EVALUATION
DEPARTMENT

14/15

Norad

Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation

Annual report 2014/15

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PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

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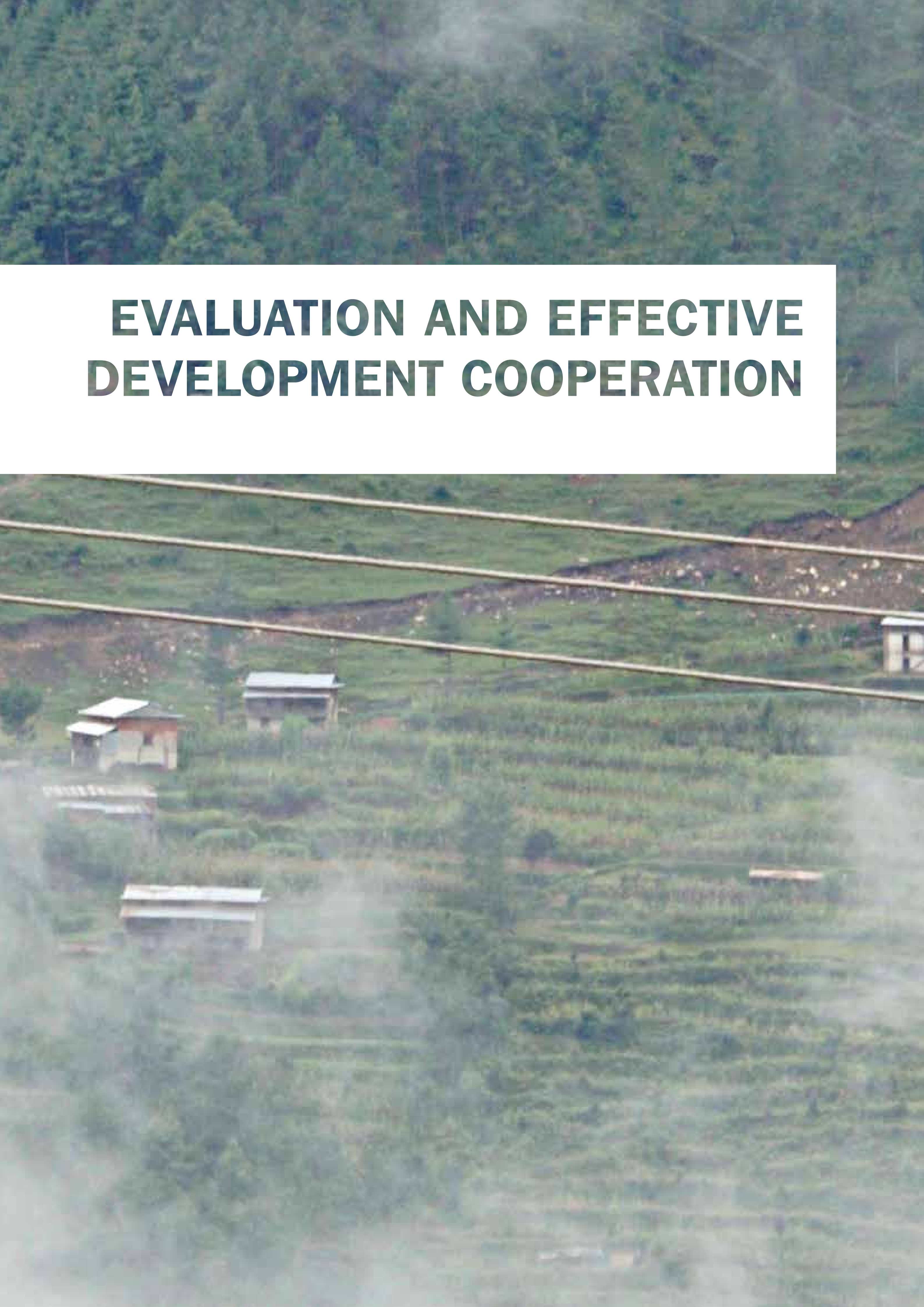


EVALUATION AND EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

2015 has been declared the International Year of Evaluation. Under the slogan "using evaluation to improve people's lives through better policy making", a number of initiatives will take place worldwide to strengthen the use of evaluation at the international, national and local levels.

Norway is an active partner in these efforts and has distinguished itself as a driving force for stronger performance orientation and greater transparency, not least in a UN context. As in other donor countries, the focus has increased on better follow-up and evaluation of development initiatives in order to achieve this. There is now widespread agreement internationally in both multilateral organizations and national development aid administrations about the importance of a reliable evaluation function.

THREE CRITERIA FOR A GOOD EVALUATION FUNCTION

Evaluations can be used in many different ways. In some contexts they can be perceived as a solid foundation for learning and accountability while in others they are more akin to historical accounts and declarations of support for existing activities. The way in which evaluations are conducted, and the organizational position and legitimacy of the evaluation department, are decisive for the role evaluations play in a given context.

There is general agreement that a reliable evaluation function satisfies three criteria:

1. Independence – understood as integrity and impartiality in the relationship with those responsible for making decisions and for grant management.

2. Credibility – centred in particular on the relevance of the evaluations and the professional quality of the implementation.

3. Use – that decision-makers and other interested parties take action based on the findings and recommendations.

These three criteria are of course closely interrelated. It is essential in all cases that the evaluation questions posed are relevant for the decision-makers.

POLITICAL INVESTMENT IN EVALUATION

Systematic evaluation in development aid management was established as early as 1978 and was the first formal central government evaluation function in Norway. Numerous evaluations and studies have been initiated and completed since then. In recent years this work has been recognised and has received awards from the Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management and the Norwegian Evaluation Society.

Despite these awards there is a constant need for improvement. The government has stated its intention to improve the evaluations of Norwegian development policy a number of times. According to the 2015 budget for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[1], systematic evaluations with consequences for the budget would be performed to strengthen the results of development policy and conditions would be created for full transparency regarding its scope, implementation and impact.

The background to this desire for improvement can partly be found in recent reviews of Norwegian development policy, including the OECD's DAC Peer Review of Norway 2013[2] and the so-called Evaluability Study in 2014[3]. These studies underscore the need to strengthen the use of evaluations. They also point to the need for improvements in 'decentralized' evaluations, i.e. evaluations, reviews, analyses and assessments initiated by entities responsible for grant management and for running programmes and projects.

In our opinion, a well-developed evaluation function is vital in this connection. Experiences in recent years show that systematic evaluation of projects and interventions combined with the evaluation of more general thematic issues can provide valuable input to processes of effectivisation.

1 St. Prop. 1 S (2014–2015) [The Budget Bill]

2 www.oecd.org/dac/peer-review/peer-review-norway.htm

3 Can We Demonstrate the Difference that Norwegian Aid Makes? www.norad.no/om-bistand/publikasjon/2014/can-we-demonstrate-the-difference-that-norwegian-aid-makes/

THIS YEAR’S CONTRIBUTION

Since last year’s annual report, the Evaluation Department has conducted eleven evaluations and studies. All the evaluations have been carried out by external consultants, commissioned through open competitive tenders. The summary and presentations provided later in the annual report show that the themes span a broad spectrum of Norwegian development policy.

The reports identify strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the various initiatives, and make recommendations on how improvements can be made. In particular we have noted three recurring issues in this year’s evaluations: diverging and poorly focused initiatives, insufficient capacity to follow up initiatives, and a failure to systematically utilize previous experiences and other expertise. These issues are therefore the main focus of this year’s report.

Even though the evaluations contain many relevant findings and recommendations, it cannot be assumed that as a whole this fulfils our expectations regarding the evaluation function. Are the three criteria of independence, credibility and use satisfied to the extent possible? Does the current activity provide a firm basis for budget allocations and transparency regarding results? Do the evaluations provide a solid foundation for making choices when it comes to concentration and focus?

We will continue our efforts to strengthen the evaluation function with the aim of establishing an even better basis for making the choices necessary to improve Norwegian development policy.

PER ØYVIND BASTØE
Director, Evaluation Department

The Evaluation Department’s activity is regulated by separate instructions issued by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 May 2006.

The department had 11 employees at the end of 2014.

Total resources used in 2014 amounted to NOK 30 million.

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSONS LEARNED IN 2014/15

1

CONCENTRATION – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A constantly recurring theme in the debate on Norwegian development aid is the need for concentration. Norwegian development assistance is alleged to be too thinly spread. The government has taken this challenge on board and has commenced efforts to reduce the number of countries receiving development assistance.

