BETTER ASSISTANCE IN CRISIS PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Baseline Report

Submitted to:

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

December 2021

VERSION HISTORY OF THE REPORT

Version	Produced by	Reviewed by	Week commencing
1	Nick Maunder, Valerie McDonnell-Lenoach, Georgia Plank, Nick Moore, Lucien Begault	Tamsin Ayliffe, Anila Channa	25 October 2021
2	Nick Maunder, Valerie McDonnell-Lenoach, Georgia Plank, Nick Moore, Lucien Begault	Anila Channa	15 November 2021
3	Nick Maunder, Valerie McDonnell-Lenoach, Georgia Plank, Nick Moore, Lucien Begault	Dulce Pedroso	13 December 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGAL NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER

Acronyms

BASIC	Better Assistance in Crisis Programme
COVID-19	The 2019 coronavirus pandemic
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DFAT	Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EACDS	Expert Advisory Call-Down Service
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EQ	Evaluation question
EU	European Union
FCAS	Fragile and conflict-affected states
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GBV	Gender-based violence
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSP	Gender-Responsive Social Protection Programme
ICF	International Climate Finance
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KII	Key informant interview
KPI	Key performance indicator
KML	Knowledge management and learning
MAINTAINS	Maintaining Essential Services after a Natural Disaster
MIS	Management information system
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
PFP	Programme Funded Post
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Social protection
SPACE	The Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert advice helpline
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board
SPT	Social Protection Team
TA	Technical assistance
TAF	BASIC's Technical Assistance Facility
TAS	BASIC's Technical Assistance Services Programme
ToC	Theory of change
UN	United Nations
UNOCHA FTS	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFM	Value for money
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Executive Summary

Introduction

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) commissioned Integrity to undertake an independent performance evaluation of the £20.5m Better Assistance in Crises Programme (BASIC) in October 2020. This baseline report is the first of three evaluation outputs we are producing as part of the contract and serves three purposes. First, it provides an early evaluation of progress over the first two years of implementation. Second, it provides a snapshot of current programme status to benchmark progress at midline and endline stages. Third, it elaborates the causal pathways within the theory of change.

BASIC programme

BASIC aims to support the new and/or improved use of social protection approaches during crisis. It is being delivered between 2018 and 2024 by the FCDO Social Protection Team (SPT). It provides support across three workstreams: technical assistance (delivered through BASIC TAS, including SPACE, and BASIC TAF); BASIC Research; and Knowledge Management and Learning services. These workstreams aim to result in the use of more effective, efficient, equitable, and financially sustainable social protection (SP) systems during crisis. They expect to do this by improving human and institutional capacity of donors, multilateral agencies, and national governments; supporting the development of new or strengthened country plans, policies, programmes, and systems; increasing the level of high-quality evidence used by, and political commitments from, key actors; and greater coherence and coordination between actors and initiatives. Between October 2018 and` August 2021, BASIC technical assistance delivered 28 projects, engaging with 45 countries through 128 unique engagements, while BASIC Research is still in its inception phase at the time of reporting.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation purpose is to provide accountability and learning. The overall purpose of the performance evaluation is to 1) provide timely evidence to improve BASIC processes and ways of working, 2) generate evidence on how the delivery of technical assistance and research services can support use of social protection during crisis, and 3) inform the design of future centrally managed programmes. The primary audience for evaluation findings is the FCDO SPT and BASIC suppliers. We also identified a wider set of secondary and tertiary evaluation users such as FCDO country posts and external stakeholders. The evaluation covers all BASIC workstreams throughout its implementation cycle, and considers its effects at the global and country levels. Examining the impacts of BASIC on end beneficiaries is out of scope of this evaluation contract.

The evaluation uses 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. Constraints to the baseline included: remote data collection due to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), uncertainties caused by the FCDO reprioritisation exercise; a low response rate on the survey; and BASIC Research still being in the inception phase. However, these risks were adequately mitigated. In terms of delivery, we specified clear internal and external management processes, including a risk register to record, monitor, and report project-related risks and procedures to support the safe collection, management, analysis, dissemination, and destruction of collected data. Our approach to evaluation ethics aligns with evaluation and learning industry best practice.

We drew on mixed-methods to assess performance, triangulating evidence to provide robust findings. Figure A summarises our data collection and analysis approach for the baseline. Between June and September 2021, we engaged with a total of 126 stakeholders, achieving planned numbers

for all methods other than our survey. To compensate for low response rates on the survey, we (a) increased number of documents reviewed, (b) worked with FCDO to expand our interview base, and (c) ensured we reached adequate saturation rates in all key areas of inquiry. We triangulated our results by holding multiple team analysis sessions while reviewing data and developing findings to reduce the risk of bias affecting our overall results.

Figure A: Overview of baseline data collection and analysis
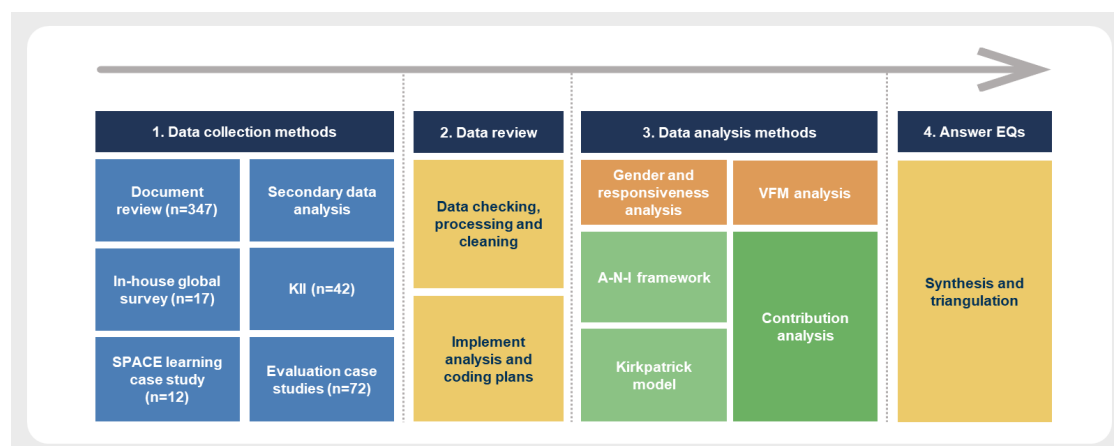
Source: Integrity (2021). N.B. Actual primary data collection sample sizes for the baseline are denoted under Step 1 for all relevant data collection methods.

Key findings

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

BASIC's objectives and rationale maintained their relevance over time and suit the needs of most target groups, with a focus on FCDO country posts. BASIC supports multiple FCDO strategic goals and international commitments and usefully focuses on contexts of protracted crises. It also remains relevant in light of wider humanitarian and climate policy changes and increasing stakeholder interest in SP use during crisis. BASIC provides clear technical assistance to FCDO country posts by filling gaps in capacity, expertise, and knowledge, operating in a responsive and flexible way. It also adapted rapidly and flexibly to COVID-19 by establishing SPACE, which was praised by multiple stakeholders, and increasingly considered gender-responsive and inclusive SP over time, especially through SPACE. However, it was less active in servicing the needs of national stakeholders and central FCDO team, and favoured demand-led over strategic delivery. Opportunities to make more effective use of local expertise and broaden the definition of inclusion to include marginalisation remain.

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?

BASIC was largely internally coherent and worked in harmony with other actors to a point, but active coordination was limited, particularly at the global level. Several mechanisms were established to promote internal coordination which were broadly effective. However, coordination was negatively affected by differences in the start-up and delivery of workstreams, and limited TAS resources to support strategic oversight of the technical assistance component. BASIC's rationale and objectives complement those of other FCDO programmes and other key donors including the EU and USAID. However, coordination with centrally managed FCDO programmes was mixed and coordination with other agencies was largely informal with the exception of SPACE. Opportunities remain for further coordination, especially regarding technical collaboration and exchange, and the development of bilateral agreements. At the national level, coherence was positive but affected by country context, and some duplication with other initiatives was identified.

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

BASIC inputs were shown to produce most outputs outlined in the programme theory of change (ToC) with some contexts more conducive to achieving these outputs. Strongest evidence was seen for high-quality evidence and awareness and knowledge sharing, while there was weaker evidence for capacity building. We found the likelihood of realising outputs was positively affected when BASIC deployed multidisciplinary teams, understood political economy issues, accessed local resources, and had sufficient engagement from BASIC users in-country. Shorter technical assistance enabled long-term support to explore a specific issue in detail and build trust with stakeholders.

As expected at this early stage, there is mixed evidence on the achievement of BASIC outcomes, with contribution to the development of new FCDO programmes a key focus to date. BASIC's main contribution was supporting the development of FCDO business cases. However, BASIC TAS engaged less with donors, agencies, and importantly, national authorities, and contributions to gender-responsive and inclusive SP is less clear - although it was noted that these have only relatively recently become explicit objectives. We found that active engagement from service users, and improved appetite for SP approaches instigated by COVID-19, increased the likelihood of outcome achievement, while an increasingly challenging funding environment had a negative effect.

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

We found early indications that BASIC positively contributed to more effective, efficient, and inclusive social assistance, but limited evidence of contributing to improved financing or SP systems. Improvements to FCDO programming appear to contribute most to ToC impacts. At the country level, the current most plausible ToC impact pathway is for: high-quality technical assistance advice to combine with 'greater awareness, knowledge and learning' and 'new or strengthened relationships' (outputs) to bring about 'new or strengthened country policies or programmes,' 'greater coherence, coordination and synergies' and 'increased political commitment.' There is currently limited evidence that BASIC has the potential to bring about diversified and more sustainable funding for SP approaches in crises. Contribution to systems change is also limited, with political economy changes, and large national SP programme implementation plans likely to contribute more. Finally, encouraging the consolidation of SP and humanitarian systems may increase the SP system fragility and exclude marginalised groups – a potential unintended consequence.

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

BASIC achieved good value for money (VFM) in terms of the delivery of activities and management but opportunities for improvement were identified. Good VFM was achieved through competitive procurement mechanisms, analysis and containment of cost drivers, and a centralised delivery model – although the latter created impact tracking and country engagement challenges. While the launch of SPACE and response to TAS requests was efficient, efficient delivery of the Research workstream was compromised by procurement delays, COVID-19, and funding uncertainty, with the latter also impacting the planning of TAS requests and the delivery of TAF. Evidence on effectiveness is not extensive although there are grounds for cautious optimism. VFM is considered in decision making and risk management processes are fit for purpose. While COVID-19 did affect timely delivery, TAS was more responsive than other centrally managed programmes. However, the sufficiency of FCDO management capacity was an issue, and the introduction of follow-up monitoring processes could improve output use.

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

Assessing sustainability is premature but we found early indications that outcomes realised may endure, and identified factors that may affect sustainability. These indications included supporting the design of multi-year FCDO programmes, the role of SPACE in increasing interest in SP use during crisis, and limited but significant contributions to legislative reforms, notably in Nigeria. Sustainability of BASIC efforts are expected to be enhanced by context-appropriate delivery models, strong FCDO country office engagement, active involvement of partner governments, and improvements to financing options and country technical capacity.

Main conclusions, learning, and recommendations

Our baseline conclusions, lessons for FCDO and partners, and recommendations are presented below.

	Conclusions
1	BASIC provides appropriate, efficient, and effective demand driven support to FCDO country posts in developing new or strengthened country plans and programmes and informing decision making.
2	Where BASIC provided longer-term support to donor coordination, it contributed to building common donor positions in support of the use of SP approaches in crises and FCDO influencing efforts.
3	The effectiveness of working through the change pathway outlined above has significant synergies with the capacity of FCDO country posts to engage with the process and availability of programme funding.
4	BASIC technical assistance has been less extensively used to support other stakeholders, including other donors and national governments and de facto authorities. The limited evidence available suggests that BASIC tools are optimally adapted to supporting FCDO country posts rather than other stakeholders.
5	BASIC's contribution to improving human and institutional capabilities in using SP approaches in crises was limited, and the scope and purpose of these outputs is unclear.
6	The strategic focus on the use of SP approaches in protracted crises is appropriate. However, the geographic focus on states experiencing protracted crises has not always been matched by progress on unpacking the particular challenges of using SP approaches in contexts of protracted crises.
7	The pace of change is necessarily slow and incremental. The expectations of stakeholders and timeframe for the programme need to be calibrated to this reality.
	Lessons
1	The contribution of technical assistance to the FCDO influencing agendas has important synergies with programme and project financing and the capacities of in-country FCDO posts.
2	The use of inter-disciplinary teams is effective in ensuring gender mainstreaming.
3	There is a risk of focusing on economy with insufficient consideration of effectiveness.
	Recommendations
1	**Clarify BASIC's future strategic priorities and scope.** This should consider: how to refocus on protracted crises; which direct beneficiaries to target and how to reach them; developing a clear capacity building strategy; clarifying the role of BASIC in influencing the diversity and sustainability of funding for social protection approaches in crises; and granting an extension of BASIC.
2	**Clarify responsibilities for leading the delivery of the refreshed strategic priorities and provide the necessary resources.** This should include clarifying the division of strategic leadership responsibilities for BASIC TAF between the SPT, Programme Funded Post, and service providers and investing further in longer-term technical assistance to support donor coordination in deep engagement countries.
3	**Explore the potential for enhanced partnerships with key stakeholders at the global and country levels to maximise synergies with, and leverage the impact of, BASIC investments.** This could include strengthening partnerships with a range of stakeholder groups to build shared ownership and collaborate on capacity building, strengthened coordination and learning and advocacy. Partnerships should be strengthened to support implementation under the current contracts and as a foundation for more formalised relationships in the longer-term.
4	**Strengthen and enhance BASIC delivery, where appropriate building on lessons from SPACE**, including deploying gender and social inclusion (GESI) experts, clarifying the relationship and allocation of responsibilities between BASIC and the Gender-Responsive Social Protection Programme, improved knowledge management mechanisms, and strengthened monitoring of results.

Table of Contents

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 £20.5 million Better Assistance in Crises Programme (BASIC), which is being delivered between 2018 and 2024 by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Social Protection Team (SPT), aims to support the new and/or improved use of social protection (SP) approaches during crisis in contexts of recurrent shocks, protracted conflict and forced displacement). It seeks to do this by providing expert advisory, capacity building, learning, coordination, high-level policy influencing, and research services.

Integrity was commissioned by FCDO SPT in October 2020 to undertake an independent performance evaluation of BASIC at three points throughout its four-year implementation period.

1.2 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The overall purpose and objectives of the performance evaluation specified in the Terms of Reference (ToR) (see Appendix 11) are as follows:

Purpose

- Provide timely evidence to improve BASIC processes, 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 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

- Assess whether, why and how BASIC is achieving its stated outputs and outcomes and progress towards impact and explore whether intended outputs and outcomes were realistic and appropriate and if there were any unintended outputs and outcomes.

- Identify what is working (and not) and why in promoting a greater use of social assistance approaches in crises and policy change and enhanced capacities through technical assistance, research, influencing, and capacity strengthening; generate evidence and learning on the effectiveness of the programme (and how it can be improved).

- Provide evaluative evidence that can strengthen the approach to monitoring within and across programme workstreams, with a particular focus on strengthening the programme logframe and providing practical support to strengthen monitoring of BASIC TAS and BASIC Research.

- Generate learning on what works from the combination of TAS, research, influencing, and capacity strengthening in promoting policy, programme, and systems-level change in crises, assessing the effectiveness of delivery modalities used in the programme and their combination.

- Learn from the above and make recommendations on what form a future service delivery programme should look like, the next phase of business planning for BASIC 2.0.

1.3 Scope of the assignment

The evaluation covers all three BASIC workstreams (see Section 2) and considers its effects at the global and country levels. We have defined the scope of our evaluation across three key dimensions:

1. **Coverage:** The evaluation covers all BASIC workstreams: Technical assistance, research and knowledge management and learning (KML).

2. **Temporal:** BASIC started implementation in October 2018 and will end in March 2024. The evaluation will evaluate programme performance at multiple points throughout this period, to inform periodic FCDO reporting and programme decision making.

3. **Geographical:** The evaluation will cover all global and country-level assignments delivered by BASIC. We have also completed more detailed case-study research in Nigeria, Jordan, Somalia, and Yemen, as well as a global case study related to SPACE.

Examining the final impacts of BASIC on end beneficiaries, the effects of the SPACE Asia-Pacific funded by the Australian government, and the performance of this evaluation contract are out of scope of this evaluation contract.

1.4 Target audiences and stakeholders

The primary audience for evaluation findings is the FCDO SPT and BASIC suppliers but we also identified a wider set of secondary (FCDO country posts and partners, other FCDO departments, or those implementing similar centrally managed facilities) and tertiary (external BASIC advisors, governments, donors, agencies, think-tanks, consultancy firms) stakeholders. FCDO SPT and BASIC suppliers were engaged regularly throughout this implementation process and provided multiple opportunities to comment on our evaluation process and preliminary findings, conclusions, recommendations, and learning. As part of our influence and use plan and periodic contract management, we will follow up with these users on a quarterly basis to collect feedback on this report's utility, including collecting examples of report use, and monitor the uptake of recommendations.

1.5 Purpose of the baseline report

This baseline report, which we developed between May and October 2021, is the first of three evaluation outputs we are producing as part of the contract. The baseline serves three purposes. Firstly, it provides an early evaluation of progress over the first two years of implementation. Secondly, it provides a snapshot of the current status to benchmark progress at midline and endline stages. Thirdly, it elaborates the causal pathways within the theory of change (ToC). Given a delay in procuring this evaluation contract, this baseline was undertaken after two years of programme implementation. Consequently, the baseline report not only documents the current status for comparative purposes, but also evaluates outputs and initial outcomes at this stage. The baseline report also provides further refinements to the BASIC ToC and updates the BASIC logframe (Appendix 4).

1.6 Organisation of this report

The remainder of this report and associated Appendices (presented separately) is structured as follows:

Section	Appendix
2. BASIC context and delivery to date, including its ToC 3. Evaluation approach and methods 4. Baseline evaluation findings, structured by evaluation question 5. Conclusions, learning and recommendations at this stage	1. Programme background and deviations from the ToR and inception phase 2. Evaluation methodology and approach 3. Use and influence plan 4. Basic ToC and Logframe review 5. Separate supporting analyses 6. Case study reports 7. Data collection tools 8. List of evaluation participants and reviewed documents 9. Mapping findings to conclusions and recommendations 10. Mapping EQuALS criteria to report content and departures from these terms and the inception phase

2   Description of BASIC and its context

This section presents an overview of the BASIC programme, its underlying rationale and context, and theory of change. It concludes with an overview of programme delivery to date. A more detailed overview of the programme, its context, and delivery is presented in Appendix 1.

2.1   BASIC programme

The £20.5m Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) Programme aims to help poor and vulnerable people cope better with crises.[1] BASIC helps people meet their basic needs through more effective social assistance in crisis in over 40 low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) across three main workstreams: Research, technical assistance, and KML.[2] The terms we use in this report to refer to each workstream and collectively are presented in Box 2.1.

Box 2.1: Overview of BASIC terminology

1. **BASIC TAS** refers to the programme of technical assistance delivered by DAI Global UK Ltd (DAI) between 2018 and 2021 which was complete in August 2021, and the Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT) under Palladium, which continues beyond EACDs call downs.

2. **SPACE** refers to the three BASIC TAS projects (Table 2) that delivered The Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert advice helpline.

3. **BASIC TAF** refers to the BASIC Technical Assistance Facility that was awarded to DAI in September 2021 and is currently in its inception phase at the time of reporting.

4. **BASIC Research** refers to the global research programme delivered by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), which is currently in its inception phase at the time of reporting.

We use the term '**BASIC technical assistance**' to refer to BASIC TAS, SPACE, and BASIC TAF collectively; and the term '**BASIC programme**' to refer collectively to these activities, BASIC Research and KML.

BASIC Research

Just under £10 million was assigned to BASIC Research, which aims to strengthen both global and country-specific evidence on using social assistance approaches to build resilience and respond to crises, in different contexts, for different vulnerable groups. BASIC Research is comprised of three sub-workstreams – global questions, country-level questions, and research uptake. The contract for BASIC Research was awarded in Q2 2020/21 to IDS, the University of Sussex and the Centre for International Development and Training, and University of Wolverhampton, with a 12-month design phase that started in October 2020.

BASIC Technical Assistance

In total, £10.5 million[3] was assigned to technical assistance which provides demand-driven country support through capacity building, learning and coordination across multiple countries and at global level. TAS is also expected to play a policy influencing role through the programmes it supports. TAS has mostly delivered assignments to partners at country level, most often FCDO Offices, with key areas of focus including cash coordination, research on the cash marketplace and actors and programme design.

The technical assistance workstream has been delivered since 2019 through TAS and was tendered as a broader Technical Assistance Facilitiy (TAF) contract at the end of 2020. Since March 2019, TAS has been delivered through an existing FCDO framework contract entitled 'Strengthening Resilience and Response to Crises', Lot B of the Expert Advisory Call-Down Service (EACDS) managed by DAI. A Programme Funded Post (PFP) was seconded to the TAS supplier to support demand generation, as well as to oversee delivery and learning. HSOT, managed by Palladium,

---

was generally used to address cash coordination and/or social protection-humanitarian nexus expertise gaps. The technical assistance contract (now TAF) was recently awarded to DAI to provide a facility which serves both BASIC and the SPT's Gender-Responsive Social Protection Programme (GSP). TAF formally commenced its inception phase in September 2021.

A COVID-19 responsive programme, the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert advice helpline (SPACE), was developed to provide short-term technical assistance. In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a global health emergency with significant social and economic implications,[4] FCDO and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) came together to deliver this joint initiative, funded by UKAid and German Development Cooperation. Delivered as part of BASIC TAS, SPACE's goal is to support countries' use or adaptation of SP approaches – including through closer alignment or coordination with humanitarian assistance – in response to the immediate and medium-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Knowledge Management and Learning

The programme also includes a third workstream on KML. This includes this evaluation contract and a broader programme of KML work led by suppliers. A draft KML strategy for BASIC TAS exists, which sets out a roadmap for BASIC's generation and promotion of knowledge to normalise and strengthen the use of social assistance in crises – that is, to extend the impact of BASIC technical assistance beyond that of individual assignments. Planned KML activities fall into one of five categories: evidence mapping, hardwiring learning into BASIC assignments, portfolio synthesis, cross-programme learning, and facilitating knowledge flow across a community of practice. BASIC TAF will now be responsible for delivering overarching KML activities, covering both BASIC technical assistance and research, and the Gender-Responsive Social Protection Technical Assistance Services (GSP), that support evidence synthesis and learning.

