

UK Aid Match: Managing risk in the final project phase



Why is risk management and reporting important?

- Risk Registers are a **project management tool** providing **critical insight** into real-time, on-the-ground risks and challenges
- On a quarterly basis, we **analyse and aggregate risks** across all grants to identify trends, challenges and mitigation strategies
- The process is synced with your wider reporting and discussions, and **helps us spot shifts in risk types, frequency and severity**
- It also informs the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office’s (FCDO) decision-making, shapes learning plans, and **guides the support we offer**.

When you update your Risk Register, you’re not just reporting - you’re using it as a live tool to manage real-time risks and reflect on mitigation strategies; while also influencing how the fund manager and FCDO responds and adapts.



Managing risk in the final project phase

- Every project has risk, but it often increases in the final year due to factors like tighter timelines with less flexibility, staff turnover, and budget pressures
- Final year delivery is particularly important: it’s your chance to show impact, learning, and value - your final report needs to be high quality and well planned
- Good risk management protects your organisation’s integrity and reputation.



Today’s risk landscape is fast moving and unpredictable

Projects are often operating in poly-crisis, a context of compounding and fast-moving challenges. This makes today’s risk landscape complex and full of uncertainty. New challenges and risks keep evolving, and the sector faces significant changes in funding and ways of working.

This might mean:

- ➡ Setbacks for marginalised groups
- ➡ Increased risk of harmful behaviours and contexts
- ➡ Approaches and targets may need to shift.



- ✓ Are we prepared? If not, where are the gaps?
- ✓ Do our plans, tools and assumptions still hold?
- ✓ Does our sustainability plan fit today’s context?
- ✓ What support do we need and from who?

Business continuity - keep knowledge flowing



Business continuity is about keeping your project, programme or organisation going when something goes wrong. Staff turnover is a significant risk for this. In the final months of the project it can lead to delays, lost knowledge and reduced quality of projects.

Mitigations:

- ➡ Plan early for the Project Completion Report (PCR) period – build in time and budget
- ➡ Prioritise knowledge management throughout the project
- ➡ Ensure quality handovers and documentation
- ➡ Use match funds to support continuity.

Budgeting and forecasting - avoid underspend or overspend



Inaccurate forecasting and delayed revisions can lead to last-minute spending pressure or missed opportunities.

Mitigations:

- ➡ Forecast regularly (monthly) and adaptively
- ➡ Plan and prepare financial claims and International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data early
- ➡ Use match funds to support closeout
- ➡ Communication proposed changes early - there is flexibility
- ➡ Simplify and speed up budget revisions by reaching out to your performance and risk manager (PRM).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and final data - show your impact



Final evaluations often cost more than planned, take longer to complete, and are of mixed quality – often due to late or weak Terms Of Reference (ToR) and design, the capacity and expertise of the evaluation team, and challenges such as staff turnover or access issues.

Mitigations:

- ➡ Use underspends to strengthen MEL
- ➡ Plan early and scenario map for disruptions
- ➡ Manage consultants closely - planning for mini deliverables that can be quality assured and identify any issues early
- ➡ Be transparent in your PCR - acknowledge limitations and adaptations
- ➡ Leverage institutional learning and tested tools.



Final tips for a strong closeout

- Plan early for final reporting, consulting your PRM if you have any questions
- Use your **Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP) and Risk Register** as live tools. Are the risks and mitigations still appropriate and valid?
- Communicate early and often – **the fund team is here to support you.**