

Analysis for Assessment or Assessment for Analysis?

Assessing the UK's 'Defence Engagement' Activities

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Hypothesis

- An assessment methodology is sometimes required in order to generate an evidence base from which to conduct subsequent analysis
 - ‘Analysis’ for assessment is not possible
- In these circumstances it is essential to ensure that the assessment methodology is amenable to analysis from the onset
 - To best enable ‘assessment for analysis’
- Case study: the UK’s Defence Engagement activities

Overview

- What is Defence Engagement
- Questions for Defence Engagement Analysis
- Assessment for Analysis
- Key Considerations for Assessment for Analysis
- Concluding Thoughts

International Defence Engagement

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International Defence Engagement Strategy

"We need to draw together, and use, all the instruments of national power, so that the sum of the British effort is much bigger than its component parts." UK National Security Strategy 2010

International Defence Engagement is the means by which we use our defence assets and activities short of combat operations to achieve influence.

1. The National Security Strategy 2010 (NSS) states that we must use all of our national capabilities to build our prosperity, extend our influence in the world, and strengthen our security. The United Kingdom has unique defence and security assets which already play an essential role in contributing, both directly and indirectly, to our security and prosperity. The Defence contribution to UK influence is one of the seven Military Tasks as defined by the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2010 (SDSR).
2. The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) set out a vision for an integrated approach to meeting our international objectives. The Government aims to focus its efforts where our national interests are most at stake and where we can achieve the greatest effect, and Defence Engagement is an essential part of this integrated approach. Our Defence capabilities and assets can be used more strategically to maximise their benefit to the UK as a whole. This International Defence Engagement Strategy, commissioned and approved by the Foreign and Defence Secretaries, will provide coherent strategic direction for our international Defence Engagement.

Context

3. Using the 2010 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review as the baseline, this Strategy will ensure that we are shaping our Defence Engagement over a longer horizon of up to 20 years, and developing the relationships and influence that we will require to achieve our objectives in a period of significant uncertainty and change. Our interests will continue to shift geographically, as will our ability to use longstanding relationships and the traditional institutions of global governance. We will have to work harder, and in different ways, to advance and protect British interests. This strategy is complementary to the FCO's recently announced network shift.

International Defence Engagement in practice

4. Defence assets contribute to the achievement of our international objectives well beyond the use, or threat of use, of hard power. Our Defence Engagement tools work through both bilateral defence relationships and multilateral engagement.
5. The scope of International Defence Engagement includes: treaties and alliances; senior level visits; our Defence Attaché network; civilian defence advisors; loan service personnel; overseas exchange and liaison officers; overseas training teams; security sector reform; international defence training; conventional deterrence and reassurance; overseas joint exercises; ship, unit and aircraft visits; and support to UK defence sales and international defence industry cooperation.
6. The effectiveness of this engagement and the way in which it can help achieve our international goals depends upon our ability to understand its impact, focus its use, and integrate it with our other levers of influence.

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"International Defence Engagement is the means by which we use our defence assets and activities short of combat operations to achieve influence"

UK International Defence Engagement Strategy
(IDES), February 2013

- Joint Strategy – Ministry of Defence (MOD) & Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)
- Consistent with UK National Security Strategy (2010) and UK Strategic Security and Defence Review (2010)

Defence Engagement Objectives

- Defending the UK, its Overseas Territories and interests
- Protecting UK citizens abroad
- Influencing in support of UK national interests
- Promoting and protecting UK prosperity
- Understanding other nations' security objectives, capabilities and intent
- Building international capability, capacity and will
- Deterring threats to UK interests

Defence Engagement 'Means' (1)

- Security and 'Non-Combat' Operations
 - Including conventional deterrence and reassurance, embargoes and interdictions; security operations (e.g. maritime security, counter-terrorism capacity building); Special Forces; information operations; cyber security and planning for Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs)
- Defence Diplomacy
 - Direct engagement, including through senior level visits; our Defence Attaché network; treaties and international arrangements; alliances and partnerships; civilian defence advisors; overseas and UK-based training and capacity building; work with multinational organisations, including NATO, the EU and the UN; loan service personnel, exchange and liaison officers and intelligence personnel working overseas; ship, unit and aircraft visits

Defence Engagement Means (2)

- Defence and Security Exports
 - Support to British Industry alongside UK Trade and Investment and Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the export of defence and security training, advice and material manufacture in the UK or by UK companies, in support of UK security objectives
- Regional Stability, Conflict Prevention, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilisation
 - Including counter-proliferation; arms control; peacekeeping; security sector reform; stabilisation; conflict prevention and reduction – frequently funded by the Conflict Pool in support of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS)

IDES Direction

“The strategy sets out how all defence activity will be prioritised to focus our engagement efforts on those countries which are most important to our national interests, and where we are most likely to achieve the desired effect.”



