

Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI)
Evaluation of the Inter-Departmental Conflict Pool
Inception Report

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) is the independent body responsible for scrutinising UK aid. We focus on maximising the effectiveness of the UK aid budget for intended beneficiaries and on delivering value for money for UK taxpayers. We carry out independent reviews of aid programmes and of issues affecting the delivery of UK aid. We publish transparent, impartial and objective reports to provide evidence and clear recommendations to support UK Government decision-making and to strengthen the accountability of the aid programme. Our reports are written to be accessible to a general readership and we use a simple ‘traffic light’ system to report our judgement on each programme or topic we review.

1.2 The Conflict Pool is a funding mechanism managed jointly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Department for International Development (DFID). It is funded from a separate Treasury settlement which is additional to departmental budgets. It is the principal mechanism by which the UK Government allocates funding for conflict prevention, stabilisation and discretionary peacekeeping overseas.¹ The Conflict Pool had £256 million of funding in 2011-12, rising to £309 million in 2014-15. This comprises both Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA spending, with the ODA proportion of the budget rising from 51% in 2011-12 to 65% in 2014-15.

1.3 We have decided to conduct an evaluation of the Conflict Pool, to assess whether it is strategic in nature, managed appropriately across the three departments and achieving its intended impact. As our mandate is to scrutinise ODA, we will not directly evaluate the outcomes or impact of non-ODA Conflict Pool activity but will need to consider it as part of our review of strategy and co-ordination.

1.4 This inception report sets out the evaluation questions, methodology and work plan for the evaluation. It is, however, intended that the methodology and work plan are flexible enough to allow new questions and lines of inquiry to emerge over the course of the evaluation.

2. Background

2.1 The Conflict Pool supports a range of activities designed to reduce the number of people around the world whose lives are, or might be, affected by violent conflict. The Conflict Pool funds discretionary conflict prevention, stabilisation and peacekeeping activities, focussing on tackling threats to stability in high-risk fragile and conflict-affected countries where UK interests are most at stake and where the UK can have an impact.

2.2 The Conflict Pool has existed since 2001, originally as two separate funds – the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool and the Global Conflict Prevention Pool – which merged in 2008 to form the Conflict Prevention Pool. A separate instrument, the Stabilisation Aid Fund, was established in the same year to support stabilisation planning in Iraq and Afghanistan. This latter fund was merged into the renamed Conflict Pool in 2009.² One of the original objectives for establishing the Pool was to strengthen the UK’s conflict prevention activities by joining up expertise in development, diplomacy and defence across the three departments.

2.3 The Conflict Pool’s budget for 2011-12 to 2014-15 was set out in the 2010 Spending Review. A proportion of this (currently around £58 million) is used for the ODA element of the UK’s assessed (mandatory) contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. In addition, up to £374 million of non-ODA is available for this per year from the Treasury Reserve. If more is required for these mandatory

¹ FCO website, www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/spend-our-budget/funding-programmes1/conflict-funding/conflict-pool/.

² *The Economic Impact and Effectiveness of Development Aid: Oral and Written Evidence*, House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, page 227, www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/economic-affairs/DevelopmentAid/DevAidEvidenceVol.pdf.

contributions, the Conflict Pool is the first port of call. Remaining Conflict Pool funds can then be used for its discretionary activities.

2.4 The Conflict Pool allocation is £256 million in 2011-12, £270 million in 2012-13, £290 million in 2013-14 and £309 million in 2014-15. In 2011-12, £76 million (including around £58 million of ODA) was earmarked for assessed peacekeeping costs, leaving a balance of £180 million for discretionary Conflict Pool activities. In 2010-11, the Conflict Pool supported 370 individual activities, ranging in size from around £20,000 (e.g. grants to non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) to £18 million (the UK voluntary contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in Cyprus, UNFICYP). The activities are divided into six programmes:

- Afghanistan;
- South Asia;
- Africa;
- Middle East and North Africa;
- Wider Europe; and
- Strategic Support for International Organisations/Strengthening Alliances and Partnerships.

