

Summary of external feedback on the draft Evaluation Policy received through public consultation process, December 9th 2008 to March 3rd 2009.

DFID is very grateful to those who took the time to send in extensive feedback to the draft policy and topic list during the consultation period. This has helped to reshape the policy now published by DFID's Evaluation Department.

We received feedback from a diverse range of interested organisations and individuals. This included NGOs, international institutions, policy think tanks, other country governments, evaluation specialists and consultancies.

The following is a summary of the comments received, not the entire list.

	Issue raised	Relevant paragraph references
1	Availability of data – stronger wording on how DFID will address that.	par 42-44
2	Balancing demands in policy could weaken evaluation – so you need to prioritise quest for one aspect. Eg Accountability versus learning Eg Independence versus partnership OK to say at the outset that evaluation is seeking to do one more than another, just be up front about it.	box 1, par 56
3	Standards – make DFID's own based on international that exist (some in draft).	par 48-50
4	Concern around focusing on technical, experimental methodologies not taking into account wider contexts, relationships. Concern around the hard data and quest for numbers hindering use of softer data thereby reducing what we actually learn.	par 57-59
5	Feedback mechanisms – need a learning loop that is inclusive of all parties involved (those impacted by aid at local level too). Allow them to comment on findings and feed their inputs into resulting decision making. It's felt that DFID is not strong enough on follow up generally – should be more focused wider development community and national learning.	box 1, par 42-47
6	Policy could more clearly state what it intends to achieve.	throughout
7	Country led – government evaluation presents different challenges to those desired by donors – in terms of democratic governance. National politics puts a totally different angle on evaluation processes, findings and what happens with recommendations. So beforehand need to put in place controls around political sensitivity.	par 46, 50

8	Culture in DFID needs to change to avoid any resistance to evaluation processes.	par 35-39
9	Partnerships – the driver for this vague commitment not clear. Who do we mean? What for? DFID needs to improve/diversify in-country relationships. Statement needed on addressing this issue.	chapter 3
10	Reference to cross-Whitehall collaboration on evaluation needs to be strengthened. Say something also about levels of competence elsewhere across UK government?	par 28-30
11	Ensure close relationship is build between evaluation and M&E systems. Interrelationship and common areas of learning identified and systematically taken account of.	par 40-47
12	Stronger statement needed on relationship between evidence found and funding decisions thereafter made.	box 1, par 45-47
13	Doesn't speak language of learning. This needs simplicity – and always ensure evaluation language is understandable for partners – avoid being too technical and reducing the accessibility (and usability) of evaluation findings.	chapter 4
14	Use evaluation (DFID) to influence at the international level.	par 2
15	Follow up to evaluation needs to be strengthened, to challenge assumptions that evaluations are inaccessible/impenetrable (one CEO having said they have never read an evaluation that's been of any use). DFID could do better follow up activity to increase value of evaluations (better communication, more inclusive learning 'loops', proactive follow up). Learning needs to be a cyclical process.	par 40-47
16	See evaluation processes themselves as a means to increase capacity (learn by doing) for partners and staff new to area.	par 21, 25, 27, 41, 53, 60
17	Say more about incentives.	par 39-40
18	Make evaluation have something meaningful in it for all stakeholders. And always feedback to those consulted.	par 26, 41, 46-47
19	Local contextual knowledge and flexibility. Use national expertise and knowledge. Particularly look at what's possible and not a threat to progress and security in conflict/post conflict situations. Link evaluation plan with conflict analysis that already exists – or needs to be carried out and evaluation can help with.	par 8, 22-27, 50
20	EVD needs a stronger quality assurance role.	par 51-56
21	Partnership about competing as well as common perspectives	chapter 3
22	Statements in policy are too general, insufficiently precise.	throughout
23	Evaluation should contribute to 'shaping' (not making) of public policy, in addition to feeding in to DFID policy.	throughout
24	Evaluation should also examine drivers and resisters to change and enhance the role of judgement in evaluation findings. Focus should not necessarily be on more evaluation but on higher quality and traction.	chapter 4 – subsection collective learning