However, the need for concentration is not just a matter of reducing the number of countries; it also concerns reducing the number of cooperation partners, sectors and objectives. Our evaluations do not give a direct answer to the question of the best way of distributing Norwegian support, but several reports recommend a more targeted use of the available resources.

The evaluation of Norwegian support for women's rights and gender equality highlights the need for more strategic and focused aid in areas where Norway has a comparative advantage and can act as a catalyst. Other evaluations such as the evaluation of the training for the peace programme and of Norfund advocate the adoption of more strategic priorities in development assistance.

A number of evaluations call for ”theories of change” – an expression that is currently popular in evaluation circles. Despite the adoption of this new expression, a theory of change does not really embrace more than what a good strategy should: it is about prioritizing resources and interventions on the basis of well-founded conclusions as to how development assistance will function in the relevant context, after assessing alternative methods of achieving the same objectives.

Yet in several evaluations, it has proved difficult even to pinpoint the strategies. Often the evaluators have failed to trace the general strategy underlying the assessments made when deciding how to use development aid grants. This applies for example to efforts in Haiti following the earthquake and to the Norwegian climate and forest initiative. This does not, of course, mean that no strategic assessments were made at the start of these interventions, but little was written down when key decisions were taken. To some extent, it appears that Norwegian aid interventions are a product of many individual decisions rather than the result of a general plan describing the desired outcomes and how these are to be achieved. The expression ”design as you go” has been used of this way of providing aid.

Weak strategies or theories of change do not necessarily mean poor development aid but they represent lost opportunities to test the validity of assessments and decisions in retrospect, to evaluate alternatives and to adjust the ongoing process should conditions change. It also means that it is difficult to document the results achieved by development assistance.

2

CAPACITY AND EXPERTISE

One of the main reasons for focusing on the aid concentration is access to resources and expertise. Norwegian aid is characterized not only by being too much and too thinly spread, but also by limited resources. A number of evaluations over a period of years have concluded that Norwegian aid management has insufficient human resources available, particularly in embassies. We wrote about this in our 2008 annual report. Since then, Norwegian aid has increased by almost 50 per cent without an equivalent increase in the number of employees in aid management, and in many cases there has been a cutback in embassy staff charged with aid administration.

It goes without saying that there should be a high threshold for using more resources than absolutely necessary to administer aid, but a number of evaluations also point out that Norwegian aid management is so understaffed that quality is affected. Norway lacks the capacity to follow up all its good initiatives. This can be used as an argument in favour of the need to increase resources, but it can equally be used to support using the resources we have in a more strategic manner.

A closely linked issue is how to retain expertise. Many aid programmes are long-term while personnel resources are available for the short-term. The Norwegian Foreign Service is characterized by frequent shifts in work tasks and every time employees are redeployed, expertise is lost. Many evaluations emphasise the need for a more systematic perspective on knowledge management. Examples are the evaluations of Norwegian aid for women's rights and gender equality, the climate and forest initiative and the Norwegian interventions following the earthquake on Haiti in 2010. These evaluations call for more systematic knowledge management, suggesting that we could achieve even better results if this had been in place.

3

TRANSFER OF LESSONS LEARNED

In addition to the need for more systematic knowledge management within the individual project, programme or country, we face challenges in transferring the lessons learned. The evaluation of Norwegian interventions in Haiti shows that there is far too little documentation of experiences and consequently the opportunity to learn from them is lost.

Many of our evaluations are relevant for those who work with similar projects, but the reports are often read only by those closest to what is evaluated. As a result yet another opportunity to transfer experience is lost. This is a very relevant challenge at present – how can the lessons learned from the earthquake in Haiti be utilized in the aftermath of the earthquake in Nepal? Despite the completely different contexts, there are many common factors when it comes to how help and reconstruction efforts should be organized in the wake of natural catastrophes in countries characterized by weak institutions.

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

REPORTS FROM THE EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

Synthesizing evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

REPORT 3/2014

Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative – Synthesising Report 2007-2013

LTS International in cooperation with Indurfor Oy, Ecometrica and the Chr. Michelsen Institute

ISBN: 978-82-7548-793-1

BACKGROUND

The Norwegian government launched its International Climate and Forest Initiative in December 2007, pledging up to NOK 3 billion annually to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+).

The objectives of the initiative are:
1. To work towards the inclusion of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a new international climate regime;

2. To take early action to achieve cost-effective and verifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and

3. To promote the conservation of natural forests to maintain their carbon storage capacity.

In addition, the climate and forest initiative will promote the general goals of Norwegian foreign and development policy, including the economic and social rights of those who make their living in and from the forest.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation was to synthesise and assess the results of the initiative in the period 2007–2013 in relation to the initiative's general climate and development goals, as well as to cross-cutting themes such as gender equality and anti-corruption. The evaluation included a review of the initiative's institutional and economic framework and its multilateral partners. It included fieldwork in Indonesia, Tanzania, Brazil and Guyana. The evaluation is part of the real-time evaluation of the initiative, and is the final evaluation in the framework agreement with LTS international Ltd.

FINDINGS

The evaluation generally demonstrates positive results in the four target areas:

> *Climate goal 1:* Norway is the largest donor in REDD+, i.e. in the global effort to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The initiative has been decisive for the progress of REDD+ in the global climate negotiations and an important driver of the work to put in place an operational and financial REDD+ structure.

> *Climate goal 2:* The initiative has made important contributions to the work by setting up systems for measurement, reporting, and verification as well as national funding and safeguarding mechanisms through its work with civil society.

> *Climate goal 3:* The initiative has made a substantial, direct contribution to the conservation of natural forests, from planning framework, project-scale pilots and the establishment of new conservation forests.

> *Development goals:* Questions related to governance with a specific focus on anti-corruption measures and illegal logging are central to the initiative. The rights of indigenous peoples are on the agenda but other groups who live in the forest are not equally well safeguarded. Gender equality was included in the planning documents but is still not assigned priority in the implementation of the projects.

Other key findings and conclusions:

- > Results reporting and the information available are generally inadequate. This applies to the multilateral initiatives and to the initiative as such.

- > *The multilateral initiatives:* The evaluation reports ineffectiveness within the multilateral institutions and that the complexity of the REDD+ structure leads to problems of coordination. In addition, the rate of disbursement has been lower than planned because of slow implementation.

- > *The initiative's institutional and economic framework:* An overall results-based framework with indicators for the initiative is lacking. This deficiency has been pointed out in previous evaluations and was also one of the main criticisms in the Auditor General of Norway's 2013 report. The initiative's ability to react quickly and flexibly to new opportunities is reported as positive but there is a need to balance this flexibility with solid planning and reporting. Moreover, a unified ”theory of change" should be put in place. A theory of change establishes the general conditions necessary for achieving the goals and is an important tool for planning and coordinating the initiative.

Strategic findings:

- > The multilateral partners are increasing the number of countries in their portfolio. Some of these receive results-based payment but many show little progress. Before including more new countries, the reason for the lack of progress should therefore be analysed.

- > The lack of security in connection with REDD+ financing poses the greatest risk for future results. More attention to costs and to the capacity for maintaining the various systems is required as well as an analysis of the magnitude of future financing within REDD+.

- > REDD+ as results-based financing is probably not viable in all countries.

- > The strongest progress within REDD+ has taken place in countries in which there is national political support and where interventions to decrease deforestation were in place before the agreement with Norway was entered into. Norwegian funding in the shape of results-based disbursements were not a decisive economic incentive but had a politically motivating impact on ongoing activities as well as opening up for new activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation report recommends focusing on the findings that reveal weaknesses in the management and reporting of the initiative:

- > Since the start in 2007/2008, REDD+ has developed from being simply a concept into a more formalized and concrete intervention at the global, national and local level. The initiative should assess its work on the basis of this and other evaluations as well as on research and internal reporting. Areas that offer opportunities or that are in need of change should be identified, also in relation to what is most cost-effective. This applies, for example, to implementation

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

channels, and to how many and what countries should receive support and how this should be done.

> Developing and revising the initiative’s strategy to put in place a theory of change, a results-based framework and a reporting system. Both process and results indicators should be prepared in conjunction with involved parties to ensure a joint understanding and to clarify whether internal resources are adequate and properly allocated. These tools should be flexible and should be revised as needed.

> Carry out a review of partnerships with other donors and multilateral institutions. Help should be given to make the work of the multilateral institutions more effective given their different mandates, limitations and opportunities for synergy with the initiative. A possible link to the Green Climate Fund should be considered.