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Defence Engagement In Practice



Questions for Defence Engagement Analysis

- How should Defence Engagement activity be prioritised?
- Are objectives being achieved?
- Are Defence Engagement activities successful?
- What is the best way to allocate Defence Engagement resources?
- What type of Defence Engagement best achieves which type of effect in which context?
- Does Defence Engagement achieve better effect than other types of government engagement / activity?
- What is the return on investment of Defence Engagement?

Questions for Defence Engagement Analysis

- How should Defence Engagement activity be prioritised?
- Are objectives being achieved?

Mixture of:

- Regular performance assessment questions and
- Overarching balance of investment / resource allocation / prioritisation questions
- Does Defence Engagement achieve better effect than other types of government engagement / activity?
- What is the return on investment of Defence Engagement?

Characteristics of Defence Engagement

- It is happening all the time
 - Not bound to specific operation or time considerations
- It is happening all over the world
 - Covering wide range of activities
- The activities & their desired effect are context dependent
- The rationale for an activity's contribution to an objective will be context dependent
- Outcomes and impact regarding achieving influence is difficult to measure (and context dependent)
- How activities are delivered will matter in addition to what is delivered
- Success measured over long time periods (but failure measured quickly)
- Paucity of reliable data and information

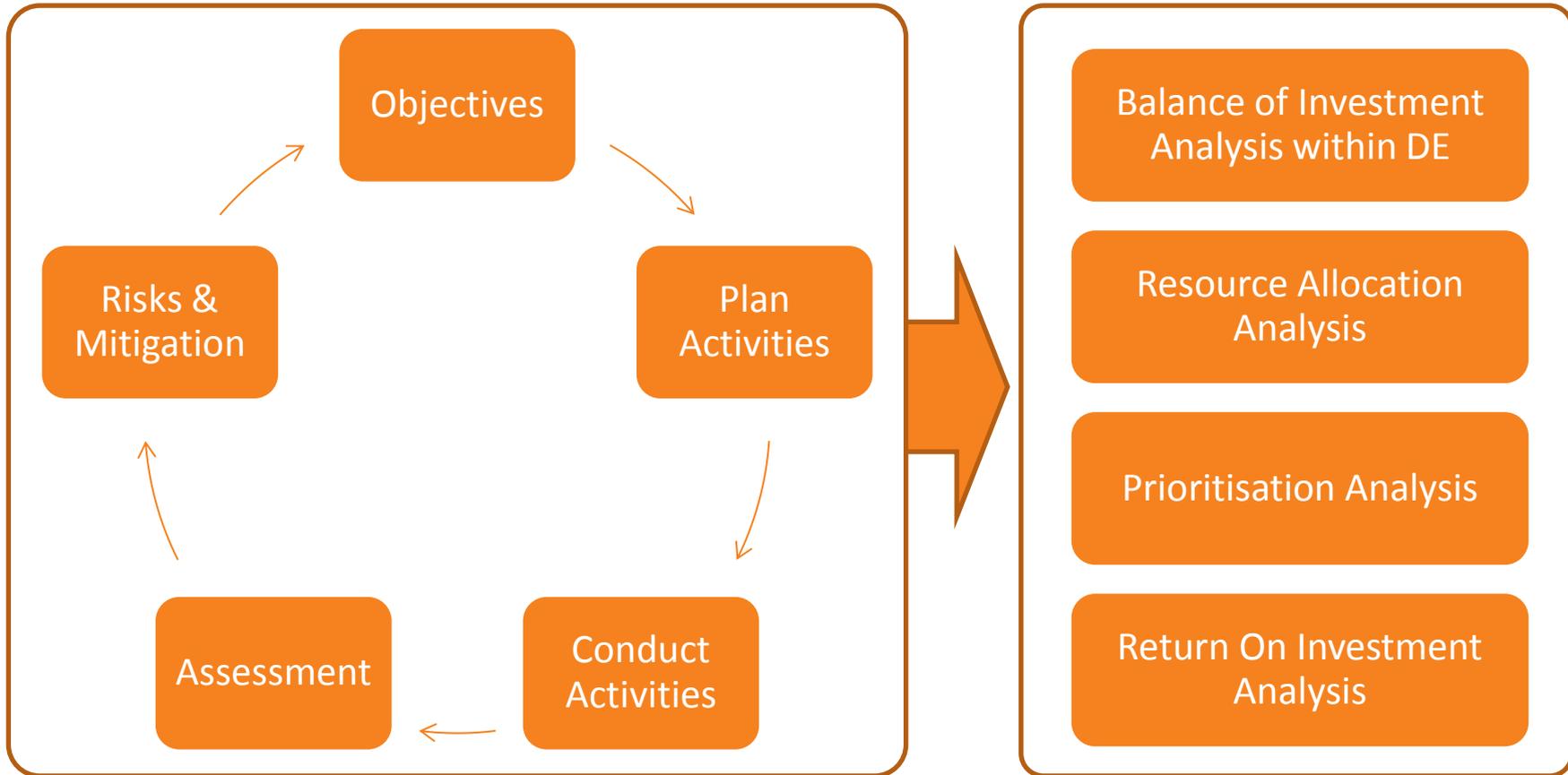
Implications for Analysis

- Traditional 'Measures of Effectiveness' approaches will not suffice due to context dependent nature across countries and regions
- Scenario-based analysis and simulation not currently possible
- Requirement to assess Defence Engagement on a recurring basis
- The data from which analysis can be conducted needs to be explicitly captured (and in some cases created) as events occur
- Requirement to fit into broader departmental reporting processes
- 'Owners' of the objectives & activities need to be involved in reporting

Assessment for Analysis

- Overarching assessment framework covering...
