



Department
for International
Development

Operational Plan 2011-2016

United Nations and Commonwealth Department

Updated December 2014

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Introduction

In 2013 the UK became the first G7 country to meet the United Nations target of spending 0.7% of gross national income on international development. The Department for International Development (DFID) uses that investment to help countries to lift themselves out of poverty and leave poverty behind. Operational plans set out to the public how we plan to deliver results across policy areas and for every country we work in. These plans clearly explain why, and how, DFID is targeting its resources and what we expect to achieve; covering the period up until March 2016.

DFID is focused on spending in the right ways, on the right things, in the right places. The portfolio of our projects is already shifting to deliver a more coherent, focused and ambitious approach to economic development. We are helping to build strong and investable business environments in developing countries and improving access to finance for entrepreneurs.

Improving the prospects for girls and women in developing countries is a priority. Investing in girls and women is the smart thing to do, as well as the right thing to do. By unleashing their potential, we see returns for girls and women themselves, their families and communities, and for their economies and countries. No country can successfully develop if it leaves half its population behind.

Life-saving humanitarian assistance remains one of DFID's most fundamental responsibilities. When disaster strikes or conflict erupts we are first on the ground to support the most vulnerable people. We are also increasing our efforts to help those countries that are at higher risk of natural disasters to become more resilient in the first place.

DFID continues to drive value for money in everything we do on behalf of the British taxpayer. We have improved our procurement and programme management, increased our internal audit oversight and we are ensuring that staff have the skills to deliver the Department's priorities.

On the international stage we are working hard to agree a new set of global development goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire next year. We are determined to secure a clear and inspiring set of goals for the post 2015 development framework that leave no one behind.

Increasingly we will take new and innovative approaches and we will work with new partners. This will include businesses who are increasingly major development players. During the Secretary of State's time as co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, DFID played a key role in encouraging different development actors to work together and use internationally agreed principles for aid and development effectiveness.

As our operational plans set out, our approach to international development is ambitious and innovative. We are determined to ensure that every pound DFID spends has the biggest possible impact on the ground. Ultimately by investing in developing countries, we can end aid dependency for good and build a better, more prosperous world for us all.

Context

The Policy and Global Programmes Directorate;

- delivers development results at scale,
- influences change in the international system,
- manages international partnerships,
- develops new solutions, policy products, knowledge and instruments in support of Ministerial priorities and development outcomes.

It is made up of the Policy, International Relations and Research and Evidence divisions and the Global Funds Department.

The Policy Division delivers development results at scale through multi-country projects to tackle specific development problems where this approach offers better value for money than working through individual country offices. The division influences change on matters such as anti-corruption work, international tax reform, supporting girls and women and climate change. It does this across the UK Government, internationally, with civil society and academia. The division supports new policy development and provides technical knowledge to overseas programmes. The division manages major partnerships and funding to a wide variety of civil society organisations, and ensures DFID learns from their insights.

International Relations Division delivers development results at scale by providing funding through the European Union, the United Nations and the Commonwealth. It influences change by leading UK work on the post-2015 development agenda, financing for development and working closely with other governments, the G7, the G20, philanthropic foundations and others to help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our collective development efforts. The division manages partnerships with the United Nations, European Union and Commonwealth development institutions, working with them to improve the development effectiveness of our contributions.

Research and Evidence Division concentrates on longer term research to produce new knowledge, both to support UK action and inform development work more generally. The Research and Evidence Division also helps to ensure quality evaluations of DFID projects and that the technical knowledge of DFID staff stays current.

The Global Funds Department delivers results at scale as the department responsible for managing the UK's contribution to international funds on health and education. It manages our partnerships with the funds and uses our involvement to influence the work of the funds.

The United Nations and Commonwealth Department (UNCD) is part of International Relations Division. It influences policy and reform in the UN Development System and individual UN agencies. The department manages major partnerships with the United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth. It delivers results at scale through its UN and Commonwealth partners who play important roles in tackling a range of complex global challenges, both at the international level and in-country: preventing conflict, tackling climate change, responding to humanitarian disasters and promoting development.

