

Country Profile – United Kingdom

Agricultural Research for Development

The UK's cross-government agriculture-related research sits under the umbrella of the Global Food Security programme, which was launched in early 2011. The Department for International Development (DFID) is the lead agency for Agricultural Research for Development (ARD).

Key ARD objectives

- To meet the challenges of providing the world's growing population with a sustainable and secure supply of safe, nutritious and affordable high quality food.
- To provide evidence to enable food producers and processors, retailers, consumers and government to respond to and manage the challenges confronting the developing world.
- To take integrated systems approaches to research on UK and global food supply systems.



DFID work to provide women with access to knowledge
Credit: © Paul Van Mele

Summary

The Global Food Security programme coordinates research, supported by the programme partners, across government departments, Research Councils and the Technology Strategy Board. It builds on partners' existing activities, aiming to add value to their current and future research investments and complement their individual strategies.

DFID is the main UK funder of agriculture research for development. Its main aims are:

- The development of new agriculture products to sustainably intensify agriculture, notably crop varieties, livestock breeds and more resilient and productive farming systems to maintain and enhance productivity using fewer resources in the face of increased climate change.
- Increased understanding of agriculture innovation. Testing interventions and delivery mechanisms, identifying what works and supporting scaled up investment in getting technology into use more rapidly to ensure food supply increases fast enough to meet increasing demand.
- A deeper understanding of the complex political, social and economic context that influences the success of investments in agriculture development.

Relevant research evidence for developing countries, both from DFID and from partners such as the Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust and Research Councils will be made available to decision-makers, policymakers, civil society and practitioners.

Main ARD budget and beneficiaries for 2010

DFID's ARD budget is currently £65 million for the financial year 2011/ 2012 but this is likely to increase.

This funding is channelled in a number of programmes, for example:

- International Agricultural Research - to deliver high quality and effective international public good research to tackle poverty reduction and achieve sustainable growth. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) receives the majority of this support.
- Responsive research programmes with the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) to ensure basic research outputs are promoted and adapted for application to problems of developing countries.
- Public-private partnerships - to develop technologies for use by farmers in developing countries using intellectual property from the public and private sectors, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).
- Research into Use - a dedicated programme is working to get the best research results into widespread use in Africa and South Asia.

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ARD landscape

DFID is responsible for delivering the UK Coalition Governments' priority to make DFID more systematic in using evidence as a basis for how best to reduce global poverty, and provide high quality relevant evidence to others. It aims to achieve this through commissioning research on key questions in development, robust evaluation of DFID's programmes, high quality statistics, active engagement with policymakers and strengthening DFID's professional cadres. A strong evidence base and well conducted evaluation is essential for the provision of more effective development and humanitarian assistance to the poorest if we are to get best value for money, learn lessons for the future and demonstrate impact.

DFID's Agriculture Research Team has also aligned with the government's new aid priorities and taken into account new evidence which clearly demonstrates the nature of future threats to global agriculture and food security: climate change, resource scarcity, food price volatility, and falling incomes.

The new Global Food Security programme strategy will ensure that this sort of research works harder for people in developing countries by avoiding duplication and pushing into areas where new research is needed.



DFID aim to provide nutritional and safe food to a growing population
Credit: © WRENmedia

Main ARD programmes

DFID has identified its comparative advantage in three areas of agricultural research:

1. Providing unrestricted funds which, delivered over longer time frames, provide the security to facilitate institutional development which can deliver high quality research. This has enabled DFID to support and maintain a position of influence within the CGIAR and other multilateral organisations, promoting institutional reform and greater attention to gender priorities.
2. Ability to provide co-financing and to leverage funds from non-traditional donors and the private sector. Flexibility and responsiveness in funding has enabled DFID to support new and emerging institutions, using modest funding to attract wider funds from others, such as BMGF. Two beneficiaries of this co-financing have been the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and Global Alliance for Livestock Vaccines and Medicines (GALVmed).
3. Ability to harness the advanced research of UK research organisations, where they have an internationally acknowledged reputation. This enables DFID to get some of the best expertise in the world working on development challenges through its collaboration with UK research councils, in particular the BBSRC, and to demonstrate a balanced portfolio from high end research through to applied research.

Perspective

DFID's activities, and those of all partners in the Global Food Security programme, are geared towards the future of developing agricultural economies and the challenges they are preparing to face. This programme is only the latest in the UK's tradition of research-led, forward looking attempts to build global efforts against emerging problems.

Further information

- [Department for International Development \(DFID\)](#)
- [UK Global Food Security programme](#)

This country profile has been commissioned by EIARD (the permanent ARD coordination platform between the European Commission, Member States of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland) as part of a series providing an overview of policies and support for agricultural research for development by EIARD member countries. EIARD is not responsible for any omissions and inaccuracies contained within this document and the information is only correct up to the date of publishing.

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