

## ICAI 2019 consultation: You said, we did...

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) is the UK's aid watchdog. We examine the effectiveness and value for money of the UK's official development assistance, whichever government department it is spent by. Our work is published online, and we report to Parliament's International Development Committee, with public hearings held to discuss our findings.

We recently entered a new phase with Chief Commissioner Dr Tamsyn Barton appointed to lead us for the next four years. But before launching this new phase we wanted to get your views on what areas of UK aid spend we should be focusing on and how we could improve our review products.

We received 108 responses from a wide range of respondents including development organisations, stakeholders, think tanks, universities and members of the public. Most of these responses came from individuals, but 30% were submitted on behalf of organisations and 16% of respondents were from outside the UK, which means we received a diverse range of perspectives.

You told us that you wanted to see ICAI broaden its approach to focus on a more diverse range of subjects, and to make our key findings more accessible.

### You said, we did...

We read all of your responses and below we set out some of your top suggestions and how we are taking them forward.

#### You said:

You want us to focus more on the government's role in meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### We did:

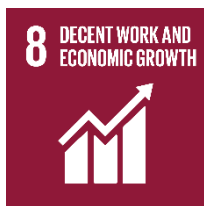
We've already committed to aligning our workplan more closely with the SDGs and we are aiming for broad coverage. Below is a list of some of our forthcoming reviews and how they will address the relevant SDGs:



DFID's support to nutrition, which will test the results claims made by DFID on its achievements in tackling malnutrition. This aligns first of all with SDG 2 which seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. It is also key to many other Goals, such as SDG 4 on education and SDG 5 on gender equality.



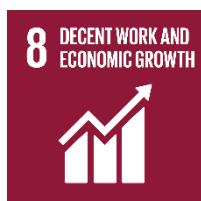
Anti-corruption and illicit financial flows, a non-evaluative information note being produced for the International Development Committee's inquiry into SDG 16, mapping the UK government's efforts to tackle corruption and illicit financial flows abroad and at home for the benefit of developing countries.



Youth employment and job creation in Africa will assess the relevance and progress of DFID's youth agenda since its launch four years ago. This review is particularly relevant to SDG 8 and the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.



UK Aid working with China in Africa will look at the effectiveness of UK government efforts to work with China to improve its engagement and investment in Africa. This review will address SDG 17 primarily, but will also relate to a range of other SDGs, including SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (building resilient infrastructure), SDG 11 (making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).



The UK's approach to tackling modern slavery will focus on efforts by DFID and the Home Office to tackle modern slavery. This review is relevant primarily to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth - eradicating forced labour, ending modern slavery and human trafficking).



Our Deforestation review will assess Defra and DFID efforts to reduce deforestation as part of the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) – the only part of the ICF portfolio not previously covered by ICAI. This review primarily addresses SDG 15 and the sustainable management of forests, but it will also touch on SDG 13 and actions to combat climate change and its impacts.



Protecting Official Development Assistance (ODA) from fraud will examine whether the biggest ODA-spending government departments have the appropriate fraud controls in place. This review will focus on SDG 17, which aims to strengthen the means of implementation for sustainable development.



The sexual violence in conflict, and the sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeepers joint review is relevant to SDG 5, which seeks to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

**You said:**

You'd like to see ICAI focus more on contributions to multilateral agencies.

**We did:**

We agree; in fact, this was the most popular subject you suggested ICAI should scrutinise.

The relative lack of scrutiny of government aid spend through multilaterals was already a concern for our Chief Commissioner Tamsyn Barton before she started her role at ICAI - she spoke about it during her pre-appointment hearing in front of the International Development Committee.

We've already started our first multilateral review looking at the African Development Bank – you can read our approach paper [here](#).

We will explore the effectiveness of UK multilateral aid spend as well as the UK's influence with multilateral partners throughout this next phase of ICAI, building on our 2015 multilaterals review and other reviews that have touched on the subject.

Our country portfolio reviews – a new initiative for examining the entire footprint of UK aid in particular countries – will explore the respective roles and contributions of bilateral and multilateral aid.

