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Evaluation of the Norwegian Aid Administration's Practice of Results-Based Management

ANNEXES 5-6

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Annex 5 A review of the RBM literature

Introduction

Mayne (2008) positions RBM as an evidence-based management approach to bring empirical evidence to the management table, quoting the OECD-DAC *Managing for Development Results Sourcebook* (2006: 9), which specifies that:

> *Results-based management asks managers to regularly think through the extent to which their implementation activities and outputs have a reasonable probability of attaining the outcomes desired, and to make continuous adjustments as needed to ensure that outcomes are achieved.*

Thus the focus of RBM is on measuring what results are bought about by policies, programmes and services, and using that information to help better manage public funds – it is an approach that tries to bring information on results to bear on managing (Mayne, 2008). The following description of RBM from Meier (2003, cited in Vähämäki et al., 2011: 6) also emphasises this, highlighting its dual emphasis on organisational learning and accountability:

> *RBM is a management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way organisations operate, with improving performance in terms of results as the central orientation. RBM provides the management framework with tools for strategic planning, risk management, performance monitoring and evaluation. Its primary purpose is to improve efficiency and effectiveness though organisational learning, and secondly to fulfil accountability obligations through performance reporting.*

This literature review aims to investigate the conditions for the effective use of results data/ evidence in decision making, as well as to identify the key enablers and challenges associated with RBM. It draws on literature related directly to the practice of results-based management, as well as broader literature on evidence informed policymaking (EIPM).

How is evidence used?

Before investigating the conditions, enablers and barriers associated with RBM, it is important to consider what utilisation of evidence looks like in this regard, and how one might judge/observe how and whether evidence has been used. Indeed, without observation of how evidence is actually used in practice, 'lists of barriers and enabling factors cannot on their own lead us to an improved understanding of the role of evidence in the jigsaw of the policy process' (Punton et al, 2016: 40).

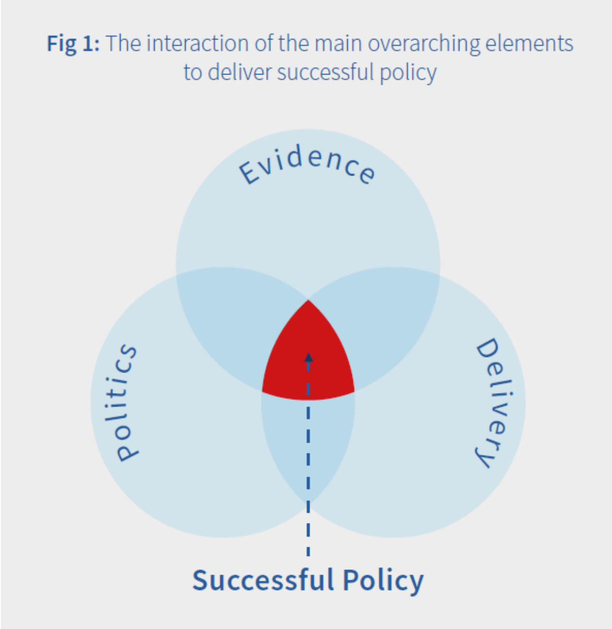
In consideration of what utilisation of evidence looks like, Mayne (2008) highlights that results information is only one type of information that is usually considered in decision making, therefore 'it should inform decisions, not dictate them.' Indeed, the term *'evidence informed policy'* is now used as an alternative to *'evidence based policy'* by a number of authors. This process of evidence use within the policymaking process is well put within a paper from CaSE (Campaign for Science and Engineering) on improving the use of evidence in UK government policymaking (2017: 8):

> *Policy decisions are made in light of many factors – evidence is only one. Social, ethical, legal, political, technological and cultural factors all play a role. Ideally, policymakers would have clear preferences based on all gathered and understood relevant information, and base their choices on these preferences. This is referred to as 'comprehensive rationality'. However, what happens in reality is 'bounded rationality' where policymakers have unclear or incomplete information and*

unclear choices are made in an environment of multiple decision makers and pressures. This makes the process non-linear and less structured. Successful policy depends on the use of a robust evidence base within a managed political context with early identification of how the policy will be delivered.

This is shown in Figure A4:1:

Figure A4.1: The interaction of the main overarching elements to deliver successful policy



(Source: Improving the use of evidence in UK government policymaking, CaSE, 2017)

Mayne (2008) also highlights a useful distinction between '*instrument use'* of results information whereby 'specific decisions are influenced by results information' such as, for example, results information from an evaluation, and *'enlightenment use'* whereby 'over time and being exposed to a variety of results information, individuals (and thereby organisations) adjust their views about a problem they are aiming to improve. They learn from using results information.' The latter is likely to include data collected on a routine basis. It is useful to keep these distinctions in mind when considering how evidence informs decision making, as well as how to judge if it takes place.

