

**Department for International Development
United Kingdom**

Research Programme on Aid Effectiveness Scoping Mission
CNTR 200607484

Main Research Questions ©

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This report has been prepared by Professor Paul Mosley and Professor John Hudson with Inja Vatne (as consultants for Enterplan Limited) for DFID, through the DFID Economist Resource Centre framework. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the view of Enterplan Limited.

1 | **Main Research Questions**

1 Main Research Questions

Introduction

In August 2006, DFID requested the Economist Resource Centre (ERC) to instigate a scoping study for a long-term research programme on aid effectiveness, envisaged to run over the next five years. The scoping work involves a literature review (separate report), discussions with stakeholders including but not confined to staffs of development agencies and NGOs in North and South¹, and this report. The structure of the report is as follows. We begin by examining the ongoing activity of major international organisations in the aid effectiveness field. We then develop the list of major research themes, or 'gaps', in this field, provided in the separate literature review, in relation to the priorities expressed by these organisations on aid-effectiveness research. In conclusion, we set out a possible vision concerning how such an organisation, if established, should operate.

We proceeded by contacting the lead economists for countries covered by DFID based overseas and in the UK, as well as DFID staff in Regional Policy Departments (RPDs) and International Division and Policy Division. Contact with the latter groups resulted in somewhat fewer interviews than the first. A number of aid recipient country current and ex government officials were contacted, as was various NGOs and academic institutions based in aid receiving countries, generating a limited but still considerable number of responses. Bilateral and multilateral donors, international NGOs and academic organisations were also invited to participate, producing several useful replies. All in all, we received a substantial number of responses. The respondents are listed in appendix 1 and we would wish to thank everyone concerned for their time and comments. Responses were gathered by face to face meetings, phone and email.

The Research Context – The Priorities and Preoccupations of Major Players

Our terms of reference^{2/}, ask us to

- “[conduct] a review of ongoing work by DFID, other donors, NGOs and the international research community to identify gaps in the literature (and data constraints) and new angles for research.
- Interview donors, policy makers, NGOs and researchers in the South and North to establish what the demand is for such research and what questions should be included.”

The list of research activity is long and the following is an illustrative summary of the past activities and future plans of several of the major institutions currently working or sponsoring research in the aid effectiveness field. This is, of course, a highly selective list and omits a large quantity of ongoing work, which we have attempted to include in our literature review.

^{1/} See Appendix A1
^{2/} See Appendix A5

The macroeconomics of aid is of particular interest to the IMF (e.g. Plant; 2006) and the Centre for Global Development in Washington (e.g. Clemens and Radelet; 2003 and 2005). Within this context the IMF is specifically interested in the use of macro-based regressions on the private sector (e.g. Rajan and Subramaniam, 2005b) and aid volatility (Bulir and Hamann; 2003 and 2005). The latter is also being researched by the Africa Department of the World Bank (e.g. Gelb and Eifert; 2005). SIDA (Sweden) have a proportionately greater focus on aid modalities, specifically relative effectiveness and complementarities, DFID is involved in assessments of different components of the aid budget, e.g. budget support (DFID Evaluation Department; 2006), The Africa Department of the World Bank also has a research interest in budget support (e.g. Stavreski et al; 2006). Related to this, the Centre for Global Development is examining proposals for new financing modalities (e.g. Radelet and Levine; 2006) and DGIS (Holland) has an interest in performance-based budget support aid. Performance based aid is also occupying the attention of the Centre for Global Development (Birdsall and Barder, 2006). The effectiveness and role of aid to fragile states is being researched by ODI in London (e.g., Christiansen; 2006), DFID (e.g. Moore; 2002) and is on the agenda of future research for the IMF. Corruption is also perhaps evidence of a more limited form of state failure and is on the research agenda of SIDA as is ways of making democracy and human rights support more efficient. Potentially related to this CIDA has plans to look at aid effectiveness in civil societies. Issues of how to co-ordinate aid between donors is currently of interest to SIDA and the Centre for Global Development. Other areas being researched include randomised evaluations (the IEG, formerly the OED, of the World Bank, issues of scaling up and PRSPs and poverty focused aid (ODI; e.g. Foster and Killick, 2006), trust and conditionality (DGIS) and aid effectiveness and non-state partnerships (CIDA)). On the research agenda are aid effectiveness in middle-income countries CIDA, aid quality and adjustment support for climate change (Centre for Global Development) and cross country work but with an emphasis on country case studies (OECD).

