

Why three programmes were closed: a retrospective analysis of programme failure

Plain-language research summary

Study type	Retrospective analysis
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The finding, in one sentence

All three closures shared one feature: the programme was designed around available funding rather than an assessed local need.

How the study was done

- Three closed programmes were examined against six comparable programmes that continued.
- Design documents, funding agreements and evaluation reports were reviewed from inception.

What it showed

- Origin predicts failure better than budget, staffing or geography.
- In each closure the mismatch was visible in the design document, before any money was spent.
- None of the three failed for lack of effort or competence on the ground.

What it does not show

- Three cases cannot support statistical inference. This is a description, not a proof.
- The analysis was carried out by the organisation that ran the programmes, with the obvious limits that implies.

Independence

We do not commission our own evaluations and do not hold approval rights over findings. Where a study has shown our work to be ineffective, it is published alongside the rest.