



CIVIL SERVICE

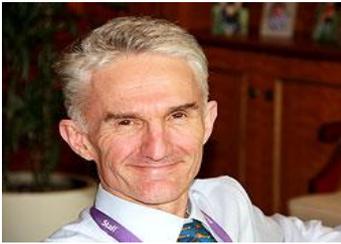
Capability Reviews

DFID Department for
International
Development



Department for International Development: Capability Action Plan 2012

Foreword



Mark Lowcock, Permanent Secretary of the Department for International Development

I am grateful to Vivienne Cox and Doreen Langston for their thorough assessment. Their invaluable insights will help us build on our strengths and further enhance our capability in the areas where we need to make more progress.

The review recognises the achievements of the Department over the last few years. Since the 2009 review, in line with the Coalition Government's agenda, we have strengthened our focus on results, value for money and the use of evidence. We are more transparent than ever before, allowing citizens to hold us and partner governments to account. Our relations with others, especially in Whitehall, are closer and more strategic.

The cornerstone for this success has been the staff of this Department, with their professionalism and relentless commitment to transform the lives of people in poor and fragile states. We need to ensure we continually improve our capability to provide strong leadership in every part of the organisation to achieve our ambitious aims. There is also more work required to embed fully the Coalition Government's new priorities of private sector and climate change across the Department.

The world around us is changing quickly, with a challenging economic outlook, new patterns of poverty, an aid system that is becoming ever more complex, and the cross-Government agenda, of which we are part, to reform the civil service. I am confident that the steps set out in this Capability Action Plan will ensure that we are in a position to maximise the value we get from UKaid and, in so doing, improve the lives of millions of people who are currently living on less than 80 pence a day.

Mark Lowcock

11 April 2012

Foreword



Vivienne Cox
Lead Non-Executive Director
Management Board of the Department for
International Development



Doreen Langston
Non-Executive Director
Management Board of the Department for
International Development

We have overseen this review as independent Board members and are pleased that the Department has conducted such a rigorous appraisal of its capability. The assessment has identified the Department's many strengths and shown where further action is needed to meet the challenges ahead. We are confident that the right areas for development have been highlighted and are glad that action is already taking place to tackle these.

The non-executive members will continue to challenge and support the Department in its efforts to improve its capability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vivienne C." with a long horizontal line underneath.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. J. Langston" in a cursive style.

11 April 2012

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1. Challenges for the Department

The Department for International Development (DFID) has made a fundamental shift in its operations, with a relentless focus on results that will transform the lives of people in poor and fragile states. It has ramped up frontline delivery to meet its ambitious targets while simultaneously reducing core administration costs. It has championed a new culture of value for money, transparency and accountability that will help ensure that development assistance provides a better life for millions of people and a safer, more prosperous world for Britain.

The Department

The Department for International Development (DFID) works to reduce poverty in poorer countries, in particular through achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It provides support to countries and programmes where aid is most needed and expected to have the greatest effect. It channels funding through multilateral and non-governmental organisations that work most effectively. It supports people affected by humanitarian disasters, joins forces with others to improve the global development system and aims to help people to lift themselves out of poverty through efforts to stimulate wealth creation and sustainable growth. By 2015, UK aid will, for example, secure schooling for 11 million children, save the lives of 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth and support freer and fairer elections in 13 countries with more than 300 million voters.

DFID works from two UK headquarters (HQ) in London and East Kilbride and from offices in 36 countries overseas. DFID had over 2,300 staff in 2010-11, almost half of whom worked in developing countries. The Department will have an unprecedented increase in the size of its programme resources - from about £8 billion in 2011/12 to about £11 billion in 2013/14 and 2014/15. At the same time, it will reduce its core administration budget by 33%.

Key challenges

The world is changing, with a challenging economic outlook, new patterns of poverty and a fundamentally different development environment: the aid system is becoming more complex, with new actors and new rules. Emerging donors and philanthropic agencies are gaining in importance and Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of financial flows to developing countries is decreasing. While DFID's priority remains the transformation of the lives of people living in poor and fragile states, it is changing to adapt to this new world.