The general thrust of the opinions which we gathered was that there is a great deal of valuable research still needing to be done in the aid-effectiveness field. There is no Aid Effectiveness Research Unit of the type considered here currently being considered by any of the major players whom we consulted. The closest analogue is the Aid Effectiveness and Management Unit (SADEV) established in 2005 by SIDA in Stockholm, which more than any other agency seeks to combine research and evaluation functions related to aid flows. This however is a unit which, although semi-independent, on the World Bank model, from the management structure of its parent organisation is part of the evaluation activity of that organisation; and although required to examine and learn from the procedures of other agencies, is principally concerned to learn lessons for the operation of SIDA. It thus differs from the concept proposed here, which is a global public good – a organisation with a remit to assess the effectiveness of the global aid system, rather than aid from DFID or any specific donor.

Thus, amongst the research that these players indicated as being urgent, most was in the middle range between macro-regressions at one pole and project evaluations at the other. (Our own literature review takes the same approach, and its centre of gravity is in section 5, 'Specialised studies ') Amongst the topics identified by these players as being key priorities for future aid effectiveness research, three came up repeatedly: *problems of scaling-up of the aid budget and recipient-country absorptive capacity; problems of providing effective aid to (and of course scaling it up within) fragile states; and problems of financing global public goods*, specifically including but not confined to using aid flows to address the problem of global warming. On all of these themes, some of the research partners have ongoing or projected research programmes, and if the programme proposed in this document goes ahead it will be important that it establishes collaborative links with these complementary research programmes. Suggestions as to how that might be done are made in the section on the organisational modus operandi below.

Research Themes

Building on the above and on our literature review (Mosley and Hudson 2006b), the following are the research themes identified by ourselves and people and organisations that we interviewed as being of high priority in the aid effectiveness area. These themes are collected together in Table 1, with a superficial indication of which research 'gaps' have been backed by whom and of how we think they might be filled.

1. Data

We still do not have a good enough data-base for proper aid effectiveness research, and many of the areas of fog which continue to frustrate practitioners in this field derive from the fact that the data which are needed are either not present or else not conformable across recipient countries. We are inspired by the advances in survey method (e.g. the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey) that were achieved by the decision of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford to prioritise data collection within its portfolio, and believe (with the support, in particular, of many of the developing-country interlocutors whom we contacted) that this is also the right approach for the proposed Aid Effectiveness Research Programme. Many of the developing-country interlocutors whom we contacted, listed in Appendix 1, are firmly of the view that primary data collection of a gap-filling nature is an important priority for the Programme. All the areas of data collection which we have proposed for the Programme relate to 'research gaps' identified in the our literature review – public expenditure and its effectiveness, measures of inequality (especially vertical), measures of political violence and broader elements of the data base (including household surveys) for large, poor African economies in which key data are lacking – Sudan, DRC, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

