



Better Assistance in Crises Programme Endline Evaluation Report

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Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Annual Review
BASIC	The Better Assistance in Crises programme
BC	Business Case
CMP	Centrally Managed Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FALSoc	Food Security, Agriculture, Land and Social Protection Department
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSP	Gender-Responsive Social Protection Programme
HARBS	Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Building Somalia
HLP	High-Level Panel on Social Protection in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings
HSOT	Humanitarian System Operations Team
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
KELU	Knowledge, Evidence, Learning and Uptake
KII	Key Informant Interview/ee
KML	Knowledge Management and Learning
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NAF	National Aid Fund
NCVA	National Cash and Voucher Assistance
NIPSS	Nigeria's National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies
NSIPA	National Social Investment Programme Agency
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PFP	Programme-Funded Post
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RED	FCDO Research and Evidence Division
SFD	Yemen Social Fund for Development
SP	Social Protection
SPACE	COVID-19 Expert Advice Service
SPARC	Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19: Research and Collaboration
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board
SPT	Social Protection Team
SSERJ	Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience
TA	Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
TSLT	Technical Support and Leadership Team
UHRC	Ukraine Humanitarian Response Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VfM	Value for Money
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

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Executive summary

The Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) programme (2018–2026) is a £23.5 million, centrally managed Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) programme aiming to strengthen the use of social protection (SP) approaches in crises. It delivers technical assistance (TA), research, and knowledge management and learning (KML) across global and country contexts, with a focus on fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS) experiencing protracted violent conflict, climate-related shocks, and forced displacement crises.

In October 2020, FCDO commissioned Integrity to deliver an independent performance evaluation of BASIC at three points over its implementation. This endline evaluation (2025–2026) assesses BASIC's performance over its full implementation period, examining relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability. It also offers lessons for future TA facilities and Research programmes. The primary evaluation audience is the FCDO Social Protection Team and BASIC suppliers.

BASIC programme

BASIC's Business Case (BC) argues that extreme poverty and fragility are tightly linked, while the humanitarian system, already overstretched amid unprecedented need, is poorly equipped to respond. BASIC aims to strengthen the use of SP in crisis-affected low- and middle-income countries through three workstreams: TA, Research, and KML:

- **BASIC TA (DAI): £10.27 million:** TA delivered demand-driven country and global support through capacity building, coordination, policy influence and learning. The first iteration of the TA component, which included the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert (SPACE) Advice Service, was succeeded by the Social Protection Technical Assistance, Advice, and Resources (STAAR) Facility in 2022. All phases were supported by a programme-funded post (PFP). The Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT), managed by Palladium, was also accessed by BASIC to provide expertise on cash coordination and the SP–humanitarian nexus.
- **Research (IDS):** Research aims to strengthen both global and country-specific evidence on using SP approaches to build resilience and respond to crises (in different contexts and for different vulnerable groups). BASIC Research currently comprises three components: Global Research, Focus Country Research, and Research Uptake and Engagement.
- **KML (suppliers and FCDO; budget within existing allocations):** The KML workstream includes this evaluation contract and a broader programme of KML activity delivered by BASIC suppliers. The Knowledge, Evidence, Learning and Uptake (KELU) strategy, launched in 2022, was drafted by the BASIC PFP in close consultation with programme partners to identify cross-BASIC learning synergies, with implementation taken forward jointly by partners alongside their respective TA and Research KML strategies.

BASIC's core logic is that system and policy support, stronger capacities, and robust evidence together help to make SP approaches used during crises more effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable. Its intended impact is that vulnerable people are better able to cope and meet their basic needs during, in anticipation of, and following conflict, displacement, and climate-related crises.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation adopted a blended theory-based and case-based approach, and was underpinned by clear management processes. Our approach was non-experimental and relied on contribution analysis, which assesses the relative contribution of BASIC to outcomes and impacts of interest compared to other possible explanatory factors. Budget uncertainties and implementation delays made it more challenging to engage with BASIC suppliers and caused some delay to data

collection activities, though these delays were sufficiently mitigated. Our approach to evaluation ethics aligns with evaluation and learning industry best practices.

We took a mixed-methods approach to assess performance, triangulating evidence to provide robust findings. We collected data by (1) reviewing programme documents and wider policy documents, (2) analysing relevant secondary data sources, (3) interviewing programme and global stakeholders, (4) conducting country case studies in Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen, and (5) surveying FCDO advisers working in countries targeted by BASIC. In total, we engaged 138 stakeholders and reviewed 147 documents. We developed findings for each sub-Evaluation Question (EQ) by triangulating data from different methods and discussing these as a team, appraising the strength of evidence underpinning the findings.

This endline evaluation covers BASIC TA, Research and KML across the full delivery period, excluding this evaluation contract and the World Bank Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) Window which started delivery in the 2024/25 Financial Year. While the evaluation covers the programme lifecycle in full, it places greater emphasis on delivery since the 2023 midline, reflecting the maturity of implementation during this period. To ensure proportionality, this endline evaluation places relatively more emphasis on STAAR TA as opposed to HSOT and PFPs, reflecting the level of investment across the programme.

Key findings

EQ1 Relevance: To what extent do BASIC interventions, individually or in combination, suit the needs of target groups?

BASIC remained highly relevant to evolving FCDO priorities, including humanitarian leadership, climate resilience, gender equality, and crisis response. SP approaches aligned closely with FCDO's broader priorities, 2025 National Security Strategy aims, and previous 2023 White Paper commitments. BASIC TA responded well to FCDO demand with high user satisfaction. Over time, BASIC became more relevant to the needs of UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNICEF) and global actors. Engagement with national governments remained variable and was constrained particularly in contexts of political instability. Limited local capacity and access challenges in FCAS were also challenges but to a lesser extent. Research maintained strong alignment with global SP debates, but due to its longer timeframes and evidence-generation focus, was less directly responsive to immediate FCDO post and country needs.

EQ2 Coherence: Are BASIC interventions internally coherent and do they work in harmony with the operations of other donors and actors in the same field?

Internal coherence of BASIC TA and Research improved considerably over time, supported by joint uptake planning and learning mechanisms. Efforts to coordinate on the uptake and use of outputs towards the end of the programme were especially well received. BASIC's design and delivery challenges such as misaligned timelines, unclear ownership of coordination, operational constraints, and delays and funding uncertainties appeared to limit internal coherence and meant that, while some synergies emerged, stakeholders ultimately viewed targeted coordination around dissemination and uptake as more realistic and valuable than pursuing extensive cross-component integration. External coherence was stronger: BASIC complemented other FCDO programmes (especially Gender-Responsive Social Protection) and aligned well with global actors such as the World Bank, ILO, and

SPIAC-B. At country level, coherence depended heavily on local partnerships, FCDO capacity, and the presence of embedded advisers.

EQ3 Effectiveness: To what extent are BASIC interventions, individually and in combination, attaining their objectives and why?

BASIC produced a high volume of TA, Research and KML products, including over 103 TA assignments and 131 research products. These TA and research outputs were consistently high quality and relevant, benefiting from strong technical leadership. Outcome-level effects were most evident in:

- **strengthening country policies and programmes** (e.g., Jordan Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience (SSERJ) programme, Nigeria National Cash and Voucher Assistance (NCVA) policy, Somalia Cash Strategy, South Sudan National Social Protection Policy Framework),
- **improving donor and system coordination** (especially evidenced in four of the seven country case studies: Yemen, Jordan, Somalia and Lebanon),
- **enhancing practitioner capability**, (e.g. in UNICEF, FCDO and implementing partners),
- **contributing to global policy momentum**, including the Rome Global Forum and the High Level Panel on Social Protection in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings (HLP).

Outcomes tended to be more limited where political commitment, financing, or institutional anchoring were weaker, particularly in high-fragility settings.

EQ4 Impact: What are the positive and negative intended and unintended consequences of BASIC interventions, individually and in combination?

Given its catalytic mandate, BASIC made plausible and significant contributions to improved crisis assistance efficiency, effectiveness and inclusion. It helped shape major FCDO and partner programmes, encouraged shifts towards shock-responsive SP, and supported coordination and system strengthening. Impact was strongest where BASIC inputs aligned with political windows, donor interest and existing system capacity (e.g., Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia). In especially fragile contexts, for example, Sudan, Myanmar or Afghanistan, BASIC's influence was particularly constrained by political barriers in working with national authorities. Access restrictions and limited functioning systems were barriers to a variable extent. There was limited evidence of increased domestic financing for SP in FCAS. Donor funding remains essential, which has become increasingly uncertain. Links between SP and climate finance show future potential, but stakeholders suggested donor commitments in this area are also under threat.

EQ5 Efficiency: Are BASIC interventions, individually and in combination, delivering in a timely and cost-efficient manner?

BASIC demonstrated good value for money across economy, efficiency and equity. Competitive procurement, growing use of national consultants, and agile TA modalities supported efficient delivery. Early delays, protracted inception phases, and FCDO budget uncertainty led to uneven delivery timing and a higher management burden for FCDO. Cost-effectiveness was strongest where small TA investments produced significant programmatic influence (e.g., Yemen VfM advice; Nigeria NCVA policy; Jordan SSERJ design, Ethiopia PSNP6 Programme Appraisal Document).

EQ6 Sustainability: To what extent are the benefits and activities associated with BASIC interventions, individually and in combination, likely to continue after funding ceases?

Sustainability varied across contexts. More durable results were observed where: national consultants and local researchers had been central to delivery; outputs were embedded in national plans, curricula, or institutional processes; civil society organisations (CSOs) and local networks continued advocacy; and donors maintained coordinated, long-term investment. Sustainability was weaker where political instability, institutional fragility, or reliance on humanitarian funding limited follow-through. The High-Level Panel created a momentum for global policy commitments, but its long-term sustainability will require continued resourcing and leadership.

Conclusion

BASIC made a credible catalytic contribution to system-level changes relating to the use of SP in crises, particularly through influencing policy dialogue, donor coordination, and global debates. Its impact was strongest where it could work through existing systems and partnerships, notably in displacement-affected and climate shock contexts, and where change could be leveraged through other actors.

Contributions to deeper reform were identified but more uneven and highly context-dependent. These contributions were shaped primarily by national political economy factors, financing constraints, and the presence of long-term partners. In FCAS settings, particular barriers to accessing national authorities and weak or absent SP systems constrained what could be achieved within BASIC's timeframe, with the programme's contribution often more evident in strengthening humanitarian response systems as an interim measure.

At the global level, BASIC made significant contributions to institutionalising SP approaches through coordination, convening, and high-quality TA and research, raising international commitment and amplifying FCDO's visibility and influence. Efforts were made to shape STAAR assignments with uptake in mind and in sequencing and layering support over time, as well as to circulate the evidence during key decision making points. However, sustaining these gains and translating them into downstream country-level change remains challenging.

Overall, BASIC delivered good value for money, though cost-effectiveness could have been improved through clearer targeting, stronger uptake of outputs, and reduced coordination burden. Looking ahead, future TA should adapt to a changing development finance landscape, including greater reliance on multilateral channels, strengthened domestic advocacy (including CSOs) and opportunities such as climate-linked social protection financing.

Lessons

- **TA facilities and Research programmes are inherently catalytic but not always system-changing by themselves.** Programmes of a similar type and scale to BASIC are effective when they focus on catalytic influencing and creating the enabling environment for systems change, rather than attempting to deliver systems change by itself.
- **Offering a mix of modalities is essential.** The choice of the most appropriate and effective modalities is dependent on context, and a mix – or a combination - of approaches is warranted. Rapid, light-touch inputs (e.g., through the STAAR TSLT model which allowed for a quick response to emergent needs) and longer, sequenced engagements both had value, depending on context and need.

- **Localisation increases relevance, uptake and sustainability.** National consultants, researchers and CSOs can play an essential role in grounding advice, improving credibility and sustaining momentum after assignments have ended.
- **Translating high-quality outputs into policy and practice change requires deliberate uptake strategies, structured knowledge brokering, and clear accountability for use.** BASIC produced a large and technically strong body of TA and research outputs that were widely regarded as high quality. However, the evaluation found consistent gaps between the delivery of outputs and their uptake into policy and practice. Evidence shows that where outcomes were achieved, they depended on sustained engagement, trusted relationships, alignment with decision points, and clear uptake pathways embedded within programme delivery.

Recommendation areas (high-level)

1. FCDO should continue to promote and support the use of SP approaches in responding to, and building, resilience to crises.
2. FCDO should maximise the benefits from the available BASIC Research and TA results.
3. FCDO should consider ways of sustaining access to relevant technical expertise, in order to meet continuing user demand and maintain momentum.

1. Purpose, scope and objectives

This section presents an introduction to the BASIC evaluation and this evaluation report. It covers the aims, purpose, objectives, scope and target audiences of the evaluation.

1.1 Introduction

The £23.5 million **Better Assistance in Crises Programme (BASIC)** aims to support the new and/or improved use of social protection (SP) approaches during crises. It does this by providing expert advisory, capacity building, learning, coordination, high-level policy influencing, and research services. It is being delivered between 2018 and 2026 by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Social Protection Team (SPT) in the Food Security, Agriculture, Land and Social Protection Department (FALSoc) (hereby SPT). In October 2020, FCDO commissioned Integrity to deliver an independent performance evaluation of BASIC at three points over its implementation.¹ This report presents the results of the endline evaluation. This endline evaluation report, produced between June 2025 and March 2026, is the third and final evaluation output and evaluates performance over the full implementation period.

1.2 Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

Purpose: The purpose and objectives of the performance evaluation specified in the terms of reference (presented in Appendix A) are as follows:

- Provide evidence to improve ways of working, knowledge exchange, and learning.
- Provide evidence and learning to FCDO, other UK government departments, country governments, and partners on how technical assistance (TA) and research can contribute to better use of social assistance approaches in crises.
- Inform the design of future centrally managed programmes and deepen global evidence and learning on how programme modalities could change policy, programmes and systems.

Objectives: To meet this purpose, the endline evaluation has the following objectives:

- Assess whether, why and how BASIC is achieving its stated outputs, outcomes and progress towards impact, including Value for Money (VfM), and explore whether intended outputs and outcomes were realistic and appropriate, and the extent of unintended outcomes.
- Identify what worked, what didn't and why, in promoting greater use of social assistance approaches in crises, and policy change and enhanced capacities through TA, research, influencing, and capacity strengthening; generate evidence and learning on the effectiveness of the programme and how it could be improved.
- Generate learning on what worked from the combination of TA, research, influencing, and capacity strengthening in promoting policy-, programme- and system-level change in crises, assessing the effectiveness of delivery modalities used in the programme and their combination.
- Make recommendations on future programme modalities to support policy, programme and systems change in crisis contexts, whether delivered by FCDO or through other actors.

Scope: The evaluation covers the three original BASIC workstreams: Technical Assistance (TA), Research, and Knowledge Management and Learning (KML) – and their global and country-level activities. The evaluation does not cover the final impacts of BASIC on end-beneficiaries, nor the

¹ In 2024, Integrity was commissioned separately to deliver an interim review of BASIC, published internally to FCDO.

World Bank FCV window. The Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service helpline delivered by BASIC TA has been evaluated previously².

1.3 Target audiences and stakeholders

The primary audience for evaluation findings is the FCDO SPT and BASIC suppliers. Its secondary audience is FCDO country posts and partners, and other FCDO departments. Its tertiary audience is external BASIC advisers, governments, donors, international agencies, think tanks and consultancy firms. Our stakeholder engagement and influence and use plan are presented in full in Appendix A.

1.4 Organisation of this report

This report and associated appendices (presented separately) are structured as follows:

Table 1.1: Organisation of this report

Endline report section	Endline Appendices
- 2. BASIC context and delivery to date, including its ToC - 3. Evaluation approach and methods - 4. Endline evaluation findings structured by evaluation question - 5. Conclusions and recommendations	A – Background and evaluation methodology 1. Description of BASIC and its context 2. Evaluation methodology and approach 3. Influence and communication plan and uptake of midline recommendations 4. Data collection tools 5. List of evaluation participants and reviewed documents 6. Mapping findings to conclusions and recommendations 7. Mapping EQuALS criteria to report content 8. Terms of reference and deviations from these and inception phase B – Supplementary analyses 1. Monitoring and administrative data analysis 2. Secondary data analysis 3. Survey analysis 4. Country case study reports 5. Lessons arising from the evaluation 6. Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and VfM scorecards 7. Logframe review

² SPACE was evaluated in more detail in the baseline phase of this evaluation contract, and separately by Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

2. Description of BASIC and its context

This section summarises BASIC's rationale, context, and theory of change, and concludes with an overview of delivery, with further detail provided in Appendix A.

2.1 BASIC rationale and programme overview

The BASIC business case (BC) argues that extreme poverty and fragility are tightly linked, while the humanitarian system, already overstretched amid unprecedented need, is poorly equipped to respond. Crises are increasingly protracted or recurrent, with most aid flowing to situations lasting three years or more, yet financing and delivery remain short-term and reactive. BASIC was designed to help address these growing needs and crisis-specific challenges, which threaten progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 1 (ending poverty in all its forms), and the 2030 Agenda's commitment to "leave no one behind". As defined in its BC, BASIC sought to focus on three main types of crises:

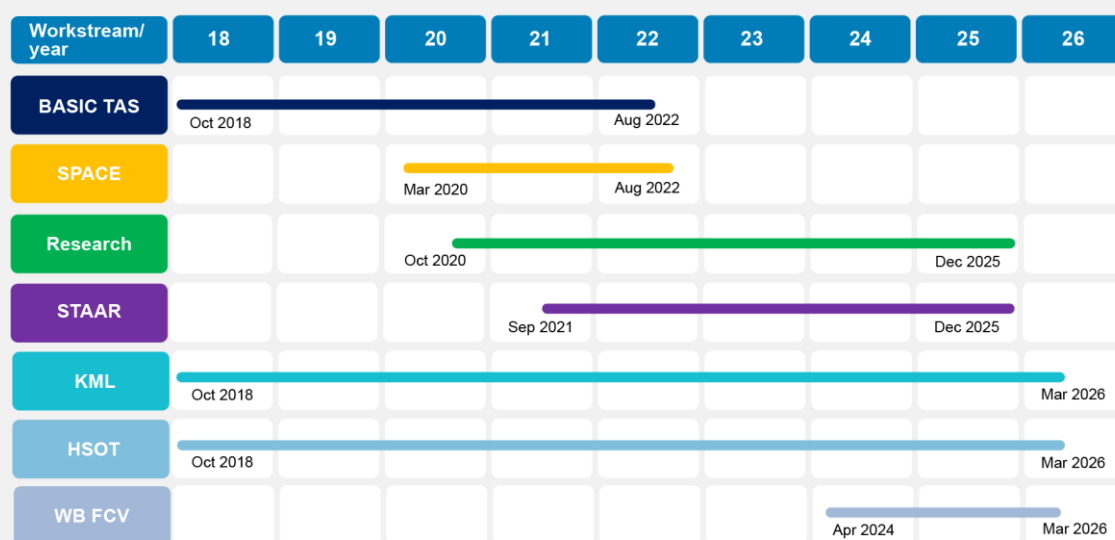
- **Recurring climate-related shocks:** Climate-related shocks are set to become more frequent and are a major impediment to development, setting back poverty alleviation and leading to loss of lives and livelihoods. These shocks are expected to put greater pressure on stretched humanitarian systems. Disasters that generate the most need, such as cyclones, floods and droughts, are predictable, but humanitarian aid is suggested to often be too little, too late.
- **Protracted conflict-related crisis in most fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS):** Most humanitarian aid is spent on a small number of protracted crises. Contexts of protracted crises routinely feature at the very low end of the Human Development Index. As such, there is a considerable overlap between fragile situations and humanitarian caseload.
- **Protracted displacement and refugees:** The number of forcibly displaced people is rising, and they are displaced for extended periods. More than 80% of refugee crises last longer than a decade, and 40% last longer than two. Despite the protracted nature of displacement, responses are often based on short-term planning, with funding mostly allocated on a yearly basis.

In response, BASIC aims to strengthen the use of social protection in crisis-affected low- and middle-income countries through three workstreams: TA, Research and KML. Box 2.1 outlines the terms we used for the programme and its components in this evaluation and Figure 2.1 presents an overview of delivery plans to date at the time of endline data collection.

| Box 2.1: Overview of BASIC terminology

- **STAAR** refers to the Social Protection Technical Assistance, Advice and Resources Facility that was awarded to DAI in September 2021 and is currently under implementation. STAAR delivers TA for BASIC and the Gender-Responsive Social Protection (GSP) programme.
- **SPACE** refers to the three BASIC TAS projects that delivered the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 expert advice helpline.
- **BASIC Technical Assistance** refers to BASIC TAS, HSOT and STAAR collectively, while **BASIC programme** refers to these three activities, plus BASIC Research and KML.
- **TAS** refers to the Technical Assistance Services programme delivered through the FCDO framework contract 'Strengthening Resilience and Response to Crises', Lot B of the Expert Advisory Call-Down Service (EACDS) managed by DAI Global UK Ltd (DAI) between 2018 and 2022.
- **HSOT** refers to the Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT) under Palladium.
- **BASIC Research** refers to the global research programme delivered by a consortium led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), which is currently in its implementation phase at the time of reporting.
- **Knowledge, Management and Learning (KML)** refers to this evaluation contract as well as the broader work led by BASIC suppliers to store and use insight developed by the programme.
- **WB FCV Window** refers to the World Bank (WB) Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) Envelope. A specialized International Development Association (IDA) funding mechanism designed to support countries facing high risks of conflict or transitioning out of fragility.

| Figure 2.1: BASIC delivery over time



Source: FCDO (2025). BASIC programme documents.

BASIC's budget was £23.5 million. Just over £10 million was allocated to TA and just under £10 million was allocated to Research. An additional £3.65 million in total was awarded to the World Bank Fragility Window, with £650k being awarded in financial year 2025/26. The remaining budget was allocated to evaluation activities. The BASIC BC classified £5 million of the total budget as International Climate Finance, with £3 million linked to Research and £2 million linked to TA. Table 2.1

below provides an overview of actual BASIC spend to date. Just over 90% of the budgeted funds had been spent as of January 2026, and BASIC is expected to use the majority of all budgeted funds.

Table 2.1 Overview of BASIC actual spend over the delivery period

Financial year	Programme spend (£ millions)
FY 18/19	0.014
FY 19/20	0.38
FY 20/21	2.38
FY 21/22	1.93
FY 22/23	3.43
FY 23/24	3.70
FY 24/25	8.24
FY 25/26*	1.40
Total	21.47

Source: FCDO (2026). Financial reporting provided to the evaluation team on 16/01/26. N.B * The financial year 2025/26 figure is only until mid-January 2026 and not the total spend for the year; it also includes spend against all other budget lines, including HSOT and PFP.

TA: TA delivers demand-driven country and global support through capacity building, learning, coordination, and policy influencing at country and global levels. From 2018, TA was delivered through TAS, supported by a programme-funded post (PFP) seconded to the supplier to support demand generation, delivery, and learning. HSOT, managed by Palladium, was also accessed by BASIC to fulfil roles, including in DRC and Somalia, providing expertise on cash coordination and the SP–humanitarian nexus.

SPACE was a COVID-19 response helpline providing short-term TA. From March 2020 to August 2021, it was funded by FCDO (through BASIC and GSP), GIZ, and Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and delivered through BASIC TAS. Its purpose was to help countries use or adapt SP, often in closer alignment with humanitarian assistance, to address the immediate and medium-term impacts of the pandemic.

STAAR, procured as the successor to BASIC TAS, began implementation in June 2022 under a contract awarded to DAI. It manages TA funded by BASIC as well as the Gender-Responsive Social Protection Programme (GSP)³, with the BASIC window focused on improving the effectiveness of FCDO, partner governments and investments in SP in crises. Delivered by core and ad hoc assignment teams, STAAR provides flexible TA, analysis, capacity development, influencing and learning across a mix of demand and strategic assignments.

Research: Research aims to strengthen both global and country-specific evidence on using SP approaches to build resilience and respond to crises (in different contexts and for different

³ GSP is a £19 million programme (2018–2026) funded by the FCDO SPT that aims to improve outcomes for the most marginalised women and girls through SP and gender equality policies. GSP was reviewed separately by Integrity in 2025 and is not covered under the scope of this evaluation.

vulnerable groups). BASIC Research currently comprises three components: Global Research, Focus Country Research, and Research Uptake and Engagement. The contract for BASIC Research was awarded in October 2020 to IDS, the University of Sussex and the Centre for International Development and Training at the University of Wolverhampton.

KML: The programme's third workstream includes this evaluation contract and a broader programme of KML activity delivered by BASIC suppliers. The Knowledge, Evidence, Learning and Uptake (KELU) strategy, launched in 2022, was drafted by the BASIC PFP in close consultation with programme partners to identify cross-BASIC learning synergies, with implementation taken forward jointly by partners alongside their respective TA and Research KML strategies.

2.2 BASIC theory of change⁴

Evidence shows that social assistance can address protracted crises more effectively and efficiently than humanitarian responses alone in certain settings. BASIC seeks to increase the use of SP approaches by addressing barriers relating to limited evidence, knowledge, capacity and political economy. Humanitarian cash delivery is often fragmented, short-term and weakly coordinated, even in long-running crises. BASIC can help overcome these weaknesses by linking humanitarian assistance with longer-term national systems as a medium-term transition out of humanitarian aid. Recent international policy commitments reflect a strong consensus to maximise the use of social assistance in crises to deliver more effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable support.⁵

BASIC operated alongside other programmes contributing towards advancing SP approaches to crises. There are several FCDO and other donor programmes working in humanitarian assistance or SP offering research or TA workstreams. Appendix A outlines other relevant programmes and key stakeholders identified by the evaluation. BASIC seeks to complement these existing efforts by providing a global, FCAS-focused offer.

The BASIC theory of change (ToC), as formally presented in the BASIC BC (Figure 2.2), proposes that the programme's workstreams will lead to more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainably financed use of SP in crises. Its core logic is that high-quality support to policy and system development, stronger capacities across FCDO, governments and partners, and robust evidence and learning on what works will together enable more effective and efficient crisis-responsive social assistance, backed by more sustainable funding. Its intended impact is that vulnerable people are better able to cope and meet their basic needs during or in anticipation of protracted conflict, displacement and climate-related crises.

Drawing on the BASIC ToC, both suppliers developed their own ToCs to further elaborate and expand upon the expected causal pathways of the BASIC ToC for their respective workstreams. For STAAR, this effort focused on defining a ToC to guide TA activities at a strategic and operational level. For BASIC Research, this effort focused on the mechanisms through which research is taken up and used. For the purpose of this evaluation, the overall BASIC ToC was the primary framework used to evaluate BASIC.

Multiple contextual factors may affect the ability of BASIC to meet its objectives. A range of bilateral, multilateral, governmental and non-governmental actors continue to allocate resources to

⁴ This section discusses the ToC as presented in the BASIC BC. STAAR and BASIC Research both presented revised ToCs in their respective inception reports which helped to define the contribution of the respective workstreams to the overall programme goals. The BC ToC has been retained as the reference point for the evaluation.

⁵ At the time of drafting the BC, international policy commitments included the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the Grand Bargain launched at the summit, the 2016 Wilton Principles, the 2017 UK Humanitarian Reform Policy, and the forthcoming UK aid strategy. EQ1 results present an analysis of how BASIC has adapted to more recent commitments.