2.5 The largest programmes by expenditure were Afghanistan (40.3% of total spending), Africa (19.5%) and Wider Europe (16.2%).³ The latter includes the Western Balkans, North and South Caucasus, Central Asia and UNFICYP.

2.6 The Conflict Pool includes both ODA and other expenditure. In 2010-11, 62% of its expenditure was classed as ODA. The non-ODA expenditure included military assistance, aspects of security sector reform, capacity-building for peacekeeping operations and activities in countries such as Cyprus that are not eligible for ODA. Under Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) rules, contributions to certain international organisations are considered to be partially ODA.⁴ The envisaged ODA/non-ODA split for the Spending Review period is set out in Table 1, although this could change if additional mandatory peacekeeping funding is required. The Conflict Pool's ability to combine ODA and non-ODA resources has the potential to make it more flexible than a traditional development agency.

Table 1: ODA/non-ODA split of Conflict Pool budget 2011-12 to 2014-15⁵

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Conflict Pool budget (£ millions)	256	270	290	309
Of which ODA (£ millions)	130	150	175	200
Of which non-ODA (£ millions)	126	120	115	109
% ODA	51	56	60	65

³ Information provided to ICAI by DFID.

⁴ *Is It ODA?*, OECD, November 2008, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/21/34086975.pdf.

⁵ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtoday/cmwms/archive/110405.htm#d2e292>.

2.7 From 2011-12, the annual budget of the tri-departmental Stabilisation Unit (£12 million) comes from the Conflict Pool.⁶ The Stabilisation Unit sometimes provides staff resources used by Conflict Pool programmes, especially the Afghanistan programme, either through its own staff or through the Civilian Stabilisation Group – a roster of over 1,000 civilian experts from the public and private sectors covering a range of relevant skills.

2.8 The Conflict Pool's management structure across DFID, FCO and MOD is as follows:

- the **Building Stability Overseas Board (BSOB)**, made up of the Conflict Directors of each department, sets the overarching strategy for the Conflict Pool and oversees its reform;
- a **Tri-Departmental Conflict Pool Secretariat** supports the BSOB;
- each of the six programmes is managed by a **Programme Board** (chaired by a Senior Responsible Owner), which is responsible for strategy and programme decisions, and a Programme Manager; and
- each activity is managed and implemented by one of the three departments, using its own systems and procedures.

2.9 From 2001 to 2010, there was no overarching strategy for the Conflict Pool(s), which were sometimes criticised for piecemeal funding decisions. In October 2010, the Prime Minister tabled *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*.⁷ This overarching security strategy includes a commitment to using 30% of UK aid to support fragile and conflict-affected states, together with increased investment in conflict prevention, security sector reform and arms control. It states that funding for the Conflict Pool will increase to £300 million by 2014-15.

2.10 In July 2011, the UK Government adopted the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS),⁸ which provides the operational strategy for the Conflict Pool. The strategy analyses drivers of conflict and instability, defines various approaches to preventing conflict and sets out the three pillars of the UK strategic response to conflict prevention:

- 'Early warning: improving our ability to anticipate instability and potential triggers for conflict;'
- 'Rapid crisis prevention and response: improving our ability to take fast, appropriate and effective action to prevent a crisis or stop it spreading or escalating;'
- 'Investing in upstream prevention: helping to build strong, legitimate institutions and robust societies in fragile countries that are capable of managing tensions and shocks so there is a lower likelihood of instability and conflict.'

2.11 The BSOS contains commitments to reforming the Conflict Pool, including by introducing a stronger results focus, improving programme management and ensuring more predictable resource flows. It calls for a 'step change' in measuring impact, relying less on subjective internal assessments and more on external expertise and data. It also states that:

'We will open up our work to more external challenge and evaluation, using an independent view of the Government's conflict prevention performance to challenge our thinking and drive continuous improvement. As a first step the new Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) which reports directly to the International Development Committee in Parliament has signalled that it will carry out an evaluation of ODA spent through the Conflict Pool during financial year 2011/12. This will cover work by all three Departments. Building on this, we will

⁶ Information provided to ICAI by DFID.

