



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

Switchboard +44 (0)207 798 7000
Direct Line +44 (0)207 798 7264
Email FOI@nao.org.uk

Reference FOI-1860
Date 25 September 2025

WATER AID

Thank you for your request of 29 August 2025 where you asked us for the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

"I am submitting a Freedom of Information request regarding UK public funding allocated to WaterAid and the oversight of its use. I am conducting research into the effectiveness of UK-funded water infrastructure projects in Africa and would appreciate the following information:

- 1. Any audits, reviews, or evaluations conducted by the NAO on WaterAid's use of UK public funds, particularly those related to water infrastructure, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs.*
- 2. Any reports or findings assessing the cost-effectiveness, impact, or long-term outcomes of UK aid disbursed to WaterAid.*
- 3. Any correspondence or internal assessments regarding the governance, transparency, or delivery performance of WaterAid in relation to UK-funded projects. If any of this information is already available through your publication scheme or disclosure log, I would appreciate guidance on where to locate it. I am happy to receive the information in digital format via email. If any part of this request exceeds the cost limit, please advise on how it can be refined."*

We have considered your request in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm that the NAO holds only limited information relevant to your request.

As part of our audit of the Department's financial statements, we obtain expenditure listings from which we select items for testing. In the 2024–25 listing (FCDO), there were 10 grant expenditure transactions with a total amount paid to WaterAid of just over £1m, while in the 2020–21 listing (DFID), there were 2 grant expenditure transactions with a total amount paid to WaterAid of just over £1m. None of these transactions were selected for testing as part of our grant expenditure audit, so we have not obtained any information in relation to governance, delivery, or outcomes. As such, the information we can provide is partial and limited to the transaction details noted. You may wish to contact the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development](#) Office (FCDO) directly, as it is responsible for administering these grants and may hold further information regarding governance, delivery, or outcomes. You may also wish to check if the [Independent Commission for Aid Impact](#) (ICAI) has undertaken any relevant work in this area. For example, the ICAI published a 2016 report [Assessing DFID's Results in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - Independent Commission for Aid Impact](#). The [International Development Committee](#) may have also considered these issues in its inquiries.

There are other organisations that have evaluated WaterAid's WASH programmes such as [Evaluating WaterAid's sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene programme | Itad](#), including work carried out jointly with the UN, WHO, and UNICEF. Further details of such evaluations can be found on WaterAid's website under [Monitoring and accountability | WASH Matters](#). You may also be interested in the [Development Tracker](#), which shows in detail international development programmes led by FCDO and other government departments and partners. It gives details of programmes, status and budget, as you can see here in relation to water, sanitation and hygiene programmes: [DevTracker Programme GB-GOV-1-301529](#).

Our policy is to respond to requests as helpfully and promptly as possible. I hope this information is helpful and you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not happy with this response, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days by writing to the NAO FOI Team at FOI@nao.org.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI

Team