> A high-level, interdisciplinary team should visit Guyana and Tanzania to discuss the reasons for their limited progress and to discuss whether and how support should be continued. The initiative should also consider whether permanent representation should be set up in Guyana to pave the way for the cooperation.

> The initiative should improve its management and dissemination of knowledge. This should include a website with links to reports and other sources of information. Work should continue to ensure greater transparency on how REDD+ funding is channelled, particularly through multilateral partners whose reporting is inadequate.

Real-time evaluation of NORHED: Theory of change and evaluation methods

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

REPORT 4/2014

Evaluation Series of NORHED: Theory of Change and Evaluation Methods

University of Southern California's Development Portfolio Management Group

ISBN: 978-82-7548-795-5

BACKGROUND

The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development of Higher Education Institutions (NORHED supports university cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in low- and middle-income countries. The objective is to help strengthen the capacity of educational institutions in the South through more and better research and more and better-educated candidates. The programme has an annual budget of NOK 130 million.

PURPOSE

The objective of the real-time evaluation of NORHED is to contribute to learning within the field of higher education and development, so that future investment can be more effective in building capacity at higher education institutions in order to promote development.

The first study commissioned as part of the real-time evaluation has analysed the extent to which the programme's instruments are in keeping with the recommendations of the existing research in the field.

FINDINGS

On the basis of relevant research, the team have identified three categories of factors that affect the degree to which capacity development is successful:

1. National institutional parameters
2. Local institutional parameters
3. Human resources and assets at the disposal of the institution

> Examples of national institutional parameters are funding, the authorities' administration of academic institutions and academic freedom, while local institutional parameters include the management of the institution, grants funding for students and the management of the academic staff.

> As all these factors affect the development of the institution, it may be difficult in some cases to develop the institutions if any of the above-mentioned factors fail to promote development. This would indicate that the framework conditions for development are not in place.

> The evaluation team is of the opinion that the NORHED programme, with one exception, has been set up in line with international research recommendations, but that the programme is unable to influence all the relevant framework conditions for development. The success of the programme is therefore partly dependent on factors outside its control.

> The programme cannot, of course, alter such external factors, but the evaluation team believes that the programme could attempt to focus on students' framework conditions to a greater extent than at present. For example, few grant schemes for students are included. This decision can be partly justified by sustainability considerations.

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

RECOMMENDATIONS

> Base the evaluation of the programme on existing research on capacity development. The general theory of change developed in connection with this evaluation should be used in future evaluations.

> Ensure that all projects have good data at all levels of the results chain.

> Choose a limited number of indicators for all NORHED projects. These indicators should be used to evaluate the programme.

> Monitor the extent to which framework conditions outside the programme's control are present.

WHAT IS A REAL-TIME EVALUATION?

A real-time evaluation means that the evaluation follows the programme from its outset. The real-time evaluation is distinct from ordinary results measurement in that it is conducted by an external team of consultants to ensure impartiality and that the methods used are standard research and evaluation methods.

Evaluation of support to umbrella and network organizations

PHOTO: G.M.B.AKASH

REPORT 5/2014

Added costs. Added value? Evaluation of Norwegian support through and to umbrella and network organisations in civil society

NIRAS, in cooperation with the Chr. Michelsen Institute

ISBN: 978-82-7548-796-2

BACKGROUND

About five per cent of Norwegian aid to civil society organizations is channelled via Norwegian umbrella and network organizations. The latter serve as an intermediary between the Norwegian authorities and civil society organizations with regard to channelling funds, quality assurance and reporting. At the same time most of them engage in political advocacy on behalf of their member organizations vis-à-vis the government of Norway or other countries, or in international fora. From purely financial and administrative angle they constitute an additional element – which comes at a cost. However, they also give value added to the development partnership.

PURPOSE

The evaluation has investigated umbrella and network organizations as a model for support to civil society. It was not designed to assess each individual organization.

The aim has been to identify and assess the theory of change which underpins the use of such organizations as a channel of support to civil society, and also to assess the effectiveness and value added of these organizations. Value added in this context is the difference, both positive and negative, that is made by channelling support via these organizations as compared to transferring it directly to each individual organization. Obtaining the views of the recipients was emphasized. This model was to be assessed against alternative forms of support for civil society organizations.

Eight organizations were included in the evaluation: the Atlas-Alliance (umbrella organization for the disabled), Digni (umbrella organization based on Christian values), FOKUS (forum for women and development) ForUM (forum for environment and development), Publish What You Pay Norway, Friendship North-South, the Drylands Coordination Group and the Norwegian Children and Youth Council.

Data collection was undertaken in Tanzania and Nepal in addition to questionnaire surveys, interviews and document reviews.

FINDINGS

> *A mixed picture of the organizations' value added.*
The evaluation shows that various sources provide quite a different picture of what gives the umbrella and network organizations 'value added', and this has changed to some extent over time. Previously most emphasis was put on their contribution to reducing Norad's administration and professional follow-up costs (transaction costs) and to strengthening the capacity of member and partner organizations in developing countries. Today emphasis is also placed on their function as a forum for the discussion of development aid and a channel for political advocacy. The members and partner organizations in developing countries generally give favourable assessments of umbrella and network organizations but point out that the work is time-consuming and that there are some problematic aspects of the relationship between partners in North and South.

> *Solid contributions to capacity development, but the effects cannot be verified.* The organizations have done considerable work in this area but none of them have taken substantial steps to measure the impact of this work. The report makes a similar comment about the organizations' results achievement in general.

> *Questions about the organizations' contextual understanding and ability to adapt.* The evaluation team felt that in some cases a number of organizations had poor contextual understanding, and that there may be differences between the prioritizations of the recipients and those of the organizations in the balance between service delivery and political advocacy, and in the relationship between international conventions and the main interests of the recipients and the expressed needs of the poor.

> *Donor dominance and weaknesses in communication.* The evaluation calls attention to some indications that cooperation between organizations in the North and South may be dominated by the priorities of the Norwegian parties (which often coincide with international priorities) rather than the priorities of the recipients. The authors are also of the opinion that weaknesses in the communication between the parties can have resulted in long-term projects having an orientation that is detrimental from the point of view of the recipients, without the umbrella/network organization intervening.

> *Size matters.* The report points out that umbrella and network organizations enable very small Norwegian organizations to administer aid – organizations that perhaps would not have had the opportunity to take part in development cooperation without this channel. At the same time the report shows that there is a difference between large and small umbrella and network organizations: small organizations have generally less experience in project administration, a higher turnover of staff, less experience in managing risk and preventing corruption, and higher transaction costs.

> *High total transaction costs and uncertain cost-effectiveness.* Umbrella and network organizations make up an additional element of aid management that has an obvious cost. It is not possible to determine if the benefits counterbalance the cost, since this (value added) cannot be measured precisely and the alternatives are difficult to assess. Nevertheless, the evaluation does include some assessments with a main focus on economic aspects, stating that the general data point to low cost-effectiveness.

> *Direct support to national organizations in recipient countries may be more cost-effective.* The report discusses the benefits and drawbacks of supporting civil society in other ways, and argues that greater consideration should be given to channelling support directly to organizations in the recipient country through national umbrella or network organizations in these countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report makes many recommendations to both Norad and the organizations. The following are the most important:

PHOTO: G.M.B.AKASH

- Norad should consider channelling a larger proportion of support for civil society via national umbrella and network organizations in the recipient country. If more support is channelled in this way, it should be followed up by support to strengthen the organizations' management and follow-up capacity.

- Norad should prepare country-specific analyses of civil society in some selected countries in order to make better choices with regard to supporting the development of civil society.

- Norad should undertake meta-evaluations of individual civil society organizations to elucidate the question of cost-effectiveness, value added, contextual understanding / willingness to adapt and/or other circumstances that have been subject to critical remarks in this evaluation. The report has considered these organizations as a model and has therefore not examined each organization in detail but merely pointed out aspects that merit closer study.

- Norad should determine what sort of costs can be reported as administrative costs to facilitate better assessments of costs and cost-effectiveness.

- Organizations should devote more efforts to developing 'theories of change' and a results framework to highlight value added and the impact of their work.

- Organizations should work more on analyses of political and economic contexts in the recipient countries.

- Organizations must strengthen 'vertical' communication: between North and South, and between members and umbrella/network organizations.

- Organizations should consider reducing their support to small organizations with high costs.

- Organizations should reassess the balance between delivering services to the poor and engaging in political advocacy.