⁷ *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister, October 2010, http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_191634.pdf?CID=PDF&PLA=furl&CRE=sdsr.

⁸ *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*, DFID, FCO and MOD, July 2011, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf>.

put in place an evaluation strategy for the Conflict Pool, covering the Spending Review period. This will help to focus our programming and improve lesson learning.⁹

3. Purpose of this review

3.1 To assess whether the Conflict Pool has led to a coherent, strategic and effective approach to conflict prevention by the UK Government.

4. Relationship to other reviews

4.1 The last independent evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools was in 2004, commissioned by the three departments and the Treasury.¹⁰ It involved four country case studies and two thematic studies. The evaluation concluded that many worthwhile activities were underway but that it was 'far too early' to assess results. It concluded that the three departments lacked a 'consistent set of ideas' as to what kinds of intervention produced the greatest effect for the lowest cost on different types of conflict. There was often a mismatch between the small amount of resources allocated to particular conflicts and the level of ambition of the goals.

4.2 A desk review of the Africa Programme was carried out in July 2010 by external consultants, commissioned by the three departments,¹¹ with four country case studies. It drew attention to the lack of a continental conflict-prevention strategy and the tendency to treat the Conflict Pool as a pot of funds for projects without a clear strategic focus. It noted considerable scope to improve value for money through management reforms.

4.3 The National Audit Office (NAO) is currently undertaking a review of the Conflict Pool, focussing on:

- governance arrangements (strategy; tri-departmental structure; accountability arrangements);
- decision-making (resource allocation; outcome focus); and
- monitoring and evaluation.

4.4 NAO's report is expected to be completed shortly. According to information received so far from NAO, the review focusses on the Conflict Pool's central structures and processes, rather than the substance of its programming choices. It does not include any review of the substance of regional or country programmes, the mix of activities or the results of individual projects.

4.5 This evaluation will as far as possible avoid duplicating NAO's review. While we may need to form our own view on some of the questions addressed by NAO, we will take their factual findings as a starting point unless these are contested by the Conflict Pool management. To complement NAO's review, we will focus on strategic issues and programming choices. We will also explore some of the resource allocation and performance management issues in more detail, where we believe we can add to NAO's analysis.

⁹ *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*, DFID, FCO and MOD, July 2011, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf>.

¹⁰ Austin, Greg, Emery Brusset, Malcolm Chalmers and Juliet Pierce, *Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Synthesis Report*, DFID, March 2004, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/7/16/35094094.pdf>.

¹¹ Richard Burge, Dylan Hendrickson, James Morton and Funmi Olonisakin, *Africa Conflict Prevention Programme – Achievements and Future Focus*, TripleLine Consulting, July 2010.

5. Methodology

Analytical approach

5.1 The Conflict Pool was created to increase the quality of UK Government efforts to reduce the incidence of conflict around the world by promoting a more joined-up approach across DFID, FCO and MOD. To assess whether it is achieving its goals, the evaluation will look at three different aspects of the Conflict Pool.

5.2 First, it will consider whether the Conflict Pool has indeed led to improved interaction between the three departments in the area of conflict prevention. This will include looking at whether they have shared practices in areas such as conflict analysis and conflict risk monitoring and a shared understanding of conflict prevention approaches. It will also consider whether, in the context of particular conflict situations, the three departments are acting in a complementary and mutually reinforcing way and whether this is visible in the selection, design and implementation of activities.

