



International Development Committee

Friday, 23 January 2026

Baroness Chapman of Darlington
Minister of State for International Development, Latin America and the
Caribbean
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
By email

Independent Commission for Aid Impact

Dear Baroness Chapman,

I am writing on behalf of my Committee, in response to your comments about the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) on 20 January 2026.

I would like to express the Committee's strong support for ICAI to continue its valuable work. ICAI's independent scrutiny of the Government's ODA spend is crucial. It helps to ensure that taxpayers' money has maximum impact around the world, whether in funding vaccines, tackling climate change, or supporting people caught up in conflict.

ICAI fulfils the statutory obligation for independent evaluation of aid's effectiveness and value for money set out in the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015.¹ This requirement could not be fulfilled by the FCDO's internal audit function, as was suggested during the evidence session. Other independent bodies like the NAO would not have the capacity to evaluate ODA with the depth, breadth and subject matter expertise afforded by ICAI, nor do they have ICAI's powerful reputation in the development field.

The FCDO, itself, has stated that:

The creation of ICAI was world-leading and its contribution to improving the impact of UK aid cannot be disputed – its scrutiny improves how aid is delivered, providing assurance to UK taxpayers and improving the lives of the world's poorest.²

¹ [International Development \(Official Development Assistance Target\) Act 2015](#), s 5

² FCDO, [FCDO's review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact](#), 16 December 2020

ICAI's reviews have shone a light on shortcomings in areas as diverse as systems for humanitarian safeguarding, the Blue Planet Fund and transparency in aid spend.^{3,4,5} Implementing ICAI's recommendations has had a considerable impact on the FCDO's and other Departments' ability to achieve the UK's development goals. As the Government reduces the aid budget, independent scrutiny and learning become even more important, not less. There is a reputational risk to the Government in discontinuing the body which evaluates its transparency and holds it to account.

ICAI's cost-effectiveness is assessed by this Committee, during annual hearings. ICAI has delivered against a flat settlement since 2019, and has seen sustained increases in Departments' acceptance of its recommendations. ICAI's annual budget of £4 million is less than 0.03% of the 2024 ODA allocation.

As ICAI's statutory overseer, the Committee would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

- When is a decision about ICAI's resourcing, or continued existence, likely?
- Will the FCDO write to ICAI to inform them, per the Framework Agreement, who is the new senior policy lead or DG sponsor for ICAI?
- Will FCDO set out the process which it intends to follow for any review of ICAI's existence, mandate or structure?
 - o When and how will the Committee, and ICAI itself, be engaged?

I would appreciate your response by 29 January. In line with our practice with Committee correspondence, we will publish this letter and your response.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Champion MP
Chair of the International Development Committee

³ ICAI, [The UK's approach to safeguarding in the humanitarian sector](#), February 2022

⁴ ICAI, [Blue Planet Fund](#), November 2023

⁵ ICAI, [Transparency in UK aid](#), October 2022