United Kingdom, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

UK-FCDO (71.9)
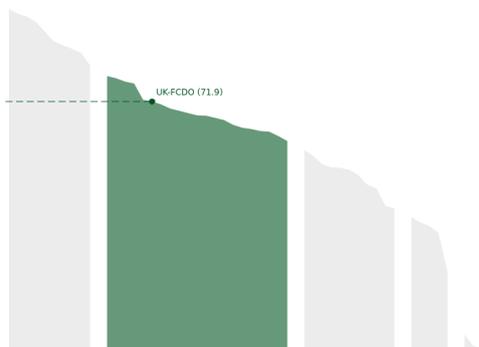
SCORE: 71.9	POSITION: 16/50	2022 GOOD

OVERVIEW

In 2020 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) merged with the Department for International Development (DFID) to form the new Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) which is now the main bilateral aid agency in the United Kingdom (UK). It oversees a decreasing share of the UK's official development assistance (ODA) due to both the UK spending cuts in 2022 and because an increasing amount of the UK's ODA is managed by other government departments.

FCDO's ODA in 2020 was £10.6bn according to the UK official statistics, 73% of the UK's total ODA spend. This figure has decreased from 77% in 2019. The UK's ODA includes overseas diplomacy related costs in ODA eligible countries (frontline diplomatic activity) and some contributions to multilateral organisations. FCDO also spends significant amounts of ODA on cross-government funds, including the Prosperity Fund and the Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund. FCDO has taken on DFID's legacy IATI data. It has archived FCO's organisational file but continues to update both legacy FCO and legacy DFID's activities and its own renamed organisational file. We compare FCDO with previous DFID Index performance since most of the activities and the data management and publication systems were previously managed by DFID.

2020 VERY GOOD	2018 VERY GOOD	2016 VERY GOOD	2015 VERY GOOD	2014 VERY GOOD	2013 VERY GOOD

Organisational planning and commitments
11.2 / 15

Finance and budgets
18.4 / 25

Project attributes
13.1 / 20

Joining-up development data
17.7 / 20

Performance
11.5 / 20

ANALYSIS

The FCDO has performed significantly worse in the 2022 Index compared with DFID's performance in 2020. Its score is 13.5 points below DFID's 2020 score and it fell 7 places to 16th in the ranking. It is now in the 'good' category, dropping out of 'very good' for the first time since we introduced the categories in 2013.

Compared to DFID's scores FCDO underperforms across all components. Looking at the Finance and budgets component, FCDO disclosed full forward-looking organisational budgets but no disaggregated country budgets at the time of review. For its activity data it scored less well than DFID in previous years with activity budgets disclosed in around 74% of IATI activities. Its transparency of commitments data has also fallen to 70%.

For the joining-up development data component FCDO published close to full standardised codes and references for activity identification in areas such as aid, finance and flow types. Where it makes considerable losses is in the disclosure of procurement contracts and tenders, which are disclosed in less than 35% of IATI activities. However, it scores well in the new networked data indicator.

Across the organisational planning and commitments component FCDO has decreased its transparency by failing to disclose organisation and country strategy documents which caused

its score to drop. It did however have in date annual reports and policy documents available in the IATI Standard. In addition, the project attributes component lost scores across sub-national locations which were only published for 20% of activities, and descriptions which failed our quality checks for IATI data.

FCDO lost a full five points (in comparison to DFID in 2020) for the performance component. This was due to lower transparency for its pre-project impact appraisals, which failed our data quality checks as well as decreased disclosure of results (40%), reviews and evaluations (70%) and objectives (83%) for FCDO's activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- FCDO should ensure that it publishes up to date documentation on its organisational and planning approach. Following the merger, FCDO delayed the publication of its overall strategy documents for over two years. This resulted in poor transparency of the new department's main aid goals.
- FCDO should improve the quality and comprehensiveness of its financial data such as activity commitments and country budgets.
- FCDO should improve the publication of key performance documents such as pre-project impact appraisals and reviews and evaluations.
- FCDO should publish consistent contract and tender awards information for all of its activities.
- FCDO should improve the quality of its description information across its activities by ensuring that they provide an overview of the implementing activities and the target groups of projects and programmes.