Evaluation of the Training for Peace in Africa programme

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

REPORT 6/2014

Building Blocks for Peace. An Evaluation of the Training for Peace in Africa Programme

The Chr. Michelsen Institute in cooperation with Itad

ISBN: 978-82-7548-797-9

BACKGROUND

The Training for Peace programme will shortly complete its fourth phase and the future of the programme after 2014 will therefore be considered.

The purpose of the programme is to assist international organizations such as the UN and the African Union as well as national authorities in Africa in building up sustainable capacity for peacekeeping operations in Africa. The programme was established in 1995 and offers instruction to police officers and other civilians to better equip them to take part in peacekeeping operations. In addition, the programme supplies research and policy formulation for peacekeeping operations. It is now in its fourth phase, which will be completed in 2015. NOK 290 million has been spent since its inception.

PURPOSE

The Evaluation Department wishes to promote more constructive discussion about the continuation of development aid programmes, and for this reason we commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme.

The objective of the evaluation was to examine the relevance of the programme and whether it has had the desired effects in its fourth phase (2010-2015), and also to propose areas for improvement should the programme be extended.

FINDINGS

The evaluation team concludes that the programme is relevant and identifies positive effects from training police officers to function better in the field.

> Public sector and regional authorities on the African continent are facing major challenges in the work to build up sustainable capacity for peacekeeping operations. Training for peace will contribute to this work by offering police officers and civilians training to better equip them to participate in peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the programme will supply research and policy formulation in the field.

> Because of the limited use of personnel who have received training in peacekeeping operations, the evaluation team questions whether the programme functions optimally.

> In addition, the evaluation team has the view that the programme suffers from weak management and points out that the partner model is insufficiently utilized.

> The partners have overlapping interests but no general understanding of how to meet the objectives of the programme. One of the results is that they focus on their own activities. The programme has been criticized for focusing on activities rather than results. It is not clear how the activities selected are intended to promote the desired results. For example, the programme has been criticized for not working more actively to ensure that those who receive training are actually used in peacekeeping operations.

> Although the research is relevant, it is driven by the interests of individual researchers.

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

RECOMMENDATIONS

> The main recommendations of the evaluation report are based on the findings that reveal weaknesses in strategic management and the interaction between the partners. The recommendations include stronger strategic management if it is decided to continue the programme. If not, the evaluation team recommends terminating the programme and instead considering whether to support partners individually.

> If a decision is made to continue the programme, a more focused intervention with fewer activities but with focus on what is to be achieved should be assessed.

> Moreover, the choice of training courses and other activities should be based on documented results. The team believes that the programme's research activities should be directed more towards what it is hoped to achieve and should as a rule involve at least two partners.

> Finally the evaluation team has the view that policy development efforts should be more focused and more aligned with the desired outcome of the programme.

Impact evaluation of the Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) – second phase, baseline

PHOTO: EVA BRATHOLM

REPORT 7/2014

Impact Evaluation of the Norway India Partnership Initiative Phase II for Maternal and Child Health – Baseline

Oxford Policy Management Ltd. in cooperation with Sambodhi Research and Communication

ISBN: 978-82-7548-798-6

BACKGROUND

The initiative commenced in 2006 and supports activities in four Indian states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan). NIPI is one of five initiatives which Norway has entered into with national governments to help attain Millenium Development Goals 4 and 5 – to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health.

Previous studies commissioned by the Evaluation Department have indicated that the objectives of activities supported through NIPI have been somewhat unclear and the results framework has been inadequate[4]. This in turn has led to difficulties in documenting whether NIPI activities have achieved their goals.

PURPOSE

The ongoing impact evaluation will attempt to establish whether the interventions supported by the initiative actually contribute to better maternal and child health in the areas of operation of the initiative.

The baseline data were collected at the turn of the year 2013/2014 (4 620 households were visited), and it is planned to collect new data in 2016/2017.

Two groups of households were studied in order to find out what happens when one group has had access to health services in Phase 1 (2006–2012) and is also to be given access to new services in Phase 2 (2013-2018). The second group, however, only had access to the health services provided in Phase 1. By comparing the two groups it is hoped to document the impact of programmes supported in Phase 2[5].

The following three activities are part of the impact evaluation:

1. Follow-up of children under one year of age after they are discharged from the maternity clinic;

2. Follow-up of sick newborns both during their stay at clinics with special expertise on the health of newborns and after they have been discharged from the clinic;

3. Family planning after the birth.

The use of lay health workers in the follow-up of mother/child plays a significant role in all three activities.

FINDINGS

A final evaluation of the impacts of the health services introduced during Phase 2 of the initiative will be carried out when data from the second collection round have been analysed. Nevertheless, the baseline data collected so far can provide useful information about NIPI.

4 Norad 2010. Evaluability Study of Partnership Initiatives: Norwegian Support to achieve Millennium development Goals 4 &5. Evaluation Department, Report 9/2010. Norad 2013. Evaluation of the Norway India Partnership Initiative for Maternal and Child Health, Evaluation Department, Report 3/2013.

5 The choice of what groups have access or not to NIPI services is not determined by the impact evaluation.The control groups are identified because in accordance with the implementation of the national health plan in India, they were not prioritized for NIPI Phase 2 activities.

PHOTO: EVA BRATHOLM

The report includes information on the range of health services today as well as how people report on their own health.

> The report questions whether NIPI's own coverage in the first phase is in accordance with the objectives of the initiative. Mothers report far fewer home visits than planned by NIPI.

> The baseline data can also be used to question whether lay health workers succeed in communicating the health-promoting measures that NIPI builds on. For example, fewer than half the mothers who were questioned knew when it was best to introduce solids for children in addition to breast milk.

> In other areas the report shows that the mothers do not always put their knowledge to use. For example, very many mothers know that it is important to pay attention to whether the child is growing and putting on weight, but in practice fewer than half of the mothers do so. Mothers also have considerable knowledge about family planning methods, but very few report using such methods.

WHAT IS AN IMPACT EVALUATION?

An impact evaluation is intended to demonstrate the impact of aid, and provides an indication of how the interventions affect the recipients compared with those who have not received aid. If changes are observed in one of the groups which at the outset were alike, and there has been no change in the external factors that could have affected the two groups, the change can be attributed to the intervention. No groups are completely alike, but to ensure that they are as similar as possible, either those that will have access to the project are drawn randomly (experimental method, also called a randomized study), or quasi-experimental methods are used to "construct" a control group. The quality of these methods will determine the robustness of the results of the impact evaluation. One challenge presented by this type of evaluation is external validity; in other words, how valid are the findings in contexts other than those in which the investigation was carried out?

Evaluation of Norway's support to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake

PHOTO: THE EVALUATION TEAM

REPORT 8/2014

Evaluation of Norway's Support to Haiti after the 2010 Earthquake

Particip GmbH

ISBN: 978-82-7548-799-3

BACKGROUND

After the earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January 2010, the Norwegian government rapidly decided to provide substantial support to emergency aid and reconstruction. The task was formidable. Haiti has been one of the most impoverished countries on the American continent for decades, and had very weak public institutions even before the earthquake. The situation after the earthquake was characterized by extreme need and destroyed infrastructure and institutions, and an enormous need for long-term rebuilding. Managing the Norwegian assistance to Haiti was therefore highly demanding.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation was two-fold:

1. To evaluate the results of the Norwegian aid, with emphasis on tangible improvements for the very poorest;

2. To learn how the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the aid management succeeded in manoeuvring in the complex political and institutional dynamics of Haiti, in terms of knowledge management, general strategic decisions and practical implementation.

The main emphasis of the evaluation was on the Norwegian intervention financed by the resources that had been promised during the first months after the quake. This amounted to around NOK 800 million, and the money was used up in 2012. Norwegian assistance after this period was also taken into consideration when it was relevant. The evaluation attached most weight to efforts directed at long-term rebuilding and concentrated somewhat less on the humanitarian effort in the first few months, because this had already been covered by other reviews.

FINDINGS

Results/effectiveness:

> Because of the time at which the evaluation was made, it is too early to consider the long-term effects of the support. For many of the projects there is not yet enough documentation to be able to say anything definite about the results achieved so far. It is therefore not possible to draw any definite conclusion as to how effective the aid was.

> The evaluation team has nonetheless carried out an assessment based on available information. These assessments provide a very mixed picture, and on balance the evaluation team concludes that the effectiveness of the Norwegian interventions was moderate.