2. Donor allocation issues

There exists a copious literature assessing the effectiveness of different *forms* of aid, but the literature on the relationship between each of these aid types is weak, and new thinking is need in reviving some of them. In particular, there is a need to understand how technical assistance can best link to other forms of aid, to better understand the costs inflicted by project aid on aid recipients, and to devise principles for determining the link between the share of aid allocated to public goods and aid effectiveness. (The need for studies both of what aid can do to alleviate global warming, and of the consequent effects of global warming on the management and organisation of aid agencies, was emphasised very strongly by donor interlocutors). Debate continues on how better country performance should be incentivised in supplementation of conditionality (or post-conditionality), and further case-study and theoretical work is needed on the dynamics of donor-recipient relationships in this context. It is also urgent to develop some of the more imaginative recent ideas for dealing with poor performance (e.g., results-based aid) and to test some of the prototype applications of these ideas. The costs of aid *volatility* are now beginning to be appreciated and assessed, but it is not clear how much flexibility will be lost through measures to reduce volatility, and creative thinking about how to minimise these costs is badly needed. Not surprisingly, the main backing for studies of this type came from donors themselves, but several developing-country representatives urged the need for studies of the 'transactions costs' inflicted by the receipt of aid flows on their effectiveness. Donor-donor issues are also on the agenda: how and to what extent to co-ordinate and harmonize donor aid strategies. Related to this is the issue of to what extent donors should focus scaled-up aid on fewer areas and perhaps fewer countries, thus reducing the transaction costs on recipients. These problems are made more complex by the emergence of new donors, e.g. in Asia. There are also issues on how to allocate aid: directly, through multilateral institutions or NGOs.

3. Recipient 'confounders' of aid effectiveness

One of the biggest worries about the impact of aid is whether it may, in certain country cases, pervert incentives and cause institutional damage. One of the most fundamental areas in which this has been alleged is tax systems, since a weak tax system is likely to perpetuate a weak and fragile state, but the evidence on this is disputed. However, parts of the literature also allege that aid flows may increase corruption, undermine the effectiveness of central and local government and reduce the quality of both public- and voluntary- sector institutions. Again, the evidence base is weak, and it is important to both improve that evidence base and, with the data thus improved, to understand in what circumstances institutional destruction is occurring. This proposed work would be complementary both with the existing work of evaluation departments, including DFID's, on institutional development, and with the proposed randomised and non-randomised country case studies proposed under 'Methodology' immediately below. This set of research priorities was supported by interlocutors both from international agencies and from developing countries, with the latter in particular preoccupied by problems of state weakness and lack of transparency at *local* government level.

The development literature has in recent years become profoundly more aware of the importance of conflict, both localised and country-wide, as a barrier to development, and also of the causes of that conflict. The challenge is now to build on that work so as to pre-empt conflict and thereby raise aid effectiveness. As previously noted, this requires a data-gathering effort particularly in the territory of minor localised conflict (which often has a more direct connection with interrupted policy reform than civil war, but may lead into civil war). It also requires work on the link between public expenditure and the probability of conflict. Finally there is a need for a special effort on the effectiveness of aid in fragile states, where the risk of conflict is most acute. This is an area with which many agencies are preoccupied

4. Methodology

It would be desirable to develop the methodology of country case-studies, not only through randomised evaluations in augmentation of work already being done by national evaluation agencies, but also through targeted case-studies of (1) aid to fragile states and (2) aid within the four 'large poor problem' countries of Africa – Ethiopia, Nigeria, DRC and Sudan.

A consortium of leading-edge donors, stimulated by CGD, is currently seeking to improve evaluation practice and establish devolved evaluation centres in Asia, Latin America and Africa: it would be desirable for the country-level work executed by the proposed DFID Aid Effectiveness Programme to be coordinated with these efforts.^{3/} There is also a need to develop the methodology of meso-level studies on aid in relation to the *private* sector, especially in the context of a projected scaling-up of aid volumes, the crowding-out effect of which is at present hotly debated.

5. Overarching issues

The aid-effectiveness field is characterised by a split not only between the macro and micro results, but also by a split between what may be called 'immediate' aid effectiveness, on which most of the data are quite favourable, and the 'long-term' impact on institutions, on which the data are poor, but the evidence is negative. Part of what needs to be done, as stated above, is to improve the data on institutional performance, but it is also important to verify whether negative long-term impacts on incentives and institutions are occurring, and what may be done to mitigate them through reforms of aid design. In general, it will be useful

^{3/} For details of this initiative, see 'When will we ever learn?' on CGD website (www.cgdev.org)

to have a methodology broad enough that it can reconcile between short-term and long-term impacts.

