist* described DFID as 'a model for other rich countries' (Barder, 2005). The UK's own ambitions at this time were huge, believing in the power of their approach to help end extreme poverty.

The approach culminated in the Labour Government and DFID playing a leading role in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005). The Paris Declaration's results management approach was reliant on the twin principles of 'use of country systems' and 'managing for results' – the recipient country was to be responsible for tracking the results achieved to which DFID (among other donors) were contributing (ibid.).⁶ The aim of the 'Managing for Results' principle was to 'strengthen country capacities and demand for results-based management', rather than for donors to develop their own systems (OECD, 2008). DFID's commitment to the Paris Declaration meant that from 2006, it began to report on their projects in relation to the Declaration's standards. This did not greatly change DFID's accountability profile. As Ireton notes, 'its actions were primary qualitative in nature' (2013: 264).

Yet the Paris Declaration was built on shaky foundations. While the aid effectiveness movement had identified the institutional issues that underpinned past approaches, there was never a clear answer for how development should proceed in circumstances where political will was lacking. The trajectory of the 'Drivers of Change' analytical tool is a case in point. This was a form of political economy analysis which sought to unpick the factors that drive or impede change in a given context (Warrener, 2004; DFID, 2005) and was to challenge the assumptions on which the Paris Declaration was built (Unsworth, 2015; interview). It was pushed in DFID by a group of advisors, led primarily by Sue Unsworth who was to become the Chief Governance Adviser, and supported by Clare Short. However, as a mode of analysis, it struggled to be institutionalised and fell out of use once Clare Short resigned (Scott, 2007; Yanguas and Hulme, 2015). The assumptions of the Paris Declaration were never to be fully unpacked, and were left untouched by the DFID White Paper of 2006 – the zenith of this model of aid (DFID, 2006; Moore and Unsworth, 2006).

6 This focus on results internationally had grown on the back of series of discussions on 'Managing for Development Results', which became bound up with aid effectiveness. The proceeding meetings included a World Bank convened International Roundtable on Measuring, Monitoring, and Managing for Results (2002) and a second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results Marrakech, Morocco (2004). These discussions then continued as part of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005); a third Roundtable on Managing for Development Results in Hanoi, Vietnam (2007); and the Meeting on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana (2008).

3.3. 2007-2010

‘DFID needs to make a step change in our use of information. We need to use evidence more effectively in order to ensure we are achieving the maximum impact from our development assistance. We also need to be able to demonstrate its effectiveness more clearly.’

DFID (2008a) Results Action Plan

Politics: The financial crash and results commitments

From 2007, DFID retreated from the contribution and partnership model. The bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008 sparked the start of the financial crisis. The UK economy was in difficulty, yet DFID’s budget was growing. In response, the voices from Whitehall and Westminster arguing that the accountability apparatus was insufficient were getting louder. As the financial crisis set in, public support for aid declined (Henson et al., 2010). In 2007, the Treasury’s Capability Review of DFID suggested it was not doing enough to report on its impact.⁷ Alan Winters, who became DFID’s Chief Economist on the day Lehman Brothers crashed, suggested that ‘the results agenda was growing in strength and relevance’ (Winters, 2016; interview).

In 2007, when Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, he appointed Douglas Alexander as Secretary of State for International Development. For Alexander, aid had a quid-pro-quo nature. As he stated to us ‘I didn’t want to see development as a nice-to-have during the nice decade of 1997-2007. We have to show our worth in the more challenging circumstances.’ He felt the focus on results began under his leadership:

‘A conservative narrative on aid is that a pound wasted on aid is wasted for the British taxpayer. I argued that a pound wasted represented a loss to the British taxpayer, but it also represented a child who didn’t get a teacher or a classroom. I argued at both ends of the development chain – from the donor to the partner country – we need a results-based focus. My determination to deliver that was only strengthened by the global financial crisis. While it affected livelihoods in UK, it also hurt those in the developing world.’

(Alexander, 2016; interview)

Accounts from former DFID staff suggest that Shriti Vadera, who became the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, was another key driver of the results reforms. She had been an investment banker and a Special Advisor to Gordon Brown when he was Chancellor. One DFID staff

member claimed Vadera expressed dismay at how little information she had to sign off on interventions (Former DFID economist; interview).

Pressure was also growing within Westminster. The then Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell, argued that: ‘Aid should pay for results - not for promises of action or fine-sounding strategy documents. It should be linked to clear, independently-audited evidence of progress on the ground’ (Mitchell, 2007). Mitchell had been in his position since May 2005 and had developed his own agenda. Minouche Shafik, who in 2008 took over from Suma Chakrabarti as DFID Permanent Secretary, told us how the department prepared for different electoral outcomes, within which greater results reforms were deemed likely (Shafik, 2016; interview).

The political calls to focus on centralised results frameworks fitted rather uncomfortably with DFID’s commitments to ‘contribution’ and the Paris Declaration. In 2009, Gordon Brown argued that: ‘We must ensure that aid flows are predictable and support plans formulated by national governments, not spent on priorities, however well intentioned, imposed by donors from afar’ (DFID, 2009a: 40). This also implies another key part of New Labour’s approach to aid: that a commitment to spending fixed sums of money on aid was in and of itself important. This was underpinned by a belief that richer countries should redistribute wealth to poorer ones.

The civil service leadership therefore began to face considerable tensions in their work. Minouche Shafik inherited a department whose approach was increasingly questioned by a new minister with different priorities and whose corporate management systems was at odds with the expectations of Whitehall. DFID was coming under greater political and public pressure. The policy window opened under Clare Short was starting to close. Yet during this period, DFID’s country offices continued to employ approaches that did not lend themselves to straightforward results measurement, such as budget support. Budget support peaked in 2007/2008, at over a quarter of the bilateral programme. This approach did not last, finally cracking under pressure during Justine Greening’s leadership.

Recognising that the tide was turning, DFID spent approximately £14 million within the UK to increase public awareness of global poverty (DFID, 2009b: 49). In July 2009, an estimated £130,000 was spent on re-branding, to be ‘phased in both in the UK and in the countries where we work’ (Alexander, 2009). Other public relations efforts involved developing positive stories of change: a former Sun journalist was hired to produce stories that could pass what some called ‘the Granny test’ (DFID staff member; interview).

DFID’s experience was not unique: western donors had been moving in this direction for a while. The

⁷ We could not locate the original document, so this interpretation relies on our interviews.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Sweden's development agency (SIDA) were experiencing similar reforms (Natsios, 2010; Vähämäki, 2015). International commitments to RBM made clear the importance of working through country systems. On balance, the shifts away from the Paris Declaration and towards projectised aid were a product of the convergence of domestic factors across donor countries that combined with a growing and shared international scepticism of the existing paradigm.

Management: The Results Action Plan and evidence-based policy

Instituting RBM processes was a central plank in the DFID bureaucracy's response to the demands of its new political leadership. Under the invitation of Shriti Vadera, the Chief Economist's office produced a report called 'Using Numbers' (Interview, FCPD official). This report strongly criticised the lack of quantification within DFID's processes. In 2008, DFID produced a Results Action Plan (2008a). It retained the commitment to the MDGs and acknowledged the principles of the Paris Declaration. Yet it also articulated a set of priorities that undermined ownership and partnership. Building on this report through the 'Making it Happen' business change programme, systems that could trace attributable and countable results were introduced. The aim was to improve corporate decision-making and public communication (NAO, 2009).

Three key reforms were launched under the Results Action Plan:

Firstly, revised log frame guidance was produced. This took place in 2009, under the auspices of Finance and Corporate Performance Division (FCPD) (DFID economist, FCPD; interview). DFID's old, simple, 4x4-matrix log frame was expanded.⁸ Some DFID interviewees suggested that for some time, log frames had not been taken seriously by management or by staff (DFID statistician, FCPD; interview). Officials responsible for designing the changes to the log frame wanted to know 'what are we actually measuring?' and 'how do we know if [...] we're actually delivering?' (DFID official, FCPD; interview). In response, DFID designed a log frame in the form of an MS Excel spreadsheet that broke down Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) into cell-based component elements of Indicators, Baselines, Milestones and Targets, along with new data content requested for analytical purposes. Milestones were to be identified on a yearly basis (DFID, 2011b). The National Audit Office (NAO, 2009: 44) supported this change, arguing that a 'greater specification of baselines, indicators and targets, underpinned by more rigorous economic appraisals, should enable project scoring to be more objective.'

Importantly, these revisions changed the annual review process. Previously, reviews assessed whether projects were

likely to achieve their final outcome. Now, they were used as a way to measure the year-by-year success of projects against commitments that were made in their design phase (DFID, 2009c). This was a technical shift, but one which had far-reaching effects. It reflected a changing attitude to aid management. The government and senior DFID civil servants wanted to know ahead of time, and in some detail, what would be achieved.

Secondly, standardised indicators were developed for use across diverse countries and sectors. Reporting at the project level was no longer enough (DFID official, FCPD; interview). Statistics advisors initially came up with 15 common indicators that could be aggregated across the department and that would trace attributable results. The final indicators were designed through negotiations between DFID headquarters and country offices. Anyone working in these areas had to use these indicators. Published in DFID's Annual Review 2008/2009 (DFID, 2009: 4-5), these were the first manifestations of NPM-style targets used as corporate management and communication tools.

Thirdly, the economic appraisal process was revised. This likely marks the emergence of a focus on value for money that was to become central to the Conservative's aid agenda from 2010 onwards. An economist with considerable experience in Whitehall prepared a How-To Note, which was released in 2009 (Former DFID economist, FCPD; interview; DFID, 2009c). It insisted that new projects come with pre-planned costed options linked to quantified results, drawing extensively on the Treasury's guidance. Work also started on a revised 'Business Case' format for proposing new programmes, which was completed in 2010 (Former DFID economist; interview). Furthermore, an 'Investment Committee' was set. It sought to advise DFID management and ministers on strategic investment choices, provide assurance around value for money, and 'ensure DFID's investment appraisal procedures and practice are fit for purpose and champion the use of evidence and quantification of outputs' (NAO, 2009: 21)

Together, these reforms introduced a partial repurposing of the project management system – seeking to improve project and corporate accountability, while also contributing to political communications. They marked a shift in the policy window that had been defined by Clare Short and continued under Hillary Benn. According to Julian Barr, a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist who developed training for the log frame, 'this was an explicit shift. We wanted to have the tools to hold implementers more to account. It wasn't about time and payments to milestones, it wasn't payment by results. It was about creating a more detailed discussion' (Barr, 2016; interview).

⁸ While the log frame, the project management system, and its associated database had always retained elements of a centralised repository for planning, it was not used as a means for collating attributable results nor as a form of management allocation control.

Box 1: Evidence-based policy

There was a parallel shift towards using ‘evidence’ as part of the New Labour and Whitehall management orthodoxy. The aim was to provide well-researched justifications for development interventions, where possible through experimental methods, particularly randomised control trials (RCTs) (DFID, 2008b). A number of influential individuals within senior leadership launched a series of reforms designed to shift the culture of evidence use within DFID. The Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) was set up in December 2007. Some within this committee pushed for an evaluation function that had greater clout and that would contribute more impact evaluations (IACDI and DFID officials; interviews). A focus on evidence and VFM was reinforced through the creation of a Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) under the Chief Economist.¹⁰ The Research and Evidence Division was also created, which aimed to support further evaluations and a wider public evidence base. There changes would start a gradual shift away from the previous decentralisation of evaluation professional expertise, towards central coordination of evidence that could be used as a public good.

Response: DFID’s internal reformers and external champions

It was perhaps inevitable that Clare Short’s agenda would attract criticism. The de-prioritisation of attributable results in favour of an approach that emphasised partnership, country ownership and international collaboration left the NAO and Parliamentary committees unable to hold DFID specifically to account for its achievements. Criticism found traction within the department through an internal coalition that, according to our interviews, was made up largely of economists and statisticians, many of who had come from other government departments. Where these criticisms came from became clear in the detail of the management reforms – for example, the economic appraisal guidelines drew on principles within the Treasury’s own Magenta book⁹ (Former DFID economist, FCPD; interview).

There were valid concerns about the aid effectiveness model. Indeed, one DFID advisor said ‘in most of the

countries I worked in, I had a reliable rule of thumb that anything proposed for reasons of “aid effectiveness” alone was likely to be a really bad idea.’ (DFID official; interview) This advisor was concerned that certain modalities aligned with the aid effectiveness agenda, such as budget support, were occasionally promoted in countries regardless of whether the modalities were fit for purpose. The criticism was not of budget support per se, but of viewing any modality as a blunt instrument that can be applied in any context.