5.3 Second, the evaluation will consider whether the Conflict Pool is strategic in nature at the portfolio level. This means assessing whether the activities funded by the Conflict Pool, both in aggregate and in response to specific conflict situations, contribute to a coherent approach to conflict prevention. We note that a funding instrument of this kind could contain quality individual activities and yet achieve little strategic impact if the portfolio of activities fails to address the underlying drivers of conflict. The strategic nature of the Conflict Pool will be assessed at two levels:

- **Aggregate level:** this will involve assessing whether the three departments share a credible, overall strategy for conflict prevention and whether the types of activities that are being funded are consistent with a clear strategy. Our review will consider whether the Conflict Pool is allocating its resources into strategic areas to maximise impact, having regard to what other agencies and donors are doing on conflict prevention. This includes looking at the complementarity between Conflict Pool activities, DFID country programmes and relevant FCO and MOD engagement on conflict prevention; and
- **The response to particular conflicts:** through case studies, our review will assess whether there is a shared understanding of the drivers of conflict, an explicit strategy for addressing them and a portfolio of activities that is consistent with the analysis and the strategy.

5.4 Third, the evaluation will consider whether the Conflict Pool is delivering results at the activity level. This will involve examining how the Conflict Pool measures results. In this review, we will collect and synthesise existing reporting on results. We will also examine a sample of activities in two case studies to see whether the target populations have been clearly identified and whether there is evidence of impact. We will seek to collect views from national stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (where relevant¹²) in the target areas as to whether the activities in question have had a material impact on levels of conflict and conflict risk. Where security considerations may limit our direct access to intended beneficiaries, we will identify other stakeholders (e.g. national NGOs) who can provide us with an informed account of local impact.

5.5 Our mandate is to scrutinise ODA, therefore we will not be formally examining the outcomes or impact of non-ODA Conflict Pool activity. We will, however, need to consider this non-ODA activity in order to examine properly the Conflict Pool's strategy and co-ordination. Our review will also consider whether the guidelines and practices for categorising expenditure as ODA are appropriate.

Evaluation framework

5.6 The evaluation framework for this review is set out in the table below. This has as its basis the standard ICAI guiding criteria and evaluation framework, which are focussed on four areas:

¹² Some Conflict Pool activities have direct intended beneficiaries (for example, programmes focussing on the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration into society of ex-combatants). Others are designed to support structures or processes for conflict management and do not have a direct impact on individuals except via their long-term effect on conflict.

objectives, delivery, impact and learning. It also incorporates other pertinent questions we want to investigate in this review. The questions which are highlighted in bold are those from our Terms of Reference (ToR) on which we will focus in particular. In this review, we will focus particularly on the objectives, governance and learning aspects of the ICAI framework.

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
1. Objectives: what is the programme trying to achieve?			
Does the programme have clear, relevant, realistic objectives that focus on the desired impact? (1.1)	Does the Conflict Pool have a strategic approach to allocating its resources, based on clear policies and objectives? (ToR 6.2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensiveness and clarity of Conflict Pool strategies and policies • Resource allocation criteria and decision-making processes • Clarity and coherence across the departments on Conflict Pool role and comparative advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, strategies, guidance material • Interviews with senior management • Consultations with external stakeholders
Is there a clear and convincing plan, with evidence and assumptions, to show how the programme will work? (1.2)	<p>Does the Conflict Pool have clear policies and strategic guidance on programming choices and activity selection? (ToR 6.2.2)</p> <p>Are individual activities technically sound and based on clear and logical theories of change? (ToR 6.2.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming goals and objectives • Adequacy of guidance provided to Conflict Pool managers and staff • Evidence of options appraisals and a clear plan showing how individual activities will work • Technical advice provided to Conflict Pool staff and used in design of programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, strategies, guidance material • Interviews with senior management • Interviews with programme managers • Conflict Pool programme documents and supporting analysis • Consultations with external stakeholders