In consideration of how one might judge/observe how and whether evidence has been used, Rutter and Gold (2015) set out a framework for assessing use of evidence within UK government policy. Highlighting that 'the importance of understanding what government is doing is essential for accountability', they conclude that there are two fundamentals to consider in assessing the evidence base behind government policy: the transparency of the evidence base; and the quality of the evidence base and why it has been applied. The resultant 'transparency framework' was later refined (Sense about Science, 2016) to include the following criteria.

1. **DIAGNOSIS** (The issue that will be addressed)

   The document(s) should explain: what policymakers know about the issue, its causes, effects, and scale.

2. **PROPOSAL** (The government's chosen intervention)

The document(s) should explain: why the government has chosen this intervention; what evidence, if any, that choice is based on; how policymakers have assessed the evidence base, including what has been tried before and whether that worked; whether there are other options and why they have not been chosen; what the government plans to do about any part of the intervention that has not yet been decided upon; what the costs and benefits are estimated to be and the assumptions behind those calculations.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION** (How the intervention will be introduced and run)

   The document(s) should explain: why this method for delivering the intervention has been chosen; what evidence, if any, that decision is based on; whether there are other methods and if so the reasons for not choosing them; if the way to deliver the intervention is still being decided, what the method is for deciding; what the costs and benefits are estimated to be and the assumptions behind those calculations.

4. **TESTING AND EVALUATION** (How we will know if the policy has worked)

   The document(s) should explain: any testing that has been or will be done; plans to measure the impact of the policy, and the outcomes that will be measured; plans to evaluate the effects of the policy, including a timetable; plans for using further inputs.

A number of UK government policies were assessed by Sense about Science (2016) using this framework.[1] Findings showed that while there were some examples of very good practice (which shows the standards are attainable), there were some general shortcomings in departmental approaches to evidence transparency.[2] In particular:

- **Sharing work done:** Departments should make available (and clearly reference) the research and reviews that they have conducted to inform a policy, so that the public can understand the rationale for it.
- **Poor referencing:** Referencing needs to be more specific and useful. Some policies linked to significant documents, showed clearly which points were referenced to which sources and how these were relevant to the government's conclusions. Most did not. The evaluation team could not locate guidance on referencing for government documents, which might help.
- **A clear chain of reasoning:** People should be able to follow the thinking between diagnosis, proposal, implementation and testing and evaluation. The most transparent proposals demonstrated the chain of reasoning as to what the problem was and why the policy was the chosen response, and included discussion about the limitations of the evidence.
- **Manifesto-derived policy commitments can be transparent:** Policies that originated in manifesto commitments featured among the best and the worst for transparency. This seems to have been influenced by whether they are concerned with outcomes (ends) or with specific measures to achieve them (means), and whether departments consulted on their development.
- **Budget announcement**s**:** Policies announced in the Budget or Autumn Statement were significantly less transparent about the underlying evidence than other policies.

[1] The following scale was used to judge the evidence: 0 = Not sufficient for level 1; 1 = Evidence is mentioned with some indication of what it is and how it has been used; 2 = As in level 1 and the supporting evidence is mostly linked to the relevant parts of the policy, properly cited and findable, and there is discussion of how it has been used; 3 = Supporting evidence is consistently linked to the relevant parts of the policy, properly cited and findable, and there is assessment of uncertainties and contradictions in the evidence base

[2] Note that while the framework looks at *what* evidence was utilised, it does not look at the *quality* of such evidence

- **Alternatives:** There was very little transparency overall about the consideration given to other policy options, even though this is a requirement in impact assessments.
- **Modelling policy impacts:** Some departments have found clear and impressive ways to share their modelling and the assumptions behind models.
- **Testing and evaluation:** There is a lot of scope to improve the description of plans for testing and evaluation and for what consultations will do with inputs. Few policies scored well on this. Policies with clear testing and evaluation plans tended to be clearer about the evidence for the scope and scale of the issues they were addressing.

Conditions for effective use of evidence to take place

Having looked at how one might assess whether / how evidence has been used, the literature review will now investigate conditions for the effective use of evidence to take place, as well as the key enablers and challenges associated with RBM. Mayne (2008) highlights six 'assumptions' which, if in place, will allow information to be seriously considered within decision making, allowing learning to take place. The following sections are structured around these six assumptions, using them as a guiding framework to organise some of the wider literature in this area.