1. Challenges for the Department

Our structural reform priorities are:

1. **Honour international commitments:** Honour the UK's international commitments and support actions to achieve the Millennium Development Goals
2. **Introduce transparency in aid:** Make British aid more effective by improving transparency and value for money
3. **Boost wealth creation:** Make British international development policy more focused on boosting economic growth and wealth creation
4. **Strengthen governance and security in fragile and conflict-affected countries:** Improve the coherence and performance of British international development policy in fragile and conflict-affected countries, with a particular focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan
5. **Lead international action to improve the lives of girls and women:** Work to empower and educate girls, recognise the role of women in development and help to ensure that healthy mothers can raise strong children
6. **Combat climate change:** Drive urgent action to tackle climate change, and support adaptation and low carbon growth in developing countries

Other major responsibilities

- **Respond to humanitarian disasters:** Ensure that the basic needs of people whose lives have been ruined by disaster (whether natural or conflict-driven) are met, and ensure that emergency relief aid is targeted at those areas where threat to life is most severe, extent and depth of suffering greatest, and response capacities of communities and authorities most limited
- **Deliver on obligations to the Overseas Territories:** Help to provide an improved environment for economic and social development and promote self-sustainability
- **Influence the global development system:** Work with the international system, Whitehall, multilateral organisations and emerging economies to ensure coordinated worldwide action to deliver international development goals

For information about DFID's progress against these priorities, see <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-us/How-we-measure-progress/>.

2. Assessment of Capability

DFID is regarded as a leader amongst donors, with highly engaged and professional staff. It has responded rapidly to new ministerial priorities and set out clearly its direction and the results it will deliver. The Department has made substantial progress on the use of evidence and has increased its focus on planning and delivery. It has improved its relations with others in Whitehall, is engaging more strategically with international partners and has improved communications with the UK public. While maintaining its innovative edge, it has put stronger processes in place to manage its resources.

DFID should strengthen leadership and management skills further and make them more consistent across the organisation. The Department needs to make more progress on the new policy areas of private sector and climate change. It can still do better on the "Value for Money" agenda, which is not yet fully embedded in the DNA of the organisation, through improved programme monitoring and by imposing more rigour on partner organisations.

Leadership		Assessment
L1	Set Direction	 Green
L2	Ignite passion, pace and drive	 Green
L3	Develop people	 Amber/Green

Strategy		Assessment
S1	Set strategy and focus on outcomes	 Amber/Green
S2	Base choices on evidence and customer insight	 Amber/Green
S3	Collaborate and build common purpose	 Amber/Green

Delivery		Assessment
D1	Innovate and improve delivery	 Amber/Green
D2	Plan, resource and prioritise	 Amber/Green
D3	Develop clear roles, responsibilities and delivery models	 Amber/Green
D4	Manage performance and value for money	 Amber/Green

2. Assessment of Capability

Leadership

DFID has a clear direction for the Department and senior leadership are harnessing the passion of staff

- The Department has set out a new direction in “Changing lives, delivering results: our plans to help the world's poorest people”, based on the 2010 aid reviews. It spells out the results UK aid will deliver over the next four years, in addition to the Business Plan and Operational Plans.
- The Leadership Group has communicated widely its vision for the type of organisation DFID will be by 2015 and the required changes to get there. The major organisational reshaping is making good progress: DFID is simultaneously growing the size of its frontline staff whilst significantly shrinking the size of its central functions. Solid workforce planning has been crucial in this regard. Succession planning for key posts is in place and recent surges in activity such as the Libya crisis have been managed well.
- The passion and commitment of DFID's people continues to be its strongest asset. Staff remain highly engaged with 81% being proud to work for the Department in the last People Survey.
- DFID has made steady progress on diversity: DFID is well on track to meet or even exceed the 2013 civil service diversity targets for women and ethnic minorities in the Senior Civil Service. Opportunities for staff appointed in country have increased and their expertise is used better. Senior managers are more visible and are taking account of staff feedback. Learning and Development is now better aligned with corporate priorities, and technical skills have improved across the organisation.
- The new corporate governance structure (Ministerial Board and Management Board) with closer collaboration between Ministers and senior management is working well. Non-Executive Directors provide external challenge, and the Ministerial Advisory Board offers ideas and advice to the Department.