2.2   Rationale for intervention

Extreme poverty and fragility are closely interlinked but the humanitarian system is ill-suited to respond and, in a context of unprecedented need, severely overstretched. Crises are increasingly protracted or recurrent, with 86 percent of aid going to crises lasting three years or more; however, financing and delivery models are mainly short term and reactive.[5] The programme aims to address the increasing need and specific challenges resulting from different types of crises – all of which jeopardise Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 and its objective of ending poverty in all its forms, as well as the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to 'leave no one behind':[6]

- **Recurring climate-related shocks and disasters:** Climate-related shocks are set to become more frequent and are a major impediment to development in many countries, setting back poverty alleviation and leading to loss of lives and livelihoods. These trends are putting greater pressure on an overstretched humanitarian system. Types of disasters that generate most humanitarian need such as cyclones, floods, and droughts are predictable and yet international humanitarian aid often comes too little, too late. Of BASIC funds, £5 million is classified as International Climate Finance (ICF), with £3 million allocated to BASIC Research and £2m to BASIC technical assistance.[7]

- **Protracted conflict-related crisis in most fragile and conflict-affected states:** Most humanitarian aid is spent in conflict-related crises in a relatively small number of countries over long periods of time. Protracted crises contexts have a percentage of people who are very poor, and routinely feature at the very low end of the Human Development Index. As a result, there is considerable overlap between the map of fragile states and humanitarian caseload.[8]

- **Protracted displacement and refugees:** The number of forcibly displaced people is rising, and they are displaced for extended periods, with generational implications. More than 80 percent of refugee crises last for more than ten years, and two in five for more than twenty years. Despite the

protracted nature of displacement, responses are often based on short-term planning with funding mostly allocated on a yearly basis.[9]

Social assistance can help address crises more effectively and efficiently, but is currently underutilised due to limited evidence, knowledge, and capacity to guide programme design and delivery, and political economy challenges to reform.[10] Programme documents argue that the delivery of humanitarian cash is often fragmented, weakly coordinated, short term, and unpredictable even in protracted crises, leaving no sustainable systems behind. In addition, they contend that social assistance approaches can help address these weaknesses, and transcend the humanitarian-development divide, by bridging humanitarian cash transfers with longer-term social assistance and providing a medium-term exit strategy from humanitarian assistance to sustainable, national government-owned systems. A series of important policy commitments[11] reflect a clear international consensus to maximise the use of social assistance systems and approaches in crises to help provide more effective, efficient, and sustainable responses to affected populations.

2.3 BASIC Theory of Change

The BASIC ToC suggests BASIC will result in more effective, efficient, equitable and sustainably financed use of social protection approaches during crisis. The core rationale underpinning the BASIC ToC can be understood as follows: providing quality support to the development of country policies and systems, building the capacities of FCDO, governments and other stakeholders, and generating evidence and learning on what works in different contexts will, taken together, bring about more efficient and effective social assistance in crises, enabled by diversified and more sustainable funding. The expected impact of these outcomes is that vulnerable people are able to cope better with crises and meet their basic needs, in anticipation of, or following protracted conflict, protracted displacements and/or climate crises. The programme-level ToC for BASIC (**Error! Reference source not found.**, and presented fully in Appendix 4) includes the following outputs:

- High-quality advice for the design and delivery of country plans, policies, programmes, and systems.
- Targeted capacity building support provided (FCDO, agencies, governments, donors, local actors), including co-creation of research.
- Greater awareness, knowledge and learning generated across countries and agencies on SP approaches in crises.
- High-quality, policy relevant research on what works in different contexts generated and effectively disseminated.
- New or strengthened relationships and strategic partnerships across the humanitarian, climate resilience and SP sectors.

The overall BASIC programme's intended impact is that vulnerable people are better able to cope with crises and meet their basic needs through:

- More efficient social assistance in crises (earlier, timelier, less fragmented, lower cost).
- Social assistance in crises is more effective in addressing household needs.
- SP approaches in crises is more inclusive (gender, age, disability, and marginalised groups).
- Diversified, comprehensive and more sustainable funding for SP approaches in crises.
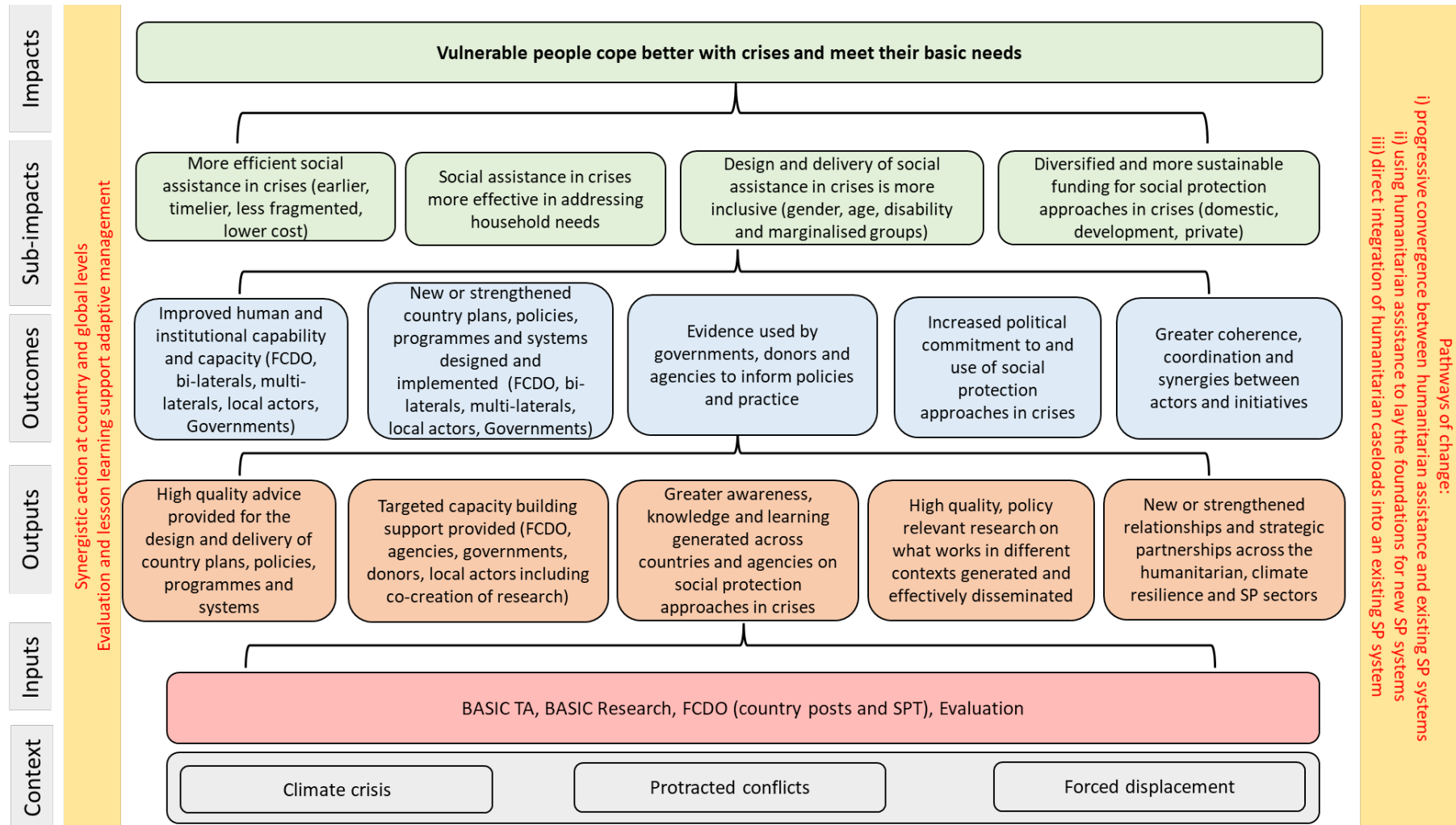
2.4 Delivery to date

TAS has delivered 28 projects to date, engaging with 45 countries – 33 of them more than once – through 128 unique engagements.[12] FCDO spent or had budgeted just over £2.6m across 28 projects delivered primarily between 2019-2021 (**Table *2.1*Table *2.1* overleaf**).[13]

Table 2.1 BASIC TAS project overview

#	Project	Country	Theme	Type	Start date	End date (as per last amendment or contract)	Spent (£m)
1	HSOT support to BASIC inception phase (part 2)	NA	Management	HSOT	Not reported	Not reported	0.01
2	HSOT support to BASIC inception phase (part 1)	NA	Management	HSOT	Not reported	Not reported	0.06
3	HSOT support to BASIC inception (part 3)	NA	Management	HSOT	Jul-19	Oct-19	0.02
4	BASIC Reporting	NA	Management	BASIC TAS	Jun-19	Jun-20	0.01
5	BASIC KML	NA	Management	BASIC TAS	Jun-19	Jun-20	0.01
6	Facilitation of a workshop on linking humanitarian cash transfers with social protection	Global	Nexus	BASIC TAS	Mar-19	Jun-19	0.02
7	Review of Cash Programming and Linkages to Social Protection in Lebanon	Lebanon	Nexus	BASIC TAS	Apr-19	May-19	0.02
8	Linking Social Protection Systems and Humanitarian Cash Transfers in Nigeria	Nigeria	Nexus	BASIC TAS	May-19	Jul-19	0.05
9	Framework Development for Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Yemen	Yemen	Nexus	BASIC TAS	Apr-19	Oct-19	0.04
10	Mozambique Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection Advisor	Mozambique	Advisor / coordinator	BASIC TAS	May-19	Jun-19	0.04
11	Review and Analysis of Identification and Registration systems in protracted and recurrent crises	South Sudan / Jordan	MIS	BASIC TAS	Oct-19	May-20	0.10
12	Grand-Bargain Sub-Group on Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection Facilitation	Global	Nexus	BASIC TAS	Feb-20	Nov-20	0.05
13	DRC surge	DRC	Not reported	HSOT	Oct-19	Mar-20	0.06
14	Support to Developing the Government of Sudan National Social Protection Strategy	Sudan	SP strategy support	BASIC TAS	Feb-20	Mar-20	0.04
15	Yemen Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash Linkages Donor Coordinator	Yemen	Advisor / coordinator	BASIC TAS	Mar-20	Dec-20	0.10
16	Strategic Advice to DFID to strengthen the reach of the social protection system in Jordan	Jordan	Coverage	BASIC TAS	Mar-20	Mar-21	0.08
17	Action Framework Development for DFID Afghanistan in the Humanitarian Aid and Social Protection Nexus	Afghanistan	Nexus	BASIC TAS	Feb-20	11-20	0.05
18	HSOT SPACE CO Engagement	Global	COVID-19 response	HSOT	Not reported	Not reported	0.09
19	SPACE	Global	COVID-19 response	BASIC TAS	Apr-20	Sep-20	0.26
20	SPACE H	Global	COVID-19 response	BASIC TAS	May-20	Sep-20	0.17
21	SPACE H Advisor	Global	COVID-19 response	HSOT	Apr-20	Oct-20	0.11
22	GB KML	Global	Nexus	BASIC TAS	May-20	Nov-20	0.10
23	SPACE HAO	Global	COVID-19 response	HSOT	Not reported	Not reported	0.07
24	Nigeria Nexus Advisor	Nigeria	Advisor / coordinator	HSOT	Not reported	Not reported	0.10
25	Part-Time Multi-Donor Cash Adviser for the WFP Multi-Purpose Cash Programme in Lebanon	Lebanon	Advisor / coordinator	BASIC TAS	Oct-21	Apr-22	0.06
26	SPACE 2	Global	COVID-19 response	BASIC TAS	Oct-20	May-21	0.79
27	Pakistan PEA	Pakistan	Nexus	BASIC TAS	Sep-21	Dec-21	0.07
28	Somalia Coordinator	Somalia	Advisor / coordinator	HSOT	Sep-21	Jan-22	0.04

Source: BASIC TAS project Tracker – last updated November 2021. N.B. Green and orange rows indicate completed and ongoing projects respectively, at the time of reporting.

Figure 2.1 BASIC Theory of Change

Impacts	**Vulnerable people cope better with crises and meet their basic needs**	

Sub-impacts

- More efficient social assistance in crises (earlier, timelier, less fragmented, lower cost)
- Social assistance in crises more effective in addressing household needs
- Design and delivery of social assistance in crises is more inclusive (gender, age, disability and marginalised groups)
- Diversified and more sustainable funding for social protection approaches in crises (domestic, development, private)

Outcomes

- Improved human and institutional capability and capacity (FCDO, bi-laterals, multi-laterals, local actors, Governments)
- New or strengthened country plans, policies, programmes and systems designed and implemented (FCDO, bi-laterals, multi-laterals, local actors, Governments)
- Evidence used by governments, donors and agencies to inform policies and practice
- Increased political commitment to and use of social protection approaches in crises
- Greater coherence, coordination and synergies between actors and initiatives

Outputs

- High quality advice provided for the design and delivery of country plans, policies, programmes and systems
- Targeted capacity building support provided (FCDO, agencies, governments, donors, local actors including co-creation of research)
- Greater awareness, knowledge and learning generated across countries and agencies on social protection approaches in crises
- High quality, policy relevant research on what works in different contexts generated and effectively disseminated
- New or strengthened relationships and strategic partnerships across the humanitarian, climate resilience and SP sectors

Inputs

BASIC TA, BASIC Research, FCDO (country posts and SPT), Evaluation

Context

- Climate crisis
- Protracted conflicts
- Forced displacement

Synergistic action at country and global levels
Evaluation and lesson learning support adaptive management

Pathways of change:
i) progressive convergence between humanitarian assistance and existing SP systems
ii) using humanitarian assistance to lay the foundations for new SP systems
iii) direct integration of humanitarian caseloads into an existing SP system

3 Evaluation approach and methods

This section provides a summary of the evaluation approach and methods employed by the study (further detailed in Appendix 2). It sets out the evaluation questions that we sought to answer, overall approach, data collection, analysis methods, management approach, and evaluation limitations and mitigating strategies.

3.1 Evaluation questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Across these EQs, we considered 21 sub-EQs, which we refined through the inception and baseline period to ensure we are catering to stakeholder needs. Our findings are laid out by sub-question, and details on the process of refinement are available in Appendix 2. As discussed above, this report focused less on answering EQs 4 and 6, given the early stage of BASIC implementation.

3.2 Approach and methods

To answer these questions, we chose a blended theory-based and case-based approach, drawing on mixed-methods to address multiple evidence needs and account for BASIC's complex operating environment and expected causal pathways. In the baseline phase, we engaged 126 stakeholders against a plan of up to 240, with the shortfall coming from lower response rates on our survey. We used the following qualitative and quantitative data collection methods:

Data collection	Description
Key informant interviews (KIIs)	We completed 42 KIIs to collect views on the performance and context of BASIC. KIIs engaged stakeholders representing FCDO, BASIC suppliers, complementary programmes, donors, and agencies. KIIs were semi-structured and tailored to informants. We followed transparent procedures to collect, store, and analyse data. Topic guides used to deliver KIIs are presented in Appendix 7 and our sampling frame is provided in Appendix 8.
Case studies	Country case studies were used to identify any in-country effects, and why and how they arose. We delivered four country case studies in Jordan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen, and one learning case on SPACE, to assess the performance of BASIC in different contexts. Country case studies were delivered in part by Local National Consultants, and all cases were informed by a review of secondary data, programme documents, and 12 global and 5 national level KIIs on average. Case study reports can be found in Appendix 6.
In-house survey	We surveyed all FCDO country posts that were in scope to receive BASIC support to collect representative views on programme delivery and performance. We administered an online questionnaire between July and September 2021, structured against the ToC. Initial testing indicated a survey length of 30 minutes, and the survey was adjusted to revise this estimate to 10-15 minutes. We received 17 responses (13 percent), with a lower than planned response, we suspect due to limited in-country capacity and wider departmental changes and requests during the survey period. We compensated for a low response rate by increasing the number of case study

Data collection	Description
	KIIs conducted with in-country FCDO staff. Our survey process is provided in Appendix 2; Appendix 7 provides the questionnaire developed and Appendix 5 presents our descriptive survey results.
Document review	We reviewed 347 BASIC programme documents to understand the extent, nature and effects of BASIC support provided to country posts, and 63 policy and grey literature documents to understand key developments in the sector. Reviewed documents are listed in Appendix 8.
Secondary data analysis	We analysed BASIC monitoring data to assess outputs realised across different countries. 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. Descriptive outputs are presented in Section 2, Appendix 1, and Appendix 5.

Contribution analysis was the main analysis method employed to assess the validity of the BASIC ToC. Our approach was non-experimental and relied on contribution analysis, which assesses the relative contribution of BASIC compared to other possible explanatory factors. Our country case studies were informed by two additional analytical frameworks in a light-touch way: the Actor-Narrative-Interest model and the Kirkpatrick model of learning effectiveness. These frameworks supported an assessment of the expected effects of BASIC policy and organisational learning.

3.3   Management and evaluation ethics

The evaluation was delivered by distinct technical and project management units to enable fluid management and high-quality delivery. We specified clear internal and external management processes to deliver the evaluation, and knowledge management processes to support effective management and governance. We used a risk register to record, monitor, and report project-related risks, and updated it at least quarterly. We used clear 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 information collected. We followed compliant and transparent practices to safeguard against personal data breaches. We adhered to Data Protection Principles through implementing the following multiple security practices.

Our approach to evaluation ethics aligns with evaluation and learning industry best practice. In our company-wide Standard Operating Procedures, we set out a clear code of ethics which aligns with the UK Evaluation Society Guidelines for Good Practice. At Integrity we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously. We are signatories to the Safeguarding Leads Network "Putting People First" commitments and work collaboratively with the Network to help prevent sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and abuse in the delivery of UKAID. We acknowledge the high-risk status FCDO has awarded to duty of care and Integrity accepts responsibility for staff, contractors, and evaluation participants throughout the lifetime of the contract.

3.4   Limitations of the study

We identified several limitations and mitigants for our approach. These limitations included:

- Uncertainties related to programme budget and delivery during implementation
- Limited implementation of BASIC Research during the evaluation
- The need to deliver primary research largely remotely due to COVID-19

To mitigate these risks, we worked closely with FCDO and BASIC suppliers to get regular programme updates and access to documents, provided specific support to revise the logframe and ToC, adapted our design to enable primary remote data collection, and engaged evaluation stakeholders early to confirm their participation. Limitations and risks are reported in full in Appendix 2.

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 progress at baseline and challenges and opportunities. The results of our review of the BASIC logframe and ToC are presented in Appendix 4.

4.1 EQ1. Relevance

EQ	Progress at Baseline	Challenges and opportunities
1.1 Alignment to FCDO priorities	Designed to act on a range of key FCDO strategic goals and international policy commitments, including the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Grand Bargain and a focus on protracted crises.	Limited activities to address commitments to mitigating climate change and increasing diversity of funding for SP in crises.
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 governments and de facto authorities.
1.3 Balance of demand-driven and strategic approaches	Builds strategically on initial opportunistic entry points. Improved targeting of resources and central guidance.	Opportunity to increase value-add through stronger global-country synergies.
1.4 Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) considerations	Consideration of gender-responsive and inclusive SP improved strongly under SPACE.	Limited inclusivity of delivery teams and opportunity to broaden the scope of inclusion.
1.5 Adaptation to changes in context	Adapted rapidly and flexibly to COVID-19 and growth in demand. Remains relevant under FCDO reprioritisation.	Need to re-focus on core priorities with emergence from COVID-19.

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

Finding 1: The BASIC programme supports a range of FCDO strategic goals and international policy commitments. In particular, BASIC is closely allied to supporting the WHS Grand Bargain commitments and the priorities of the FCDO SPT and Humanitarian and Protracted Crisis Policy Group. The BASIC Business Case confirmed the coherence of BASIC with FCDO's aid strategy. This includes alignment with the goal of tackling poverty, risk, and vulnerability (as expressed through the UK Aid Strategy, FCDO Outcome Delivery Plan[14] and SDGs) and strengthening linkages between humanitarian and development approaches (as stated in the UK humanitarian reform policy).

More specifically, BASIC was seen by FCDO stakeholders[15] as a concrete way of taking forward commitments made in the 2016 WHS and in the Grand Bargain to work differently in disasters and reforming the international system. For example, the BASIC design contributes towards localisation commitments by increasing the proportion of humanitarian response channelled through national responders.[16] These commitments are central to the design of BASIC and strongly reflected in the ToC (**Error! Reference source not found.**), which envisages supporting governments with SP programming as a path towards localisation.

In addition, BASIC was understood by FCDO stakeholders to have a specific relevance to the priorities of the FCDO SPT, in particular the objective of increasing the use of social assistance in crises, with a

focus in contexts of recurrent shocks, protracted conflict and forced displacement.[17] However, FCDO stakeholders outside of the SPT team noted that the absence of an explicit and public FCDO Social Protection policy can lead to diverse understandings of FCDOs' SP goals and strategy and limits the clarity of BASIC's relevance.

Finally, BASIC goals and approaches were also noted to be closely aligned to the priorities of the FCDO Humanitarian and Protracted Crisis Policy Group (HPCP) in promoting the use of cash transfers as a crisis response tool. BASIC uses humanitarian cash as an entry point to bridge humanitarian assistance with SP. However, while the value of using cash transfers as an entry point was noted, there was wide agreement that support to SP and social assistance systems also needs to consider a broader set of transfer modalities.

Finding 2: BASIC addresses an important gap by focussing on the use of Social Protection approaches in protracted crises. BASIC is a relevant response to the large and rising share of humanitarian needs in protracted crises. In general terms, the business case is aligned to the Strategic Defence and Security Review commitments to do more in protracted crises and there is a specific commitment that 65% of the programme costs will contribute to spend on protracted crises. In strategic terms, the objective of more efficient, effective, and sustainable crisis response is addressed through enhancing government-led political commitment and capacities for delivering SP systems in protracted crises contexts. There was a broad consensus amongst stakeholders on the importance of this focus on protracted crises. This contrasted with the progress and momentum already established around the development of Shock Responsive Social Protection in response to disasters and refugee inflows.