Vision

Overview

Our vision is of a stronger UN and Commonwealth that deliver development results more effectively for poor people, including in conflict and crisis affected countries. We work to influence policy and reform across the UN Development System and with individual UN agencies.

UNCD's aims are to:

Ensure value for money through effective influencing and reform of UN and Commonwealth institutions and procedures.

Deliver results by helping to ensure effective programme management by scrutinising and improving the performance and effectiveness of the agencies we support, strengthening the UN system as a whole.

Ensure an effective department, managing and motivating staff well and ensuring compliance with DFID processes.

The Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) has underlined certain key areas for improvement and we have also recently reassessed our activities against DFID's wider priorities. We will therefore especially focus in 2014/15 on:

- Managing risk on our programmes more effectively and providing even greater assurance on the funds for which we are responsible
- Strengthening agencies' accountability to their governing boards and transparency of their expenditure
- Embedding results-based management in the agencies
- Improving human resource management and agency leadership

We will continue to look to mainstream climate change, conflict/fragility and gender issues in agencies' work and we will ensure we are equipped to respond to the changing UN landscape as the post-2015 agenda becomes clearer and as relationships with, and the roles of, emerging powers in the UN system continue to evolve.

We will use influencing opportunities with both the agencies and UK membership of Boards to:

- Deliver MAR reforms, through stronger relationships with key agencies and more active use of Executive Boards.
- Combine institutional reform (UNCD) and policy objectives (Policy Division and Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department) for coherent messaging.
- Bring country level lessons (DFID Country Offices and advisory networks) into agency and membership influencing.
- Influence improved performance and leadership, including efficiencies through greater joint UN working.
- Use funding to provide further incentives for change wherever possible.

Alignment to DFID and wider UK government priorities

UNCD will work closely with other government departments both at a mission level and also in London to deliver our objectives. We will work closely with policy teams within DFID and across Whitehall to drive forward wider policy objectives. We will work closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on our Commonwealth work, including the delivery of results through the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Trust.

Results 2011/12-2015/16

Headline results (those with a * directly attributable to DFID. In all other cases, DFID is contributing to the results)

Pillar / Strategic priority	Indicator	Baseline	Progress towards results (including year)	Expected results (end year included)
Poverty, vulnerability, nutrition and hunger	Number of people receiving services from International Fund for Agricultural Development		78.7 million (2012)	98.6 million (2013), surpassing 2015 target of 90 million, as reported in annual Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) in December 2014
Health	Number of children benefitting from two doses of vitamin A supplement (UNICEF)		506 million (2012)	
Health	Number of female condoms procured (UNFPA)		17.5 million (2012)	
Education	Number of education ministry officials trained and coached in strategic planning and management (UNESCO)			
To improve the performance and effectiveness of the agencies we work with, UNCD's work is focused on addressing the key reform priorities identified by the Multilateral Aid Review and on influencing cross-UN policy development that impacts on agency performance and efficiency.	<p>Effective and transparent UN and Commonwealth results management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems (MAR strategic and performance management)</p> <p>UN agencies clearly demonstrate improved efficiency and cost control (MAR cost control)</p> <p>More effective UN delivery (incl. coordination and leadership), particularly at country level and humanitarian emergencies (MAR contribution to results)</p>	<p>No. of agencies assessed as unsatisfactory = 1; weak = 10; satisfactory = 1</p> <p>No. of agencies assessed as unsatisfactory = 1; weak = 10; satisfactory = 1</p> <p>No. of agencies assessed as unsatisfactory = 2; weak = 8; satisfactory = 2 (2010)</p>		<p>No agencies 'unsatisfactory' and increase in number 'satisfactory'. UNICEF and UNDP improve to 'satisfactory' and demonstrate strengthened results frameworks in next strategic plans (for 2014 onwards).</p> <p>No agencies 'unsatisfactory' and increase in number 'satisfactory'. Clear reporting on efficiencies in agency annual reports. UNDP improves to 'satisfactory'.</p> <p>No agencies 'unsatisfactory' and increase in number 'satisfactory'. UNDP improves to 'satisfactory', UNICEF delivery improves in humanitarian and emergency situations. FAO builds on good humanitarian performance and improves patchy performance elsewhere.</p>