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
Does the programme complement the efforts of government and other aid providers and avoid duplication? (1.3)	Does the Conflict Pool complement other activities by the UK Government and other agencies and donors and avoid duplication? (ToR 6.2.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management views on comparative advantage of Conflict Pool • Complementarity of ODA and non-ODA activities • Appropriateness of guidelines and practices for categorising expenditure as ODA • Complementarity of Conflict Pool activities with DFID country programmes • Complementarity of Conflict Pool activities with other UK Government activities • Collaboration with other donors and organisations active on conflict prevention • Leveraging of other resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior management and programme managers • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Interviews with DFID country offices • Interviews with MOD and FCO country representatives • Guidance material • Conflict Pool programme documentation • Interviews with key donors in sample countries • Case studies • Interviews with recipient government representatives
Are the programme's objectives appropriate to the political, economic, social and environmental context? (1.4)	Does the Conflict Pool have a strategic approach to engaging with particular conflict situations, based on robust analysis of the country context and drivers of conflict? (ToR 6.2.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of conflict analysis • Balance of portfolio, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ geographical coverage; ○ length of engagement; ○ type of activity; and ○ choice of delivery partner. • Quality of approaches taken against international learning and good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance material • Conflict assessments • Programme strategies • Activities lists • Interviews with senior management and programme managers
2. Delivery: is the delivery chain designed and managed so as to be fit for purpose?			
Are the choices of funding and delivery options appropriate? (2.1)	Are the choices of implementing agencies and other partners appropriate? (ToR 6.3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of options appraisals • Quality of design processes • Clarity of project documentation • Quality and appropriateness of implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance material • Interviews with programme managers • Review of project documentation • Case studies

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
Does programme design and roll-out take into account the needs of the intended beneficiaries? (2.2)	Are the intended impacts and beneficiaries of Conflict Pool activities clearly identified? (ToR 6.3.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with intended beneficiaries • Extent to which stakeholder analysis informs design and delivery of country/regional programmes and individual projects • Choice of partnerships • Quality of capacity-building approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with intended beneficiaries • Conflict analysis • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Case studies • Conflict Pool programme documentation and analysis
Is there good governance at all levels, with sound financial management and adequate steps being taken to avoid corruption? (2.3)	Do the three departments have adequate approaches to the governance and financial management of Conflict Pool activities and are adequate steps being taken to avoid corruption? (ToR 6.3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of project cycle management • Extent of challenge and accountability around design and resource allocation • Due diligence of implementing partners • Quality of oversight of implementing partners, including reporting requirements • Specific anti-corruption measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with programme managers and country teams • Guidance material • Review of project documents
Are resources being leveraged so as to work best with others and maximise impact? (2.4)	<p>Is the delivery of Conflict Pool activities helping to improve co-operation across the three departments? Is there evidence of joint working and synergies between activities? (ToR 6.3.3)</p> <p>Is Conflict Pool spending helping to leverage resources from other UK and international sources? (ToR 6.3.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working and co-operation at country and HQ levels • Level of cross-departmental challenge • Synergies with DFID country programmes • Synergies with FCO and MOD activities • Collaboration with other agencies and donors • Leveraging of other funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Interviews with the three departments at HQ level • Conflict Pool documentation

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
<p>Do managers ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery chain? (2.5)</p> <p>Is there a clear view of costs throughout the delivery chain? (2.6)</p>	<p>Do managers ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery chain?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigorous processes for selecting delivery partners • Consideration of the relative costs and cost-effectiveness of different options • Sufficient oversight of delivery and cost-effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Sample survey of activity proposals and budgets • Sample of financial reporting at country and HQ levels
<p>Are risks to the achievement of the objectives identified and managed effectively? (2.7)</p>	<p>Are risks to the achievement of programme objectives identified and managed effectively? (ToR 6.3.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment part of conflict analysis • Regional/country programmes incorporate risk analysis • Individual project designs incorporate risk analysis • Active approaches to managing risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict assessments • Project designs • Risk matrices • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Case studies
<p>Is the programme delivering against its agreed objectives? (2.8)</p>	<p>Are activities delivering on their agreed objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of individual projects • Regular reporting on results • Evidence of activities delivering against objectives • Conflict Pool providing sufficient support and oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Review of project reports • Case studies