Figure 4.1: Mapping of BASIC implementation against the Fund for Peace 2021 Fragility
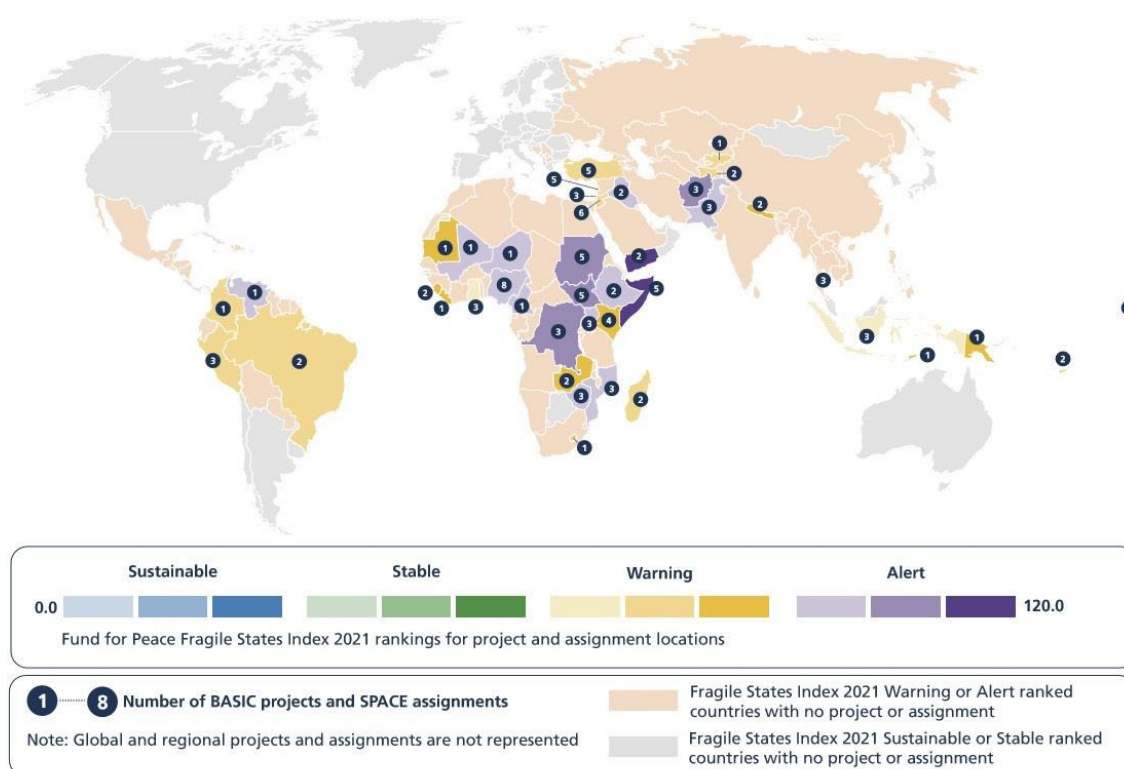
Source: BASIC TAS Monitoring data; FFP (2021). 2021 Fund for Peace Fragility Index.

These priorities appear to have been carried through into implementation. Analysis of secondary data found that of the top 20 fragile states identified in 2019 by the Fund for Peace Fragility Index (which

draws on 2018 data, the year that BASIC began implementation), 60 percent received targeted outputs from BASIC TAS, including SPACE (Figure 4.1). Fragile countries in 2018 that have not received support to date included: Syria, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Guinea, Haiti, Burundi, Eritrea, and Guinea-Bissau. Of these countries, Syria, CAR, and Burundi were also significant beneficiaries of FCDO disaster relief assistance.[18] BASIC TAF and BASIC Research country selection criteria specifically targeted a variety of protracted crises. Monitoring data shows that the introduction of SPACE diluted the protracted crises focus as this initiative addressed COVID-19 impacts more broadly. As shown in Appendix 2, SPACE inputs were targeted to many non-protracted crises contexts. However, while the BASIC business case focussed research and most technical assistance on forced displacement and protracted conflict contexts, it did give scope to provide some technical assistance support to a broader range of contexts.

Finding 3: Although BASIC has considerable scope to work on climate and resilience within the social protection context, the pathways for doing so are not well articulated. While BASIC recognises opportunities to align with the FCDO climate change priorities, the pathways for linking with climate change are still being elaborated. Climate adaptation and resilience is broadly recognised as a key policy priority for FCDO with implications for the frequency and severity of disasters. BASIC articulates a contribution to climate objectives, by building resilience to climate shocks. As such, approximately 24 percent of programme spend will be counted against International Climate Finance targets.[19]

The logic for creating linkages with the climate agenda were acknowledged in interviews – especially given an overall lack of attention to climate change in settings of protracted crises. However, the inclusion of the climate thematic has been, according to FCDO and supplier stakeholders, difficult to interpret and integrate into programming that is also looking at protracted conflict contexts. The nexus with climate change is most explicit in the Research workstream ToR, where £3 million was made available to address global, climate-specific questions. However, BASIC Research plans for addressing this priority are not yet finalised.

References to climate are minor in BASIC TAF's ToR and limited to requiring climate disaster and climate resilience expertise within the BASIC expert pool. There have been some examples of engagement with climate-related issues through SPACE. For instance, global-level climate-specific thematic policy briefings were delivered, as well as a learning session looking at social protection and climate. Country-level engagement with climate-related issues was mainly limited to developing contextual understanding, such as through SPACE's in-depth country cases studies.

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

Finding 4: Analysis of monitoring records indicates that BASIC TAS was primarily focused on meeting FCDO country office demand, with lessor attention to other clients. The evaluation identified four key user groups, of which FCDO country posts were mainly targeted (Figure 4.).

Finding 5: BASIC TAS was demand driven and responded well to the needs of FCDO at country level by filing gaps in capacity, expertise and knowledge. The commissioning of BASIC assistance was seen as responsive to the needs of FCDO country users. Country posts all reported experiencing significant time pressures, which the provision of BASIC TAS alleviated. In addition, even the more experienced country posts noted that the BASIC consultants offered specific skills and networks which added value above and beyond this.

The design of individual assignments was generally perceived as well aligned to the specific context. The advisory services provided under BASIC were designed to be "demand driven, with the objective

of ensuring support was provided where there is willingness to reform."[20] This was promoted by a process where country posts shared responsibility with the SPT team for the development of the individual ToR for TA. In practice, the level of responsibility for authoring ToRs varied – in many cases the country team took most of the responsibility, such as Yemen. In other cases, with lower capacities in country – such as Nigeria – there was a heavier reliance on the PFP to stimulate demand and help draft ToRs.[21] This appeared to work well in terms of ensuring local relevance of the assignments.

Figure 4.2: Illustrative overview of BASIC TAS projects (excluding HSOT) and SPACE assignments by user
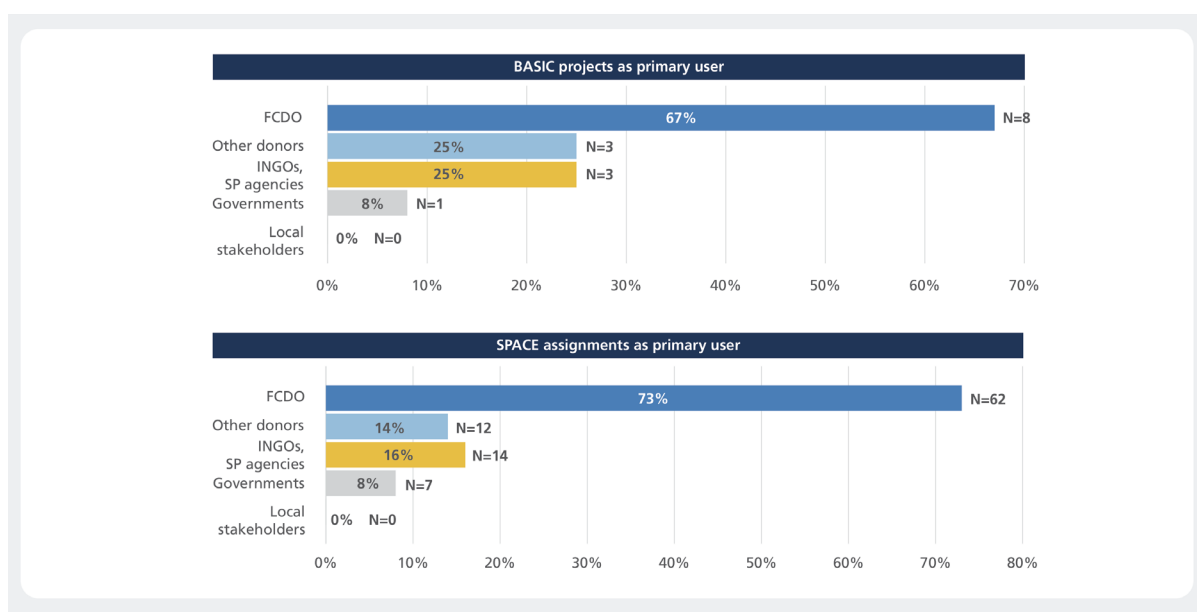
Source: BASIC DAI project Tracker – last updated 22 June 2021; SPACE Overview of the Service – last updated 18 June 2021. N.B. Of the 28 BASIC TAS projects, all HSOT projects are excluded, three SPACE projects are reported at the assignment level separately and Reporting and KML projects are excluded from the analysis; all Grand Bargain projects were multi-coded to other donors and INGO

s. Only country-specific SPACE assignments were considered; global SPACE assignments were excluded given that they indirectly target all user groups. Multi-coding permitted so the sum of column percentages is greater than 100 percent.

The use of adaptive management practices enabled the programme to operate in a responsive and flexible way. This is well evidenced through SPACE, which was able to effectively scale up and flex to meet crucial technical support needs and was able to deal with ad-hoc country level requests, proving reactive and quickly understanding country office needs using clinic calls. Where more time for strategic alignment could be afforded, BASIC worked with FCDO country focal points to support country priorities and meet overarching policy agendas, as outlined in the Somalia example in Box 4.1: **Somalia Localisation Framework**.

Box 4.1: Somalia Localisation Framework

The 'Somalia BRCiS – Framework for localisation Shift' completed in May 2021, outlines an initial analysis for the Somalia BRCiS programme to support a greater shift in power, funding, and process to support localisation. Aligned with the BRCiS April 2021 vision statement, outlining the need for localisation to improve programme impact and sustainability, it provides evidence and approaches FCDO can draw on to design, develop or contribute to programming with a stronger localisation focus. The localisation framework highlights BASIC delivering on the FCDO Somalia country office longer-term strategic objectives as well as aligning with wider FCDO policy commitments around localisation and working with local governments and partners.

That said, some evidence collected through KIIs suggest that, due to a lack of resources and failure to work with local expertise, the localisation framework was not well rooted in Somalian contextual realities. The rapid transfer

of some areas of decision making and financial power to local actors was considered unfeasible and did not account for local dynamics, and capabilities were not appropriately considered.

Finding 6: BASIC TAS has been less active in servicing the needs of other national level stakeholders or FCDO teams at the central level. There is little evidence to suggest BASIC is so far meeting the priority needs of country governments. Relatively few BASIC outputs and engagements targeted government stakeholders (Figure 4.). Examples of BASIC supporting national governments or institutions to address immediate needs include developing the 'Roadmap and Outline for National Social Protection Strategy' for Sudan' and the 'Mapping and review of prioritisation' for the Social Fund for Development in Yemen. However, engagement has generally been secondary in comparison to FCDO and other donor engagement, and traction has so far been limited.

Where BASIC TAS had been commissioned on behalf of, or in supported of, government stakeholders, the reception was mixed. In Nigeria, the case study indicated the intention of the government to use BASIC outputs in policy formulation. In Jordan and Yemen, the response was less immediately positive, with the perception that BASIC had not been able to fully contextualise its inputs to the political economy facing national decision makers. Comments from national stakeholders included that the TAS reports were "more useful as a way of FCDO understanding what we do than in helping us" and that it "reflected the interests of international actors over our own domestic concerns."

The direct use of BASIC by other donors was most apparent in the context of SPACE, where products were commissioned by the co-funders GIZ and Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Other donor agencies expressed their desire to work with BASIC and use it as a resource, signifying BASIC's potential in servicing a wider group of user needs. Other donors tend to engage with BASIC indirectly as consumers of BASIC outputs, as reflected in interviews with USAID, the European Commission and World Bank. Donors expressed interest in BASIC outputs; for instance, SPACE's 'In-depth Country Case Studies,' 'Presentations to External Actors,' 'Learning Sessions and Briefs' and 'Country/Cross-country 1-2 Pagers'. Products published on SocialProtection.org were also referenced as having drawn interest and increased BASIC's, and in particular SPACE's, visibility.

A smaller number of assignments were commissioned directly by the SPT team, and this was partly attributed to limited capacity amongst the SPT team to commission or utilise TAS outputs. Examples included support to the coordination of the Grand Bargain Sub-Group,[22] policy papers commissioned from SPACE and a global study of Management Information Systems (MIS) systems. There was no direct feedback from other donors on the utility of the coordination inputs – possibly as external stakeholders were not aware that this was provided by BASIC – and the MIS report was not actively followed up or utilised.

Finding 7: There is little evidence so far on how relevant the research is to meeting demand and the priority needs of users, and stakeholder consultations are ongoing. The evaluation found evidence of scoping of the use of social protection approaches in crisis response by BASIC Research during their inception phase. This initial scoping exercise contributed to refining a list of global research questions with the aim of ensuring coherence across the subsequent country level research activities. As the Research workstream was still in the inception phase and the research themes had yet to be officially selected it was too early to determine the relevance of these questions or the effectiveness in identifying research gaps.

A more detailed mapping exercise in a long list of ten countries contributed to the final decision on the four priority countries, by assessing both the contextual relevance and demand. The four selected countries were all viewed as relevant choices by stakeholders. For example, it was reported by BASIC Research that this process informed the decision to focus on Lebanon rather than Jordan, given the protracted crises focus. Local demand from FCDO posts for research was evident but awareness of the

research component amongst other stakeholders was limited to selected individuals who were consulted. The case studies confirmed that within the four selected countries there was a further extended consultation process to refine the research questions involving a range of stakeholders, including FCDO, Government and national researchers. This process aimed to define the final research topics for each country by consulting stakeholders on which of the draft global list of research questions were regarded as most relevant to investigate in the local context.

While there was evidence of wide consultation on the research themes it was unclear how the interests and priorities of different stakeholder groups were being reconciled and traded-off, with potential tensions emerging. The incomplete evidence gathered during the baseline suggested that FCDO were key consultees at country and HQ levels, while other stakeholders including national authorities had much less direct influence. The research team themselves were leading the definition of the research agenda and emphasised their view that research should be more academic in nature and distinct from the more demand-led work commissioned under technical assistance.

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

Finding 8: Challenges emerged with the model of highly demand-driven technical assistance initially provided by TAS. As noted above, the design of BASIC was highly demand-driven and facilitated a strong alignment with in-country needs. However, challenges emerged with relying on an overly demand-driven approach.

Initial technical assistance provided by both BASIC TAS, and SPACE was characterised at times as being "opportunistic" or "ad-hoc" and lacking a longer-term vision, with insufficient time or resources for strategic thinking. In contrast, the later stages of SPACE demonstrated how a clear strategic focus on responding to the pandemic could be translated into the more coherent and strategic provision of TA, including mechanisms to consolidate and share best practices and lessons. The end of SPACE thus has thrown the relative lack of strategic focus in BASIC into relief, with its weaker mechanisms for drawing lessons across countries and ensuring that the global programme is "more than the sum of its parts."[23] The appropriateness of responding to demand from a very wide geography, including MICs such as Brazil, was also questioned by some stakeholders.

Finding 9: There have been efforts to balance the responsive nature of the support with a more strategic approach over time. Several measures have been taken, or are ongoing, that contribute to a more strategic approach. Firstly, there has been a more strategic push to proactively generate demand from priority countries and away from lower priority contexts. This is further evidenced by the focus on selected deep engagement countries for both the BASIC TAF and Research workstreams.

Secondly, the introduction of a PFP[24] improved the coordination between BASIC and FCDO and facilitated balancing out strategic support with the demand-led aspect of BASIC delivery. This post was valuable in helping to stimulate demand from countries which were strategically important to include within the scope of BASIC support but where requests for services for various reasons were not spontaneously emerging. The PFP also helped to screen out lower priority requests.

Thirdly, the combination of short- and long-term support enabled BASIC TAS to respond to different types of needs. Short-term, targeted technical support, often coming in the form of consultation, advice and analysis has been effective at offering demand-driven support, used to address immediate country office needs. Following on these initial engagements with sustained support – for example through nexus or coordination advisors such as in Nigeria and Yemen – benefited more concerted efforts at developing strategic outputs aligning with FCDO priorities and policy commitments. This is discussed further in Section 4.3.

Finding 10: While in early stages of delivery, plans for BASIC Research indicate an intention to balance strategic considerations with a local demand. As part of the inception phase, the research workstream is articulating and communicating a set of strategic global research questions which are being used to integrate centrally determined strategic priorities with local demand. The Research team conducted reviews of the issues in a short-list of potential focus countries, followed by local stakeholder consultations to assess demand of evidence on each theme and research question. This was done with the objective of developing a strong understanding of crossover between country, FCDO and BASIC priorities.

The research topics were yet to be finalised at the time of the baseline. This process appears to be an appropriate mechanism to attempt to balance these factors. However, the effectiveness of the approach will need to be properly assessed once the implementation of BASIC Research starts. This in turn is likely to depend on the appropriateness of the global research themes selected and whether the questions are sufficiently focused or overly ambitious in scope.

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

Finding 11: While consideration of gender-responsive and inclusive social protection in the initial stages of TAS was relatively weak, this improved dramatically with the advent of SPACE. Weak mainstreaming of GESI-related issues in the early stages of BASIC TAS related in part to limitations of the EACDS delivery model, combined with insufficient relevant contractual obligations. FCDO KIIs indicated that this was a key rationale for procuring the TAF, which explicitly aims to improve the use of gender-responsive social protection approaches through separate but coordinated BASIC and GSP windows. However, it was not yet clear how GESI would be mainstreamed as part of TAF in practical terms at the time of analysis.

By contrast, SPACE adopted a two-pronged approach, mainstreaming GESI effectively, as well as undertaking targeted support (**Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**). These efforts related to both country- and global-level work and were enabled by funding from FCDO SPT's GSP programme for a strong six-person sub-team of GESI experts, led by a SPACE Deputy Team Leader specialised in gender, social protection, and livelihoods (and in the context of a relatively weak market for consultants with expertise in both social protection and gender or social inclusion expertise).

Table 4.1: GESI in SPACE delivery

Area	Mainstreaming	Targeted activities
TAS	▪ All assignment teams included a GESI expert, from the initial scoping call onwards. ▪ There was some variation in the level of input of GESI experts in assignments and, in turn, the value they were able to add – though experts and users report the quality of advice to be very good overall. ▪ SPACE overcame minor management challenges relating to the GESI sub-team, who were deployed by DAI, but contracted by OPM.	▪ Of the 45 countries that received SPACE support, 24 percent had a GESI focus. This number suggests that specific demand for and interest in support on gender-responsive and inclusive social protection is quite low. ▪ However, other key themes across SPACE assignments relate strongly to inclusion – e.g., expansion of safety nets to cover informal workers in response to COVID-19, and localisation (i.e., improved participation of local actors in SP design and implementation).
Tools, products & events	▪ GESI matrices were developed to complement core strategy and decision matrices, which themselves integrated relevant issues across SP design and delivery considerations (e.g., targeting, transfer amounts, accountability	▪ A quarter of all publications and blogs had a primary focus on GESI issues, including disability in targeting and identification, inclusive MIS, and practical tips for linking

Area	Mainstreaming	Targeted activities
	mechanisms, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response) and were deployed systematically, particularly in early assignments.	GBV and SP, with the majority considering GESI in some capacity. ▪ Two GESI-focused internal FCDO events covering, respectively, COVID-19 and inclusive economic recovery. ▪ GESI clinics at socialprotection.org conference.

Analysis of case study evidence supports the argument that GESI mainstreaming has improved over time, primarily through SPACE but also in TAS assignments. In all country cases, technical assistance provided was found to be GESI-sensitive using a scale adapted from UNICEF Innocenti's Gender Integration Continuum. Two of the four (Jordan and Somalia) included elements with a higher level of ambition – though these were GESI responsive rather than transformative (Appendix 5.1).

During inception, a range of steps have been taken to support mainstreaming in the design and implementation of Research. Most notable amongst these are the development of a GESI mainstreaming plan as a living document which will be reviewed quarterly to inform programme adaptation, and a matrix planning approach to ensure sufficient consideration of inclusion across research themes and focus countries. BASIC Research also includes a dedicated inclusion theme, which has focused during inception on inclusion and transformation, lived experiences (intersectionality), and institutional policies and approaches – and which is expected to be taken forward as one of four Research themes in the implementation phase.

Finding 12: The main outstanding GESI-related shortfall in BASIC delivery relates to the inclusivity of delivery teams, with TAS and SPACE having made only very limited use of local consultants. SPACE had intended, in its second phase, to diversify its expert roster, but this objective was never realised – largely due to the short lead times for assignments, and challenges in recruiting national consultants against benchmarked fee rates under EACDS. SPACE has recently begun to pair international and regional consultants on assignments funded by DFAT to address a lack of strong SP expertise in the Pacific region; there is potential for BASIC TAF to build on this approach. By contrast, Research is expected to have a strong focus on in-country research partnerships, though selection of country partners has been delayed for several months due to uncertainty around cuts to the programme budget.

Finding 13: There is also scope to expand slightly the programme's definition of inclusion. BASIC TAS has understood GESI primarily with reference to gender, age, and disability, including consideration of intersectionality and lifecycle approaches. In practice, as regards vulnerable populations, this has meant a focus mainly on adult women and people with disabilities, with some coverage of adolescent girls, older people, refugee populations and (in the COVID-19 context) informal workers. This focus has been driven by both the backgrounds of experts and the nature of demand. Whilst appropriate to focus on a core set of exclusion issues 'in-depth', it is worth keeping a broader definition in view in case other issues are pertinent in specific contexts. KIIs with suppliers and documents produced during inception suggest that BASIC Research is adopting a more ambitious definition of inclusion, which takes in account, for example, sexuality and political marginalisation.

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

Three main changes in programme context have been identified over the implementation period to date: 1) the COVID-19 global pandemic, 2) uncertainties associated with the Official Development Assistance

(ODA) reprioritisation exercise, and 3) the growth of support for using SP approaches in response to crisis.

Finding 14: BASIC adapted rapidly and flexibly to the COVID-19 crisis by establishing SPACE.
BASIC demonstrated its ability to respond and adapt to changing circumstances through the rapid creation of SPACE in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. BASIC received widespread recognition across internal and external stakeholders for the rapidity and effectiveness with which it pivoted to provide a strong pool of expertise to respond to this emerging priority. Multiple stakeholder groups at the global and country level praised SPACE for its ability to provide more tailored support in response to COVID-19. The onset of COVID-19 also enabled BASIC to engage with more countries than initially expected, as the demand for BASIC technical assistance increased. Documented process learning from the adaptive measures taken by SPACE is also expected to inform the design of TAF. However, the scale up of SPACE increased the administrative burden on the DAI management team and FCDO staff, which affected the delivery of other ongoing planned BASIC activities. It proved challenging to maintain a dual focus and trade-offs were required.

Finding 15: BASIC remains relevant in the light of the FCDO reprioritisation exercise to date, specifically in relation to the retained priorities of humanitarian reform and climate change.
FCDO and supplier stakeholders strongly indicated that the reprioritisation exercise created uncertainties about the relative priorities of FCDO in terms of its geographic and thematic focus. However, FCDO stakeholders also reported that the thematic focus of BASIC remained largely unchallenged by the end of the exercise and in line with the Integrated Review, published in March 2021. Humanitarian preparedness and response and climate change and biodiversity are two of FCDO's seven strategic priorities for ODA.[25]

Finding 16: The growing interest of a wider set of stakeholders in the use of social protection approaches in crisis response has increased the relevance of, and demand for, BASIC. Several stakeholders referred to the growing attention from both donors (including the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and the EU) and multi-lateral agencies (such as the World Bank (WB) and the World Food Programme (WFP)), who all have become more actively engaged in the use of social protection approaches over the implementation period. Furthermore, the onset of a global pandemic was strongly suggested – by multiple evaluation sources – to have increased the relevance of BASIC as countries globally sought to adapt their SP systems in response to the economic, health and structural effects of the crisis.