DFID should strengthen leadership and management skills further and make them more consistent across the organisation

- Given the significant challenge of increasing the number of front line staff while administrative staff numbers are reducing, more effective human resource management by teams across DFID is critical. Progress has already been made on workforce planning and on recruitment. The focus now needs to be on improving leadership and line management capability consistently across the organisation.

2. Assessment of Capability

Strategy

DFID has a well-defined strategy and is regarded as a leader amongst donors and respected partner in Whitehall

- DFID's focus remains on reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This well-defined mission manifests itself in a clear direction for the Department.
- The organisation is aware of the latest trends and developments due to regular horizon scanning and a scaled-up investment in research. The Department is seen as agile and responding well to change.
- There is a clear line of sight from the high-level objectives in the Business Plan to individual and team objectives, ensuring everyone focuses on priority outcomes.
- The Department has made substantial progress on the use of evidence, for example through the 2010 aid reviews, the new Business Cases for DFID's interventions and the Quality Assurance Unit that provides central scrutiny of the most significant investments. The establishment of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) is another key reform.
- DFID has made a step-change in its relations with others in Whitehall. It is regarded as more willing to listen and more collaborative. It plays a helpful role on the National Security Council.
- The Department has an excellent reputation amongst the international development community. Its international partnerships are stronger and more strategic, with improved relations with emerging powers, foundations and non-traditional donors who play an increasingly important role in the aid system. As a result, it is able to influence others, for example on placing a stronger focus on results and making aid more transparent.
- DFID has increased its engagement with the UK public by more clearly communicating the results of its work to a wider range of stakeholders, opening up to scrutiny and engaging UK citizens directly in development. DFID should similarly demonstrate how it is contributing to the Government's growth objective.

Further progress is needed to embed the new policy areas across the Department

- Given the change in strategic direction with a greater emphasis placed upon the private sector and climate change, DFID needs to communicate the relevant priorities across the whole Department and reflect them in its everyday work.
- While continuing to focus on current delivery challenges, DFID needs to ensure it keeps its longer term strategy adapted to the fast-changing world. It needs to try to anticipate and shape developments that the next ten years and beyond might bring. It should continue to communicate this longer-term strategy effectively.

2. Assessment of Capability

Delivery

The Department has considerably increased its focus on value for money

- Tough decisions have been taken to prioritise DFID's resources. Programmes are chosen according to their expected impact on poor people. A new corporate performance framework allows close monitoring of the Department's results. Important trade-offs have been made to reduce the administration budget, for example by cutting travel costs and shrinking the size of the SCS by around 25%.
- DFID has greatly enhanced its commercial capability over the last years, with more experts across the organisation and improved negotiations with suppliers.
- The Department has spelled out clearly its approach to value for money, through its Finance Improvement Plan and new processes: the Business Case, the Quality Assurance Unit and evaluations being increasingly built into programmes at the design stage to improve supervision and learning. ICAI provides an additional external scrutiny function. Regular portfolio reviews monitor performance in the largest areas of DFID spend and show that portfolio quality is improving steadily.
- DFID has stepped up its efforts to protect its funds from corruption, fraud and other abuse. Its risk management framework has been enhanced, the capability of the internal audit department increased and responses to fraud and abuse strengthened.
- There are rigorous controls in place for its sponsored bodies (ICAI, CDC and Commonwealth Scholarship Commission). DFID has recently carried out a major review of CDC, the UK's Development Finance Institution, aimed at improving value for money and increasing its impact on poor people.
- DFID is recognised as an innovative organisation with a good track record in establishing innovative projects, partnerships and funds. Its increased focus on research and evaluations supports a greater culture of learning from experimentation. DFID is currently developing a new approach to innovation, with a clear strategy, priorities and statement of appetite for risk.

In light of the increased challenges, more work is required to embed the culture of value for money throughout the organisation

- Over the next few years, DFID will manage larger programme resources, reduce its administration budget and work increasingly in fragile countries. Managing risk well and pursuing the best value for its resources will therefore be crucial, with equal emphasis on economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Value for money needs to underpin every decision. The new Plan "Finance For All" will strengthen DFID's capacity and capability at all levels. Now that the process for project initiation has been greatly improved, a stronger focus should be placed on monitoring and evaluating ongoing activities and imposing more rigour on partner organisations.
- DFID needs to improve further the quality and consistent application of anti-corruption controls in its programmes. The recent ICAI report has helped to identify areas for development and the Department has made it clear that it will implement ICAI's recommendations in full.