> Many interventions were well suited to improving conditions for the poor, but the long-term positive effects are nonetheless highly uncertain. The uncertainty is often due to circumstances beyond Norway's control, such as weak institutions. Although these are difficult to handle, the report indicates that Norway could have achieved lasting effects with greater certainty by carrying out systematic risk assessments and by orienting its intervention differently.

PHOTO: THE EVALUATION TEAM

Organization of the Norwegian input:

> According to the evaluation, Norway made bold, innovative and astute choices by concentrating efforts in one region (Département du Sud), by thinking in the long-term from an early stage, and through its thematic/sectoral priorities. Norway is also praised for being an international example for other donors with respect to donor coordination, but the evaluation team does not find any indication that Norway actually did point other donors in the right direction.

> Norway is criticized for not having an explicit strategy for its intervention. Little was written down on how decisions were made and on what basis. No clear overarching objectives were formulated, and apparently no alternative means of supporting Haiti had been considered before decisions were taken. No explicit risk assessments were carried out either.

> The evaluation criticises the ability of the Norwegian aid delivery system to manage knowledge and to learn from experience. Much of the intervention was dependent on a few people who provided little documentation of the type of knowledge upon which they based their choices, and their experiences along the way. The evaluation team found few or no references to use being made of sources other than the personal knowledge and experience of those involved. Nor did they find any indication that previously adopted Norwegian policy documents of relevance had been used.

> Norway did little to achieve synergies between the different parts of the Norwegian intervention. This applied both to horizontal synergies (e.g. between voluntary organizations and public institutions) which could have contributed to knowledge sharing and more coordinated efforts in support of poor peoples, and vertical synergies in relation to political processes and institutions at national level, to ensure that the local and regional input would be sustainable.

> The evaluation reveals some examples of how Norway may have contributed to building parallel structures alongside the public institutions.

> The Norwegian flexibility is described as a two-edged sword. It made rapid and unbureaucratic decisions possible, but at the same time it bears signs of a critical absence of an explicit evidence-based decision-making process underlying strategic assessments, lack of documentation, lack of risk assessment and other factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most recommendations aim to make Norwegian interventions yield greater benefits in similar crises in other countries in the future. Proposals include:

> drawing up country strategies for work in fragile states. The emphasis here should be on realistic goals, horizontal and vertical synergies, clear formulation of how Norwegian efforts are intended to contribute to state-building locally, regionally and nationally, and a plan for transfer of responsibility to the authorities. Country strategies must be dynamic, and subject to regular reappraisal.

> developing training systems, for example to show the evidence base for strategic decisions, systematize documentation and the use of knowledge and experience, and identify and further develop synergies among the various actors in a country programme.

> refining procedures and requirements for risk analyses of Norwegian involvement in vulnerable states. Risk analyses must be based on specific analyses of social and political context, including do no harm principles, and should be explicit and verifiable.

Evaluation of the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund)

PHOTO: WAYNE CONRADIE/PICTURING AFRICA

REPORT 1/2015

Evaluation of the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund)

Gaia Consulting Ltd.

ISBN: 978-82-7548-801-3

BACKGROUND

Norfund is one of the largest single ventures in Norwegian development aid. The Fund is Norway's most important development aid contribution to promoting business development. The purpose is to establish viable and sustainable business activities, primarily in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

In the period 2007–2013, slightly over half of Norwegian assistance for business development (approximately NOK 8.5 billion) went to Norfund. At the end of 2013, Norfund's portfolio consisted of 118 investments which, according to the company's own evaluation, were worth approximately NOK 9.6 billion.

During the evaluation period, Norfund made an average of 14 new investments per year. During the same period, the company exited from six companies. Since its inception in 1997, Norfund has exited from a total of 33 investments.

The evaluation covers all support to Norfund in the period 2007–2013. The evaluation was conducted in the period February 2014–January 2015.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation has been to understand Norfund's role as an instrument of Norwegian development assistance policy through documentation of the development outcomes of its activities, and draw lessons for future programming of development financing for sustainable private sector development in least developing countries. The evaluation assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Norfund's activities.

FINDINGS

> The Board and management of Norfund have a great deal of freedom in their implementation of Norfund's mandate. The Fund has succeeded in operationalizing the mandate with respect to thematic and sectoral priorities in Norwegian development policy.

> The report questions the geographical prioritizations of Norfund's investments. Norfund's geographical prioritizations detract from the Fund's relevance to the goals of Norwegian development policy.

> Norfund's approach to the planning and documentation of development impact is simpler and less wide-ranging than many other European development finance funds. The same applies to Norfund's risk management procedures.

> In the period 2007–2013, companies in which Norfund has invested accounted for between 148 000 and 313 000 jobs, and generated tax revenues of the order of NOK 24 billion. Attributing the reported development impact to Norfund's participation in the investments in question presents considerable challenges.

> It is not possible to assess Norfund's influence on the general economic and social development in the host countries. The development effects recorded are, with few exceptions, limited to company level.

> The nominal return on Norfund's investments is estimated to be 8.8%. This is mainly due to the return on hydropower projects through SN Power.

PHOTO: WAYNE CONRADI

The nominal return excluding the return from this company is 3.7%, while the real return is 1.9%. However, there is uncertainty associated with these estimates. So far Norfund has exited from few companies, so the estimates are based on Norfund's own valuation of unrealized assets.

> Implementation of Norfund's present growth strategy is critically dependent on capital contributions from the development assistance budget for the forseeable future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

> The evaluation singles out a number of areas for improvement, but according to the evaluation team there are no important grounds for making major changes to the current operations.

> Although the current management model allows Norfund's Board considerable freedom of manoeuvre, the owner should contribute to defining more detailed goal setting for Norfund.

> Norfund should further develop its reporting and follow-up of the development impact and value added attributable to its investments.

> Norfund should ensure that sufficient resources are made available for it to exercise active ownership. The results achieved through active exercise of ownership should be reported more systematically.

> Norfund should consider developing a more integrated and standardized financial risk management system for selecting and following up its investments.

THE EVALUATION DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should set out more detailed objectives for Norfund's activities in order to instruct the Board and management on how they should interpret their mandate.

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should consider whether Norfund should realise capital from investments that fall outside Norfund's core mandate.

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should determine how development impact and value added by Norfund's investments should be assessed and reported.

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should consider alternative means of contributing targeted support to the least developed countries with weak investment climate for development of private sector.

Evaluation of Norwegian support for strengthening women's rights and gender equality

PHOTO: ANGÉLICA ARBULÚ

REPORT 2/2015

Evaluation of Norway's support to women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation

Swedish Institute for Public Administration in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute and the Chr. Michelsen Institute

ISBN: 978-82-7548-755-9

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Evaluation Department conducted an evaluation of the strategy for work for women and gender equality in development cooperation. The purpose of the evaluation at that time was to provide an assessment of available capacity and expertise to implement the strategy. A further aim was to learn more about how Norway could promote gender equality in bilateral development cooperation. The conclusion of the evaluation was that the capacity for applying this type of assistance needed to be strengthened, and that results reporting should be improved. These recommendations were repeated in the halfway review of the action plan for women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation in 2009. One of the outcomes of the halfway review was to establish pilot embassies that were intended to maintain a particular focus on women's rights and gender equality, including improved reporting of results.

Now a new evaluation has been carried out, this time focused on the results of Norwegian development assistance.

The evaluation mainly covers the period 2007–2013 and includes one desk study of global efforts for gender equality, and case studies of three countries: Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal. In addition, a desk study was performed of Norwegian aid for gender equality in Zambia.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which Norwegian aid to strengthen women's rights and gender equality has achieved the outcomes envisaged in the action plan for women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation. One objective of the evaluation is to extract lessons that can be used to design future development initiatives in this field.

FINDINGS

> The evaluation report shows that the results of Norwegian aid in this area vary from very good to weak.

> The evaluation finds examples where Norwegian support for rights advocacy has led to changes in the public debate and in adopted policy, for example through the collaboration with Norwegian Church Aid and Save the Children in Ethiopia to abolish female genital mutilation. However, the results of efforts to encourage national authorities to increase use of their own means to strengthen women's rights and other gender equality work are weaker.

> The evaluation finds examples showing that Norwegian support to strengthen capacity for working with rights and gender equality issues is more effective when the support goes to civil society organizations compared with support to strengthen the capacity of national authorities.

> The results achieved varied substantially at project level. The evaluation concludes that this had more to do with the quality of design and reporting systems than with the type of cooperation partner.