4.2   EQ2 Coherence

Evaluation Question	Progress at Baseline	Challenges and opportunities
2.1 Internal coherence	Effective mechanisms have been established to promote information exchange and cooperation between BASIC workstreams.	BASIC TAS had limited mandate and capacity for more strategic coordination.
2.2 External coherence	Few overlaps between BASIC and other FCDO centrally managed programmes with few other comparable centrally managed programmes supported by other actors.	Opportunity to strengthen and formalise collaboration with global actors including World Bank.

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

Finding 17: The benefits of using two distinct specialised service providers outweigh the additional costs and challenges of internal coordination. Procurement of two suppliers, one for

technical assistance and research, added coordination demands. This was justified by the distinct expertise of the suppliers – a lesson from the analogous FCDO Maintaining Essential Services after a Natural Disaster (MAINTAINS) programme was the benefit of using specialised suppliers.

Finding 18: A variety of mechanisms have been established to promote information exchange and cooperation between BASIC workstreams and were broadly effective. Several design linkages and coordination mechanisms were introduced to coordinate BASIC workstreams internally, which broadly met their objectives. We identified multiple active design links and coordination mechanisms that were used to support internal coherence, as illustrated in Table 4.. These links and mechanisms were both formal and informal in nature.

Table 4.2: Overview of design links and internal BASIC coordination mechanisms

Link / mechanism	Objective	Description
Separation of TAS and Research	Enable the joint focus on TAS and research.	Procurement of different suppliers with different capabilities and expertise to respond to the needs of the programme.
KML workstream	Synthesis and dissemination of knowledge and lessons from technical assistance and research outputs.	A range of deliberate activities including evidence mapping, process learning, portfolio synthesis, and knowledge exchange, underpinned by continued KML development under TAF.
Programme Funded Post	Increase BASIC demand and ensure sufficient delivery and learning processes in place.	An FCDO PFP was seconded into the TAS supplier to support demand generation, oversight of delivery and learning.
Technical consult pool	Facilitate cross-learning between assignments.	The repeated use of a smaller group of consultants across SPACE to enable cross-assignment learning and DAI expert learning sessions. Cross over of consultants between BASIC research and technical assistance.
BASIC Coordination group	Convene BASIC suppliers to share information and coordinate delivery.	Quarterly supplier management meeting, chaired by FCDO.
Supplier sub-group meetings		Ad-hoc and periodic meetings to share.
BASIC product peer-review	Provide quality assurance to supplier products, based on BASIC delivery experiences.	Technical personnel review pre-agreed outputs and share feedback for consideration.

N.B. Green indicates evaluation evidence suggested the link or mechanism met its objective, orange indicates it partly met its objective, and red indicates that it did not meet its objective.

Supplier organisations valued the content of coordination group meetings and the role of the PFP. These links enabled decisions to be made on when to coordinate across suppliers without being burdensome and provided key oversight of the BASIC portfolio in countries, respectively. At the country level, the early evidence was generally positive on internal coherence, although given the nascency of the role of BASIC Research at country level, case study evidence was weaker. However, the convening role of the FCDO posts was an important factor in promoting local level coherence. For example, in Yemen the research and TAS workstreams were being actively integrated within the framework of the new business case.[26]

Finding 19: A range of contextual and design factors prevented the optimal coordination between suppliers. Several issues were identified by suppliers and FCDO that somewhat negated efforts to support internal coherence, at both a global and country level. These included:

- Differences in the timing in the start-up of workstreams prevented the ability to plan and collaborate fully on implementation.

- Limited opportunities for Research to coordinate with and inform TAS assignments given that the main research outputs are only anticipated towards the end of the delivery period. However, the suppliers noted that the definition of research topics benefitted from the pre-existing BASIC TAS and SPACE scoping reports.

- Changes in the SPT leadership team led to some interruptions to coordination efforts.

- Limited resources allocated to TAS to support strategic oversight meant that BASIC TAS had limited mandate and capacity for more strategic coordination.

Finding 20: Overall coordination was viewed by suppliers and FCDO as generally effective. At a functional level, coordination was reported as generally good. However, some instances of overlap were noted, such as between SPACE country case studies and the Research country scoping studies, and suppliers reporting that they were not fully sighted on events and webinars, where joint attendance could have been beneficial. The introduction of BASIC TAF with additional management resources for strategic planning and the start of BASIC Research implementation phase are expected to provide an opportunity to improve internal coherence. For example, while the KML strategy was initially developed by DAI, it plans to develop a new collaborative KML strategy now that BASIC Research has been procured.[27]

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?

Finding 21: There was a good level of coherence between BASIC and other FCDO centrally managed programmes, although the extent of active coordination was mixed. Overall BASIC was found to fit well with other FCDO centrally managed programmes. This is underpinned by BASIC having a relatively clear and unique role. However, there was still some potential overlap with several FCDO programmes. The greatest potential overlap was with MAINTAINS, given its similar function; however, this was largely managed through a division of geographic responsibilities.[28] There was arguably an unexploited opportunity for greater technical collaboration and exchange with MAINTAINS, a point that is now redundant given its early termination. The potential overlap with the GSP[29] has been recognised and to enhance synergies there was a decision to use the same service provider for GSP and BASIC TAF. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of joint management in promoting coherence given this has yet to move into implementation. BASIC appears to have coordinated effectively with the Palladium-managed HSOT, with specific humanitarian expertise provided through the HSOT database.

Coordination with other complementary FCDO centrally managed programmes appears to have been limited to date. For example, there was limited evidence of technical collaboration with Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC)[30] on the use of cash plus or livelihood responses as part of a SP response or the Humanitarian Global Services Project.[31]

Finding 22: The aims and objectives of BASIC were broadly aligned with those of other key donors, including the EU and USAID, but cooperation and coordination remains largely informal. KIIs with other global donors found them strongly supportive of the goals of BASIC, with one donor suggesting FCDO to be at the frontier when it came to advising on the use of SP during crisis. Coordination with donors was conducted by FCDO rather than directly by the BASIC programme. At global level, the Grand Bargain cash sub-group was judged as a particularly useful coordination mechanism. The Grand Bargain sub-group was judged as a useful forum for the exchange of information, including BASIC products. However, it did not appear to serve as a platform for the strategic coordination of the BASIC programme per se and the similar activities of other donors. The main locus

for donor coordination has been migrated to the SPIAC-B following the sunsetting of the cash sub-group.

Under SPACE, concrete cooperation in the use of BASIC products did emerge with other donors: GIZ and DFAT. This was viewed as a successful collaboration. However, bilateral, formalised agreements with the major donors including the WB on the use of BASIC is not yet in place (Figure 4.).

Figure 4.3: Percent of total social protection (2017-2019) humanitarian spend (2018-2021) for case-countries - top six donors and recipients – Nigeria, Jordan, Somalia, Yemen
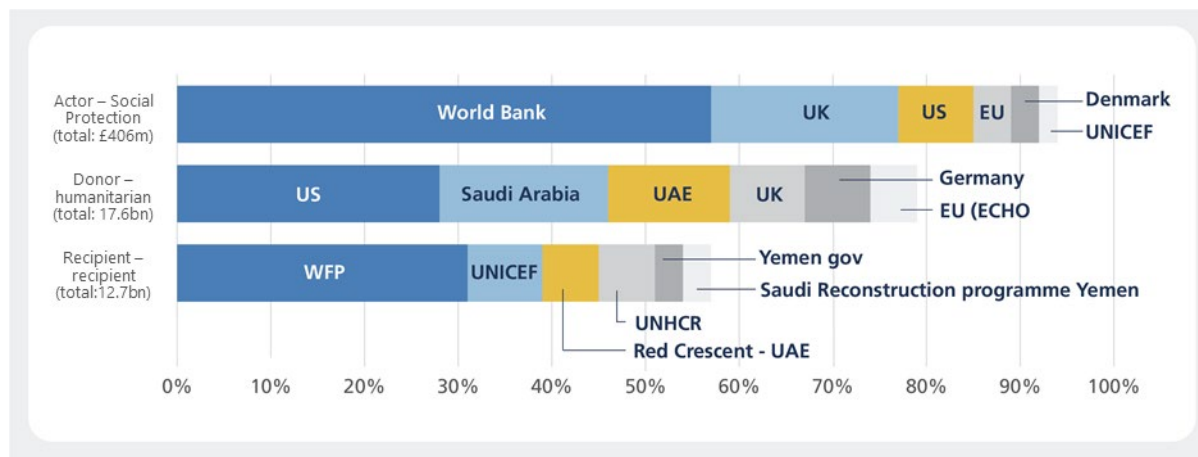
Source: UNOCHA (2021); OECD (2021). **N.B.** There may be some double counting present in the social protection figure as donors, financial institutions and multilateral agencies may be referring to funding for the same efforts, but from different positions – e.g., the World Bank may receive funds from multiple donors. Differences in UNOCHA donor and recipient figures reflect incomplete records uploaded to the UNOCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS).

Finding 23: There have been active efforts to coordinate with other providers of relevant technical assistance, research, and knowledge management functions. However, a degree of overlap continues to be observed in delivery. Duplication risks were found to be moderate, with few other centrally managed programmes of other actors identified with similar aims and activities. Donors and implementing agencies regarded a degree of duplication acceptable given the sheer wealth of evidence gaps and benefits of individual agencies having direct ownership and able to tailor outputs to their needs.

BASIC has actively sought to establish a limited number of partnerships with a range of related initiatives. This includes working with sp.org on the dissemination of products. IDS did seek to partner formally with WFP on the research agenda. Although this did not proceed due to contractual reasons, country level agreements may still be possible. A range of other research partnerships are being taken forward at global and country level. Given the significance of their emerging role in supporting SP responses to crises, a core gap remains the lack of a strategic global partnership with the WB on both technical assistance and research.

Technical assistance consultants coordinated and collaborated well with a range of partners in delivering on assignments in country. However, there appeared to be limited prior external engagement in the design phase of mapping and scoping exercises. Consequently, there was a degree of overlap with similar mapping and scoping studies produced in some case countries in similar time frames.[32] However, this might be justified to some extent by the specific needs of the commissioning organisation and the transaction costs of multi-agency sponsorship.

Finding 24: Cross-case analysis suggested achievement of external coherence is highly dependent on country context. Several factors relating to the composition of SP infrastructure and support were suggested to have enabled external coherence, such as the presence of pooled funding

instruments and large, national programmes with multiple components, and pre-existing coordination mechanisms. However, case research also flagged that more developed systems were more complex as they involved more actors with smaller and/or overlapping remits, which require additional resources to support coherence. However, these coordination challenges further underpin the rationale for BASIC, which seeks to resolve coordination failures at multiple levels.

4.3   EQ3 Effectiveness

EQ	Progress at Baseline	Challenges and opportunities
3.1 Achievement of outputs	Provided high-quality, diverse, and impartial advice for the design of, mainly FCDO, programmes. Generated greater awareness and understanding of SP approaches in crises.	Research country plans have been well received by FCDO teams in country. Strategic partnerships with key humanitarian-SP actors not yet developed. Few dedicated capacity building activities to date.
3.2 Contributory factors to outputs	Different technical assistance modalities respond to different types of need – and were used sequentially to focus effort and build stakeholder trust.	Factors affecting the achievement of TAS and SPACE outputs are: quality and impartiality of advice provided, clarity of user requests, contextual understanding, on-the-ground access and support, and user bandwidth for engagement.
3.3 Achievement of outcomes	Technical assistance fed directly into the design of FCDO programmes, and improved coordination between donors and agencies. FCDO offices used outputs to support their influencing objectives.	Limited contribution to changes in *government* policies or programmes, or wider systems change, so far. Extent to which stakeholders have used programme evidence to inform practice is unclear.
3.4 GESI outcomes	The most promising GESI results relate to influencing of partners in country.	Lack of clear evidence as to whether TAS and SPACE has contributed to implementation of gender-responsive and inclusive SP. Importance of building country demand for GRSP.
3.5 Contributory factors to outcomes	N/A	Three factors enable BASIC's ability to bring about outcome-level change: strategic use of BASIC to support country objectives; positive PE of SA provision; and positive funding environments.
3.6 Synergies between workstreams	Research differs qualitatively from analysis and evidence synthesis undertaken by technical assistance and has the potential to add value.	Research is operating on a different timeframe from rest of the programme, and unlikely to combine with other outcomes to generate impact within BASIC's lifetime.

EQ3.1 Has each workstream, and BASIC overall, achieved their intended outputs?

Finding 25: BASIC TAS and SPACE have provided high-quality, diverse, and impartial advice for the design and delivery of – mainly FCDO and, to a lesser extent, government, and agency – programmes. In June 2021, TAS had delivered 28 projects to date, engaging with 45 countries **–** 33 of them more than once – through 128 unique engagements.[33] Most technical assistance projects focused explicitly on the harmonisation of humanitarian and SP systems; however, most *funding* was allocated to responding to COVID-19 more broadly. (See Appendix 2 for a full analysis of technical assistance projects and spend.) 88 percent of the 17 baseline survey respondents reported that technical assistance received from BASIC was, or will be, very effective (35 percent) or effective (53 percent) in supporting them to make better use of SP approaches in times of crisis.[34]

Both users and experts themselves emphasised the high calibre of experts on the roster – with several pointing to the stellar reputations, and high level of influence with donors and agencies, of senior experts.[35] SPACE and, to a lesser extent, BASIC TAS deployed multidisciplinary teams comprised of members with complementary skillsets. Users emphasised that this was unusual for a call-down facility

and improved the overall quality of advice provided by integrating different perspectives and providing an internal source of challenge.[36]

Users have tended to view BASIC technical assistance as an impartial source of advice (supported, in the case of SPACE, by a multi-donor funding structure). This enabled experts to build open and effective working relationships with in-country users and, in some instances, to facilitate policy dialogue between stakeholders.[37] At the same time, where experts had previous experience of working in or with FCDO or GIZ, in addition to substantive expertise, users perceived this to be an added benefit which enabled support to feed directly into internal programme design and approval processes.[38]

Finding 26: BASIC has generated greater awareness and understanding of SP approaches in crises – through knowledge products and to some extent by facilitating cross-country learning. While BASIC TAS did not routinely share products developed during support with external stakeholders, SPACE has produced a large volume of learning publications. Users reported that SPACE distinguished itself – and built strong brand visibility – through the high-quality and practical orientation of its learning products, as well as the speed with which these were published compared to other sources.[39] As regards primary users, of the 207 outputs produced by SPACE specifically by June 2021, 101 were global public goods or other global-level publications produced for a general audience, 70 were used by FCDO (56 at country level and 14 at global level by the SPT), 10 by UN agencies, 7 by a host government, 5 by GIZ and 3 by a coordination body (Grand Bargain Subgroup on Linking Humanitarian Cash with Social Protection, Donor Cash Forum).

Cross-country learning has been more structured under SPACE than BASIC TA, with the former benefitting from the existence of a core team and producing three waves of a cross-country synthesis document. Under both facilities, cross-country learning has been facilitated by the experience of individual consultants. SPACE experts reported that having a view across different contexts meant that they were well-placed to facilitate cross-country learning, particularly during the initial COVID-19 response when they were primarily advising on options for horizontal and/or vertical expansion.[40] Several technical assistance users likewise pointed to the opportunity to learn from other country contexts as a benefit of support. Examples cited involved linking FCDO programmes in different countries – for instance, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Zimbabwe to explore alternative delivery models for cash programming – or providing country examples to inform programming – e.g., to inform the evaluation of an emergency cash transfer for girls' education in South Sudan.[41]

Finding 27: While the Research workstream is not yet in implementation, country plans developed by BASIC Research have been well received by FCDO teams in country. Research appears to be effectively setting country-level research agendas in consultation with embassy teams.[42] As Research moves into implementation, it will be important to explore how the programme can ensure synergies between Research and any short-term evidence pieces which might be developed by the new BASIC TAF.
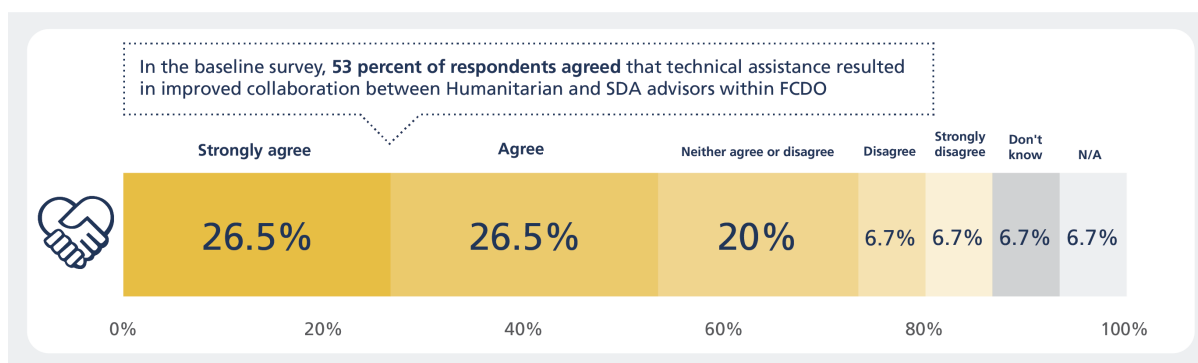
There was an apparent mismatch of expectations in the approach and deliverables from the Research inception phase. While the supplier focussed on using the inception for the implementation phase, on the FCDO side there was an additional expectation that the inception process would itself yield policy relevant papers.

Finding 28: BASIC is strengthening relationships between humanitarian and SP actors, but strategic partnerships have not yet been developed. In the baseline survey, 27 percent of respondents (including some of those based in Jordan, Nigeria, Yemen and DRC) strongly agreed that technical assistance resulted in improved collaboration between humanitarian and social development advisers within FCDO (Figure 4.2).[43] While too early to assess Research-related outputs, 'strengthening networks and linkages' between the humanitarian, climate resilience and SP sectors, both nationally and internationally, is expected to form a 'domain of change' for Research.[44] Areas which have received

limited attention so far include building strategic partnerships at global level (as distinct from support to coordination mechanisms), as well as building relationships between HA/SP and climate actors.

Figure 4.2: Survey responses to the statement 'The assistance provided by BASIC resulted in improved collaboration between FCDO Humanitarian and Social Development Advisers'

In the baseline survey, **53 percent of respondents agreed** that technical assistance resulted in improved collaboration between Humanitarian and SDA advisors within FCDO

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	N/A
26.5%	26.5%	20%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Source: Integrity (2021). In-house survey (n=17). Question D3 - And regarding specific technical activities you engaged in, can you indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements…

Finding 29: BASIC has so far undertaken few dedicated capacity building activities. The ToC references capacity building support for FCDO, agencies, governments, donors, and local actors among its outputs. To date, concerted capacity building activities have focused on internal capacity, through SPACE internal learning sessions for FCDO (and GIZ) advisers and programme staff, and public facing, global level learning sessions, which sought to build capacity to develop and implement SP policy and programme approaches in response to crises.[45] Building country research partner (local actor) capacity features prominently in the nested ToC for the Research workstream (though partners are yet to be identified).[46] Capacity building elements to government or donors/agencies were featured within some technical assistance assignments, but were more limited extent and on an ad hoc basis – suffering from a lack of clarity on scope and ambition.

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

Finding 30: Different technical assistance modalities have responded to different types of need – and have been used to build upon each other, supporting delivery of quality advice. Technical assistance has undertaken multi-stage engagements – most often characterised by an initial short engagement to explore options and entry points, that laid the groundwork for more sustained 'deeper dives' to explore a specific issue in detail – which has produced particularly useful and actionable advice.[47] Repeat engagements have also allowed the building of trust with key stakeholders and partners in country, as in Nigeria, where technical assistance provided support to a Development Partners Group and Cash Working Group.[48]

Conversely, the length of engagement has affected the extent to which experts were able to take the bigger picture into account in shaping assignments, and not only provide relatively narrow advice on specific technical issues (where additional days for this type of engagement were not included in ToRs). For example, in Sudan, BASIC provided advice to government on the design of a monitoring survey, but the expert was unable in the time available, and given delays in engagement from the interlocutor, to engage in broader issues raised by the FCDO which related to the overall design of programme monitoring, evaluation and learning .[49]

It is worth noting that BASIC has so far deployed few long-term embedded advisers to countries relative to programme ambitions, at least partly due to COVID-19 restrictions.[50] Evidence from Nigeria and Yemen suggests that embedded advisory roles can offer particular value in developing practical solutions to strengthen, and improve coordination between actors across, the humanitarian-development nexus.[51] For example, in Nigeria, the Nexus Advisor also developed an action plan for a

Cash Common Donor Approach to support transition to a more cohesive humanitarian approach to using cash.

**Finding 31: Other factors affecting the achievement of technical assistance outputs** have been:

▪ **Quality and impartiality of advice provided:** which, as noted in Section EQ3.1 above, has generally been very high.

▪ **Clarity of user requests:** The delivery team emphasised that receiving a clear steer from in-country clients was essential to enable them to provide high-quality support. Initial scoping calls generally supported the development of a clear ask. ToRs aimed to clearly define expected outputs of assignments, while retaining flexibility to adapt through contract breakpoints for review and revision (first piloted in Yemen). However, in cases where BASIC did not receive a clearly defined request despite these efforts, it was challenging for BASIC to offer useful support (as in the case of some assignments in Somalia).[52]

▪ **Contextual understanding, including the political economy of SP:** In Jordan, while some FCDO staff reported that BASIC consultants had a good understanding of the national and wider Middle Eastern context, others observed that they could have placed more emphasis on political dynamics within and between government institutions involved in delivering SP (it is worth noting that this concern may have been addressed had the team not been unable to travel due to Covid-19).[53] In Somalia, users reported that support would have been more effective had experts been better able to absorb and take into account the complexity of the nascent SP system.[54]

▪ **On-the-ground access and support:** In Yemen, the assignment team (and commissioner) were restricted in their understanding of institutional capabilities and ability to talk to a variety of national authorities by limited in-country access, even at times when access would have arguably been feasible.[55] And in Jordan, BASIC technical assistance deployed consultant based outside of the country which – had COVID not required a shift to virtual stakeholder engagement – would have meant missing an opportunity for the FCDO to involve the consultant regularly in meetings with government counterparts.[56]

▪ **User bandwidth for engagement:** Engaging technical assistance support necessarily requires a time commitment from users. In some cases, in-country users lacked sufficient bandwidth to develop and draw on BASIC (e.g., Syria, Iraq) or, for those who had already drawn on BASIC support, to formulate requests for further assistance which was desired (e.g., Pakistan, Yemen case study). Further, some in-country advisers felt that they could have drawn more effectively on technical assistance had they had more time to engage with other Embassy colleagues across siloed programme portfolios (e.g., humanitarian, social development and/or climate resilience). Capacity limitations could also be substantive; in the case of Sudan, the Project Management Unit of the Family Support Programme lacked a gender lead to commission and act as the contact point for a related assignment which they had identified as a need.[57]

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

Finding 32: BASIC technical assistance advice and outputs have fed directly into the design of FCDO programmes; however, the programme's contribution to changes in government systems has so far been limited. The most direct and tangible instances of technical assistance outputs being implemented were where these fed directly into FCDO programme design – most often, inputs to business cases for new or expanded programmes, including adaptation of existing programmes to support Covid-19 response, which were subsequently implemented. Just under 30 percent of baseline survey respondents strongly agreed, and 20 percent agreed that specific changes in FCDO country strategies, plans, programmes, or business cases had taken place because of the assistance received (Figure 4.3). 40 percent agreed that technical assistance resulted in the specification of new or improved

SP approaches by their team.[58] See Box 4.2**: BASIC technical assistance has informed the design of new FCDO country programmesBox 2.1** below for examples from case study countries.