### **You said:**

You'd like ICAI to continue its focus on non-DFID aid spending departments and cross-government spend.

### **We did:**

ICAI's mandate is to review official development assistance, no matter which government departments are spending it. As many respondents mentioned, in Phase 2 we reviewed the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and the Prosperity Fund.

Some of these reviews raised significant concerns around ODA eligibility, tied aid and cross-government learning amongst others.

Our 'How UK Aid Learns' review was the first review of Phase 3, and as such, set out to make public information about all 18 UK aid-spending government departments and funds, as well as assess how well they are learning from each other to ensure value for money and effectiveness. We are aiming to follow this up with more in-depth insights into key departments. We are also currently working on a joint review of sexual violence in conflict and sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeepers, which focuses on the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence.

Our latest work plan includes reviews of DFID and BEIS' work on deforestation, the Home Office's work with DFID and FCO on tackling modern slavery, and the cross-government approach to preventing corruption and illicit financial flows, and protecting ODA from fraud.

We are aiming to ensure that all key departments are subject to scrutiny.

### **You said:**

You want to hear more from the intended beneficiaries of UK aid.

### **We did:**

We agree - this is an important step towards ensuring transparency and accountability for UK aid spend, and was also highlighted in the Chief Commissioner's pre-appointment hearing. We've

committed to incorporating the voices of people that aid is intended to help into the design of future reviews, wherever appropriate and feasible.

Our upcoming country portfolio review of UK aid spend in Ghana is the first review where we've built the collection of beneficiary feedback into the evidence gathering process and where the views of Ghanaian citizens, as well as of people who have directly received UK aid in Ghana, will inform our analysis of the government's work.

We've also already spoken extensively to survivors of abuse for our joint Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping reviews, and are looking at ways we can include their voices in a sensitive and respectful way.

We will also be doing this in our review of DFID's support to nutrition.

### **You said:**

You provided lots of other ideas for important areas of aid spend for us to look at. These included:

DFID systems, processes and human resources

Humanitarian aid

Procurement

Leaving no one behind

You also suggested a number of sectors and thematic areas for us to look at, including health, climate, gender, the private sector and security sector reform.

### **We did:**

While we can't commit to reviews for all of your suggestions, we'll return to all of your ideas early next year when we come to select our next batch of reviews. In the meantime, you can read about our current upcoming reviews [here](#).

### **You said:**

You wanted us to make our key findings more accessible, with more summaries, quicker reviews and more information notes that government can act on.

### **We did:**

We are currently producing information notes on anti-corruption and illicit financial flows, and on the use of UK aid in enhancing mutual prosperity. We understand that these quicker notes can be useful and will continue to produce them when appropriate.

We are introducing new country portfolio reviews, and from next year, we will be scoring our annual follow-up review to more clearly communicate whether government has made satisfactory progress in response to our recommendations.

We have also committed to publishing the literature reviews that underpin our reports, in order to further contribute to the public body of evidence around aid spending.

We will continue to look at ways in which we can make the key findings of our reviews more accessible, including the option of producing summary notes and briefs.

## Overview

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact is the UK's aid scrutiny body. Our work helps to improve UK aid through robust, independent, scrutiny, and provides assurance to Parliament and the public about aid spending.

We examine the effectiveness and value for money of the UK's official development assistance, whichever government department spends it. Our work is published online, and we report to Parliament's International Development Committee, with public hearings held to discuss our findings.

The government responds to each of our recommendations, and we conduct a regular follow-up process to ensure departments are taking action to improve UK aid based on our reviews.

In July 2019, the next four-year phase of ICAI will officially begin, with a new board of Commissioners all in place. We would like to hear your views to help us shape this next chapter in ICAI's work.

## Why We Are Consulting

The information gathered in this consultation will help ICAI plan its future review programme. The responses will be used to inform a paper ICAI will publish in the summer, setting out thoughts on the current UK aid landscape, and ICAI's role within that.