1. <u>There is an issue or decision to be addressed</u>

There needs to be a context in which results information should be used. Mayne (2008) highlights the following examples:

- Decision making, namely in
  - Policy formulation
  - Planning decisions (setting goals and expected results; designing implementation approaches)
  - Programming and reprogamming decisions (adjusting outputs; adjusting short-term goals)
  - Policy and program termination
  - Operational decisions (keeping activities/outputs on track; adjusting inputs)
  - Firefighting
- Learning taking place, where decisions per se are not being taken:
  - Learning takes place cumulatively over time, or
  - At learning events (Barrados and Mayne, 2003; Mayne and Rist, 2006; Moynihan, 2005 - cited in Mayne, 2008)

Once evidence is used to identify or shed light on an issue or decision to be addressed, Vähämäki et al. (2011) report that the literature describing RBM unanimously refers to the importance of 'contextual adaptability' i.e. if evidence shows that circumstances or performance change, managers (or organisations) should be ready to respond to that change, and alter their approach if necessary. The following 'elements' are listed as enabling factors for such practice:

1) An analytic and performance oriented approach to understanding what to do
2) A view of performance that is centred on beneficiary level developments (outcomes), only thereafter moving on to identify what resources, activities, and immediate tangible results (outputs are necessary to get there)
3) A need for information about your subject, and a capacity to collect, process, and analyse that information over time
4) A mechanism by which policy, planning, and decision making can be influenced by performance information.

2. Relevance – relevant results information is available

(i) Ensuring the right type of information is available

A commonly cited barrier to utilising evidence in policy making is that research is not relevant for decision making (Punton et al., 2016). While it is not always possible to know what information is required in advance, Mayne (2008) states that for decisions that can be planned in advance, key issues should be identified a priori, so that appropriate results information can be made available. Results-based planning documents and tools such as a theory of change will set out some of such issues (but not all).

Mayne (2008) defines 'results information' as not only empirical evidence on results that have been observed, but also the assumptions and understandings behind programmes and interventions, therefore 'the theory of change and it's assumptions behind a programme or intervention is an important aspect of results management' (p. 4). This is echoed by Palenberg et al. (2015) who, after evaluating RBM within Finland's Development Policy Programmes, recommend that '*a comprehensive Theory of Change is required as a basis for selecting meaningful indicators and for linking results across the different results framework levels. A sound Theory of Change also renders transparent inherent difficulties in attributing development outcomes to the activities and the funding of individual donors*' (p. 22).

Mayne (2008) highlights five types of results information:

- *Basic results data* – data on the occurrence or not of outputs and outcomes.
- *Results analysis* – analysis of the results data, such as comparisons with expected results, explanation of differences with expected results, trends over time, etc.
- *Assumptions and rationale analysis* – analysis of the assumptions and understanding of the theory of change behind the programme in question, including the ongoing rationale for the programme.
- *Causal claims* – claims and statements about the extent to which the programme activities have indeed made a contribution to the observed results; on whether the programme is making a difference.
- *Action-oriented analysis* – statements about the implications of the results data and information for decision making.

(ii) Challenges in getting the right data:

In relation to obtaining results information, Vähämäki et al. state that '*probably the most cited challenge related to the [RBM] method/model is the difficulty in selecting appropriate, objective indicators that measure relevant results rather than activities*' (2011: 19). In a similar vein, Mayne highlights that '*much performance measurement information that is made available is simply basic data on the volume of outputs and outcomes observed, with perhaps some variance analysis. Often this is not very rich data, and perhaps of limited usefulness. Many contexts need some information on causal claims and suggestions for future action*' (2008: 15).

However, challenges arise when '*results frameworks tend to become overly complex with an excessive number of indicators*' (Vähämäki et al., 2011: 20) This is put well by Palenberg et al. (2015):

> *Strategic results frameworks tracking development impacts, development results linked to agency activities and agency performance are becoming a standard in international development and complement qualitative information on results in planning and reporting of development work. However, the high number of 70 or more indicators in these frameworks entails the risk of losing sight of the forest for the trees when used for accountability purposes and of tipping the balance between learning and accountability purposes of RBM to the latter.*

This tendency towards a 'target culture' is cited as something to watch out for within the RBM approach – for example, Vähämäki et al. (2011) reference findings from a UNDP evaluation which determines that the 'overly formalistic approach to codifying outcomes has stifled the innovation and flexibility required to achieve those outcomes (p. 22).' This issue is raised by a number of authors in critiquing RBM and feeds into a much wider debate around the approach. The issues central to these arguments are summarised below:

- First, is a tendency for RBM to encourage practitioners to focus on projects that emphasise 'measurable' outcomes over projects that produce outcomes which are harder to measure or quantify. A series of articles edited by Eyben et al. (2015) bear witness to the frustrations of development practitioners who feel that results and evidence protocols and practices have constrained their ability to pursue transformational development through 'shrinking the possibilities of development organisations supporting messy, unpredictable, and risky pathways of societal transformation' (Guijt in Eyben et al., 2015). In addition, a point raised by a number of authors is that a rigid emphasis on results can lead to a focus on short-term outcomes and 'quick deliverables' (Guijt in Eyben et al. 2015). For example, after analysing the results reporting practices of ten bilateral and multilateral donor agencies in order to assess their implications for aid effectiveness, Holzapfel (2014) concludes that:

> *the data provided by donor agencies on agency-wide results resulting from the use of standard indicators is generally only of limited informational value and does not provide an adequate basis for holding the donor agencies to account. The majority of standard indicators are formulated at output level or at the level of short-term outcomes, and it is difficult to assess whether these contribute to longer-term development results.*

Shutt (2016) also raises a similar point:

> *According to some critics, such as members of the Big Push Forward[3] (BPF), the power of RBM goes beyond the visible rules and procedures used to manage aid relationships. It has more diffuse and invisible effects. These include encouraging practitioners to think about development in terms of short-term results they can control rather than human rights. Such effects are exacerbated when practitioners are forced to comply with procedures they may not subscribe to.*

- The latter point raised by Shutt (2016) draws on another widely critiqued issue on RBM practice. This relates to challenges around aligning donor goals with interests of partners. Vähämäki et al. (2011) report that all reviews and evaluations included in their study 'recommend a stronger focus on the partner relationship, and the need to base a donor results system on partner's

[3] The Big Push Forward is a network of practitioners 'creating the space for discussion, thumb debate and the exploration of appropriate approaches for assessing transformative development processes.' http://bigpushforward.net/about

system/s and priorities' (p. 46). Vähämäki et al. (2011) quote the Managing for Development Results sourcebook which states that

the programs in which the greatest problems arose in the results aspects tended to be those with poor ownership – the donors had played too strong a role in defining the program for the partner countries. Implementing agencies in the countries felt that they were not sufficiently vested in the programme and were not responsible for shaping the outcomes.

Thus we see in play the issue explored within Eyben et al. 's (2015) work around the power dynamics that determine who decides what gets measured, how, and why. In relation to this issue, others have drawn links between the tendency for results-based approaches to reinforce accountability to donors and in doing so, undermine mutual accountability (Pereira and Villota, 2012). Bester (2016) includes a recommendation for increased compatibility between the RBM systems within the United Nations Development System (UNDS) and the RBM systems of programme countries in order for there to be 'mutual accountability of development results (p. 8).' Within their study of six major results-based initiatives, Pereira and Villota (2012) conclude that the level of harmonisation between donor requirements and country systems is often low because of widespread parallel structures.

- The final issue of note with regards to the critiquing of RBM is a tension between evidence being more relevant to accountability reporting than for management improvement. For example, this issue is raised on several occasions by Vähämäki et al. (2011) within their review of results-based managed in development corporation, where they refer to the '*conflict between result reporting/accountability on the one side, and the use of information for learning/improved management on the other side*' (p. 21). Indeed, their literature review concludes that '*results information seems to mainly have been used for the purpose of accountability needs/reporting purposes in donor countries, and less so for learning purposes within organisations*' (p22). Similarly, within her review of RBM in UNDS, Bester (2016) states that 'much of the emphasis in the implementation of RBM has been on developing the strategic plans, country programme documents and the results matrices. The '*managing' for results aspect of RBM in the form of using information for programme improvement is less prominent*' (p. 5).

Guijit (in Eyben et al. 2015) largely agrees with these sentiments within her assessment of *'whether the growing emphasis on upward accountability is trumping mutual learning*'. Guijit draws on findings from a survey by Abu Alghaib which found that of 25 DPOs surveyed, only five considered that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches helped promote organisational learning. However, Guijit also reflects on some of the positive elements which can be bought about through an focus on accountability, namely that accountability pressures can stimulate deep organisational discussions on core values and what success looks like; heightened appreciation of the contribution of M&E as an organisational practice; opportunities for people-centred accountability processes; the promotion of useful debates about value for money (VFM); or shedding light on power dynamics using theory of change approaches.

3. <u>The information is made available in a timely fashion (Timeliness)</u>

This assumption refers to information being:

- available prior to a decision being taken, and
- with enough time available to understand and consider the information (Mayne and Rist, 2006 cited in Mayne, 2008).

Mayne (2008) points out that timing is more challenging when it comes to 'instrumental' use of results (particularly for 'firefighting issues') and less of an issue for 'enlightenment' use, as ongoing learning contexts are usually more flexible. Mayne states: '*If an issue is being discussed and debated over a period of time, results information needs to be available during that period, with ample time for reflection. Learning events can be planned in advance with specific information needs that should be able to be met*' (2008: 16).

An additional consideration in relation to timeliness, which falls within the realm of organisational culture, is allowing time to review evidence – Punton et al's 2016 literature review on factors which promote and constrain evidence informed policymaking remarks that lack of time and opportunity to use research is a key barrier to evidence informed policymaking.

