

# News story: UK leading transparency revolution for empowerment and growth

The UK is behind a transparency revolution to make aid work better to end poverty, eradicate disease and help refugees survive brutal conflicts, with the Department for International Development (DFID) publishing a new Transparency Agenda, 'Open Aid, Open Societies' today (Tuesday 6 February 2018).

We are leading the way to drive transparency standards across the world to make governments, company ownership and the oil and mining sectors more accountable, more responsive and more open.

By opening up all areas of spending in the countries we work in, including national budgets and income from trading natural resources, we empower citizens, close down global opportunities for corruption, let people everywhere see how decisions are made and hold their leaders accountable – leading to better economic growth and helping countries stand on their own two feet.

The results of this work range from building trust in governments and increasing the number of people willing to pay tax, or making changes to mining laws which increase revenues going directly to public services.

This also sets out how DFID's work is being made as transparent as possible, so that British taxpayers know exactly how and where their contributions are being made to save millions of lives around the world. We are ensuring the public, both in the UK and elsewhere, have data and information that they can easily understand and challenge, enabling them to scrutinise how money is spent and build trust in aid.

Minister of State for International Development Harriett Baldwin said:

"Transparency transforms people's lives for the better by enabling countries to collect taxes, improve public services, and ensure a level-playing field in which businesses can flourish.

"We are encouraging developing countries to open up their governments to scrutiny by their own citizens – and in doing so we are making sure UK taxpayers know exactly how their aid is spent.

"Fairness and justice are core British values. This is why we will continue leading the global transparency revolution – starting with closing loopholes that hide illicit money. We all prosper in a fairer and more transparent world."

The Transparency Agenda sets out the various ways that DFID is a leader in transparency:

- DFID's Development Tracker was the first of its kind and has been widely

replicated by aid agencies around the world – showing exactly how the aid budget is being spent.

- The UK was the first G7 country to adopt the Open Contracting Data Standard ensuring transparency across the full procurement process and publishing who is winning public contracts. This helps eliminate the risk of corruption or collusion. We will support 16 countries to implement more open contracting in public procurement by 2020
- In 2011, we helped establish the Open Government Partnership which strengthens good governance by securing concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens and fight corruption. This work included a project supporting citizens in the Democratic Republic of Congo to vote on budget allocations using mobile phones, which led to a 16 fold increase in tax collection and increased trust in government.
- The UK was among the first countries to require companies to submit details of their real beneficial owners – information which is then made public by the UK government.
- We will lead an international effort to make global commodities trading more transparent – the physical sales by governments producing oil, gas and minerals to commodity trading companies where the national government receives an undisclosed share of production. This will address a black hole which can provides opportunities for corruption on a colossal scale that can hinder economic growth and foster national security challenges.
- The UK was a founding member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a global standard to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources. Ghana, for example, revised its mining tax law after joining the EITI, which led to revenues more than doubling between 2010 and 2011, from \$210 million to \$500 million.
- DFID publishes its data every single month as opposed to every quarter, going beyond the highest international standards, and we hold our partners to the same high standards.