PHOTO: KAJSA JOHANSSON

> Turning to the results of support designed to create changes at individual level – to improve the everyday life of women and girls – the evaluation finds examples of Norwegian aid leading to a strengthening of the position of women at household level and in the local community. This applies to agricultural projects in Mozambique and Nepal, and to the increased knowledge and understanding by local leaders of women's rights and gender equality issues, for example through a renewable energy project in Nepal. However, the results of Norwegian aid aiming to mobilise support from men and boys to strengthen women's rights and gender equality are weaker.

According to the report, the strengths of Norwegian aid for gender equality are:

> credible voice in international fora

> willingness to provide long-term support that makes it possible to work with complex sociocultural norms and practice associated with rights and equal opportunities issues

> support through civil society organizations, including traditional and religious leaders who often play an important role in forming public opinion on sensitive issues concerning rights

> support for vulnerable groups, including groups engaged in combatting harmful traditional practices, and organizations and persons working to strengthen the rights of sexual minorities

> grants for women's rights and gender equality work (chapter 168/item 70) which can fund catalyst work to strengthen women's rights and gender equality at country level

> skilled specialists in Norad

According to the report, the weaknesses of Norwegian aid for gender equality are:

> relatively small amount of aid compared with the biggest OECD donors

> inadequate expertise on gender issues, particularly at embassy level

> weak expertise in project follow-up and reporting of results

> inconsistent/unstrategic use of grants for women and gender equality (chapter 168/item 70)

RECOMMENDATIONS

> More strategic use of aid for gender equality that is based on the strong sides of Norwegian gender equality aid.

> Introduce mandatory and more systematic results reporting.

> Strengthen capacity and competence in Norwegian aid management with respect to gender competence, project follow-up and results reporting.

Baseline study of Norwegian support to management of the environment and natural resources in Myanmar


PHOTO: ESPEN RØST

REPORT 3/2015

A Baseline Study of Norwegian Development Cooperation within the areas of Environment and Natural Resources Management in Myanmar

Fafo – Institute for Applied International Studies (AIS)

ISBN: 978-82-7548-762-7

BACKGROUND
Myanmar and Norway have initiated long-term development cooperation following some years of Norwegian engagement where the emphasis was on the peace process and humanitarian support. Although baseline studies are sometimes conducted in connection with individual interventions as part of the ongoing results work, there is often a need for further data for future evaluations.

A number of the interventions entail cooperation between Norwegian and Myanmarian institutions, and capacity development is a major component. Some interventions aim to directly improve the socioeconomic conditions of selected target groups, while this is a more implicit and long-term vision for the other interventions.

PURPOSE
Because Norway is in the initial phase of entering into long-term cooperation with the government and other actors in Myanmar, we now have a unique chance to collect data that can furnish us with important answers with regard to what results the intervention has had. The Evaluation Department therefore commissioned a preliminary study in 2014 that consists of collecting and analysing baseline data within selected areas of this cooperation. The main purpose of this preliminary study has been to enable better evaluations of Norwegian interventions in the future.

It was decided to focus on Norwegian development cooperation in the sphere of environment and natural resource management. In the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Norway and Myanmar signed in December 2014, this is defined as one of two main areas for development cooperation.

The principle aim of the study was to establish and analyse relevant and credible baseline data that describe the current socioeconomic situation, and the conflict situation for relevant target groups. In addition the study was to establish and analyse baseline data for the organizational capacity of Norwegian and Myanmarian institutions. The study focuses primarily on impact level, i.e. what socioeconomic effects and/or capacity development effects the interventions are expected to have in the medium and long term.

The starting point of the work entailed mapping the interventions in environment and natural resource management that were included in the study. The consultants identified and assessed planning processes, programme theory, aid effectiveness and target groups for the different interventions. This was important for obtaining insight into the type of data that was available, and for determining the content of the baseline.

FINDINGS
The study concludes that the Norwegian environment and natural resources management portfolio in Myanmar has solid potential for contributing to further development in Myanmar. Interventions are consistent with needs and demand in Myanmar, and with the main priorities in Norwegian development policy.

PHOTO: ESPEN RØST

> However, realizing the full potential of the interventions requires systematic planning in accordance with good development cooperation practice, which entails more explicit theories of change and assessments of capacity needs.

> Another challenge in several of the project documents is limited contextual awareness. This includes conflict-sensitivity and aspects of institution culture.

> The study identifies considerable gaps in the availability of the baseline data required for measuring the results of the Norwegian efforts in environment and natural resource management.

> Good data are expected in the near future, not least from the census that was conducted in April last year. These data comprise the core of the proposed indicators for the socioeconomic database. Nonetheless, it is necessary to collect primary data in order to be able to evaluate aspects of concern to Norway, such as gender equality, conflict and rights – for example land rights.

> A major challenge with respect to data on Myanmar, however, is that Myanmarian authorities own all data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The three most important recommendations in the report are as follows:

> *Develop explicit theories of change for the interventions, and coordinate the planning of the interventions.* A number of the partners are struggling with the same challenges, and could benefit from coordination, for example with respect to developing result matrices, to conflict sensitivity considerations and to other areas that are a priority for all interventions, such as gender equality and rights. Developing explicit theories of change is a prerequisite for successful activities.

> *Share knowledge on context and build the capacity of Norwegian partner institutions.* Myanmar represents a context that is difficult to work in, and factors such as a complex political picture, including rights and conflict sensitivity, are more than the partner institutions can be expected to handle alone. Norwegian authorities should assume responsibility for sharing this type of information with partners, and offer the necessary capacity-building as part of the project planning.

> *Grant resources for, and establish separate data collection activities and result management systems at programme level.*

Results-based financing in Norwegian aid: does it work?

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

REPORT 4 AND 5/2015

Experiences with Results-Based Payments in Norwegian Development Aid" og "Basis for Decisions to use Results-Based Payments in Norwegian Development Aid

The Chr. Michelsen Institute

ISBN: 978-827548-804-4 / ISBN: 978-82-7548-805-1

BACKGROUND

Results-based financing is high on the agenda as an innovative solution to various development problems. Aid is defined as result-based financing when 1) the aid is based on results achieved and 2) the ratio between results and payment is established in advance. Results-based financing can be given to states, organizations and individuals.

Results-based financing is used mainly in three Norwegian aid contexts: the Norwegian health commitment, the Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, and support for clean energy.

As part of the Norwegian health commitment, Norway has established a trust fund in the World Bank to test result-based bonuses for health workers, clinics and sometimes institutions at a higher level to increase the number of women who give birth at health clinics. Norway has undertaken to donate NOK 2.1 billion to this fund in the period 2007–2022. Bilateral agreements have also been entered into on result-based financing of health workers to promote mother-child health. Through the GAVI vaccine alliance, Norway also offers results-based financing to states to increase their vaccine coverage.

Norway has disbursed NOK 5.45 billion through the government's International Climate and Forest Initiative to the government of Brazil, via the Amazon Fund, and just under NOK 1 billion to the governmet of Guyana through a similar fund. These are examples of results-based financing to states.

It is also intended that results-based financing will be used at all levels in the Norwegian clean energy initiative (Energy+), which was established in 2011. This programme has not reached the stage where there are documented disbursements associated with such initiatives.

PURPOSE

In order to provide an improved decision-making basis for current and future initiatives, the Evaluation Department commissioned two new studies, of experience of using results-based financing in Norwegian initiatives and the decision-making basis for using results-based financing in Norwegian initiatives.

FINDINGS

> The authors of the two studies conclude that the decision-making basis for all the initiatives was political, and that all the initiatives had weak explanations for how and why results-based financing was supposed to work (weak theory of change) at the outset. The Norwegian health drive now has a stronger theoretical foundation, while there is still considerable lack of clarity as to how results-based financing functions in the other initiatives.

> The Norwegian health commitment, and in particular results-based financing for improved mother-child health, has a weighty evaluation and research component built into it. However, only about five of over 30 evaluations have been published because the others are not completed yet. The evaluations that are completed show that results-based financing sometimes works, and sometimes not. This is probably influenced by project- and context-specific factors.

PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

> It is unclear whether the initiatives that involve results-based financing to states, such as the climate and forest initiative and vaccine programme, have yielded the desired effects. In the case of the climate and forest initiative it has been possible to show that there has been a reduction in deforestation, but it is not clear whether the changes are attributable to the programmes. This is partly because the programmes have weak theories of change that make evaluation difficult. There have been greater challenges in connection with the vaccine initiative in determining the actual extent of changes in countries' vaccine coverage.