Figure 4.3: Survey responses to the statements about changes resulting from technical assistance
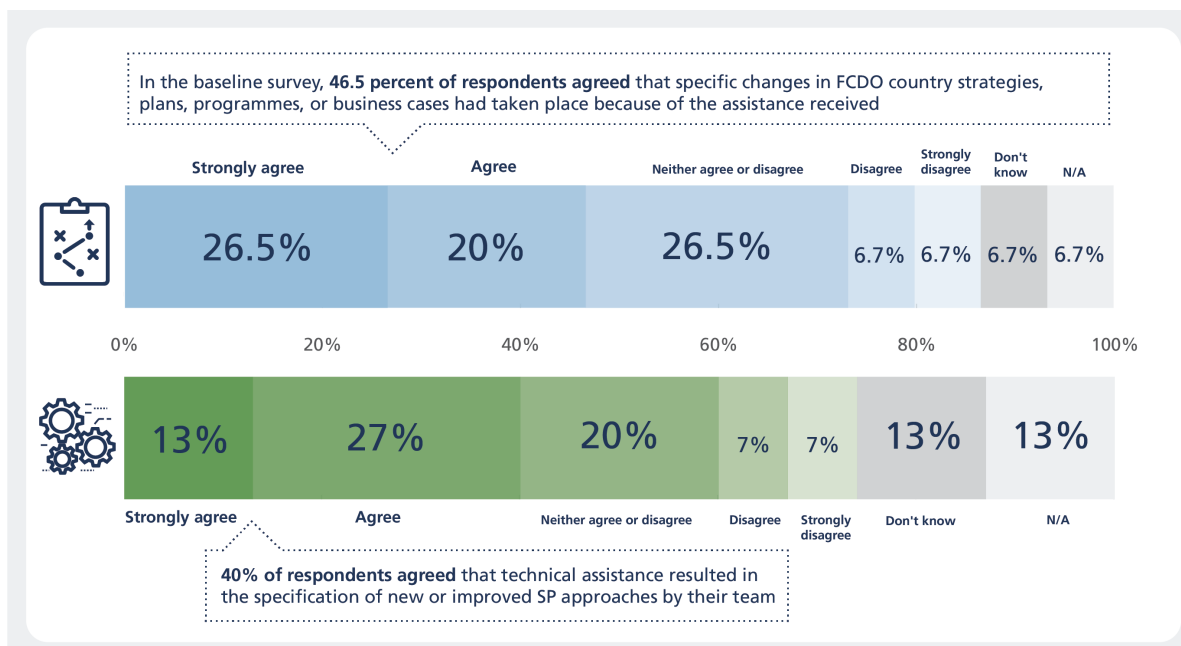
Source: Integrity (2021). In-house survey (n=17). Question D3 - And regarding specific technical activities you engaged in, can you indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements…

However, the (mostly short-term) technical assistance operating model has lent itself less well to direct engagement with national authorities, unless situated within a broader and longer-term programme of support from FCDO country posts or agency partners. At baseline, uptake of BASIC advice by government appears to have been limited to discrete technical issues (e.g., monitoring survey design in Sudan) and otherwise weak. In Yemen, a short-term assignment which recommended improvements to the national Social Fund for Development's approach to targeting and evidence-based programming had limited results, with the Social Fund for Development reporting that work on transforming Social Fund for Development systems already underway and being led internally.

Box 4.2: BASIC technical assistance has informed the design of new FCDO country programmes

In **Jordan**, SPACE deliverables fed directly into the development of FCDO's business case for its £25m Emergency Social Protection Programme, including the decision to use two parallel delivery mechanisms, both of which were ultimately implemented. FCDO staff reported that they would not have been able to gather the necessary evidence and prepare the BC in the short time available without BASIC's support. TAS has since provided options for a new five-year programme, for which the business case is currently in development.

In **Yemen**, FCDO drew heavily on BASIC outputs to support all stages of programme development, including pre-concept note decision making as well as development of a concept note and business case. BASIC products also guided spending of the COVID-19 crisis reserve, supporting the office to think through impacts of COVID, mapping response architecture, and decisions on additional funding to the Social Welfare Fund, WFP, and NGOs.

Finding 33: The extent to which – and how – stakeholders have used evidence generated by the programme to inform policy and practice is less clear. The Research workstream is expected to be the primary contributor to the outcome, "evidence used to inform policies and practice." Section EQ3.5 below explores potential factors which may, and efforts so far by the Research team to, facilitate the

uptake of Research outputs. It is worth noting that TA assignments have synthesised and analysed existing evidence in support of, for example, programme design.

Case study evidence indicates that FCDO and, less frequently, agencies, are accessing and sharing SPACE knowledge and learning products[59] – but there is limited evidence as to whether and how they are being used to inform policies and practice. In Latin America, UNICEF translated some publications into Spanish for use in workshops with governments and agencies.[60] And, in Jordan, WFP staff reported having used SPACE resources to inform their programming and flagged SPACE as a useful resource to the government.[61] However, the evaluation has not identified any instances of country governments drawing directly on centrally-produced SPACE publications. Some experts questioned whether levels of uptake were sufficient to justify the quantity of outputs.[62] And with SPACE coming to an end, it is unclear how BASIC will maintain this momentum.

Finding 34: BASIC support has begun to improve coordination between donors and agencies on humanitarian and SP policy and programming. At global level, donors report that the SPACE multi-donor funding model has strengthened their collaboration on policy issues beyond the programme, and that SPACE support to the Grand Bargain Subgroup on Linking Humanitarian Cash with Social Protection is supporting the development of joint donor and agency positions – on gender in the COVID-19 response, for instance. However, these claims are only weakly supported by evidence.[63] Technical assistance has also supported donor/agency coordination mechanisms at country level (Box 4.3). In Nigeria, several assignments supported greater alignment between humanitarian cash programming and SP programmes and systems – for example, by mapping humanitarian cash transfers and SP programmes, both in the BAY States and in responses to COVID-19, across members of a Cash Working Group and Development Partners Group and identifying potential linkages. However, ambitions to undertake more work related directly to supporting country-level coordination have been somewhat limited by resource constraints – e.g., the number of delivery days available and client absorptive capacity. In Nigeria, for instance, BASIC support to the Cash Working Group through the nexus adviser was more limited than expected.

Box 4.3: BASIC technical assistance has established or strengthened donor and agency coordination platforms

In **Yemen**, BASIC has supported the establishment of a donor cash working group by developing a framework and workplan. Both have been perceived as adding value by working group members, though it is challenging to track the implementation of specific workplan activities.

In **Jordan**, BASIC technical assistance carried out stakeholder consultations which are helping to build consensus among members of an SP donor group around options for building the humanitarian-development nexus for SP. Donors and agencies reported that consultations have helped them find an avenue to work towards more coordinated support to government.

Finding 35: There is strong evidence that some FCDO offices have used technical assistance outputs in support of their influencing objectives; however, it is too early to assess how far these efforts have translated into increased and sustained political commitment to use of social protection approaches in crises. In total, 27 percent of baseline survey respondents (FCDO staff) agreed that technical assistance resulted in new and/or improved SP approaches being adopted by the government and 14 percent that it resulted in new and/or improved SP approaches being adopted by relevant multilateral agencies and international finance institutions (Box 4.4 provides examples of how BASIC technical assistance has begun to influence government stakeholders).[64]

Several in-country users reported having used technical assistance outputs to make a case for policies or programmes internally (e.g., in ministerial submissions) and to inform engagement with and influencing of government and other partners. In Jordan, for example, BASIC has supported the FCDO to position itself as a thought leader in a crowded donor environment, with advisers able to draw on

BASIC-produced evidence, not only in internal communications, but also to inform their negotiations with the National Aid Fund and donors as the Government of Jordan was developing its National Social Protection Strategy.[65] However, BASIC could expand the influencing potential of written technical assistance outputs by systematically repackaging them for external country stakeholders. At global level, SPACE has prepared briefs on key multilaterals to inform FCDO, GIZ and DFAT efforts to engage with and influence them – although how donors will draw on this support remains to be seen.[66]

Box 4.4: BASIC technical assistance has begun to influence government policy and practice

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC), SPACE supported FCDO to influence the government to implement a two-phased approach to determining eligibility for its new cash transfer (which meant that initial transfers could be made far more quickly), by providing evidence-based feedback on design and acting as an independent convenor of meetings between government, donors**,** and agencies.

In **Nigeria**, BASIC has succeeded in engaging decision makers at the top of the government, through an adviser embedded within the FCDO and tasked with strengthening the nexus between humanitarian and development actors. Three policy proposals made by BASIC have been integrated into the National Development Plan, including establishing an SP fund, developing tools to plan, track and report on SP expenditure, and amending the SP legislative framework accordingly.

Finding 36: There is some evidence that BASIC has built individual, but not institutional, capabilities. As regards internal staff capacity, SPACE events for FCDO and GIZ personnel appear to have been most beneficial for personnel who already had a solid grounding in humanitarian cash transfers or SP and were interested in building their understanding of specific technical issues (e.g., improving the interoperability of humanitarian and SP systems). One staff member reported having deployed concepts and terminology learnt from events during country-level discussions with WB.[67]

Beyond the FCDO, instances of improvements in the capacities of individual government personnel identified by the evaluation at baseline were few and focused on specific technical issues (with the most notable instance in Sudan, where the technical assistance user reported having built their understanding of survey design for monitoring SP programming – but where the individual in question was themselves a secondee, as part of a research group providing capacity support to government). Building national consultant capacity during the course of technical assistance assignments has been unrealistic given limited use of national consultants and within the level of resource allocated to individual assignments. Only in the case of agencies has BASIC begun to support capacities at an institutional level, with SPACE responding to a request from WFP at headquarters level, to identify areas for internal capacity building based on the programme's experience engaging with WFP country offices; however, the results of this engagement are not yet known.[68]

An important auxiliary benefit of BASIC technical assistance has been that it directly facilitates coordination and learning between individual experts across the humanitarian-development nexus. SPACE experts indicated that working in mixed teams, as well as regular technical team catch-ups, had enabled them to engage meaningfully with and learn from experts with different specialisms, better understand different perspectives and build knowledge on specific substantive areas (e.g., determining transfer values) or cross-cutting areas (e.g., disability inclusion) – and go on to deploy that learning in assignments beyond SPACE.[69]

EQ3.4 To what extent has BASIC contributed to the development of gender-responsive and inclusive social protection policies, systems, and programmes in partner countries and globally?

Finding 37: There is a lack of clear evidence as to whether technical assistance has contributed to demand for, or design and implementation of, gender-responsive and inclusive SP policies and programmes. Results at country level have been mixed, both for assignments which mainstreamed gender or inclusion-related issues (under both BASIC TAS and SPACE) and for more

targeted pieces of work (SPACE only). There is certainly strong potential for technical assistance to support the development of gender-responsive and inclusive social protection. For example, in Pakistan, SPACE supported the government to develop more effective accountability mechanisms for its SP programme by engaging with existing community networks (women's self-help groups) rather than relying on programme-specific beneficiary committees comprised of volunteers. And in Kenya, it supported the Council of Governors to develop a gender-responsive COVID-19 response plan in such a way that it could be implemented straightforwardly across councils.[70]

At global level, there have been relatively high levels of demand for GESI-focused SPACE publications. The paper, "Strengthening Gender Equality and Social Inclusion during the implementation of social protection responses to COVID-19" received over 1,100 unique views (by end March 2021, having been published in September 2020) – which compares well with other SPACE papers published earlier.[71] However, the programme has not tracked which types of users have accessed these publications, and whether and how they have been used to inform practice. Readership numbers reflect the increasing visibility of inclusion-related issues in SP responses. There was some suggestion on part of programme experts and users that SPACE has contributed to this shift by generating discussion and providing actionable guidance[72] – but this type of result is not easily validated and the level of contribution challenging to establish.

Box 4.5: SPACE support to gender-responsive and inclusive SP has had mixed results

In **Lebanon**, SPACE supported the development of the FCDO Business Case for the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme. This involved mainstreaming a strong focus on gender equality in programme design, as well as helping the Lebanon Social Development Adviser to develop relationships with UN Women to inform a clear FCDO ask on gender inclusivity in the future of the programme. The Business Case ultimately did not proceed due to budget cuts. However, BASIC support has built the country office's understanding of *how* it can integrate GESI, and interest in championing gender inclusivity in its social assistance work. The embassy recently held a Policy Briefing which invited development actors to discuss the future of SP in Lebanon and included inputs from SPACE experts on the importance of inclusion in programming.

In **Sierra Leone**, the FCDO requested guidance on i) including persons with disabilities in targeting and ii) identifying, supporting, and reporting instances of GBV in cash programming. SPACE provided two guidance notes to inform adaptation of the targeting and delivery of FCDO's emergency cash programme. While this was possibly the most substantial GESI-targeted piece of work undertaken by SPACE, uptake of recommendations has been lacking with engagement from commissioning staff lower than expected. SPACE sought to extend the reach of learning from these assignments by developing a publication, *"How Targeting Mechanisms Can Identify People With Disabilities for Inclusion in Social Protection Programmes"* to help other countries and programme implementers adapt their programmes.

Finding 38: Uptake of GESI-related technical assistance outputs and recommendations has been strongest in cases where users specifically requested relevant expertise – reiterating the importance of building country demand for gender-responsive and inclusive SP. However, most targeted assignments have involved a low number of days, limiting the scale of ambition and potential results.[73] As regards support to GESI mainstreaming, there have been notable instances of FCDO embassies implementing recommendations (e.g., Lebanon; see Box 4.5 above). Nevertheless, where existing interest in inclusion-related issues was weak, so too was uptake – a pattern exacerbated by budget cuts, with GESI-related design features often the first thing to go.[74] There are also important sector-wide (both humanitarian and SP) barriers, not least the complexity and cost of, for example, comprehensive disability and inclusion, and a tendency to focus on output-level results (e.g., numbers of girls in school as a result of conditional transfers rather than educational attainment or other outcome). However, it is worth noting that addressing these challenges primarily falls within the scope of GSP rather than BASIC (see Section EQ2.2 above for linkages between BASIC and GSP).

Finding 39: The most promising GESI results relate to influencing of partners in country. In feedback to the programme, FCDO Ghana reported that SPACE has supported them to use its influence with the WB strategically to encourage improved integration of gender and disability-related

issues in programming. Similarly, in Brazil, FCDO has used evidence gathered by SPACE to push back on WB partners and prevent GESI-related programme workstreams being discontinued in the context of budget cuts. See Box 4.5 for examples of the mixed results of SPACE support to gender-inclusive and responsive SP at country level.

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

Finding 40: The evaluation has identified three main factors which have, and are likely to continue to, enable or constrain BASIC's ability to bring about outcome level change:

- **How strategically users (are able to) draw on BASIC support in support of their objectives**: Evaluation evidence suggests that translating technical assistance outputs into outcomes requires active engagement from users – underpinned, in the case of FCDO posts, by a shared vision across the country team, and senior management support.[75] Some users, such as FCDO Yemen, actively used BASIC to support its influencing goals and inform engagement with external stakeholders.[76] Others deployed BASIC as an independent broker, as in DRC where SPACE hosted stakeholder workshops convened by UNICEF and WFP to influence and build consensus around the design of a new WB-funded cash transfer programme.[77]

  Conversely, limitations on client bandwidth and staff turnover affect not only the quality of their engagement with BASIC support (see EQ3.2 above), but also their uptake of technical assistance outputs – as in Nigeria where staff turnover has undermined technical assistance team follow-up and FCDO's use of BASIC outputs in support of its advocacy and influencing goals.[78]

- **The political economy of social assistance provision**: SPACE responded to dramatically increased appetite for SP policy and programming as a tool for responding to crises in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several users indicated that, although the initial wave of requests associated with the onset of the pandemic has passed, considerable levels of demand are likely to continue, with an increasing focus on recovery and, in the future, a need to respond to climate-related disasters and displacement.[79]

  The politics of SP delivery at country level also matter. For example, humanitarian agencies may be disincentivised from completely integrating delivery of social assistance with government systems – for instance, by short-term institutional funding and planning cycles, approaches to setting transfer values (humanitarian minimum expenditure baskets versus more pragmatic approaches likely to be supported by government) and/or hesitancy around sharing beneficiary data with government. As regards partner governments, in some countries with large refugee caseloads there is decreasing political space to integrate refugees into national systems – as in Jordan, where increasing poverty rates amongst Jordanians during the pandemic have exacerbated challenges to social cohesion between refugees and host communities.[80]

- **Funding environments, within FCDO and across humanitarian-SP actors**: Within FCDO, the reprioritisation of ODA spending resulted in a prolonged period of uncertainty around programme budgets for country posts, resulting in several planned assignments being put on hold or cancelled. Budget cuts also curtailed uptake of the outputs of some assignments which had already been undertaken (as in Liberia and Zimbabwe).[81]

  More widely, decreasing levels of international humanitarian funding following the pandemic, as well as unprecedented levels of humanitarian need, are resulting in shortfalls for meeting the needs of existing caseloads. At the same time, funding from actors who have traditionally committed relatively less funding to social assistance in protracted crises contexts, most notably WB, is increasing. While there is some case evidence that BASIC has supported FCDO to respond to changing funding dynamics, engagement with key (emerging) partners including WB could be more strategic.

While BASIC Research has not yet moved into implementation, the nested ToC for the workstream will reflect enabling factors by integrating country partner milestones as intermediate outcomes – explicit steps between output and outcome level.[82] It is also expected that research design will be informed by FCDO's research uptake guidance, with the Research team having already implemented several items on the research uptake checklist (e.g., mapping relevant stakeholders, including complementary research programmes).[83]

Finding 41: Current monitoring and reporting of activities and results does not effectively support BASIC to contribute to outcome-level change. Considerable efforts have been made by the technical assistance delivery partner to capture, for example, feedback from technical assistance users. However, data relating to delivery and results could be collected and recorded more systematically and presented more clearly. For example, while outcome-level monitoring data is being collected on user and stakeholder behaviours (e.g., uptake and use of evidence), this can appear fragmented and be difficult to make sense of for those not directly involved in programme management. Evidence to relating to, and implications for the validity of, each of the ToC assumptions is set out in Appendix 5.

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

BASIC Research is operating on a different timeframe from the rest of the programme, meaning that use of the main research outputs by governments, donors and agencies is unlikely to combine with technical assistance to generate impact within, or immediately beyond, the lifetime of the programme. Nevertheless, key informants indicated that Research differs qualitatively from analysis and evidence synthesis undertaken by technical assistance and has the potential to add value by establishing long-term presence and engagement, building local capacities, and collecting much-needed primary data in protracted crises contexts. Currently, how Research activities and outputs will synergise with the technical assistance workstream, and vice versa, in practice is unclear. At midline and endline, we will explore whether and how synergies between different BASIC workstreams have helped bring about outcome-level change and compare pathways to impact in countries receiving both technical assistance and Research support ('deep engagement countries'), as well as with varying levels of technical assistance support.

4.4   EQ4 Impact

| EQ	Progress at Baseline	Challenges and opportunities
4.1 Contribution to 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.	Currently limited potential to bring about diversified and more sustainable funding.
4.2 Contribution at country level	Most plausible ToC impact pathway is for high-quality advice to combine with greater awareness and strengthened relationships to bring about new or strengthened country policies or programmes, greater coherence/synergies and increased political commitment. Early evidence of a potential trajectory towards impact in some case countries.	Least plausible impact pathway is for capacity building support to bring about improved institutional capability.
4.3 Contribution at global level	Baseline evidence suggests similar levels of feasibility of different impact pathways at global level.	Early evidence of trajectory towards impact is more limited at global level.

EQ4.1 Has BASIC and its workstreams achieved or likely to contribute to intended impacts per the theory of change and business case?

Finding 42: There is potential for BASIC 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. The overall ToC impact statement is supported by four sub-impacts, of which three relate to the provision of more efficient, effective, and inclusive social assistance in crises (with the third sub-impact added during the ToC review carried out in May/June 2021). As set out in Sections EQ3.3 and EQ3.4, the main achievements of BASIC so far have been i) the design of FCDO programmes which have subsequently been implemented; and, to a lesser extent, ii) emerging evidence of improved coordination across actors. Each of these outcomes has the potential to contribute to the improved effectiveness, efficiency and/or inclusivity of SP approaches used in crises. Improvements to FCDO programme design can perhaps contribute most directly to (sub)impact(s). However, improved coordination and coherence across actors and initiatives offers a larger scale of ambition and is therefore a core element of the ToC which is critical to achieving the programme's intended impact. Sections EQ4.2 and EQ4.3 below explore the feasibility of specific causal pathways in the ToC at country and global level.[84]

Finding 43: However, there is currently limited potential for BASIC to bring about diversified and more sustainable funding for SP approaches in crises (the fourth sub-impact in the ToC). The programme is not yet addressing global-level funding issues directly, in a context of both internal budget cuts and wider funding shortfalls post-COVID-19. There is certainly scope for BASIC to influence international institutional financing models, but this would require concerted influencing efforts in this particular area, driven centrally by FCDO – the evaluation has not identified evidence that this is yet the case. It would also require programme investments to demonstrate and support advocacy for particular financing models, which is likely to be more challenging following ODA cuts.[85] At country level, case study evidence suggests that in some contexts TA has supported Embassies to leverage other donor funding; however, at baseline, we did not identify evidence that the programme had leveraged increased domestic financing.

Finding 44: At baseline, the evaluation has identified several potential negative unintended consequences of the BASIC programme. Key informants stressed that, with BASIC operating at a remove from delivery, the potential for adverse impacts for vulnerable populations are relatively low. Nevertheless, given that BASIC is playing a strong role in programme design, it has been important to mitigate related risks. The SPACE team in particular has sought to do so by building mitigation mechanisms into advice systematically through use of core strategy and decision matrices across assignments which prompt consideration of, e.g., accountability, grievance redressal and GBV referral mechanisms. However, BASIC is not collecting monitoring data on the downstream effects of its advice.