Secondly, there is a need for research which will put aid effectiveness into its context of other development policies. Studies are needed of the relationship between the effectiveness of aid and the effectiveness of other instruments of donor policy towards developing countries (including trade policy, international financial initiatives, migration policy, and internal labour standards). More broadly, studies are needed of the effectiveness of aid in relation to other North-South flows such as remittances. In several donor countries and notably in the UK, a strenuous attempt has been made to incorporate aid into a process of 'joined-up government' in which policies towards developing countries are integrated. The impact of policy integration on aid effectiveness is under-researched and needs further assessment.

Finally, there is a need to link aid-effectiveness research with the democratic process in aid donor societies. In our judgment, taxpayers' demand for aid is highly sensitive not only to the tax-price, but also to the quality, of the aid budget: if aid quality is perceived as improving, that can set in motion a virtuous spiral of increased public support for aid, increased political leverage of pro-aid lobbies, and higher aid volumes, and of course vice versa. Recently the question of aid quality and its determinants has been re-addressed through a substantial Centre for Global Development ; however, in all OECD countries, to the best of our knowledge, all studies of public attitudes to aid are seriously out of date,^{4/} and confined to public knowledge of and attitudes to government aid programmes. Given that DFID and other aid agencies have made a large investment in expanding public knowledge of the aid programme but have no knowledge of the impact of this publicity , we see it as an urgent priority for the new research programme to involve itself in up-to-date investigations of public attitudes towards aid, how they are formed, and how they interact with aid quantity and quality. This research would explicitly examine the influence of different media and sources of information (e.g. NGO reports on aid, aid agency publicity, events in the developing world etc) on the dynamics of public support for aid.

Table 1. Proposed Research Themes, 'Backers' and Possible Treatments of these Themes

Theme	'Knowledge gap'	Recommender	Our suggestion as to how gap should be filled
Data	1. Forms of inequality (especially vertical) 2. Indicators of institutional quality 3. Political violence 4. Public expenditure and its effectiveness 5. Additional data for focus countries (DRC, Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia)	Especially LDC representatives	For (1) (2) and (3) new surveys will be required. Some possibility for (4) and (5) of tacking new questions on to existing government surveys
Donor allocation	Budget support aid: Impact of BSA on	Some DFID	

^{4/} The last one of which we are aware in Britain was in 1977 (the Bowles report, United Kingdom 1977)

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Theme	'Knowledge gap'	Recommender	Our suggestion as to how gap should be filled
issues:	<p>effectiveness of public expenditure</p> <p>'New conditionality' proposals, e.g. performance targeting</p> <p>Determinants of trust- and conflict- relationships related to budget support</p> <p>TC and links to other aid forms,</p> <p>Global public goods, incl. global warming</p> <p>Costs associated with controlling aid volatility, and methods of reducing these costs</p> <p>Co-ordination and harmonisation issues</p> <p>Ownership (linked to voice below). Levels of ownership</p>	<p>LDC interlocutors/other donors</p> <p>LDC interlocutors/ other research agencies</p>	
Recipient confounders of effectiveness	<p>Fiscal impact of aid:</p> <p>Corruption and governance:</p> <p>Mechanisms of local voice and accountability</p> <p>Violence and fragile states</p>	LDC interlocutors	Consider all these issues in the context of scaling-up and 'diminishing returns to aid'
Methodology and overarching issues	<p>Randomised country-level evaluations (of fragile states especially)</p> <p>Private sector impact studies</p> <p>Reconciliation of long-term and short-term impacts of aid</p>	Research Institutions/donor agencies	Need to harmonise research with 'Leading Edge Consortium' on evaluation (see CGD website)
Aid policy environment	Public awareness of aid and development, and how it influenced by donor and non-donor (e.g. NGO) publicity		

In column 3 we have indicated the parties already engaged or interested in executing particular components of this research agenda. These include (in the case of country case studies and the assessment of all micro-interventions) the evaluation departments of international development agencies including DFID.