4. <u>The information is understandable (Understandability)</u>

As with timeliness, this is a relatively straight forward assumption, however, Mayne (2008) points out that it is often not met. Research which is not clear, presented in an appropriate format, or reliable is outlined by Punton et al's (2016) as a common barrier to use of evidence in decision making. Indeed, results data often comes in the form of complex graphs and tables, which are not suitable for certain audiences and such information may need to be summarised in a clear format. Punton et al (2016) also specify low capacity to understand and use research evidence as another barrier, citing that although capacity gaps may be more extreme in low-income contexts they exist in high-income contexts too.

5. <u>The information is seen as reliable and credible (Reliability and Credibility)</u>

Mayne (2008) states that '*producing evidence which is seen a reliable and credible is not straightforward*', highlighting that much has been written on how to ensure good quality evidence and that the credibility of those producing results in an organisation matters. While outlining the various requirements for obtaining reliable and credible data is considered beyond the scope of this literature review, an interesting issue is raised by Guijit (2015 in Eyben et al.) in regards to the *rigour* of evidence used within RBM. It is argued that rigour within such processes should '*be reclaimed beyond narrow method-bound definitions to encompass better inclusion of less powerful voices and improved analysis of power, politics, assumptions, and resource allocation*'. This sentiment is echoed by Holzapfel (2014) who recommends that

> *given the limitations and risks inherent to agency-wide results measurement systems … donor agencies should explore complementary options or alternatives to standard indicators in order to meet their reporting requirements. For example, donor agencies are advised to invest more in rigorous impact evaluations, to increase the transparency of individual interventions and to incorporate beneficiary feedback more systematically into their monitoring and evaluation efforts.*

6. <u>There is interest in results information by those involved</u>

Mayne (2008) highlights this as the 'most demanding assumption' to be fulfilled in order for evidence to be utilised within policymaking. Indeed, it is found to be the most frequently discussed issue within the literature covered for this review, as it includes a number of fundamental and often deep-rooted challenges in relation to the use of evidence.

First, as Mayne highlights, even if the 'right' results information in accordance with the previous assumptions (relevant, timely, understandable, reliable and credible) is present, it still may not get considered. Mayne lists a number of reasons why some may not want to consider the information:

- those involved do not 'trust' empirical information, believing rather in their own experience and knowledge,
- the information does not fit their ideological base,
- the information is inconvenient for power struggles, budgets, careers, and/or
- the implications arising from the information challenge current practices and require more willpower to change than there is.

Punton et al (2016) also includes some of these reasons when investigating barriers to and facilitators of evidence informed policymaking (EIPM) in relation to individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional factors, as summarised below:

- **Individual-level factors:** Punton et al's (2016) review found nine primary observational studies from lower- and higher-income contexts which provide evidence that individual beliefs, attitudes and motivations to use evidence (and how to use it) are connected to pre-existing beliefs, and to the norms and values that prevail within organisations or societies. For example, several studies suggest that evidence may be ignored or side-lined if it counters past experience – particularly if an issue is hotly debated. Two studies suggest that beliefs about what counts as 'good' evidence may result in useful knowledge being discounted; and two further studies found that certain evidence findings may be viewed as 'unacceptable' in particular contexts and so ignored. The status of evidence itself also appears important: three studies suggest that where evidence is valued, this can encourage its use as a 'weapon' to confer legitimacy on a decision; while another study found that where evidence is less valued this can lead to deliberate attacks of EIPM concepts for political gain.
- **Interpersonal and organisational factors:** Much of the literature on interpersonal factors falls within the 'supply side' of EIPM and was not considered in depth for Punton et al's (2016) review. This includes a large amount of evidence, summarised in secondary synthesis papers, suggesting that evidence use is influenced by the type and nature of relationships between researchers and policymakers. This review also found two observational studies from the UK emphasising the importance of relationships and power within government organisations in affecting what kinds of evidence are acceptable. Eight primary studies and three systematic reviews – mainly from high-income contexts – provide evidence suggesting that organisational factors can affect individual motivation to use evidence, or present barriers to changes in individual behaviour. For example, if evidence is promoted or valued within an organisation, this can increase individual motivation for EIPM, and lack of time to access and appraise research partly reflects an organisation's 'culture' of evidence use. Hierarchical management of information, organisational silos and poor organisational memory can also limit access to research and evidence use.
- **Institutional factors:** The review discussed 12 primary observational studies and several secondary and theoretical studies relating to institutional factors affecting evidence use. Seven primary observational studies suggest that non-governmental actors often play an important role in relation to EIPM. International donors may both promote and constrain the effective use of evidence in decision making, private sector actors can exert pressure which 'blocks' evidence

informed decisions, and the media (and the general public) may present a barrier to EIPM. Civil society may play a number of different roles in relation to EIPM, including putting pressure on government to use evidence, building momentum behind ideas, and bringing together different forms of knowledge. Finally, five primary observational studies suggest that institutional factors such as sudden change (e.g. crises or regime changes), levels of decentralisation and levels of democracy can all create opportunities for or barriers to EIPM.

