


KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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Who are the main actors in the UK's development cooperation?

DFID leads on strategy setting and funding decisions for the UK's development policy

The UK currently has a minority government headed by the Conservative Party under Prime Minister Theresa May and supported by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Northern Ireland. The prime minister can exercise significant influence over development policy, for example through funding commitments for international initiatives, though the degree of involvement varies in practice.

The **Department for International Development** (DFID) leads on strategy setting and funding decisions for the UK's development policy. DFID has been headed by the Secretary of State for International Development, Penny Mordaunt, since November 2017. DFID's Executive Management Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary for International Development, Matthew Rycroft, since January 2018, oversees implementation and is accountable for ensuring that DFID divisions deliver results consistent with ministerial priorities. DFID has about 2,700 employees and implements programs in 28 priority countries through various regional programs (for more details, see question three: 'How does the UK spend its ODA?').

Cross-government oversight: While DFID is responsible for how it spends ODA, the UK has several cross-government groups that exercise oversight. The **Cross-Ministerial Group**, co-chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Secretary of State for International Development, scrutinizes ODA spending from a 'value-for-money' standpoint across all government departments. The **Senior Officials Group on ODA**, a director-level group co-chaired by the UK Treasury and DFID, monitors spending relative to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target and promote collaboration across government to help ensure it is reached. The last group, announced in March 2018, is a **Ministerial Committee** overseeing governance of cross-government spending and is chaired by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Other government departments: Recent conservative governments have prioritized allocating more ODA through other ministerial departments and cross-government funds, which has resulted in DFID's controlling 72% of ODA in 2017, down from 86% in 2014. This elevates the importance of actors outside of DFID, particularly the

Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, which largely funds climate-related projects; the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**, which focuses on strengthening global peace, security, governance, and prosperity in support of the 'UK Aid Strategy' in 2017; and the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, which funds action on ('Key Question 5: 'How is the UK ODA budget structured?').

Parliament: The UK Parliament is composed of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Within the House of Commons, 'select committees' review the work of ministerial departments. The International Development Committee scrutinizes DFID's policies and spending and monitors organizations that receive DFID funding. In recent years the International Development Committee has called upon DFID to take more active oversight over ODA spent by other departments and warned against its economic development strategy focusing too closely on national interests, among other issues. Reporting to the International Development Committee but sitting outside of government is the **Independent Commission for Aid Impact**, which produces in-depth reviews of the UK's development governance, policy, and financing.

In addition to select committees, All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are influential in policymaking, bringing together members of Parliament, the private sector, and civil society organizations (CSOs) on key policy issues, including on international development (e.g., the APPG on the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development, the APPG on Global Education, the APPG on Global Health, the APPG on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, and the APPG on Agriculture and Food for Development).

Civil society: CSOs in the UK play a strong role in implementing development funding and shaping the agenda. They frequently engage with the government through formal and informal consultation processes. Bond, the UK's membership body for development CSOs, has more than 400 and has been key in maintaining the UK's strong commitment to development. DFID provides funding to CSOs, both through its country offices and as direct funding through DFID headquarters.

Academia, think tanks, and the media: Academic institutions (e.g., the London School of Economics, Sussex

University’s Institute of Development Studies, and Birmingham’s International Development Department) and think tanks (e.g., the Center for Global Development and the Overseas Development Institute) play a significant role in the UK’s development policy. British medical journals (e.g., ‘The Lancet’, ‘The BMJ’, ‘PloS Medicine’) place a strong emphasis on global health issues. The online version of the newspaper ‘The Guardian’ has a designated section on development topics.

How is bilateral funding programmed?

Programming of DFID’s bilateral funding is highly decentralized

Programming of DFID’s bilateral funding is largely decentralized, as DFID’s country offices mostly manage program development. Programming is based on the

Treasury’s Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), which sets DFID’s budget normally for three to five years. Based on the CSR, DFID sets out high-level priorities in its multi-year Business Plan.

Reflecting the Business Plan’s priorities, DFID’s country offices develop Operational Plans (OPs), which guide DFID’s bilateral cooperation within the partner country. An OP includes indicative multi-year budgets for ‘strategic pillars’ (e.g., health), including ‘results targets’ to be achieved by the end of the OP period. Once the OP is finalized, country offices will still have an opportunity to make adjustments during the annual budget process, based on the overall multi-year budget framework set by the CSR and DFID’s Business Plan. In addition, DFID headquarters originates and manages programs that go beyond the scope of a single country, such as specific thematic and regional initiatives.

THE UK’S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