3. Capability Action Plan

Area for development	Milestone	Model Element	Date
Leadership			
<p>1. More needs to be done to embed the leadership model and improve line management capability further, making it more consistent across the organisation.</p>	<p>1.1 Consistent messaging on the characteristics of the SCS Civil Service Leadership Model and its importance. Model used to assess staff for recruitment, performance and promotion purposes.</p>	L3–Develop People	Ongoing
	<p>1.2 Expectations of leadership skills clarified. Based on these, priority learning needs for SCS agreed and Civil Service and other relevant learning opportunities accessed.</p>		October 2012
	<p>1.3. Leadership expectations and behaviours integrated as a core element of SCS performance objectives for 2012-13, and new 360 measurement tools in place. Evaluation at mid year and end year point.</p>		<p>May 2012 (objective setting) October 2012 (mid-year review) March 2013 (end year review)</p>
	<p>1.4.1 Line manager role profile and example leadership and management objectives continue to be used by A Band leaders.</p>		Ongoing
	<p>1.4.2 The new civil service wide competency framework will be applied when ready.</p>		June 2012
	<p>1.4.3 New leadership expectations of A Band leaders integrated into 2013-14 performance objectives (at beginning of reporting year).</p>		March 2013
	<p>1.5 Heads of departments/overseas offices identify priority actions to improve line management capability, based on local People survey results. These actions will be part of Heads' annual performance objectives.</p>		May 2012 – May 2013
	<p>1.6 Increase of People survey scores on line management by 2 percentage points overall in 2012, and 3 in 2013.</p>		<p>December 2012 December 2013</p>
	<p>1.7 Proposals made for extending potential/talent assessments to A Band staff.</p>		April 2012
<p>1.8 Systematically use SCS and A1 talent assessments in SCS succession planning.</p>	October 2012		
<p>1.9 Develop broader DFID talent management strategy and approach.</p>	April 2013		

3. Capability Action Plan

Strategy			
<p>2. DFID needs to make further progress on embedding the new areas of private sector and climate change. It needs to communicate the relevant priorities across the whole Department and reflect them in its everyday work.</p>	<p>2.1 Continued high-level leadership for the implementation of two strategies and workplans that set out strategic priorities and activities to embed private sector and climate change across the Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Strategy for Strengthening and Deepening DFID's Private Sector DNA ii. 2013 Climate Smart Workplan 	S1-Set Strategy and Focus on Outcomes	Ongoing
	<p>2.2. Guidance notes on specific aspects of how to engage with the private sector prepared, including on boundaries for engagement</p>	S3-Collaborate and Build Common Purpose	End of FY 12/13
	<p>2.3 Private sector Learning and Development programme developed, aimed at increasing capacity of experts and other staff to work with and on the private sector, and increase links and mutual understanding. Activities to include mentoring, inward and outward secondments.</p>	S1, L3	End of FY 12/13
	<p>2.4 Strategic Climate Programme Reviews completed in all programme countries to ensure that climate issues are addressed: 3 pilots completed, all 17 African country programmes by December 2012, all 28 countries by December 2013.</p>	S1	April 2012 December 2012 December 2013
	<p>2.5 Understanding of climate change broadened across DFID beyond climate and environment experts, e.g. inclusion of climate change session in all induction courses by end 2012.</p>	S1	Ongoing
<p>3. DFID needs to ensure it keeps its longer term strategy adapted to the fast-changing world. It needs to try to anticipate and shape developments that the next ten years and beyond might bring. It should continue to communicate this longer-term strategy effectively.</p>	<p>3.1 Strategic horizon scanning activities feed into Management Board thinking and are disseminated widely across DFID and Whitehall.</p>	S1-Set Strategy and Focus on Outcomes	Ongoing
	<p>3.2 The newly established post-2015 team is effective in harnessing DFID's thinking on a post-MDG framework and in influencing the international architecture. DFID's position is widely communicated.</p>		Now - end of 2013
	<p>3.3 Meetings of the Ministerial Advisory Board include discussions of long term strategic issues. They are widely communicated and feed into policy making.</p>		Quarterly

3. Capability Action Plan

Delivery			
<p>4. The Department can still do better on pursuing the best value for its resources, with equal emphasis placed on economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Now that the process for project initiation has been greatly improved, a stronger focus should be placed on monitoring and evaluating ongoing activities and imposing more rigour on partner organisations.</p>	<p>4.1 Continued implementation of the Finance Improvement Plan "Finance For All". Key milestones include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design of a new finance operating model ii. Staff with responsibility for managing money have the required skills and their performance is measured iii. Completion of fraud risk assessments covering 80% of DFID's activities 	<p>D2-Plan, Resource and Prioritise; D4-Manage Performance and Value for Money</p>	Dec 2012
	<p>4.2 Plan established to increase focus on project implementation. This will include a stronger quality assurance of and accountability for annual reviews and project closure reports.</p>		Dec 2012
	<p>4.3 Organisations implementing UK aid will be managed according to clear performance targets. There will be a thorough understanding and reporting of costs throughout the delivery chain.</p>		March 2013
<p>5. DFID needs to improve further the quality and consistent application of anti-corruption controls in its programmes.</p>	<p>5.1 Continued implementation of response to 2011 ICAI report on DFID's approach to anti-corruption, led by Anti-Corruption Champion on the Management Board. Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review of nature and structure of DFID's counter fraud and anti-corruption work ii. Pilot Strategic Intelligence Threat Assessments to inform country programmes of major corruption threats iii. Due diligence guidance for country level work with multilateral and other partners iv. New guidance for anti-corruption strategies tested v. Anti-corruption strategies in place for all 28 country programmes. 4 (including 3 fragile states) by May 2012. 	D2, D4	<p>April 2012</p> <p>May 2012</p> <p>Dec 2012</p> <p>May 2012</p> <p>May 2012 January 2013</p>

Approach to capability management

DFID has already started actions in all the above areas. DFID's Structural Reform Plan (SRP) that has been refreshed in March 2012 will provide the guiding framework for all activities intended to improve the Department's capability. Reporting on the above actions will be part of the SRP reporting. Where appropriate, they will also be integrated into DFID's Quarterly Management Report. These two reporting mechanisms will allow the Management Board to monitor progress on a regular basis and, where required, take remedial action early.

Annex A: The model of capability



Annex A: The model of capability

L1: Set direction

- Do you have and communicate a clear, compelling and coherent vision for the future of the organisation?
- Does the Board work effectively in a corporate culture of teamwork, including working across internal boundaries and making effective use of non-executive directors?
- Does the Board take tough decisions, see them through and show commitment to continuous improvement of delivery outcomes?
- Does the Board lead and manage change effectively, addressing and overcoming resistance when it occurs?

L2: Ignite passion, pace and drive

- Do you create and sustain a unifying culture and set of values and behaviours which promote energy, enthusiasm and pride in the organisation and its vision?
- Are the leadership visible, outward looking role models communicating effectively and inspiring the respect, trust, loyalty and confidence of staff and stakeholders?
- Do you display integrity, confidence and self-awareness in your engagement with staff and stakeholders, actively encouraging, listening to and acting on feedback?
- Do you display passion about achieving ambitious results for customers, focussing on impact and outcomes, celebrating achievement and challenging the organisation to improve?

L3: Develop people

- Do you have people with the right skills and leadership across the organisation to deliver your vision and strategy? Do you demonstrate commitment to diversity and equality?
- Do you manage individuals' performance transparently and consistently, rewarding good performance and tackling poor performance? Are individuals' performance objectives aligned with those of the organisation?
- Do you identify and nurture leadership and management talent in individuals and teams to get the best from everyone? How do you plan effectively for succession in key posts?
- Do you plan to fill key capability gaps in the organisation and in the delivery system?