 - Objectives
 - Activities
 - Rationale for Activity contribution to Objectives
 - Indicators and metrics for measuring objective and activity success
 - Regular reporting against indicators and metrics
 - Regular overall assessments supported by narrative justification
 - Regular report of risks and mitigating actions
- ...can, if set up for analytical purposes, allow assessment for analysis over time

From Assessment to Analysis



Considerations From Experience

- Defining the overarching assessment questions
- Consistent Terminology
- Appropriate Management Information Systems
- Good Objectives
- Explicit Intervention Rationale
- Good Indicators, at the right level
- Stakeholder buy-in
- Quick-Wins
- Reporting hierarchy
- Reporting framework



Overall Assessment Question

- Needs to be defined upfront to shape the framework
 - “Are the activities conducted contributing to achievement of the objectives in the manner intended?”
 - “Are the objectives being achieved?”



Consistent Terminology

- Balance between standardised language whilst still capturing nuances
- Important for both activities and objectives
- Helps bound the problem space, and early stakeholder buy-in
- Essential to enable higher-level analysis
- Creation of DE Taxonomy

Appropriate Management Information

- To ensure 1 source of the truth amongst stakeholders
- Essential that an information system becomes useful to those using it
- Should not replicate other systems used by stakeholders
- Activities / Objectives recorded as they are planned
- Does not need to be a unitary system or complicated



Good Objectives (1)

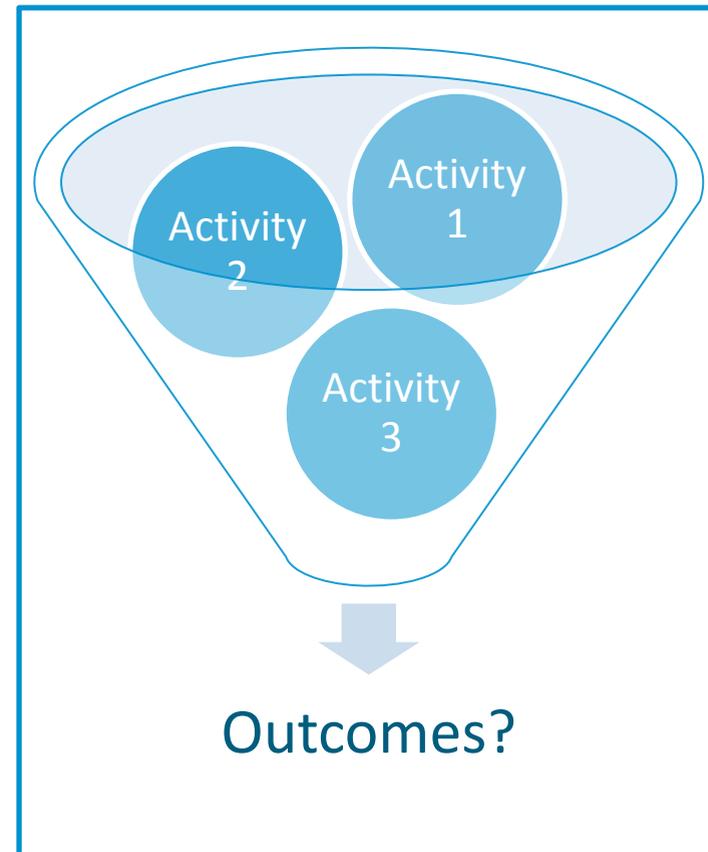
- Objectives should be SMART:
 - **Specific** – clear and precise objectives, detailing what is intended to be achieved
 - **Measurable** – expressed such that progress can be measured (e.g. how much / many etc)
 - **Achievable** – within the boundaries of the available resources
 - **Relevant** – to the policy area & coherent with higher-level objectives and sub-objectives
 - **Time-framed** - clear time-frames detailing what will be achieved by when
- Extra T:
 - **Targeted** – explicitly towards the intended target audience(s)
- Not every element of SMART needs to / can be included in all objectives – use as guide to best practice.