Pillar / Strategic priority	Indicator	Baseline	Progress towards results (including year)	Expected results (end year included)
To improve the performance and effectiveness of the agencies we work, UNCD's work is focused on addressing the key reform priorities identified by the Multilateral Aid Review and on influencing cross-UN policy development that impact on agency performance and efficiency.	UN agencies are increasingly transparent and accountable, making publicly available info on programmes, audits and evaluations (MAR transparency and accountability)	No. of agencies assessed as unsatisfactory = 1; weak = 8; satisfactory = 3 (2010)		No agencies 'unsatisfactory' and increase in number 'satisfactory'. All UN agencies meet International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards.

UNCD aims to deliver development results and improve the performance and effectiveness of the multilateral system. It does this by funding to United Nations and Commonwealth organisations and by representing UK interests in the governing boards of the organisations. A small selection of indicators with links to the current DFID Results Framework is presented below to provide headline results that UNCD's work is contributing to. These by no means capture the range and complexity of development and humanitarian issues tackled by UN and Commonwealth organisations.

Evidence supporting results

No single country can address the global challenges of poverty, climate change, insecurity and economic instability. These require an international response. Multilateral Organisations (MOs) can tackle issues on a scale and in places which the UK, or any other individual country acting alone, cannot reach. The UN, for example, is the custodian of the Millennium Development Goals and its legitimacy and neutrality allow it to play a unique role in securing international peace, security and humanitarian objectives. It is therefore essential that we support the UN and Commonwealth system.

Through the MAR, we have identified reform priorities for each of the organisations that we fund. The four key reforms for UNCD relate to: contribution to results, strategic and performance management, cost control and transparency and accountability (although all four reforms will not be relevant to every agency). The theory of change underpinning these results recognises that the UK is just one member of UN and Commonwealth Boards. Any change therefore requires substantial engagement with, and influencing of, board members, wider stakeholders and the agencies themselves. Through this approach we will secure buy in for UK reform priorities which will lead to improved performance by the MOs. We will also continue to support the development of cross-UN policy which will strengthen agency performance and efficiency. We expect that by strengthening the organisations this will lead, in turn to better development results.

In our headline indicators we therefore include both measures of reform progress and examples of development indicators related to DFID's Results Framework. However, these development indicators should not be used to assess the effectiveness of UNCD spend as they are by no means comprehensive in terms of MO coverage or mandates. The limited availability of development-related headline indicators for tracking progress also reflects the fact that the MAR generally found the quality of MOs results systems to be weak. This makes it difficult to assess progress in delivering against organisations' strategic plans. Many MOs also struggle to aggregate country or project level results to a central level and to measure the direct contribution to development or humanitarian results of their normative functions. However, many of the Multilateral Organisations are making good progress in putting processes in place to improve their organisational results frameworks. Almost all MO now have improved results frameworks in place and the next step is to encourage their use to better report results achieved and in managing organisational performance.

Our core funding to these organisations will continue to be linked to progress against key reform priorities including improvements to their results systems which will better allow them to demonstrate their impact and better manage organisational performance. As part of this we will use membership of agency boards to encourage them to set ambitious targets and hold them to account for these rather than setting targets ourselves. We will monitor MO progress in delivering these reforms and levels of progress will influence future funding decisions.

Delivery and Resources

Instruments of delivery

MOs are an essential part of the international system for humanitarian and development aid. They have a global presence and the legitimacy to work on politically sensitive issues that can be difficult for some national governments. But the MAR found that strengthened delivery of UK and international development priorities also requires a series of managerial changes. Core contributions will enable multilateral organisations to continue to play a leadership role and to deliver development results, whilst also undertaking the reforms needed so they can more efficiently and effectively contribute to developing countries.

All UNCD's funding is paid directly to either UN or Commonwealth Agencies. The majority of funding is paid as assessed or core funding which allows the agencies full flexibility in how to use the funds for their strategic objectives.