Organisational Modus Operandi

Our expectation is that the programme will operate as a Research Programme Consortium funded by DFID, linking together research partners from a range of institutions in industrialised and developing countries. The directorial and coordinating functions of this programme will be in an institution of established track record in applied development research, which may or may not be in the UK.

In Table 2 we illustrate how the main research themes which we have described divide up across research methodologies and between locations.

Table 2 Proposed Research Programme : Methodological Organisation

(1) Activity	(2) Comparative studies using international databases, could be executed from any site	(3) Studies requiring in-country fieldwork	(4) Country case-studies	(5) Interested parties and additional remarks
(i)Data collection		1. Forms of inequality (especially vertical) 2. Indicators of institutional quality 3. Political violence 4. Public expenditure and its effectiveness 5. Additional data for focus countries (DRC, Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia)		
(ii)Donor allocation Issues	Aid allocation issues (TC, budget support, global public goods, volatility) Prioritisation between aid modalities New aid effectiveness ideas e.g. results-	Trust and conditionality/ PRSP negotiations: in-country interviews		Initiated by CGD, collaboration virtually

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(1) Activity	(2) Comparative studies using international databases, could be executed from any site	(3) Studies requiring in-country fieldwork	(4) Country case-studies	(5) Interested parties and additional remarks
	<p>based aid</p> <p>Aid/private sector interactions.</p>			<p>mandatory. Also note interest of donors already practising 'results-based aid'</p>
(iii) Recipient confounders of aid effectiveness	<p>Aid, tax effort and fiscal management: cross-country comparison</p> <p>Economic policy choice, political violence and policy instability: comparative study</p>	<p>Development of improved governance/ institutional performance indicators</p> <p>Fragile states: on-the- ground studies and data collection</p>	<p>Aid, tax effort and fiscal management: country case studies</p> <p>Economic policy, political violence and policy instability: country case-studies</p>	<p>Need for collaboration with CFS (Sussex)</p> <p>Fragile states a research priority for many donors (e.g. SADEV, World Bank) and research institutions (e.g. ODI), collaborative work required</p>
(iv) New targets and Methodologies	<p>Aid and private sector studies</p>		<p>Randomised case-study evaluations within fragile states</p> <p>Case-studies of 'large poor African states' (DRC, Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia)</p>	<p>CGD future priority, collaboration needed</p>
(v) Overarching issues	<p>Reconciliation of short-term regressions and</p>			

Main Research Questions

(1) Activity	(2) Comparative studies using international databases, could be executed from any site	(3) Studies requiring in-country fieldwork	(4) Country case-studies	(5) Interested parties and additional remarks
	long-term studies of institutional impact etc Study of links between aid and other policy instruments Studies of public attitudes to aid, and of influence of different information channels on these attitudes			

It is assumed that the successful research consortium will be composed of five or six institutions, of which at least three will be located in developing countries. It is expected that that majority of programmes which require field research (those listed in columns 3 and 4) will be executed either within the southern partners who participate in the research consortium, or within neighbouring countries to these.

The proposed RCEA is not primarily a programme to build southern research capacity. However, over the five-year life of the RCEA, it is expected that southern institutions will develop their research capability, especially in the field of survey technique, impact assessment analysis and the feeding through of ideas into policy,

An important issue for the new programme is to establish appropriate collaborative relationships with other agencies interested in the same field. The agencies which have already an interest in themes which we have delineated, or which have indicated that they intend to take such an interest in the future, are indicated in the fifth column of the table.

Dissemination of research results will be a key issue for the new programme. The research results need to be aimed at a range of potential target audiences within aid agencies, governments and independent research institutions and to make use of an number of channels including the media, web-based resources, workshops, meetings and written material. In particular, it is expected that data generated from part (i) of the research programme would be made universally available to researchers.