THE EVALUATION DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT

The two studies find that the evidence base for reaching conclusions regarding results-based financing is weak. In a discussion memo prepared by the Evaluation Department, we discuss how the basis for decision-making can be improved with the aid of theory-based evaluations and relevant research.

The two studies yield several lessons:

Measures should include theories of change that are project-specific and that can explain how changes are expected to come about. Specifically, the theories of change should take into account the following:

> Results-based financing to states and individuals are two quite different aid instruments.

> Results-based financing will probably cause a change, but the change may not necessarily be for the better.

Interventions should be accompanied by theory-based evaluations that can document that changes take place and that they can be attributed to the programme.

> Evaluations should test whether results-based financing has an effect on the objectives of the programme. This would be easier to do for results-based financing to individuals than to states.

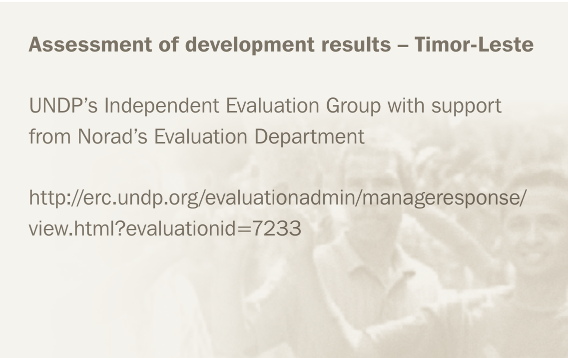
> The evaluations should attempt to capture negative effects.

> Results-based financing should be tested against some real alternatives, for example direct transfers without conditions attached.


PHOTO: KEN OPPRANN

OTHER EVALUATION REPORTS

Assessment of the results of the UN development programme in Timor-Leste



Assessment of development results – Timor-Leste

UNDP's Independent Evaluation Group with support from Norad's Evaluation Department

http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageresponse/view.html?evaluationid=7233

PHOTO: UNDP

BACKGROUND

Timor-Leste is one of the youngest countries in the world. The past decade has been characterized by the building of national institutions and by attempts to create stability, in a situation with a great deal of internal unrest in the country. After 400 years of Portuguese colonial government and 25 years of Indonesian occupation, Timor-Leste was established as an independent state in 2002. The violent transition from the occupation added to the devastation of the country, and to the extreme poverty of the people. The ravaging of the country has made peace- and state-building more difficult.

PURPOSE

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) collaborated with the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), whose main responsibility was to assist the Timor-Leste authorities in the important task of building peace and state institutions in Timor-Leste.

FINDINGS

> Credit is due to the development programme for listening to the Timor-Leste authorities' own priorities. The authorities have also appreciated the flexibility and political neutrality of the assistance provided through the development programme.

> The collaboration with UNMIT to facilitate the holding of elections and strengthen the capacity of national institutions has created synergies in the contribution to peace-building.

> The development programme's contribution to strengthening the country's governance has been substantial. Acute capacity problems were addressed early.

> The scope of the development programme's work to combat poverty was limited and inadequate. The programme did not manage to play its part fully here, and left this to other actors.

> Contributions made to the returning of internal refugees, including dialogue and mediation, have been important. However, efforts to address the underlying conflicts have not been sufficient.

> Inadequate coordination of technical assistance has hampered the systematic development of national capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

> The focus on institutional and human resources should be maintained, but in the future the programme should be more aware of its role, and which sectors it intervenes in.

> Strategic partnerships should be developed to coordinate efforts with other actors.

> The development programme should prioritize poverty, inequality and unemployment. This should be done by creating jobs outside the petroleum sector. In order to achieve effective poverty reduction, the programme must strengthen its presence at local level.

> Poverty reduction should be viewed in context with the environment.

> Gender equality is crucial to peace building and development. It is also a core principle of the development programme. It should be made an integral part of the initiatives.

> The development programme should provide a better overview of the results of work at local level.

World Bank Group support to reforms of business regulations

Investment Climate Reforms-An independent evaluation of World Bank group support to reforms of business regulations

The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group with support from Norad's Evaluation Department

http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/Data/reports/investment_climate_final.pdf

ILLUSTRATION: THE WORLD BANK

BACKGROUND

Private firms are a significant source of jobs, tax revenues and delivery of goods and services in developing countries. The firms' ability to create jobs and reduce poverty is dependent on a smoothly functioning investment climate.

In the period 2007–2013, the World Bank supported the development of political, legal and institutional framework conditions for private firms in developing countries. The support covered altogether 819 projects in 119 countries and amounted to a total of USD 3.7 billion.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation has been to assess the relevance, effectiveness and social value of the World Bank's support for improving institutional framework conditions for private firms in developing countries.

FINDINGS

> The World Bank has contributed to improving the investment climate by supporting changes in laws and improving the efficiency of processes.

> The support has resulted in cost savings for private firms. The effects of the support on total investment, jobs, development of businesses and economic growth in recipient countries is not obvious.

> As a general rule the support was well targeted with respect to both country and regulatory policy area.

> The World Bank has concentrated primarily on reducing costs for firms. In the design of the Bank's contribution, the effects on the welfare of other stakeholders has not been properly included.

> Coordination of the World Bank programmes has for the most part been informal, relying mainly on personal contacts. Nonetheless, the degree of coordination has been higher than in the rest of the Bank.

RECOMMENDATIONS

> The current practice, which focuses mainly on interests of the private firms, must be expanded to take account of the effects of the programmes for all affected groups.

> Expand the current diagnostic tools to include comparable indicators that capture aspects of the investment climate that are not covered by existing tools.

> Ensure that the staff of the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have a better understanding of each others' work and business models, in order to promote cooperation across the organizations.

World Bank Group support to health financing

World Bank Group Support to Health Financing

The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group with support from Norad's Evaluation Department

http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/evaluations/wbg-support-health-financing

PHOTO: VERDENSBANKEN

BACKGROUND

How well a health system functions and achieves its equity and efficiency goals depends on how countries finance their health service. Some of the most important factors in this connection are how countries mobilize income from various sources, which private or public insurance schemes one chooses, and how they purchase health services. In the period 2003–2012, the World Bank supported various health financing programmes in 68 countries.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of various health financing programmes, with a view to identifying factors in successful Bank group support to health financing reforms.

FINDINGS

> Support has been more successful where there has been strong commitment on the part of the government, and use was made of the Bank's expertise across its health and public sector competence.

> The support has contributed to raising or securing public revenues for the health sector. Mandatory contributions to various health insurance measures for low-income groups resulted in access to health services that is more equitable.

> Public and private insurance has not always resulted in pro-poor spending, improved equity use of health services or greater financial protection.

> The Bank has increased its focus on results-based financing. There was limited focus on the effect on costs or the broader effects on the public sector.

> An integrated approach that links health financing to public sector reforms increases the effectiveness of financing reforms.

> Linking health financing to public finances requires good cross-disciplinary cooperation in the Bank group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

> Support government commitment and strengthen information and technical capacity.

> Focus on health financing as a cross-cutting topic at country level and regard good health financing as a competitive advantage.

> Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the Bank's and the IFC's projects.

Learning and results in World Bank operations: How the Bank learns

Learning and Results in World Bank Operations: How the Bank Learns

The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group with support from Norad's Evaluation Department

https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/Data/reports/chapters / learning_results_eval.pdf

ILLUSTRATION: THE WORLD BANK

BACKGROUND

Bank lending has fallen in relation to developing countries' gross domestic product. In order to remain relevant, the World Bank must therefore improve the quality of its services. The challenge is to be better at learning from lending activities and to use lessons learned from both successful and failed interventions to improve the quality of the Bank's services.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess how the World Bank has generated and used learning and knowledge gained from its lending activities, what is the potential for improvements, and how is that potential being realised?

FINDINGS

> In general, the Bank's own staff perceive the Bank as committed to learning and knowledge sharing.

> When it comes to the Bank's lending activities, the Bank's organizational culture and systems, incentives offered to employees and signals from managers are not as effective as they could be.

> The recent changes in the Bank's organizational structure have not addressed the challenges associated with the organizational culture or the incentives offered to employees, and have therefore not led to any significant change in the learning situation in the organization. It remains to be seen whether the most recent structural change in connection with the introduction of "global practices" will be more effective in this respect.

> World Bank employees perceive the lack of institutional incentives as one of the biggest obstacles to promoting learning and knowledge-sharing in the Bank.

RECOMMENDATIONS

> Focus greater attention on how knowledge flow and learning take place through interpersonal exchanges.