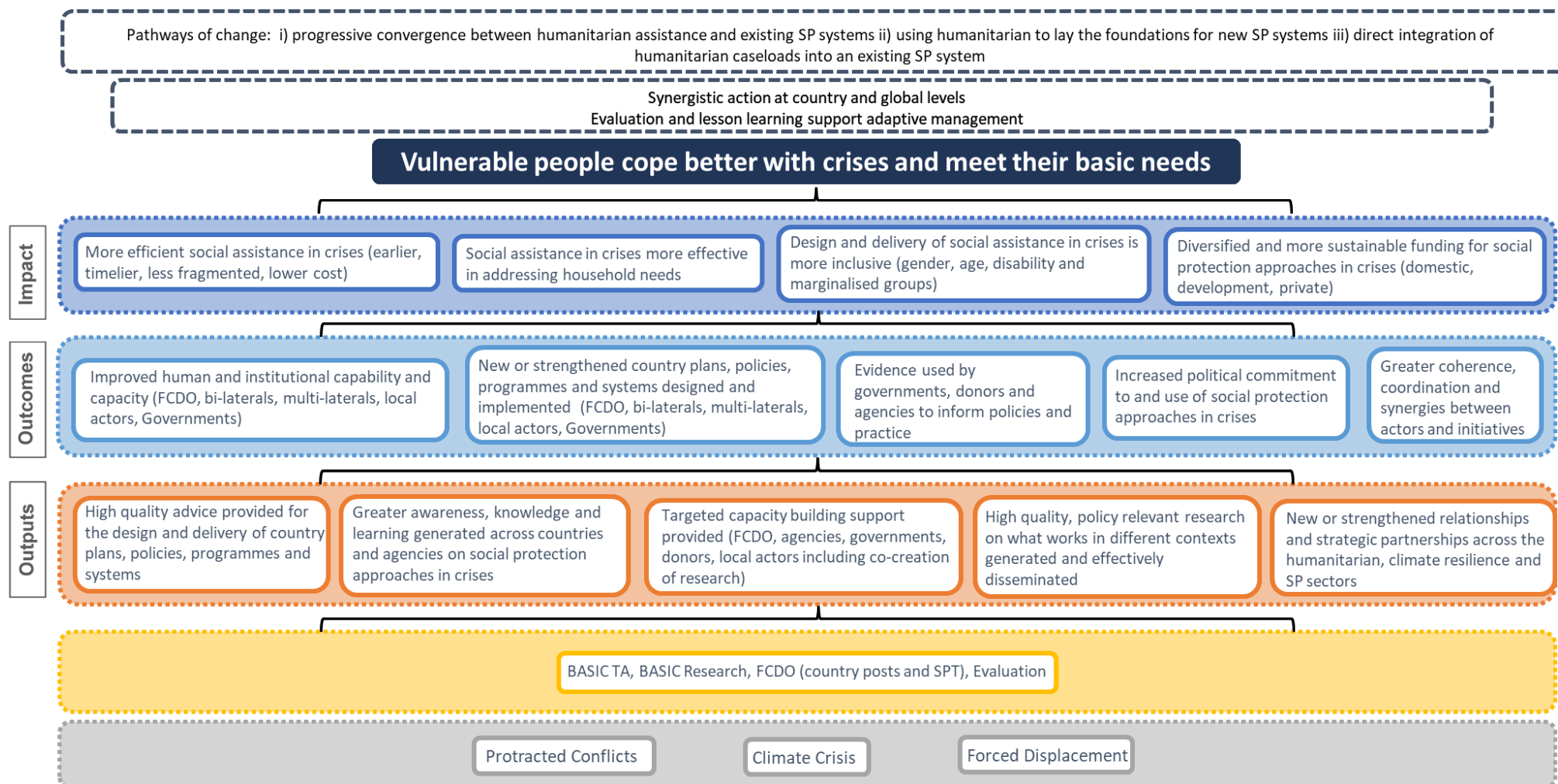
deliver and enhance humanitarian and SP systems.⁶ Within the international community, a range of research and TA programmes have also been developed to provide support in this area.⁷ And finally, broader technological innovation in sectors relating to SP is likely to enable further system enhancement or development. However, recent official development assistance (ODA) funding cuts are undermining the scale, predictability and continuity of SP programming and could impact on the sustainability of BASIC's achievements (discussed further under EQs 1 and 6).

BASIC's ToC, including its underlying assumptions and context, is presented in full in Appendix A.

⁶ Additional analysis of key trends in funding commitments can be found in Appendix B.

⁷ An illustrative overview of these programmes is provided in Appendix A.

| Figure 2.2: BASIC theory of change summary logic model

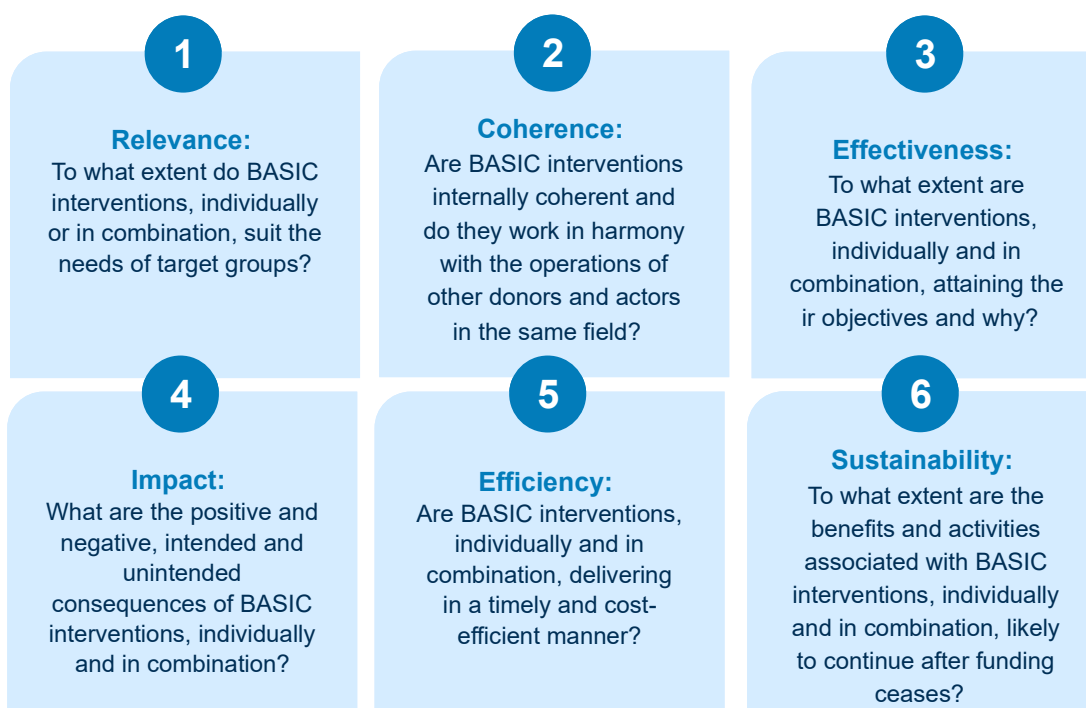


3. Evaluation approach and methods

This section summarises the evaluation approach and methods, outlining our evaluation questions, overall design, data collection and analysis methods, management approach, and key limitations with associated mitigation strategies. Further approach and method detail is provided in Appendix A.

3.1 Evaluation questions

To address the performance evaluation purpose and objectives, the evaluation answers the following high-level evaluation questions (EQs), which align to OECD-DAC criteria:



Under our EQs, we considered 21 sub-EQs to structure our findings. No changes to these questions were introduced before starting the endline phase.⁸

3.2 Evaluation design and methods

To answer our EQs, we implemented a non-experimental, blended theory-based and case-based approach, drawing on mixed methods to account for BASIC's complex operating environment and expected causal pathways (see Appendix A). We collected qualitative and quantitative data using the methods outlined in Table 3.1. Resources for the endline learning case study were allocated to delivering three additional light-touch country case studies in Lebanon, Ethiopia and South Sudan to better understand BASIC's results from a larger sample of countries.

⁸ We refined these questions during the evaluation inception phase and prior to the midline phase. A summary of these changes is presented in Appendix A of the midline evaluation report.

Table 3.1: Data collection methods used by the evaluation**Document review:**

We reviewed 147 BASIC programme documents to understand the extent, nature and effects of BASIC support provided, including FCDO annual reviews, component quarterly reporting and BASIC finance records. We used an AI tool to support the large-scale processing and analysis of project documentation. Our approach to deploying this tool is outlined in Appendix A. We also reviewed component output datasets, individual outputs and research publications, and assignment summary notes as part of the administrative data and country case analyses.

**Secondary data analysis:**

We analysed BASIC monitoring data to assess outputs realised at the global and country levels. We analysed indicators from a range of secondary data sources to understand context and the extent and quality of SP systems in BASIC target countries. We adopted clear and transparent processes for collecting and analysing secondary data.

**Key informant interviews (KIIs):**

We completed 50 KIIs to collect views on the performance and context of BASIC. KIIs engaged stakeholders representing FCDO, BASIC suppliers, complementary programmes, donors and agencies. They were semi-structured and tailored to informants. We followed transparent procedures to collect, store and analyse data.

**Country case studies:**

Country case studies were used to identify in-country effects, and why and how they arose. To assess BASIC's performance in different contexts, we delivered four case studies in Jordan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen, and three light-touch cases studies in Lebanon, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The four cases were purposively sampled at baseline to identify a range of experiences from difference BASIC operating contexts. Case studies were delivered in part by national consultants, and all cases were informed by a review of secondary data, programme documents and KIIs (13 per case study on average). 75% of countries with the highest number of BASIC TA assignments are included in our case sample.

**Survey:**

We surveyed FCDO humanitarian, climate and social development advisers in country posts eligible for BASIC support to gather representative views on context and BASIC performance. The questionnaire, aligned to the ToC, was administered between December 2025 and January 2026 and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Of 119 contacts shared by FCDO, 100 were deemed relevant to our population of interest, and 25 advisers participated, giving a 25% response rate, higher than baseline (13%) but lower than midline (30%). Appendix A provides further details on survey administration and results.

We used contribution analysis (CA) to analyse performance against the BASIC ToC. CA assesses the relative contribution of BASIC compared to other possible explanatory factors. Our country case studies were informed to a limited extent by two additional analytical frameworks, the Actor-Narrative-Interest model and the Kirkpatrick model of learning effectiveness, to assess the effectiveness of capacity building delivered in case countries. These frameworks supported an assessment of the expected effects of BASIC on policy change and organisational learning.

Table 3.1: Summary of evaluation design limitations

Limitation	Mitigation
Reduced wider FCDO stakeholder engagement with the evaluation (not SPT specifically) due to wider political pressures (managing potential budget cuts, changes in policy).	New data collection approaches, such as individually administered survey questionnaires, were used. KII recruitment was improved through personalised emails and adaptation of approach and interview length depending on availability.
The purposive sampling of case study countries enabled in-depth contextual analysis, but the findings may not capture the full diversity of programme contexts.	At endline, we expanded the country-level analysis to include three additional countries, strengthening geographic and contextual representation. This was complemented by broader data collection through the survey and global KIIs, which captured perspectives from additional contexts beyond the selected case studies. Findings were triangulated across data sources, and systematic reviews were integrated into the analysis to reduce over-reliance on case study evidence.
The survey achieved 25 responses from 100 eligible advisers (25% response rate). The small sample limits representativeness across the adviser cohort. There is also a risk of response bias, as advisers more familiar with or positively disposed towards BASIC may have been more likely to participate.	Targeted follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents, explicitly clarifying that participation did not require prior knowledge of or engagement with BASIC. This resulted in eight additional responses and modestly improved representation. Survey findings were triangulated with qualitative interviews, document review and country case study evidence.
Alignment of the evaluation and the expected timescales to realise sub-impacts may have limited opportunities to observe outcomes.	Broader literature on intervening in social protection systems indicates that timescales to impact can vary, with some changes taking multiple years to emerge. While the evaluation was able to observe changes during BASIC's implementation, it is possible that further changes may arise after implementation concludes. Given the timing of the evaluation, it was not possible for the evaluation to observe any additional changes after BASIC concluded.

We followed a systematic approach to appraising and triangulating evidence from multiple sources. Data collection and coding were conducted by several team members to reduce bias, supported by internal quality assurance checks. We integrated qualitative and quantitative data through a shared analytical framework and held periodic team analysis sessions to reach consensus. Where findings conflicted or outliers appeared, we reported them as mixed and explained the divergence. We also assessed the strength of evidence for each sub-EQ using a rubric (see Appendix A), considering the scale and consistency of triangulation and evidence saturation.

3.3 Management and evaluation ethics

The evaluation was delivered by technical and project management units. We specified clear delivery and knowledge management processes to deliver the evaluation. We used a risk register to record, monitor and report project-related risks, and updated it at least quarterly. We used quality assurance processes to deliver this report in line with EQuALS standards. We offered FCDO and BASIC suppliers opportunities to comment on our delivery progress and results prior to final submission. We have procedures to support the safe collection, management, analysis, dissemination and destruction of data collected, and to safeguard against personal data breaches.

Our evaluation ethics approach aligns with industry best practice. Integrity's company-wide Standard Operating Procedures set out a code of ethics consistent with the UK Evaluation Society's Good Practice Guidelines, and we are signatories to the Safeguarding Leads Network's 'Putting People First' commitments to prevent sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse in UK aid delivery. We also recognise FCDO's high duty of care risk rating and take full responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of staff, contractors and evaluation participants throughout the contract.

4. Evaluation findings

This section presents our evaluation findings by EQ and sub-EQ, drawing on multiple data sources. Each section begins with a summary of findings across all phases.

4.1 EQ1. Relevance

This section presents endline evaluation findings on the relevance of BASIC, assessing how well BASIC's goals and design met stakeholder needs and stayed relevant as conditions changed. We examined whether the BASIC Research and TA objectives were aligned to the priorities and needs of FCDO, other donors, multilaterals and governments at global and country levels, with a specific focus on GESI. We assessed the extent to which an appropriate mix of strategic, demand-driven and adaptive approaches were used. Relevance was judged by examining alignment with key commitments, analysing the portfolio of outputs and the perception of key stakeholders. The findings draw on documentation, monitoring data, KIIs, survey responses from FCDO advisers, and country case studies. A summary of findings across all phases is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: EQ1 Relevance: Key findings summary by evaluation phase

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
1.1 Alignment to FCDO priorities	Designed to act on a range of key FCDO strategic goals and international policy commitments and focus on protracted crises. Limited activities to address commitments to mitigating climate change.	The policy commitments that underpinned BASIC, including the 2016 WHS and Grand Bargain, were less prominent. Improving humanitarian response provided the principal entry point for BASIC, while adapting to link climate change and SP.	BASIC continues to align closely with key FCDO strategic priorities outlined in the International Development White Paper, particularly those relating to fragility, conflict, resilience building and climate change.
1.2 Responsiveness to user needs	Well adapted to meeting the needs of FCDO country posts. Less responsive, or adapted, to meeting the needs of other stakeholders, including national authorities.	BASIC TA remained well adapted to servicing FCDO needs but less so to other stakeholders. BASIC Research provides a public good, but in practice is more closely aligned to the needs of specific stakeholder groups.	BASIC TA has continued to respond to core FCDO demands while successfully expanding relevance to the UN and other international agencies, but more limited reach in meeting the needs of other donors and national authorities. Opinions varied on the relevance of research to the immediate needs of FCDO.
1.3 Balance of demand-driven and strategic approaches	Builds strategically on initial opportunistic entry points. Opportunity for stronger global-country synergies.	While remaining predominantly demand-led, BASIC STAAR has introduced several strategic elements.	BASIC balanced strategic and demand-driven approaches across the needs-driven TA and longer-term strategic research workstreams.

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
1.4 GESI alignment	Consideration of gender-responsive and inclusive SP improved strongly under SPACE. Opportunity to broaden the scope of inclusion.	Early indications suggested that GESI will continue to be mainstreamed under STAAR in SPACE. GESI-targeted work has remained a priority for BASIC Research.	GESI was consistently integrated across BASIC, through a combination of mainstreaming and targeted work in BASIC Research and, given the existence of the parallel GSP window under STAAR, mainstreaming in BASIC TA.
1.5 Adaptation to changes in context	Adapted rapidly and flexibly to COVID-19 and growth in demand. Remains relevant under FCDO budget revisions.	BASIC has remained highly relevant to the new crises. Reductions in the UK aid budget created funding uncertainties for BASIC and may change FCDO demand for BASIC's services and FCDO influence in the sector.	BASIC has partially succeeded in addressing new crises and adapting to the major changes in donor landscape, including the increased emphasis on efficiency and multilateral partnerships, reduced FCDO resources and the hyper-prioritisation of crisis response.

4.1.1 EQ1.1 Is BASIC aligned with FCDO priorities (relating to SP, humanitarian and climate change) and Grand Bargain commitments?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 1:

BASIC remains well aligned with core FCDO policy commitments. There is a strong focus on the intersection of fragility, conflict and SP, as well as the use of humanitarian assistance to work across the humanitarian-development nexus and in response to climate change.

Recent HMG policy priorities continue to emphasise the need for sustainable international development efforts. The 2023 UK Government White Paper on international development set out the UK's policy direction⁹ and is intended to guide development policy through to 2030. The strategy was a key reference point for the later part of the BASIC implementation period.¹⁰ The strategy identifies four key focus areas: supporting economic development, making gender equality a core priority, delivering humanitarian leadership, and tackling climate change and global health. While SP is not recognised as a focus area in its own right, the White Paper explicitly links it to crisis resilience and vulnerability reduction, positioning it as an essential component of a development strategy that enables people to withstand and recover from conflict-related and climate-related shocks. The subsequent UK National Security strategy 2025¹¹ confirms that sustainable international development

⁹ FCDO (2023). International development in a contested world: ending extreme poverty and tackling climate change.

¹⁰ While the 2023 White Paper formally remains in effect, this has been supplemented by new policy statements. The UK's "new Approach to Africa" 2025 which sets out seven priorities including reorientating the UK's aid relationship from "donor to investor", collaboration on migration and climate change, supporting peace and stability, investing in health, promoting African voices in global forums, and cultural partnerships. Moving forward these adapted priorities are expected to be increasingly influential.

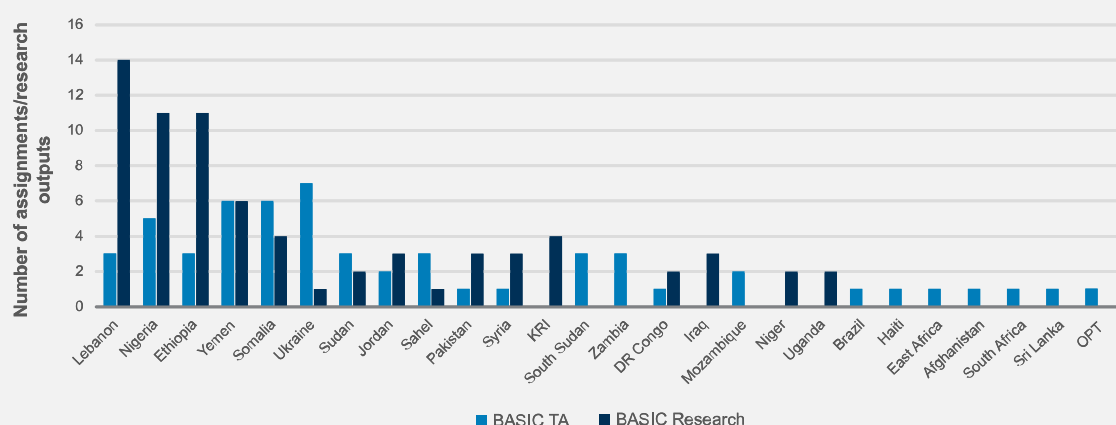
¹¹ HMG (2025). National Security Strategy 2025: Security for the British People in a Dangerous World, [here](#). Date accessed: 02/02/26).

is central to UK foreign policy goals and aligns it with broader geopolitical priorities such as climate change, global stability and strategic partnerships.¹²

The BASIC Research workstream has remained closely aligned with this FCDO policy. Figure 4.1 shows that country-level research has focused almost exclusively on FCAS contexts, or situations of forced displacement. As one BASIC researcher noted, *“One of our key reference points has always been to ask whether there is something unique about conflict contexts that affects how social protection is used”*.

BASIC TA assignments were also predominantly focused on FCAS contexts or situations of forced displacement (Figure 4.1). There was, however, more flexibility to include support to shock-responsive SP in response to natural disasters, targeting, for example, multiple assignments in Zambia. This was consistent with the BASIC BC, which deliberately allowed for a limited number of shock-responsive assignments.

| Figure 4.1: BASIC TA assignments and BASIC Research outputs by country



Source: Data adapted from STAAR Q2 Report FY25-26 Annex A Assignment Information, last updated in September 2025; and the BASIC Research outputs log (2025). N.B. Figure includes all types of country-specific BASIC Research outputs and BASIC TA assignments that proceeded to implementation phase. BASIC TA assignments were filtered to remove GSP and Ukraine Humanitarian Response Programme (UHRC) assignments. Excludes seven STAAR assignments that were either in the scoping or procurement phase at the time of reporting; and ten BASIC Research outputs that were duplicates and had no start year. Multi-coding of BASIC Research outputs to countries was permitted.

BASIC has used the nexus between humanitarian assistance and SP as a principal entry point for its work, which is in line with the aspirations of the 2023 UK Government White Paper.

FCDO's humanitarian cadre acknowledged BASIC's relevance in helping to position humanitarian assistance as a tool to support transitions out of fragility and resilience building through strengthened SP systems. As one FCDO humanitarian officer noted, *“Without programmes like BASIC, UK engagement risks being confined to humanitarian response, with limited scope for research, system reform, or strategic influence”*. This role has been strengthened by FCDO's decision to bring the SPT, which manages BASIC, into the Food Security, Agriculture, Land and Social Protection Department (FALSoc), which sits in the Humanitarian Directorate.¹³

BASIC - both Research and TA - also advocated for sustaining and strengthening national SP systems as distinct from a vehicle for immediate crisis response. Most stakeholders agreed that maintaining a strong underlying SP system is a necessary precondition for the effective delivery of shock-responsive SP. Furthermore, as one UN respondent argued, *“Having a minimal social protection floor in place is extremely important in building people's resilience to crises in its own right”*.

¹² HM Government (2023). Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a more contested and volatile world (available [here](#); date accessed: 02/02/26).

¹³ In some contexts, specific social policy work, particularly related to gender, may also connect with the Education, Gender and Equalities Department.

However, some FCDO humanitarian advisers perceived that while BASIC resources were available to support the needs of humanitarians, a more recent increased emphasis on sustaining social protection systems was less well connected to their core interests. As one said, *“This has two problems: one is what we (i.e., humanitarians) do in situations where there are no systems in place and secondly this doesn’t tell us what we can do to help work towards building these systems”*.

STAAR inception documents positioned climate as a strategic priority, facilitated by the recruitment of a dedicated Climate Lead within the Technical Support and Leadership Team (TSLT). Climate considerations link to BASIC’s advocacy for shock-responsive SP, which is designed to mitigate the impacts of climate-related shocks, and the BASIC BC was explicitly aligned with FCDO climate objectives, with 15% of the budget counted against International Climate Finance targets.¹⁴ Examples of STAAR climate-related outputs referenced by interviewees included: four climate-specific pieces of work with FAO, covering climate finance, climate-resilient programming and the intersection of climate and gender; work with FCDO’s Loss and Damage team to explore the use of SP as a delivery mechanism for climate finance; climate-specific country-level assignments; and a paper on climate finance commissioned by FCDO¹⁵.

BASIC Research has integrated climate resilience into its research agenda, producing thematic briefs and working papers on the intersection of SP and climate resilience in FCAS. For example, the Livelihoods and Climate project in Ethiopia produced working papers and policy briefs examining the links between social assistance and climate resilience. In total, 12 climate-focused research outputs were produced out of 131 overall (representing 9.2% of the total).

4.1.2 EQ1.2 Is BASIC responding to demand and meeting the priority needs of immediate users at global and country levels?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 2:

BASIC TA has focused on serving the needs of FCDO at country and HQ levels, while BASIC Research addressed FCDO needs more tangentially.

The process for generating TA assignments ensured that they were demand-led. Consequently, users expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their relevance. FCDO demand remained healthy and the department continued to be the major user of BASIC TA. Of the 103 BASIC TA assignments that had a lead user recorded between 2019 - 2025, the FCDO were the lead user of 58 assignments (56%).

BASIC’s governance and coordination mechanisms, including regular meetings with SPT, were used to ensure alignment with user needs and identify TA assignments in response to central needs.¹⁶ The role of the embedded PFP was valued as a conduit for ensuring relevance to FCDO needs, both in SPT and at field level. However, changes and discontinuity in FCDO staff posts created challenges in aligning with FCDO needs as the priorities of successive advisers were not always aligned, and gaps meant that momentum was sometimes hard to maintain.

¹⁴ FCDO (2018). BASIC Business Case.

¹⁵ Hopper, R., Hurworth, M., Lowndes-Bull, Z (2024) The Realities of Climate Finance for Social Protection, Social Protection Technical Assistance, Advice and Resources (STAAR) Facility, DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom: [here](#). Date accessed: 10/04/26.

¹⁶ FCDO (2019). BASIC Annual Review 2019, page 2.

The Research design choices were primarily based on scoping across a wide range of stakeholders, rather than responding to specific FCDO requests. Researchers welcomed the input of FCDO posts but did not necessarily see them as a primary user. For example, in Lebanon the FCDO Social Development Adviser *“provided valuable contextual insight, helping the research team situate their findings within real-time political, institutional, and operational dynamics”*.

Different views were expressed as to how relevant research outputs were to FCDO in practice. Some saw it as filling important gaps, for example providing missing beneficiary perspectives on the effectiveness of VSL schemes in Yemen and on informal settlements in Lebanon. But other FCDO stakeholders felt that research needed to go an extra step to make it relevant: *“It is important for the research to not only identify the critical enablers or blockers but also how to address them”*. The uptake of research is discussed in detail under EQ3. At the central level, FCDO asked whether the research design (comprising 21 projects, working across four themes, in four deep-engagement and a wider set of countries) was appropriately configured to support consolidation and synthesis of findings. However, as many of the globally focused syntheses were still under development at the time of endline data collection, it was premature for the evaluation to assess this issue.



Finding 3:

BASIC TA increasingly responded to the needs of a range of UN and international agencies, while BASIC Research consulted widely with stakeholders from inception. A declining interest among other donors in SP highlights the importance of BASIC’s influencing work with this group of stakeholders.

Following an initial steer to focus on FCDO user needs in early periods of the programme, FCDO requested BASIC TA to broaden its user base and relevance. Building on the KML influencing strategy and inception phase workplans, a proactive call was made by STAAR early in 2023 to offer services across a wide range of stakeholder groups – a process that BASIC had not used previously. As shown in Figure 4.2, in conjunction with a substantial budget uplift in 2024, STAAR successfully reached a larger number of stakeholders, with a particular increase in uptake among UN and international agencies at global and country level. In addition to the proactive call, this success was also attributed to being able to capitalise on the established reputation of SPACE.

Figure 4.2: BASIC TA assignments by lead user¹⁷ (2019–2025)

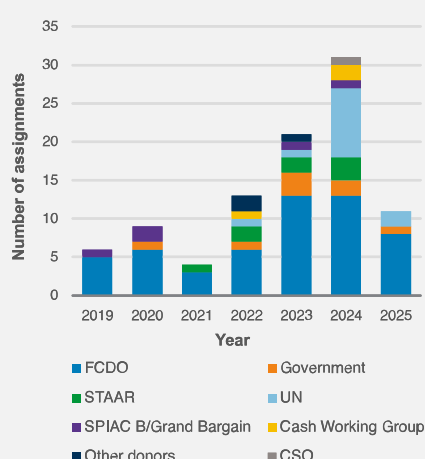


Table 4.2: Breakdown of UN and international organisations as lead users of STAAR

UN and international agency	Total assignments
WFP	7
FAO	4
Cash Working Group	3
UNICEF	2
World Bank	1
ILO	1
OHCHR	1

¹⁷ Lead users as defined by DAI for STAAR and BASIC TA.

