

Standing up and Being Counted

What's the point in having a trumpet if you can't give it the occasional toot? So, play on...

Springfield recently submitted [comments to the Commons Select Committee on International Development \(IDC\) on DFID's Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14](#). There is little value in shouting from the sidelines if you're not prepared to make substantive, constructive, and honest input when invited to do so. [The report](#) was released last week. We are delighted to see the Committee citing our evidence throughout the report and using it to draw many of their conclusions.

Springfield's major points included:

- The perverse incentives, politicisation, and adverse management practices created by the 0.7% GNI target for ODA risks ultimately driving less effective development. Springfield has alluded to these risks in previous soapbox offerings, and whilst the IDC isn't recommending pulling back from the spending target, it does explicitly acknowledge and recognise the many risks associated in meeting it.
- The negative impact of current contracting models which are pursued in the name of efficiency. Here the IDC recommends DFID looks at how contracting models, particularly framework contracts, are negatively affecting both choice and quality of delivery and also how staffing levels within DFID affect its ability to utilise more specialist, technical resources.
- The negative impact of payment-by-results and the focus on direct delivery of outputs as a consequence. Here the IDC recommends a review of PBR and has called for its merits to be considered carefully and its use deployed sparingly.
- DFID staff profiles, capacities, and incentives. The IDC, following on from [ICAI](#), recognises the issues here and, while they note that the impact of recent increases in staffing has yet to be realised, recommends that in-country terms be increased and consistently reviewed to decrease turnover and increase DFID's expertise in a given subject area and geographical context.

The key point here is that we think it's important to stand up for more effective development at every opportunity. That may mean highlighting unpalatable truths – and biting the hand that feeds as one person from DFID put it so eloquently to us recently. But Springfield exists to assist development do better and achieve more for those we purport to be helping; even if sometimes the development “sector” itself doesn't want to be helped...!