2 | **References**

2 | References

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A1 | **Persons Consulted**

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 Nick York, Evaluation
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 Alexis Ferrand, Economic Adviser
 Claire Vallings, Economic Adviser, DRC
 Richard Thomas, Senior Governance advisor, CRD
 Graham Symons, Economic Adviser, Latin America Department
 Tom Beloe, Manila Conference on Aid Effectiveness
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 Kripali Manek
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 Gwyneth Chittleborough, Uganda, Economic Adviser
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 Hans Beck, Vietnam, Economic Adviser

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Ministry of Planning and Development, Mozambique

Pedro Couto, Vice Minister for Finance
Channing Arndt, National Directorate of Studies and Policy Analysis

AERC (African Economic Research Consortium)

Joseph Karugia, Manager, Research

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Pauline Adebusoye

COR/C&C

Anaia Bewa, Executive Director/Senior Consultant

Debt Relief International

Alison Johnson, Programme Manager
Matthew Martin, Director

CGD

Ruth Levine, Director of Programs and Senior Fellow (with Todd Moss, Dennis de Tray and Steve Radelet)

Pronatura International

Guy Reinaud, President of Pro-Natura International
Dr. Norma Bubier, Head of Pro-Natura UK

Oxfam

Kate Raworth, Senior Researcher

Action Aid

Jesse Griffiths, Policy Officer: Aid & Accountability (with Patrick Watt and Jasmine Burnely)

Eurodad

Lucy Hayes, Policy and Advocacy Officer (aid, poverty and governance)

FinMark Trust

Mark Napier, FinMark Trust (South Afr), Chief Executive Officer
Jeremy Leach, FinMark Trust (South Afr), Executive Director

ODI

Tony Killick, ODI, IEDG Senior Research Associate

SOAS

Dr Jonathon di John, SOAS, Lecturer in Development Studies

LSE Crisis States Research Centre

James Putzel, LSE Crisis States Research Centre, Director

University of Copenhagen

Finn Tarp, Department of Economics, Professor of Development Economics and Coordinator of the Development Economics Research Group (DERG)

SustainAbility

John Elkington, SustainAbility, Founder and Chief Entrepreneur

Ashmore Investment

Jan Dehn, Head of Research

Other

Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco, independent consultant, Mozambique

A2 | **Summary of Individual Responses**

A2 | Summary of Individual Responses

The Case for the Programme: Some people were concerned that there was no need for such a programme, arguing that “More research is not needed”, but that the existing literature should rather be synthesised to make policy recommendations. (Quite apart from original research, there does appear to be a demand for some agency to summarise and disseminate current research developments both from academic research and other agencies). However, the majority of voices were not of this view, but welcomed such a programme. Several people did raise concerns about “issues of independence and conflict of interest”. Clearly the research programme will need to address this, although as the literature points out, these do not go away even if outside reports are commissioned to consultants who might repeatedly work for the agency commissioning the research. One comment from someone outside DFID based in the south illustrates a degree of enthusiasm “I am pleased to hear that DFID wants to work more on the aid effectiveness issue” and several pointed to the fact that this would appear to fill a gap.

On Harmonisation and Co-Ordination Between Donors: Several people noted differences between donors on their objectives and modus operandi. One respondent raised the question of what the aid effectiveness debate looks like in other parts of the world, particularly outside the Anglo-American perspective. One of the reasons for possible differences lies with the fact that different donors may pursue different objectives of which growth is just one. Others include “increased equality, consumption by the poor” and measures of social welfare in general. Another respondent emphasised that the appearance of new donors – China was mentioned – makes the task of co-ordinating and harmonising donor response potentially more difficult. The point was also raised that some donors have different preferences with respect to modalities: “How to integrate some donors who prefer the project approach but still give substantial aid to countries like ...”

Aid Modalities: Several respondents emphasised the need for research on the effectiveness of different aid modalities and instruments: “It would be helpful to have an evidence based framework of which instrument, or combination of instruments, works in different settings”. Another mentioned “the issues of differing modalities for different stages of development as well as issues associated with scaling up are pertinent”.