Source: Adapted from STAAR Q2 Report FY25-26 Annex A Assignment Information, last updated in September 2025. N.B. filtered to remove GSP and UHRC assignments. Multi-coding of assignments to users was permitted.

Users across these agencies confirmed the relevance of the BASIC TA to their programming, internal strategy development and advocacy. However, while individual assignments were designed with clear criteria, including sustainability, the evaluation found no specific evidence of these engagements being harnessed to advance an explicit FCDO advocacy strategy in relation to these organisations. TA assignments appear to have been selected principally on a case-by-case basis. One TA provider questioned whether *“we got an accumulation of ad hoc projects from whoever happened to hear about it, making ‘greater than sum of parts’ difficult”*. While reference was made to BASIC levers (evidence, TA, KML) in SPT influencing plans, this did not reference BASIC explicitly.

BASIC Research engaged widely with UN and international agencies in the research design.

Stakeholders were consulted during inception or during the research itself, including WFP and UNICEF. The BASIC Research team also linked their research findings to these partners, for example: working with the World Bank on its approach to SP in situations of fragility, conflict and violence,¹⁸ conducting workshops with ILO on strategy development, and providing consolidated evidence to underpin the High-Level Panel on Social Protection in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings (HLP) commitments.

Overall, the relevance of BASIC to other donors appears to have declined over time. Initial donor engagement was strong with SPACE co-financed by GiZ and DFAT. However, few subsequent TA assignments responded to donor requests: two with GIZ and one with USAID. FCDO staff perceived donors to be a minor user of BASIC compared to other stakeholder groups, as shown in Table 4.3. However, it was noted that five assignments supported SPIAC-B – a global coordination body with donor representation – and several country-level assignments, for example in Yemen, specifically strengthened donor coordination.

Table 4.3: Thinking about the support provided by BASIC, in your view, which groups made use of this support in [country]?

User group	N	%
Multilaterals	9	82
Government	8	72
FCDO	6	55
Donors	4	36
Other	10	90
Total	11	100

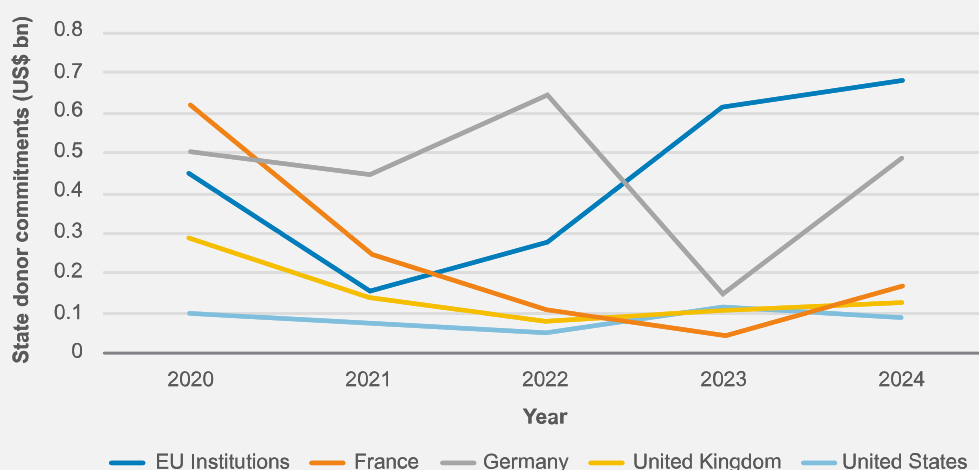
Source: Integrity (2026). Analysis of survey responses, question B3.1. Respondents could offer more than one user group. Of the 25 possible respondents, only 11 accessed support, hence the sample above is 11, not 25.

This can be attributed to several reasons, including high-level strategic choices among key partners. BASIC was credited with helping to influence (alongside the SPT) an initially sceptical USAID to becoming a co-sponsor of the 2024 Rome Forum, progress that was reversed with the

¹⁸ BASIC Research has also contributed to the development of technical briefs for the Global Forum on Social Protection in Conflict and Fragility, ensuring that its research informs the framing of key themes and policies discussed at the forum, as stated in BASIC Research Y3Q2 Quarterly Report – January 2025, page 11.

dismantling of USAID in 2025. While EU funding remained important, multiple sources confirmed that DG ECHO had pulled back from funding SP in situations of conflict, becoming more focused on its core humanitarian responsibilities, while the development services of the EU (which are funding SP as shown in Figure 4.3) have not been systematically partnered by BASIC. Stakeholders suggested that German interest in supporting SP varied over the programme period, which is in line with Germany's variable financial commitments.¹⁹ Evidence of this declining interest among other donors reinforces the importance of FCDO's advocacy agenda.

Figure 4.3: SP commitments from the largest six state and institutional donors (USD billions)



Source: OECD (2025). Creditor Reporting System.



Finding 4:

BASIC strengthened its relevance to addressing the needs of national institutions and authorities, but significant capacity and political constraints limited the extent to which this reorientation could be realised.

A core FCDO ambition was increasing the relevance of BASIC to national governments. BASIC was potentially well aligned to this goal. As one stakeholder stated: *“With less delivery in country, it is about helping countries to help themselves, which is exactly what STAAR aims to do”*.

BASIC workstreams provided relevant services to national governments. BASIC TA supported the development of national SP strategies in Sudan, Lebanon, Mozambique and Nigeria,²⁰ a Social Health Protection strategy in Yemen, and a response to El Niño crop failure in Zambia.²¹ At global level, Somalia and Yemen representatives were included as members of the HLP of experts. BASIC Research conducted in-country consultations, workshops and dissemination activities to communicate findings to decision makers and inform local policy and practice. For example, in Niger, the research identified ministries and national actors interested in using BASIC Research to revise the national social safety net, planning dissemination workshops to enable engagement.²²

Government staff interviewees acknowledged the relevance of the TA and research provided. The Yemen Social Fund for Development (SFD) appreciated that they were given support with few

¹⁹ Germany did fund the BASIC TA Data Convergence/AI in SP initiative.

²⁰ FCDO (2019). BASIC Annual Review 2019, page 4; BASIC TA (2020). Quarterly Report – April-June 2020, page 2.

²¹ Assignments in support of the government in Ukraine and Moldova are not directly referenced as they were financed through the UHRC rather than directly by BASIC.

²² BASIC Research (2025). Y4Q1 Quarterly Report, page 1.

conditions in developing a locally relevant Social Health Protection strategy. However, there was an unmet expectation that FCDO would also fund a pilot alongside the provision of TA. The use of national consultants in Yemen or international consultants with deep pre-existing networks in Ethiopia and Nigeria was seen as critical to ensuring institutional relevance.

There were significant challenges to increasing engagement at national level. FCDO and BASIC TA stated that they would have liked to provide increased support to meet the needs of national governments. The BASIC TA supplier noted that the open call for requests made by STAAR in 2023 had limited traction with governments. Communication channels with governments were often dependent on FCDO posts to act as intermediaries, creating a bottleneck to requests for services. Consequently BASIC TA worked through intermediaries with existing networks to government – mainly UN agencies and the World Bank.

Limited national capacity was also seen as a big constraint to engaging with BASIC. For example, in South Sudan, at the time of the first STAAR engagement in 2023, responsibility for SP fell on one national officer with no operating budget. In other cases, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Lebanon, the Sahel and Yemen, there were political and conflict-related constraints to working with national or de facto authorities.

BASIC made innovative efforts to expand its relevance and partnerships beyond technical counterparts in national government, including working with civil society. Research highlighted the importance of working with civil society actors in advocating for increased SP support – for example, organisations of people with disabilities, women refugees and ethnic minorities – to help identify areas. Working through CSOs also circumvented situations of direct engagement with any of the actors in an ongoing conflict. An innovative initiative was the formation of an informal advocacy network of SP experts in Sudan, called the Sudan SP alliance, which was supported both by STAAR and informally by BASIC Research staff. Building on BASIC research in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, local actors campaigned to influence SP practices and policies through the “Protect My Dignity” campaign.²³

4.1.3 EQ1.3 Does the design of BASIC allow for an appropriate balance between strategic and demand-driven (responsive and flexible) support?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 5:

The BASIC workstreams evolved to increasingly blend strategic and demand-led approaches, although perceptions on the success of this blending varied. Plans for additional activities to increase the strategic contribution of BASIC in the final year were not operationalised as a hoped-for budget uplift did not progress.

The BASIC BC was originally designed to combine strategic research with predominantly demand-driven TA. The Research agenda, while created in consultation with a range of stakeholders, was ultimately designed by the Research team and aimed to collect primary evidence from beneficiaries to generate innovative insights. In contrast, the TA workstream principally responded directly to requests from a range of stakeholders. However, in practice the distinction between the two approaches within workstreams was not clear-cut.

²³ BASIC Research (2024). Y2Q3 Quarterly Report, pages 1, 3.

The TA workstream included a level of strategic ambition from the outset (see EQ2.1). A TSLT was established to provide follow-up and continuity across themes. Users valued the TSLT for its easily accessible thematic expertise, including support to refine draft terms of reference and provide clinic-style inputs drawing on multiple specialists. It also served as a key source of institutional memory, helping strengthen new assignments and maintain continuity, including by briefing new FCDO posts. A KML function fed lessons on what was and was not working (and how and why) back into delivery. STAAR strategically leveraged the demand-driven country-level assignments, synthesising country-level learnings into global-level influencing (see EQ4.3), including the Rome Conference and the HLP.

Opinions varied on the balance between strategic and demand-driven approaches within STAAR. One STAAR consultant reported that *“demand was combined with strategic nudging and influencing in quite a natural and integral way. We were able to share thoughts with stakeholders and what might be useful and where the facility could support them”*. Another noted that *“work remained ad hoc with limited strategy and no joining of the dots”*.

Research was initially structured to strategically prioritise country-level questions (in four deep engagement countries), but with flexibility to pursue global research questions beyond these four deep engagement countries. In total, Research conducted studies in 16 countries, as shown in Table 4.1. However, the Research team noted structural constraints to a more responsive approach, given that the long-term timeframe for Research made it more difficult to initiate additional research in new countries later in the programme implementation period.

FCDO referred to a design ambition to shift BASIC towards a more strategic, coordinated push in its final phase. STAAR responded to this request by drawing up detailed uptake plans in conjunction with Research in early 2025. However, a hoped-for budget uplift did not progress and the associated plans to accelerate strategic delivery were not followed through.

4.1.4 EQ1.4 To what extent do BASIC’s interventions take GESI considerations into account?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 6:

GESI was substantively integrated across BASIC’s work through both mainstreaming and targeted analysis. GESI approaches were conceptually robust within BASIC Research, but more variably applied across TA assignments.

Under STAAR, GESI considerations were intentionally mainstreamed by default across assignments, including those delivered under the BASIC window. This intent was reflected in strengthened terms of reference, peer review processes, and oversight by the TSLT’s GESI Lead, who sought to ensure that gender and inclusion issues were considered even where not explicitly requested by users. Across the portfolio, GESI was embedded in commissioning guidance and quality assurance mechanisms, and interviewees consistently reported that inclusion was treated as a standard expectation rather than an optional add-on. In practice, the depth and consistency of GESI integration varied somewhat across assignments. The effectiveness of mainstreaming depended on a combination of user demand, clarity at commissioning stage, team capability, and leadership within individual assignments. Over time, delivery modalities under STAAR increasingly incorporated national and regional partners, with a growing number of assignments led or co-led by local consultants and organisations. This contributed to more contextually grounded understandings of gender and inclusion dynamics, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected settings.

Across all longitudinal country cases, TA remained GESI-sensitive, assessed using a scale adapted from the UNICEF Innocenti Gender Integration Continuum. At baseline, two of the four cases (Jordan and Somalia) included elements that were GESI-responsive, reflecting a higher level of ambition. At both midline and endline, this was the case for two of the four countries, with – for example – one assignment delivered in Nigeria having a focus on inclusion.

Figure 4.4: GESI responsiveness of BASIC TA in case study countries at baseline, midline and endline

Country	GESI responsiveness of TA component			
	Baseline	Midline	Endline	Directions of travel
 Jordan	●	●	●	→
 Nigeria	■	●	●	↑
 Somalia	●	■	■	↓
 Yemen	■	■	■	→

● GESI-sensitive, with some aspects GESI-responsive ■ GESI-sensitive

Source: Integrity (2026). Country case evidence.

By design, BASIC TA did not deliver focused GESI assignments; targeted gender-responsive work sat primarily within the GSP window (see Box 4.1 for the relationship between GSP and STAAR). At midline, the evaluation noted a risk that, because GSP lacked an explicit FCAS focus, STAAR might end up doing little GESI-targeted work in FCAS contexts. In later phases, however, STAAR made deliberate efforts to link GESI with fragility and crisis through cross-cutting assignments – such as work in Haiti and the Sahel on women’s organisations, local actors, and inclusion in FCAS. These efforts were strengthened by TSLT core days, as well as the Disability Lead, being jointly funded by BASIC and GSP.

Box 4.1: Relationship between the BASIC and GSP programmes

STAAR was funded through two related FCDO programmes: BASIC and Gender-Responsive Social Protection (GSP). BASIC focused on strengthening SP in fragile and crisis contexts, while GSP focused on improving gender responsiveness. TA under both programmes was delivered through the single STAAR facility. While assignments were mostly funded through either BASIC or GSP, they were managed through shared systems and leadership, enabling gender and inclusion to be mainstreamed and supported by common technical infrastructure. In practice, BASIC funded demand-led and strategic TA on SP in crises, while GSP funded more targeted gender-focused assignments, including dedicated guidance, tools and embedded advisory roles. Coordination across the two windows was led by the TSLT, enabling joint deployment of expertise and coherence across commissioning, quality assurance and learning. This dual-window model allowed STAAR to pursue two linked objectives: strengthening SP in crises and strengthening the gender responsiveness of SP systems, while maximising synergies and avoiding duplication across the portfolio.

Within Research, GESI integration was systematic and consistently embedded. BASIC Research adopted a matrix-style approach that combined the mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion considerations across all research with dedicated lines of inquiry specifically focused on gender and inclusion dynamics. Researchers were encouraged to remain open to emerging findings and to use participatory, lived-experience methods, including surveys, interviews, and co-

analysis with local partners. This helped amplify the voices of displaced women, people with disabilities, and residents of informal settlements.

BASIC Research also generated important GESI-related evidence and insights across multiple country contexts. Empirical work in Iraq, Pakistan, and Lebanon examined how intersecting identities (such as gender, disability status, displacement, and nationality) shape people's lived experiences of accessing social assistance in fragile and conflict-affected settings. This research highlighted that formal inclusion in social protection systems does not automatically translate into equitable, safe, or dignified access in practice. In some cases, individuals may face stigma, bureaucratic barriers, or increased exposure to risk through programme participation, underlining the importance of designing systems that are sensitive to social and power dynamics. Another important strand of research focused on the gendered nature of social protection systems and the critical role of frontline workers. Studies, including work in Yemen, underscored that frontline social workers, who are often predominantly women, play a central role in enabling inclusive and effective programme delivery. The research highlighted that system performance depends not only on programme design, targeting systems, or digitalisation, but also on the safety, resourcing, training, and working conditions of these frontline actors. In fragile contexts, ensuring the protection and support of these workers is essential for the functioning and inclusiveness of social protection systems.

4.1.5 EQ1.5: Context and adaptation: Have changes in context affected the relevance of BASIC, and has the programme adapted appropriately to these changes?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 7:

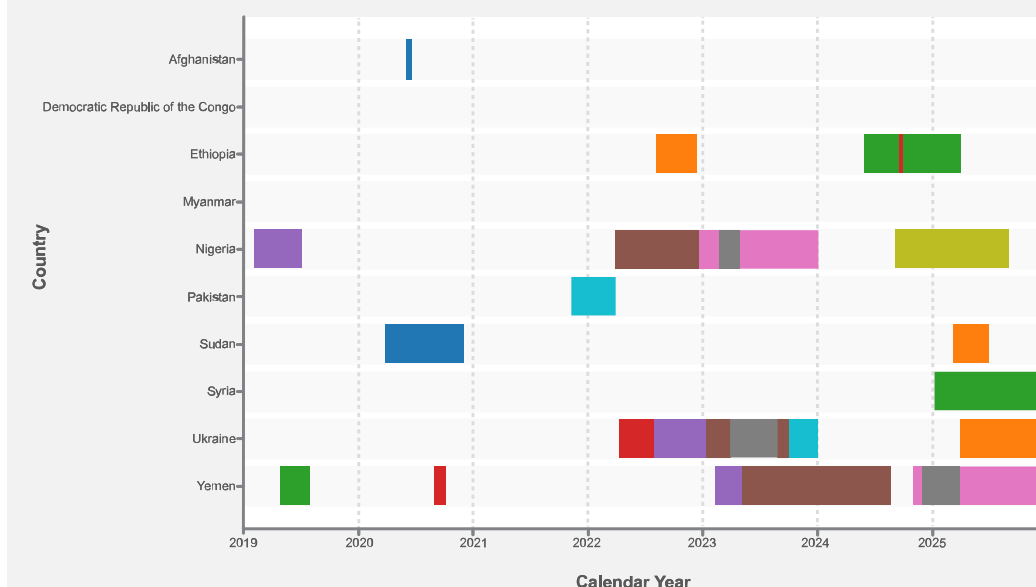
BASIC was only partially successful in maintaining its relevance to shifting humanitarian needs due to contextual challenges in FCAS settings, including respect for humanitarian principles.

BASIC demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging crises from the outset. During the COVID-19 pandemic, BASIC quickly established the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice (SPACE) helpline, providing rapid, tailored TA to 32 countries in response to increased demand. In the subsequent period, BASIC TA services focused on major protracted and emergent crises. Figure 4.5 summarises TA assignments against the top ten global crises over this period.²⁴ This comparison shows a significant degree of convergence.

However, there are important exceptions, often related to access constraints. Humanitarian needs in Sudan rose from the start of hostilities in April 2023, but a STAAR response was not mobilised until 2025. Other major protracted crises, including in DRC, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Syria, received minimal or less timely support from STAAR where political engagement with the authorities was problematic.

²⁴ Data on top ten humanitarian crises from the Global Food Crisis Reports, [here](#). Date accessed: 10/04/26.

Figure 4.5: BASIC assignments against top ten humanitarian crises (2019–2025)



Source: Data extracted from STAAR Assignment data, filtered to remove GSP and UHRC assignments. Each colour shows a unique assignment in that country.

While Research was intentionally more geographically and strategically focused, a degree of flexibility was built into adapting research locations to reflect emerging crises.²⁵ Research was conducted in seven of the top ten humanitarian crises listed above. Research areas expanded to include the war in Gaza and its reverberations in Lebanon, Ukraine and Sudan. Ethiopia, while not an original deep dive research focus country, became a core research focus in part as a response to civil conflict in Tigray and other regions. For example, the focus of research in Lebanon was adapted to work in the more accessible areas of Beirut rather than insecure rural localities.



Finding 8:

BASIC adapted well to the very significant global contextual shifts. Some of these shifts challenged BASIC's design assumptions, but the programme broadly retained its relevance.

These changes have put pressure on BASIC's design principles. The impact of the UK aid cuts and broader development financing has crystallised since the midline evaluation. Between 2019 and 2025, UK ODA has fluctuated significantly.²⁶ Similar shifts are also evident across international development financing. Despite these challenges, BASIC demonstrated an ability to maintain its relevance and adapt successfully.

Tighter budgets have contributed towards a hyper-prioritisation of aid, with a growing concentration of UK assistance in the highest-priority crises and a retrenchment of humanitarian assistance to life-saving assistance. Over the past year, changes in US policy, shifts among other major donors, and the emergence of the humanitarian reset had collectively narrowed attention onto humanitarian priorities, often at the expense of other areas.

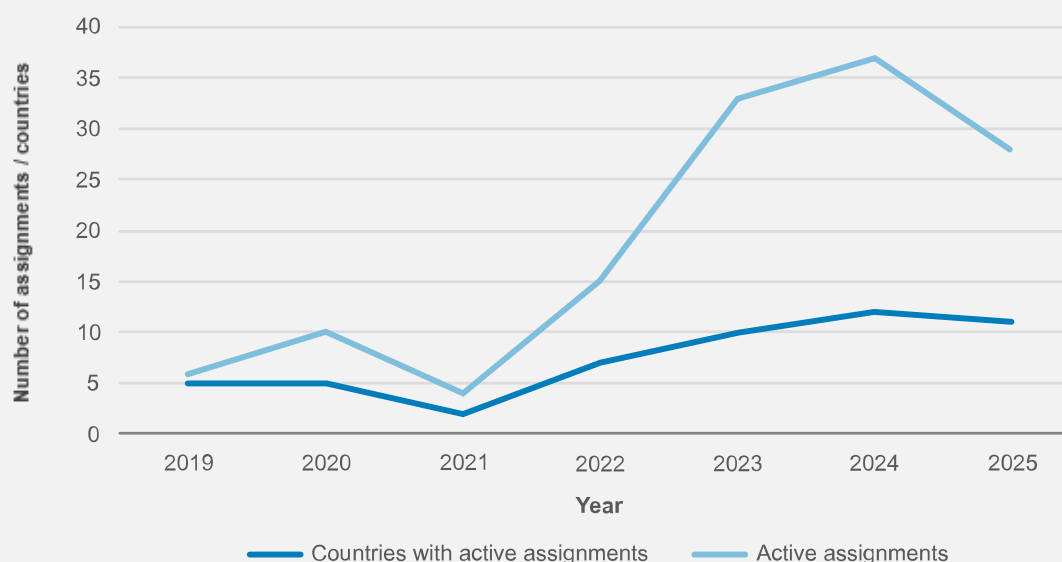
STAAR heightened its relevance by ramping up assignments related to making limited budgets go further. For example, when evaluating a BASIC study on VfM in Yemen, FCDO stated that *"The value for money piece was key and helped frame internally the benefits of different ways of working with NGOs and alternatives to the UN"*. BASIC has adapted to hyper-prioritisation by both

²⁵ FCDO (2019). BASIC Annual Review 2019, page 3.

²⁶ Philip Loft, Philip Brien, Research Briefing: UK aid: Reducing spending to 0.3% of GNI by 2027/28, [here](#). Date accessed: 10/04/26.

concentrating resources in high-priority countries while using TA as a cost-effective means of supporting a larger set of lower-priority countries. While the number of BASIC assignments rose dramatically in 2023, this remained concentrated on a relatively small number of countries (Figure 4.6). Overall, stakeholders viewed the current context as very challenging but potentially fertile ground for advancing SP approaches to crisis response.

Figure 4.6: Active BASIC TA assignments by year and number of countries



Source: Adapted from STAAR Q2 Report FY25-26 Annex A Assignment Information, last updated in September 2025. N.B. Filtered to remove GSP and UHRC assignments; excluding assignments recorded with procurement or scoping statuses or no stated start date.

Focusing reduced humanitarian resources on priority needs was seen by many FCDO respondents as potentially at odds with FCDO repositioning to do system strengthening work, by putting pressure on the available time and money to do systems thinking. Other FCDO and supplier stakeholders made a counter-argument that TA and Research provided a cost-effective means of supporting countries as an alternative to large-scale programmes.

Several of the country case studies found that a major bottleneck to the use of BASIC services was FCDO capacity constraints. This is likely to be compounded by forthcoming cuts in FCDO budget, which are expected to lead to additional cuts in staff and FCDO programming. This has major implications for the relevance of the BASIC model, which is heavily oriented to working in close association with FCDO posts in the design and use of outputs. BASIC TA and Research reported that they had adapted to this to some extent by increasingly developing independent networks at country level.

FCDO staff also noted significant uncertainty about future strategic priorities, including the position of SP relative to longer-standing priorities such as humanitarian assistance, health and education, which continue to dominate political attention. The international environment has become more sensitive and difficult for gender equality and inclusion work. While there was no evidence that BASIC had adapted its position on gender and inclusion, the need for careful framing to keep gender and inclusion on the agenda in SP was recognised. BASIC was seen to be highly relevant, providing evidence to inform the debate on the continuing value of SP approaches.

4.2 EQ2. Coherence

This section presents findings on coherence, assessing how well BASIC fitted within its wider context. We examined internal coherence between Research and TA, and external coherence between BASIC and FCDO and wider stakeholders. We considered design links into BASIC's ToC and the coordination mechanisms it used at global and country levels. We assessed coherence by considering issues of duplication, alignment of objectives and ToCs, complementarity in activity delivery, and the timeliness, proportionality and utility of coordination. Findings draw on documentation, monitoring data, KIIs, survey responses from FCDO advisers, and country case studies. The section summarises evidence on internal (EQ2.1) and external (EQ2.2) coherence, while EQ3.6 addresses resulting synergies.

Table 4.4: EQ2 Coherence: Key findings summary by evaluation phase

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
2.1 Internal coherence	Effective mechanisms have been established to promote information exchange and cooperation between BASIC workstreams.	Stakeholders saw clear added value in housing STAAR and Research together, but linkages were weak during inception. Coordination mechanisms are now being put in place to strengthen integration during implementation.	BASIC's coherence aims were initially unclear but later focused on joint dissemination and uptake of outputs. Coordination mechanisms were stronger at global level than country level. Design features of BASIC and wider constraints limited internal coherence and while greater synergies were encouraged at midline, some stakeholders questioned the value of pursuing more extensive coherence beyond dissemination and uptake.
2.1 External coherence	There was minimal overlap between BASIC and other FCDO centrally managed programmes. However, there is clear scope to strengthen and formalise collaboration with global partners, including the World Bank.	Coordination with other centrally managed FCDO programmes prevented overlaps and helped identify synergies. Institutional partnerships with external actors in areas such as the provision of TA, knowledge management, and research, were still nascent.	BASIC aligned well with related FCDO programmes, especially GSP, with coordination increasingly driven by BASIC workstreams. Evidence shows strong alignment with external global programmes and practical coordination at both global and national levels, although some minor challenges and missed opportunities remained.

4.2.1 EQ2.1 What are the design linkages and coordination mechanisms in place between BASIC workstreams?

Strength of evidence:

Medium



Finding 9:

BASIC's coherence objectives were initially unclear, but the focus on pursuing synergies around the joint dissemination and uptake of BASIC outputs sharpened over time.

The BASIC BC highlighted the importance of internal coherence but did not specify clear objectives around producing synergies. It specified the role of strong governance structures to ensure coordination and collaboration between workstreams and cited collaboration and coordination

across delivery partners as a critical success criterion. This focus did not appear to be matched with prioritised objectives around the types of synergies that coherence should produce.²⁷

Over time, BASIC narrowed its coherence efforts to links and mechanisms that supported joint uptake of outputs. While the midline evaluation identified attempts at synergy, it found that collaboration objectives were not clearly shared. Through subsequent workstream engagement, BASIC refocused on joint dissemination and uptake. Stakeholders across FCDO, Research and TA viewed this as useful and credited it with creating joint uptake opportunities that would not otherwise have emerged.



Finding 10:

BASIC specified and adapted a range of design links and coordination mechanisms, but these appear to be less established at the country level.