Multilateral organisations

UNCD provides assessed contributions to UNESCO and FAO and core funding to UNAIDS, WHO, UNFPA, IFAD, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women. UNCD funds a number of Commonwealth Programmes including the Commonwealth Secretariat and a non-departmental public body, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission. Funding is also provided through UNCD to the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust and to the UNFPA project for Increased Access to Reproductive Health and Family Planning.

Other Country Activity

A Country Engagement Manager post was established in 2012 to work with DFID Country Offices and leverage both increased impact and value for money from DFID's bilateral programme spend. Following a review on the value of this post, we now have 1.5 Country Engagement Managers to respond to the growing number of requests for support in this area and the growing demand to ensure coherence between core-and non-core funding.

Maximising the impact of our people

Three locally-engaged staff now act as Agency Leads in New York and Geneva to lead our engagement with some of our agencies and help us make better use of more senior UK mission staff in New York and Geneva. There are three agency leads in Abercrombie House. All are supported by a strong core of cross-cutting advisors in some of the key policy areas (results, accountability, governance, risk) to support our aim of each agency – but particularly those where there is most concern following the MAR update in 2013 - having made substantive progress with their MAR reform areas and providing better value for money and results from our core contributions. This agency by agency work continues to be complemented by strengthened cross-systems policy work taking forward actions from the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

UNCD's future learning and development and skills needs are also expected to remain mainly stable, but with increased focus on professionalisation of programme and financial management. Departmental learning goals:

Improving on our financial management capability, including the development of finance and ARIES experts and meeting the commitments of 'Finance for All'

Building increased knowledge of Programme Management and the Smart Rules through the:

- Appointment of a central programme management lead for UNCD to disseminate knowledge and guidance to staff at key points in the lifetime of projects
- Developing and embedding the SRO role across UNCD through a departmental wide consultation process led by the A2 results adviser. We will continue encouraging interested staff to work towards gaining accreditation into relevant advisory cadres, including the new programme management cadre

Working effectively with Ministers; preparing briefs and submissions and developing skills in written communications more broadly.

Continue to build on our knowledge of the UN and Commonwealth agencies/institutions gained during the Multilateral Aid Review and subsequent update to continually maintain awareness of change and our ability to engage.

Influencing effectively to meet our vision of engaging with agencies and pushing for reform, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement and management and facilitation skills.

Continued commitment to developing a better understanding of results, evaluation, financial reporting and risk to provide a more robust oversight of UN and Commonwealth systems working effectively with UNCD's cross cutting advisory capacity.

Continuing to improve our ability to manage our challenging agenda through stronger leadership.

Delivery of these objectives will be through existing mechanisms, using our own cross-cutting advisers to help others to develop and making maximum use of the Civil Service Learning modules.

We have assumed that administrative efficiencies will flow from smarter working practices and that we will receive adequate technical support from Policy Division and Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE).

Planned programme spend**

Pillar/Strategic	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16 (provisional*)
	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Total resource and capital £000
Education	2	0	18,574	0	21,861	0	970	0	
Global Partnerships	225,161	-86	210,502	33,852	225,811	34,088	185,750	0	
Governance and Security	283	0	1,300	0	1,419	0	184	0	
Poverty, hunger and vulnerability	0	0	0	0	2,500	0	5,000	0	
Health	64,685	0	62,100	0	61,400	0	5,000	0	
TOTAL**	290,131	-86	292,476	33,852	312,991	34,088	196,904	0	251,850

* Expenditure figures for 2015/2016 are indicative. DFID works in a variety of challenging environments, including fragile and conflict affected areas. Humanitarian work is often reactive and can be scaled up or down. An element of flexibility within funding allocations is necessary to ensure that we can balance the need for long term planning alongside the ability to respond where necessary to changing requirements. .