Figure 4.5: Plausibility of ToC sub-impacts
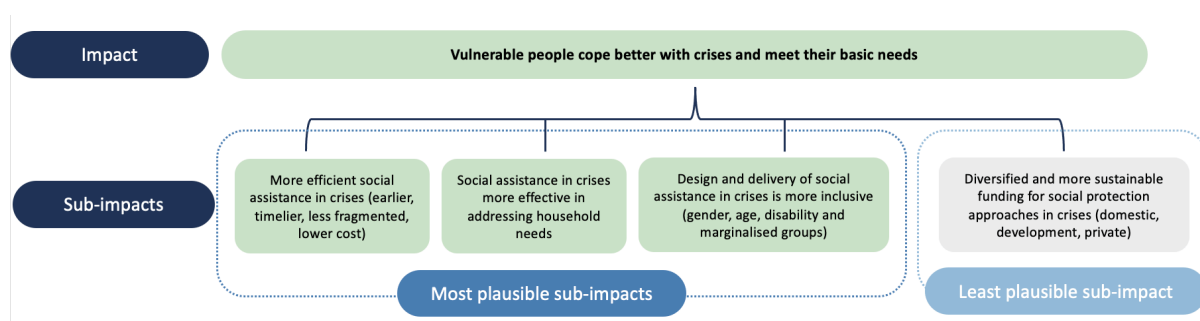
The most important potential negative unintended impacts are long term. First, more efficient social assistance which consolidates and reduces delivery channels may increase the fragility of systems, as well as risk of exclusion of vulnerable populations. There is value for resilience and inclusivity in having some overlap or replication across delivery systems, with smaller NGO-run transfer programmes often providing coverage to groups excluded by targeting and eligibility criteria of large humanitarian or,

particularly, government programmes. This risk is reflected in existing ToC assumptions.[86] Second, in many contexts, government-led systems may result in the exclusion from coverage of politically marginalised groups (though we note that development systems which are fully government led would only be possible in the very long term). The evaluation will explore whether and where each of these risks has materialised at midline and endline, though it should be noted that it may be challenging to draw a direct line between these risks and BASIC advice.

It is therefore critical that the sub-impacts articulated by the ToC are viewed alongside each other (as inextricably interlinked workstreams of the impact statement) and weighed alongside each other in specific contexts.

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?

Finding 45: Baseline evidence suggests differing levels of feasibility at country level of particular impact pathways within the ToC. Evidence from evaluation case studies suggests that, at country level, the most plausible ToC impact pathway is for:

'High quality advice' provided by technical assistance to combine with *'greater awareness, knowledge and learning'* and *'new or strengthened relationships'* (outputs) to bring about *'new or strengthened country…policies or programmes', 'greater coherence, coordination and synergies'* and *'increased political commitment'* – with the caveat that achieving this last outcome may be particularly challenging in some country contexts or among specific stakeholder groups including, critically, government. And, in turn, more effective, efficient and/or inclusive social assistance in crises (impact).

And that the least plausible impact pathway, again at country level, is for:

'Targeted [BASIC] capacity building support' to bring about *'Improved…institutional capability and capacity'* and, in turn and in combination with other outcomes, more effective, efficient, or inclusive social assistance in crises.

This impact pathway is currently the least clearly articulated and is likely to require both new areas of activity and significantly increased resources to be feasible.

Box 4.6: Nigeria: Initial evidence of potential trajectory towards impact

In **Nigeria**, engagement with senior government decision makers has resulted in the integration into the National Development Plan of three BASIC policy proposals – putting in place an SP fund, developing tools and processes to plan, track and report on SP expenditure, and amending the SP legislative framework accordingly – which, taken together, are expected to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of SP provision.

The embedded advisor developed an action plan on the Cash Common Donor Approach which, if agreed by donors, is expected to be a valuable tool for linking humanitarian action and SP – improving the effectiveness of social assistance. Likewise, a BASIC TAS 'mapping linkages' study made recommendations on harmonisation of cash and vouchers, and targeting of social registers, which are now being implemented, supporting more efficient and inclusive social assistance.

Stakeholders used risk analysis carried out by SPACE to negotiate with the Government and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on the movement of cases to BAY States to prevent insurgents from seizing cash (efficiency) and ensure humanitarian actors' compliance with national financial inclusion laws (inclusivity).

Figure 4.6: Plausibility of ToC impact pathways
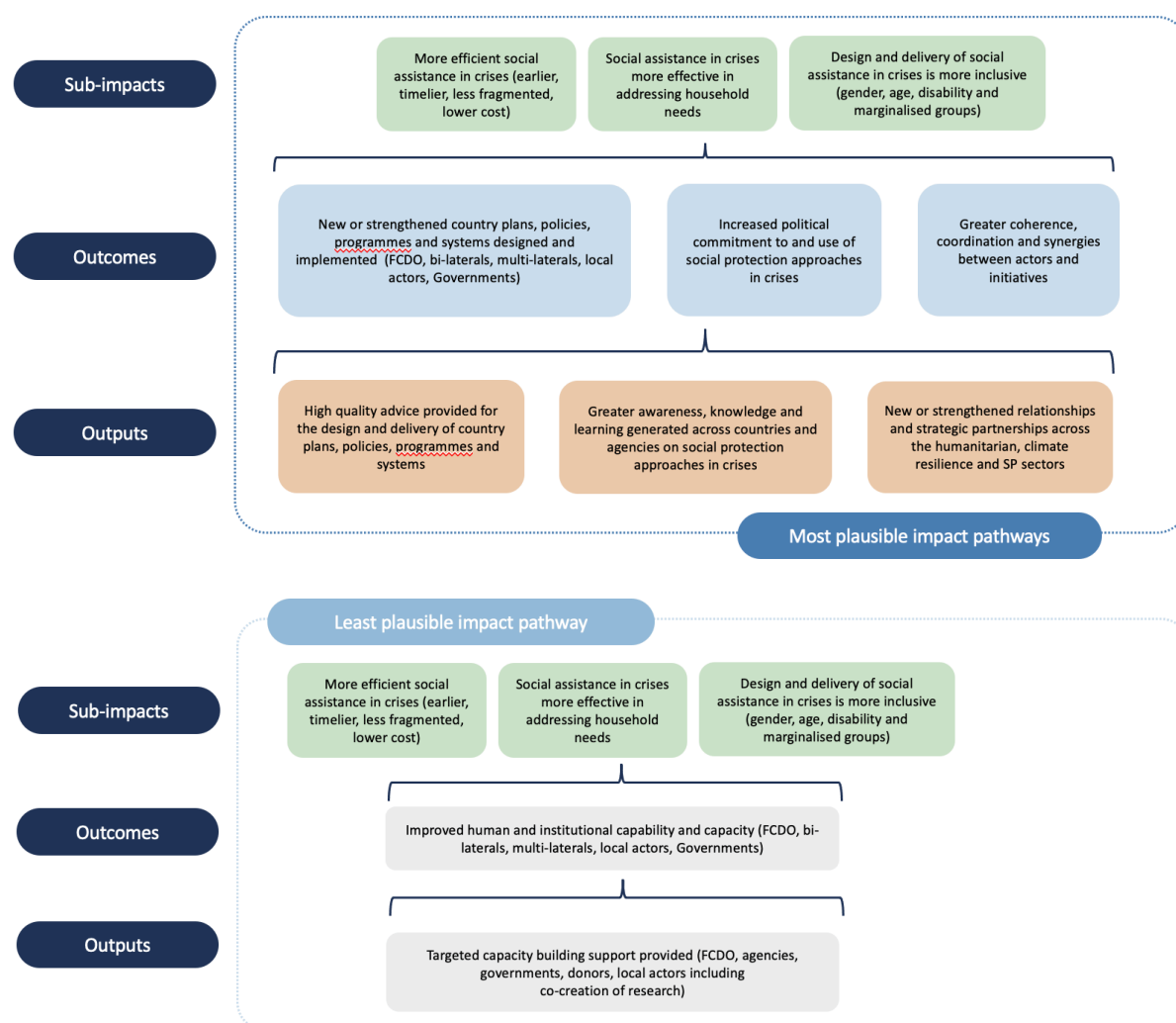
Finding 46: While desired impacts are long term, at baseline evaluation case studies have yielded early evidence of a potential trajectory towards impact in some countries (through the 'most feasible' impact pathway identified above). Evidence of impact relates mostly to policy *or* programme, rather than more comprehensive systems, change. See Box 4.6 and Box 4.7 for illustrations of how, at baseline, we have explored in specific country contexts how far BASIC has contributed to putting in place the building blocks for impact, with reference to ToC sub-impacts. It is challenging to determine the size of BASIC's contribution relative to other factors and actors, with the donor environment crowded in many of the contexts the programme is working in.

Finding 47: Necessary contributions outside of BASIC to achieve impact relate to the political economy for SP, including funding environments – like the outcome-level enablers and constraints identified in Section EQ3.5. Most tangibly, implementation of programmes designed or otherwise supported by BASIC depends on funding outside of BASIC's, and in some cases the FCDO's, control. These contributions emphasise the importance to the BASIC ToC of country-level staff and, specifically, of concerted senior-level FCDO efforts to build partnerships around mutual interests with external stakeholders, where possible, to build political commitment, promote donor, agency and government coordination and coherence, and leverage funds.

> **Box 4.7: Jordan: Initial evidence of potential trajectory towards impact at country level**
>
> In **Jordan**, the £25m Emergency Social Protection Programme, which SPACE helped design, has enabled expansion of emergency financial assistance through the government's flagship cash transfer programme to 293,000 vulnerable households impacted by economic shocks resulting from COVID-19, including informal workers. That is, the new FCDO programme supported by BASIC enabled government social assistance to meet household needs more effectively.
>
> As the use of two SPACE-recommended funding modalities enabled the FCDO to unlock international financing for Jordan, the new programme resulted in *diversified funding* for social assistance (albeit on a temporary basis). The first donor to contribute to a WB multi-donor trust fund, FCDO enabled the WB to channel other funding into it, unlocking USD $300m of concessional financing. Parallel funding to the Joint Fund Agreement balanced risk, as it was able to disburse funds to the government more swiftly.
>
> While not yet approved, the new five-year programme (for which options were prepared by BASIC TA) will seek to build on the existing government cash transfer programme by supporting it to introduce more inclusive transfers targeted to lifecycle risks, as well as to widen access to contributory social insurance (which meets household needs, while also diversifying funding).

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

Finding 48: Baseline evidence suggests similar levels of feasibility of different impact pathways at global level; however, early evidence of trajectory towards impact is more limited than at country level. The most plausible ToC impact pathway is for:

> *'High quality advice' provided by technical assistance to combine with 'greater awareness, knowledge and learning' and 'new or strengthened relationships' (outputs) to bring about 'greater coherence, coordination and synergies' and 'increased political commitment' (though, as above, achieving this last outcome may be particularly challenging in some institutional contexts). And, in turn, more effective, efficient and/or inclusive social assistance in crises (impact).*

As with the country level, there is quite limited potential for BASIC to contribute to impacts through improved capacities. At midline and endline, we will explore what difference synergies between the technical assistance and Research workstreams make to achieving global impacts, as well as interactions between the global and country levels.

4.5 EQ5 Efficiency

EQ	Progress at Baseline	Challenges and opportunities
5.1 What is the value for money (VFM)	BASIC offers good VFM 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 and delivery of Research impacted on efficiency. The need for multiple TAS contracts affected efficient procurement, although TAF may address this. Cost effectiveness of BASIC should assessed by examining SP funding leveraged as result of BASIC.
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.	FCDO management capacity was a challenge, due to staff turnover and resource constraints, although now addressed. Closeout arrangements for assignments should better consider the monitoring of output use.
5.3 Timeliness of delivery	COVID-19 impacted the timely delivery of outputs, although TAS and SPACE were viewed as highly responsive.	TAF timeliness should be assured using a new contracting mechanism. Research is transitioning to delivery, carrying with it the expectation of a timely response to users' needs.

EQ5.1 Does BASIC, its workstreams and different types of intervention represent good value for money in terms of the 5Es (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and cost effectiveness)?

At baseline, VFM was assessed in two main ways. First, whether BASIC, its workstreams, and the different types of intervention being implemented through each of those workstreams represent good VFM with reference to FCDO principles. Second, whether the BASIC programme is managing delivery of VFM at each stage in the programme's cycle (design, procurement, implementation and close out).

Finding 49: Overall, BASIC ensured good economy through use of competitive procurement mechanisms and cost containment measures by both workstreams. Both Research and technical assistance workstreams were generally procured competitively using framework contract mechanisms supporting strong economy in procurement exercises. The use of a framework contract mechanism – EACDS – for the TAS draw-down requests ensured mini-competitions between interested suppliers for each assignment.[87] Over 81 percent of TAS call downs received more than one bid, However, not all requests had multiple offers; for example, only one proposal was submitted by suppliers for an Afghan request and a Grand Bargain Sub-Group KML post.[88] Moreover, SPACE was sole sourced. The Research workstream was procured through the International Multi-Disciplinary Programme Framework.

The key cost drivers of each workstream were fees. COVID-19 travel restrictions reduced international travel, resulting in savings for both workstreams and, in the case of the technical assistance workstream, meant additional support to countries in times of high need. Benchmarking of EACDS fee rates with other framework contracts ensured competitive rate card for fees for TAS.[89] Other cost drivers for the TAS workstream (such as field travel and subsistence costs) were closely scrutinized by SPT and FCDO country posts, ensuring costs of assignments are reasonable.

The centralised delivery model reduces management costs for both workstreams. It was a good model to ensure access to excellent advisors, the pooling of expertise and building capacity collectively. However, centralised delivery models were rated by key informants as a challenge for country posts as there are many centrally managed programmes. Moreover, the tracking of impact can be more challenging for suppliers in the case of centrally managed programmes in view of absence of in-country presence[90]. There is a need to rely on advisors in country to maximise impact[91], and continuity of FCDO staff in country offices can compromise follow up on advocacy and influencing activities. The centralised model with a multitude of assignments can lead to fragmentation and a lack of coordination between assignments.[92]

Use of national experts fell short of expectations for BASIC TAS. While it was anticipated that at least 50 percent of teams delivering country-level work would include national experts, 45 percent of country-specific assignments involved national experts since May 2019.[93] SPACE 2 was designed to include greater participation by national experts as well as more junior roles, to ensure VFM. However, the disaggregated data was not available to report on this.

Finding 50: While the launch of SPACE and overall response to requests were efficient, efficient delivery of BASIC Research was severely compromised by procurement delays and funding uncertainty, with the latter also impacting the planning of requests and the transition to a longer-term delivery mechanism for the technical assistance workstream. The quality of advice provided by TAS consultants was recognised, ensuring FCDO are not only buying inputs at an appropriate price but also the right quality.[94] TAS's supplier tracked client satisfaction with the support received (KPI #6). Since tracking began in May 2019, the client satisfaction score achieved was 3.9/5, in excess of the target average score of 3 or above. The number of countries requesting technical assistance support more than once (32) and the survey of 42 direct users (out of 127 engagements) totalling an average

score of 4.23/5 out of seven areas of usefulness (including technical expertise, relevance, and impact on decision-making) demonstrates user satisfaction with output delivery by BASIC TAS.[95]

Procurement delays and funding uncertainty negatively impacted on efficient delivery of the Research workstream in particular. Procurement delays (18-month delay in launching Research) and funding uncertainty resulted in a prolongation of the lengthy (yearlong) inception phase of the Research workstream by one month.[96] Other research programmes supported by FCDO have had a shorter inception phase (e.g., three months in the case of MAINTAINS). The Research workstream's in-country engagement in partner countries was also delayed as a result of both COVID-19 travel restrictions and the Spending Review. These delays to the initiation of the Research workstream will necessitate a significant ramp up/increase in delivery activity in financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, as highlighted in Figure 4.6,[97] which may pose risks in terms of the Research workstream's absorption capacity.

The implications of anticipated ODA budget changes within FCDO and a delay in procurement of BASIC TAS presented some risks to the momentum of the TAS workstream, which resulted in a time extension to the EACDS Lot B framework to support new call-down contracts until September 2022.[98] More generally, most spend is expected in the latter years of the programme cycle which implies the need for efficiency across all of BASIC's workstreams (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7: Breakdown of spend by BASIC workstream
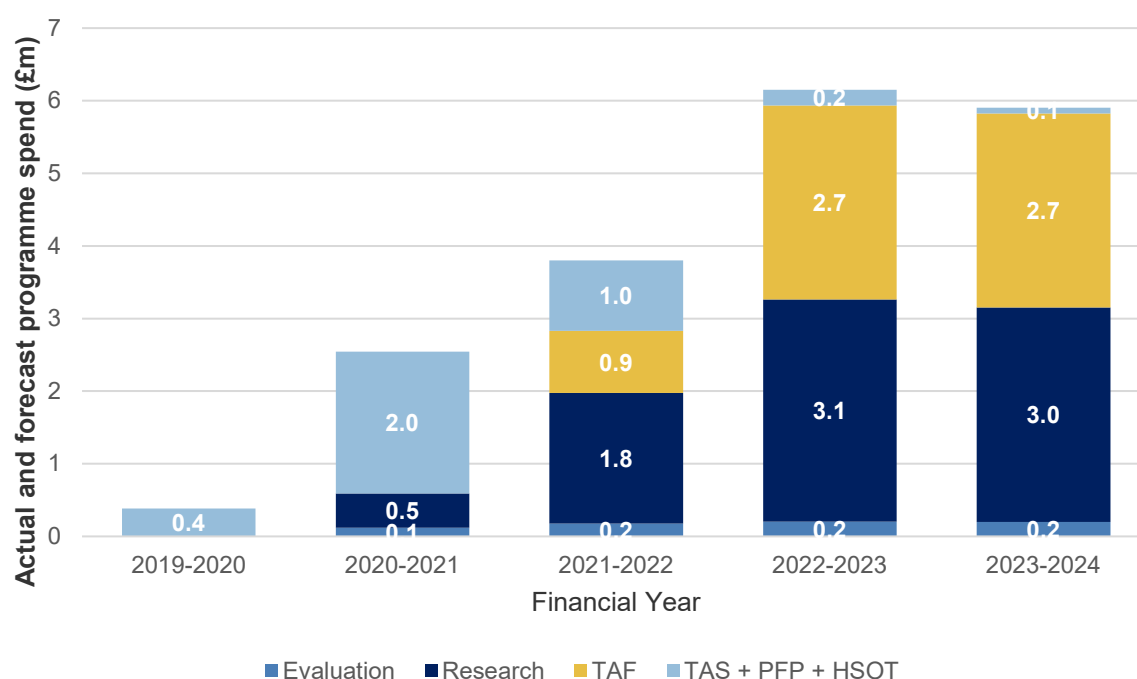
Source: FCDO (2021). **N.B.** Approximately £1.71 million GBP of the approved budget is currently unallocated and is accordingly not represented in Figure 4.6.

The adaptation to COVID-19 and the launch of both SPACE, SPACE-H and SPACE phase 2 are assessed as highly efficient.[99] The DFAT-funded window of SPACE (SPACE Asia Pacific, or SPACE-AP) was efficient and did not cause additional administrative burden for DFAT, FCDO and GIZ in terms of coordinating activities. Overall, the expansion of SPACE to allow for co-funding, co-branding, and sharing management costs with GIZ and DFAT was also well managed, ensuring efficiency in reporting as well as economies of scale, yielding positive returns in terms of VFM.[100]

Nonetheless, the delivery of previously planned activities under BASIC were impacted by the pandemic, e.g., the sharing of the pipeline, due to additional approvals needed for all DFID contracting as a result

of COVID-19, travel restrictions leading to revised ways of work for a Yemen contract and new workplans for the Jordan and Afghanistan assignments. Furthermore, finalisation of the KML strategy was put on hold to allow time for COVID-19 response activities. Previously intended influencing or advocacy through the Grand Bargain sub-group had to be scaled back or postponed.[101]

Adaptations of the delivery model for the technical assistance workstream going forward are designed to address some inefficiencies to contracting processes because of the use of framework contract mechanisms for the technical assistance workstream. The use of the EACDS framework contract resulted in inefficiencies in the contracting of consultants for technical assistance assignments as each assignment warranted a separate contracting and approval process, which creates administrative burden for the supplier and FCDO in terms of processing amendments and approvals. Going forward under TAF, it is hoped such inefficiencies will no longer be an issue as there will be one contract in place to recruit teams for assignments.[102]

New means of recruiting expertise used in SPACE, as well as cross-donor collaboration, were efficient, yielding good VFM for the FCDO. Access to GIZ-contracted experts and consultants contracted through the FCDO's ender Responsive and Social Protection Programme) provided SPACE and SPACE H with a wider pool of expertise.[103] However, although experts working on SPACE assignments reported that the assignments were interesting and rewarding, predictability around contracts, due to challenges of pipeline management, impacted on their potential availability for assignments.[104]

The avoidance of duplication in activities brought about by the collaboration between donors was another efficiency positive of SPACE.[105] Access to experts under HSOT was another efficient mechanism used by BASIC TAS to facilitate access to a wider pool of humanitarian experts. The Programme Funded Post was a highly efficient approach to driving TAS demand and understanding SP priorities in country.[106] The PFP ensured strong engagement and relationships with country posts, providing an effective mechanism to support country office interaction with BASIC and its services. The PFP left on personal leave in March 2021 and was not replaced.[107] Finally, output-based fee payments, incentivising output delivery, support efficiency and in turn VFM in delivery of the Research workstream.

Finding 51: Overall evidence on effectiveness is not extensive at this stage, although there are grounds for cautious optimism that the support provided through the TAS thus far will feed into future SP policy, programme and system change. The tracking of use of TAS deliverables has some shortcomings and the Research workstream's effectiveness cannot be reported as it is not yet in delivery. Findings on effectiveness are reported in response to evaluation questions 3.3 and 3.5 (effectiveness EQ). There are some useful indicators in place to assess TAS effectiveness. These include the percentage of draw-down contracts implemented effectively – 93 percent of technical assistance assignments are reported as having achieved stated outcomes.

SPACE knowledge products have been accessed 21,149 times. with the Useful Documents paper particularly well received and the SPACE framing tool rated as useful for internal consensus and decision making. Direct outreach by SPACE also increased the number of users.[108] TAS's KPI #7 was designed to report on uptake/use of outputs, measuring the percentage of commissioning teams reporting the positive impact of TAS with at least one recommendation under implementation within the following six months. While no data was reported in TAS QRs on this indicator, some tracking of the uptake and use of deliverables are reported. In the most recent TAS QR available at baseline, of 11 TAS assignments, seven examples of use are presented.[109]

However, evidence on measurement of effectiveness is compromised by gaps in the available evidence on use of TAS outputs and is not yet available for the Research workstream as it is not in delivery. SPACE's 2 monitoring methodology requires the preparation of quarterly uptake progress reports to gather qualitative data on the types of actors using SPACE knowledge products, in order to measure

the specific themes within the SPACE influencing agenda that have the most traction and with whom. SPACE's monitoring methodology notes that quantifiable metrics, while robust, might be less useful than impact stories gathered in a purposive way. However, the reported data on knowledge product page views has flaws and is incomplete. A final cumulative SPACE Uptake Progress report was prepared in August 2021. The effectiveness of the Research Workstream is not yet measurable as Research workstream is still in its Inception Phase and has not yet started delivery. Going forward the Research workstream has indicators in its logframe which will track the use of research.