BASIC specified a range of design links from its outset. These included quarterly coordination meetings, monthly workstream meetings, and workstream quarterly reporting, all of which were noted as providing good entry points for coordination by FCDO and workstream stakeholders.²⁸ Both suppliers clearly outlined their thematic and geographic priorities and proposed additional governance arrangements to coordinate across workstreams, which was seen as a key design link. For example, one BASIC TA stakeholder said having access to Research plans facilitated TA alignment.²⁹ A PFP was also seconded to BASIC TA and was seen as critical in providing oversight and facilitating coordination across components and FCDO stakeholders.³⁰

Links were introduced or adapted in response to context shifts, which had mixed effects on internal coherence. Documentary and KII evidence identified that the following shifts affected internal coherence:

- **BASIC TA country focus:** From its outset in 2021, STAAR intended to invest more resources in a more targeted set of countries, but this strategy was ultimately deprioritised by FCDO. Some stakeholders suggested that this limited opportunities for collaboration between workstreams in overlapping target countries, while others suggested that the decision limited the risk of overlaps and duplication.³¹
- **KML:** Initially, both suppliers developed KML strategies in isolation, which limited opportunities for coordination. Over time, especially since the launch of the KELU Strategy and later efforts led by FCDO to encourage coordination dissemination and these plans increasingly cohered and identified collaboration entry points.³²
- **Results Framework (RF) amendments:** In 2024, FCDO adapted the BASIC RF to include indicators to monitor BASIC coordination. Some stakeholders suggested that this created incentives for coordination.³³
- **BASIC External Expert Advisory Group:** The BC identified this group as a key point of oversight, covering coordination in part. However, the group was never established. While FCDO stakeholders indicated this may have been a missed opportunity to identify points of coordination, Research stakeholders indicated that it duplicated its own independent advisory function.

A range of coordination mechanisms were also introduced, especially in later years, to support joint dissemination and uptake. Evidence from the 2024 BASIC Interim Review found that progress had been made in establishing coordination mechanisms.³⁴ These mechanisms

²⁷ FCDO (2018). BASIC Business Case

²⁸ FCDO (2020 and 2021). BASIC Annual Reviews.

²⁹ TA stakeholder [KII023].

³⁰ DAI (2020). TA Quarterly Report; FCDO (2020 and 2021) BASIC Annual Reviews.

³¹ TA stakeholder; FCDO stakeholder.

³² STAAR Implementation Strategy; BASIC Research Inception Report; BASIC Research Quarterly Reports.

³³ FCDO stakeholder.

³⁴ Integrity (2024). BASIC Interim Review. FCDO (Published internally); FCDO stakeholder.

(summarised in Table 4.5) spanned the delivery cycle, with multiple FCDO and supplier stakeholders suggesting that these arrangements were improving coherence.³⁵ Stakeholders offered different views on the reasons for increased coordination. FCDO suggested that it had put incentives in place to encourage coordination, which was enabled by individual relationships and personalities, while suppliers highlighted their proactive efforts to coordinate around delivery.

Table 4.5: Overview of BASIC coordination mechanisms identified by the endline evaluation

Coordination mechanism	Global or national example
Governance	
Governance structures and coordination meetings: Formal oversight and decision-making processes.	Quarterly coordination meetings, FCDO monthly management meetings covering objectives, pipeline, operations and delivery, and risk management, internal component meetings to identify coordination entry points.
Planned and ad hoc coordination meetings: More targeted forums to support delivery.	Ad hoc thematic or in-country assignments/research-level engagements, often organically through staff members, e.g., Vfm work in Yemen.
ToC review and evaluation engagement: Engagement around objectives and causal pathways.	Initial ToC workshops and ongoing quarterly meetings grounded in the BASIC ToC, nested component ToCs and country-level ToCs.
Scoping and delivery	
Joint review and scoping: Shared oversight of activities and outputs.	Sharing or peer review of scoping or final outputs, especially around aligned thematics, e.g., climate shocks in Pakistan, child marriage in South Sudan.
Template and tool sharing: Sharing and standardisation of outputs.	Sharing of guidance on research recommendations.
Shared staff: Dual use of experts across components.	Joint use of consultants across STAAR and Research assignments, e.g., Yemen, or the use of Research staff as advisers on BASIC TA.
Joint delivery: Coordinated or complementary delivery across components.	Research access to TA SharePoint site, dataset sharing, joint data collection, research collaboration, e.g., complementary Vfm analysis in Yemen, or joint external engagement in Jordan, advising on country stakeholders in Ethiopia.
Dissemination and uptake	
Joint uptake plans: Aligned strategies to drive adoption and usage of outputs.	Complementary country stakeholder and key message mapping, uptake planning meetings, joint monthly uptake and dissemination meetings.
Learning and knowledge exchange: Using experience and evidence to feed back into scope and practice.	Joint podcasts and SP.org webinar series on shared themes and countries, internal learning sessions, Research annual meetings, Research Learning Journey.
Co-delivery of external events: Engaging externally together.	Humanitarian Network Partnership Week, WB Fragility Forum, Global Forum Rome.

Source: Synthesis of documentary, stakeholder KII, and case study evidence.

³⁵ TA stakeholder; Research case country ; FCDO stakeholder; BASIC Annual Review 2025.

These efforts appear to have been more focused at management and global levels, with less evidence of links and mechanisms at the country level. Cross-case analysis of our seven country cases studies identified mixed evidence on the extent to which internal coherence was achieved in country. In Yemen and Ethiopia, we found moderate evidence of planned internal coherence, with examples of planned and ad-hoc coordination, shared staff, and joint review and delivery identified. In all other cases, in-country coordination happened more informally, for example through joint attendance at events or workshops.


Finding 11:

BASIC's design and wider challenges limited opportunities for internal coherence, and the need for extensive cross-component coordination was challenged by stakeholders.

Several design and operational factors influenced the extent to which coordination mechanisms met their objectives, although efforts were made to mitigate issues. We identified two groups of factors. One relates to design challenges that appear to have affected internal coherence from the outset, and the other relates to operational factors that arose during delivery:

Design / structural

- **Misaligned timelines:** Due to Research being planned as multi-year, and broader implementation delays (as discussed in EQ3.6), opportunities for design links were more limited towards the end of the programme, once Research outputs were finalised.³⁶
- **Delivery focus:** Supplier stakeholders said that the components often had different and potentially complementary objectives, with Research providing more foundational outputs and TA more applied support. However, some stakeholders suggested that this opportunity was insufficiently capitalised on.³⁷
- **Thematic overlaps:** TA stakeholders suggested that where components shared thematic priorities, coordination links were easier to deploy. For example, the coordination of component Climate Leads at global level supported increased alignment of approaches.³⁸ In other cases, stakeholders suggested that these overlaps created tensions and competition between suppliers.³⁹
- **KELU remit and ownership:** Coordinating around all outputs across workstreams proved challenging. While both workstreams agreed that KELU was useful, some felt that it needed to place greater emphasis on synthesising BASIC outputs to identify opportunities for collaboration, as opposed to generation of demand and coordination of delivery. There were also differing views on who should lead this work. Some expected FCDO to take the lead, others saw it as the responsibility of the workstreams, and some noted that no clear owner was ever established. FCDO stakeholders additionally highlighted that the PFP, who had provided additional inputs into the drafting of the KELU strategy and was supporting workstreams on its delivery, had limited capacity, especially towards the end of the programme. These stakeholders stressed that stronger engagement from both workstreams was needed given their varied thematic and country priorities.⁴⁰
- **External recognition:** External stakeholders and qualitative survey responses indicated that the link between Research and TA was often unclear given their distinct branding and management. While some viewed the workstreams as connected, many others did not, leading to limited expectations and encouragement to promote synergies.⁴¹

Delivery / operational

³⁶ TA stakeholder; FCDO stakeholder.

³⁷ Research stakeholder KII; TA KII.

³⁸ Research Quarterly Reporting Y2Q1; BASIC TA Quarterly Report 2023; BASIC TA Stories of Change.

³⁹ TA stakeholder; FCDO stakeholder.

⁴⁰ Research stakeholder; FCDO stakeholder; TA stakeholder.

⁴¹ BASIC Research case study KII; External multilateral stakeholder KIIs.

- **Time constraints and competing priorities:** Research and TA delivery teams were often working under constraints, which made coordination challenging.⁴²
- **Output production:** Output production, especially for Research, was skewed towards the end of the programme. This meant that opportunities for coordination, especially around dissemination and uptake, were limited towards BASIC's end. One stakeholder suggested more informal forums to discuss emerging results could have supported TA to draw more on Research.⁴³
- **Delays and funding uncertainties:** Delays in finalising Research inception or STAAR implementation and funding uncertainties (as discussed in EQ5) made collaboration difficult.⁴⁴

The need for extensive internal coherence was challenged by some stakeholders.

Fundamentally, some stakeholders argued that the factors identified above, along with the resource requirements of achieving coherence, meant that achieving a high degree of internal coherence was not always realistic.⁴⁵ This reflects a shift from the midline emphasis on encouraging stronger synergies towards an endline assessment that greater coherence was most valuable when focused on dissemination and uptake, rather than pursued as a broader or more systematic objective.

4.2.2 EQ2.2 What are the design linkages and coordination mechanisms in place between BASIC and other relevant FCDO and development partner interventions in BASIC's deep engagement countries and globally?

Strength of evidence:

Medium



Finding 12:

BASIC appeared to align well with related FCDO programmes, especially GSP. BASIC made practical efforts to ensure coherence with other relevant external initiatives at the global and country levels. Despite some missed opportunities, this was not a constraint to achieving objectives.

BASIC appeared to be well aligned with other FCDO global programmes. The BC outlined an expectation for BASIC to complement and coordinate with other FCDO programmes, especially around protracted conflicts. An analysis of relevant FCDO global programmes delivered since 2018 found similarities with other FCDO programmes (Table 4.6). At the same time, BASIC was relatively unique in offering a combination of components not found elsewhere, thereby limiting overlaps.

Table 4.6: Mapping of global FCDO programmes to key BASIC programme features

Programme / focus	SP focus	Global FCAS crises	Foundation al Research	Applied TA	Demand-led and strategic
Better Assistance in Crises	•	•	•	•	•
Gender-Responsive Social Protection	•		•	•	•
Maintaining Essential Services After a Natural Disaster	•		•	•	
Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises			•	•	•

⁴² Research stakeholder.

⁴³ TA stakeholder.

⁴⁴ TA stakeholder; Research stakeholder; Case study FCDO KII; Research Quarterly Report Y3Q4.

⁴⁵ Research stakeholder.

Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team		•		•	
Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence		•	•		
Humanitarian Services Global		•		•	
Global Agriculture and Food Security		•			•
Centre for Global Disaster Protection		•		•	•

N.B. We considered all FCDO programmes covering at least two or more regions starting in or after 2018 that had a total budget of over £1 million in constant prices. A green highlighted cell indicates that a feature was present in a programme.

BASIC coordinated with other FCDO global programmes and teams. During the early stages of the programme, initial efforts were made by both FCDO and workstreams to engage and share information across FCDO, for example with MAINTAINS, HSOT, SPARC and RED.⁴⁶

Over time this became increasingly supplier-led. Strong design links and coordination mechanisms with GSP, through the STAAR mechanism, were cited as a particularly positive example. In 2021, STAAR was specifically procured to offer TA for both BASIC and GSP using a joint operational framework and shared resources. Stakeholders suggested that this streamlined delivery, broadened BASIC's access to specialist gender and inclusion expertise, and enabled deeper consideration of the intersection between GESI and SP approaches in crisis contexts (EQ1.4). At the country level, BASIC worked through FCDO post teams which ensured coherence with other country-level FCDO facilities, such as in Jordan.

We did not identify evidence of duplication between BASIC and comparable external efforts at global level. Multiple FCDO and wider multilateral and research stakeholders suggested that BASIC was reasonably unique globally, given its wide geographic focus and broad technical offer. Where other similar offers were identified, these were suggested to be regionally or thematically focused or delivered at a smaller scale compared to BASIC⁴⁷

At the country level, evidence on external coherence was mixed. While evidence of internal coherence at country level was more limited, cross-case analysis suggested stronger evidence of external coherence. Five out of eight cases evidenced moderate to strong efforts to ensure external coherence, especially with other donors and multilateral agencies (EQ3.3). For example, in Nigeria, case study evidence showed that three successive STAAR embedded advisers strengthened coherence between STAAR and other humanitarian, SP and government actors.

However, several of the FCDO post stakeholders surveyed continued to identify country-level coherence as a key challenge (28%; n=5 in the endline versus 27%; n=7 in the midline). Challenges cited included limited awareness of wider initiatives, competition for and between research groups and consultants, and wider fragmented donor support in country. Missed opportunities cited included not using existing or complementary research efforts, or duplicated research and TA led by other organisations. However, the evaluation could not identify clear examples where a lack of external coherence was the primary limiting factor regarding BASIC meeting its objectives in-country.

4.3 EQ3. Effectiveness

This section presents endline evaluation findings on the effectiveness of BASIC, assessing how well the programme has delivered against the outputs and outcomes envisaged in the programme ToC. The section summarises evidence on achievement of outputs (3.1), outcomes

⁴⁶ The FCDO Research and Evidence Division (RED) supplied resources to BASIC to provide Research oversight and support. RED resources were also reallocated away from supporting BASIC. Some stakeholders suggested that this limited SPT's ability to provide comprehensive oversight of the methods and approaches deployed by Research.

⁴⁷ FCDO stakeholder; External stakeholder.

(3.3), and outcomes relating to gender and inclusion (3.4); enabling and hindering factors (3.2 and 3.5); and the role of synergies between workstreams in bringing about outcomes (3.6).

Table 4.7: EQ3 Effectiveness: Key findings summary by evaluation phase

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
3.1 Achievement of outputs	Provided high-quality, diverse and impartial advice for the design of main FCDO programmes. Generated greater awareness and understanding of SP approaches in crises. Strategic partnerships with key humanitarian SP actors not yet developed.	Only a handful of TA assignments delivered since baseline. STAAR has not yet built on SPACE momentum on generating learning or developed a clear strategy for capacity building. Research fieldwork is only now getting underway.	Since the midline, BASIC has been highly productive and has largely achieved its intended outputs: STAAR delivered a high volume and wide range of demand-led and learning outputs, and Research delivered most of its planned agenda.
3.2 Contributory factors to outputs	Factors affecting the achievement of TA outputs are: quality and impartiality of advice provided, clarity of user requests, contextual understanding, on-the-ground access and support, and user bandwidth.	Factors affecting achievement of TA outputs are likely to remain constant throughout the programme's lifetime. Long inception phases and budget reductions resulted in unmet demand.	Outputs were largely achieved because adaptive delivery and strong technical skills offset constraints; barriers mainly affected consolidation and dissemination.
3.3 Achievement of outcomes	TA fed into the design of FCDO programmes, and improved coordination between donors and agencies. FCDO offices used outputs to support influencing objectives. Limited contribution to changes in government policies.	FCDO country programmes whose design had been supported by BASIC TAS and SPACE have been implemented and, in at least one case, contributed to changes to wider SP policies and programmes.	BASIC has contributed meaningfully to outcomes, with strongest evidence for influence on policies, programmes and coordination, and moderate but credible contributions to building capacity and political commitment.
3.4 GESI outcomes	Lack of clear evidence as to whether TAS and SPACE have contributed to implementation of gender-responsive and inclusive SP. The most promising GESI results relate to influencing of partners in country.	Most of the key changes BASIC, TAS and SPACE have contributed to in-country include elements of improved equity in SP delivery. However, there is likely to be a lower level of ambition for GESI-related outcomes looking forward.	BASIC, especially Research, advanced gender-responsive and inclusive SP debates, but direct policy or programme change remains limited, with outcomes still emerging through longer-term, indirect pathways.
3.5 Contributory factors to outcomes	Three factors enable BASIC's ability to bring about outcome-level change: strategic use of BASIC to support country objectives; positive political economy of social assistance provision; and	The midline has identified several additional factors that enable or constrain achievement of outcomes. Key enablers include demonstration effects and the catalytic effect of COVID-19, and key constraints	Outcomes were most evident where BASIC sustained engagement, built trust, and provided timely inputs at key decision points. However, high-quality outputs did not always lead to outcomes, as funding cuts and weak uptake limited progress.

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
	positive funding environments.	include reduced donor funding, including by FCDO.	
3.6 Synergies between workstreams	Research is operating on a different timeframe from TA. Research differs qualitatively from analysis and evidence synthesis undertaken by TA and has the potential to add value.	Given the continued lack of substantial linkages and coordination between TA and Research, synergies between BASIC workstreams are unlikely to enhance achievement of outcomes.	There is some evidence of occasional workstream collaboration but synergies were uneven and emerged late. Structural, timing and resource constraints limited joint work, which rarely translated into coordinated outcomes.

4.3.1 EQ.3.1 Has each workstream, and BASIC overall, achieved their intended outputs?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 13:

Since the midline, BASIC has been highly productive and has largely achieved its intended outputs: STAAR delivered a high volume and wide range of demand-led and learning outputs, and Research delivered most of its planned agenda.

Under STAAR, output delivery accelerated substantially after the midline, and over the facility's lifetime (2021–2025). STAAR delivered 95 TA, analysis, evidence, and learning assignments. These spanned the full suite of outputs envisaged in the programme design, including demand-led TA, embedded advisory support, analytical and policy products, guidance notes, learning activities, and a wide range of knowledge management products. Interviewees consistently described STAAR as a highly productive facility that maintained a steady flow of outputs despite operating in complex and volatile contexts. The STAAR facility model functioned largely as designed, with its agile and flexible approach enabling it to respond to shifting demand, absorb funding volatility, and sustain delivery across multiple regions and thematic areas. A mix of country-level and global work, as well as of delivery modalities, allowed the facility to address both immediate operational needs and longer-term strategic questions in SP.

Regarding KML, STAAR produced a substantial portfolio of guidance notes, evidence notes, webinars, podcasts, conferences, curated learning products, and communities of practice. Usage data and stakeholder feedback indicate high levels of access and engagement for several core resources, and users frequently cited the breadth and accessibility of learning products as a distinctive strength of the programme. Compared to midline, where several planned KML activities had been delayed, endline evidence suggests that STAAR largely delivered its intended KML outputs.

Capacity building formed part of the output mix, including through embedded advisers, learning events, and peer exchange activities. However, evidence suggests that capacity building was less systematically articulated as a distinct output stream than TA and learning products. While some assignments incorporated substantial skills transfer and institutional strengthening, capacity building remained more implicit and variable across the portfolio.

Strong user feedback and repeat demand suggest that the majority of outputs met or exceeded commissioners' expectations in terms of quality (see EQ5 for analysis of user feedback). FCDO staff survey responses to statements about TA suggest generally positive

perceptions of the quality of support:⁴⁸ of the 12 staff members who had accessed support from BASIC, 11 agreed or strongly agreed that the TA they had received was helpful and relevant. Similarly, nine respondents agreed or strongly agreed that support had met its intended aims. Seven respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the support they received could not have been sourced from other providers.

Within BASIC Research, the planned research agenda was largely delivered across all four planned core thematic areas: politics and political economy, climate and livelihood resilience, inclusion and participation, and systems for design and delivery. The programme generated a substantial body of work, comprising country case studies, working papers, and a range of synthesis products that consolidated learning across themes and contexts. No major thematic areas were discontinued following midline, indicating strong continuity between the original design and implementation.

The Research portfolio comprises 131 distinct products, exceeding numerical targets for both academic and non-academic outputs and reflecting a deliberately broad dissemination strategy that goes beyond traditional academic publishing. Production has included shorter, more accessible formats, particularly blogs (27), theme briefs (12), webinars (9), podcasts (6), and videos (6), alongside a smaller core of peer-reviewed journal articles (7) and working papers. The distribution of Research portfolio products closely mirrors BASIC's strategic focus on crisis-affected contexts, governance, and the political economy of SP, complemented by additional clusters on inclusion, targeting, climate, digitalisation and financing.

In addition to formal publications, BASIC supported a range of convening and knowledge exchange activities. High-profile global events – notably the Rome Conference and HLP – provided platforms for disseminating TA and research findings, engaging senior policy audiences, and positioning BASIC as a central contributor to global debates on SP in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.

4.3.2 EQ3.2 What factors have contributed to or hindered achievement of outputs and why?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 14:

Outputs were largely achieved because adaptive delivery and strong technical skills offset constraints. Barriers mainly affected consolidation and dissemination.

Across both workstreams, key enabling factors were flexible delivery models and high-quality technical expertise. The ability to adapt sequencing and support modalities to shocks, funding volatility, and shifting political conditions was also critical, as shown in Table 4.8.

⁴⁸ Endline survey findings are based on a very small sample of only 25 members of staff and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 4.8: Key enablers and constraints affecting achievement of outputs

	Enablers	Constraints / limitations
STAAR	- Agile facility design and operational flexibility. - Quality of expertise made available. - Sequenced and layered TA across countries built cumulative outputs. - Strong technical leadership, quality assurance and coherence. - Convening power and technical credibility enabled flagship outputs and global synthesis.	- Funding volatility and late-stage removal of a potential uplift reduced some planned learning and follow-up activities. - Downsizing of the TSLT in the final nine months of the programme weakened quality assurance and portfolio-level learning. - FCDO capacity constraints limited continuity and follow-through. - Political economy and access constraints in fragile and conflict-affected settings.
Research	- Strong research leadership and continuity maintained a coherent agenda despite funding uncertainty. - High technical credibility and depth of analysis in challenging contexts. - In-depth country engagement and strong partnerships with local research organisations. - Participatory approaches anchored outputs in local realities.	- Access constraints in some countries. - Some FCDO reviewers found headline findings to be too general to be readily actionable.

Source: KIs and case studies.

As regards enabling factors, under STAAR:

- Agile facility design and the operational flexibility of the core team were central to sustaining output delivery.** The team actively scaled support up and down, pivoted geographies, and re-sequenced work in response to funding changes and external shocks. This enabled continued delivery of outputs across highly volatile contexts, including rapid mobilisation following the war in Ukraine, adaptive re-engagement in Ethiopia and Yemen as political conditions shifted, and flexible reprioritisation when planned deep-engagement country packages became unaffordable.
- Sequencing and layering of TA across countries and themes was a further enabling factor.** In several contexts, early analytical or diagnostic work was followed by advisory support, embedded roles, and/or subsequent phases of engagement that built cumulatively on earlier outputs. Examples included Ethiopia, where initial analysis on sustaining SP in extreme crisis informed donor dialogue and later embedded advisory roles; Yemen, where linked assignments on localisation, donor coordination and community-based mechanisms built on each other over time; and Ukraine, Nigeria, Zambia and the Sahel, where successive assignments created a pipeline of related outputs rather than isolated interventions. This layered approach helped translate individual outputs into more coherent country-level portfolios.
- Strong technical leadership, backstopping and quality assurance, particularly in the early and middle phases of the programme, also enabled delivery.** The TSLT provided cross-cutting expertise, strengthened commissioning, and enhanced coherence across assignments. Collaboration within the TSLT underpinned several flagship synthesis outputs (e.g. 'Synthesis of Learning and Promising Practices for Preserving and Strengthening Social Protection in Conflict Settings' and 'Strengthening the Role of Local Actors in Social Protection') and supported the agenda that emerged from major convenings, including the Rome Forum.

- **STAAR's convening power and technical credibility further contributed to output achievement.** High-profile global and regional events – including the Rome Forum, HLP, and engagement through SPIAC-B – provided platforms to co-produce outputs with major institutions, consolidate evidence, and position STAAR products within global policy debates.

Within BASIC Research:

- **Strong research leadership and continuity enabled delivery of a coherent research agenda despite prolonged funding uncertainty and repeated budget reductions.** Four dedicated theme leads were able to keep teams engaged, retain analytical focus, and sustain progress across core thematic areas even as timelines stretched and delivery tails lengthened. This continuity of leadership and purpose was widely cited as a key factor in maintaining momentum and avoiding fragmentation of the Research portfolio, though it should be noted that individual researchers tended not to be well-sighted on activities beyond their own workstream.
- **High technical credibility and depth of analysis further enabled achievement of outputs. BASIC Research outputs were widely regarded as technically strong and grounded in real-world complexity.** Researchers were able to continue working in highly challenging contexts such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq, generating rich empirical insights that would have been difficult for operational actors to produce independently. Several interviewees highlighted the value of BASIC Research in tackling politically sensitive and analytically demanding questions that other actors avoided, strengthening the distinctiveness and credibility of the research outputs.
- **In-depth country engagement and partnerships with credible local and regional institutions further strengthened research delivery.** Where research teams were able to sustain engagement over time, outputs benefited from deep contextual understanding and trust-based access. Examples included Nigeria and Yemen, where repeated engagement enabled nuanced analysis of political economy dynamics, targeting and system constraints, even in contexts where reform traction remained limited. Collaboration with national research institutes, think tanks and local partners improved access to policy actors, strengthened contextual interpretation of findings, and supported validation and dissemination at country level. Participatory research approaches and the use of reference groups helped anchor outputs in local realities and strengthened ownership among some stakeholders.

The principal hindering factors were associated less with the delivery of outputs than with their dissemination and uptake. For STAAR:

- **Repeated funding reallocations constrained forward planning** and, to some extent, reduced the scale of learning events, synthesis, dissemination and follow-up. According to some KIIs, while core outputs continued to be delivered at volume, cuts limited resources for translating outputs into policy-facing products and consolidating learning across countries.
- **The reduction in technical leadership capacity in the final nine months of the programme may have further constrained portfolio-level learning and synthesis.** According to KIIs with STAAR personnel, reduced TSLT time may have resulted in more limited bandwidth for strategic oversight and cross-country learning in the final phase, limiting opportunities to draw together and articulate what the portfolio collectively contributed. It should, however, be noted that STAAR sought to mitigate this factor by retaining TSLT involvement as much as funding and availability allowed.
- **FCDO capacity constraints and staff turnover also hindered follow-through.** High turnover and limited bandwidth within FCDO reduced continuity of engagement and institutional memory. In some cases, outputs were delivered but not fully embedded within evolving policy or programming processes, limiting their strategic use.

- **Dissemination was uneven across the portfolio.** While flagship products linked to major global forums achieved strong uptake and citation, some STAAR interviewees noted that resources hosted on socialprotection.org were not easily discoverable through general web searches, implying that audiences needed to know where to look to access them. Several papers (e.g. that on coordination) were shared directly through different fora and networks resulting in wider readership.
- **Political economy and access constraints further limited achievement in several contexts.** Conflict, insecurity and government resistance to findings constrained ambition and pace in countries such as Ethiopia, Yemen and Nigeria (case studies). In these settings, achievement often focused more on maintaining relevance, protecting space for dialogue and preventing regression than on advancing reform.

Within BASIC Research:

- **Pathways from research outputs to use were often diffuse and indirect.** According to KII with Research personnel, outputs were as likely to circulate through individual researchers' professional networks than through structured uptake mechanisms.
- **Opportunities for synthesis across themes and countries were also constrained by funding and time pressures.** While BASIC Research generated a substantial body of work, several interviewees (Research and FCDO) noted missed opportunities to systematically "join the dots" across countries and thematic areas and to articulate more clearly what the research collectively added up to. This was despite the fact that the main global review products and several within-project synthesis outputs were ultimately produced.

4.3.3 EQ3.3 Has each workstream, and BASIC overall, contributed to outcomes?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 15:

BASIC has contributed meaningfully to outcomes, with strongest evidence for influence on policies, programmes and coordination, and more moderate but credible contributions to capacity and political commitment in crises.

Table 4.9 provides an overview of endline evidence on the extent to which BASIC contributed to the achievement of its intended ToC outcomes. It synthesises evidence across workstreams and case studies, summarising the strength of evidence for each outcome area and illustrating the types of changes observed through selected examples. It is intended to provide a high-level summary of where outcome-level contributions were strongest and where evidence is more limited. It is supported by a detailed assessment of evidence against each of the outcomes in a series of case study countries (see Appendix A).