> Understand how team dynamics and participation in social networks affect the potential for learning and knowledge-sharing.

> Reward learning and knowledge-sharing, and attempt to counteract tendencies not to share information.

> Restructure individual result-based agreements and performance evaluation criteria.

> Ensure the senior management's commitment and leadership for learning.


PHOTO: ESPEN RØST

FOLLOW-UP OF EVALUATIONS

FOLLOW-UP OF EVALUATIONS

Follow-up of the Evaluation Department's reports is institutionalized through the *Instructions for Evaluation Activities in Norwegian Aid Administration*. When an evaluation has been completed and the evaluation report published, these instructions require the Evaluation Department to prepare a follow-up memo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' management or, when it comes to following up the evaluation of the Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, to the Ministry of Climate and Environment. The memo summarises experience gained from conducting the evaluation, the contents of the report and the recommendations, and the views on the report of the parties concerned. In particular, the memo is intended to point out any evaluation results that indicate a need for strategic changes in Norwegian development policy.

Further follow-up is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Climate and Environment. The department or foreign service mission that is responsible for the aid that has been evaluated is required to draw up a follow-up plan within six weeks and report back to the ministry management within a year on the measures that have actually been initiated as follow-up of the evaluation.

The table on the next page shows the follow-up status of the Evaluation Department's reports in the period 2009 and up to June 2015. Both the Evaluation Department's follow-up memos and the ministries' follow-up plans and reports are published immediately on the Evaluation Department's website (http://www.norad.no/en/tools-publications/publications/evaluationreports/).

FOLLOW-UP OF EVALUATIONS // STATUS AS AT 27.5.2015[6]

TOPIC OF THE EVALUATION/PROJECT	REPORT NO.	EVALUATION DEPARTMENT FOLLOW-UP MEMO TO THE MFA	FOLLOW-UP MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE MFA	REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP
Nepal's Education for All programme	1/2009	February 2010	Follow-up Government of Nepal	
Joint donor team in Juba	2/2009	9.9.2009	No plan recommended beyond the followups already	
NGOs in Northern Uganda	3/2009	31.8.2009	25.6.2010	25.6.2010
Integration of emergency aid, reconstruction and development	Joint	7.8.2009	No Norwegian follow-up required	
Support for the protection of cultural heritage	4/2009	30.9.2009	9.6.2010	8.11.2011
Multilateral aid for environmental protection	Synthesis	8.10.2009	No Norwegian follow-up required	
Norwegian peace effort in Haiti	5/2009	15.2.2010	15.7.2010	2.2.2012
Norwegian People's Aid –humanitarian mine clearance activities	6/2009	19.2.2010	8.4.2010	31.3.2011
Norwegian programme for development, research and education (NUFU) and Norad's programme for master's studies (NOMA)	7/2009	14.4.2010	3.11.2010	8.1.2013
Norwegian Centre for Democracy Support	1/2010	26.3.2010	7.5.2010	14.11.2012
Study of support to parliaments	2/2010	Follow-up memo not relevant		
Norwegian business-related assistance	3/2010 (Case studies 4,5,6/10)	23.9.2010	15.3.2011	9.1.2013
Norwegian support to the Western Balkans	7/2010	4.11.2010	21.1.2011	4.6.2013
Transparency International	8/2010	22.9.11	21.11.2011	1.2.2013
Evaluability study – Norwegian support to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 & 5 (maternal and child health)	9/2010	24.2.2011	Included in the MFA's follow-up plan for report 3/2013	
Peace-building activities in South Sudan	Joint	3.3.2011	22.6.2011	31.3.2015
Norwegian democracy support through the UN	10/2010	8.7.2011	20.5.2014	20.5.2014
IOM – International Organization for Migration's efforts to combat human trafficking	11/2010	18.5.2011	5.1.2011	20.12.2012
Real-time evaluation of Norway's international climate and forest initiative	12/2010 (Country reports 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18/2010)	8.6.2011	12.9.2011	16.7.2012
Declaration of Paris	Joint	Did not apply to Norwegian aid in particular. Follow-up memo not relevant		
Children's rights	Joint	21.11.2011	18.12.2012	3.2.2014
Development cooperation between Norwegian NGOs in East Africa	1/2011	25.4.2012	19.09.2012	16.9.2014
Research on Norwegian development assistance	2/2011	4.1.12	19.2.2013	19.2.2013
Norway's culture and sports cooperation with countries in the South	3/2011	27.1.12	6.6.2012	11.9.2013
Study of development, power and corruption	4/2011 Study	Follow-up memo not relevant		
Norwegian peace efforts in Sri Lanka	5/2011	8.2.2012	29.3.2012	30.5.2014
Support to anti-corruption efforts	6/2011	15.2.2012	27.5.2013	2.6.2014
Norwegian development cooperation to promote human rights	7/2011	17.1.12	17.12.2012	5.5.2014
Norway's trade-related assistance through multilateral organizations	8/2011	8.3.12	11.1.2013	15.10.2013

6 The overview has been prepared by Norad's Evaluation Department on the basis of copies of follow-up decisions and reports in accordance with the Instructions for Evaluation Activities in Norwegian Aid Administration.

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TOPIC OF THE EVALUATION/PROJECT	REPORT NO.	EVALUATION DEPARTMENT FOLLOW-UP MEMO TO THE MFA	FOLLOW-UP MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE MFA	REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP
Activity-based financial flows in UN system	9/2011 Study	Follow-up memo not relevant		
Norwegian support to the health sector in Botswana	10/2011	Follow-up memo not relevant		
Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities	1/2012	20.4.12	14.1.2013	14.2.2014
Study of travel compensation (per diem)	2/2012	3.7.2012	6.5.2015	6.5.2015
Norwegian development cooperation with Afghanistan	3/2012	13.12.2012	16.5.2013	6.3.2015
The World Bank Health Results Innovation Trust Fund	4/2012	18.9.2012	21.1.2013	13.5.2014
Real-time evaluation of Norway's international climate and forest initiative: lessons learned from support to civil society organizations	5/2012	3.12.2012	14.1.2013	31.1.2014[7]
Norway's Oil for Development Programme	6/2012	21.3.2013	23.5.2013	17.10.2014
Study of monitoring and evaluation in six Norwegian civil society organizations	7/2012	16.5.2013	27.5.2014	
Study of the use of evaluations in the Norwegian development cooperation system	8/2012	30.4.2013	16.6.2013	30.7.2015
Norway's bilateral agricultural support to food security	9/2012	3.6.3013	22.1.2014	17.3.2015
A framework for analysing participation in development	1/2013 (Case studies 2/2013)	9.7.2013	25.9.2013	22.10.2014
Norway-India Partnership Initiative for Maternal and Child Health (NIPI I)	3/2013	7.11.2013	9.3.2015	
Norwegian Refugee Council/ NORCAP	4/2013	16.10.2013	18.11.2014	
The Norwegian Climate and forest initiative – real-time evaluation. Support for measuring, reporting and verifying	5/2013	28.11.2013	11.2.2014	22.5.2015
Norway's bilateral agricultural support to food security	5/2013	28.11.2013	11.2.2014[8]	22.5.2015
Evaluation of results measurement in aid management	1/2014	11.6.2014	15.9.2014	
Unintended effects in evaluations of development aid	2/2014	Follow-up of study included in follow-up memo for report 1/2014		
Norwegian climate and forest initiative – real-time evaluation – Synthesis report	3/2014	6.10.2014	8.6.2015	
Evaluation Series of NORHED: (higher education and research for development) theory of change and evaluation methods	4/2014	Follow-up memo not relevant		
Evaluation of Norwegian support through and to umbrella and network organisations in civil society	5/2014	15.12.2014	13.3.2015	
Training for peace in Africa	6/2014	16.2.2015	10.3.2015	
Impact Evaluation of the Norway India Partnership Initiative Phase II for Maternal and Child Health – Baseline	7/2014	Follow-up memo not relevant		
Evaluation of Norway's support to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake	8/2014	23.2.2015	17.6.2015	
Evaluation of the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing countries (Norfund)	1/2015	24.2.2015	3.6.2015	
Norwegian support for strengthening women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation	2/2015			
Study of baseline data for Norwegian support to Myanmar	3/2015			
Experiences with Results-Based Payments in Norwegian Development Aid	4/2015			

7 From 1 January 2014, responsIbility for follow-up of real-time evaluation of Norway's Forest and Climate Initiative lies with the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

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