Finding 52: Cost-effectiveness will be an important VFM consideration at midline and endline, although assessment at baseline is not possible due to insufficient data. Cost effectiveness seeks to measure what an intervention's ultimate impact on poverty reduction is, relative to FCDO inputs. The VFM Proposition in the Business Case for BASIC expects the return on investment to be substantial (even under conservative assumptions) with the programme expecting to support better assistance in crises for at least 3.3 million people and generate total savings of £43.5m over its duration. The Business Case noted DFID was working to build up the data and strengthen the approach for assessing the VFM of cash transfers in crises (from humanitarian to social assistance) to demonstrate the gains from the use of SP approaches in crises.

Going forward as the delivery of BASIC and its workstreams gathers pace it is suggested that a case study on assessing the cost effectiveness of BASIC be prepared by the evaluation, by examining the value of funds leveraged for SP approaches in crises (by partner governments, donors including FCDO) due to BASIC's inputs. It is suggested to support this assessment, both Research and TAF supplier develop indicators and gather data on funds leveraged for SP because of BASIC support and report on these indicators in quarterly reporting.

Finding 53: Gender and inclusion considerations are reflected in BASIC's technical assistance delivery (particularly under SPACE) and plans for the Research workstream. However, there is paucity of evidence on the extent BASIC TAS has increased reach of SP programmes in terms of coverage to different vulnerable groups or has impacted on development of gender responsive and inclusive SP programmes and policies. Further findings on equity are set out in responses to EQ3.4.

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

Finding 54: VFM measures have been defined for both workstreams, management structures consider VFM in decision-making and risk management processes are fit for purpose. However, the sufficiency of FCDO management capacity has been an issue. This has now been addressed through the injection of more resources. During the design and procurement stages ToRs were developed for BASIC TAS assignments. For some SPACE assignments (for example, nexus advisors providing coordination advice across the humanitarian-development nexus) scoping calls were widely used although were not always sufficient as a management instrument to define the scope and breadth of work with the resources available. Evidence from country case studies[110] indicated that the time allocated to some assignments was insufficient to deliver the depth needed to ensure high-quality research that met users' expectations. Data reported under EQ5.3 below demonstrates the need for contract extensions for most of the assignments supported by TAS (some 70 percent of assignments were time extended). This indicates that initial scoping activities may not have been sufficient, while also recognising that many contract extensions were due to delays to activities because of COVID-19 which changed ways of working and challenges in engagement with partners.

The Research Workstream had an inception phase of over one year in duration to ensure the design of forward plans was appropriately evidence based, fitting with user needs and expectations.[111] However, a lengthy inception phase does have VFM implications as it means a longer period before delivery

requiring coverage of core management costs.[112] Other research programmes (e.g., FCDO's MAINTAINS Programme had a three-month inception phase per its Business Case).

Both workstreams have VFM measures designed to monitor and report on VFM in quarterly reports, which are relevant and robust.[113] BASIC Research has a menu of VFM measures aligned to the logframe indicators which is in turn based on the ToC developed by the BASIC Research consortium. The specified VFM measures are also aligned to the 5Es in a VFM approach paper. At the time of baseline reporting the VFM approach of the Research consortium was not yet final and was still being discussed with FCDO. The TAS workstream has a menu of 11 KPIs including VFM dimensions including forecasting accuracy, timely delivery of outputs, availability of expertise and client satisfaction.[114]

The core management structures for both workstreams are in place for both TAS and Research workstreams. There is close programme management by FCDO to ensure delivery of VFM and VFM considerations are considered in decision-making although VFM was not treated as a separate agenda item for these structures.[115] There is also a coordination structure in place to support sharing and cross fertilisation of ideas between workstreams which is beneficial from a VFM perspective. The planned External Reference Group for the Research workstream has not yet been set up. The research budget for 2021/22 was reduced by 15 percent (reallocated to later years) and the supplier was flexible in updating workplans and forecasting. A contract amendment is presently underway.[116]

Capacity constraints and staff turnover at FCDO SPT somewhat impacted the efficiency of ongoing management of both contracts[117] although good communication between FCDO (then DFID) and TAS supplier was noted.[118] Key changes to the FCDO SPT team membership structure[119] took place in early 2021 and insufficient FCDO management capacity was identified as a risk to the delivery of TAS workstream[120] particularly in relation to strategic engagement and global policy influencing. However, measures (recruitment of two HSOT interim short-term advisors and the addition of an A2 Programme Manager) helped address these capacity constraints. It was efficient to mitigate against the risk of FCDO capacity constraints by utilising all management board members on SPACE for reviews and quality assurance which addressed previous delays in these activities. Both workstreams practice good management and mitigation of risks. Detailed risk matrices have been developed by both workstreams and risks are monitored and reported on in quarterly reporting. There is evidence of good management of risks and appropriate escalation routes (to Ministers if necessary) within the FCDO.[121]

Finding 55: Close out arrangements for assignments are not sufficient, specifically on the follow up arrangements to support use of the outputs and further advocacy and influencing activities. Follow-up on recommendations proposed in some deliverables was compromised by the short-term, ad hoc nature of some of the assignments, as well as FCDO staff turnover.[122] Furthermore communication, dissemination and use plans were not part of the deliverables and close out of BASIC TAS assignments.[123] While TAS does engage with those requesting the support (feedback calls, follow on surveys), a follow up phase needs to be built into the ToR for assignments to support further advocacy and influencing activities to promote use of outputs. Going forward such follow up arrangements are catered for in the TAF monitoring approach.

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

Finding 56: Feedback from stakeholders indicated consensus on BASIC and SPACE responding to requests in a timely manner. KPI data indicated that the speed of sourcing for TAS assignments (83 percent) fell slightly short of the 90 percent target of call downs sourced within 10 working days of issue of the request.[124] The exceptions to timely response included the outstanding Lebanon multi-donor cash coordinator assignment which was an example of a very long procurement process (over one year), due to need to await confirmation of FCDO budget. However, BASIC was rated as providing

more rapid response to FCDO country posts needs than other centrally managed facilities.[125] BASIC's rapid response is viewed as important as country posts do not always identify the need for BASIC support until it is urgent.[126] Going forwards, there will only be one contract for TAF, so contracts for each assignment will no longer be required, leading to administrative and efficiency savings in the response time.[127]

Data on time extensions of 17 BASIC TAS assignments shows that the since the start of the pandemic, time extensions were required for almost all assignments (n=12). Since May 2019, only 38 percent of outputs met the original contract deadlines.[128] Most of the time extensions have been since the start of the pandemic that clearly impacted timely completion of assignments. The cumulative time extensions for the 12 time-extended TAS assignments amounted to 48 months (58 months planned delivery versus 106 months actual delivery). These extensions include time extensions for SPACE 2 from seven to 10 months. Some time extensions were significant e.g., an assignment in Jordan (due to start at the beginning of the pandemic) was extended by 11 months.[129] Few time-extended contracts warranted increased budgetary recourses. TAS KPI #11 reports on the percentage of call downs delivered within the original budget provided in the contract (excluding the additional scope of the contract) with 86 percent of call downs (since tracking began in May 2019) were delivered within the original budget, falling slightly short of the 90 percent target.[130]

Finding 57: There have been major delays in the delivery of the Research workstream as noted above which has impacted on its timely availability to support users' needs.[131] Timely completion of activities such as research themes and questions were impacted negatively by different expectations of FCDO and the supplier on deliverable requirements, as well as some reported delays on the supplier side.[132]

4.6   EQ6 Sustainability

EQ	Progress at Baseline	Challenges and opportunities
6.1 Foundations for system change	There are indications that TAS effects on policy, programme and systems will be sustainable. At a global level, SPACE is likely to have acted as a catalyst to shaping the COVID-19 responses of a wide pool of users and different donors.	Limited evidence that BASIC has influenced institutional capabilities constraining likely sustainability of this support. Wider Business Case development support and leveraging funding from other donors is likely which should enable sustainability.
6.2 Factors influencing sustainable change	A range of internal and external factors may affect the sustainability of BASIC's support going forward. 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 technical assistance.

EQ 6.1 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?

Our inception report indicated that sustainability would not be subject to detailed assessment at baseline, given the early stage of BASIC implementation. A number of caveats are warranted in relation to our assessment of sustainability at this stage. First, it is too early to comment on the sustainability of Research workstream, although it is noted that Research plans do include strategies to disseminate and track influence and take-up of research, which should bode well for tracking and planning action to better support future sustainability. The lack of systematic follow up and planning on the use of TAS outputs hinders a full assessment of likely sustainability. Many assignments under SPACE are relatively recent and have not yet had sufficient time to demonstrate sustainable impact. BASIC's support is

indirect in some cases, via input into the design of FCDO and other donor programmes, which means other steps need to be implemented before the contribution to sustainable impact is discernible.

Evidence and findings on BASIC's overall contribution to outcomes is presented in the response to EQ 3.3. The likely sustainability of BASIC's support to partner government and donor social assistance programmes, policies and systems, improved coordination between humanitarian and SP actors and institutional capacity building is set out below.

Finding 58: Outputs have been most influential on the design of FCDO programmes, although sustainability of this support is currently unclear. Wider changes stemming from BASIC's work supporting the development of Business Cases and leveraging funding from other donors is likely which should strengthen the future sustainability of BASIC's support. When BASIC TAS supported FCDO country posts in developing business cases (e.g., Jordan, Yemen) the sustainability of the support is reflected in the implementation of the programmes designed by BASIC's support, which in most cases is not clear at this point. If these programmes are implemented in the future, their delivery should potentially result in BASIC acting as a catalyst for the policy, programme and system changes engineered by the programmes BASIC helped to design. Technical assistance outputs were used by some clients to support their influencing objectives on SP policy and programming, particularly at the country level (Box 4.4). In the case of Somalia, scoping discussions supported the development of an FCDO cash programming strategy, which may realise sustainable change by supporting shock responsive approach to safety net programming.

Finding 59: At the global level, SPACE is likely to have acted as a catalyst to shaping the COVID-19 responses of a wider pool of users and different donors. The future sustainability of SPACE support on SP systems, programmes and policies is assessed as likely in view of the increased interest and momentum created by COVID-19 on SP.[133] Although FCDO support for SPACE ended in August 2021, GIZ and DFAT support continues until November 2021. The COVID-19 crisis has emphasised the need for SP and created an opportunity to extend and make SP more sustainable and inclusive.

Finding 60: There is evidence from the country case studies that TAS is acting as a catalyst contributing to national policy and legislative reforms, most notably in Nigeria. Sustainability is assessed as likely in the case of support provided on National Development Planning in Nigeria which succeeded in potentially influencing policy and legislation in several key areas. With legislation being drafted and a new SP Policy in preparation, it is plausible that the policy recommendations proposed by SPACE will be reflected in concrete sustainable change. In the case of Somalia, the Strategy Decision Matrix tool supported programme teams to develop coherent policies and programmes grounded in evidence and reflecting the local context which should increase the likelihood of sustainable changes to SP policies, programmes, and systems.[134] In the case of Yemen, BASIC has concentrated on developing the FCDO strategic approach rather than engaging substantively with national authorities. However, the political context restricted access to national authorities which in turn compromises the potential to influence Government.[135]

Finding 61: Findings on effectiveness (see EQ 3.3) indicate that there is only limited evidence that BASIC has improved institutional capabilities, although SPACE has directly facilitated coordination and learning between experts along the humanitarian-development nexus. While BASIC has begun to improve coordination between donors and agencies, it is not clear how these efforts translated into increased political commitment to and improved use of SP approaches in crises. The sustainability of coordination activities (for example, Jordan) across the international community to ensure more coordinated support to government institutions is not assured, although global and country-level stakeholder consultations indicated the value of the support from BASIC technical assistance.[136] Similarly in the case of BASIC support to the Abuja-based Cash Working Group and

coordination between SP and humanitarian actors on cash-based programming, coordination is not sustainable without further support and needs more time for sustainable.

EQ 6.2 What are the factors likely to hinder/support sustainable outcomes in terms of influencing global policy and influencing governments and partners?

Finding 62: Delivery modalities, FCDO country office engagement in advocacy and influencing activities and interest and active involvement of partner governments are some of the factors likely to drive sustainability of BASIC TA's work. The COVID-19 pandemic was viewed as an opportunity to drive sustainable change to social protection approaches in crises. The SPACE model – multi-donor, global facing technical assistance facility, high-quality expertise, multi-disciplinary teams, practical orientation of support - means that it should be well placed to influence and sustain interest in SP approaches in crises in particular the response to COVID-19.[137] Longer term assignments sustaining engagement with in-country stakeholders (embedded advisors) can help build trust and sustain influence with the likelihood of leading to more sustainable impact than smaller short-term engagements. However, the active engagement of FCDO posts is critical to making change happen and cannot be substituted by longer term BASIC assignments (e.g., Yemen). In the case of Nigeria – a step by step approach was rated as a useful way to build momentum over time with successive assignments using earlier outputs from preceding BASIC/SPACE assignments to potentially feeding into longer term sustainable changes.

Partner Governments are increasingly seeing SP as an essential pillar to National Development.[138] The global attention to SP during COVID-19 pandemic provides an excellent opportunity for BASIC to sustain momentum behind the nexus agenda. The support provided by technical assistance to build strategic partnerships and wider global engagement via SPACE also bodes well for influence on policy and sustainable outcomes. Engaging with the right partners was rated as important for likely sustainability of the support provided via technical assistance engagements.

Finding 63: The factors which may constrain the sustainability of the support provided by BASIC technical assistance include financial /funding constraints, capacity limitations and issues which may limit FCDO influence to advocate for changes to programmes, policies and system changes. Significant financial resources are needed to have SP at an adequate scale in partner countries.[139] Partner governments have limited financial resources which limit investment in SP and donor support is still needed although development and humanitarian funding has been decreasing since the onset of COVID-19. These factors may exacerbate governments' reluctance to integrate humanitarian caseloads into national systems. Moreover, encouraging partner governments to use their small tax base to support refugees is challenging, which may limit scope for sustainable change in the targeting of support to different groups. Expansion of SP systems to refugees is a challenge in Jordan for example.

Evidence from KIIs and country case studies indicates that technical assistance was effective in addressing evidence, and FCDO capacity, gaps, although is less clear on the extent to which BASIC supported sustainable capacity development of partner country government staff (although plugged gaps in coordination mechanisms like cash working groups, Donor Groups).[140] National SP systems in LMICs are stretched financially, institutionally and administratively and as a result BASIC's TA component has had to be careful not to overload weak or nascent systems.

The crowded donor landscape (for example, in Jordan) can constrain FCDO influencing power, making it difficult to influence changes to SP policies and systems.[141] However, BASIC technical assistance engagement with coordination mechanisms (such as donor fora, cash working groups, etc.) can reduce the impact of this constraint. Stakeholder feedback[142] reported that the capacity of FCDO posts had

gone down post-merger (FCO and DFID merged in September 2020) and that Britain's exit from the European Union may have altered its degree of influence with some donors, such as ECHO.

Finding 64: Feedback from key informants also supported the view that a technical assistance programme in combination with a funding programme can create more power to exert influence and generate sustainable impact rather than a technical assistance facility on its own.[143] This is due to provision of finance for adoption of SP approaches in crises can provide a useful platform to engage and influence key stakeholders. Ensuring adequate contextualisation of the support provided was rated as critical to exerting influence. SPACE support was not always adapted to the local context e.g., COVID-19 lens was mismatched to Somalia context where COVID-19 is viewed largely as a secondary issue to other crises. Moreover, engagement with partner governments was rated as critical to ensure likely sustainability of BASIC technical assistance support (e.g., Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen)[144], with greater engagement needed to deliver change. SPACE's model was not used in the main to directly support partner governments which could hinder sustainable impact.[145]

5   Closing remarks

While this is a baseline evaluation, it has captured several years of BASIC TAS and SPACE implementation. Furthermore, it occurs at an opportune juncture to provide recommendations prior to BASIC TAF and Research finalising their inception phases, which draw on the experience of concluding activities under BASIC TAS and SPACE. Based on these findings, we draw seven conclusions and make four main recommendations, as set out below and summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Appendix 9 provides a mapping of the links demonstrating how the recommendations build on the findings and conclusions.

Figure 5.1: BASIC Evaluation – Baseline results summary
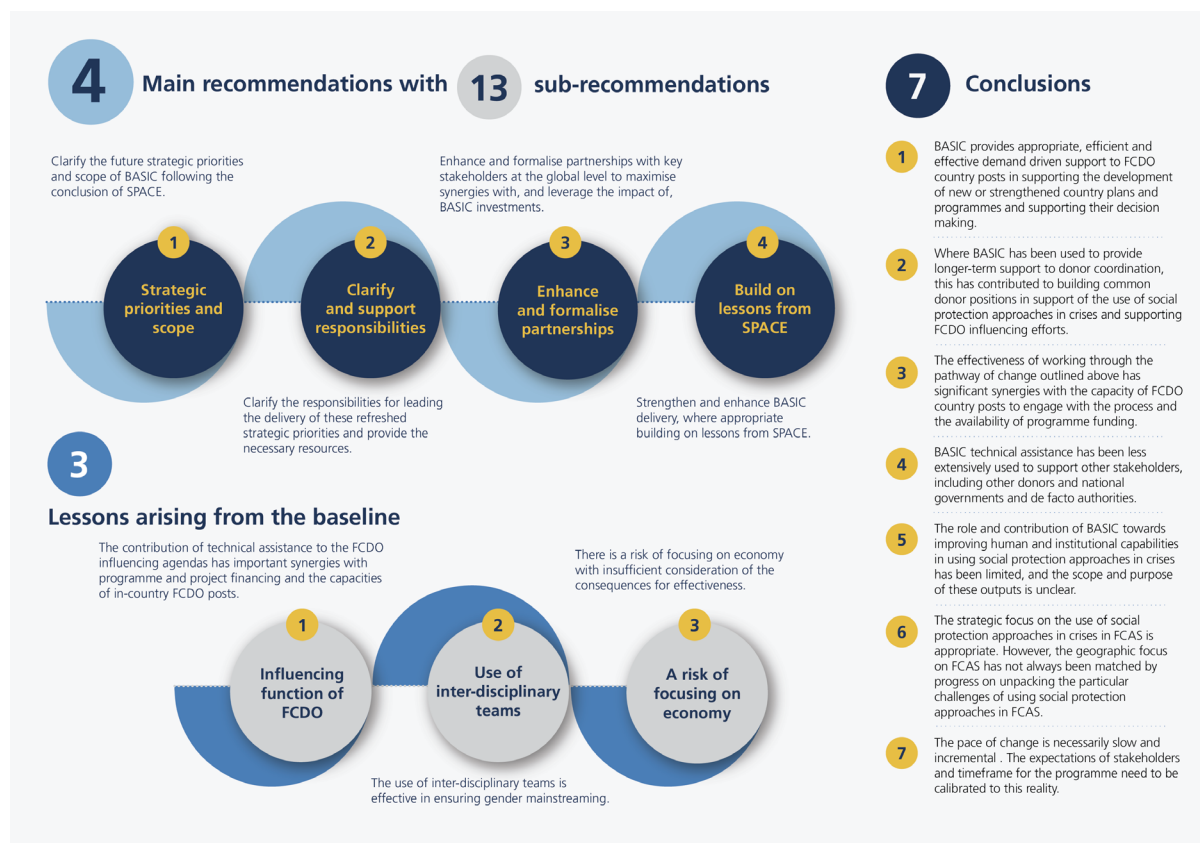
5.1   Conclusions at this stage

Conclusion 1: BASIC provides appropriate, efficient and effective demand driven support to FCDO country posts in supporting the development of new or strengthened country plans and programmes and supporting their decision making.

We found clear evidence of the relevance and utility of BASIC to the work of FCDO country posts – mainly through providing appropriate technical assistance. Monitoring data confirms that the majority of BASIC assignments directly supported FCDO. These services are shaped by local demands and filled gaps in both capacity and expertise. At this stage it is too early to determine how BASIC Research will contribute, although efforts are being made to seek the views of FCDO posts in determining local research agendas. BASIC was able to deliver quality services in a generally timely and efficient manner. In response to the lessons learnt during early assignments, adaptive management has improved service delivery – notably in areas including helping countries to articulate requests, in reducing delays in fielding consultants and mainstreaming GESI considerations. Several of these adaptations were developed under SPACE, with an opportunity to embed them in the new BASIC TAF contract.

BASIC has been effective in directly supporting the development of new or strengthened FCDO country plans and programmes – one of the key outcomes anticipated in the BASIC ToC. We found clear evidence that outputs produced were well aligned in helping FCDO to develop its strategic approach and in several countries were credited with providing robust evidence used in the development of business cases and advocating within FCDO for their approval. Repeated and sequenced assignments have worked to build a robust case, typically starting with initial mapping or scoping, followed by the development of contextualised intervention strategies. SPACE assignments were also credited with supporting immediate decision-making on the use of the crisis reserve in response to COVID-19.

Conclusion 2: Where BASIC has been used to provide longer-term support to donor coordination, this has contributed to building common donor positions in support of the use of social protection approaches in crises and supporting FCDO influencing efforts.

It is evident that the impacts that BASIC aspires to are dependent on the support of a range of stakeholders - these include donors, Government, and multi-lateral agencies. The process of building consensus amongst donors, especially at the country-level, is critical to ensuring that a common vision underpins dialogue and negotiations with Government and multi-lateral partners. We found initial evidence that BASIC can play an important role in contributing to this process. The advice and analysis produced by BASIC provided a platform for defining the key messages underpinning influencing and advocacy and ultimately leveraging impact. The use of long-term assignments – variously entitled as nexus advisors or donor coordinators – in countries such as Nigeria and Yemen have proved effective in shaping and sustaining coordination through providing secretariat services to donor platforms.

Plans for the wider introduction of longer-term BASIC technical assistance positions to support country coordination was interrupted by COVID-19. However, the positive impact noted above where these positions have been introduced supports the further targeted use of resources for this purpose. While coordination is required at several levels the clearest evidence of the value-addition of BASIC was at the level of strategic coordination amongst donors. Technical coordination – for example of Cash Working Groups – is also required and valuable but there is a wider pool of agencies (including Cash CAP) who are arguably better suited to fill this role.

Conclusion 3: The effectiveness of BASIC's contribution to improving FCDO plans and programmes and strengthening donor coordination has significant synergies with the capacity of FCDO country posts to engage with the process and the availability of FCDO programme funding.

Baseline evidence we gathered highlighted the critical role of FCDO country-posts to overall effectiveness. Country posts were critical in both defining BASIC inputs and in using outputs. As donors, country-posts were able to exert more influence and provided a more sustained presence than BASIC was able to offer independently. However, while BASIC was important in leveraging the impact of country posts, it was not – even through long-term positions - a substitute for FCDO posts themselves. This raises questions on BASIC effectiveness in countries where sufficient, engaged, FCDO capacity is lacking. Some constraints on the bandwidth of FCDO posts were mitigated through more programme support – for example through the assistance PFP position in articulating demand. However, this did not ensure BASIC output use. There is a risk that insufficient country capacity may compromise impacts.