Table 4.9: Overview of endline evidence on achievement of BASIC ToC outcomes

ToC outcome	Description	Strength of evidence	Examples
Strengthened human and institutional capability and capacity	Achieved mainly through research capacity building and training systems for practitioners; weaker	Moderate	Mentoring of southern researchers (Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen); STAAR TRANSFORM modules on conflict, displacement

ToC outcome	Description	Strength of evidence	Examples
	evidence of government institutional change		and climate; advocacy around need for wider systems change
New or strengthened country plans, policies, programmes and systems	Examples across case studies, and different types of user (FCDO, donor, agency, to a lesser extent government)	Strong	Iraq/Kurdistan policy and practice changes (Research); Ethiopia PSNP adaptation discussions (STAAR)
Evidence used by governments, donors and agencies to inform policies and practice	Focus has been on dissemination; less emphasis on uptake	Limited	Rome Forum; HLP; Lebanon and Nigeria dissemination workshops
Increased political commitment to and use of SP in crises	Some evidence of changes in discourse, particularly at global level; more limited re binding commitments and financing	Moderate	HLP and 'catalytic agenda'; advocacy within international agencies, e.g., WFP, World Bank; Lebanon ministerial discourse shift
Greater coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives	Examples at both country and global level; global-level evidence is more recent	Moderate-Strong	Rome Forum; Yemen donor coordination; SPIAC-B coordination support

Source: Evaluation country case studies. See Appendix A for criteria against which strength of evidence has been assessed.

Overall, the strength of evidence varies markedly across the different outcome areas in the BASIC ToC. The strongest evidence relates to new or strengthened (FCDO) country plans, policies, programmes and systems, where there is consistent and robust evidence of contribution across multiple contexts and users. Evidence is also relatively strong for greater coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives, although it is more recent and uneven across countries. By contrast, evidence is moderate for strengthened human and institutional capability and capacity, reflecting clearer results for individual and practitioner capacity than for institutional change, and for increased political commitment to and use of SP in crises, where changes in discourse are more evident than binding commitments or financing. The weakest evidence relates to the use of evidence by governments, donors and agencies to inform policies and practice, where dissemination is well documented but systematic uptake and influence on practice remain limited.

At global level, BASIC's influence is most evident in agenda-setting, narrative change and high-level coordination, with moderate but credible evidence of influence on global policy debates and emerging reform agendas, and more limited evidence of downstream change in financing, institutional reform or implementation. Multiple interviewees identify the Rome Global Forum on Social Protection in Crises (September 2024) and the subsequent HLP as pivotal global achievements. Research and STAAR played a central technical and convening role in these processes, consolidating evidence from Research and TA, elevating it into senior political forums, and securing high-level engagement from actors including FCDO, OCHA, the World Bank and fragile-state governments. This sequence is widely credited with strengthening global consensus around an "SP first" agenda in protracted crises, increasing acceptance that national systems can and should be used during conflict, and placing SP more firmly on humanitarian-development policy agendas.

Table 4.10: Illustrative overview of global forums engaged by BASIC

Illustrative global forums	Overview of BASIC coherence efforts
G20 Summit in South Africa (2025)	STAAR contributed to South Africa's G20 Presidency through technical inputs and negotiation support, to ensure that SP was formally recognised in the G20 ministerial declaration as a key component of economic development.
IDS Social Protection Conference (2025)	Research hosted a conference convening the global SP community on the links between social and humanitarian assistance in crises.
Global Forum on Social Protection and Conflict in Rome (2024)	Research and STAAR jointly supported preparations with shared Technical Leads shaping the agenda and the STAAR team coordinating planning so that Forum discussions and evidence from both components informed each other.
World Bank Fragility Forum (2024)	BASIC TA and Research jointly presented evidence and learning to explore collaboration options with the wider community, including UNICEF, WFP, and USAID.
UN OCHA Humanitarian Partnerships Week (2021)	BASIC TA and Research collaborated at the Humanitarian Partnership and Networks Week, delivering a clinic titled "What have we learnt on linking humanitarian cash with social protection?"

N.B. Synthesis of documentation, monitoring data, KII, FCDO responses, and external stakeholder views.

Case evidence on outcomes with a substantial effect on SP systems can be summarised as follows:

- Strengthened human and institutional capability and capacity:** Evidence shows that BASIC made credible and sometimes significant contributions to strengthening technical and professional capacity, particularly among practitioners, advisers and agencies, with more limited evidence of sustained government institutional change. Across cases, the strongest results relate to targeted training, mentoring and embedded advisory support that improved analytical skills, technical practice and confidence among UNICEF staff, researchers and FCDO advisers. These capacity gains were often concrete and observable, for example in improved disability identification, strengthened research skills, and enhanced advisory quality within FCDO. However, in several contexts these improvements were individual or organisational rather than fully institutionalised, and in some cases were not sustained after direct support ended. This evidence supports an overall assessment of moderate but credible impact in this outcome area.
- New or strengthened country plans, policies, programmes and systems designed and implemented:** This is the outcome area with the strongest and most consistent evidence of BASIC contribution. Across multiple countries, BASIC and its predecessor workstreams made direct, traceable contributions to the design of major (mostly FCDO) programmes. In Jordan, Lebanon and Somalia in particular, advisory inputs fed directly into BCs, programme architectures and delivery choices, including decisions to use national systems and to integrate humanitarian and development support. These contributions were often time-critical, closely aligned with decision points, and judged by users to be essential to programme approval and design. The evidence supports a strong conclusion that BASIC played a significant role in shaping high-value programmes.
- Evidence used by governments, donors and agencies to inform policies and practice:** Evidence of influence in this outcome area is mixed and generally weaker than for programme design. While dissemination activities were extensive and some products clearly informed specific policy processes and budget decisions, systematic uptake into routine policy and practice was uneven. In Nigeria and Borno State there is strong evidence of catalytic use of research in policy revision and budgeting, but in other contexts anticipated influence remained prospective rather than realised by endline. In Somalia, for example, strategic diagnostics were widely used, while academic research outputs saw limited uptake.

- **Increased political commitment to and use of SP approaches in crises:** Evidence for increased political commitment is moderate and concentrated on agenda-setting. In several contexts, BASIC-supported evidence strengthened internal advocacy within FCDO and sustained donor engagement with reform agendas. There are credible signs of increased institutional willingness to use national systems in crises, particularly in Lebanon and Somalia, and of sustained reform dialogue in Yemen. However, formal political commitments and legislation are limited, and changes are better characterised as incremental and enabling rather than transformational. BASIC's role is best described as contributing to political momentum and institutional readiness rather than driving decisive political shifts.
- **Greater coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives:** Evidence of contribution to coordination is moderate to strong, with some of the most convincing results in contexts where BASIC supported the design or redesign of coordination architectures. In Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen in particular, BASIC contributed to improved donor coordination, stronger governance arrangements and more coherent system-level coordination functions. In Ethiopia and Nigeria, embedded advisory support improved coordination practices and technical alignment, although some gains were not sustained after advisers exited. Overall, the evidence suggests that BASIC was particularly effective as a knowledge broker and convener, helping to align actors and improve coordination structures, even where formal authority rested elsewhere.

4.3.4 EQ3.4 To what extent has BASIC contributed to the development of gender-responsive and inclusive SP policies, systems and programmes (and programme outputs) in partner countries and globally?

Strength of evidence:

Medium



Finding 16:

BASIC, especially Research, advanced gender-responsive and inclusive SP debates, but direct policy or programme change remains limited, with outcomes still emerging through longer-term, indirect pathways.

Across the portfolio, BASIC's contribution to gender-responsive and inclusive SP was more evident in shaping analysis, discourse and advocacy than in delivering demonstrable changes in policy design or programme implementation. This reflects both the limited number of targeted GESI assignments under STAAR by design, and the inherently long and indirect pathways from Research and TA to institutional and policy change. In most cases, influence was observed at the level of analytical framing, political discourse and advocacy capacity rather than codified reforms or redesigned programmes.

Within BASIC Research, several GESI-focused studies supported local civil society actors and policy stakeholders to use research evidence in legal and policy advocacy. There were early signs of influence on debate and framing, but limited evidence of definitive reform outcomes to date, as illustrated in Box 4.2.

| **Box 4.2: Illustrative examples of BASIC Research contributions to gender-responsive SP**

Strengthening advocacy on inclusive SP legislation in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. BASIC Research identified gaps in SP legislation affecting marginalised groups, strengthened the advocacy capacity of local partner Pasawan and informed reform debates. Interviewees reported improved credibility and agenda-setting influence, although concrete policy change had not yet materialised.

Elevating frontline social workers in policy discourse on inclusive SP in Yemen. BASIC Research helped elevate the role of frontline social workers in discussions on inclusive SP. Following policy engagement events, senior leaders publicly reframed social workers as central to system effectiveness and inclusion, influencing political discourse, although this was not consistently reflected in formal policy reforms.

Highlighting digital exclusion risks in SP targeting in Nigeria. In Nigeria, Research highlighted how digital targeting practices can exclude widows, female-headed households and people with disabilities, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Interviewees reported that CSOs referenced these findings in policy discussions, but evidence of direct influence on programme design remained limited.

Under STAAR, targeted GESI-related outcomes were more limited, consistent with the facility's design, which located most gender-responsive-focused work under the GSP window. Where STAAR undertook cross-cutting analysis linking gender, inclusion and crisis, contributions were primarily at the level of analytical framing and technical dialogue rather than concrete programme change, as illustrated in Box 4.3.

| **Box 4.3: Illustrative examples of STAAR contributions to gender-responsive SP**

Informing debate on inclusive programme design in Haiti. STAAR-supported analysis examined gender, inclusion and the role of women's organisations in crisis-affected SP. The work highlighted how insecurity and weak state presence shape inclusion risks and underscored the importance of women-led organisations in reaching marginalised groups. Interview evidence suggests that the findings informed donor and partner discussions, although there is limited evidence of resulting policy or programme change.

Shaping technical dialogue on gender and inclusion in adaptive SP in the Sahel. In the Sahel, STAAR-supported work contributed to analysis on adaptive SP in climate- and conflict-affected contexts, with attention to gender and inclusion risks. The work highlighted disproportionate impacts on women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Interviewees reported that these insights shaped donor and partner technical dialogue, but evidence of concrete programme changes remains limited.

Strengthening disability inclusion in humanitarian cash programming in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, STAAR support strengthened UNICEF's capacity to identify and include children with disabilities in humanitarian cash programmes through targeted training and adapted guidance. Following implementation in Tigray and Oromio, UNICEF reported improved identification across around 25,000 households. Interview and programme evidence suggests that the work informed disability-focused cash top-ups and contributed to more inclusive delivery, alongside strengthened institutional capacity.

4.3.5 EQ3.5 What factors have contributed to or hindered achievement of outcomes and why? Have underpinning assumptions held?

Strength of evidence:

High



Finding 17:

Outcomes were most evident where BASIC sustained engagement, built trust, and provided timely inputs at key decision points. However, high-quality outputs did not always lead to outcomes, as funding cuts and weak ownership of uptake limited progress.

Across both workstreams, outcome-level change was most likely where BASIC was able to sustain engagement over time, build trusted relationships, and align inputs to concrete policy or programming decision points. By contrast, where outputs were delivered as one-off products, or where responsibility and resourcing for uptake were unclear, influence on decision making was more limited despite high technical quality. Table 4.12 summarises key enablers and constraints relating to achievement of outcomes for both STAAR and Research.

Table 4.11: Key enablers and constraints to achieving outcomes across BASIC workstreams

	Enablers	Constraints / limitations
STAAR	- Sustained and layered engagement enabled trust-building, political navigation and iterative problem-solving. - Timely and relevant inputs aligned to decision points increased the likelihood that evidence informed policy design or crisis response.	- Gap between delivery and responsibility for use: no clear accountability or resourcing for ensuring uptake once time had passed after delivery; responsibility implicitly assumed to sit with FCDO without sufficient capacity. - TA not always embedded in policy and programming processes, reducing influence on decision making in some instances despite technical quality.
Research	Strong relationships with local partners and researchers able to feed findings into policy dialogue.	- Synthesis completed later in the programme's lifespan than originally planned, limiting time available for dissemination and follow-up. - TA not always embedded in policy and programming processes, reducing influence on decision making in some instances despite technical quality.

Under STAAR, sustained engagement emerged as the strongest enabler of outcomes. Longer-term or layered engagement enabled trust-building, political navigation and iterative problem-solving, and allowed advisers to maintain continuity despite high turnover among government and donor counterparts. Sustained presence also enabled advisers to translate analysis into practical action and to adapt support as political conditions and priorities shifted.

Strong relationships and local credibility further increased the likelihood of outcomes. Where researchers or advisers had long-standing country relationships and were perceived as trusted and independent, findings were more likely to enter policy dialogue and inform adaptive decision making. Ethiopia was frequently cited as a case where deep contextual knowledge and trusted relationships

enabled research evidence to inform discussions on adapting the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) under crisis conditions. Similarly, local research partners in Yemen and Iraq were able to feed findings into national debates through their networks, even where opportunities to directly influence formal policy were constrained.

Timely and relevant inputs aligned to decision points also enabled outcomes. Influence was strongest where BASIC support coincided with moments of policy design, revision or crisis response, such as discussions on PSNP adaptation in Ethiopia or programme redesign following major shocks. In these cases, evidence and advisory inputs were more likely to be used because they were designed to address immediate problems facing decision makers.

By contrast, several constraints limited translation of outputs into outcomes. In some contexts, Research and TA were well regarded but could have been more directly embedded in policy or programming processes, reducing their influence on decision making.

A recurrent constraint was the gap between delivery of outputs and responsibility for their use. While consultants and researchers delivered high-quality products, there was often no clear accountability or resourcing for ensuring uptake months after delivery. Responsibility for follow-through was implicitly assumed to sit with FCDO or partner institutions, but without sufficient capacity, continuity or dedicated resources. As a result, several outputs were reported to be well received but not systematically applied.

Table 4.12: Enablers and constraints of outcome-level change

Factor	Case example
Enablers	
Sustained and layered engagement	Yemen: Under STAAR, linked TA assignments supported sustained engagement on SP in crisis, building continuity in technical dialogue and enabling iterative problem-solving in a highly constrained environment.
Strong relationships and local credibility	Lebanon: Close and sustained engagement between IDS researchers and FCDO embassy staff ensured that research questions and outputs were closely aligned to live policy debates, facilitating use of findings in technical dialogue with MOSA, EU, UNHCR and WFP.
Timely and relevant inputs aligned to decision points	Nigeria: BASIC TA supported the review of Nigeria's revised National Social Protection Policy, enabling advisers to influence content at a key decision point, including strengthening provisions to extend coverage to internally displaced persons.
Constraints	
Research and TA not embedded in policy and programming processes	South Sudan: BASIC TA supported analytical work and capacity strengthening within the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, but remained weakly integrated into government planning and financing processes, limiting its influence on system-level change.
Gap between delivery and responsibility for use	Nigeria: BASIC Research delivered detailed analysis on digitalisation and inclusion, but there was a lack of a clear mechanism for supporting uptake and follow-through after delivery.
Budget cuts and loss of the planned uptake phase	Yemen: Budget cuts within BASIC reduced planned fieldwork and follow-on engagement, pushing delivery towards shorter, more desk-based work and weakening the programme's capacity to support dissemination, uptake and sustained influence.

Table 4.13 assesses the strength of evaluation evidence to support assumptions associated with specific causal linkages in the ToC. Assumptions that are well evidenced are concentrated at the input-output level, reflecting strong confidence in delivery capacity and technical quality. Evidence becomes more mixed for assumptions linking outputs to outcomes, where uptake, coordination, and institutional capacity are more variable across contexts. At the output-outcome level, several critical assumptions were only partially realised in practice. As shown in Table 4.13, while assumptions linking inputs to outputs are generally better supported by evidence, the strength of evidence weakens progressively at the output-outcome and outcome-impact levels (see EQ4).

Table 4.13: Strength of assumptions associated with achievement of ToC outputs and outcomes

Level		Strength of evidence
Linking inputs to outputs		FCDO posts are sufficiently engaged to identify windows of opportunity for reform and draw on BASIC TA strategically to promote use of SP approaches in crises.
		BASIC has the flexibility to adapt to major contextual changes, including new shocks and the FCDO budget revision exercise.
		There is sufficient technical expertise and capacity to deliver high-quality advice and robust research in these contexts.
Linking outputs to outcomes		International consultants and researchers delivering BASIC provide advice that is relevant and appropriate.
		There is adequate commitment and financial and human resource at country level (in FCDO, governments or agencies) to implement new or strengthened plans, policies and programmes.
		International consultants and researchers delivering BASIC generate evidence that is relevant and appropriate.
		In-country researchers have sufficient networks and capacity to engage key stakeholders and promote uptake of research. Users can access evidence and understand its applicability to their own contexts. Staff turnover among users and policymakers does not prevent uptake of research/evidence.
		FCDO posts have the absorptive capacity to utilise BASIC outputs and link to their influencing work. Buy-in from senior FCDO personnel is sufficient to support high-level influencing agendas.
		BASIC workstreams collaborate effectively to maximise cross-programme linkages, coordination and synergies. BASIC collaborates effectively with other stakeholders to achieve capacity strengthening and influencing outcomes.



Held



Partially Held

N.B. Whether ToC assumptions have held.

4.3.6 EQ3.6 Do the three workstreams of BASIC synergise and together bring about changes in the use of SP approaches in crises?

Strength of evidence:

Medium

**Finding 18:**

While STAAR and BASIC Research have made considerable efforts to collaborate, structural and timing constraints have limited the creation of synergies that could support outcome-level change.

Across the programme, synergies between BASIC Research and STAAR were episodic rather than systematic. While there were instances of joint working and exchange, there is no clear evidence that countries or themes with both workstreams present achieved stronger or faster outcome-level change than those supported by only one workstream. At endline, interviewees consistently highlighted a structural mismatch in timelines and modes of operation which limited synergies that could support achievement of outcome-level change, despite considerable efforts on the part of both STAAR and Research to maximise linkages between the two workstreams (see EQ2.1).

At global level, the most widely cited example of synergy was the Rome Conference and the subsequent HLP. In this case, BASIC Research provided evidence and analytical framing, while STAAR supported synthesis, positioning and follow-on engagement, and the programme's convening platforms created space for dialogue with senior policymakers and global actors. Multiple interviewees described this as a point where the programme "gelled" and delivered more than the sum of its parts, culminating in a call-to-action. This example illustrates how, when timing and resources aligned, joint working could influence agenda-setting and global policy dialogue.

At country level, Yemen represents a clear example of continuity between Research and STAAR. Issues identified in Research scoping were subsequently carried forward into STAAR assignments, creating alignment in problem definition and technical dialogue between diagnostic work and advisory support. This enabled more coherent engagement with partners and a shared analytical narrative across workstreams, although evidence that this continuity translated into concrete programme-level change remained limited.

4.4 EQ4. Impact

This section presents endline evaluation findings on the impact of BASIC as judged by the sub-impacts defined in the programme ToC.

Given the limited time to realise impacts, the evaluation examined actual and *plausible contributions* of BASIC to the four sub-impacts (EQ4.1 and Figure 2.2). We assessed the consequences of varying levels of BASIC engagement on impacts and identified major constraints outside of the programme scope (EQ4.2). The section concludes by analysing the contribution of BASIC to impacts at global level (EQ4.3). The findings draw primarily on the country case studies, supplemented by documentation, monitoring data, KIIs, and survey responses from FCDO advisers.

Table 4.14: EQ4 Impact: Key findings summary by evaluation phase

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
4.1 Contribution to intended impacts	Potential to contribute to more effective, efficient and inclusive social assistance and, in turn, to enable vulnerable populations to cope better with crises and meet their basic needs.	Plausible contribution to more effective, efficient and inclusive social assistance. Relatively limited potential to bring about diversified and more sustainable funding.	Plausible contribution to improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness and inclusivity of crisis assistance. Minimal evidence of contribution to more diverse or sustainable funding.
4.2 Pathways of change and	Most plausible ToC impact pathway is for high-quality advice to combine with	By far the best evidenced impact pathway at midline is TAS advice informing the design of new FCDO country	Impact was enhanced where TA coincided with political commitment and enhanced

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
constraining factors	greater awareness and strengthened relationships to bring about new or strengthened country policies or programmes, and greater coherence/synergies.	programmes whose implementation is contributing to the delivery of 'more effective', 'more efficient', and/or 'more inclusive' SP.	coordination. Major constraints included a lack of sustainable financing and the contextual challenges of working in a FCAS context.
4.3 Contribution at global level	Similar levels of feasibility as above for different impact pathways at global level.	SPACE has influenced several multilateral organisations' global SP strategies and Research targeted a global audience. STAAR is unlikely to produce the same volume of global public goods as SPACE.	Working with global stakeholders has become an important pathway to realising BASIC impacts.

4.4.1 EQ4.1 Have BASIC and its workstreams achieved, or are they likely to contribute to, intended impacts as per the ToC and BC?

Strength of evidence:

Medium



Finding 19:

BASIC plausibly contributed to the sub-impact of improving the efficiency of crisis assistance.

BASIC made a plausible contribution to the improved efficiency of crisis response. The specific content of the TA and advice provided by both BASIC workstreams was well aligned with the goal of more efficient crisis response (see Table 4.15). Key contributions included the use of the most efficient delivery partners and modalities, cost savings through increased inter-operability and digitalisation, de-duplication of beneficiaries across programmes, reducing inclusion errors and expanding the use of electronic payment systems.

Table 4.15: Illustrative BASIC contributions to improved efficiency of crisis response

Country	Examples of efficiency-oriented activities
Yemen	BASIC's work on interoperability and harmonisation of social assistance systems addressed barriers to data sharing and improved coordination between social assistance programmes. ⁴⁹ A STAAR VfM assignment was designed to inform FCDO decision making on the most cost-efficient delivery partners for social assistance.
Ethiopia	BASIC Research facilitated a workshop with policymakers, academics, government and NGOs to discuss the evolving policy agenda and improve the efficiency of social assistance. ⁵⁰
Sudan	BASIC Research's working paper on "Supporting Mutual Aid in Sudan: Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Risk and Accountability" provided operational recommendations to adapt funding modalities to support community initiatives, improving timeliness and efficiency. ⁵¹

⁴⁹ BASIC Research: Y2Q1 Implementation Report, p. 12

⁵⁰ BASIC Research: Y4Q1 draft report, p. 1

⁵¹ BASIC Research: Y4Q1 draft report, p. 3

Ukraine	STAAR supported the Ukraine Cash Working Group by embedding a humanitarian-SP adviser, who advanced coordination and discussions on data sharing between the government of Ukraine and the humanitarian sector. ⁵²
Palestine	In Gaza, STAAR facilitated the formation of a Data Governance Task Team to address politically sensitive data-sharing issues. ⁵³
Iraq	A STAAR assignment explored the shift from food to cash assistance, including cost efficiency.
Nigeria	STAAR contributed to the national cash and voucher policy, aimed at expanding the use of cash transfers.

BASIC's role was essentially catalytic in highlighting opportunities to improve systems, while the "heavy lifting" of systems change remained the responsibility of country programmes and actors. Two specific pathways emerge for the BASIC contribution. One is technical advice around best practices. Government institutions and, in some cases, CSOs particularly benefited from exposure to global best practices and expertise, whereas UN and international agencies were more likely to already have this knowledge in-house. In terms of the second pathway, interviews across stakeholder groups reported continuing fragmentation, but BASIC contributions brokering agreements between agencies directly related to improved interoperability.

The evaluation found some tangible improvements in efficiency, with somewhat stronger evidence of change compared to other sub-impacts. Only four (22%) FCDO survey respondents reported system-level improvements and four of these changes related to more efficient social assistance. This question was asked in general and was not necessarily attributable to BASIC. Case study evidence found that BASIC made variable contributions to system-level efficiency gains. In some cases change was clearly driven by other actors: the UN, donors and governments. For example, work updating the Yemen social registry to improve efficiency is being driven by the World Bank with minimal reference to BASIC. Many agencies are already sensitive to the opportunities of using new technologies and digitalisation to improve cost efficiency.

In several cases it remained too early to assess whether BASIC TA will successfully trigger efficiency gains. For example, the Nigeria Cash and Voucher assistance is yet to be approved. Elsewhere, contextual constraints have limited impacts, for example institutional barriers to data sharing in Palestine persist.



Finding 20:

BASIC efforts plausibly promoted effective and inclusive SP, but with mixed results at sub-impact level so far.

BASIC TA and Research plausibly contributed to improved programme effectiveness.

Examples of relevant themes included support on aligning transfer values to needs, improved targeting and coverage, reduced exclusion, strengthened accountability to affected populations,⁵⁴ more shock-responsive SP, and links to referral mechanisms and sustainable livelihoods. As with efficiency sub-impacts, BASIC complemented the work of a range of government, UN, World Bank and donor actors.

There are examples of tangible improvements in effectiveness where BASIC had made an important contribution. The BASIC contribution was primarily seen as catalysing action among the system "owners". Multiple stakeholders confirmed meaningful improvements in the effectiveness of

⁵² BASIC Annual Review 2023, p. 3.

⁵³ STAAR BASIC Annual Review, p. 2.

⁵⁴ For example, research on accountability in social assistance delivery in Somalia and the DRC closed feedback loops with communities with the goal of enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. (BASIC Research Y2Q1 Implementation Report FINAL, p. 8; BASIC Research Y2Q2 Implementation report, p. 5).

social assistance in Somalia, primarily through improved targeting. The World Bank described BASIC's aid diversion research as *"extremely important in influencing policy decisions"*, particularly around targeting methodologies. In Jordan, reform of the government's flagship social assistance fund (the National Aid Fund) included multiple changes to improve effectiveness, including consolidated cash transfers, a more sophisticated and standardised targeting approach, unified case management and establishing hotline services. These reforms were supported and informed by the FCDO Jordan SSERJ business case, which was in turn underpinned by BASIC analysis. In Zambia, the scale-up of the coverage of national cash transfers to better meet needs was credited to STAAR support.

These case findings were somewhat contradicted by the survey findings where FCDO staff did not identify system-level effectiveness gains, possibly because the survey did not overlap with the case study countries and was therefore biased towards areas of lower BASIC involvement.

In other cases, the BASIC contribution to impacts remained uncertain. BASIC Research recommendations to strengthen the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia are still under consideration.⁵⁵ In the long run, the implementation of the National Cash and Voucher Assistance (NCVA) policy in Nigeria may expand access to social assistance by the poor and the vulnerable, but is yet to be enacted. In Yemen, BASIC Research recommended revising transfer amounts and targeting in SFD, to enhance the effectiveness of social assistance in meeting household needs, but SFD funding from donors is suspended and all activities are paused.⁵⁶

BASIC has been a strong proponent for gender, equity and inclusion through both stand-alone and mainstreamed activities. BASIC has raised visibility of gender-responsive and inclusive SP in crises, and in some instances has contributed to policy dialogues, for example in Ethiopia⁵⁷ and Haiti⁵⁸ (see EQ3.5). However, evidence on this translating into programming decisions was limited and anecdotal. For example, in Sudan, the work that STAAR supported on the World Bank child disability grant was seen as influential by an interviewee. In Ethiopia, UNICEF reported that improved disability inclusion in cash top-ups was linked to the work started by STAAR.

BASIC supported the inclusion of refugees within national SP systems, including work in Lebanon and Jordan. However, there has been limited appetite among governments to take on this responsibility, linked to budgetary implications (see EQ6). For example, a long-standing government commitment to pilot the integration of refugees into the National Aid Fund (NAF) in Jordan has not been realised. Progress was made in Lebanon, where contributory SP benefits have been extended to informal workers and refugees, supported by FCDO and designed by BASIC. However, there were no examples of refugees being included as beneficiaries of unconditional SP schemes.