What Level of Analysis: These responses illustrated a wider diversity of views. One noted that cross section regressions ‘have their place’ but need to be complemented by e.g. individual case studies. Another referred to a wide volume of (i) macro research on aid and growth and (ii) project evaluations but a dearth of analysis on sectoral impact (in e.g. Mozambique). Another view was that the programme should not engage in Collier Dollar type econometric analysis, but that this can be left to others. Yet another called for more work on the specific long term macroeconomic impacts of aid, particularly within a country specific context. On the other hand one respondent called for work on “how to allocate resources across countries? Multivariate analysis of aid productivity across countries (governance, etc.)”. All this seems to illustrate that work is relevant at all levels, but this does not answer the question as to whether the new programme should be equally engaged in all of these.

Global Public Goods: This was a common theme. Respondents wanted to know the returns to investment in global public goods. Within this context the need to deal with climate change was mentioned. “[because of] the urgency of climate change, immediate research is needed in how to quickly move into ‘payment for environmental services including carbon sequestration’ as strategies for the developing world to stop deforestation. This is really

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urgent.” Another emphasised the need to integrate global public goods within the context of specific recipient countries.

Ownership: This too was a common theme in different ways. People from the South emphasised it as being important but so did those from donor agencies in the North. One respondent noted that we need to research “How aid allocations can be more responsive to local needs in settings where governments do not represent key populations?” calling for qualitative research and case studies. This raises an issue of where the government is not fully representative of everyone in the country. Another (donor) noted “There is need for work on other agendas, such as human rights, empowerment of the poor, and democratization.” Another respondent said “Once again, no one asks specifically, does the national strategy take into consideration that there will be groups of people who are not of the same ‘tribe’ or grouping as those in power in Government and their needs will be neglected or worse, they are actively discriminated against”. This raises the question of to whom does ownership refer? Governments, the poor the aid is intended to benefit or both?

Capacity Building and Absorptive Capacity: One respondent mentioned: “I would really be interested in learning more about absorption...” This was linked to social factors. in particular the impact of aid on institutions and society and its values and norms of behaviour. The implicit concern is that some absorptive limits relate to the negative impact on institutions and corruption.

Public Awareness: Several respondents mentioned the importance of public support for development. Potentially research can contribute to this in three ways (i) by providing authoritative, credible and independent assessment of aid effectiveness in general, (ii) by providing information which enhances the effectiveness of aid itself and finally (iii) by providing an understanding of the determinants of public support for aid and other development expenditures.

Data: On the specific issue of data one DFID respondent emphasised that significant data exists, even within DFID, pertaining to individual countries which could form the basis of a new and valuable cross country data set. Another emphasised the need for long-term data, i.e. data which will allow analysis of the medium term effects of aid – this was echoed in others comments.

Modes of Delivery: One respondent called for analysis of “the relative effectiveness of multilateral and bilateral activities”. A variation on this is the role of NGOs, one respondent emphasised the “issue of “partnership programming” (channelling a part of aid through partners), and more generally the role of non-state actors”. Possible related to this one asked “What level of aid is provided outside agreed development frameworks in the country? What impact does such approach have on development in the countries receiving the support?”

A3 | **Terms of Reference**

A3 | Terms of Reference

Scoping a Long-Term Research Programme on Aid Effectiveness

Purpose

Internal discussions have highlighted that aid effectiveness is an area in which DFID's Central Research Department could potentially fund a longer term research programme that could play an important role in informing the policy debate over the next 5 years, in the context of changing aid modalities and scaling up of aid delivery.

CRD background

Central Research Department has moved to a model of funding large, long term research programmes (typically £2-7m over five years) on areas highlighted in the research funding framework 2004-2007. Research funded by CRD is considered as an investment in the global pool of knowledge, and has a long-term focus, should be based on principles of high quality academic thinking, policy relevance, a strong component of engagement and substantial involvement of southern research institutes. The current model is the Research Programme Consortium (RPC) which combines Northern and Southern partners, with a lead institution playing a co-ordinating role, though other models may be more appropriate for new research commissioned. Capacity building should also play an important role in creating an equal relationship between partners. The research produced should be valuable to DFID and other policy actors, and have a clear commitment to engagement and communication.