Mayne (2008) also looks at contexts in which there *would* be interest in results information, listing three circumstances where this would be the case:

- The evidence is seen as convenient – e.g. where evidence supports ideological positions.
- The need for evidence is seen as essential or at least worthwhile – e.g. special requests are made for specific results information for important discussions rather than just using routine data.
- A culture of seeking evidence exists – due to leadership or experience over time, expecting results information including empirical evidence to support managing and decision-making can become the norm in an organisation or sub-unit in an organisation. In such contexts, the lack of results information would be seen as incompetence. In this context, routine use of results information is likely.

Mayne (2008) concludes that '*for everyday interest in results information in an organisation, what is needed is an organisational culture where results information is valued and seen as a normal part of good management*' (p. 18). Indeed, this is a widely cited requirement for effective RBM, for example, Vähämäki et al. (2011) find that '*several critics have pointed out that RBM is not primarily a matter of technical skills, but a question of organisational culture*.'

Organisational culture for results management

As put by Palenberg et al. '*RBM implementation is not easy and the time and resource efforts, as well as the degree to which a results-oriented approach requires fundamental cultural and procedural changes in organisations is often underestimated'* (2015: 22). Drawing on wider literature, Mayne (2008) identifies six factors for building a 'culture of inquiry' within an organisation. These are summarised below, with additional material added from further sources where relevant:

- Demonstrated senior management leadership and commitment

Mayne (2008) states that 'providing visible and accountable leadership through such actions as overseeing and supporting the results management regime – identifying and supporting results management champions, walking the talk – providing consistent leadership in results management, challenging the theories of change behind programmes and the evidence on past performance, and demonstrating the benefits of results management are key to establishing a culture of results (p. 20).' This finding is echoed throughout the literature, for example, Vähämäki et al. (2011) conclude that '*the most frequent lesson in the different reviews is the need for support for RBM from top leadership, and a "buy in" of the system at all levels of the organisation. Without strong advocacy from senior managers, results-based management systems are unlikely to be institutionalised either broadly or effectively within an agency*' (p. 45).

Bester (2016) also states that

> *the demonstrated commitment by the senior leadership of UN entities was identified as an important lesson in implementing RBM. Several UNDS entities identified leadership as a critical success factor in the progress they had made with the implementation of RBM. This commitment went beyond senior leaders merely stating that they thought RBM was a good approach, to demonstrating that commitment by making resources available for RBM (for example, for capacity development of staff in RBM), or making investments in systems to improve the monitoring and reporting on results, and investment in developing evaluation capacities. Senior leaders were also seen to demonstrate their commitment by reflecting their understanding of RBM and constantly communicating the message of the importance of results.* (p. 17)

- Informed demand for results information

Mayne (2008) specifies that

> *a significant role for managers, especially senior managers, in fostering and supporting results management is to routinely ask questions about results and the assumptions behind programmes and interventions when reviewing, assessing and making decisions on plans, operations and reports. Knowing that such questions will be forthcoming ensures that those carrying tasks will pay attention to results. Asking the questions will help ensure that relevant result information is available when it is needed, and that assumptions about theories of change are routinely challenged. In this way, results information—evidence on what is working, what is not and why—becomes a routine and natural part of managing the organisation*.' (p. 20)

- Supportive organisational systems, practices and procedures – including incentives and support

Much is said about the influence of organisational systems, practice and procedure on organisational culture. Punton et al (2016) find that an absence of supportive organisational systems and incentives for decision makers to use evidence (including a lack of time to read and use research) is a key barrier to EIPM. In her review of RBM in UNDS, Bester (2016) concludes that '*building a results culture is as much about changing behaviours as it is about improving systems, tools and capacities, and there is still some way to go in building a strong results culture in the UNDS*' (p. vii).

Alongside the discussion on systems, comes a focus on incentives for utilising evidence. Again, quoting Bester 'RBM involves behaviour change and there must be incentives for individuals and organisations to change their behavior' (p. 17). Bester's review of UNDS found that a few entities within the organisation had introduced incentives to strengthen a results culture – this included reports with dashboards and scorecards so that results are easily understood and used to inform decision-making. Vähämäki et al. (2006) reports that non-usage of results data can be attributed to a lack of leadership, staff motivation, and incentives to use the results, drawing on a UN-review which concludes that there are no consequences for non-compliance or non-attainment of results.