Finding 21:

There has been minimal progress in improving the diversity and sustainability of financing for crisis assistance through SP systems at country level. Linking SP to climate financing offers the most plausible potential opportunity.

This sub-impact was assessed against strengthening funding diversity (including domestic, multilateral, private) and sustainability, which could be measured by a transition to multi-year, on-budget support and the share of crisis funds delivered through SP systems.

The evaluation found minimal evidence of increased domestic financing for crisis response through SP systems in FCAS. For example, a modest policy commitment to devote 1% of the budget in South Sudan to SP⁵⁹ has yet to be realised. One of the few examples comes from Lebanon,

⁵⁵ BASIC Research Y4Q1 draft report, p. 3.

⁵⁶ BASIC Research Y4Q1 draft report, p. 3.

⁵⁷ STAAR BASIC AR 2025, p. 4.

⁵⁸ STAAR BASIC AR 2025, p. 4.

⁵⁹ 2014 South Sudan Social Protection policy.

where the government has taken budget responsibility for part of a national disability allowance introduced with EU and ILO support. However, there was no mention of a specific contribution from BASIC to this decision. In Nigeria, data from BASIC Research was also used to help plan an emergency response, although this was an unexpected benefit rather than the purpose of the research. Overall, national spending on SP in low-income countries still significantly lags behind middle- and high-income countries (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16: Spending on SP by country income group

Development status	Social protection spending (% of GDP)	Total government spending (% of GDP)	Implied share of national budget on social protection (%)
High-income	16.2	42	38.6
Upper-middle-income	8.5	32	26.6
Lower-middle-income	4.2	32	13.1
Low-income	1.1	18	6.1

Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO). World Social Protection Report 2024–26. And International Monetary Fund (IMF). Fiscal Monitor – General Government Total Expenditure (% of GDP).

Donor funding for SP is shrinking (see Figure 4.3), potentially reducing the diversity of financing. BASIC has been credited with helping internal advocacy within agencies, including FCDO, to maintain support to SP approaches in a difficult global context. For example, in Yemen, BASIC was credited with giving donors and agencies confidence to keep investing in the SFD. An FCDO post observed that *“The whole narrative in Yemen was the link between humanitarian assistance and social protection. BASIC really helped us keep it there despite evolutions in the organisation”*.

Stakeholders saw that the most realistic opportunity for new funding lay in better linking of climate financing with SP systems, even though donor commitments in this area are also under threat.⁶⁰ Previous studies by FAO identified examples of where this link has been realised but these predate any possible BASIC contribution. More recent STAAR and Research outputs have helped highlight how little climate finance goes to social protection but this is yet to demonstrate a contribution to drawing in climate finance.

The share of crisis funds delivered through SP systems remains limited. BASIC has demonstrated influence on FCDO programming that aims to align humanitarian assistance and SP (e.g., Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen and Ethiopia). While there has been increased operational alignment between humanitarian and national systems, parallel financing of humanitarian programming remains the norm. For example, UN and supplier stakeholders cited the case of Ukraine, where despite a well-established national SP system, the bulk of social assistance continues to be delivered by humanitarian agencies. This was attributed to the risk aversion of donors and prioritisation of the perceived additional accountability safeguards of using international agencies.



Finding 22:

Donor support to SP was narrowly framed and could be expanded to consider the role of informal SP. BASIC helped draw attention to the resilience of SP systems in crisis situations.

Respondents identified the risk of biasing SP systems to think too much about the connection to humanitarian assistance. *“The danger is that social protection systems are just going to be used as a*

⁶⁰ The UK'S International Climate Finance, January 2026, [here](#). Date accessed: 10/04/26.

vehicle to deliver humanitarian assistance. We have a duty to make sure that, as FCDO, we recognise that it connects with health, it connects with education, and is a sector independent of others.”

Interviewees noted that SP is understood very differently by different people and rarely in line with its official definition. One respondent argued that *“The tendency is for international actors to focus on cash transfer programmes, as it links with their interests, and ignore a bunch of other social protection interventions such as social insurance, active labour market programmes and subsidy systems. So we’ve ended up with this really narrow view of what it means. To sustain social protection systems in that way is unhelpful and really constrains us.”* Stakeholders did not make a specific case for other SP instruments, such as social insurance, subsidy programmes, active labour market policies or social services. The main emerging argument from BASIC encouraged a broader definition of SP in FCAS that included support to informal forms of SP.

An unexpected positive impact of BASIC was the stream of work on sustaining and building the resilience of SP systems in situations of fragility and conflict. A BASIC researcher stated: *“The sustained work allowed us to get away from the notion of the nexus and enabled us to start with social protection and not just social assistance and see what happens... things exist on the ground irrespective of whether international actors are supporting them or not”.*

4.4.2 EQ4.2 What has been the impact of BASIC and its workstreams on policy, programme and system change in countries with varying levels of engagement? What complementary actions outside of BASIC are necessary to create impact?

Strength of evidence:

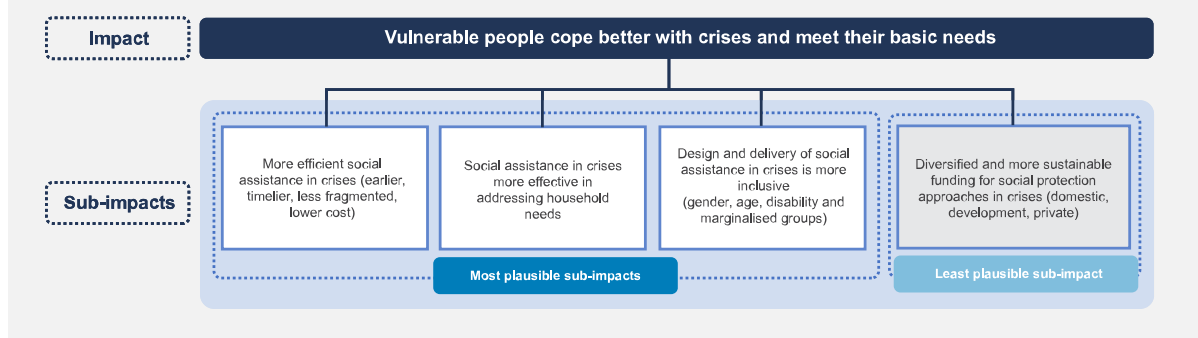
High



Finding 23:

The main impact pathway for BASIC has diversified beyond working through FCDO programmes. However, BASIC’s contribution to impact has been limited by a range of contextual factors including a lack of political commitment and financing, continuing coordination challenges and a context of fragility.

The best evidenced impact pathways at midline were quite narrowly seen as “informing the design of new FCDO country programmes whose implementation is contributing to the delivery of ‘more effective’, ‘more efficient’, and/or ‘more inclusive’ social protection”. At endline, the evidence confirms that the most plausible sub-impacts remain the same. However, the intermediate pathways have diversified beyond a direct reliance on FCDO country programmes. BASIC’s influence on a wider group of stakeholders has become apparent. This includes, to variable degrees, UN and international agencies, other donors and beneficiary governments. This influence has been realised through policies and programmes, levels of political commitment among international actors, and improved system-wide coordination and coherence.

Figure 4.7: Plausibility of ToC sub-impacts


System-level change has proved a slow and challenging process in FCAS, impeded by a range of significant contextual constraints. The survey of FCDO staff indicated four main barriers: institutional capacity, political commitment, financing and operating context. In contrast, there were relatively few technical design and operational constraints. Table 4.17 summarises the top ten reported barriers to change as identified by survey respondents.

Table 4.17: In [country] what significant barriers to change in using SP approaches to respond to crises still exist, if any?

Barrier	N	%
Political		
Limited political support for SP	7	32
Sustainable finance challenges	7	32
Cultural and social norms (added at endline)	6	27
Design		
Challenges implementing SP graduation mechanisms	4	18
Operations		
Technological barriers	2	9
Capacity		
Government capacity gaps - SP systems	9	41
Coordination		
Actor coordination challenges	5	23
Fragility		
Instability and fragility	7	32
Migration / displacement of people (added at endline)	4	18
Funding (added at endline)		
Changing donor landscape	4	18
Total	22	100

Source: Integrity (2026). Analysis of survey responses, question D10. Two additional categories were included in the endline analysis. While the survey replicated the midline, these categories emerged from respondents' open-ended responses, where a sufficient number of participants independently identified these issues as barriers to change. They were therefore included as distinct categories in the analysis.

Interrelated political and financing challenges were repeatedly identified as a key constraint.

Governments were reportedly unwilling to prioritise SP given overall fiscal challenges and competing demands on the national budget. One respondent noted caution in expanding social assistance as it is seen as hard to reverse once implemented. There was a degree of scepticism by government actors over donor motives. These were often perceived to be driven by a desire for an “off ramp” for humanitarian assistance in a climate of diminishing international aid. BASIC was seen to have limited potential influence: *“We weren’t reaching into the diplomatic world or the business world or elements of government beyond ministries of social protection, for example ministries of finance. These remain somewhat beyond the scope of BASIC”*.

Poor coordination emerged as a continuing challenge. Deep-seated incentives were seen by FCDO and UN respondents to favour continuing fragmentation and duplication. Critically, respondents noted a reluctance among international actors to channel funding through national systems: *“The cynical view is that international programmes are sustaining their own jobs and funding and don’t genuinely look to transition”*. As noted in EQ3, BASIC has contributed meaningfully to enhanced coordination at both technical and donor levels, but this coordination challenge is far from resolved.

Perhaps the most critical constraints to impact are the intrinsic contextual challenges of FCAS settings. There are political limits to donors working with states who may be parties to ongoing conflicts. In many of the most food-insecure FCAS countries (including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Sudan and the Sahel), this severely curtailed direct cooperation with national institutions and SP systems. Any BASIC contribution in these settings required a tangential approach, such as strengthening humanitarian delivery channels, or a longer-term perspective.

SP capacities in FCAS are limited and systems are minimal (such as in DRC or South Sudan) or fragile (such as in Yemen). System capacity often needs to be built before any convergence with humanitarian systems can be realised. In these situations, BASIC is best suited to advocating for investment rather than capacity building at scale itself.

A comparison with the assumptions underpinning the ToC suggests that, at best, the assumptions linking outcomes to impact only partially hold (Table 4.18). As argued above, conflict-related constraints have limited or prevented physical, institutional and political access. Finding 22 on unexpected effects pointed to the limitations of using a humanitarian entry point. While not proven by the evidence, several stakeholders questioned whether the efficiency gains of consolidating systems outweighed the resilience gains of intentional layers of redundancy. Finding 21 confirmed that there is little or no evidence that stakeholders are willing to finance increased funding.

Table 4.18: Strength of assumptions associated with achievement of ToC outcomes and impacts

Level		Strength of evidence
Linking outcomes to impact		Conflict and security do not prevent country-level research, TA, or capacity-building support, or subsequent implementation of plans.
		Humanitarian assistance is an appropriate entry point for building a social assistance system.
		The benefits of reduced fragmentation in assistance outweigh the benefits of maintaining intentional overlaps and redundancies that may be desirable in FCAS.
		Stakeholders are willing to contribute potentially increased levels of funding to support the establishment of social assistance systems.

 Partial evidence
  Limited or no evidence

N.B. Strength of the evidence for ToC assumptions.

4.4.3 EQ4.3 What has been the impact of BASIC and its workstreams on policy, programme and system change globally (including the legacy impact of SPACE)?

Strength of evidence:

Medium



Finding 24:

BASIC has contributed meaningfully to the global dialogue on SP and crisis response. Its influence on both agency-specific and collective narratives has plausibly helped sustain political commitment and supported downstream country-level impacts.

The proportion of BASIC TA global-level assignments, compared to country-level assignments, has increased over the programme period. Global assignments constitute the majority of assignments conducted in 2025 (Figure 4.7). Lead users of these global assignments included FCDO central teams, UN agencies and the World Bank, SPIAC-B and other donors, and internal knowledge management among BASIC workstreams (Figure 4.8). BASIC Research also drew together its research findings into 28 globally focused synthesis papers published between 2021–2025.

Figure 4.8: BASIC TA global vs. country-specific assignments per year and lead user

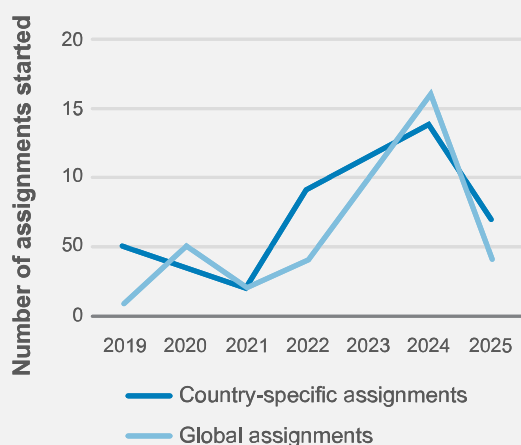
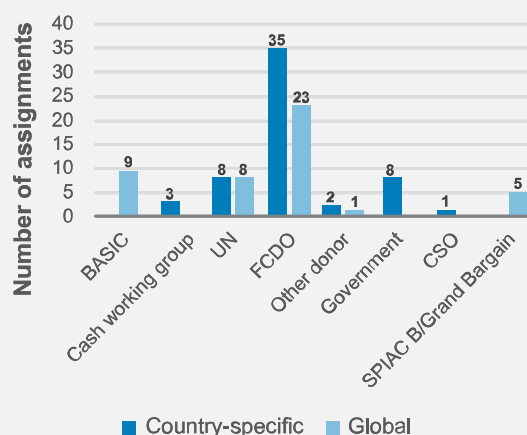


Figure 4.9: Lead users of global assignments country vs. global



Source: Adapted from STAAR Q2 Report FY25-26 Annex A Assignment Information, last updated in September 2025. N.B. filtered to remove GSP and UHRC assignments. Multi-coding of assignments to users was permitted. Excludes assignments with non-stated start years or lead users, or recorded with procurement or scoping statuses.

At global level, a key impact of BASIC was seen to be maintaining the political momentum behind using SP approaches. For example, the role of the World Bank is critical to sustaining many of the nascent social assistance programmes in FCAS settings. BASIC was seen as providing critical inputs to the debate on the World Bank's role in FCAS. The HLP was widely viewed as a potentially major influence on the direction of SP, with the recommendations charting a pathway for the longer term. However, it is clearly far too early to determine the impact.

Several international agencies credited BASIC with supporting the development of internal strategies on the use of SP approaches in crises, including the integration of gender, inclusion, and climate change considerations. For example, a guidance note on gender-transformative SP in crisis contexts

was produced in partnership with GIZ.⁶¹ STAAR's work on addressing barriers to accessing climate financing for SP systems has shaped the approaches adopted by both FAO and the Task Force on Linking Adaptive Financing, established by BMZ⁶².

The survey conducted as part of the endline data collection indicated a clear perception that major agents of change at country level are international agencies, with BASIC credited with a relatively smaller direct role (Table 4.19). This corresponded with the evidence from the case studies which highlighted the role of other agencies on change at the country level. The evaluation gathered limited evidence on the extent to which global agency-level influence translated into strengthened crisis assistance at country level. While survey interviews suggested a positive contribution, extrapolating this finding assumes that the pathway from global level to national programme design within these organisations is strong, and in practice some of these agencies are quite decentralised.

Table 4.19: Top three actors in-country which made significant contributions to SP changes?

Actor responsible for change (count in top 3 rank)	N	%
Multilateral/UN agencies	16	89
Local or country governments	12	67
Other donors	10	56
CSOs/civil society	5	28
Other FCDO teams or programmes	5	28
Other	2	11
BASIC	2	11
Academic or policy researchers	1	6
Private sector	0	0
Financial institutions	0	0
Total	18	100

Source: Integrity (2026). Analysis of survey responses, question D9.

4.5 EQ5. Efficiency

This section presents endline findings on BASIC's efficiency, assessing whether programme resources were used well and represented good value for money. Since this is an endline evaluation, there is an emphasis on the cost-effectiveness dimension of VfM and to distil conclusions on the extent to which the programme delivered against the value proposition of the BC (EQ5.1). EQ5.2 considers the extent to which the programme was managed appropriately, taking VfM considerations into account. Finally, EQ5.3 considers the quality and timeliness of BASIC's delivery.

⁶¹ Annex C STAAR Stories of change, pp. 2, 5; STAAR QPR Jan-March 2024, p. 25.

⁶² Annex C STAAR Stories of Change-April-June 2025, p. 2; STAAR QPR July to September 2024, page 21.

Table 4.20: EQ5 Efficiency: Key findings summary by evaluation phase

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
5.1 BASIC VfM	BASIC offers good economy through competitive procurement mechanisms and cost containment. The launch of SPACE and request responses were highly efficient. Evidence on effectiveness is limited at this stage. Delayed procurement of Research impacted on efficiency. The new contracting arrangement for STAAR is deemed likely to improve procurement for the TA workstream.	There could be a deterioration in BASIC's VfM proposition at midline if any budget cuts compromise the appropriateness of Research's spend on inception phase deliverables. Efficiency of both workstreams was affected by protracted inception phases slowing the pace of delivery, necessitating a significant scale up of delivery in the remaining years. Approval processes for deliverables and contract amendments were similarly inefficient. There is insufficient data to report on cost effectiveness.	BASIC was good value for money, in terms of economy, efficiency and equity dimensions and in terms of effectiveness, the programme contributed meaningfully to outcomes. Overall, the programme is considered cost effective. The relatively small investment has led to meaningful improvements in global- and country-level awareness and consideration of the importance of use of social protection approaches in crisis settings.
5.2 Management to deliver VfM	BASIC'S management takes VfM considerations into account. VfM is considered in decision making and risk management processes are fit for purpose. However, FCDO management capacity was a challenge due to resource constraints and staff turnover.	Funding uncertainty, as well as lack of clarity on the end dates for BASIC's workstreams has led to challenges in the management of VfM considerations. While management structures for both workstreams are in place, leadership and management arrangements have been affected by FCDO staff turnover. VfM was considered in decision making, although some changes may negatively affect VfM.	Overall, both components ensured VfM considerations were taken into account in the management of their respective programmes of work. While BASIC Research had an overall good performance in forecasting use of its resources, STAAR suffered from high forecast variances, due in part to the on-demand nature of the facility and differences in forecasting processes. The administration and management burden on FCDO, due in particular to the design and management of the STAAR facility, remained an issue throughout the lifetime of BASIC.
5.3 Timeliness of delivery	COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of outputs, although TAS and SPACE were viewed as highly responsive. The transition of Research into implementation carried with it the expectation of timely response to user needs. The new STAAR contracting mechanism bodes well for timely delivery.	While both workstreams sought to progress delivery to the extent possible during their protracted inception phases, the slow progression into implementation by both, alongside funding uncertainty, impacted negatively on the pace of delivery and timely response to potential users of the service.	The timelines for the delivery of BASIC shifted over time. It was designed as a five-year programme but was delivered over a seven-year period. Slow spend and delayed delivery in the early years was remedied in the later years of the programme by accelerated delivery. While the quality of outputs was rated good overall, there were some concerns about the policy relevance of some of BASIC Research's outputs.

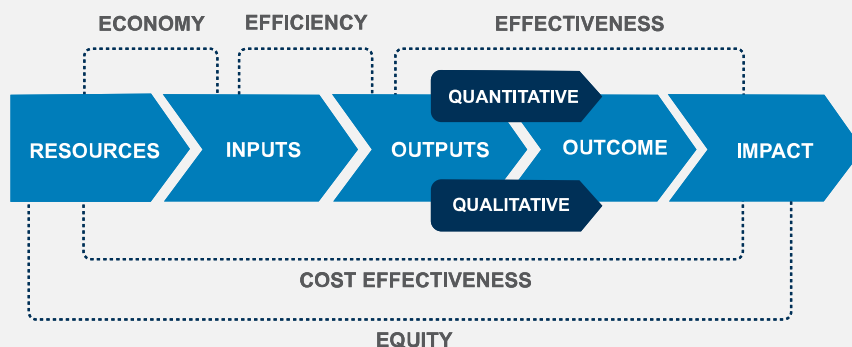
4.5.1 EQ5.1: Do BASIC and its workstreams and different types of intervention represent good value for money in terms of the FCDO 5Es?

Strength of evidence:

High

In measuring VfM, the BASIC evaluation team applies the 5Es approach, shown below in **Figure 4.9**. This approach involves measurement of VfM according to an assessment of programme economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and cost effectiveness⁶³. The remainder of this section presents evidence against the five criteria.

| Figure 4.10: The 5E value for money framework⁶⁴



Economy and Efficiency



Finding 25:

Both STAAR and BASIC Research has performed well against their menu of economy indicators.

STAAR offered economy through managing administrative and assignment costs despite some level of funding uncertainty. The recent annual review of BASIC (2024/25) reported that for the period from October 2024 to September 2025, STAAR's administrative costs were 13% of programme spend. This aligns with BASIC Research's forecast spend on administration over total programme costs (13.2%). STAAR succeeded in delivering assignments within agreed budgets and largely within the parameters of set fee caps. The granting of time extensions in February 2024 to March 2025, and then a nine-month no-cost extension to STAAR until December 2025, were warranted due to underspend in earlier years.^{65, [66]} The TA Facility, over its lifetime, experienced some funding uncertainty which impacted on VfM.⁶⁶

BASIC Research ensured good economy as its contract is a drawdown from the International Multi-Disciplinary Framework. Fee rates are negotiated at a competitive rate as part of the framework, and no profit is included in day rates or the total contract. BASIC Research's commitment to employing national consultants for their activities is demonstrated by data showing that over a quarter of total consultant days used on research were utilised by national consultants. STAAR also reported a growing use of national consultants to deliver country-focused assignments.⁶⁷ BASIC Research tracks survey costs. Evidence indicates that 12 surveys were delivered during the reporting period: three in Ethiopia, two in each of Niger and Yemen, and one in each of KRI, Lebanon, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan. The surveys conducted in Somalia, KRI and Lebanon were significantly more expensive than surveys conducted in other locations. In comparison to the qualitative survey in Niger,

⁶³ OPM (2023). Assessing Value for Money. Available [here](#). Date accessed: 10/02/26.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ KIIs.

⁶⁶ STAAR's QPR January-March 2025.

⁶⁷ STAAR QPR July-September 2025 reported that 56% of days had been worked by national staff and 62% of country-focused consultant days were delivered by national staff.

the qualitative survey in Somalia was over four times more expensive. While conflict and fragility are likely to be key cost drivers for surveys due to extra security costs, it is not always a differentiator since all the survey locations are considered to be FCAS contexts. Economies of scale do appear to be a key cost driver for surveys, as the larger surveys tend to have lower cost-size ratio.


Finding 26:

Overall, the TA facility has performed well in terms of efficient delivery. BASIC Research's delivery has been efficient in the closing phase of the programme, making up for delays in the early phase.

Over its life, STAAR had high user satisfaction scores. Repeat use of the TA facility increased, demonstrating user satisfaction with the efficiency of the delivery of support.⁶⁸ STAAR reported that the sequencing and layering of assignments contributed to efficiency, citing examples of this approach in Sudan and Zambia.⁶⁹ The STAAR supplier provided data to the endline evaluation team which demonstrated the cost efficiency of layering support via multiple assignments versus the cost of engaging a principal-level adviser for the whole period. Citing cost data for four assignments delivered in Ethiopia, the total cost of STAAR support amounted to £256,639, compared with a cost of £465,797 had a single adviser been mobilised for a 30-month period.

The majority of key informants interviewed for the endline evaluation reported that the facility had been impressive in terms of the timeliness of its response to requests. A score of 3/5 or “sufficiently timely” was assigned by most (93 or 94%) users of the STAAR facility.⁷⁰ However, some respondents noted that although STAAR was promoted as a rapid drawdown facility, it could not always move as such since it was sometimes difficult to find experts quickly and the approval process was arduous. Another interviewee reported that their attempts to access support from STAAR were abandoned due to the high transaction costs of the process.

There has been a steady increase in the number of countries supported, and the TA facility has met or exceeded targets concerning the number of countries supported throughout its life. To date, STAAR and its predecessors have engaged in 57 countries,^[68] performing well in the expansion of its geographical footprint over time. The expansion from 10 countries supported in 2019 to 32 in 2020 was largely due to SPACE, which supported an additional 23 countries.

There was consensus across most KIIs that the research produced by BASIC Research was of high quality, although some interviewees questioned the policy relevance of some research outputs and the extent to which the proposed recommendations were actionable. There has been a considerable acceleration in the pace of research delivery since midline, demonstrating efficiency in the closing phase of the programme, with BASIC Research scoring A or A+ in BASIC FCDO annual review (AR) output scores during that period. However, delays to the inception period, funding uncertainties and COVID-19 (2020–2022) led to delays in outputs being produced and contributed to the programme achieving output scores of B in ARs during the early years of programme delivery.

Effectiveness and equity

Finding 27:

The effectiveness of the BASIC programme's work is most evident in relation to the strengthening of country plans, policies, programmes and systems, and improving the

⁶⁸ 65% of STAAR (BASIC) users have accessed the support more than once. STAAR QPR July–September 2025.

⁶⁹ STAAR QPR April–June 2025.

⁷⁰ Data analysed from STAAR QPRs April–June 2024, July–September 2024, October–December 2024.

coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives. STAAR and BASIC Research have performed well in terms of equity considerations.

STAAR made a strong contribution to a range of outcome-level results in case study countries (as discussed in EQ3). BASIC Research also contributed to outcomes, such as new or strengthened country plans, policies, programmes and systems, and made a limited contribution to the outcome of evidence being used by governments, donors and agencies to inform policies and practice in the case study countries and additional case study countries.

While STAAR has engaged in less GESI-focused work than BASIC Research, STAAR assignments have nonetheless advanced gender-responsive and inclusive SP debates, including disability inclusion.⁷¹ BASIC Research measures the relevance of research to populations who are severely vulnerable in crises through output indicator 1.3 of its logframe: “Number of operational and policy recommendations specifically about gender, age, disability and intersecting vulnerabilities, balanced across critical global themes and focus countries, which are relevant, useful and accessible”. While the milestone specified in the most recently available quarterly progress review⁷² is to have 22 recommendations, BASIC Research has to date recorded 50 recommendations on a range of different projects.

Cost effectiveness



Finding 28:

From a programme-level perspective, it is plausible to conclude, given the global influence and cost of BASIC in comparison with spend on SP, that the programme investment was justifiable.

Cost effectiveness analysis is about assessing whether the outcomes of the programme justify the resources used or investment made. The core VfM proposition for BASIC in the programme’s BC was based on the programme reducing the cost of delivery of social assistance in crises through use of cash and better coordination of assistance. The BC indicated that humanitarian cash transfers are more effective in addressing people’s needs.⁷³ The return on investment was expected to be substantial: the programme would support better assistance in crises for at least 3.3 million people and generate savings of £43.5 million over its duration.

BASIC constitutes a tiny fraction of the overall spend on SP, indicating that even if the programme affected a small number of changes, it would still be justifiable from a cost-effectiveness standpoint. Overall, at a sectoral level, as of April 2025, the World Bank alone provided \$29.5 billion in financing, including \$15.5 billion through IDA, to respond to the growing demand for SP solutions amid overlapping global crises.⁷⁴ BASIC’s overall cost was £21.469 million (as of 16/1/2026).

The BASIC programme was delivered during a period when the spend on SP during the COVID-19 pandemic expanded considerably. This offered it an opportunity to exploit the growing interest in SP and growth in funding. More recently, with aid cuts, there has been a reverse shift towards de-prioritisation of social assistance. In this context, by continuing to advocate strongly for SP in crisis settings, BASIC ensured that the case for the importance of SP in crisis settings continued to be made and warned against spending reductions. Engaging with global forums, such as the HLP,

⁷¹ Some examples include the scoping review on disability-inclusive SP for climate action in rural areas and the Ethiopia learning session focused on disability inclusion in programming in Tigray.

⁷² BASIC Research QPR Q2 FY2025-2026.

⁷³ Business Case for Better Assistance in Crisis Programme, paragraph 27, page 7.

⁷⁴ State of Social Protection Report 2025: The 2-Billion-Person Challenge, World Bank, April 2025, [here](#).

gave BASIC an opportunity to deliver significant value by influencing many key global actors and large-scale humanitarian and SP programmes at minimum cost, demonstrating strong cost effectiveness.



Finding 29:

BASIC has succeeded in generating some of the programme's expected benefits set out in its BC. Some reductions in the cost of delivery of social assistance – mainly from advocacy for the use of cash and improved coordination of assistance – are likely to have resulted from BASIC's work.

The evaluation team analysed the results of the programme at the outcome and impact levels to “test” the VfM proposition of the programme. This involved assessing whether the potential benefits of the programme, set out in the BC⁷⁵ and outlined in Box 4.4, were realised. As the data available is qualitative, it was not feasible to quantify the financial value of the benefits that resulted from the programme.

| Box 4.4: Potential benefits resulting from an increased use of SP approaches in crises

1. Reduced cost of delivering social assistance in crises by generating savings from the use of cash to address needs (instead of vouchers or in-kind assistance) and delivering assistance in a less fragmented way.
2. Greater impact for people affected by crises by producing better outcomes at the same cost.
3. Reduced humanitarian needs by responding earlier and investing in the resilience of households to manage shocks through shock-responsive SP systems.
4. Ability to leverage domestic and development funding to respond to crises, broadening the sources of funding in crises beyond humanitarian support.

Reduced cost of delivering social assistance in crisis settings

Both BASIC Research and TA have advocated for the use of cash in delivery of Research or TA assignments. However, some interviewees disagreed that increasing the use of cash was BASIC/STAAR's intention, noting that the programme's ambition was to improve the effectiveness of delivery and transition humanitarian cash to SP approaches.

BASIC Research conducted research on the digitalisation of assistance (for example in Nigeria) and STAAR has also supported the provision of cash to beneficiaries, for example to people with disabilities in Ethiopia. A STAAR-embedded adviser in Ethiopia provided advice on how UNICEF Ethiopia could move from cash to digital wallets, although the institution has not yet made this transition. The BASIC TA facility was commissioned by FCDO Somalia to support its approach to cash programming under the new Somalia Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Building Programme, with the output – Somalia Cash Strategy – directly informing design and implementation and the use of cash by the programme. While the case for using cash remains strong at the end of the programme, and the programme has been a powerful advocate for its use, cash is not always the preferred modality for beneficiaries everywhere – for example in Northern Nigeria due to high price inflation.

STAAR has made an important contribution to strengthening coordination between humanitarian and SP actors by providing embedded advisers to Cash Working Groups or FCDO posts, for example in Nigeria and Ethiopia. While some of these coordination improvements faded

⁷⁵ BASIC Programme Business Case, paragraph 133, page 33.

away when the advisers were no longer in post, in some instances, such as Yemen, the improvements may continue. The Donor Coordination Platform set up with STAAR assistance will potentially be supported by ECHO funding for a secretariat to the platform. Interestingly, interviewees for the Yemen country case study reported that reduced donor funding has enhanced incentives for coordination.

Greater impact for people affected by crises, by producing better outcomes at same cost

A number of examples of STAAR's work illustrate how it benefited people affected by crises, although the cost implications of these improvements were not discernible. STAAR's work in Ethiopia on identifying children with disabilities and improving disability inclusion have been impactful, resulting in the provision of support to a group that was previously not adequately served and leading to better outcomes for this group. STAAR's work in Ethiopia has been influential in terms of PSNP 6 design, with the Programme Appraisal document making reference to conflict sensitivity and conflict shocks. When PSNP6 is rolled out, this should be impactful for people affected by crises. The needs assessment support provided by STAAR which fed into the Nigeria NCVA policy, which was approved in 2025, shaped the policy by providing a clear direction on targeting and transfer values, ensuring that it was anchored in real household needs.

Reduced humanitarian needs as a result of an earlier response and investing in household resilience.

There is no evidence to assess the benefits generated by BASIC's work which have resulted in reduced humanitarian needs.

Leverage domestic and development funding to respond to crises

STAAR has contributed to the development of proposals and BCs to attract funding to support delivery of social assistance in crisis settings. Some examples are set out below:

- South Sudan: STAAR helped formulate a proposal concerning the second phase of development of a social registry to apply to a World Bank multi-donor trust fund. Funding of \$400,000 was secured in August 2024.
- STAAR support in Jordan directly influenced the design of high-value investments: most notably the £95 million Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience in Jordan (2022–2027), which is UK-funded.
- BASIC Research's work in Nigeria generated data which was used by the Borno State government in the aftermath of the September 2024 flooding following the collapse of the Alau Dam. The evidence informed the decision to increase the Borno State budget for 2025 by 82.8% to support reconstruction, small businesses and victim assistance.



Finding 30:

STAAR succeeded in delivering outcome-level change at relatively low cost through targeted, small "bets" with high impact. In contrast, research investments were more expensive and had mixed results, with their usefulness often depending on political willingness and external factors.

To test the correlation between spend and results, the endline evaluation team explored the costs of a number of STAAR-supported outcome-level changes in case study and additional evidence countries. The evidence demonstrates that relatively small investments can lead to important and useful results.

- STAAR's assignment provided support to UNICEF and the Cash Working Group in Ethiopia. At a cost of almost £220,000, the investment delivered improvements to human and institutional capability in UNICEF, input into the Programme Appraisal Document for PSNP6 and improved coordination between humanitarian and SP actors in Ethiopia.

- Similarly, the input which fed into the now-approved National Cash and Voucher Assistance (NCVA) policy in Nigeria cost the TA facility less than £40,000 (although some updating of this work was done by the UNICEF embedded adviser, requiring an additional modest cost).
- In Yemen, the improvements to donor coordination started by STAAR required a modest £146,000 budget.
- Support to the design of the FCDO Humanitarian Programme BC cost slightly less than £38,000, yet yielded significant value to FCDO's programming in Jordan, influencing, for example, a £95 million programme.

BASIC Research's investments by country show a mixed picture in terms of correlation between results and investment. For example:

- BASIC Research's work in Ethiopia cost almost £600,000, with the cost reflecting the financing of large surveys in three Ethiopian regions. The research was rated as high-quality and engaged stakeholders including the Government of Ethiopia, the World Bank, and FCDO. However, its use - particularly in informing the design of PSNP6 - was limited due to misalignment between the findings and the government's preferred approach, especially regarding livelihood strategies within social protection
- BASIC Research's work in Lebanon (which cost £343,000) has supported the development of local research capacity, leading to the use of BASIC Research methodologies by an NGO-led research and learning network conducting research on beneficiaries' experience, targeting, grievance and redress mechanisms. Moreover, FCDO used the findings from BASIC Research to re-signal UK prioritisation of systems-oriented SP after a period dominated by humanitarian programmes. Interviewees indicated that the research informed EU debate on SP financing and reform.
- BASIC Research's work in Nigeria generated multiple research outputs. These covered a range of topics from targeting to digital rights and inclusion, as well as unpacking social assistance in conflict settings. The overall spend on research in Nigeria was £366,000. Interviewees reported that evidence generated by BASIC Research was used to inform an increase in Borno State's budget to support victim assistance and reconstruction following the collapse of the Alau Dam. In Yemen, BASIC Research's work cost £231,000 overall. SFD managers reported that the research was used to support the case for continued donor funding of national institutions.

4.5.2 EQ5.2 Is BASIC managed to ensure delivery of VfM throughout the programme cycle (design, procurement, delivery and close of interventions)?

Strength of evidence:

High

The endline review team, as at midline, used a structured scorecard to assess the extent to which the programme was managed to ensure delivery of VfM throughout the programme cycle. The findings from this assessment are contained in the VfM scorecard in Appendix B.



Finding 31:

Overall, STAAR was managed to deliver VfM, although there was a high administrative and management burden on FCDO throughout the facility's lifetime.

STAAR and BASIC Research report quarterly to FCDO on VfM metrics (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity). STAAR has a strong VfM framework, but its approach to cost-effectiveness – focused on cost per output - offers limited value for decision-making. Reporting on other VfM areas was assessed as good overall and shows VfM is actively considered in management

VfM was one of the criteria considered in the selection of assignments to be supported. The selection of consultants to resource assignments was initially through a mini-competition between the lead supplier and their consortium partners. However, the competitive bidding process for all assignments presented challenges for consortium partners and, as a result, the sourcing route was adapted to also include the matching of assignments to the most suitable and qualified consortium member. While this approach may have been positive from an efficiency point of view, it may have impacted on economy, although the facility did use a rate card agreed with FCDO which, in almost all cases, was adhered to in budgeting assignments.

Risk management was generally effective across the TA facility's lifecycle. However, recurring issues - forecast variance, invoicing quality and accuracy, and funding uncertainty - created VfM implications and a sustained management burden for FCDO, as noted by multiple interviewees. High forecast variance stemmed largely from the facility's on-demand nature and differing forecasting approaches: FCDO forecasted based on expected spend, while STAAR forecasted based on actual payments, leading to misalignment. The 2025 AR report also attributes the administrative burden to staff turnover in key FCDO roles, reduced STAAR technical leadership, aspects of the facility's design, and differing expectations around financial management. Funding uncertainty further compounded challenges, resulting in repeated work planning cycles for the supplier, with around six iterations of workplans that were never implemented.⁷⁶

To guide effective delivery, STAAR used its component-level ToC, although it assessed its contributions to only two of the BASIC programme's overarching outcomes (capability and capacity, and new and strengthened plans, programmes, etc.).



Finding 32:

BASIC Research's management of VfM was rated good overall, with high forecast accuracy except in the first year of the programme.

Overall, BASIC Research had good systems in place to track and report on VfM, with progress reported regularly to FCDO. There was also evidence of BASIC Research using its ToC to track pathways of outputs to outcomes, as well as good consideration of risks during the implementation of the research programme.

BASIC Research disaggregated the budget for individual research projects and closely monitored spend against workplans with relevant Project Leads. Project Leads reported against project workplans on a quarterly basis, and the Leadership Team provided support when there were delays or delivery challenges. As part of the programme's Payment by Results (PBR) indicators, BASIC Research provided FCDO with quarterly and annual projections of spend, with a forecast variance tolerance of 5%. With the exception of year one of the programme - where the research component underspent by approximately 21% - it has stayed within the 5% target. Overall, FCDO reported being satisfied with BASIC Research's budget and forecast management.

⁷⁶ KII

Figure 4.11: BASIC Research forecasts vs. actual spend



Source: IDS financial reporting, 2025. N.B. Actuals for Q2 Year 4 have not been included.

4.5.3 EQ5.3: Is BASIC responding to demand and needs in a timely way and in line with user expectations?

Strength of evidence:

High



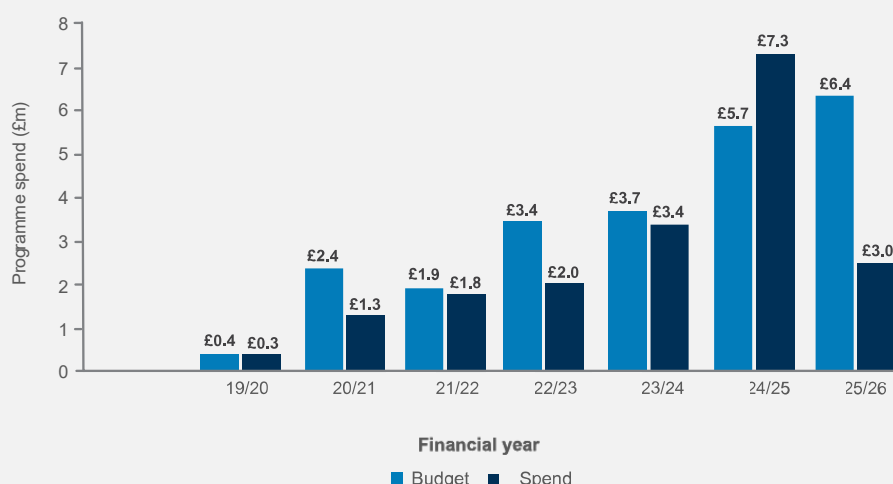
Finding 33:

The timelines for delivery of BASIC have shifted over time. It was designed as a five-year programme but was extended to seven years and three months. Both BASIC Research and STAAR closed in December 2025.

The spend versus budget profile of BASIC and its components was set out on the programme's page in DevTracker and is shown in Figure 4.12. The trajectory of programme spend illustrates how delays in the programme's early years have led to an increase in spend in its closing phase. The early delays to BASIC Research were due mainly to the protracted inception phase for the research component. The delivery of both components was also impacted by funding uncertainty and delays in the approvals of contract addenda due to administrative processes. The BC planned that the programme would be delivered over a five-year period, but instead it was delivered over seven years and three months⁷⁷. The time extension to the programme and its components was appropriate to accommodate the spread of delivery over a longer period, a factor in time for uptake and dissemination during the closing phase.

⁷⁷ In February 2024, FCDO granted the STAAR facility a no-cost time extension to March 2025. This was subsequently extended again to December 2025, bringing it into line with the timeline for the BASIC Research component.

Figure 4.12: Trajectory of programme spend against budget



Source: DevTracker

Both components produced a significant increase in activity during the closing phase of the programme, meeting expectations in the most recent annual review (with a score of A in 2025). STAAR was successful in accelerating delivery in FY 2024/25 in response to the previous year's underspend. While the number of assignments delivered by STAAR (BASIC) in 2023/24 was 64, in 2025/26 this number increased to 92 in Q1 and 95 in Q2, showing a significant increase in delivery activity.⁷⁸ AR 2025 noted that *"it can take longer than expected to build both demand for, and trust in, technical expertise services amongst targeted stakeholders, thereby backloading activity in the later years of the programme"*. As noted above, BASIC Research also considerably accelerated the pace of output delivery during the closing phase of the programme.



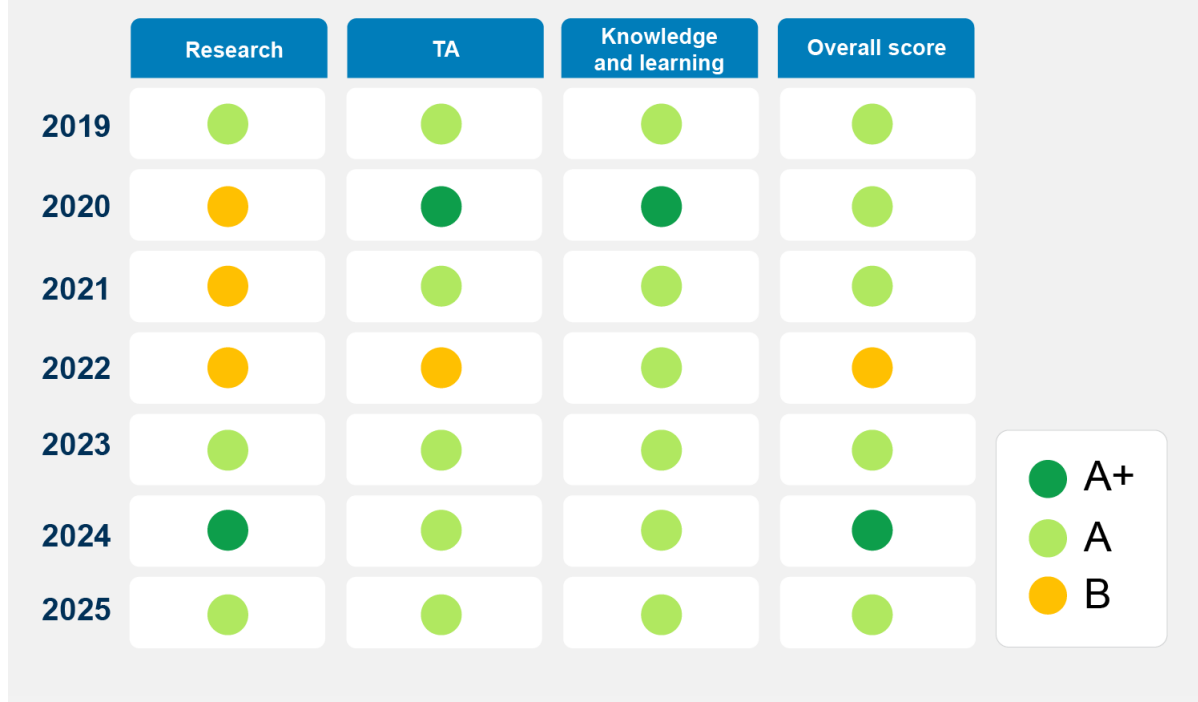
Finding 34:

Overall, STAAR performance was satisfactory, meeting expectations on quality and timeliness of delivery. BASIC Research experienced delays in the early years, but delivery accelerated toward the end, resulting in many publications being produced close to or after the programme's completion.

The annual review scores for the programme and its components are shown in Figure 4.13 below. The scores for STAAR indicate that the delivery performance over time has met expectations in most years. The exception was 2022, with the delayed implementation of the new TA facility due to an extended inception phase to accommodate more discussion on plans and the approach to core versus assignment costs. The successful scale-up of BASIC TAS and the quick establishment of SPACE to maximise responsiveness and meet demand resulted in an output score of A+ for the TA Facility in 2020, with the facility's performance exceeding expectations. The annual review scores for BASIC Research suffered in the early years of the programme. This was because of delayed implementation due to a protracted inception phase and some COVID-19-related delays disrupting in-country research plans and data collection. While BASIC Research accelerated the pace of delivery in the closing phase of the programme, this did mean that a large number of outputs (35+) were published in the October to December 2025 period with publishing continuing after the end of the contract. This timeline for publications limited the scope for uptake and dissemination work focused on these outputs and publications.

⁷⁸ STAAR QPR July-September 2025.

Figure 4.13: Annual review scores of BASIC and its components 2019–2025



Source: BASIC annual reviews 2019–2025

As noted above under Finding 26, user satisfaction scores for STAAR indicate a very high level of satisfaction by facility users over time.⁷⁹ No metric was used to systematically track the level of satisfaction of BASIC Research users, although this issue had been raised on a number of occasions in discussions between FCDO and the supplier. While users interviewed for this endline evaluation were consistent in praising the high quality of the research, there were some dissenting views on its usefulness due to its policy and programme relevance.

4.6 EQ6. Sustainability

This section presents endline evaluation findings on the sustainability of BASIC. We evaluated sustainability using the OECD-DAC definition. Under this framework, sustainability refers to the extent to which an intervention's net benefits are likely to continue after it ends. BASIC's ToC seeks to achieve sustainability of outcomes through creating lasting improvements in programme performance, data and information systems, financing, and the institutional capacities and partnerships that support effective SP systems. To evaluate sustainability as part of this endline evaluation, we have considered a number of dimensions of sustainability which are set out in Box 4.5 below.⁸⁰ We used these criteria to assess the likely sustainability of BASIC's contribution to ToC outcomes and identify the barriers and enablers of sustainable change using global- and country-level evidence. A summary of sustainability findings across all evaluation phases is presented in Table 4.21.

⁷⁹ While all users reported positive feedback on the service in 2019, scores of 3 or higher were reported by 100% of users in the 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 Annual Review Reports for BASIC and STAAR. The Annual Review Reports for 2024 and 2025 report on the percentage of users scoring 4 or higher in terms of user satisfaction, with scores of 93% reported in 2024 and 85% in 2025, slightly lower than the 90% target (due to lower user scores for two assignments).

⁸⁰ Itad (2025). How can programme exit strategies contribute to sustaining climate resilience and prosperity outcomes in coastal communities?; Brown, C. and Shorten, T. (2021). Common elements of good practice for sustainability, The Fleming Fund, London, UK.

Box 4.5: Key dimensions of sustainability

- **Local participation and ownership** – the extent that outputs are embedded in national systems.
- **Capacity building** – technical and managerial capacities are in place at institutional and individual levels and systems for knowledge retention are operational.
- **Integration** – outputs are integrated into governments, donors, agencies, systems, policies and plans.
- **Financial sustainability** – resources are committed, institutional home identified.
- **Exit or handover strategy** – handover processes agreed, e.g., output sharing processes.

Table 4.21: EQ6 Sustainability: Key findings summary by evaluation phase

EQ	Baseline findings	Midline findings	Endline update
6.1 Foundations for system change	There are signs that TAS effects on policy, programmes, and systems will be sustained. Globally, SPACE likely acted as a catalyst for shaping COVID-19 responses across multiple donors. While evidence of BASIC's influence on institutional capability is still limited, the combination of BC development and leveraged donor funding improves prospects for sustainability.	Implementation delays compromised our ability to evaluate sustainability. That said, we found evidence of BASIC catalysing policy, programme and system change in country due to earlier assignments supported by TAS. While SPACE helped shape multiple pandemic responses, the sustainability of its products is somewhat questionable, due to perceptions of their COVID-19 specificity.	BASIC has laid catalytic foundations for policy and system change, with some results more likely to be sustained than others. The momentum BASIC TA and BASIC Research helped build around SP in crisis settings is at risk due in particular to funding cuts.
6.2 Factors influencing sustainable change	Multiple internal and external factors may affect the sustainability of BASIC output. At baseline, the assessment of sustainability is limited, due to the early stage of programme delivery. Delivery modalities, FCDO country office engagement, and active involvement of partner governments are some of the factors likely to drive the sustainability of BASIC TA.	Limited resources and the global economic downturn are reducing partner governments' SP investment and reform appetite and limiting BASIC's influence. Sustainability is also challenged by declining donor support, weak SP systems, and the time needed for system change. Elements of BASIC's model, such as embedded advisers, donor engagement, and renewed in-country travel, have enabled more sustained change.	At endline, key enablers of sustainability included continuity through national consultants and partners, ongoing access to programme outputs, the retention of STAAR's thinking within sector institutions, and IDS's continued role in the SP research space. However, ODA cuts, the humanitarian reset, and weak political will were identified as major risks to sustaining BASIC outcomes.

4.6.1 EQ6.1 What is the likelihood that foundations for catalytic change or policy, programme and system changes at global or at country levels have been laid as a result of BASIC support?
Strength of evidence:
High

ToC outcome: *Improved human institutional capability and capacity.*



Finding 35:

Embedding BASIC's support within core institutions and training systems is key to sustaining the capacity and capability gains it has generated, but these gains remain vulnerable to institutional shifts driven by aid cuts.

The sustainability of BASIC's contribution to this outcome is assessed as likely. KIIs with users of the BASIC support suggested that capacity had been improved as a result of STAAR's provision of embedded advisers to UNICEF and FCDO, or when the users engage closely with BASIC support. The examples below demonstrate how the foundations for sustainable system change were laid, through BASIC support, via the embedding of knowledge and know-how acquired through the programme in training systems in institutions:

- The training delivered by STAAR on disability identification in Ethiopia has been incorporated into UNICEF's regular staff training programme in the country.
- The incorporation of some of BASIC Research's work in Nigeria has led to the inclusion of BASIC Research's methodologies into a training curriculum for senior civil servants (permanent secretaries and state-level officials) by Nigeria's National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS). These methodologies are designed to help equip leaders to anticipate and shape policy responses before crises escalate.

Capacity strengthening of BASIC's in-country researchers and STAAR's national consultants has the potential to lay the foundations for catalysing future changes at the country level. For example, in Yemen two field-level researchers received training and international exposure and one went on to a position in government. Box 4.6 presents an example of how BASIC Research generated sustainable research capacity in Lebanon, albeit at the individual rather than institutional level.

| Box 4.6: Example of BASIC Research capacity strengthening local researchers in Lebanon

BASIC researchers in Lebanon trained and supervised Lebanese researchers. This covered qualitative interviewing, political economy analysis and mixed methods survey design. Training covered the full research cycle, including tool design, fieldwork, coding, analysis and writing. The research produced multiple working papers, co-authored by Lebanese researchers. Several of the researchers went on to lead or co-lead new SP projects, having acquired practical experience, a publication track record, and the credibility needed to attract new research funding.

While the programme strengthened individual and institutional capacities, KIIs noted that these gains are vulnerable to staff turnover, particularly as donors and agencies undergo restructuring and cuts. In Jordan, FCDO advisers reported using BASIC inputs and analysis to enhance their capacity, with the newly acquired knowledge used to inform evidence-based discussions with the National Aid Fund and development partners when Jordan was developing its National SP Strategy. While the NIPSS example above demonstrates the potential for sustainable strengthening of the training system for senior civil servants in Nigeria, across the case study countries and additional evidence countries there was scant evidence of sustainable improvements in government capacity or capability as a result of BASIC support.



Finding 36:

Some BASIC contributions to country plans, policies, programmes and systems may

be sustainable, but longevity is uncertain due to funding and political constraints. Sustainability of evidence use and coordination, especially in FCAS, depends on political commitment, and momentum driven by the HLP.

ToC outcome: New or strengthened country plans, policies, programmes and systems designed and implemented.

This outcome area is one of the strongest in terms of BASIC's contribution to change. The likely sustainability of the support is mixed as it is highly dependent on donor financing which is under pressure in many countries. There are several examples from case study countries of how BASIC influenced country plans, programmes, programmes and policies, with a range of expectations concerning likely sustainability:

- **Ethiopia:** STAAR's work has influenced the nascent design of PSNP 6. UNICEF in Ethiopia confirmed that the Project Appraisal document for PSNP 6 included reference to conflict sensitivity and conflict shocks which, if retained in the final version by the Government of Ethiopia, would constitute a key policy change that could catalyse further changes in Ethiopia's SP system.
- **Jordan:** Support provided by both BASIC TA and SPACE fed directly into the design of FCDO programmes with high-quality advisory inputs translating into the design and implementation of new country programmes. The sustainability of the support is rated as moderate, with FCDO's programming likely to continue in a direction aligned with BASIC.
- **Lebanon:** BASIC's messages on avoiding parallel humanitarian systems and embedding crisis response within national programmes informed the design of the National Poverty Targeting Programme ("Aman") shock-responsive component as a Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) delivered mechanism, although its sustainability depends on continued donor financing.
- **Somalia:** BASIC made a meaningful contribution to SP programme design, with the Somalia Cash Strategy prepared with TAS support informing the BC for the Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Building Somalia (HARBS) Programme. However, the Somalia case study notes the absence of national legislation and absence of domestic financing as key vulnerabilities to the sustainability of SP programme design in Somalia.

ToC outcome: Evidence used by governments, donors and agencies to inform policy and practice.

This is the outcome area which the response to EQ3.3 reports as mixed in terms of overall performance by BASIC. There are some foundations for the sustainability of STAAR's work, for example the revision of the National Cash and Voucher Assistance (NCVA) policy in Nigeria. However, likely sustainability is less in relation to other results, reported in the country case studies for Yemen and Somalia.

- **Nigeria:** The STAAR support to the NCVA policy in Nigeria, approved in October 2025, is rated as a substantial change in Nigeria's SP system, with the Federal Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction citing the policy document as a "*major milestone in Nigeria's humanitarian architecture*". Although not yet implemented, plans to initiate its implementation were being rolled out in early 2026, thereby demonstrating local ownership and likely sustainability.
- **Yemen:** While BASIC Research in Yemen contributed to conceptual and strategic shifts in how SP in the country is understood, no structural reforms, legal changes or operational overhauls occurred, somewhat limiting sustainability. The rapidly changing context in Yemen, with a pause in the functioning of the SFD, limits sustainability of research and support from BASIC.

- **Somalia:** While strategic evidence generated by STAAR/SPACE was actively used by FCDO, WFP and the World Bank to steer policy dialogue and programming, sustainability is vulnerable without institutional anchoring and lack of SP legislation, as well as donor fragmentation.

ToC outcome: *Increased political commitment to use SP approaches in crises.*

Political commitment to SP is shaped by broader political, institutional and funding dynamics somewhat beyond BASIC's scope, and therefore the sustainability of changes supported by the programme are more uncertain than for other outcome areas. While there is increased institutional willingness to use national systems in crises, particularly in Lebanon and Somalia, and sustained reform dialogue in Yemen, the sustainability of these steps towards change is fragile, compromised by the absence of binding political commitments. The likelihood that Somalia's government engagement as co-chair of the HLP will lead to sustained political commitment on the use of SP approaches in crises in Somalia is compromised by its donor dependency and the absence SP legislation and domestic budgetary allocation to SP. Similarly, in South Sudan, national commitment is weak, with a failure to commit domestic resources to SP. In Nigeria, interviewees noted that currently, amid the evolution in institutional architecture and corruption scandals, increasing political commitment to SP would be a challenge.

| Box 4.7: Nigeria's SP landscape since midline

In Nigeria, since the midline evaluation of BASIC in 2023, the institutional architecture for SP has evolved, principally with the creation of the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA) under the newly named Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction. NSIPA is used to channel most federal SP expenditure in Nigeria. There have also been a number of corruption allegations in the SP space in Nigeria in recent years. Recent scandals, notably in 2024, saw the suspension of officials over alleged misappropriation of funds in social assistance programmes. The level of political commitment to SP was rated by respondents interviewed for the Nigeria case study as low, demonstrated by the absence of predictable, adequate allocation and release of funds for SP.

The HLP, co-chaired by the UK and Somalia, was identified by the World Bank as one of BASIC's most significant achievements. However, interviewees expressed concerns about the sustainability of its impact, particularly the implementation of its recommendations, given the lack of mechanisms to maintain momentum beyond its initial call to action. A meeting was scheduled for February 2026 at Wilton Park to advance the Panel's recommendations. While the HLP successfully convened global leaders, policymakers, and practitioners and promoted the use of social protection in crisis settings, its long-term impact will depend on continued political commitment to carry forward its agenda.

ToC outcome: *Greater coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives.*

BASIC's contributions to this outcome were assessed as moderate/strong under EQ3.3. This is evident from the feedback on STAAR's support to the coordination of humanitarian and SP actors in Nigeria and Ethiopia, although interviewees in both countries also reported that once the support from BASIC was withdrawn, the system reverted to its previous fragmented state. Continuity of donor

engagement and funding for coordination efforts in the aftermath of BASIC support does, however, counter the fragmentation issue. The BASIC TA/STAAR support to improve coordination in Yemen has been valuable in supporting the establishment of a donor coordination platform which may be sustained by DG ECHO, which has expressed an interest in funding a secretariat for this platform. Additional examples of improved coherence are shown in Box 4.8.

| Box 4.8: Cash assistance and SP coordination in Jordan and Lebanon

Jordan: Within FCDO programming in Jordan, a key development has been the integration of humanitarian cash assistance and SP system strengthening under the UK-funded Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience (SSERJ) programme, with reported improvements in operational coordination between humanitarian agencies.

Lebanon: Improvements in coordination and synergies between cash and SP actors in Lebanon arising, for example, from STAAR's learning, which directly informed the redesign of cash coordination arrangements, are assessed as medium in terms of likely sustainability. While coordination structures now exist, durability depends on continued funding and Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) leadership.

4.6.2 EQ6.2 What are the factors likely to hinder/support sustainable outcomes in terms of influencing global policy and influencing governments and partners?

Strength of evidence:

Moderate



Finding 37:

National consultants, researchers and partnerships were viewed as critical enablers of sustainability by both components beyond programme closure.

Both STAAR and BASIC Research delivery partners emphasised that local partnerships were key enablers of sustainability. This included engaging national consultants and researchers, developing collaborative research partnerships and enabling nationally led output delivery. Collaborative research partnerships with well-placed organisations and individuals, for example with Pasewan for the research conducted in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, were a driver of contributions to outcomes as a result of their work.

BASIC Research invested in developing the capacity of national researchers to ensure that sustainable capacity in-country was retained after the programme closed. BASIC Research has sought to support the building of global capability, specifically through the development of e-learning and communities of practice. BASIC Research findings were used in the development of a new e-learning course on SP in crisis settings, which was launched in September 2025.⁸¹

STAAR supported the TRANSFORM innovative learning package designed to build critical thinking and sustainable capacity among policymakers and practitioners to improve SP systems. The initiative is primarily funded by an Irish Aid-supported project on Accelerating the Achievement of Universal Social Protection in ILO Lusaka, with FCDO/STAAR, EU, Finland, OECD providing funding. An Outcome Harvesting survey conducted in Zambia in 2024 reported that those trained through TRANSFORM often became advocates for strong, well-financed SP systems, within

⁸¹ Draft 2025 Annual Review for the BASIC programme.

and outside of government structures, with the ripple effect strengthening national ownership and sustainability of SP systems⁸².

For STAAR, the continuity provided by national consultants' in-country presence allowed engagement to continue beyond the end of assignments. This enabled them to support the uptake and use of STAAR outputs after delivery. The 2025 BASIC Annual Review noted that “*national consultants enable continuity and sustainability by preserving institutional knowledge and expertise*”.



Finding 38:

Other factors driving sustainable use of the programme's outputs include IDS's ongoing SP research and STAAR's thinking plugged into key institutions for continuity after the support has ended. BASIC has attempted to ensure that outputs remain available after its closure, but the perceived low visibility of BASIC Research outputs threatens their sustained use.

IDS will continue to engage in SP research via its Centre for Social Protection. Its engagement and partnerships with sector stakeholders and institutions, such as Irish Aid, are likely to create opportunities for the use of BASIC Research outputs in the future. IDS also shared datasets; for example, the financing of SP dataset was shared with ODI, creating opportunities for future updating and use.

In some cases, STAAR's embedded advisers helped sustain reform efforts by providing continuity, such as in Yemen and Palestine.⁸³ However, in others, such as Nigeria and Ethiopia, progress was not maintained after their support ended, particularly in areas like coordination between humanitarian and social development actors. At the global level, STAAR engaged key institutions including the World Bank and OCHA (e.g. through the Rome Global Forum on Social Protection in Crises and the subsequent High-Level Panel), and worked with partners such as UNICEF at country level. This helped embed STAAR's approach within these organisations⁸⁴. Some interviewees also noted that consistent FCDO staffing in-country supported the continued use of BASIC's outputs after the programme ended.

BASIC programme outputs will remain accessible to the social protection community after closure. BASIC Research will host its outputs on an open-access digital repository with a search function, although users have raised concerns about how easy it is to find relevant publications. STAAR's outputs will be available via the socialprotection.org website. Overall, these arrangements are appropriate and support continued use of the programme's outputs. This is a strength, as many development programmes lose accessibility when their websites are closed after completion.

Some stakeholders questioned the policy relevance of BASIC Research outputs. While interviewees valued their quality, they noted that the policy implications were not always clear, which limited sustained use. In some case study countries (e.g. Nigeria and Ethiopia), awareness of the research was low due to limited visibility of the outputs. This low visibility was attributed by one respondent to insufficient early investment in branding, which could have raised the profile of the research. One interviewee also noted that finding outputs via internet search engines required considerable effort. Findings from the endline survey of FCDO posts are consistent with this observation: while 68% of respondents were aware of the TA facility, only 52% were aware of the Research component (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21: Survey respondent awareness of the BASIC programme and its components

Type	BASIC component	Unaware	Aware	% / N
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⁸² TRANSFORM Newsletter, December 2025, [here](#). Date accessed: 10/04/26.

⁸³ Draft 2025 Annual Review for the BASIC programme.

⁸⁴ Draft 2025 Annual Review for the BASIC programme; KILs.

%	Overall	28	72	100
	TA	32	68	100
	Research	48	52	100
N	Overall	7	18	25
	TA	8	17	25
	Research	12	13	25

Source: Integrity (2026). Analysis of survey responses, question B1.



Finding 39:

Interviewees identified ODA funding cuts, the humanitarian reset and lack of political will as key risks to the sustainability of BASIC's work.

As noted in the findings on relevance (EQ1), the funding landscape has shifted sharply since BASIC began, and interviewees repeatedly noted the sector's financial fragility and humanitarian actors' reliance on short-term funding. As SP budgets shrink, it may become harder to justify programme changes for conflict settings, and political commitments may weaken. The humanitarian reset, wider aid system restructuring, and security challenges in countries like Yemen further undermine the sustainability of BASIC's contributions. Survey analysis supported this finding: respondents saw limited government capacity as the main barrier to using SP in crises. They also highlighted weak political support, instability and fragility, finance constraints, coordination challenges, and cultural and social norms as additional obstacles.

5. Closing remarks

Based on the preceding findings, we draw six conclusions, three key lessons and make three main recommendations. Appendix A provides a mapping of the links demonstrating how the recommendations build on the findings and conclusions.

5.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1:

There has been considerable progress since the midline, with BASIC effectively and efficiently delivering a large volume of TA and Research outputs in line with plans and targets. This body of work contributed to the variable realisation of the outcomes anticipated in the BC.

The evaluation findings are clear that **BASIC has been highly productive and has largely achieved its intended outputs**. STAAR delivered a high volume and wide range of demand-led assignments, and Research delivered most of its planned research outputs. BASIC collectively delivered a wide range of convening and knowledge exchange outputs and activities. Delivery accelerated substantially after the midline, with improved clarity in FCDO commitments to the BASIC budget.

Quality was good, largely exceeding expectations and enabled by the high-quality expertise in the respective workstreams. BASIC was good value for money: in terms of economy and efficiency both components ensured that VfM was considered in the management of their respective programmes of work. Early delays in the rate of expenditure and delivery were corrected in the later years of the programme by accelerated delivery.

The extent to which these outputs contributed to the outcomes foreseen in the ToC varied.

There was strong evidence for new or strengthened country plans and policies, especially within FCDO. BASIC has played a commendable role in keeping GESI considerations, including disability inclusion, as part of the policy dialogue. It pivoted to respond rapidly to COVID-19 despite health crises not forming an initial focus of the BC. BASIC made an increasing contribution to coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives. As a donor facility, BASIC was particularly well suited to fostering coordinated donor positions around the use of SP approaches, including the Nigeria and Yemen examples. BASIC also played an important role in raising the profile of SP approaches to crisis response in policy debates, particularly among international actors.

Capacity building was addressed in a more limited way, with a focus on skills transfer rather than institutional strengthening. Other agencies (World Bank, UNICEF) arguably have a comparative advantage in holding and sustaining the technical relationship with national governments and leading capacity strengthening at national level given established relationships and commitment to maintaining a long-term presence. BASIC made a more appropriately calibrated contribution to building individual capacities at the strategic leadership level and highlighting the need for system-wide investments. The weakest evidence relates to the use of evidence by governments, donors and agencies to inform policies and practice, where dissemination is well documented but systematic uptake and influence on practice remain limited.

Conclusion 2:

There is evidence that BASIC made a catalytic contribution to impacts in specific contexts. However, the assumptions linking outcomes to impacts only partially held, meaning that progress towards the higher-level results were uneven.

In line with the design intent, BASIC has played a catalytic role in supporting system-level changes. Partnership is key to achieving impact and BASIC contributions have been leveraged through the work of other agencies. Impacts at country-level were observed where BASIC was able to catalyse changes in the policies and programmes of other stakeholders. This is consistent with the realistic reach of a centrally managed global programme.

Both workstreams have plausibly contributed to catalysing change. However, the direct contribution of demand-driven TA to specific system changes proved easier for the evaluation to evidence. The indirect and longer-term influence of research is harder to capture, with the best examples of influence coming in situations where the research was designed to make a timely contribution to policy reforms.

Given the time taken to achieve change, it is premature to draw firm conclusions on impact. However, there is a degree of confidence that BASIC can make a plausible contribution to improved efficiency, effectiveness and inclusiveness in the right context. In contrast, there was minimal evidence of BASIC having a plausible influence on the diversity and sustainability of financing, the most plausible pathway for this was building linkages between climate finance and SP. Financing decisions are ultimately political and there are clear limits to the role of evidence in shaping these decisions.

The BASIC BC anticipated that the programme would contribute across situations of protracted conflict, forced displacement and recurrent shocks and natural disasters. In practice these categories are somewhat blurred, with complex overlapping crises with the balance of drivers shifting overtime. Other unanticipated shocks also emerged – notably the COVID-19 crisis – which BASIC pivoted to address. This points to the limitations of using this categorisation framework in the BASIC BC.

Using SP approaches in FCAS remains fundamentally challenging, and progress has been uneven and intermittent. Political barriers with concerns over principled engagement limited the scope for working with national authorities and institutions in many of the largest complex emergencies. BASIC had severely constrained entry points in major crises including Sudan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, the Sahel and ultimately Yemen. SP systems and capacities are poorly developed in these contexts, offering concrete opportunities to align and harmonise with humanitarian assistance.

BASIC acknowledged and adapted to these contextual limitations. Where SP systems in FCAS are fragile or non-existent, a long-term approach to system building co-existed with exploring adaptive approaches to working with a range of stakeholders beyond national Government. In complex crises, the BASIC contribution was at times more apparent in strengthening humanitarian response systems as an interim measure, alongside a longer-term aspiration to strengthen SP approaches.

Conclusion 3:

BASIC made a significant contribution to building and sustaining global-level commitments to the use of SP approaches in crises. However, limitations in the scope of the evaluation made it hard to reach a clear conclusion on the extent to which this pathway had contributed to downstream impacts at country level.

BASIC has successfully raised the global profile of using SP approaches in FCAS settings.

The programme played a central role in convening and technically supporting the Rome Global Forum on Social Protection in Crises (September 2024) and the subsequent HLP. This secured high-level engagement from a wide range of actors in building a global consensus around an “SP first” agenda in protracted crises, increasing acceptance that national systems can and should be used during conflict, and placing SP more firmly on humanitarian-development policy agendas.

The body of BASIC evidence has been important in encouraging global partners to maintain or deepen commitments to promoting SP approaches. BASIC outputs have also been used by partners in building their individual agency-level understanding and capacities.

As a tangential benefit, the quality and impact of BASIC raised the profile and visibility of FCDO. The technical expertise offered by BASIC allowed FCDO to project influence beyond its scale as a mid-sized donor.

Work at global level provides an important channel to influencing country-level programming.

International agencies play a critical role in technically supporting and financing SP at the national level, and BASIC could potentially play an important role in influencing and leveraging these capacities. However, there is insufficient evidence to confirm or refute the downstream effects on changes in financing, institutional reform or implementation.

Conclusion 4:

TA needs to be more politically aware about what forms of social assistance are acceptable in a particular context.

Technical challenges in using SP approaches are rarely the main constraint to change. While there are still opportunities for improving understanding of ‘what to do’, the main challenge going forward relates to building the necessary political commitment and funding.

BASIC has had some success in fostering high-level political commitment to using SP approaches among international actors, although this is fragile given the current global context. But, critically, national authorities across a range of countries (including Somalia, Ethiopia

and South Sudan) remain highly resistant to increasing on-budget support to expand social assistance.

Ultimately, BASIC technical advice and evidence has had limited influence on political decision making by national authorities. The factors influencing national decision making are multiple and complex. Expecting a TA facility to be a primary driver of political decision making is unrealistic, and these discussions need to be embedded within a political process.

It is important to understand the political economy which frames national decision making as a context to operate within, rather than as a constraint to be changed. From the perspective of a technical facility such as BASIC, any technical offer must be calibrated to what is contextually acceptable and the opportunities and limitations within the specific context.

Conclusion 5:

While the overall VfM of BASIC was good, important opportunities emerged to improve cost effectiveness.

Viewed from the aggregate level, BASIC provides good VfM. Given the scale of humanitarian assistance, only small percentage improvements in efficiency were needed to justify the modest programme costs. This holds true even though, in an inherently high-risk FCAS operating context, the uptake of many individual assignments and research pieces may be compromised.

At the same time, there are key opportunities for improving the VfM offered by BASIC. From the FCDO SPT perspective it is easier to justify the economic case where BASIC outputs are transparently linked to specific users. In particular, primary field research is particularly expensive, and this is most clearly justified where there is a well-defined user.

A better balance between the production of outputs, the dissemination of this work, and uptake could have improved cost effectiveness. The sheer volume of research outputs proved hard for users to digest, especially with a clustering of publications at the end of the BASIC programme. Furthermore, the principal focus of both Research and TA went into producing the deliverable. More investment in promoting the use of BASIC outputs, beyond dissemination activities, would have led to a better return on the investments. However, STAAR did seek to manage risks to uptake by shaping assignments with uptake in mind rather than treating them as standalone deliverables; for example by making efforts to keep the evidence circulating so it was available for potential users when key decisions were being made.

Housing TA and Research in one facility led to a significant coordination burden on both the SPT and the suppliers and was not clearly offset by synergistic effects. While both workstreams had individual benefits, these activities may have been more efficiently managed as complementary programmes rather than in one facility. There is a further argument that academic research would have been better funded and managed outside of a policy division.

Conclusion 6:

Any future TA needs to be adapted to the ongoing changes in the strategic objectives and financing of development assistance.

The very substantive changes in the international development context over the last year necessitate a fundamental rethink of how any ongoing TA might be framed and delivered. This is complicated by the fact that many of the changes, including within FCDO, are still in process, and key decisions remain in flux.

A BASIC type of facility needs to adapt to the on-going realignment of FCDO strategies and capacities. One expectation is that the volume of bilateral programming, including by FCDO, will

diminish. Any future programme will need to adapt to the context of diminished FCDO country programming and capacities. This may imply that FCDO would be a less prominent direct user of these services in support of internal programming, but equally it may lead to demand for different types of TA to support an adapted role. There is also the risk that any technical facility would have to contend with demand for long-term TA assignments as a substitute for FCDO core posts.

Furthermore, any BC would need to demonstrate relevance to the overarching FCDO priorities, where humanitarian, climate and development priorities are balanced against trade and security goals. At this point, beyond knowing that the nature of demand is likely to evolve significantly, the exact nature of these changes remains speculative.

Supporting and influencing multilateral agencies as indirect channels to assist national governments and institutions will likely become an increasingly central role. The ToC for the BASIC Programme recognised there are multiple pathways to change for a range of BASIC users, such as governments, donors and agencies, in addition to the FCDO itself. Embedding BASIC support within core institutions and training systems, for example, was key to sustaining the capacity and capability gains it has generated. In addition, new and innovative channels of work at country-level to build support for enhanced SP need to be considered. There are clear limitations in focusing purely on national government counterparts in situations of fragility. More innovative approaches deserve greater consideration, such as supporting CSOs to lead and nurture a domestically owned debate on the use of SP. In an environment of extreme pressure on development finance, linking climate financing to SP is one of the few positive opportunities that deserves further exploration.

5.2 Lessons arising from the endline evaluation

Building on our findings and conclusions, we have extracted a set of generalisable lessons from the delivery of BASIC. These lessons may be useful for future FCDO programming or for other practitioners working on similar interventions or towards similar objectives, especially the delivery of TA facilities and Research programmes. The lessons are summarised here and presented in full in Appendix 2, where for each lesson we describe the related evidence base, characterise the lesson and explain how applying the lesson is expected to improve design and performance. As discussed in Section 5.4 below, it is anticipated that these lessons will be further refined and disseminated as part of our use and influence plan.

Lesson 1: A TA facility and Research programme of a similar type and scale to BASIC is effective when it focuses on catalytic influencing and creating the enabling environment for systems change, rather than attempting to deliver systems.

BASIC demonstrated that TA facilities and Research programmes of this scale can play an important catalytic role by generating evidence, shaping decisions, convening actors, and strengthening capacity, but cannot deliver or sustain system-level transformation on their own.

Durable systems change depends on factors largely outside a programme's remit, including political commitment, domestic financing, government ownership, and long-term institutional partnerships. Similar programmes can be effective when they define realistic pathways to catalyse influence, such as accelerating decision making, building consensus, addressing binding constraints, or strengthening local capacity. Catalytic influencing is usefully underpinned by locally informed and owned political economy analysis and links to country-anchored actors and programmes able to sustain reform over time.

Lesson 2: The choice of the most appropriate and effective modalities is dependent on context, and using a mix of approaches was warranted.

As the BASIC implementation model showed, influence was strongest where TA and Research deployed a flexible, context responsive mix of approaches aligned to political economy conditions, absorptive capacity, and decision timelines. No single delivery modality proved universally effective across BASIC contexts. Rapid or “clinic”-style TA are well suited to urgent decisions and, while longer-term or repeat engagements can support trust building, continuity, and deeper influence on coordination and policy processes.

Research can add most value where it aligns with ~~robust~~ live policy debates through time-sensitive outputs, while managing expectations that more rigorous and time-intensive studies follow longer influence pathways. Clear differentiation and sequencing of modalities, evidence-~~robust~~ generation and advisory support, can help manage trade-offs between rigor and timeliness and strengthen complementarities between TA and Research.

Lesson 3: Localisation, including the use of national consultants, researchers, CSOs and institutions, increases relevance, uptake and sustainability.

Localisation consistently enhanced the relevance, uptake, and sustainability of BASIC’s TA and Research by grounding activities in local contexts, political realities, and trusted networks. Working with national consultants, researchers, CSOs, and institutions can offer continuity, credibility, and contextual insight that strengthens ownership and facilitates uptake of outputs by domestic stakeholders. By anchoring advisory support and evidence within local actors and policy spaces, localisation can also increase the likelihood that catalytic contributions continue to influence decision making beyond programme timelines. Investing in local expertise and institutions is a core enabling factor for effective and durable influence in FCAS and crisis-affected contexts.

Lesson 4: Deliberate uptake strategies, structured knowledge brokering, and clear accountability for use are essential to translating high-quality TA and research outputs into policy and practice change.

BASIC produced a large and technically strong body of TA and research outputs that were widely regarded as high quality. However, the evaluation found consistent gaps between the delivery of outputs and their uptake into policy and practice. TA facilities and Research programmes of a similar type and scale to BASIC should treat uptake as an integral, resourced, and managed component of programme delivery. High-quality outputs are a necessary but insufficient condition for influence. The evidence from BASIC consistently shows that where outcomes were achieved, they depended on sustained engagement, trusted relationships, alignment with decision points, and the presence of actors who could actively broker the connection between evidence and use. Where outcomes were not achieved despite strong outputs, the missing ingredient was often a structured uptake pathway and clear accountability for who would act on the evidence, and when.

Therefore, programme design should invest in a set of enabling conditions for uptake. First, outputs should be designed with explicit uptake objectives from the outset. Second, programmes should invest in dedicated knowledge brokering capacity. Third, accountability for uptake should be shared and explicit, with responsibilities agreed in advance between delivery partners, FCDO, and where possible national stakeholders – rather than assumed to rest with FCDO by default. Finally, a recurring challenge observed was the limited usability and accessibility of research outputs during programme implementation, particularly with Research since much of the research outputs matured towards the end of the programme or after close-out. While this reflected the time required for robust data collection and analysis, it reduced the accessibility of findings for learning and adaptive decision-making when they were most needed. Future programmes should actively invest in making outputs findable and usable – through searchable platforms, targeted policy briefs, layered communication products that summarise findings at different levels of technical depth, and proactive

direct sharing with identified audiences, rather than relying on passive hosting. This is particularly important for research outputs that address politically sensitive or technically complex issues, where the gap between academic and policy readerships is large and where intermediary products and engagement are most needed. Earlier and more effective uptake can also be supported by embedding influence planning at the design stage, including selecting questions where evidence can plausibly inform decisions and clarifying pathways to influence from the outset. This includes commissioning and resourcing iterative synthesis and learning-oriented products alongside formal outputs, supported by dedicated knowledge translation capacity. Producing layered, audience-specific products, sequencing synthesis before programme close, and engaging policy users through proactive outreach and structured dialogue can help ensure findings are accessible, timely and usable.

5.3 Recommendations

Considering these conclusions and lessons, we developed three recommendation areas, as presented in Table 5.1. These recommendations are directed to FCDO and can be used to inform priority follow-on actions at the completion of the BASIC programme. Given the ongoing review of FCDO priorities and structures, these recommendations are intentionally general in nature. Each recommendation is assigned a responsible owner, priority rating, and timeframe for completion. It is anticipated that FCDO will prepare a management response to these recommendations.

Table 5.1: Recommendations for FCDO

Recommendations	Responsibility	Priority	Suggested timeline
1. FCDO should continue to promote and support the use of SP approaches in responding and building resilience to crises.	FCDO senior management	High	By end-2026
This recommendation is based on Conclusion 2 on the plausible contribution of BASIC to catalysing the adoption of SP approaches; Conclusion 3 that the quality and impact of BASIC raised the profile and visibility of FCDO; Conclusion 5 that viewed from the aggregate level, BASIC provides good VfM; and Conclusion 6 that a BASIC type of facility needs to adapt to the ongoing realignment of FCDO strategies and capacities. This strategic prioritisation should include the following elements: 1.1 The ongoing reorganisation of FCDO should maintain organisational responsibilities and adequate human resources at global and country levels, to continue the department's established role in promoting the use of SP approaches. 1.2 Future FCDO international development and related policies and strategies should continue to prioritise support to strengthening and using SP approaches in crises.			
2. FCDO should maximise the benefits from the available BASIC research and TA results.	FCDO SPT	High	By end-2026
This recommendation is based on Conclusion 1 of BASIC delivering a large volume of TA and Research outputs; Conclusion 4 that BASIC has had success in fostering high-level political commitment to using SP approaches among international actors, although this is fragile given the current global context; and Conclusion 5 on the need to better balance the production of outputs, the dissemination of this work, and uptake. The benefits from work completed under the BASIC workstreams should be maximised and sustained through the following actions: 2.1 Ensure that there is full publicly accessible library of BASIC Research and TA publications. 2.2 FCDO should promote and encourage system-wide collective ownership of, and responsibility for, actions in support of implementing the catalytic agenda for peace, stability and resilience (presented as the outcome document of the HLP).			

2.33 FCDO should consider incorporating the use of SP approaches in crises within the scope of new or existing FCDO Centres of Expertise ..

3. To meet continuing user demand and maintain momentum, FCDO should consider ways of sustaining access to relevant technical expertise.

FCDO SPT

Medium

By end-2028

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 2 of the plausible contribution of BASIC to catalysing the adoption of SP approaches, but given that SP systems in FCAS settings are fragile or non-existent, a long-term approach to system building is required, and that the typology of crisis contexts is blurred and not always helpful; Conclusion 5 that BASIC provides good VfM but workstreams may have been more efficiently managed as complementary programmes rather than in one facility; and Conclusion 6 that supporting and influencing multilateral agencies as indirect channels to assist national governments and institutions will likely become an increasingly central role.

This should include consideration of the following elements:

3.1 FCDO should consider putting in place a stop-gap mechanism, such as the historic use of EACDS, to ensure continued access by its staff to relevant expertise while longer-term solutions are considered.

3.22 In the medium term, FCDO should consider the provision of further TA, ideally as a stand-alone social protection facility consolidating related expertise (e.g., integrating the work of the GSP).

3.3 The scope of a future CMP TA facility should:

- respond flexibly to demand across situations of protracted conflict, forced displacement and recurrent shocks and natural disasters,
- sharpen the thematic focus on the links between SP, climate change and integration of GESI,
- continue to work at global and country levels,
- sharpen the number and objectives of partnerships with international and regional agencies,
- consider including limited resources to commission primary research where explicitly linked to specific user requests.



**LISTEN
COMPREHEND
RECOMMEND**