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
Are appropriate amendments to objectives made to take account of changing circumstances? (2.9)	Is the Conflict Pool flexible and responsive to changes in circumstances?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate balance of activities between long- and short-term objectives • Length of time required for new funding decisions • Funds set aside for responding to crisis or opportunities • Evidence of individual activities being adapted to take into account changing circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Conflict Pool documentation and programme process guidance
3. Impact: what is the impact on intended beneficiaries?			
Is the programme delivering clear, significant and timely benefits for the intended beneficiaries? (3.1)	<p>Is the Conflict Pool delivering clear, significant and timely benefits for the intended beneficiaries?</p> <p>Do conflict pool activities help to strengthen national advocates and community capacities for conflict reduction? (ToR 6.4.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of stakeholder analysis to develop country strategies and activities • Choice of partnerships • Quality of capacity-building components of activities • Extent to which programmes are evaluated against objectives • Reported results and impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports, monitoring returns and evaluation • Discussions with national stakeholders and intended beneficiaries
Is the programme working holistically alongside other programmes? (3.2)	Do the results of the Conflict Pool complement those of other agencies and donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of partnerships • Sample assessment of fit between Conflict Pool results and other agencies and donors' results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Case studies • Discussions with key donors in sample countries

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
Is there a long-term and sustainable impact from the programme? (3.3)	Is the Conflict Pool delivering a sustainable reduction in conflict and conflict risk? (ToR 6.4.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of results data • Results convincingly attributed to Conflict Pool activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Discussions with intended beneficiaries in-country • Project reports, monitoring returns and evaluation
Is there an appropriate exit strategy involving effective transfer of ownership of the programme? (3.4)	How does the Conflict Pool view its exit strategy and how will the programme ownership be transferred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Pool staff, strategy and policy notes recognise the need for transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with Conflict Pool country staff • Conflict Pool policy and strategy papers
Is there transparency and accountability to intended beneficiaries, donors and UK taxpayers? (3.5)	Is the Conflict Pool operating with an appropriate level of transparency and accountability to national authorities, intended beneficiaries and UK taxpayers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies on release of information • Publication of Conflict Pool spending data, activities and results • Consultation and data-sharing with national stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior management, programme managers • Conflict Pool reporting • Interviews with national stakeholders
4. Learning: what works best and what needs improvement?			
Are there appropriate arrangements for monitoring inputs, processes, outputs, results and impact? (4.1)	Do the three departments have appropriate arrangements for monitoring inputs, processes, outputs, results and impact from Conflict Pool activities? (ToR 6.5.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation rules and guidelines of the three departments • Guidance on results management • Quality of reporting • Evidence of Conflict Pool management monitoring progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental guidelines • Interviews with programme managers and country teams • Monitoring reports • Discussions with intended beneficiaries
Is there evidence of innovation and use of global best practice? (4.2)	Is there evidence of innovation and use of global best practice? (ToR 6.5.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes for learning from wider practice • Processes for identifying lessons from existing activities and disseminating them across the programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Conflict Pool country teams • Case studies • Conflict Pool documentation

ICAI evaluation framework questions	Evaluation questions	Criteria for assessment	Sources of evidence
Is there anything currently not being done in respect of the programme that should be undertaken? (4.3)	Are there any approaches to conflict prevention not being pursued by the Conflict Pool that should be undertaken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good practices or approaches from international experience not taken up by the Conflict Pool • Opportunities identified in conflict analyses not pursued by the Conflict Pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • Regional and country strategies • Conflict analyses
Have lessons about the objectives, design and delivery of the programme been learned and shared effectively? (4.4)	Are Conflict Pool activities contributing to learning across the three departments on conflict prevention and helping to strengthen the UK Government's overall conflict prevention approach? (ToR 6.5.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of performance management and lesson learning • Adaptation of programmes in response to learning • Evidence of sharing of experience and lessons • Evidence that UK Government's overall conflict prevention approach is being shaped by Conflict Pool lessons learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior management, programme managers and Conflict Pool country teams • Assessment of dissemination of lessons learned from Conflict Pool programmes