However, Bester (2016) also raises the issue that performance appraisal systems can reinforce and reward delivery (i.e. spending allocated funds) rather than development results. As also referenced earlier in this literature review, Bester highlights that '*the increased emphasis from development cooperation partners on "value for money" has the unintended consequence of driving entities to focus on easily achievable and measurable outputs rather than more challenging and transformative outcomes, or alternatively, they define results and their measurement in vague terms*'. Thus, we see the risk of a 'perverse incentive' though a focus on achieving direct, short-term results, which can result in pressure on programme implementers to spend funds – making relationships with partners aid-centric and allowing insufficient time for iterative learning (Booth and Unsworth 2014, cited in Eyben et al., 2015).

- A results-oriented accountability regime

Mayne (2008) specifies that there is a need to adapt 'the accountability regime' to include the idea of influencing (rather than being literally accountable for) outcomes and rewarding good managing for outcomes (Auditor General of Canada, 2002; Baehler, 2003; Perrin, 2006, cited in Mayne). This chimes with the point raised earlier on ensuring a balance between accountability and learning within RBM practice. Mayne argues that that accountability for outcomes should consist of:

- Providing information on the extent to which the expected and other outputs and outcomes were attained, and at what cost
- Demonstrating the contribution made by the activities and outputs of the programme to the outcomes
- Demonstrating the learning and change that have resulted
- Providing assurance that the means used were sound and proper
- A capacity to learn and adapt.

Mayne (2008) emphasises that deliberate efforts are needed to build a capacity for and acceptance of learning in an organisation. Drawing on the literature, he recommends a number of strategies, the most promising of which is the idea of institutionalised learning events.

Within their evaluation of Finland's Development Policy Programmes, Palenberg et al. report finding little evidence for learning from results, highlighting that

> *Substantial change in organisational culture, staff incentives, and management style is necessary to successfully and sustainably integrate results-oriented management, learning and reporting at the MFA. The introduction of RBM at the MFA needs to emphasise the learning aspects of RBM by encouraging staff initiative, risk taking and learning from failure as well as from success, and by avoiding a regime dominated by compliance* (2015: 22).

- Results measurement and results management capacity

It is widely accepted within the literature that for RBM to function, there is a requirement for staff to have the capacity to be able to engage with RBM. Mayne (2008) draws on wider literature to conclude that '*building a culture of results in an organisation does require a capacity to be able to articulate and measure results, and a capacity to understand how results information can be used to help managers manage*' (OECD-DAC, 2006; Perrin, 2002, 2006 cited in Mayne, 2008). Some level of in-house professional results management support is usually required to assist managers and staff (Binnendijk, 2001; Perrin, 2006; Ramage and Armstrong, 2005). Within her review of RBM in UNDP, Bester (2015) finds that '*several entities continue to invest in the development of staff capacities in RBM through guidance documents, tools and training, and acknowledge that there needs to be more investment in developing RBM capacities*'. Bester also suggests that there is a tendency to focus capacity development on those staff directly involved in programming, and M&E, highlighting that institutionalising RBM requires an organisation-wide approach to capacity development, which means that the capacities of staff in operations management, as well as technical staff should be developed (Bester, 2016).

Annex 6: Definitions, data and interview instruments

Annex 6.1 Interview guide

Best practice is to record and then transcribe the interview for analysis. This has advantages in that it produces greater transparency in what is said and allows the interviewer to focus on the interview, doing it well and guarding against bias. Our challenge is that we do not have either the time or resources to record and transcribe over 100 interviews and then carry out a rigorous and systematic analysis of this volume of textual data. Deadlines dictate that most data collection and analysis for this evaluation be completed within less than six weeks and we would not have the time to use the coding approaches to analysis narrative transcriptions across 100 plus interviews.

The common strategy in such situations is for the interviewer to write notes during the interview, and then use these to write up the interview. But there are considerable risks to validity in this strategy, especially for rich, semi-structured interviews which are not simply going through a list of questions and writing down short answers. There is also no scope for transparency and review of what has been recorded, so its accuracy depends on how well the interviewer can simultaneously engage in an interview and take notes, the accuracy of their understanding of what is being said and their ability to overcome cognitive biases, such as finding it easier to remember things that fit with one's own views.

We will use two strategies:

- Make notes of important points and quotes during the interview, but at the end of the interview, take a few moments to go back through the notes with the person or people who have been interviewed, and say something like, 'Do I have this right? These seem to be the main issues you've raised…' and list them. This can be especially useful for interviews which have covered a lot of issues.
- Record interviews if possible and then write up notes afterwards based on the recording. If using this approach it is still necessary to take some notes as it is surprising how often recording does not work! The team leader will then check a sub-set of notes against the recording of the interview to look for consistency or instances of bias.

Basic form for an interview guide

Introduction: • Thank you • Your name • Purpose • Confidentiality • Duration • How interview will be conducted • Opportunity for questions	I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is ____________________________ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the use of RBM by the Norwegian aid administration. Specifically, we are collecting evidence that is intended to contribute to improved results-based management in the Norwegian aid administration. This will be done by documenting how results-based management is practised in the management of aid grants, and through a discussion of how this contributes (or not) to development outcomes. The focus will be

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>on the consequences of the current approach to results orientation, including how this affects what and whom to fund (and to what degree).