Our baseline also suggested that the ability of FCDO to use strategic advice and insights developed by BASIC was heavily reinforced by its programme funding. The credibility with other donors and influence that FCDO was able to apply on programme partners was much stronger where it had a significant financial leverage. Significant political economy challenges mean that there are strong disincentives to change which can inhibit taking good ideas forward. The concrete influence that comes with donorship can provide important countervailing incentives to stimulate stakeholder reform.

Conclusion 4: BASIC technical assistance has been less extensively used to support other stakeholders, including other donors and national governments and de facto authorities. The limited evidence available suggests that BASIC tools are optimally adapted to working in support of FCDO country posts, rather than other stakeholders.

The limited use of BASIC beyond FCDO is partly a strategic choice, with FCDO first using BASIC to determine its internal position, before using it as a more external facing tool. However, the question of ownership may be important in influencing the wider uptake of BASIC services. Our early evidence suggests challenges in the direct use of BASIC by external stakeholders, as seen in the mixed reaction of national Governments and institutions where support has been provided. Within counties there has been a much lower direct use of BASIC technical assistance by other stakeholders. Through SPACE there have been limited assignments to support GIZ and DFAT, which suggests that co-financing is important in creating ownership. Other donors were generally indirect beneficiaries with access to various publications and events. There is currently little evidence on how knowledge products have been used by other donors.

There were also a limited number of examples where BASIC has been commissioned to work with national governments. The response to these contributions has been variable. Some has been well received – often in middle-income countries, where there are stronger national capacities such as Nigeria and Sudan. Arguably short-term advice is less suited to supporting national governments where the absorptive capacity for such advice may be lower. Several Governments also referenced a mismatch of objectives – where they saw BASIC advice as being framed to solving the priorities of international agencies rather than their own interests. The relatively light use of BASIC at the global level, both in terms of commissioning more strategic studies and follow-up in the use of outputs could be attributed to over-stretched SPT advisors, alongside changes in staffing.

Conclusion 5: BASIC's contribution to improving human and institutional capabilities in using SP approaches in crises was limited, and the scope and purpose of these outputs is unclear.

There has been limited support provided by BASIC towards the capacity building outcomes in the ToC. Given the distribution of BASIC beneficiaries and types of technical assistance provided so far, analysis suggested that the main capacity building activities were in support of FCDO staff and at the level of individual skills development through informal knowledge transfer. There was much less evidence of significant skills transfer outside of FCDO and no real evidence of institutional capacity building.

There is also a lack of clarity in the BASIC strategy on the scope of its capacity building ambitions both in terms of which beneficiary groups it seeks to work with and the level of outcomes. It is unclear whether BASIC is seeking to achieve changes in individual capacities, institutional capacities, and/or the enabling environment. Furthermore, the potential scale of needs for capacity building – if interpreted broadly – would dwarf the scale of the available resources. Defining a clear capacity building strategy would be helpful for both BASIC TAF and BASIC Research; both suppliers are currently doing this.

Several considerations are relevant to framing a strategic approach. Firstly, there has been a disconnect in the approach taken to date with the objective of localisation. An important missed opportunity has been the limited engagement of local consultants. Investing in transferring knowledge to local experts – both technical assistance and researchers – could contribute to domesticating the debate, as well as providing a sustained source of contextualised expertise. Second, there are clearly a range of alternative providers available with the skills, mandate, and resources to support capacity building initiatives – many of these providers are well placed to provide sustained longer-term support and build strong relationships and trust, which underpin effective capacity building. Therefore, the comparative advantage of BASIC in capacity building needs to be carefully assessed.

Conclusion 6: The strategic focus on the use of SP approaches in protracted crises is appropriate. However, the geographic focus on protracted crises has not always been matched by progress on unpacking the particular challenges of using social protection approaches in protracted crises.

BASIC was well designed to fill a specific and strategic gap in exploring the increased use of SP approaches in protracted crises. This is justified by the scale, and increasing level, of needs in protracted crisis. Furthermore, BASIC complements and builds on other FCDO centrally managed programmes exploring the use of shock responsive SP in response to disasters and refugee inflows.

Under SPACE there has been a significant pivot towards responding to the effects of the COVID-19 in a diversity of contexts. Given the end of SPACE, there is a need to re-consider the strategic focus of BASIC. To maximise the impact of the limited available resources it would also make sense to focus BASIC on protracted crises and the logical conclusion is that BASIC resources should be refocussed on working in contexts or protracted crises. However, there is a potential challenge as SPACE increased demand for assistance across a wide range of countries that lacks an alternative supply, especially given MAINTAINS's termination.

The protracted crises focus is already reflected in the selection of the four Research countries. Geographically BASIC TAF is committed to concentrate on states experiencing protracted crises, albeit with a degree of flexibility to address wider service demand. However, it is less clear that the geographical focus is sufficiently mirrored by a thematic focus on the particular challenges of working in protracted crises.

While much of the BASIC TAS resources have been directed towards working in protracted crises, the substance of the initial work has often tended towards addressing technical issues around the cash reform agenda. There has been a strategy of addressing the "lower hanging fruit" in areas such as the harmonisation of targeting, registration, and distribution systems – with the initial goal of aligning humanitarian actors as a basis for aligning with development actors. These entry points are relevant but only an entry point.

In contrast there has been less progress in addressing the more specific challenges of using SP approaches in protracted crises. For example, these include overcoming political or capacity challenges of working with national governments and de facto authorities; understanding how social assistance can promote social cohesion; developing sustainable financing models for fragile states; and linking social assistance to climate change financing and issues in conflict settings. The early discussions around the Research agenda indicate that these topics will be addressed. However, more attention is needed on how these core issues could be addressed by BASIC in a joined-up manner and not just delegated to the side of Research. There was at times a lack of clarity in where this leadership function resided for BASIC TAS; in the SPT, in the PFP or the supplier. This ambiguity was compounded by staff absences and changes.

Conclusion 7: The pace of change is necessarily slow and incremental. The expectations of stakeholders and timeframe for the programme need to be calibrated to this reality.

The changes anticipated within the ToC will require considerable time to achieve. They are highly ambitious without even accounting for the highly challenging context in which BASIC works. Institutional change takes significant time amongst all stakeholders, including donors, Governments, and multi-laterals. However, these changes also have very significant long-term benefits in terms of both the potential efficiency and effectiveness gains. It is important that all stakeholders appreciate this. It is anticipated that the programme will have limited impacts in the current timeframe and that these will be concentrated amongst a limited group of stakeholders.

The impact of the programme will therefore be hard to judge over the implementation period. The current timeframe even offers sufficient opportunity to capitalise on outputs. Furthermore, the bulk of the Research outputs are only anticipated to emerge towards the end of the current implementation phase and will only become apparent in the longer-term.

5.2   Lessons arising from the baseline

We mainly expect to draw lessons from BASIC's implementation during the endline and midline. It is too early at this stage to identify clear lessons. However, at this point some preliminary lessons are emerging, which will be further expanded and developed in subsequent evaluation phases. These lessons are distinct from our recommendations below. Instead, they are intended to contribute to wider organisational learning for FCDO and partners.[146] They build on our findings and conclusions and are judged as potentially valid and have not been generalised from single point findings.

We are particularly interested in extracting general lessons on the use of technical assistance and research by FCDO. As noted in the inception report, there is a strong demand within FCDO to better understand the potential and limitations in the use of these tools. Some very preliminary ideas on key lessons from the use of technical assistance are listed below. There will be further attention to developing lessons in relation to the use of research derived from the implementation phase for this activity. However, lessons are not strictly limited to these activities and will continue to be extracted more widely. More developed lessons will be shared with key stakeholders (across and beyond FCDO) after later evaluation phases when they have been further validated and expanded.

Lesson 1: The contribution of technical assistance to the FCDO influencing agendas has important synergies with programme and project financing and the capacities of in-country FCDO posts.

One of our key evaluation conclusions relates to the value of the BASIC technical assistance in supporting the influencing ambitions and goals of FCDO. Technical assistance can help define the strategic vision and messages that substantiate FCDO influencing efforts. Technical assistance can also help to establish and animate coordination structures that underpin collective donor action. This potential was tempered by a further finding that technical assistance in isolation may have limited impact. The importance of FCDO posts having adequate expertise and bandwidth to lead advocacy efforts emerged. Equally, the relative weight of FCDO as a financial donor appeared to accentuate their influence and allow FCDO to combine advocacy with financial incentives for reform. This lesson may have implications for FCDO more widely, in how and where to invest in these activities.

Lesson 2: The use of inter-disciplinary teams is effective in ensuring gender mainstreaming.

A further key finding from the evaluation related to the progress made to the improved mainstreaming of gender – and to a certain extent, other inclusion efforts – in BASIC. Key to this was the use of multi-disciplinary teams under SPACE with the routine integration of gender expertise across all assignments. This approach emerged as effective and potentially deserves wider consideration as a best practice for adoption across FCDO.

Lesson 3: There is a risk of focusing on economy with insufficient consideration of the consequences for effectiveness.

We found that there has been a strong emphasis on delivering VFM in BASIC through a heavy focus on economy. A range of cost containment measures have been put in place. This is understandable given that economy is easier to measure and control than cost-effectiveness. However, there were indications that this drive towards economy did not always sit well with the goal of effectiveness. For example, fee rate caps for national consultants limited national participation in assignments and reduced contextual understanding and potential contributions to localisation. Assignment durations –

particularly under SPACE – were very short and limited the scope and utility of outputs. More fundamentally, there were indications that unrealistically short contract durations potentially compromised the continued participation of some international consultants. This is a significant programme risk as the value of the technical assistance was heavily associated with the ability for BASIC to utilise a small number of high-quality experts.

5.3   Recommendations arising from the baseline

Considering the above conclusions and learning, we developed four recommendations, as presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Each one is assigned a responsible owner, priority rating and timeframe for completion.

Table 5.1: Baseline recommendations arising from the evaluation phase

Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority	Suggested timeline
1. Clarify the future strategic priorities of BASIC TAF and BASIC Research. The priorities should reorient the programme following the conclusion of SPACE and align with to the available programme resources and timeline.	FCDO SPT in conjunction with the BASIC TAF and BASIC Research suppliers	High	By mid-2022
This strategic re-prioritisation should consider the following elements: 1.1 The extent to which, and how, BASIC should prioritise the focus on protracted crises contexts. This should go beyond geographical coverage to clarify the key challenges of using social protection approaches in protracted crises contexts and develop a joined-up strategy between BASIC TAF and BASIC Research to address them. 1.2 Articulate the objectives and approach to integrating climate change adaptation and resilience within the BASIC programme – with particular attention to protracted crises. 1.3 Based on an assessment of its comparative advantages, develop a plan that clarifies the scope, objectives, and beneficiaries of BASIC capacity building activities. It is suggested that the immediate priority is to focus on building skills at the national level for the delivery of technical assistance and research by think tanks, research institutes and individual consultants. 1.4 Based on an assessment of trends and channels for financing social protection approaches in crises analyse the options for influencing the diversification and sustainability of funding, clarifying the potential contribution of the BASIC programme versus what the SPT and FCDO can do in their complementary but separate roles. 1.5 Consider a no cost (or cost extension) of BASIC to allow adequate time for the conduct and uptake of research and TAF outputs.			
2. Clarify the responsibilities and resources for delivering these refreshed strategic priorities.	FCDO SPT	High	By mid-2022
This should include the following actions: 2.1 Clarify the division of responsibilities for strategic leadership of BASIC TAF between the SPT, PFP and service provider and provide the necessary resources to deliver on these allocated responsibilities. 2.2 Clarify the relationship and allocation of responsibilities between BASIC and GSP, including their respective levels of ambition on GESI-related results and the arrangements for coordinating delivery in BASIC countries. 2.3 Invest further in longer-term technical assistance to support donor coordination in deep engagement countries. This country presence should also be used as a key point of articulation between the country and the global programme, and between the TAF and Research workstreams at the local level.			
3. Explore the potential for enhanced partnerships with key stakeholders at the global and country levels to maximise synergies with, and leverage the impact of, BASIC investments.	FCDO SPT, in conjunction with the BASIC suppliers.	Medium	Over the remaining BASIC phase.
Actors should consider strengthening partnerships with a range of stakeholder groups through a range of mechanisms, including formal bilateral agreements, informal coordination, secondments. Partnerships should be strengthened during the implementation of current supplier contracts and as a foundation for more formalised relationships in the longer-term. This should include partnerships with a range of objectives, including: 3.1 FCDO should explore multi-donor partnership and potential co-financing of future technical assistance and research functions in order to increase donor coherence through shared ownership. 3.2 FCDO, BASIC TAF and BASIC Research should explore enhanced partnerships with organisations (for example, UN agencies, the World Bank, and other actors, including CashCap) to collaborate on capacity building, strengthened coordination, learning and advocacy.			

Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority	Suggested timeline
4. Strengthen and enhance BASIC delivery, where appropriate building on lessons from SPACE.	**BASIC TAF and Research, with FCDO SPT.**	**High**	**By mid-2022**

4.1 Assess the most appropriate approaches and modalities to effectively support non-FCDO beneficiaries (other development partners and national governments) with BASIC services.

4.2 BASIC Suppliers should increase the use of local expertise in the delivery of services.

4.3 BASIC TAF should deploy GESI experts following the GESI model.

4.4 Build on and enhance SPACE innovations that improved knowledge management mechanisms – including routine dissemination plans for all outputs.

4.5 Data relating to delivery and results should be collected, recorded, and reported more systematically and presented more clearly on the uptake of services and funds leveraged for social assistance as a result of BASIC TAF and Research support.

6 Endnotes

1 Of the total BASIC budget commitments, £5 million of BASIC's budget is provided by the International Climate Fund as part of the FCDO's contribution to the Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership.

2 BASIC Business Case; DAI (2021). BASIC Coordination update meeting- Feb 2021.

3 Of which £2.22 million is VAT reclaimable, making total net spend to technical assistance a little under £8.28 million.

4 SPACE ToRs.

5 FCDO (2018). BASIC Business Case.

6 Ibid.

7 £5m of the BASIC budget (£3m under research, £2m under TAS) is classified as ICF, and is part of the FCDO's contribution to the Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP).

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 FCDO (2018). BASIC Business Case.

11 These include the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), The Grand Bargain launched at WHS, the 2016 Wilton Principles, the 2017 UK Humanitarian Reform Policy, and the forthcoming UK aid strategy.

12 Appendix 2 provides an overview of the status of TAS projects and SPACE 2 learning products.

13 The procurement of one project (Part-Time Multi-Donor Cash Adviser for the WFP Multi-Purpose Cash Programme in Lebanon) has been halted temporarily and was not included in the analysis.

14 See https://bit.ly/3CK6B8l.

15 Appendix 2 provides an overview of the status of TAS projects and SPACE 2 learning products.

16 The Grand Bargain's Commitments on Localisation include: increased investment in, and capacity building of, the institutional capacities of local and national responders, especially in fragile contexts; removing barriers to partnering with local and national responders; supporting and complementing national coordination mechanisms; providing at least 25percent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible; developing a 'localisation' marker; and making greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders.

17 The SPT policy priorities were reported to fall under three main areas: (i) increasing the coverage and adequacy of social protection, (ii) increasing the use of social assistance in crises, and (iii) more inclusive social protection with reference to gender and other dimensions of vulnerability, including disability.

18 Available at: https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/location/country. Date accessed: 23/22/2022.

19 FCDO (2019). Addendum to Business Case BASIC - Better Assistance in Crises August 2019, p.3

20 KII Interview with FCDO staff.

21 A dedicated Programme Funded Post (PFP) was seconded into the TAS supplier to generate demand through active country outreach and ongoing troubleshooting of requests. The PFP was recruited and started on the 1st of September 2019.

22 UNICEF was engaged in the design of, and selection of the consultant on, the GB Sub Group KML support.

23 KII Interview with FCDO staff.

24 Ibid.

25 See Section EQ1.1 above.

26 KII – the Business Case had yet to be formally released.

27 The overarching BASIC Evidence, Learning and Policy Influencing Strategy which will be developed under the technical assistance workstream of BASIC during the SP TAF inception.

28 MAINTAINS undertakes multi-country research to generate operationally relevant evidence on how to design, fund and better deliver essential (education, health, social protection, nutrition, and water and sanitation) services that can respond to shocks in weak and fragile and conflict affected states.

29 The GSP enhances outcome for women and girls from social protection systems, through high quality research and evidence on what interventions are most effective, and provision of advisory services and resources to FCDO and partners to allow them to design, implement and monitor and evaluate social protection systems that deliver improved results for women and girls.

30 Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC) generates evidence that will strengthen the effectiveness of agricultural programmes to support and rebuild agriculture during different types of protracted crises, including those in fragile and conflict-affected states.

31 Launched by DFID, now FCDO, in May 2018, HGS is a global £7m programme aimed at improving the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian responses through early warning, risk analysis and improved coordination of these specialist humanitarian partners, in line with humanitarian reform objectives laid out in the Grand Bargain. This aims to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of humanitarian responses, by providing financial support to five independent partners that produce global public goods on providing early warning, advice, and risk analysis to the international community, and safety and security advice to the NGO sector.

32 For example, see Yemen case study.

33 Appendix B provides an overview of the status of TAS projects and SPACE 2 learning products.

34 Baseline survey results.

35 KIIs with technical assistance users and delivery team.

36 Ibid.

37 KIIs with SPACE users.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 KIIs with SPACE delivery team.

41 KIIs with SPACE users in country.

42 KIIs with BASIC suppliers; BASIC Research documents

43 Baseline survey results.

44 Nested ToC for BASIC Research.

45 Recordings and presentations from SPACE learning sessions.

46 Theory of Change for BASIC Research.

47 KIIs with SPACE users and delivery team.

48 KIIs with FCDO and development partners in Nigeria.

49 KIIs with technical assistance users in Sudan.

50 KIIs with FCDO SPT and delivery team.

51 KIIs with FCDO and development partners in Nigeria.

52 KIIs with SPACE users.

53 KIIs with technical assistance users in Jordan.

54 KIIs with technical assistance users in Somalia.

55 KIIs with technical assistance delivery team and users in Yemen.

56 KIIs with technical assistance delivery team and users in Jordan.

57 KIIs with technical assistance users.

58 Baseline survey results.

59 KIIs with SPACE users at country level.

60 KIIs with SPACE delivery team.

61 KIIs with development partners in Jordan.

62 KIIs with SPACE experts.

63 KIIs with SPACE donors.

64 Baseline survey results.

65 KIIs with technical assistance users in Jordan.

66 KIIs with SPACE delivery team.

67 KIIs with FCDO attendees of SPACE learning events.

68 KIIs with SPACE delivery team.

69 Ibid.

70 KIIs with SPACE delivery team.

71 Fourth SPACE uptake progress report, April 2021.

72 KIIs with SPACE delivery team.

73 Excel overview of the SPACE service, communications between SPACE delivery team and FCDO.

74 KIIs with SPACE users and delivery team.

75 KIIs with technical assistance users and development partners in case study countries.

76 KII with SPACE user in Pakistan.

77 KIIs with technical assistance users and development partners in Jordan.

78 KIIs with technical assistance users in Nigeria.

79 KIIs with technical assistance users and development partners.

80 KIIs with technical assistance users and development partners in Jordan.

81 KIIs with technical assistance delivery team and users.

82 Theory of Change for BASIC Research.

83 DFID Research Uptake Guidance and checklist, 2016.

84 At midline and endline, the evaluation will review country level (changes in) key secondary indicators relating to the adequacy, coverage and benefit incidence of SP programmes to the lowest quintile (see Appendix 5 for an overview of secondary monitoring data).

85 At midline and endline, the evaluation will review changes in financial commitments relating to humanitarian assistance and SP made by the UK and DAC countries to case study countries (see Appendix 6).

86 ToC assumptions between outcome and impact level include that 'the benefits of reduced fragmentation in assistance outweigh the benefits of maintaining intentional overlaps and redundancies that may be desirable in protracted crises.

87 BASIC Annual Review 2019.

88 TAS Quarterly Reports.

89 BASIC Annual Review 2019.

90 KII FCDO.

91 KII FCDO.

92 KII FCDO Programme.

93 TAS Quarterly Report April-June 2021.

94 Nigeria Case Study, SPACE Case Study, GIZ Evaluation of SPACE.

95 BASIC Annual Review 2021.

96 After the completion of baseline data collection, additional views were provided to the evaluation team on challenges faced in the delivery of the BASIC Research inception period. These included specifying and agreeing the scope and related technical and non-technical outputs for the inception phase. While these views were not considered in the main-stage analysis, we have presented them here for additional context on why delays may have been experienced.

97 Based on yearly financial data by workstream provided by the FCDO.

98 TAS QR Jan-March 2021.

99 KII FCDO, Suppliers and BASIC Annual Review 2020.

100 KII FCDO.

101 TAS Quarterly Report April-June 2020.

102 KII FCDO.

103 TAS Quarterly Report April-June 2020.

104 GIZ Evaluation of SPACE.

105 TAS Quarterly Report April-June 2021.

106 KII Supplier.

107 TAS Quarterly Report January-March 2021.

108 Evidence from BASIC Annual Review 2021.

109 TAS QR April-June 2021.

110 For example Nigeria as reported in the Nigeria Case Study.

111 KII Supplier.

112 KII FCDO.

113 VFM management at delivery stage was assessed using a scorecard which examined various VFM-related processes, not examined as part of the 5Es assessment namely: (i) existence, relevance and robustness of VFM measures; (ii) programme-level leadership, management and governance arrangements to deliver VFM; (iii) strategies and measures adopted to enhance delivery and mitigate risk.

114 TAS QR Oct-Dec 2019.

115 KII Suppliers.

116 BASIC Annual Review 2021.

117 KII Suppliers, TAS QR Oct-Dec 2019, TAS QR Jan-March 2021.

118 TAS QR Oct-Dec 2019 and BASIC Annual Review 2021.

119 The SRO role is being held by the head of the Social Protection Team (SPT). A new Senior Programme Officer has joined the SPT, and is taking a key role in oversight of the programme, and expected to assume the SRO role in due course. At the same time a new Social Development Advisor has taken on technical oversight for BASIC.

120 TAS QR Jan-March 2021.

121 KII FCDO.

122 Country case studies, KII FCDO.

123 Nigeria Case Study.

124 TAS QR April-June 2021.

125 KII FCDO.

126 KII FCDO.

127 KII Supplier.

128 TAS QR April-June 2021.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 KII Supplier, BASIC Annual Review 2021.

132 BASIC Annual Review 2021.

133 KII FCDO, Suppliers, Country Case Studies, SPACE Case Study.

134 Somalia Country Case Study.

135 Yemen Country Case Study.

136 Jordan Country Case Study.

137 Country and SPACE Case Studies.

138 Country Case Studies.

139 KIIs FCDO, Suppliers, Donors, Country Case Studies.

140 KIIs FCDO, Suppliers, Donors, Country Case Studies,

141 KIIs FCDO, Suppliers, Donors, Country Case Studies.

142 KIIs FCDO.

143 KIIs FCDO, Suppliers, Country Case Studies.

144 Country Case Studies.

145 KII Suppliers.

146 OCED DAC defines Lessons as "Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact."