



Foreign & Commonwealth Office - Brief

Delivering the mission statement

Introduction

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is the lead UK government department for foreign affairs. Its mission is to look after UK interests abroad:

- Its embassies, high commissions and consulates provide a global network. They deal with issues affecting Britain.
- It makes and delivers British foreign policy.
- It provides services for Britons travelling or working abroad. This also includes support to British businesses in foreign markets.

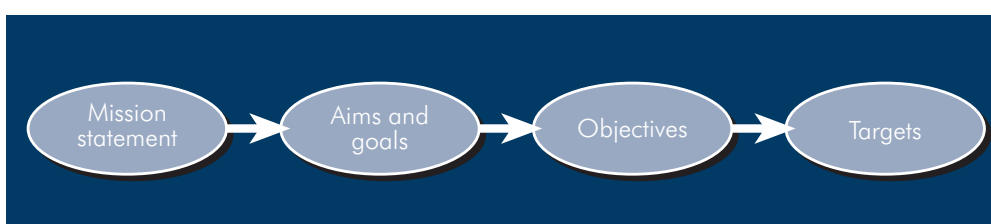
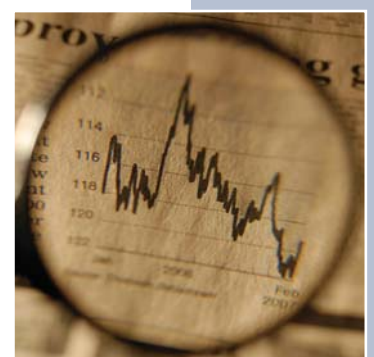
This study looks at how the FCO meets its goals through the skills of its people.

Aims and objectives

A mission statement provides focus for an organisation. The FCO's is: *'Better World, Better Britain'*. To meet this it sets clear goals.

Within these goals are objectives. These are in three areas:

1. Essential services – to support the British people and economy. For instance to: *'improve the reputation of the UK as the international business partner of choice in key sectors in leading overseas markets'*.
2. Policy goals e.g. wider issues. For instance, under the goal to prevent and resolve conflict is the objective *'to promote human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance'*.
3. The global network. This sets up meetings between foreign and British government experts. The FCO ensures the right messages are conveyed at the right time.





Strategy

The FCO agrees on what it wants to achieve. It then creates strategies and tactics. Strategies are the broader plans and are more long-term. Tactics are shorter term. For instance, the FCO aims to counter the spread of nuclear weapons. The strategy used to meet this aim was to have discussions with world leaders. This would lead to a UN resolution to limit Iran's nuclear weapons programme.

Roles and responsibilities

FCO staff come from a range of backgrounds. This results in many skills. These skills are matched to projects. People can join the FCO at different entry levels. Each role is varied with high responsibilities. Training and development is important in each job. People joining the FCO have four weeks induction training. Further training, coaching and mentoring to support the role are agreed with the manager.

Measuring outcomes

Every year an autumn performance report shows how well the FCO has met its objectives and Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. These targets are set by government. It uses the report to identify what areas of work need to improve. The report also shows the UK public and government whether the FCO has fulfilled its mission. The FCO goes beyond these targets by winning awards. These targets and awards could not be achieved without the many skills of its staff.

Conclusion

The FCO's mission is to protect and support the British public in the UK and abroad. To achieve this it sets a range of goals and objectives that must support government targets. Feedback is then shown in the autumn performance report. The FCO's results can be assessed against its targets. The FCO's scope of work needs people with a range of skills. Its mission provides focus for its workforce and an opportunity to make a difference.