The Permanent Secretary at the time, Minouche Shafik, suggested the results changes were ‘evolutionary’. She stated:

‘Everyone cared about results. There was an important political push from the new Secretary of State, but there was also an awareness in Whitehall that expectations of accountability would increase with a rising aid budget.’

In part, this also follows from the decentralisation of power and increase in spending. Yet Shafik outlined how moving from the PSA emphasis to aggregated results created

‘...huge internal debates over whether this was a good idea or not. A lot of debates on measurement, quantity vs. quality, how to aggregate results across countries... As always in DFID, we grappled with those issues and tried to find ways to measure in more creative ways.’

She stated ‘I was comfortable not having a narrow understanding of results. It didn’t have to be our pound making all the difference.’ (Shafik, 2016; interview)

Yet the risks of insisting on attributable results were raised within DFID. The Head of Evaluation in 2008 noted that if DFID put in place systems that placed greater demands on country office teams than they could meet, then ‘we may end up measuring what matters to UK audiences rather than aligning with the priorities and monitoring systems of developing countries’ (DFID, 2008b: 4). The development of standard indicators for the purposes of political communication was particularly controversial, with one interviewee close to the process noting that as they were rolled out they were ‘unpopular’ within the department (interview, DFID statistician, FCPD). DFID staff we interviewed were concerned that if

9 This is HM Treasury guidance on what to consider when designing an evaluation.

10 The QAU consisted of five officials reporting to the Chief Economist (at the time of interview in 2013, all five were economists). They review the evidence in business cases – where the programme is £40 million and over, or if the programme is novel or technically contentious. Typically, 6-10 reviewers from a range of professional cadres provide inputs, which results in a report to be signed off by the Chief Economist (DFID official; interview). An ICAI (2014: 21) report on ‘How DFID Learns’ commended this group for encouraging better use of research and evidence in business cases.

results were used primarily for political communication, it would narrow which ‘results’ counted.

Many in DFID already thought the log frame was an inadequate tool – and that the changes amounted to a more difficult version of that. While the initial rationale may have been to generate a more detailed and informed discussion, management tools once created do not necessarily behave as their creators hoped. Similar drivers were cited for the creation of the log frame in the first place, but its use shifted from a trigger for discussion, to a tick-box audit and control exercise (Eyben, 2013; interview).

In policy circles, it appears there was acceptance that greater attention on results was politically required, but scepticism about how this would work in practice. The dilemma was felt across multiple donors, as noted in the Evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration: ‘Many donors are reported to be caught in a difficult situation, facing pressure to report on results under their own systems, but unable to count on sufficiently robust country systems as a basis’ (Wood et al., 2008: 23; also see Jerven, 2013). Furthermore, as Booth (2011: 5) noted, ‘Unless political leaders already have development as their goal, their results orientation is hardly likely to be enhanced by improving systems for collecting and managing statistics’.

Despite this, there was also hope for what a results agenda might achieve. After detailing their concerns, Hudson and Jonsson (2009: vi) noted:

‘Nevertheless, a realistic results agenda that addresses rather than assumes away the challenges of tracing the impact of UK development assistance, and that acknowledges that different constituencies may prioritise different sorts of results, may provide the basis for an open, honest and evidence-based conversation – and perhaps a political conversation – about the aims, means, complexities and outcomes of development assistance.’

Prior to May 2010, DFID continued to be praised as a global leader, with Lockwood et al. stating the ‘... Government, and DFID, can rightly be proud of the volume, quality and poverty focus of UK aid’ (2010: 13). There were some growing concerns among NGOs about whether the UK, among other governments, were meeting their commitments under the Paris Declaration, and its successor, the Accra Agenda for Action (OECD, 2008). At this time, academics continued to debate whether aid contributed to poverty reduction (Easterly, 2005; Moyo, 2009), and the role of ‘evidence’ (see Box 1, p.25). However, target-setting within DFID remained a rather quiet area for analysis.

3.4. 2010-2012

My top priority will be to secure maximum value for money in aid through greater transparency, rigorous independent evaluation and an unrelenting focus on results.

Andrew Mitchell, Former Secretary of State for International Development (2010-2012), Conservative Party

Politics: Centre-right aid and the results agenda

Since 2007, results-based thinking had been eroding the agenda defined by Clare Short and framed by the Paris Declaration. After the election of 2010, however, the results agenda was to take root as the central aid management idea. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats formed a coalition government. Aid was one of only two budgets ring-fenced in a widespread programme of austerity. Viewed historically, protecting aid was a remarkable position for a Conservative-led government to take. While in government in 1970 and then 1979, Conservative governments had sought to bring ODA under the control of the Foreign Office and cut aid expenditure (Barder, 2005).

Despite growing scepticism from within the party and the wider public, the commitment to aid had been written into policy by former Conservative leader Michael Howard and retained by the new Prime Minister David Cameron. Cameron sought to establish the principle of ‘One World Conservatism.’ Prior to gaining power, he argued that ‘people at home are hurting in this recession...But they understand that there are still billions who have the tiniest fraction of what we have, even in a recession, and that it’s our social responsibility to help them’ (Cameron, 2009).

Politically, this led to a set of commitments that echoed their Labour predecessors on volume and broad purpose: measuring aid success in line with the MDGs; keeping DFID independent; and ‘keeping aid untied from commercial interests’ (Ilott et al., 2016: 27). David Cameron appeared personally invested in this, evidenced in part by his support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the successors to the MDGs. Drawing on Mawdsley (2015: 348), we offer four further reasons why Cameron took this political risk:

- to ‘decontaminate the Tory brand’, trying to emulate what he saw as the positive global influence DFID had under Labour. This took place alongside commitments to tackle climate change and support gay rights;
- to placate the NGOs, a powerful local constituency and lobbying force, who were strongly pushing for the commitment to 0.7%;
- to maintain soft power at a time where British influence globally was gradually declining; and
- to use DFID as a way to improve security and increase economic development for the UK (or, in the ‘national interest’).

This reflected a desire to reshape Britain's role in the world whilst retaining a high level of ambition. But this left a political challenge. If the Coalition Government could not distinguish itself from Labour on the basis of its overall commitment, then it had to do so on some other characteristics. Results, value for money, evidence and transparency were placed at the centre of the approach. The Government's approach was carved out by the 2010 appointment of the new Secretary of State, Andrew Mitchell. Having been the Shadow Secretary of State for International Development for the Conservatives for five years he was passionate, well prepared and had a good sense of what he wanted to achieve. In an interview with us, he stated: 'I saw that this was space occupied by Labour, not the Tories. I said what does a centre-right development policy look like? It was clearly the results agenda.' (Mitchell, 2016; interview).

For Mitchell, results were not about processes and procedures characterised by partnership, ownership and collaborative working, but rather about concrete questions about what was achieved (Mitchell, 2010). For him, results were crucial to the effort to convince the UK public that aid was being spent effectively, particularly when other budgets were being cut. They were also used to support moves towards an internal competitive market for aid. Mitchell stated that:

'And so in the end we said, "Instead of you in Ethiopia, putting in for a budget increase of 3% and getting it, we're going to ask what you can produce". And so you say to us, well, we can get 50,000 girls into school in Ethiopia. And we say, "Fine, what's it going to cost?" And so we created an internal market where the Ethiopian office might call the Rwandan office and say for example, "How is it that you can get girls into school for £40 a year and we can't get it below £60?"'

(Gash and Gold, 2015)

He argued that, 'money goes into the sausage machine and people want to know what comes out the other side. It shows that there is value in what is being spent in their name.'¹¹ (Mitchell, 2016; interview). The agenda moved beyond simply enumerating aggregated results to focusing on whether results were achieved with value for money (DFID, 2011a). This was exemplified in the dramatic commitment 'to ensure that for every pound of taxpayers' money we spend, we demonstrate 100 pence of value' (Mitchell, 2010). It was a statement which came to define value for money almost to the letter (DFID, 2011a).

For Mitchell, DFID had to move away from simply committing money to problems: he was interested in committing to specific results. This was distinct from the approach under Gordon Brown and Douglas Alexander. In our interview, Mitchell argued that 'the worst sentence in the development lexicon is that "we are going to spend a million pounds on x"' (Mitchell, 2016; interview). There was an irony to this since the debate around aid in the lead up to the 2010 election – driven by both political parties and NGOs – had been primarily about money.

The Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats had each committed to meeting the 0.7% target by 2013, and bringing that commitment into law. The general sense politically was that to hit the target, DFID had to become more effective as an organisation. Lynne Featherstone, a Liberal Democrat and former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (2012-2014), said: 'It appears to me that before the Coalition, [DFID] had been a fantastic organisation, well-intentioned, well-meaning, but not rigorous. It had to become tighter. The scale up had to be reliable.' (Featherstone, 2016; interview)

DFID's influence over the rest of government was declining, and those in the department knew there was growing political hostility towards their expanding budget. The protected budget also opened DFID up to major scrutiny at a time of austerity, from the public and the media. *The Daily Mail*, a right-wing newspaper, has proven a particularly aggressive critic of development spending, regularly advocating for cuts.¹²

These shifts were reflected internationally. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, agreed in 2011, signalled another departure from the Paris Declaration. Leveraging its position, DFID pushed for results (alongside transparency and value for money) as key priorities. The MDGs became only one aspect of its reporting commitments, and not the most prominent. DFID was influential in convincing others to follow their lead. As Andrew Mitchell stated:

'We created an internal market in results, and "results, results, results." That was my mantra. And actually it's been copied all around the world; the EU programme now do it, the Americans do it, the Australians do it, and it was a British initiative. Results, you buy results.'

(Gash and Gold, 2015)

Key elements of the Paris commitments were to be sacrificed in order to prioritise delivering attributable

11 The Conservative's 2009 Green Paper on international development stated: 'We will collect and publish comprehensive information about the effectiveness and outcomes of all forms of British aid – allowing future funding decisions to be based on evidence, not guesswork' (2009: 14).

12 According to an online search we conducted, there were no more than 11 articles a year on development spending by the Daily Mail between 1997 and 2009. That changed in 2010, with at least 20 articles and grew in 2011 (26) and 2012 (36). This search was conducted on Lexis Nexis. The search criteria was for the term 'DFID' or 'Department for International Development', including only articles in *The Daily Mail* or *Mail on Sunday* with 'major mentions' since 1997. This returned a total 285 results.

results to UK aid. This was to be reflected in later assessments by OECD/UNDP (2016), which showed DFID's performance to be weak or worsening in relation to ensuring its programmes were driven by country priorities; and in designing, monitoring and evaluating its programmes through country-led mechanisms.

Management: Aid reviews, ICAI and evidence-based policy

Andrew Mitchell had demanded that attributable, measurable results be placed at the heart of the department's project management processes and communication efforts. As Shutt notes, 'although completing logical frameworks had long been part of the proposal negotiation processes with DFID, suddenly indicators and targets became far more important' (2016: 26). Adherents to the former regime had to adapt to this new approach.

The emphasis on RBM was, in part, put into action in two key ways: by initiating the Bilateral Aid Review (BAR) and Multilateral Aid Review (MAR),¹³ and by setting up the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI).

The Bilateral Aid Review (BAR)

The BAR signalled a shift in the way results would be used, putting political communications at the centre of DFID's management processes. The BAR involved country offices bidding for resources from DFID headquarters on the basis of 'directly attributable results' they were going to achieve over the course of the parliament (DFID, 2011c). The FCPD team were charged with the task of establishing 28 results indicators from the bids, which they then aggregated thematically (Maxwell, 2011).¹⁴ These bids gave birth to the 'We Will' commitments that were to form the DFID Results Framework (DRF) (DFID, 2011d). Country offices were to be held accountable for their results allocation. Outcomes that were difficult to aggregate fell into individual Country Operational Plans and commitments. The indicators were then released to the British people as targets (DFID official; interview).

The motivation was to change the focus of DFID allocation procedures from a discussion about inputs to outputs. No longer a post-hoc accountability mechanism or a discipline for articulating assumptions, these results were to be criteria for ex-ante corporate resource

allocation at a regional and global level. Furthermore, as the DRF became mainstreamed, money was supposed to be shifted to countries and regions if a target was not going to be met. This framework was pushed through from the centre (DFID official; interview; former DFID official, FCPD; interview).¹⁵ This rather ad-hoc process became the central corporate results management framework that the government would adhere to, which took place at the same time as the ongoing expansion of log frame requirements (DFID, 2011b).

As part of the BAR process, DFID also reduced the number of countries it would focus on from 43 to 27. These selections were made on the basis of development need, likely effectiveness of assistance and UK strategic fit. There was a heavy weighting towards working in conflict-affected places, which meant increased funding in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, among others.

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI)

The creation of ICAI was Andrew Mitchell's second major effort to distinguish the Coalition government from its Labour predecessor. Reporting to the IDC, ICAI was to be a body that undertook reviews of UK aid spending and its contribution to results (ICAI, 2016a). Mitchell argued that: 'Independent evaluation of British aid is absolutely crucial. There is something a bit too cosy and self-serving about internal evaluation.' (Mitchell, 2010). In fact, ICAI was not a typical independent evaluation group. It was not designed to conduct evaluations according to evaluation standards, but rather to undertake performance reviews. Nevertheless, despite being funded through DFID,¹⁶ it had its own budget, a marked upgrade from the IACDI. ICAI had considerable independence in the subject of its reviews and its conclusions were often widely publicised. The commission has now produced a huge number of reports on diverse areas of DFID's work, often offering critical and controversial analysis.

Response: Professional implementation and external critique

The 2010 commitment to results was not new – it grew from the results-oriented logic fostered under Douglas Alexander, which also had proponents throughout the Short years. However, the centrality of results to corporate resource allocation and political communication was new.¹⁷ The power of the idea of results was growing.

13 We do not address the MAR in any depth here.

14 These were to become 'Tier Two' of the DRF, with Tier One comprising the MDG indicators, and Tiers Three and Four comprising various process and policy reforms. Subsequent reviews of these targets led to the exact number of them changing over time, as well as certain indicators (for example in relation to water and sanitation) becoming composites of other indicators.

15 Personal recollection of the process by Gideon Rabinowitz.

16 In official terms, ICAI is an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by DFID.

17 They were underlined by an emphasis on cost-benefit analysis, not simply as an articulation of assumptions but as a decision tool. This was, if not new, newly underlined. Almost every economist working on this would hark back to an earlier time when ODA led economic appraisals, as part of the economic growth aid paradigm that held sway from 1965 to, broadly, the early nineties.

The Chief Economist at the time, Alan Winters, said that advisers had to very quickly come to terms with this ‘huge revolution’ (Winters, 2016; interview).

As with all NPM reforms, the existence of cadres of professionals willing to undertake these reforms was crucial to their success (Kirkpatrick et al., 2005). Many of the reforms were housed in the FCPD. Here, statisticians and economists were crucial to the central implementation and management of the DRF, the design of the Business Case, and its implementation – in the latter, often as a matter of the practical skillsets and sensibilities they possessed rather than necessarily as a formal assignment (Dercon, 2014; interview). Owen Barder observed that economists have often been ‘seen as a bit of an umpire on competing pressures for spending’ (Barder, 2013; interview). The Chief Economist was responsible for the QAU, which has often been dominated by economists (DFID economist; interview).¹⁸

Yet some DFID civil servants had concerns, particularly in relation to the DRF and BAR processes. As one DFID staff member put it, ‘The absurdity kicked in. Offices were competing with each other to deliver results. It really encouraged an optimism bias. Everyone wanted a bigger budget and deliver bigger results and this sent us in the wrong direction.’ (DFID official; interview) Subsequent ICAI reports have suggested that the competitive process, focused on large quantifiable results, led to overbidding (ICAI, 2014). DFID officials suggested that they had a very short timeframe to prepare the bids.¹⁹ One DFID staff member stated ‘This was meant to be coming from country need but was just about people filling country pots’ (DFID official; interview).

Alan Winters said there were concerns that while economists ‘had a set way of debating [the numbers] and understanding them...putting them in the hands of the non-specialists had risks’. He stated that governance and social policy colleagues ‘felt they were being squeezed out as they couldn’t produce hard numbers’ (Winters, 2016; interview). On top of that, the new focus on results sat uneasily with the growing focus on working in conflict-affected areas, where it is often much more difficult to produce clearly measurable results (DFID, 2010).

With DFID as a major source of funds, its turn away from partnership modalities towards more transactional and results-oriented processes generated a flurry of criticisms from the sector. The ‘Big Push Forward’ emerged, a group of academics and practitioners concerned about the effects of increased accountability, auditing and control that the results agenda brought on.²⁰ One of the experienced members of this group, Rosalind Eyben, later criticised the desire of DFID to make it all about the UK:

‘In 2012 DFID claimed to the British public that it had secured “schooling for 11 million children – more than we educate in the UK but at 2.5% of the cost”. Everyone else involved in helping those 11 million children get to school had disappeared from the narrative.’

(Eyben, 2015: 20).

Commentators and NGOs developed some fairly critical positions of the new agenda (Ahmad, 2011; Ramalingam, 2011; Maxwell, 2011; Barder, 2012). Andrew Mitchell himself argued that DFID needed to guard against ‘bean counting’ (Mitchell, 2011). The UK Aid Network (2012: 1a) outlined a concern that the ‘priorities, agendas and decisions emanating from DFID Headquarters exerted a significant top-down pressure on the kinds of offers that were put forward, weakening the decentralisation of decision making to DFID country offices.’ Yet the ability of the department to digest and debate the new numbers being generated was hampered by the reductions in the personnel budgets with respect to the growing programme funds. Just months after Mitchell took over DFID, perhaps the most notable criticism of excessive management controls in aid emerged from another major donor: Andrew Natsios, the former administrator of USAID, lambasted his organisation for developing a counter-bureaucracy (Natsios, 2010).

For Ilcott et al. (2016), 2010 marked the beginning of a period in which DFID ‘pivoted from being a “development powerhouse” with a clear strategic focus, to being a department preoccupied publicly with defending its funding, and privately with seeking out sufficient viable projects to spend its entire budget effectively’.

18 At the same time, many economists take roles as administrators, informally colonising parts of the Senior Civil Service: the Chief Economist observed, for example, that many of the Deputy Heads are economists (Dercon, 2014; interview).

19 Alan Winters, the Chief Economist until 2011, recalled how he, along with other economists, went through every single country office BAR submission, ‘to see if they were using evidence reasonably well.’ (Winters, 2016; interview).

20 One of the authors, Whitty, was a convener of this group.

3.5. 2012-2017

‘When I arrived in DFID three years ago, I came armed with my accountant’s eye. Value for money is what I focused my 15-year business career on and I see no reason to change that in politics.’

Justine Greening, 2015

Politics: Market-driven aid in the national interest

In 2012, Andrew Mitchell was replaced by Justine Greening. She entered DFID with a clear task from Prime Minister David Cameron to increase DFID’s focus on results, transparency, evidence and value for money (Greening, 2012). Although she became the Secretary of State amidst some controversy (it was claimed she did not want the role (Walters, 2016)), she was to become an ardent defender of UK aid as both being in the national interest and the right thing to do. This involved championing the cause of women and girls, building on the work of Lynne Featherstone of the Liberal Democrats. In many respects, Greening continued Mitchell’s approach to results while becoming a more explicit champion for the role of the private sector in the development industry (Greening, 2015).

As a professional accountant, she focused on:

- increasing the Secretary of State’s personal scrutiny of programmes;
- bringing the personal sign off for aid spending by Secretaries of State down from £40 million to £5 million;
- supporting the introduction of increased internal audit procedures, to be conducted every two years in each country office; and
- accelerating the use of value for money in the form of results-based contracts and Payment by Results (PbR).

These reforms were framed as creating gains in efficiency and effectiveness and reflected a further integration of the typical NPM doctrine. Justine Greening explained how in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there was a programme ‘reaching 2 million people at a cost of \$13 US dollars per person. We re-tendered it and put in place a results-based contract, and we were able to reach 7.5 million people, but at a cost of \$7.40’ (Greening, 2015). Such calculations were part of attempts to stimulate competition among providers, in theory leading to better value and more effective development programmes.

They were also underpinned by the Conservative government’s commitment to increasing the role of private sector and corporate standards in the development

industry (Mawdsley, 2015). Eyben (2015: 11) argues that ‘large accountancy companies such as KPMG who win large contracts from USAID and DFID have heavily influenced results-based programming.’ In 2015, as part of the announcement of the UK Aid Strategy, Greening finally ended general budget support, whose reputation had been trashed by a string of public scandals.²¹ This ended one of the last hold-outs of Clare Short’s approach.

Greening also had to deal with the implications of the considerable and far-reaching reforms introduced by Andrew Mitchell.

One aspect of this was ICAI – a unique scrutiny mechanism in Whitehall. ICAI regularly released critical reports of aid and DFID struggled to stop them turning into public scandals. A number of background interviews we conducted suggested that the budget and mandate of ICAI came under pressure from Justine Greening. Yet in the end, ICAI was retained and its role matured as it sought to find its place amidst other scrutiny bodies, such as the IDC.

A second aspect was the need to respond to implications of the results agenda in practice. In 2013, an ‘End-to-End Review’ was run by two DFID staff members. It was initiated in part due to internal and external criticisms about the growing bureaucratisation of DFID, which was seen to inhibit a focus on ‘real world delivery’ (Wingfield and Vowles, 2014). Yet before it could be finalised, a scandal around the TradeMark Southern Africa programme sprang to public attention. Payments had been made to the Government of Zimbabwe in contravention of UK policy. A signature action was needed by Justine Greening. She threw her support behind the review. This meant the review carried greater weight, while at the same time it was shaped by political pressures that reinforced control, risk mitigation and upwards accountability.

In 2015, the UK government published their UK Aid Strategy (UK government, 2015), which sought to align ‘the government’s global efforts to defeat poverty, tackle instability and create prosperity in developing countries, all strongly in support of the national interest.’ This included a government commitment to more cross-government aid spending. More than £1 billion a year was to be funnelled through the Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund (CSSF), which was launched in April 2015. In an attempt to encourage cross-government working, DFID was moved to Whitehall, close to the rest of central government.

Aid spending continued to hold cross-party support, with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 enshrining the 0.7% GNI commitment. Media attacks continued to grow in response. The national interest justification for aid spending – alongside a focus on results and increased scrutiny – was to be the government’s main line of defence. In 2016 Justine Greening responded to a set of questions by the Mail on

21 In 2005, Hilary Benn cancelled budget support to Ethiopia after large-scale state-sponsored violence during an election period. In 2011, Andrew Mitchell stopped £19 million of budget support to Malawi, citing concerns over economic management and governance. Greening herself froze aid to Rwanda after receiving ‘credible and compelling reports of Rwandan involvement with M23 in DRC’ (UK Government, 2012). Furthermore, putting funding into specific DFID projects and programmes, rather than in-country systems, had the effect of making measurement based on attribution easier.

Sunday, arguing that 0.7% was a manifesto commitment, in the UK's national interest and subject to scrutiny on the basis that she was a former chartered accountant (Walters, 2016).

Management: The 'Smart Rules' and Better Delivery

As noted above, this period was marked by internal attempts to rebalance DFID's internal processes, recognising the unintended consequences of the implementation of the results agenda. The End-to-End Review provided a process through which staff from across the department were able to communicate what was going well and what was not, particularly from a programme management perspective.

The conclusion of the End-to-End Review was that DFID's programme management approach needed to change. There was a need for a better sense of collective responsibility and clear lines of accountability; a stripping back of bureaucratic processes; an improvement of, DFID's ability to commission and implement flexible and adaptive programmes; and to spend more energy on 'real-world delivery' (Vowles, 2013). In practical terms, alongside the creation of the role of Senior Responsible Owners (SRO) that attached accountability to a particular adviser, it also led to two further key creations:

- **'Smart Rules'**. A set of 37 rules that provide the operating framework for DFID programmes. This was a reduction from more than over 200 compliance tasks. According to their authors, these rules were designed to counter fear of failure, risk aversion, projectisation and crucially, a focus on 'short term results' (Wingfield and Vowles, 2014).
- **The 'Better Delivery' team**. This team has sought to introduce principles of context-awareness and flexible programming into different parts of DFID structures, including through integrating 'adaptive programming' trainings for new staff, and wider procurement and contracting processes. New 'Smart Guidance' notes were produced, although they drew rather heavily on old guidance.

These internal processes appear to be gaining some limited traction in DFID. There are a growing number of examples of projects seeking to adopt more flexible, adaptive and problem-driven approaches (Wild et al., 2017). Many of these approaches have, to date, flown under the radar. However, their visibility is now improving thanks to the Smart Rules and work of the Better Delivery team.

In 2015, DFID produced a Single Departmental Plan – the new form in which results commitments would be tracked. They were structured around the new UK Aid Strategy commitments, and were generated as part of the Bilateral Development Review (BDR) process. During these processes, it appears there were some attempts to tackle the challenges posed under the initial BAR in 2010. In the Single Departmental Plan (2015-2020), targets are organised around the four strategic priorities of the UK Aid Strategy alongside value for money commitments (DFID,

2016a). There are 14 commitments, but only six of those are built around specific output indicators – reflecting the priority areas of humanitarian assistance, immunisation, nutrition, family planning, education, water and sanitation.

This reflects an observation in a 2016 ICAI report: that DFID intended to address concerns around output indicators in the new results framework by combining them 'with strong narrative reporting on qualitative results at country and portfolio levels' (ICAI, 2016b: 4). Indeed, Alison Evans, ICAI's current Chief Commissioner, commented that during her first meeting with senior DFID management, they told her and co-commissioners, 'that we are no longer just about results, we are about transformation.' (Evans, 2016; interview). Critical reflection on the complexities of change at the country-level was supported by the introduction of a new instrument, the Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostic (CPRD). These were made mandatory in 2013. Each DFID country office is expected to produce CPRDs which show 'how economic, political and social institutions interact and what this means for efforts to reduce poverty.' (Wild et al. 2017: 21-2)

An increasingly important question is how cross-government spending, such as through the CSSF, is held accountable. The CSSF reports to the National Security Council (NSC). This means its spending corresponds to the strategic priorities of the UK government, even if, by law, the ODA it spends still has to be focused primarily on poverty reduction. Various government departments can apply for CSSF funds, including those that have not worked abroad much before. They may therefore be unfamiliar with results, evidence and value for money tools and processes. In practice, the majority of CSSF funds are implemented by the FCO – a department with a very different history and ways of working to DFID (see Box 2).

Response: Pressures, measures and contradictions

The four years from 2012 to 2016 demonstrated, at least on some level, that civil servants within DFID were beginning to find a path for gradual reform away from narrower interpretations of the results agenda. They remained hamstrung by political pressure, by the entrenched assumptions of the agenda and by a simple lack of time (since the proportion of staff to programme budget had declined).

While internal reforms such as the Smart Rules appear to have broad support from programme staff, there is a degree of scepticism about whether these reforms will stick. Wild et al. (2017) detail how DFID programme managers seem to be convinced that 'adaptive' approaches are important or necessary, but that they lack the confidence and support to make changes. There is still a long way to go before underlying behaviours and incentives change, in part because there is not yet a fully supportive leadership or organisational environment. The Smart Rules themselves were clearly a product of the tensions within the department on the best way of planning, managing and evaluating impact. For example, while at times log frames

appear to be no longer required, the rules fail to suggest alternatives and in places proceed with the same blueprint planning logic (Valters, 2015).²²

Our interviews suggest that, in practice, many partners do not yet feel the benefit of the reforms associated with the Smart Rules and Better Delivery department. Diana Good, a commissioner with ICAI from 2011 to 2015, said to us:

‘Let’s remember that this is all achieved through implementers. What is the effect on them of DFID asking for results? I’ve interviewed a lot of local implementers and asked them about impact and sustainability. How often does DFID come and what do they ask about? The answer is, “Sometimes they come a lot and sometimes they don’t, but they only ask about numbers and results.”’
(Good, 2016; interview).

Similarly, ICAI (2016) noted that DFID’s partners frequently reiterated how ‘the administrative burden of implementing DFID programmes is now higher than for many other donors’, even in the midst of supposed simplification (ICAI, 2016: 7).

In 2015, ICAI offered a heavy criticism of the results agenda. From an early stage, ICAI had been vocal about the counter-productive elements of DFID’s results focus. This culminated in a review on ‘DFID’s approach to impact’, which argued that the results agenda had firmly established when and where taxpayers’ money is being spent, but not what that spending actually achieves. It argued that DFID’s focus on results prioritised short-term economy and efficiency over long-term, sustainable impact (ICAI, 2015a). It took particular aim at the global results framework, arguing that it “takes a small subset of DFID’s results, mostly at activity and output level and, using sometimes questionable methodologies, turns them into impressive-sounding aggregates” (ICAI, 2015a: 11).

Andrew Mitchell had wanted to change DFID from the ‘well-upholstered NGO moored off the coast of Whitehall’ to more of a ‘department of state for promoting international development’ (Gash and Gold, 2015). This, in part, spoke to the revolving door between major NGOs, universities, think tanks and DFID. Many NGOs at first urged a cautious implementation of the results agenda (Ahmad, 2011). Over time, most have come to at least tacitly support it. There are numerous reasons for this.

Firstly, actual experiences of the results agenda range from good to bad. For DFID and its implementers, it encouraged a greater focus on what they were actually achieving (Whitty, 2015). Secondly, there is a wider institutional interest for these groups to keep the lights on.

Box 2: Cross-government spending and results

The FCO may increasingly be taking on aid spending, but historically it has not used business cases, evidence and results frameworks in the same way DFID has. The CSSF has brought in mandatory results frameworks for tracking outputs, outcomes and impact linked to the NSC’s strategic objectives. The overall emphasis appears to be more on strategy and impact, rather than on specific project results. For example, evaluation is carried out at the country or portfolio level (JCNSS, 2017). This is likely sensible.

However, the CSSF has been criticised for a different problem: many of its interventions are based on weak or non-existent theories of change (ICAI, 2017b). It may be that, with aid being spent differently, opportunities emerge for more flexible and agile ways of working. However, this may be at the cost of carefully thought-through programmes that have poverty reduction as their primary goal. Furthermore, DFID is one of the most committed government departments in terms of evidence production and use (see Box 1). Many of the lessons of the past – for example that simply ‘capacity building’ police or army forces is not a good way to change behaviour – could easily fall away in cross-governmental work (Denney and Valters, 2016).

If the results agenda was the way for the Conservatives to defend aid, these NGOs needed to implicitly support that – to secure their own jobs and the work they did in developing countries. Thirdly, these reforms created greater space for new organisations that felt the focus on evidence and results could be useful. Some NGOs and think tanks have since played an active role in gradual reform attempts through piloting different methods and strategies as part of attempts to ‘do development differently’ (SAVI, 2014; Mercy Corps and IRC, 2016; Ladner, 2015; Wild et al., 2017).

Criticisms from influential thinkers and groups continued, but became more nuanced as the mixed effects of the results agenda became apparent. A brief survey conducted by Whitty (2015) suggested that the results agenda had reduced the space for learning for many of those subject to it. Managers may have liked it, but those subject to it were sceptical. ICAI’s report on ‘How DFID Learns’ offered similar conclusions (ICAI, 2014). The Big Push Forward argued that many development practitioners find ways to play the game to change the rules – in essence, they negotiate, subvert and sometimes work with the

22 For example, under 2.3, rule 16, it is stated ‘The SRO must agree a delivery plan with their Head of Department or delegate, including a *realistic logframe or similar* and risk register (including frequency of monitoring), before any programme becomes operational.’ [our emphasis]. Yet under 2.5, rule 25, there is a presumption a log frame will exist: ‘The SRO must ensure that the programme is appropriately monitored throughout the year and that the delivery plan, logframe or similar risk assessment are updated as necessary, with *significant changes to the logframe agreed with the Head of Department or delegate.*’ [our emphasis].

results agenda in order to achieve developmental ends (Eyben et al., 2015). Shutt argued that the focus on value for money sometimes led to ‘regressive learning of how to comply’ (2015: 73). One of the authors of this paper argued, on the back of the ICAI (2015a) report, that the results agenda had been shown to be unrealistic, time-consuming and misleading (Valters, 2016).

During this time, the UK’s focus on aid effectiveness agenda was shaped by the projectised model of aid associated with the results agenda. For example, UK Aid Network outlined how the UK ‘has performed well and is leading globally in certain areas such as aid transparency and accountability, while lagging behind in others, most notably on country ownership and supporting developing countries to manage their own development’ (UK Aid Network, 2017: 43). This aligned with broader trends in the international sphere. As Greenhill (2016) notes, ‘the Paris, Accra and Busan agendas have not caught fire politically, and are struggling even more in this era of “aid in the national interest.”’

Post-script: 2016 - present

In July 2016, Theresa May became Prime Minister of a Conservative government. For a moment, it looked as if this change in leadership could mean the end of DFID as an independent department (Ilcott et al., 2016), but this did not come to pass. In 2017 Theresa May called an election that led to a hung parliament, with the Conservatives entering into a ‘confidence and supply’ arrangement with the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland in order to have a working majority. The Labour Party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, surprised commentators by gaining a considerable number of votes and seats. The Labour Party’s vision of an ‘ethical foreign policy’, which echoes former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook’s statements from 1997, would certainly take UK aid in a different direction if they were to take power in a future election (Thornberry, 2017).

With the Conservatives in power, the support for DFID appears tentative. Yet the UK continues to be one of the few states to actually meet its pledge to spend 0.7% of GNI on aid. At a time where many countries, particularly in Europe, may have viewed the UK’s international commitments as weakening, continued high aid spending allows the government to project a sense of ‘Global Britain.’²³ Theresa May has emphasised the importance of branding foreign aid to that effect, stating in a speech to DFID staff that ‘UK Aid is a badge of hope for so many around the world – and I hope that everyone here feels proud to be able to play their part in bringing light where there is darkness, and hope where there is despair’ (May, 2017).

The current Secretary of State, Priti Patel, was appointed in 2016 and reappointed after the 2017 election, despite having previously been an aid sceptic (Ilcott et al., 2016). She has made clear her desire to increase the degree of scrutiny, in terms of results and value for money – continuing the rhetoric of the past two Secretaries of State from the Conservative party. Various sources suggested that Patel has asked for country offices to look for programmes to cut, even as the department’s budget continues to rise.

A growing amount of that budget is being spent by other government departments. After the election of June 2017, DFID had two junior ministers appointed who report to both DFID and the FCO, presumably with the goal of strengthening collaboration. If DFID were subsumed into the FCO, this would reflect the last step in the gradual reversal of Clare Short and New Labour’s attempts to have development concerns influencing other departments, rather than the other way around.²⁴ The IDC has argued against this, stating ‘the only outcome of such a move would be to diminish the focus placed on poverty reduction...’ (IDC, 2017: 16). As Diana Good asked: ‘If you combine the results agenda with national security interests, where does international development fit in?’ (Good, 2016; interview).

Patel has moved quickly to bring back the emphasis on UK commercial interests, promising to use British aid to leverage new trade deals. Attention to the private sector has increased. She recently announced a plan to quadruple funding to the UK’s Development Finance Institution, the CDC Group, despite concerns about its value for poverty reduction overseas (NAO, 2016). Similarly, the Cross-Government Prosperity Fund was launched in 2016 to promote economic reform in developing countries, as well as to benefit UK trade and business interests. This has a planned budget of £1.3 billion between 2016 and 2021, with 97% of its funds being ODA. A new Economic Development Strategy was published, with a focus on transformative growth, productive jobs and private sector investment (DFID, 2017).

Oversight bodies have begun to scrutinise these cross-government funds, including from a results perspective (see also Box 2). For example, despite the broader strategic focus, a review by the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy of the CSSF found that ‘there is significant pressure on the Government to demonstrate tangible results quickly in return for its investment, something that does not easily fit with the long-term and often less tangible nature of conflict prevention activities’ (JCNSS, 2017: 18). A rapid review of the Cross-Government Prosperity Fund by ICAI suggested that the external procurement of monitoring and evaluation may push the Fund away from learning whether it was being effective or

23 ‘Global Britain’ is one way the Conservatives have branded their policies since the EU referendum.

24 A departing minister from DFID, Grant Shapps (2017), recently called for DFID to be subsumed under the FCO – echoing similar calls from past Conservative governments.

not. These scrutiny bodies appear to be suggesting that the focus should be on overall strategy, yet at the same time continuing to criticise the lack of measurable results (ICAI, 2017b).

When Patel entered her position, a number of review processes were already ongoing, including the BDR, Multilateral Development Review (MDR) and the Civil Society Partnerships review. Published in 2016, the BDR emphasises another push for more transparency, less corruption and greater control over how aid is delivered. Yet it also states that ‘we [DFID] recognise getting good quality feedback and using it to inform decision making requires a flexible way of working, a culture of learning and adaptive programming. We must be willing to empower and build open relationships with beneficiaries.’ (DFID, 2016b: 46). We suspect that this commitment reflects the flux and flow of different ideas within DFID, which have yet to resolve themselves under the direction of the new leadership. Anecdotal information from DFID advisors suggests the watchwords remain ‘results’ and ‘value for money’. The rapid scale up of PbR has continued, despite reviews across government and various donors urging caution (NAO, 2015; Clist, 2016).

What appears here to stay is a strong criticism of aid spending under the current government. Since Priti Patel became the Secretary of State, *The Daily Mail* have run numerous headlines attacking the aid budget, perhaps

sensing that there is political momentum against aid.²⁵ Patel has sought to allay these fears, through briefings designed to make it clear that aid is being spent in the UK’s national interest. As Fisher (2015) describes, media pressure can make DFID staff act more in response to such newspaper headlines than a careful analysis of public opinion.

Growing critiques have also emerged from campaigning organisations. Global Justice Now, among others, has criticised the privatisation of UK aid, as ‘over 90% of centrally managed contracts continue to go to UK suppliers’ (Global Justice Now, 2016: 4). This reflects a concern that UK organisations are profiting from the aid budget. The government has come under criticism for exporting arms to Saudi Arabia while they conduct bombings in Yemen – where the UK is also providing aid (Oxfam, 2017). Numerous organisations have outlined concerns that the UK’s approach to tax treaties does not match with its development ambitions (Action Aid, 2016), which an ICAI (2016c) report corroborated.

Currently, the government’s defence of aid relies on clamping down on corruption and waste, allied with a strong strategic argument for the use of aid. The political climate remains tense for aid advocates. There have been positive trends towards adaptive programming in DFID, but DFID staff and implementers remain sceptical of whether it can move forward in such a political climate. The results agenda, in some form, appears here to stay.

25 A petition launched by *The Daily Mail* titled ‘Stop spending a fixed 0.7 per cent slice of our national wealth on Foreign Aid’ gathered over 200,000 signatures and therefore provoked a debate in parliament. Headlines in the Daily Mail have included ‘At last: Stunning victory for Mail on Sunday campaign as £12 billion foreign aid budget will be slashed to fund the war on terror’ (28/08/2016)

4. What have we learned?

Four key findings emerge from the analysis. These findings demonstrate, in different ways, that a binary division between politics and management is unhelpful (Gulrajani, 2011).

Secretaries of State often greatly influence how DFID is managed based on their personal and political party ideology, rather than primarily the complex realities of aid implementation

Secretaries of State can have a significant effect on the management of the department. This can mean crucial elements of development policy are driven by political winds in the UK, rather than primarily by the complex realities of aid implementation. The point is perhaps obvious: DFID is first and foremost a British government entity spending British government funds. Yet the story shows how these political winds have led to widespread adoption of ambitious, untested approaches and management systems ill-suited to DFID's ambitions.

Primarily this story focused on the approaches of Clare Short and Andrew Mitchell. The former reacted to the perceived failings of previous approaches, informed by her left-wing sensibilities. Short's approach protected the department and propelled it into international commitments to poverty reduction. These commitments were dominated by the MDGs and the principles of what was to become the Paris Declaration. These principles were based on a good problem diagnosis but struggled in practice.

From 2010, Andrew Mitchell also protected the department, but through a results agenda which he explicitly saw as a centre-right protection of aid. This agenda sought to differentiate itself from New Labour through a focus on attributable results, alongside more evidence and value for money. Justine Greening maintained this approach, even as the department sought internally to digest and reframe the reforms. The results agenda emerged as part of a centre-right political agenda, including a greater role for private finance, a preference for UK-based contractors, and a narrower focus on the national interest.

Whether Secretaries of State try to influence aid management directly depends considerably on their personal interest. Hillary Benn, for example, said to us, 'it was not my ambition to organise the department.

I expected the department to be organised to allow the government to do what we wanted.' (Benn, 2016; interview). Equally, it depends upon the political climate: Clare Short and Hilary Benn, according to the spirit of the day, had more freedom to define an ambitious agenda, while Douglas Alexander and Andrew Mitchell's approaches responded to growing aid scepticism.

If DFID's policy agendas are framed by party ideology, as interpreted by the Secretary of State, this partly helps explain why new technical tools and approaches rarely have the impact their makers intend. Wider political and organisational dynamics shape them. The results agenda, for some, was a way to provoke a more detailed conversation, but our interviews suggest it has too often been geared primarily around a narrow understanding of accountability. The dominance of political policy agendas also suggest an uphill battle for evidence-based policy adherents. Answers to the question of 'what works' in development are often political, rather than empirical. They are based on assumptions one has about how the world can and should be. For example, if one believes poverty *and* inequality should be tackled, this has implications for how one weighs the evidence and results of a cash transfer programme.

DFID staff interpret these new agendas differently, based on their professional interests and expertise

While civil service staff are there to implement the government's policies, the way they've interpreted the results agenda has been crucial to how it's been implemented. This story shows that DFID staff do have some leeway to shape and respond to ministerial priorities, even if within the boundaries of their overall mandate – which in recent times has been in relation to results, evidence and value for money. DFID is not a homogeneous organisation. It comprises multiple disciplines and thirteen cadres – indeed, with its agriculturalists, anthropologists, political scientists, economists, educationalists, public health specialists, evaluators and so on, it is probably more diverse than any other department. Inevitably, individuals will react differently.

In his review of 'managing for results' in New Zealand, Norman (2002: 1) suggested that within the bureaucracy there were True Believers, Pragmatic Sceptics and Active Doubters:

‘True Believers support a current focus on measurement and think that more effort should be put into creating clearer, more observable measures that emphasise outcomes. Pragmatic Sceptics see reported measures as part of a new game of public management and at best a starting point for asking about the substance behind the form. Active Doubters believe that too much emphasis on measurement gets in the way of the ‘real work’ of developing relationship-based work in a political environment.’

The results agenda empowered those who fall in the true believers category – many whose jobs are driven by the often sensible desire to quantify, measure and analyse. The results agenda has given a growing role to statisticians, economists and evaluators, who in their role as administrators of the centralised audit and control processes hold the professional cadres to account. The agenda shifted power internally, empowering the centre over the country offices. Alan Winters, DFID’s Chief Economist from 2008 to 2011, stated that ‘it’s a quite complicated institutional dynamic. For some people this kind of clean measurement was a blessing. It suited their world view. For others, it was a simple civil servant role. People had to just get on and do it.’ (Winters, 2016; interview).

There were a significant number of both pragmatic sceptics and active doubters in DFID. For some, experiencing the results agenda was being subjected to accountability methods they were unused to, and felt were unsuitable. Some of the changes were sweeping and difficult to implement, which led to either superficial practices or cadres (notably economists) taking on much of the practical work. The agenda clashed with some civil servants’ opinions on how to best manage aid programmes. While our research did not delve systematically into how different cadres within DFID responded to the agenda, interviewees made clear that those working in areas that are more difficult to measure, such as governance, struggled to apply its tools and approaches to their work.

More broadly, pragmatic sceptics realised that they had to balance competing interests, or as one staff member said, ‘It’s about trying to balance the numbers game with the long-term development game.’ There is a fine line to be walked between complying with political signals, and providing robust feedback to politicians. Where there are active doubters, the risk is that the overriding demand for ‘neutrality’ from the civil service can silence criticism or keep it within country offices or teams. Even Andrew Natsios, who led USAID, only felt able to criticise the counter-bureaucracy once he was no longer part of the system (Whittle, 2011).

Some staff were able to seize windows of political opportunity, and therefore shape how the reforms unfolded. As one DFID staff member put it, ‘a ministerial priority becomes a hook for people to gain power within an organisation. A minister can whisper something in a meeting and then you have a whole group of people

running with it because it gives them status, power and purpose.’ (DFID official; interview). Interpreting political signals is an important part of a civil servant’s job. It provides a clear answer to the question another DFID official posed:

‘The role of civil servants should be to shape the narrative of the department. But it’s the same civil servants who went from aid effectiveness, to spending targets, to results, to the Smart Rules... why have they flipped on all these issues?’

(DFID official; interview).

Professional incentives clearly matter, even if civil servants have space to interpret policy agendas according to their expertise.

DFID has consistently been drawn back to central government accountability standards which sit uneasily with development work

Secretaries of State have enabled DFID to escape or entrench the full implications of central government accountability standards. In 1997, the Secretary of State had considerable freedom, in part due to the relatively small budget and profile of DFID. Notably, it formed an exception to the normal rules for departmental responsibility of attributable change against measurable and specific targets, a norm that was gathering pace as part of New Labour’s vision for government. There were some grumblings amongst the apparatus of Whitehall, its audit agencies, economists and statisticians. However, the international vision, its adherents and its possibilities were to dampen and marginalise these criticisms.

What followed was a gradual reassertion of the Whitehall centralised accountability requirements. The centre sought to bring the decentralised department – with its devolved spending, its use of other country systems, and its different forms of measurement and accountability mechanisms – back under control. They did so under pressure from external actors and internal champions, and within a changing political environment. Ultimately, this led to a series of reforms, culminating in Andrew Mitchell’s articulation of results and value for money and its integration into DFID’s systems through the business case, log frame reforms and results framework management systems.

As a government department, DFID must be properly accountable to the British people. Yet DFID expenditure is often used in countries with very different bureaucratic cultures and traditions to the UK. Accountability can neither simply mean performing to standard centrally-decided targets, nor be based on the assumption that the UK alone can deliver deep-rooted change. Reflecting on the move towards greater centralized control, Diana Good stated, ‘I can’t help but think it just helps DFID think they

are in control. But actually it makes them more remote and less in control.’ Getting this balance right is truly challenging. And it requires a degree of flexibility in the ways in which accountability for complex work in foreign countries is understood.

The commitment to 0.7% has both protected and exposed DFID

The commitments to aid spending made in the last twenty years have become entwined with political agendas, civil service responses and demands for central accountability. Hilary Benn and Gordon Brown committed the UK to spending 0.7% of GNI on aid. This was during a time when there was a great deal of enthusiasm that Western states could help ‘Make Poverty History’.

These commitments took place before the financial crisis of 2008. The Coalition government continued to protect this budget, reflecting an uneasy but clear cross-party commitment to aid spending. Yet this set up a difficult political tension that remains to this day. How can spending fixed proportions of money on foreign aid be justified, when many other government budgets are being cut? The figures are stark. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), between 2010-2011 and 2016-2017, DFID’s spending rose by 24% (£2 billion), while the average for other government departments (outside of health, education and defence) was cuts of 28% (£48.8 billion) (IFS 2017). Once the premise of the need for austerity is accepted, who can blame the public for criticising a growing foreign aid budget?

Part of the answer to these questions was the results agenda. Andrew Mitchell outlined to us how ‘you’ll never sustain the 0.7% commitment and get other countries to do so too unless you can demonstrate results.’ (Mitchell, 2016; interview). The case for aid did, and does, need to be made. While it can be difficult to exactly measure aid spending, the UK’s outlay appears to have at least quadrupled since 1997. The risk is that simply spending is made to look virtuous. Mitchell was aware of this, arguing ‘the worst sentence in the development lexicon is that “we are going to spend a million pounds on x.”’ (Mitchell, 2016; interview). That view, in part, explained his own focus on results.

The justifications for the commitment to 0.7% are moral and symbolic. They seek to protect aid from party political fluctuations and ensure steady aid flows. However, Clemens and Moss (2005) of the Centre for Global Development argue that while 0.7% is a useful lobbying tool, it has no real empirical basis. Regardless, a fast growing aid budget, without similar increases in DFID staff, delivered increasingly fragile states, is an unlikely recipe for more and better results (Gulrajani, 2010b; ICAI, 2015b). Commentators are generally wary of pointing to such challenges since it may undercut the broader case for aid and international development.

Recently, the IDC argued that criticism of the 0.7% commitment is often unjustified, since the examples they found of ‘less effective spending do not represent a considerable portion of, nor are they an inevitable consequence of, the 0.7% target’ (IDC, 2017: 3). More important, perhaps, is not the specific amount being spent or target being set, but whether DFID has the managerial capacity and knowledge to spend it optimally.

5. The future of UK aid and results

The future of UK aid is uncertain. Politicians in Europe and the United States of America have grown in popularity on a platform of national interest. The ‘era of austerity, shifting geo-politics, public perceptions of donors failing in relation to the MDGs and competition from private philanthropists have all taken their toll on donor priorities’ (Shutt, 2016: 26). Withdrawing from the European Union is likely to present severe challenges to the UK economy, which may have knock-on effects for aid spending (Emmerson et al., 2016). Yet the political trajectory of the UK is also uncertain. If the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn was to take power in a future election, foreign policy and UK aid would likely undergo a radical change.

This research, analysis and emerging findings suggest that DFID should adopt a new approach to its results agenda. We have three main recommendations:

Create a results agenda that is fit for purpose

For a results agenda to be fit for purpose, there needs to be at least four major shifts in how it is understood and implemented.

Change the assumption that it is possible to predict, with certainty, what our interventions in other countries will achieve

A rigorous focus on results has come to be associated with sticking to plans, but that need not be the case. Theorists, policy-makers and practitioners have established ways to work with, and around, these issues, rather than viewing them as insurmountable challenges (Green, 2016; Gulrajani and Honig, 2016). Measurement will remain a crucial part of a revised agenda, but predominantly serving the purpose of understanding whether an intervention is on the right track. It is not an end in itself. The primary challenge, common across public policy, is to have a sensible way to develop or find good information and to use it to adapt practice accordingly. While many in DFID will already be working to make that happen, the results agenda appears to have skewed practice in a different direction.

Cultivate an approach which fits the task at hand

This means that there needs to be different kinds of results approaches, from flexible to rigid, depending on how

complex the problem aid is seeking to solve is. A revitalised agenda fit for purpose would involve diverse tools and approaches. There are signs that in new instruments, like the Prosperity Fund and CSSE, the need for different approaches are understood. Yet many of their interventions are based on weak or non-existent understandings of how they will lead to change (ICAI, 2017b). This suggests a revitalised approach to how evidence of different kinds can be used to support (or challenge) bad ideas, as well as inform adaptive programming, is needed.

Revisit how results, evidence and value for money are understood and communicated

These various agendas have overlapped, particularly in the past ten years. It is self-evident that results, evidence and value for money are important. The risk with each of them, somewhat borne out in this story, is that through narrow interpretations they become too constraining. A revised set of agendas would open up space for debate about what aid can achieve (results), the kinds of information that help to ascertain that (evidence), and what our shared values are with aid recipients (value for money). Examples can be found where this has happened, but they tend to be the exception rather than the rule (Shutt, 2015). Evidence, in particular, is clearly essential to sensible aid policy, so long as what works ‘here’ is not automatically assumed to work ‘there’ (Cartwright and Hardie, 2012). DFID remains one of the most committed government departments in terms of evidence production and use.

Pay attention to whether interventions are greater (or lesser) than the sum of their parts

The results agenda has driven a focus on whether a given project is achieving the improvements it said it would. A revised agenda should put more emphasis on whether the project – along with everything else around it – is ultimately able to contribute to deep-rooted change. This includes asking what the role of UK aid, and UK foreign policy, is in a specific country. Such an emphasis matches the UK aid strategy, in which the government aims to ‘invest more to tackle the *causes* of instability, insecurity and conflict’ [our emphasis] (UK government, 2015: 3). Where it services these aims, cross-government spending could offer an important opportunity for joined-up thinking. For this joined-up thinking to be developmental, though, requires a proactive Secretary of State who will

ensure development concerns have a major influence on UK's strategic decision-making on other matters.

Be more honest with the British public about aid

According to Bond, a membership body for organisations working in international development, public support for aid in the UK is in steady decline. Over half the British public think aid is wasted (Bond, 2016). A more honest conversation about aid and development is required – how, where and why it works, why results aren't always tangible and easy to show, and why it sometimes fails. This can be done in four ways:

Engage the public in a conversation that is neither too simple nor too pushy about complexity

The results agenda has, in part, been driven by a desire to communicate the impact of UK aid to taxpayers. During our interview with Andrew Mitchell, he stated 'there's absolutely no reason why this should be complex for the public. It's the job of politicians to explain complex things to the public in a way that they understand.' (Mitchell, 2016; interview). While a focus on headline numbers may make sense in some cases, in others it can be misleadingly simple. We should also focus on conveying the reality of aid spending. For example, aid sometimes fails, but this is no different to other policy, business or even personal endeavours the British public face every day. Communicating a viable and honest aid strategy to the British public will require leadership by successive political heads which is hard to sustain through electoral cycles.

Emphasise the morality of aid without patronising the British public or aid recipients

The moral case remains one of the strongest reasons for people supporting aid in the UK (Bond, 2016). National interest arguments get less traction. Yet as stated by Wild et al. 'the rationale for providing aid should focus neither on the narrow self-interest of the donor country nor on a pious or paternalistic benevolence' (2015: 44). UK aid can be promoted as a strong moral choice in response to global challenges, without suggesting aid spending as the silver bullet for domestic concerns about migration or terrorism. A fresh approach will appeal to people's emotions and values, which tend to get more traction than direct rational arguments (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017). For example, recent research has suggested 'tax dodging and gender-based discrimination were relatable because they are domestic and international problems' (Tucker, 2017).

Make clear that it is not all about us

The results agenda has reinforced the idea UK aid delivers things to poor countries, rather than supports them, or

works with them together on issues of shared interest. A starting point for aid conversations needs to be that those in developing countries contribute more than the UK government does. Yet, defences of aid are more often defences of political worldviews, making them difficult to shift. Typically, those from the left support aid in part as reparations for past or present injustice, or as an act of solidarity with those poorer than us, while those from the right view it as part of our national interest, or to further our soft power. More broadly, supporters of aid should join up struggles for social justice at home and abroad. The commitment to 0.7% GNI will remain difficult to justify if public spending and living standards are falling in the UK.

Do not let a desire for public communication of aid's successes or failures influence aid management too much

The need to communicate success cannot primarily drive what country offices decide to focus on. It is preferable to set a country focus based on need, and to celebrate successes where they are found. Fisher (2015) has shown how while few DFID staff believe in the effectiveness of the political conditionality of aid spending, they continue to publicly promote it as a means of convincing a sceptical public that aid can leverage positive change. Payment by results is in a similar position. This kind of tactical positioning, driven by political imperatives, is unhelpful for aid management and communication over the longer-term. While the UK government is right to ensure the public understand how aid and development work, and also understand UK citizen's preferences, there will be times where the evidence of effective practice will need to trump those concerns. This is what Maxwell (2011) calls the 'paradoxes' of aid communication. Politicians and senior civil servants will need to defend those approaches that have been shown to be effective in reducing poverty.

Support reform in how DFID is managed

There are three main ways to reform how UK aid is managed.

Encourage senior political and management commitment to the 'Better Delivery' reforms

Since 2012, some DFID staff have been working to ensure greater flexibility in their systems and processes, as well as trying to ensure staff take better account of the underlying causes of poverty and conflict. Progress has been made (Wild et al., 2017). Yet many staff still lack the confidence to work in different ways, in large part because they are concerned they will not have the backing of senior management or ministers. There are significant challenges in shifting the culture of the organisation to different ways of working, in part due to political pressure applied by ministers. There are many ways to improve

the department's ways of working, grounded in theory and practice, which do not necessarily dilute accountability.²⁶

Consider the implications of the 0.7% commitment

The UK has shown global leadership in committing to 0.7%, but making a virtue out of spending alone is misleading. It matters how it is spent. Working in fragile states, particularly with fixed targets and spending commitments, is clearly difficult. Whatever the goals of aid in these settings, it is misleading to suggest it will always be successful. An honest conversation about aid and development demands a consideration of where, when, and how, taxpayers' money can be spent effectively. This means properly resourcing staff time, and reflecting on whether DFID is well enough staffed, with enough in-country expertise to manage aid programmes in an effective way.

Build a consensus needs to be built on what domestic accountability for aid spending looks like

Accountability for aid spending should not be identical to other departments with solely domestic concerns. Working in foreign countries on complex issues requires a different, but still rigorous, approach. Given time and space, DFID staff have proven themselves capable of establishing good alternatives that still manage to speak to political demands for accountability. Despite concerns with the results agenda in DFID, its ability to manage diverse political projects has matured over time. The goal is to build towards accountability for domestic taxpayers and aid recipients. Yet significant concerns have emerged about the competency of other government departments to use aid well. Partly this is due to having a muddled purpose, with poverty reduction blurring unhelpfully into a narrow understanding of the national interest. This can lead to projects initiated with unclear theories of change. Other government departments also are not used to spending aid, and do not have mature accountability systems for it, particularly in relation to aid recipients. Therefore, as DFID reforms its own results agenda, it at least needs to bring other government departments with it.

Conclusion

The basic premise of the results agenda, that the focus should be on what aid can achieve, is surely uncontested. It is built around domestic political realities and genuine accountability concerns. Despite this, the results agenda has often failed to create the space for a detailed conversation about what aid can achieve in different places. What is necessary is a management system that fits the ambition of UK aid. The management system for UK aid should not frustrate attempts to do aid spending well.

We hope that in telling this story, we have opened a space for those pursuing a results focus to critically reflect in two

ways. Firstly, to reflect on the necessary balance between being accountable to UK citizens and to those whom aid most affects – people in developing countries. Historically there has been huge emphasis on the former, not the latter. Secondly, to reflect on the very idea that aid projects can be planned and implemented with certainty about the outcomes. Given what UK aid is often trying to achieve, this is rarely the case. On both these fronts, it is possible and necessary to think and work in a different way.

Our paper calls for political leadership to resist the temptation of promising more and better results and value for money, given the implications it has for aid management. The challenge is that political decisions of this magnitude, of how to frame the spending of a whole department, are unlikely to be directly based on its implications for management. While the results agenda was understandable, concerns about the direction it took UK aid were outweighed by political views and expediency. The flux and flow of political agendas for government aid spending will continue due to electoral cycles. Yet over the 20 years of DFID's experience, and its predecessor ODM, much has been learned about how to effectively manage for poverty reduction. The more this can be included in political discourse the better.

This story brings the UK's international ambitions into the light. Part of the political question is: are we looking to buy results, or make deep-rooted changes? Do we wish to help build institutions so that countries can take on development challenges themselves, or do we want to deliver results ourselves? The underlying assumption of the results agenda is that a projectised delivery approach makes the most sense. But it has clear limitations, which presumably the current and future UK governments would like to overcome. A long-term approach to development challenges evokes questions around which interventions make the most sense, even if some, like budget support, have fallen out of favour. Whether through bilateral or multilateral aid, or working through international institutions, a long-term institutional lens changes the terms of the debate.

Finally, aid should only be a small part of the picture. For the kind of interconnected challenges faced in the world today – from climate change, to conflict, to poverty and inequality – aid will often be a marginal driver of change. This means working with international systems where there are opportunities for traction. But it also means looking at how non-aid based decisions in the UK affect others: whether in the form of working towards a green economy, reconsidering the UK's role in the arms industry, supporting pro-poor bilateral and global trade relations, or tackling domestic and international tax justice issues. These steps are what is required to move away from a narrow understanding of results, to a cross-government and global approach which collaboratively tackles the causes of the world's most urgent challenges.

26 As noted by Gulrajani and Honig (2016), this requires a shift in how autonomy, motivation, trust, performance management, governance, risk management and leadership are understood and implemented.

References

- Action Aid. (2016) *Mistreated: The tax treaties that are depriving the world's poorest countries of vital revenue*. London: Action Aid.
- Ahmad, T. (2011) *The 'Right' Results: Making sure the results agenda remains committed to poverty reduction*. Oxford: Oxfam.
- Alexander, D. (2009) Response to parliamentary questions, 15 Dec 2008. Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm081215/text/81215w0007.htm>
- Barber, M. (2008) *Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to Transform Britain's Public Services*. London: Methuen Publishing.
- Barder, O. (2005) *Reforming Development Assistance: Lessons from the UK Experience*. Working Paper Number 70 October 2005. London: Centre for Global Development.
- Barder, O. (2012) *What are the results agenda?* Blog Post on Owen Abroad, 10 February 2012. Available at <http://www.owen.org/blog/5228>
- Barder, O. and Talbot, T. (2014) *Why 'Beyond Aid' Matters for Development*. Memorandum for the International Development Committee. London: Centre for Global Development.
- Barr, J. and Christie, A. (2015) *Improving the Practice of Value for Money Assessment*. CDI Practice Paper 12. Sussex: IDS.
- Bezes, P., Demaziere, D., Le Bianic, T., Paradeise, C., Normand, R., Benamouzig, D. and Evetts, J. (2012) New public management and professionals in the public sector. What new patterns beyond opposition? *Sociologie du travail*, 54: e1-e55.
- Bond (2016) *UK public attitudes towards development: How the Aid Attitude Tracker can help make the case for aid and development*. London: Bond. Available at <https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-documents/bond-aid-tracker-online.pdf>
- Booth, D. (2003) Introduction and Overview. *Development Policy Review*, 21: 131-159.
- Booth, D. (2005) *Missing Links in the Politics of Development: Learning from the PRSP Experiment*, Nord-Süd Aktuell, 19(3/4): 239-245.
- Booth, D. (2011) *Aid effectiveness: bringing country ownership (and politics) back in*. Africa Power and Politics Programme. ODI Working Paper 336. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Booth, D. (2015) 'Still Watering White Elephants? The Blueprint Versus Process Debate Thirty Years On', in A.M. Kjær, L. Engberg Pedersen and L. Buur (eds) *Perspective on Politics, Production, and Public Administration in Africa: Essays in Honour of Ole Therkildsen*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Burns, D. and Worsley, S. (2015) *Navigating Complexity in International Development: Facilitating sustainable change at scale*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing.
- Burnside, C. and Dollar, D. (1997) *Aid, Policies, and Growth*. Policy Research Working paper 1777. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
- Cameron, D. (2009) *Speech by David Cameron on 13 July 2009*. Available at <http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601332>
- Carlsson, J. and Wohlgemuth, L. (eds) (1999) *Learning in Development Co-operation*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wikse II International.
- Cartwright, N. and Hardie, J. (2012) *Evidence-based policy: a practical guide to doing it better*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chambers, R. (1974) *Managing Rural Development: Ideas and Experience from East Africa*. New York: Africana Publishing Co.
- Chambers, R. (1988) *Normal Professionalism and the Early Project Process: Problems and Solutions*, IDS Discussion Paper 247. Brighton: IDS.
- Christiansen, K. and Hovland, I. (2003) *The PRSP Initiative: Multilateral Policy Change and the Relative Role of Research*. ODI Working Paper 216. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- The Conservative Party (2009) *One world conservatism: a conservative agenda on international development*. Policy Green Paper No. 11. London: Conservative Party.
- Clemens, M. and Moss, T. (2005) *Ghost of 0.7%: Origins and Relevance of the International Aid Target*. CGD Working Paper 68. London: Center for Global Development.
- Cracknell, B. E. (1989) Evaluating the effectiveness of the Logical Framework system in practice. *Project Appraisal*, 4(3): 163-167.
- Cracknell, B. E. (2000). *Evaluating Development Aid: Issues, Problems and Solutions*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London: SAGE.

-
- Craig, D. and Porter, D. (2006) *Development Beyond Neoliberalism? Governance, poverty reduction and political economy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- De Gramont, D. and Carothers, T. (2013) *Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- de Renzio, P. (2016) *Accountability dilemmas in foreign aid*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Dempster, H. and Hargrave, K. (2017) *Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Denney, L. and Valters, C. (2016) *Evidence synthesis: security sector reform and organisational capacity building*. London: DFID.
- Dent, M. (2006) Disciplining the medical profession? Implications of patient choice for medical dominance. *Health Sociology Review*, 15(5): 458-468.
- DFID (Department For International Development UK) (1997) *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2005) *Fighting Poverty to Build a Safer World: A Strategy for Security and Development*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2006) *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor – A White Paper on International Development*. By the Secretary of State for International Development. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- DFID (2008a) *Results Action Plan*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2008b) *Independent Evaluation in DFID Annual Report 2007/08*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2009a) *Eliminating World Poverty: Building Our Common Future*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2009b) *DFID Annual Review 2008/9*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2009c) *How To Note: A Strengthened Approach to Economic Appraisal*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2010) *Building Peaceful States and Societies*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2011a) *DFID's Approach to Value for Money (VfM)*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2011b) *Guidance on using the revised Logical Framework: A DFID Practice Paper*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2011c) *Bilateral Aid Review: Technical Report*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2011d) *DFID's Results Framework: Managing and reporting DFID results*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2016a) *DFID Annual Report 2015-2016*, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/538878/annual-report-accounts-201516a.pdf
- DFID (2016b) *Rising to the challenge of ending poverty: the Bilateral Development Review 2016*. London: DFID.
- DFID (2017) *Economic Development Strategy: prosperity, poverty and meeting global challenges*. London: DFID.
- Dollar, D. and Pritchett, L. (1998) *Assessing aid - what works, what doesn't, and why*. World Bank policy research report. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Easterly, W. (2006) *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Emmerson, C., Johnson, P., Mitchell, I. and Phillips, D. (2016) *Brexit and the UK's Public Finances*. London: The Institute for Fiscal Studies.
- Eyben, R. (2015) *The Politics of Results and Struggles over Value and Meaning in International Development*. AFD Research Paper Series, May, No. 2015-15.
- Eyben, R., Guijt, I., Roche, C. and Shutt, C. (eds) (2015) *The Politics of Evidence and Results in International Development: Playing the Game to Change the Rules?* Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.
- Ferguson, J. (1994) *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferlie, E., Ashburner, L., FitzGerald, L. and Pettigrew, A. (1996) *The New Public Management in Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, J. (2015) 'Does it Work?' – Work for Whom? Britain and Political Conditionality since the Cold War. *World Development*, 75, November 2015: 13-25.
- Gallagher, J. (2009) Healing the Scar: Idealising Britain in Africa, 1997–2007, *African Affairs*, 108(432): 435-451.
- Gash, T. and Gold, J. (2015) *Ministers Reflect: Interview with Andrew Mitchell, 9 June 2015*. London: Institute for Government. Available at <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/ministers-reflect/person/andrew-mitchell/>
- Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: the renewal of social democracy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Giddens, A. (2000) *The Third Way and its critics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Global Justice Now (2016) *The Privatisation of UK aid How Adam Smith International is profiting from the aid budget*. London: Global Justice Now.
- Goldfinch, S. and Wallis, J. (2010) Two myths of convergence in public management reform. *Public Administration*, 88: 1099–1115.
- Green, D. (2016) *How Change Happens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Greenhill, R. (2005) *Making a Difference: External Views on Canada's International Impact – the interim report of the Global Voices Project*. January 2005. Toronto: The Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

- Greenhill, R. (2016) *Development effectiveness for the SDG era: five reasons why we need a new agenda*. ODI Blog 14 October 2016. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available at <https://www.odi.org/comment/10451-development-effectiveness-sdg-era-new-agenda-aid>
- Greening, J. (2012) *Justine Greening: Launching Aid Transparency Challenge*. Speech by the Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, MP, at an event hosted by Publish What You Fund, Bond and UK Aid Network, 6 December 2012. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-launching-aid-transparency-challenge>
- Greening, J. (2015) *Justine Greening: Delivering better performance and better value for money in development*. Speech by the Development Secretary at DFID's third annual supplier conference, held at 1VS Conference Centre in London, 14 October 2015. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-delivering-better-performance-and-better-value-for-money-in-development>
- Groves, L. (2015) *Beneficiary Feedback in Evaluation*. London: DFID.
- Gulrajani, N. (2010a) *Re-imagining Canadian development cooperation: a comparative examination of Norway and the UK*. Toronto: Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation.
- Gulrajani, N. (2010b) *Ringfencing aid may do more harm than good*. Guardian Global Development blog. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/oct/24/ringfencing-aid-more-harm-than-good>
- Gulrajani, N. (2011) Transcending the Great Foreign Aid Debate: Managerialism, Radicalism and the Search for Aid Effectiveness. *Third World Quarterly*, 32(2): 199-216.
- Gulrajani, N. and Honig, D. (2016) *Reforming donors in fragile states: Using public management theory more strategically*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Haque, M.S. (1996) The contextless nature of public administration in third world countries. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 62: 315-29.
- Harford, T. (2016) *Messy: How to Be Creative and Resilient in a Tidy-Minded World*. Brown: Little.
- Henson, S., Lindstrom, J., and Haddad, L. with Mulmi, R. (2010) *Public Perceptions of International Development and Support for Aid in the UK: Results of a Qualitative Enquiry*. Brighton: IDS.
- Hewitt, A. and Killick, T. (1998) The 1975 and 1997 White Papers compared: enriched vision, depleted policies? *Journal of International Development*, 10(2): 185-194.
- HMG (2015) *Statutory guidance: The Civil Service code*, Updated 16 March 2015. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code>
- Hood, C. (1995) The "New Public Management" in the 1980s: Variations on a theme. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 20(2/3): 93-109.
- Hood, C. and Peters, G. (2004) The Middle Aging of New Public Management: Into the Age of Paradox? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(3): 267-282.
- Hudson, A. and Jonsson, L. (2009) *Donor Domestic Accountabilities UK Case Study: A report produced for the Institute for Research and Debate on Governance, as part of a project for Agence Française de Développement*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Hulme, D. (2007) *The Making of the Millennium Development Goals: Human Development Meets Results based Management In an Imperfect World*. BWPI Working Paper 16. Institute for Development Policy and Management. Manchester, UK: University of Manchester.
- ICAI (Independent Commission for Aid Impact) (2014) *How DFID Learns*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- ICAI (2015a) *DFID's Approach to Delivering Impact*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- ICAI (2015b) *Assessing the Impact of the Scale-up of DFID's Support to Fragile States*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- ICAI (2016a) *About Us*. Available at <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/about-us/>
- ICAI (2016b) *Annual Report 2015 to 2016 Report to Parliament's International Development Committee*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- ICAI (2016c) *Report: UK aid's contribution to tackling tax avoidance and evasion*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- ICAI (2017a) *The cross-government Prosperity Fund: A rapid review*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- ICAI (2017b) *Annual Report 2016 to 2017 Report to Parliament's International Development Committee*. London: Independent Commission for Aid Impact.
- IDC (International Development Committee) (1998) *July 1998 Fifth Report, Department for International Development: 1998 Departmental Report*. Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmintdev/711/71105.htm>
- IDC (2000) *8 August 2000 Eighth Report, Department for International Development: Departmental Report*. Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmintdev/475/47505.htm#note26>
- IDC (2002) *Select Committee on International Development Minutes of Evidence: Examination of Witnesses (Questions 1 - 19)*. Available at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmintdev/964/2061805.htm>

- IDC (2017) *House of Commons International Development Committee. UK aid: allocation of resources, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17*. Available at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/international-development-committee/news-parliament-2015/1/allocation-of-resources-report-published-16-17/>
- Ilcott, O., Randall, J., Bleasdale, A. and Norris, E. (2016) *Making policy stick: Tackling long-term challenges in government*. London: Institute for Government.
- Institute for Fiscal Studies (2017) *The changing landscape of UK aid*. IFS Briefing Note BN204. London: IFS.
- Ireton, B. (2013) *Britain's International Development Policies: A History of DFID and Overseas Aid*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- JCNSS (2017) *Committee on the National Security Strategy: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. Second Report of Session 2016–17*. London: House of Commons and the House of Lords.
- Jerven, M. (2013) *Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do about It*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Kingdon, J. (1995) *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies (2nd ed.)*. London: Longman Publishing Group.
- Kirk-Greene, A. (2000) *Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Kirkpatrick, I., Ackroyd, S. and Walker, R. (2005) *The New Managerialism and Public Service Professions*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kusek, J. Z. and Rist, R. C. (2004) *Ten steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system: A handbook for development practitioners*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Ladner, D. (2015) *Strategy Testing: An Innovative Approach to Monitoring Highly Flexible Aid Programs*. Working Politically in Practice Case Study 3. San Francisco: The Asia Foundation.
- Lankester, T. (2013) *The Politics and Economics of Britain's Foreign Aid: The Pergau Dam Affair*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Legrand, T. (2012) Overseas and over Here: Policy Transfer and Evidence-Based Policy-Making. *Policy studies*, 33(4): 329-348.
- Lockwood, M., Mulley, S., Jones, E., Glennie, A., Paintin, K. and Pendleton, A. (2010) *Policy Coherence and the Future of the UK's International Development Agenda*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Mawdsley, E. (2015) DFID, the private sector, and the re-centring of an economic growth agenda in international development. *Global Society*, 29: 339-358.
- Maxwell, S. (2006) *Where next for DFID? A public debate is needed on the forthcoming Public Service Agreement and budget settlement*. ODI blog 5 December 2006. Available at <https://www.odi.org/comment/4137-next-dfid-public-debate-needed-forthcoming-public-service-agreement-budget-settlement>
- Maxwell, S. (2011) *Doing aid centre-right: marrying a results-based agenda with the realities of aid*, Available at <http://www.simonmaxwell.eu/aid-and-aid-management/doing-aid-centre-right-marrying-a-results-based-agenda-with-the-realities-of-aid.html>
- Maxwell, S. and Riddell, R. (1998) Conditionality or contract: perspectives on partnership for development. *Journal of International Development*, 10(2): 257-268.
- May, T. (2017) *PM speech to Department for International Development staff, 27 March 2017*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-to-department-for-international-development-staff>
- Mayne, J. (2007) *Best Practices in Results-Based Management: A Review of Experience: A Report for the United Nations Secretariat, Volume 1: Main Report*. New York: UN Secretariat.
- Mercy Corps and International Rescue Committee (IRC) (2016) *Adapting Aid: Lessons from Six Case Studies*. Edinburgh: Mercy Corps.
- Mitchell, A. (2007) *Speech at Conservative Party Conference, 2 October 2007*. Available at <http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599787>
- Mitchell, A. (2010) *Full transparency and new independent watchdog will give UK taxpayers value for money in aid*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/full-transparency-and-new-independent-watchdog-will-give-uk-taxpayers-value-for-money-in-aid>
- Mitchell, A. (2011) *Results for Change: International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell's speech at the Royal College of Pathologists*, 8 June 2011.
- Mitchell, T. (2002) *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Moore, M. and Unsworth, S. (2006) Britain's New White Paper: Making Governance Work for the Poor. *Development Policy Review*, 24: 707-715.
- Morrissey, O. (2002) *British Aid Policy Since 1997: Is DFID the Standard Bearer for Donors?* CREDIT Research Paper.
- Mosse, D. (1998) 'Process-Orientated Approaches to Development Practice and Social Research', in D. Mosse, J. Farrington and A. Rew (1998) *Development as Process*, ODI Development Policy Studies. New York: Routledge.
- Moyo, D. (2009) *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa*. London: Penguin Books.

- Mulgan, G. (2005) Government, knowledge and the business of policy making: the potential and limits of evidence-based policy. *Evidence & Policy*, 1(2): 215-226.
- Murray Li, T. (2007) *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- NAO (2009) *Department for International Development: Progress in improving performance management*. London: National Audit Office.
- NAO (2016) *Department for International Development: investing through CDC*. London: National Audit Office.
- NAO (2017) *Assessing value for money. Successful Commissioning Toolkit*. Available at <https://www.nao.org.uk/successful-commissioning/general-principles/value-for-money/assessing-value-for-money/>
- Natsios, A. (2010) *The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development*. July 2010. Washington DC: Center for Global Development.
- Norman, R. (2002) Managing through Measurement or Meaning? Lessons from Experience with New Zealand's Public Sector Performance Management Systems. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 68(4): 619-628.
- Nutley, S., Walter, I. and Davies, H. T. O. (2009) Promoting Evidence-based Practice: Models and Mechanisms from Cross-Sector Review. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19(5): 552-559.
- ODI (2007) *MDG midpoint: Politics and process - What have we learned?* 10 July 2007, Public Event. Available at <https://www.odi.org/events/206-mdg-midpoint-politics-process-have-learned>
- OECD (2005) *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*. High Level Forum. Paris: OECD.
- OECD (2008) *The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD (2013) *Measuring and managing results in development co-operation: A review of challenges and practices among DAC members and observers*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD/UNDP (2016) *Making Development Co-operation More Effective: 2016 Progress Report*. OECD: Paris.
- Oxfam (2017) *Press release: UK Government's 'calculated complicity' risks Yemen slipping into famine*. 8 February 2017. Oxford: Oxfam.
- Panchamia, N. and Thomas, P. (2014) *Civil Service Reform in the Real World*. London: Institute for Government.
- Pawson, R. (2006) *Evidence-based Policy: A Realist Perspective*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Picciotto, R. (2012) Experimentalism and development evaluation: Will the bubble burst? *Evaluation*, 18(2): 213-229.
- Poate, D. and Barnett, C. (2003) *Measuring Value for Money? An independent review of DFID's Value for Money (VFM) Indicator, Public Service Agreement 2003-2006*. Department for International Development Evaluation Report EV645. London: DFID.
- Power, M. (1994) *The Audit Explosion*. London: Demos.
- Power, M. (1997) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Public Accounts Committee. (2002) *Department for International Development: Departmental Report 2002*
- Ramalingam, B., Jones, H., Reba, T., and Young, J. (2009) *Exploring the science of complexity: Ideas and implications for development and humanitarian efforts*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Ramalingam, B. (2011) *Results 2.0: Towards a portfolio-based approach*. Aid on the Edge of Chaos Blog, Available at <https://aidontheedge.info/2011/06/30/results-2-0-towards-a-portfolio-based-approach/>
- Ramalingam, B. (2013) *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sanderson, I. (2006) Complexity, 'practical rationality' and evidence-based policy making. *Policy & Politics*, 34(1): 115-132.
- SAVI (2014) *Participatory Political Economy: Supporting partners and staff to think and act politically*. SAVI Approach Paper No 4.
- Scott, Z. (2007) The Changing Face of Drivers of Change. *Public Administration and Development*, 27(1): 85-90.
- Seers, D. and Streeten, P. (1972) Overseas development policies. In: Beckerman, W. (ed.) *The Labour Government's Economic Record: 1964-1970*. London: Duckworth.
- Short, C. (2004) *An Honourable Deception? New Labour, Iraq and the Misuse of Power*. London: Free Press.
- Short, C. (2007) *The fog of war*. Originally published in The Parliamentary Monitor, 2 April 2007. Available at <http://www.clareshort.co.uk/copy-of-6jul07>
- Shutt, C. (2015) 'The politics and practice of value for money', in R. Eyben, I. Guijt, C. Roche and C. Shutt (eds) (2015) *The Politics of Evidence and Results in International Development: Playing the Game to Change the Rules?* Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.
- Shutt, C. (2016) *Towards an Alternative Development Management Paradigm?* Stockholm: EBA.
- Solesbury, W. (2001) *Evidence Based Policy: Whence it Came and Where it's Going Working Paper (pp. 11)*. London: ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice, Queen Mary, University of London.
- Therkildsen, O. (1988) *Watering White Elephants? Lessons from Donor Funded Planning and Implementation of Water Supplies in Tanzania*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

-
- Thornberry, E. (2017) *Labour will make Britain a force for good – the Tories would take us to war*. The Guardian, Opinion. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/11/labour-britain-foreign-policy-donald-trump>
- Tucker, W. (2017) *Align with your audience's moral compass*. DevCommsLab Blog Post, June 14 2017. Available at <https://devcommslab.org/blog/enable-people-to-see-that-your-cause-aligns-with-their-own-moral-compass/>
- Trussell Trust (2016) *Press Release: Foodbank Use Remains at Record High*. 15 April 2016. Available at <https://www.trusselltrust.org/2016/04/15/foodbank-use-remains-record-high/>
- UK Aid Network (2012) *International Development Committee: Written evidence submitted by the UK Aid Network, in collaboration with Bond*. Prepared 8 March 2012.
- UK Aid Network (2017) *The State of UK Aid: An analysis of the quality of UK aid*. London: UKAN.
- UK government (2015) *UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest*. London: DFID.
- Unsworth, S. (2009) What's politics got to do with it?: Why donors find it so hard to come to terms with politics, and why this matters. *Journal of International Development*, 21: 883-894.
- Vähämäki, J. (2015) "The results agenda in Swedish development cooperation: Cycles of failure or reform success?" In (eds) Eyben, R., Roche, C., Guijt, I. and Shutt, C., *The Politics of Evidence in International Development: Playing the Game to Change the Rules*, 135-154. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Ltd.
- Vähämäki, J., Schmidt, M. and Molander, J. (2011). *Review: Results based management in development cooperation*. Stockholm, Sweden: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.
- Valters, C. (2015) *Theories of Change: Time for a radical approach to learning in development*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Vowles, P. (2013) *Adaptive Programming*. Available at <https://dfid.blog.gov.uk/2013/10/21/adaptive-programming/>
- Walters, S (2016) *Greening's gone AWOL... but then she didn't want the job anyway: Former International Secretary Andrew Mitchell launches extraordinary attack on his predecessor for failing to stick up for Britain's £12bn foreign aid spend*, The Daily Mail. 10 April 2016. Available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3532043/Greening-s-gone-AWOL-didn-t-want-job-Former-International-Secretary-Andrew-Mitchell-launches-extraordinary-attack-predecessor-failing-stick-Britain-s-12bn-foreign-aid-spend.html#ixzz4AoHSeieQ>
- Warrener, D. (2004) *Synthesis Paper 2: DFID's Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRs)*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Whaites, A. (1998) The New UK White Paper on International Development: An NGO Perspective. *Journal of International Development*, 10(2): 203-213.
- White, A. (1998) British Aid and the White Paper: Dressing a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing in the Emperor's New Clothes? *Journal of International Development*, 10(2): 151-166.
- White, H. (2002) 'A Drop in the Ocean? The International Development Targets as a Basis for Performance Measurement', Appendix 2 in National Audit Office (2002) *DFID: Performance Management – Helping to Reduce World Poverty. Report by the Controller and Auditor General*. London: National Audit Office.
- Whittle, D. (2011) *Ben Ramalingam on Aid and Complexity*, The Huffington Post. 25 May 2011. Available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dennis-whittle/ben-ramalingam-on-aid-and_b_805838.html
- Whitty, B.S. (2015) 'Mapping the Results Landscape: Insights from a Crowdsourcing Survey', in R. Eyben, I. Guijt, C. Roche and C. Shutt (eds) (2015) *The Politics of Evidence and Results in International Development: Playing the Game to Change the Rules?* Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.
- Wild, L., Booth, D., Cummings, C., Foresti, M. and Wales, J. (2015) *Adapting Development: Improving Services to the Poor*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Wild, L., Booth, D. and Valters, C. (2017) *Putting theory into practice: how DFID is doing development differently*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Williams, D. (2011) *International Development and Global Politics: History, Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Wingfield, T. and Vowles, P. (2014) *DFID Is Changing Its Approach to Better Address the Underlying Causes of Poverty and Conflict – Can It Work? Guest Post from two DFID Reformers*. Oxfam From Poverty to Power Blog, 9 October 2014. Available at <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/dfid-is-changing-its-approach-to-better-address-the-underlying-causes-of-poverty-and-conflict-can-it-work-guest-post-from-tom-wingfield-and-pete-vowles/>
- Wood, B., Kabell, D., Sagasti, F., Muwanga, N. (2008) *Synthesis Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration*. Copenhagen.
- Yanguas, P. and Hulme, D. (2015) Barriers to political analysis in aid bureaucracies: From principle to practice in DFID and the World Bank, *World Development*, 74: 209-19.
- Young, R. (2001) New Labour and international development: a research report. *Progress in Development Studies*, 1(3): 247-253.

Annex 1: Interviewees

Name	Role	Date of interview
Politicians		
Clare Short	Secretary of State for International Development, 1997-2003	16-08-2017 (via email)
Hilary Benn	Secretary of State for International Development, 2003-2007	22-09-2016
Douglas Alexander	Secretary of State for International Development, 2007-2010	04-10-2016
Andrew Mitchell	Secretary of State for International Development, 2010-2012	11-07-2016
Lynne Featherstone	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, 2012-2014	30-06-2016
Civil servants		
Owen Barder	Former Director of International Finance and Development Effectiveness, DFID	21-10-2013
Rosalind Eyben	Former Chief Social Development Adviser, DFID	26-10-2013
Stefan Dercon	Chief Economist 2011-present, DFID	06-01-2014
Sue Unsworth	Former Chief Governance Adviser, DFID	03-08-2015
Alan Winters	Chief Economist, DFID, 2008-2011	18-07-2016
Richard Manning	Director General, ODA and DFID (Policy), 1996-2003	26-07-2016
Adrian Wood	Chief Economist, DFID, 2000-2005	28-07-2016
Tony Venables	Chief Economist, DFID, 2005-2008	12-08-2016
Suma Chakrabarti	Permanent Secretary, DFID, 2003-2008	14-08-2016
Minouche Shafik	Permanent Secretary, DFID, 2008-2011	29-09-2016
Anna Wechsberg	Director, Policy, DFID	03-10-2016
Oversight body representatives		
Malcolm Bruce	Chair of the International Development Select Committee, 2005-2015	11-07-2016
Diana Good	Specialist Advisor to the International Development Select Committee, 2015-2017; former ICAI Commissioner, 2011-2015	19-07-2016
Alison Evans	Chief Commissioner, ICAI	26-07-2016
Aid and development experts		
Cathy Shutt	Independent consultant and tutor at the University of Sussex.	04-03-2016
Julian Barr	Non-executive director, Itad	19-09-2016
Simon Maxwell	Director, ODI, 1999-2007	03-04-2017

We also interviewed 40+ former and current DFID staff who asked to remain anonymous. Their job role cited in text is not necessarily their current position. Many of them may no longer work for DFID.



ODI is the UK's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues.

Readers are encouraged to reproduce material for their own publications, as long as they are not being sold commercially. As copyright holder, ODI requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication. For online use, we ask readers to link to the original resource on the ODI website. The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI or our partners.

© Overseas Development Institute 2017.
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial Licence (CC BY-NC 4.0).

All ODI publications are available from www.odi.org

Cover photo: Paul Frederickson,
'Big Ben', 2017

Overseas Development Institute
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
Tel +44 (0) 20 7922 0300
Fax +44 (0) 20 7922 0399