** Figures exclude Commonwealth Scholarship Commission.

Planned operating costs**

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 (provisional*)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Frontline delivery costs – pay	11	70	121	147	
Frontline delivery costs – non pay	2	5	11	19	
Administrative costs - pay	1,428	1,501	1,576	1,279	
Administrative costs – non pay	478	373	277	323	
TOTAL**	1,919	1,949	1,985	1,786	1,786

* Expenditure figures for 2015/2016 are indicative. DFID works in a variety of challenging environments, including fragile and conflict affected areas. Humanitarian work is often reactive and can be scaled up or down. An element of flexibility within funding allocations is necessary to ensure that we can balance the need for long term planning alongside the ability to respond where necessary to changing requirements.

** Figures exclude Commonwealth Scholarship Commission

To reduce operating costs and provide efficiency savings UNCD have:

- developed a differentiated approach to the level of engagement with agencies based on their contribution to results, their levels of core and non-core funding, and their progress according to the MAR update (i.e. the risk of non-reform). The differentiated approach to agency engagement includes a more proportionate approach to programme management.
- refocused and reduced our advisory input on the key policy priorities for delivery of our results on agency reform.
- modified the portfolio delivery review timetable, to maintain oversight whilst reducing resourcing.

Delivering Value for Money (VfM)

Maximising the impact of every pound that we spend in UNCD on poor people's lives.

The MAR set out the challenge facing UNCD to improve the value for money of the agencies we fund. UNCD will work to achieve substantial progress by 2015 across four strands of MAR: results frameworks, transparency, cost control and delivery, particularly in fragile and crisis affected countries. Over this spending review period we will invest £1.3 billion mainly through core resources.

There are a number of top-level challenges in taking this agenda forward including:

- The UN and Commonwealth are highly political institutions. Most change can only happen by consensus.
- There are a number of underlying technical issues that need to be addressed. Much of what the UN does is difficult to measure.
- UNCD faces institutional barriers in agencies that we need to address in order to develop a better understanding of their performance.

To address these challenges UNCD will:

- Use the conclusions of the MAR and MAR update to build the case for a stronger focus on Value for Money (VfM) across our institutions, member states, and with influential stakeholders. We have stopped funding, or reduced funding to, the poorer performing institutions and we will use our money and influence to lever reforms in others. We have strong ministerial and senior management support to pursue UNCD's Value for Money agenda but must develop a truly multilateral approach.
- We developed business cases to further drive our value for money agenda that stipulate 1) the results we intend to achieve 2) how we will use our finance to leverage better performance and cost control 3) how we will use non-financial measures (e.g. on-going dialogue, our participation in governing bodies, political capital) to leverage change.
- Build a stronger network of relations with a number of DFID country offices to improve the evidence base of agency performance and results.
- Upgrade our in-house skills and request support from the Procurement Group (PrG) to ensure that we can more effectively assess and monitor the procurement capability of our partners.
- Upgrade our in-house financial skills to raise fraud awareness and more effectively assess and monitor the financial performance of partners
- Finalise a new and improved Framework Arrangement with key partners to better reflect DFID's demand for better financial management, monitoring, reporting and delivery standards and strengthened anti-fraud measures
- Undertake Portfolio Delivery Reviews of key partners to oversee non-core programmes that DFID is funding through its country offices.

The MAR Update showed there has been reform. All organisations assessed have made some progress against the agreed reforms. UNAIDS, has moved to a higher value for money category (in this case from adequate to good value for money for UK aid). We will carry out a full reassessment of value for money through a MAR in 2015 to inform future funding decisions, and the reform agenda going forward.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

The operational plan (OP) and results framework will be reviewed annually and light touch reviews will also be undertaken at six months intervals. The reviews of the operational plan will be led by the Deputy Head of Department. Annual reviews of business cases for agency core funding and other funding will provide the detailed results achieved through UNCD spending and provide the basis for monitoring of the operational plan. This includes monitoring of MAR reform priorities. Data sources to monitor the business cases and the operational plan include annual reporting by agencies to their governing bodies, mid-term reviews of strategic plans and Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) reviews.

Evaluation

UNCD will continue to adapt and build on their approach to evaluation to ensure it is in line with DFID's wider policies, working with the Senior Evaluation and Learning Advisor in the Multilateral Effectiveness Department (MED). Overall the aim is to ensure that funds spent through UN agencies and Commonwealth organisations meet comparable standards for evaluation quality as those within DFID. Specific actions include:

Maintaining awareness of the quality of evaluation functions in the UN agencies and Commonwealth bodies. This will build on engagement with the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Office of Internal Oversight Services in their assessment of UN agencies.