5.7 The evaluation methodology will comprise the following elements:

- a review of literature and evidence available internationally on conflict reduction and peacebuilding strategies and approaches, in order to develop a conceptual framework for analysing the adequacy of Conflict Pool strategies and approaches;
- a review of the Conflict Pool management arrangements, including governance, resource allocation, results management and collaboration between the three departments, drawing on the results of the NAO review and supplementing these as required;
- a portfolio review of the Conflict Pool, looking at spending patterns and types of activities and whether they show evidence of strategic use of resources; and
- case studies of two conflict situations, each involving:
 - a review of conflict analyses, conflict reduction strategies and the overall balance of activities, to determine whether the objectives match the problem analysis and whether the theories of change are sound and based on past learning;
 - an examination of planning, resource allocation, design, delivery and monitoring of Conflict Pool activities;
 - a synthesis of activity reporting and results data; and
 - a review of the impact of a sample of Conflict Pool activities.

5.8 The case studies are provisionally identified as Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Pakistan has 24 Conflict Pool projects in 2011-12 with total planned expenditure of £3.76 million, while DRC has five projects with total planned expenditure of £1.8 million.

5.9 Afghanistan is the largest area of operation for the Conflict Pool, representing around 40% of total expenditure. This evaluation will not use Afghanistan as a case study, however, due to its close proximity with our evaluation of DFID's programme controls and assurance in Afghanistan, as well as the logistical difficulties associated with visiting activities on the ground in Helmand Province.

5.10 During the course of the evaluation, we will identify appropriate external stakeholders for consultations on the operations of the Conflict Pool. These may include representatives of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Conflict Issues, academics and NGOs.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 It is proposed that the evaluation be undertaken by a core team of four, with some additional support for field research in DRC and supplementary peer review. While lead responsibility for answering sections of the framework is indicated below, all members will contribute to research and analysis as required.

Team leader

With over 15 years in policy analysis, he has worked for a variety of clients on a range of high-level policy issues including implementation of the Paris Declaration, aid effectiveness and fragile states. He is an authority in international law and human rights and has written widely on post-conflict reconstruction, state-building and the restitution of property. He has more recently specialised in aid effectiveness and governance processes at all levels, including policy development, programme design and evaluation.

He will have overall management responsibility and ensure delivery of the outputs. He will also lead the Pakistan case study team.

Team member 1

She is an experienced economist, policy analyst and evaluator who has worked on topics as varied as international trade, domestic accountability, pro-poor growth and international engagement in fragile states. She is an experienced leader of evaluations, particularly at country level. She has worked with a range of donor partners to improve delivery of aid,

corporately and in specific contexts. Her particular interest is supporting the improvement of governance, notably relating to anti-corruption.

She will lead on the substantive review of conflict prevention strategies and approaches, will participate in the Pakistan case study and will lead the DRC case study.

Team member 2

She is a chartered accountant with a Masters in Development Studies and has over five years' experience with KPMG working across public sector audit. She has also worked at the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office and at the Institute of Development Studies. Within KPMG, she has worked for two years as part of the internal audit team at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and has experience of auditing charitable funds at a range of healthcare organisations.

She will participate in the DRC case study and also conduct a detailed review of resource allocation and project cycle management.

Team member 3

She is a consultant and chartered engineer. Before joining KPMG, she worked for five years as a consultant for an engineering consultancy (Ove Arup & Partners Ltd.). Her key roles included leading project teams, developing Arup's Sustainable IT and Smart Cities service and leading the international development network. She plays an active role in developing KPMG's International Development network. She will assist team member 2 with the UK desktop review of resources allocation and project cycle management.

Team member 4

He is a development economist with 12 years of experience in developing and managing programmes in conflict-affected environments. He has recently used this experience to lead a team developing resources for practitioners working to develop the private sector in conflict-affected countries.