Annex A: The model of capability

S1: Set strategy and focus on outcomes

- Do you have a clear, coherent and achievable strategy with a single, overarching set of challenging outcomes, aims, objectives and success measures?
- Is your strategy clear what success looks like and focused on improving the overall quality of life for customers and benefiting the nation?
- Do you keep the strategy up to date, seizing opportunities when circumstances change?
- How do you work with your political leadership to develop strategy and ensure appropriate trade offs between priority outcomes?

S2: Base choices on evidence and customer insight

- Are your policies and programmes customer focused and developed with customer involvement and insight from the earliest stages? Do you understand and respond to your customers' needs and opinions?
- Do you ensure that your vision and strategy are informed by sound use of timely evidence and analysis?
- Do you identify future trends, plan for them and choose among the range of options available?
- Do you evaluate and measure outcomes and ensure that lessons learned are fed back through the strategy process?

S3: Collaborate and build common purpose

- Do you work with others in government and beyond to develop strategy and policy collectively to address cross-cutting issues?
- Do you involve partners and stakeholders from the earliest stages of policy development and learn from their experience?
- Do you ensure your department's strategies and policies are consistent with those of other departments?
- Do you develop and generate common ownership of the strategy with your political leadership, the board, the organisation, delivery partners and customers?

Annex A: The model of capability

D1: Innovate and improve delivery

- Do you have the structures, people capacity and enabling systems required to support appropriate innovation and manage it effectively?
- Do leaders empower and incentivise the organisation and its partners to innovate and learn from each other, and the front line, to improve delivery?
- Is innovation explicitly linked to core business, underpinned by a coherent innovation strategy and an effective approach towards risk management?
- Do you evaluate the success and added value of innovation, using the results to make resource prioritisation decisions and inform future innovation?

D2: Plan, resource and prioritise

- Do your business planning processes effectively prioritise and sequence deliverables to focus on delivery of your strategic outcomes, and do you make tough decisions on tradeoffs between priority outcomes when appropriate?
- Are your delivery plans robust, consistent and aligned with the strategy? Taken together will they effectively deliver all of your strategic outcomes?
- Do you maintain effective control of the organisation's resources? Do your delivery plans include key drivers of cost, with financial implications clearly considered and suitable levels of financial flexibility within the organisation?
- Are your delivery plans and programmes effectively managed and regularly reviewed?

D3: Develop clear roles, responsibilities and delivery models

- Do you have clear and well understood delivery models which will deliver your strategic outcomes across boundaries?
- Do you identify and agree roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for delivery within those models including among arm's length bodies? Are these well understood and supported by appropriate rewards, incentives and governance arrangements?
- Do you engage, align and enthuse partners in other departments and across the delivery model to work together to deliver? Is there shared commitment among them to remove obstacles to effective joint working?
- Do you ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of your delivery agents?

D4: Manage performance and value for money

- Are you delivering on the priorities set out in your strategy and business plans?
- Does the need to ensure efficiency and value for money underpin everything that you do?
- Do you drive performance and strive for excellence across the organisation and delivery system in pursuit of your strategic outcomes?
- Do you have high-quality, timely and well-understood performance information, supported by analytical capability, which allows you to track and manage performance and risk across the delivery system?
- Do you take action when you are not meeting (or are not on track to meet) all of your key delivery objectives?

Annex B: Assessment Criteria

 <p>Green</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding capability for future delivery in line with the model of capability. • Clear approach to monitoring and sustaining future capability with supporting evidence and metrics. • Evidence of learning and benchmarking against peers and other comparators which confirms progress towards world class.
 <p>Amber/ Green</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has identified capability gaps, is already making improvements in capability for current and future delivery and is well placed to do so. • Is expected to improve further in the short term through practical actions that are planned or already underway and has clear metrics to support progress.
 <p>Amber/ Red</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has weaknesses in capability for current and future delivery and/or has not identified all weaknesses and has no clear mechanism for doing so. • More action is required to close current capability gaps and deliver improvement over the medium term.
 <p>Red</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant weaknesses in capability for current and future delivery that require urgent action. • Not well placed to address weaknesses in the short or medium term and needs additional action and support to secure effective delivery.

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Capability Reviews Team
Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7270 5000

E-mail: capabilityreviews@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

Web address: www.civilservice.gov.uk/capabilityreviews

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