Objectives

There is already large amount of research on aid effectiveness being undertaken, and to add value any new programme will have to be based on a well-defined set of research questions that are proven to be both i) new and innovative, and ii) in clear demand by policymakers, especially in the South. A priority should be establishing the demand of Southern policymakers and researchers, and consideration of capacity strengths and constraints in developing countries. Proposals from researchers interested in bidding for the programme will have to show evidence of the qualities outlined above and there will be scope for innovation in methodology, communications/advocacy and capacity building strategies.

Process

We require a consultant(s) to assist with the scoping process by establishing answers to i) and ii) above by:

Conducting a review of ongoing work by DFID, other donors, NGOs and the international research community to identify gaps in the literature (and data constraints) and new angles for research.

Interviewing donors, policymakers, NGOs and researchers in the South and North to establish what the demand is for such research and what questions should be included.

This will be used to develop a call for expressions of interest (EOI) for inviting bids for the programme. A reference group is being formed to guide the discussions on this programme, and will review the outputs of the scoping exercise.

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The overall report should provide a background in terms of the current state of play in academic thinking on aid effectiveness, and describe other ongoing research by donors/academics/NGOs that is complementary or potentially overlapping to this potential work. It should clearly outline what the key problem and research questions are. It should provide guidance on what kind of methodologies and approaches are expected (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, case study, data requirements). It may also include innovative ideas on the potential structure of such a research programme, and its outputs in terms of acting as an international knowledge network, e.g. some kind of regular reporting of research headlines, in the ID21 model, for DFID and other stakeholders.

The first meeting of the reference group identified broad themes that could form the basis of thinking around the new programme (though these represent a starting point, and should be fully tested and amended if necessary):

New aid modalities – Budget Support (follow up on some of the research questions from the joint evaluation), Technical Co-operation, impact of different modalities, critical values of modalities, institutional comparative advantage, aid working in different environments (e.g. fragile states, post conflict)

Scaling up, how to increase absorptive capacity, getting the balance right between social and productive sectors expenditure, impact of user fees abolition.

Economics research into aid-growth and aid poverty linkages (a voice to counter that of recent dominant macro-economics debate), impact evaluation including randomised where appropriate, data issues and quantitative research (i.e. Debt: Growth Ratios).

Consideration of data issues, and a sense of the gaps in terms of methodology will also be useful. Any successful bid will likely offer a range of disciplinary specialisms (e.g. Economics, Governance, Social Development, Statistics) and an indication of the balance of such disciplines can inform the panel decision when short-listing EOIs. The reference group will read the full report but an executive summary of no more than four pages is also required, in order to circulate the report more widely

CRD (Catherine Porter) will:

Provide a preliminary list of key contacts in DFID, other Donors, Governments, Academics and NGOs for the consultation- the consultant will be expected to build on this and use their own contacts.

Provide information on DFID-funded research in potentially overlapping areas (e.g. Fragile States, Institutions for pr-poor growth, [other work commissioned by PD]) as well as background documents on aid effectiveness research in DFID.

Provide guidance and previous examples of research call format.

Assist with the writing of the background note providing comments on first draft. At least one initial meeting and one meeting to discuss the first draft are envisaged.

Outputs:

By end Aug (TBC)

A comprehensive literature review (not exceeding thirty pages) of published work on aid effectiveness, with an executive summary of no more than four pages.

List of people consulted

An overview of what other donors are funding or planning to fund in the area of aid effectiveness.

A report outlining the main research questions for the programme based on the dual enquiries of one) whether there is potential demand for such a programme, particularly from developing countries and policy actors; and two) a gap in knowledge for these broad themes, to fund a large (i.e. five year) programme on aid effectiveness. If so:

By 15 Sept (TBC)

A background note (Two pages) which will form the main analytical component for expressions of interest/research call

Meeting with reference group to finalise background note

Time period: twenty days over ten weeks. We aim to put out the research call in October. To start as soon as possible

Supporting documentation:

Research Funding Framework;

Bi-lateral programme call for tender document

Catherine Porter
CRD
August 2006