
Re: International Development Select Committee Inquiry on DFID's allocation of resources

25th January 2016

Dear Stephen Twigg,

Following the outcome of the 2015 Spending Review, we understand that around £1.5bn resource funding from the ODA budget held in the Department for International Development will be transferred to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to fund research in-line with ODA priorities. We therefore welcome this opportunity to respond to the International Development Select Committee's DfID allocation of resources inquiry.

The Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) is the leading independent advocate for science and engineering in the UK. CaSE works to raise the political profile of science and engineering, and ensure that the UK has world-leading research and education, skilled scientists and engineers, and successful innovative businesses.

As recognised in the inquiry's terms of reference, there will be challenges in ensuring effective design, delivery and accountability of ODA spend by other government departments. There are a number of the cross-government funds that could be used profitably to fund research, for example the Newton Fund, the Prosperity Fund, the CSSF. One of the challenges will therefore be to provide strategic coherence between the cross-government funds to promote synergy and not duplication. CaSE recommends accessing independent scientific advice, perhaps through the Chief Scientific Advisor network, which would play a valuable role in informing strategic oversight of ODA funds across Government.

The details of how the ODA funding allocated to BIS will be distributed are yet to be outlined. However, across the funds there needs to be clarity, from an applicant's point of view, in how to apply for research funds. There must also be a clear process by which decisions about what research is funded are made that is consistently applied for ODA funding across government, to ensure the highest quality research is being funded.

The decision to invest ODA funding in UK research recognises the well documented economic, social and health benefits research can bring both in the UK and globally. The pre-eminence of UK research is founded on long-held principles of allocation of funding for research by peer-reviewed judgement of excellence. The Haldane principle refers to the value of research being conducted independently from Government. It has developed to state that the research community should determine which projects receive state support via the Research Councils; whilst Government may guide strategic priority-setting according to a range of criteria. Ensuring this principle is central to the design, delivery and accountability structures of ODA spend on research will help ensure value for money in ODA research spending.

Science and engineering research is a long-term enterprise, and requires sustained support over a period of many years. It is therefore welcome that the allocation of ODA funding to be delivered through BIS is stable up to 2020/21. This stability enables funders to make medium-term plans and commitments with a greater degree of confidence, and provides a stable funding environment that promotes effective collaboration and partnerships that often require long lead-times. Research funded through ODA funds will benefit from this stability but it must also be recognised that outcomes and benefits from such research are unlikely to fit into short political timescales. This

should be built into accountability structures and future assessments of value derived from DfID funding.

Departmental R&D budgets are the intelligence budgets of the Government. They are a significant component of government investment in science and need to be considered alongside the ring-fenced science budget and capital spend. They allow ministers and civil servants to stay ahead of rapidly-moving policy and technology, to test ideas, and evaluate them when they have been implemented so that successes and failures can be learned. Therefore, the Department should seek to ensure ODA money is spent on research that complements but doesn't duplicate research funded through the ring-fenced science budget. Further, it should ensure it protects and maintains its own departmental research and development budget. CaSE recommends that a portion of the DfID R&D budget is used to fund analysis of ODA research need, to inform strategic planning for funding allocation of ODA money, helping to ensure value for money in all ODA spending.

Thank you for the opportunity to feed into the Committee's inquiry. I would be happy to discuss any elements outlined in this letter with the Committee.

Yours sincerely



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About CaSE

The Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) is the leading independent advocate for science and engineering in the UK.

CaSE is an independent, non-partisan, charity, funded by around 800 individual members and 100 organisations including businesses, universities, learned and professional organisations, and research charities. Collectively our members employ 350,000 people in the UK, and our industry and charity members invest around £19.3bn a year in R&D globally. A list of our members can be found on our website.