DEEP DIVE

Organisational planning and commitments

Score: 11.2 / 15

ABOUT COMPONENT

This component looks at the overall aims and strategy of an organisation. We check for any public commitments to aid transparency. We also make sure audits are published and if planning documents have been published, including by parent organisations (including national governments) where applicable. We make note of any Freedom of Information laws and critically, we make sure that organisations have tried to make their information easy to access and understand. You should not have to be an expert in open data to be able to find and use this information.
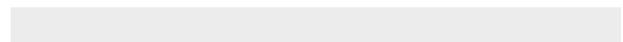
Quality of FOI legislation — Score: 1.88

Accessibility — Score: 1.88

Organisation strategy — Score: 0
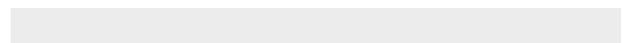
Annual report — Score: 1.87

Allocation policy — Score: 1.87

Procurement policy — Score: 1.87

Strategy (country/sector) or Memorandum of Understanding — Score: 0

Audit — Score: 1.87

Finance and budgets

Score: 18.4 / 25

ABOUT COMPONENT

This component is critical to allow you and anyone else to follow the money. We expect to find the total budget of the organisation being assessed, right down to individual transactions for each development activity. In particular, forward-looking budgets from donors are important for partner country governments to be able to plan their own future finances.

Total organisation budget — Score: 4.17

Disaggregated budget — Score: 0
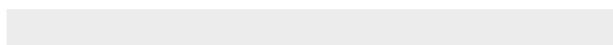
Project budget — Score: 2.76

Project budget document — Score: 2.87

Commitments — Score: 2.67

Disbursements and expenditures — Score: 3.05

Budget Alignment — Score: 2.89

Project attributes

Score: 13.1 / 20

ABOUT COMPONENT

This component refers to descriptive, non-financial data, including basics like the title and description of a project. Information like this is important as it is often the entry point for data users to quickly understand what a project is about. We also look for other information that helps to put a project in context, such as its sub-national location or the sector that the project deals with, for example, education or agriculture.

Title — Score: 1

Description — Score: 1.5

Planned dates — Score: 1

Actual dates — Score: 0.96

Current status — Score: 1
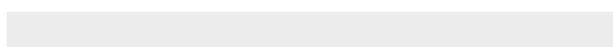
Contact details — Score: 1

Sectors — Score: 2.5

Sub-national location — Score: 1.64

Conditions — Score: 0
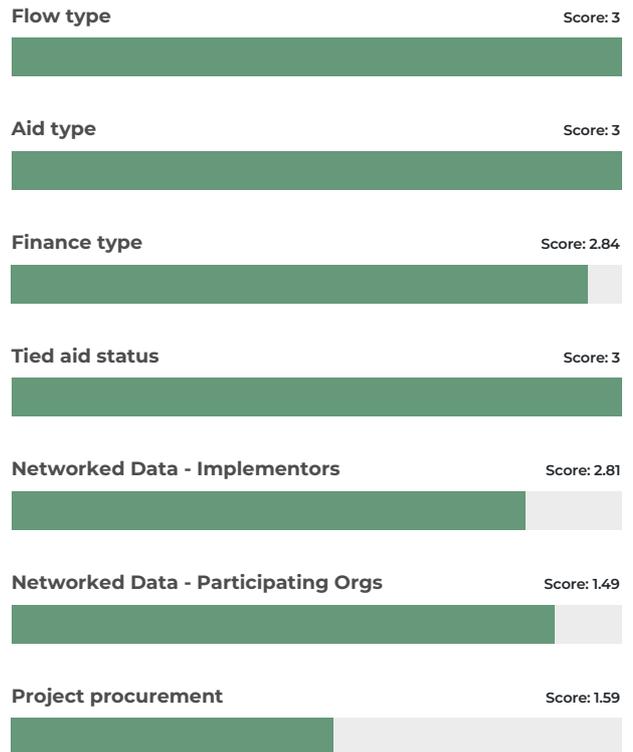
Unique ID — Score: 2.5

Joining-up development data

Score: 17.7 / 20

ABOUT COMPONENT

This component looks at how well an organisation's data is able to be linked and connected with other bits of information. There is a diverse nature of flows, activities and actors within the development sector. Aid and development finance data needs to be effectively linked and connected with the rest to provide a full picture for the user. This can be particularly important for partner country governments, which need to integrate information on aid with their own budgets and systems.

Flow type   Score: 3

Aid type   Score: 3

Finance type   Score: 2.84

Tied aid status   Score: 3

Networked Data - Implementors   Score: 2.81

Networked Data - Participating Orgs   Score: 1.49

Project procurement   Score: 1.59

Performance

Score: 11.5 / 20

ABOUT COMPONENT

This component refers to the essential data and documents that assess whether a project is on track or has been achieved. This includes things like baseline surveys, progress against targets, mid-term reviews and end of project evaluations. This information is important to hold aid organisations to account and also to share knowledge with others on what worked and what did not during a project.

Objectives   Score: 4.45

Pre-project impact appraisals   Score: 0

Reviews and evaluations   Score: 4.01

Results   Score: 3.01