- Driving improvements in evaluation quality and use through the Multilateral Aid Review process. In particular UNCD will work with the senior evaluation advisor in MED on the approach to integrating evaluation and results work as part of the approach to the next MAR exercise.
- Actively engaging with boards and other governance fora on evaluation issues. Using the expertise within MED (and the wider evaluation Cadre) to ensure DFID communicates its priorities clearly in boards, working with other capitals as required.
- Disseminating evaluation evidence produced by multilaterals within DFID and helping country and policy teams to engage with multilaterals on evaluation.
- Discuss priorities for evaluation of their own activities to support continuous improvement in their multilateral engagement practices.
- support the evaluation of the Global Programme on Reproductive Health and Commodity Security as they develop their approach to evaluation with UNFPA
- Keep these activities under review.

Building capacity of partners

We will also work with agencies to improve their ability to measure and monitor results and collect relevant data, including by seconding a Results Adviser to UNDP. In other cases our Results and Evaluation Advisers work with organisation to share good practices and improve results reporting and evaluation capacity.

Transparency

Transparency is one of the top priorities for the UK government. It helps people see where money is going and for what purpose. It helps improve value for money and makes governments everywhere more accountable to their citizens. DFID is a world leader in aid transparency and has an ambitious vision for both DFID and its partners. We will ensure that we play our part in continuing to work towards that vision – set out in a suite of commitments the Aid Transparency Guarantee (ATG), Aid Transparency Challenge (ATC) and DFID's Open Data Strategy.

Actions to ensure DFID meets its commitments in the UK Aid Transparency Guarantee

Publication of information

- We will ensure that all project documentation is published on the Development Tracker.
- We will ensure that all information in the public domain is comprehensive, accessible, accurate, timely and written in plain English
- We will publish a summary of this operational plan and all project summaries in English.

Supporting transparency in our work

Our aim is to increase the transparency of donors, partner countries and multilateral agencies to enhance aid effectiveness by improving transparency. We will introduce full transparency in aid and publish details of all UK aid spending online, and push for similarly high levels of transparency internationally

UNCD will work with UN agencies and their memberships to improve transparency. We will encourage agencies to adopt the standards as set out in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) adhere to follow-up measures.

We will push for all agencies, our priority ones in particular, to have: a disclosure policy with a presumption of openness; easily accessible and up-to-date policy and project documentation; and performance assessments freely shared.

We will do this by sharing good examples of disclosure policies across our international division and support agencies in developing their policies, taking into account lessons learnt and good practice across the multilateral system.

We will build alliances with those donors already signed up to IATI (Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) and other member states (including Bangladesh, Ghana, Rwanda, Indonesia, Nepal, Viet Nam, Burkina Faso, Malawi, The Dominican Republic and Syria) to build a coalition across memberships to press for agency commitment to IATI standards through governing bodies.

We will support independent evaluation with all UN agencies, seeking opportunities to update policies and ensuring appropriate budget allocation through governing bodies.

We will promote the reporting and publication of results, building on evidence for agencies' future programme planning.

We will lead by example as a donor country, encouraging a culture of transparency within our department and with our partner organisations. Improving transparency means all staff will need to:

Think transparency every time a decision is made. Assume that every pound, euro and dollar spent will be open to public scrutiny.

Annex A: Changes to operational plan

Page number	Change made to operational plan	Reason for change
Page 4	Context- Total amount amended and WFP removed. Details on Non Departmental Public Body added.	WFP moved to another department. Better reflect relationship with Commonwealth Scholarship Commission.
Page 8	More information added on delivery mechanisms. Increased focus on professionalism in financial and programme management.	Clarification. SMART Rules and corporate focus.
Page 13	Details on progress based on MAR Update added.	MAR update reviewed progress towards value for money.
Page 14	Evaluation text updated.	To reflect current position.
Page 15	Added information on publication of information	More clarity on how we publish information needed.

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