7. Management and reporting

7.1 We will produce a first draft report for review by the ICAI Secretariat and Commissioners by 5 April 2012, with time for subsequent revision and review prior to completion and sign off in May 2012

8. DFID/other partner liaison

8.1 This evaluation will require close liaison with all three departments involved in the management of the Conflict Pool. Preliminary meetings were held with the Conflict Pool Secretariat on 1 December 2011 to discuss the arrangements.

9. Expected outputs and time frame

9.1 The main deliverables will be:

- a summary of the Conflict Pool portfolio analysis, which may form an annex to the main report; and
- the main report, in the standard ICAI format.

9.2 The timetable for this evaluation will be broadly as follows, with adjustments as necessary.

Phase	Timetable
Planning Preliminary consultations Planning and methodology Brief literature review Finalising inception	1 December 2011 – 16 January 2012
London-based research Interviews with Conflict Pool senior management and programme teams Review of policies, strategies and guidance Analysis of governance and management arrangements Mapping of activity portfolio	16 January 2012 – 20 February 2012
Field research Pakistan case study Second case study	23 – 28 January 2012 29 February - 9 March 2012
Analysis and write-up Initial findings presentation First draft report Second draft report Final draft report Fact checking Final signed-off report	w/c 26 March 2012 w/c 2 April 2012 w/c 16 April 2012 w/c 30 April 2012 w/c 7 and 14 May 2012 w/c 21 May 2012

10. Risks and mitigation

10.1 The following sets out the key risks and mitigating actions for this evaluation.

Risk	Level of risk	Specific issues	Mitigation
Inability to access information, due to confidentiality surrounding Conflict Pool	Low/Medium	The Conflict Pool is an instrument of UK foreign and security policy and operates with a higher degree of confidentiality than pure development assistance. Some Conflict Pool documents are classified at a level beyond our remit.	Design evaluation and select case studies and programmes so as to enable robust evaluation without the need for access to higher-level documents.
Security risks associated with case studies in conflict zones	Medium	The case studies will include Pakistan and DRC, both of which carry relatively high security risks.	While formal duty of care rests with the contractor, FCO has agreed to provide logistical and security support for the teams during the country visits. Transport in Pakistan will be by armoured vehicle, while accommodation will be within the High Commission compound. In Kinshasa, the team will stay in a secure hotel and will be accompanied on all engagements by an FCO escort.
Lack of impact data makes impact assessment impossible	Medium	<p>Conflict Pool has acknowledged weaknesses around results management, monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Nature of Conflict Pool activities makes it difficult for the evaluation team to see results on the ground.</p>	<p>Evaluation team to examine a range of projects across the two case studies, to obtain sufficient results data.</p> <p>If robust impact evaluation of Conflict Pool activities does not prove possible, the evaluation will make this clear and make recommendations for improving results management in the future.</p>

11. How this ICAI review will make a difference

11.1 The Conflict Pool is a key instrument of UK foreign, security and development policy, with heightened importance since the release of the BSOS.¹³ Its objectives are to reduce conflict and fragility, which is one of the most important constraints on development around the globe. It also aims to contribute to promoting international peace and security, while serving the UK's foreign and security policy interests.

11.2 The Conflict Pool is the only ODA funding channel managed by more than one department. It provides the first opportunity that we have had to review ODA activities by departments other than DFID.

11.3 The Conflict Pool management has acknowledged past shortcomings in the areas of resource allocation and performance management. The BSOS makes a specific reference to our forthcoming evaluation, stating its expectation that we will assist the three departments in strengthening the management and operations of the Conflict Pool. Our evaluation will also focus on how strategic and joined up the three departments are in their approach to the Conflict Pool, assisting them to improve where necessary.

11.4 This evaluation therefore presents an opportunity for us to make a contribution to the development of a critical area of the UK development programme.

¹³ *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*, DFID, FCO and MOD, July 2011, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/1/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf>.