

Effectiveness of UK AID: FIA Foundation submission to International Development Select Committee (IDC) inquiry

Safe and sustainable transport is vital for reducing poverty, tackling climate change, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UK aid, together with the Department for International Development's focus on ending poverty, is respected internationally. However, the UK could do more to integrate sustainable mobility into its bilateral programmes to tackle emerging health and environmental risks arising from rapid urbanisation. Safe streets, clean and low carbon vehicles and active travel are increasingly vital for a range of development objectives. As host of COP26, the UK has an opportunity to accelerate the international transition to safe, clean, and low-carbon mobility globally by, for example, building on its own commitment to phase out the sales of internal combustion vehicles.¹ This would benefit many of the poorest communities around the world.

Each year, 1.35 million people die from road traffic injuries,² with millions more injured, while around 7 million die prematurely from the impacts of air pollution.³ Both these issues disproportionately impact the poorest communities and have massive economic and social costs. Safe and sustainable transport is also linked to many other Global Goals, including gender equality, access to vital services and employment opportunities, and tackling climate change. Transport is responsible for around a quarter of climate change emissions globally, so must be central to decarbonisation strategies. Road traffic is the leading global cause of death for children over the age of five. We believe that every child should have the right to safe and healthy streets, and to be able to travel safely to and from school, encouraging physical activity through streets with adequate infrastructure for walking and cycling, and with clean air.

The UK spends around £400 million of aid each year supporting road projects in developing countries. £300 million of this is indirect spending through core contributions to multilateral organisations, with the remaining £100 million spent through bilateral programmes, often as contributions to multi-donor trust funds or projects.⁴ There have been too many examples where multilateral organisations have funded road infrastructure which failed to ensure even basic levels of road safety for 'vulnerable' road users like pedestrians, cyclists and children. The World Bank's new road safety safeguard policy is a very positive development to address this,⁵ but is yet to be consistently applied. The UK should do more to ensure that all its bilateral and multilateral funding for roads meets minimum safety standards, for example as measured by the star rating protocol developed by the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), a UK charity, which is now being deployed in more than 100 countries.⁶

Road safety is chronically underfunded globally, with the UK's direct contribution to this issue small relative to other comparable health burdens. The UK has provided leadership in the World Bank's

¹ UK Government (2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consulting-on-ending-the-sale-of-new-petrol-diesel-and-hybrid-cars-and-vans>

² WHO (2018) Global status report on road safety 2018 https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en/

³ WHO '9 out of 10 people breathe polluted air' Key Facts <https://www.who.int/news-room/air-pollution>

⁴ FIA Foundation analysis of Statistics for International Development 2018 data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2018>

⁵ World Bank (2018) Environmental and Social Framework <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards>

⁶ iRAP (the International Road Assessment Programme) How we can help: Star Ratings

Global Road Safety Facility, which leverages significant additional funding within the Bank for road safety improvements. We welcome this, but significantly more could be achieved with even slightly more investment. This should include first building on the UK's excellent applied research programme for road safety and high-volume transport to include work on climate change and second directly funding programmatic interventions. One way to achieve this would be to support the UN's new Road Safety Fund while using UK influence to help better align the work of this new fund with the World Bank's Facility.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of safe and accessible walking and cycling facilities, coupled with reduced vehicle speed. It has also shown the benefits of car-free cities for the quality of air. Yet, typically, across sub-Saharan Africa more than 90% of roads used by both pedestrians and fast-moving traffic do not have viable sidewalks.⁷ This is a major contributor to death and injury. As with clean water infrastructure, access to a safe sidewalk and to clean air should be a basic development indicator. The UK Government and the Mayor of London have made important announcements in recent weeks about prioritising walking and cycling and clean mobility in response to COVID-19.⁸ There is an opportunity to show leadership internationally through UK aid to support similar interventions to enable safe walking and cycling in developing countries. This is not only an essential road safety measure but also a vital contribution to tackling climate change.

We welcome recent leadership by the UK in the area of road safety. In September 2019 the Department for Transport took the initiative to organise an international road safety conference at Lancaster House, building on our strong domestic record. Participation by road safety minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton in the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Sweden in February 2020, was a welcome indication of the importance to the UK of the issue. The UK is being supportive of efforts to include road safety on the agenda of the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. Yet the UK could be doing still more to take an international leadership role, and below we set out four opportunities to both improve the effectiveness of existing aid in this field, and to expand the UK's reputation and engagement as a leader in safe and sustainable mobility globally:

- **The UK should use its leadership of COP26 as an opportunity to develop a new cross-government strategy on safe and sustainable mobility in the countries which benefit from UK aid**
- **DFID should go further in integrating sustainable mobility into its bilateral programmes including supporting safe walking and cycling in developing countries in response to COVID-19.**
- **The UK should increase its funding to safe and sustainable transport in developing countries, including through the UN's new Road Safety Fund, and use its influence to align the work of this new fund and the World Bank's Facility.**
- **The UK should ensure that all its bilateral and multilateral road funding meets minimum safety standards (for example the star rating protocol developed by the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), as well as promoting clean air and climate-friendly low-carbon mobility solutions.**

About us

⁷ FIA Foundation / Amend (2016) Step Change: An Action Agenda on Safe Walking for Africa's Children. <https://www.fiafoundation.org/connect/publications/step-change>

⁸ Department for Transport (2020) £2 billion package to create new era for cycling and walking <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking>

The FIA Foundation is a leading philanthropy working for safe and healthy streets globally: safe, clean, fair and green mobility for all. With a head office in London, and with a particular focus on providing support to middle and low income countries, we provide catalytic funding to a network of expert partners to address urgent issues such as road safety, clean and low carbon mobility and street design for 'liveable' cities.

We are also active in campaigning and convening on these issues – we host the Child Health Initiative (CHI), a partnership that works for safe and healthy journeys to school for every child worldwide; the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI) which works with 70 countries currently to promote zero emission vehicles; and The Real Urban Emissions initiative (TRUE) which supports cities in addressing grossly polluting vehicles on their streets.

We receive no direct funding from the UK government, but we have worked closely with the Department for International Development (DFID) through the steering group of the World Bank-hosted Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF), to which we provided start-up funding. Our submission is based on our experience supporting policy change and leveraging investment around the world through our expert partners – some of whom have received funding from the UK government, but also from other donors.