Good Objectives (2)

- If the objective / policy goal is high-level & long-term – set interim and intermediate objectives splitting up the overarching objective.
 - Best practice for developing objectives for DE has been to focus on the 3 to 5 year period.
- Be clear about the level at which the objective is set:
 - **Output** – Delivering activity – allowing a ‘measure of activity’ and potentially a ‘measure of performance’
 - **Outcome** – Achieving an effect (allowing a ‘measure of effect’ and testing of the logic linking the intervention to the objective)
 - **Impact Level** – Achieving a range of effects (or outcomes)

Explicit Intervention Rationale

- Define for each activity / intervention
 - The objectives that it contributes to
 - Why, in the view of the activity planner, will that intervention have that effect
 - This is the activity rationale – or ‘theory of change’
 - Becomes a testable hypothesis
- Can help with prioritising objectives / activities
- A useful step for stakeholders to consider ‘why’
- Can be part of a broader ‘objective-hierarchy’ tool



Good Indicators, at the right level

- What information is required to know whether the outcome / output has been achieved?
 - Is the information at the right level?
- Written as a question can help
- Identify the most appropriate data sources upfront and a mechanism through which they can be gathered
- Recognising the difference between data gathering tasks and data analysis tasks

Stakeholder Buy-In

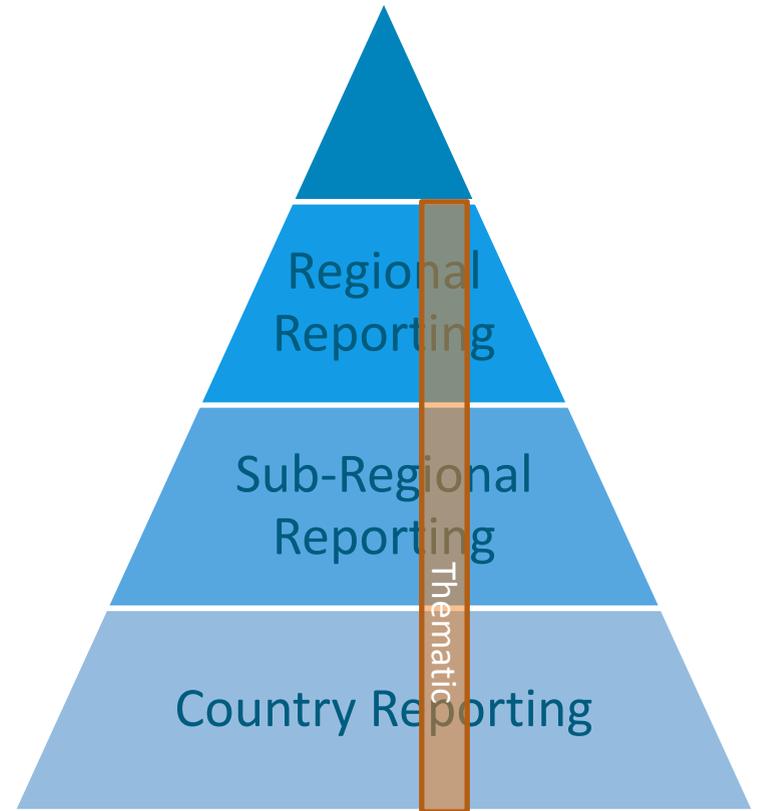
- This approach cannot work without stakeholder involvement and input
- Ultimately, the framework is for the stakeholders – need to buy in to the framework
- Requirement for a balance between analytical requirements and stakeholder requirements – usually regarding simplicity and ease of use
- Expectation Management

Quick-Wins

- Importance of demonstrating utility to stakeholders early-on
- Use of the data that is available to answer suitable questions
- Use of surveys & proxy data for analysis purposes

Reporting Hierarchy

- Ideally an assessment framework should be based on a conceptual hierarchy which provides the structure that connects activities with an overall strategy
- Consider the reporting chain, including:
 - Different audiences to which the results will be presented
 - Different ways in which the information can be summarised
- Avoid duplication of assessments – link into one hierarchy where possible



Reporting Framework

- Consistent framework across all stakeholder areas
- Fit for purpose(s) – both analytical and those of the stakeholders
- Many ways to do this, but should include:
 - The original objectives (SMART), activities planned and rationale
 - Activities completed in reporting period
 - Overall assessment – ‘are we on track to achieve the objective?’
 - Indicators used
 - Reporting against the indicators
 - Narrative justification
 - Risks , mitigations & changes to assumptions
 - The last assessment

Reporting Framework (2)

- Consider best way to produce overall assessment framework:



Concluding Thoughts

- Importance of working with stakeholders and understanding the activities, intended outcomes and the links between them
- Importance of building the evidence base
- Applicability across more contexts?



Any Questions?



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