The interview should take less than an hour. I would like to tape the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments but if you do not want me to please say so. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we do not miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with other evaluation team members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time. Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Questions
• No more than 15 open-ended questions
• Ask factual before opinion
• Use probes as needed</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Closing key components:
• Summarise key points and themes identified in the interview
• Additional comments
• Next steps
• Thank you</td><td>The key points and themes that seem to be important from what you say are

Is there anything more you would like to add?

We'll be analysing the information you and others gave me and coming to an overall judgement in November this year. There will be a validation workshop in mid-November where people from both CSOs and the aid administration will be able to discuss our overall findings. We will also develop recommendations in close collaboration with key staff within the aid administration.

Thanks for making time.</td></tr>
</table>

Annex 6.2 Case study template

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Case study: [INSERT NAME]</td><td colspan="2">Name of case study lead: [INSERT}</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Level of analysis: [Strategy / grant scheme / grant]</td><td colspan="2">Timeframe under review: [INSERT]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Summary of the case study and the key decision points: [INSERT]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Decision point 1: [INSERT DESCRIPTION OF THE DECISION]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">A) To what extent was results evidence discussed / considered as part of this decision?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">B) What results information was considered?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">C) If results evidence was considered, how did it shape / inform the decision?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">What is your overall judgement on how evidence informed the decision was:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Results evidence was not discussed / considered as part of the decision-making process</td><td>Results information was provided as part of the decision-making</td><td>Results evidence was discussed / considered as part of the decision, but there is no</td><td>Results evidence was a key factor in shaping / influencing the decision</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>process, but there is no evidence it was even discussed / considered</td><td>evidence of it in fact influencing the decision</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Evidence to support judgement</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Factors that explain use / non-use of results evidence PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THESE FACTORS IS RELEVANT TO THE DECISION AND WHY</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The organisational culture of seeking and using evidence
• Evidence is valued and promoted in decision making, especially by senior leadership.
• Evidence use is incentivised (e.g. individuals' performance reviews, career progression and recognition among colleagues.)
• RBM is understood as an approach to learning that supports staff initiative, risk taking and learning from failure as well as success, rather than an approach designed to foster compliance and primarily to meet accountability demands.</td></tr>
<tr><td>No relevance to the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td colspan="2">Significant contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Evidence to support judgement</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Key issues were identified beforehand so that appropriate results information can be provided in time to inform decisions made.
• Results information is made available in time for informing decision making
• Systems and procedures for gathering and analysing the results information have identified and factored in sufficient time to allow to deliver the analysis in time to allow users sufficient time to understand and consider the information.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">• Management information system exist that enable information to be easily accessed from across the organisation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>No relevance to the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Significant contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Evidence to support judgement</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Tools and systems that allow the collection and aggregation of results evidence are available
• Approaches exists for measuring not just what happens but also why and effective and efficient contribution to development results
• Tools and approaches allow useful aggregation of evidence above the level of the individual project (this assumes results frameworks for aggregation are based on a coherent ToC)</td></tr>
<tr><td>No relevance to the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Significant contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Evidence to support judgement</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">The right results information is made available and presented in a form that suitable for use in decision making.
• The results information that is mobilised is relevant to the decisions being made (e.g. results evidence not only explains what has happened, but also how and why this happened, since one needs to know how and why change happens if to learn what works.)
• Results information is presented in an accessible way to the user. An appropriate format is used that allows users to quickly identify key messages, yet still have confidence in the data</td></tr>
<tr><td>No relevance to the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td><td>Significant contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Evidence to support judgement</td></tr>
</table>

Users believe that the results **information presented is reliable and credible** • Users believe that the results information available is credible and reliable enough to use • Systems are in place and operational that users believe mean that results evidence has been collected and analysed in a methodologically credible way		
No relevance to the use/non-use of results evidence	Contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence	Significant contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence
Evidence to support judgement		
Staff have the capacity to articulate and measure results and also how such information can be presented • Staff have sufficient time to operationalising the RBM tools and approaches. • Staff have the capacity to understand results information and use it to make funding decisions • The aid administration has invested in the development of staff capacities in RBM through guidance documents, tools and training, and acknowledge that there needs to be continued investment in developing RBM capacities'.		
No relevance to the use/non-use of results evidence	Contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence	Significant contributory factor in explaining the use/non-use of results evidence
Evidence to support judgement		

The effect of the aid administrations RBM requirements on partners
What are the intended and/or unintended consequences of the aid administration RBM requirements on the partner [**PLEASE INDICATE WHICH HYPOTHESES THAT ARE MOST RELEVANT TO THE PARTNER, ALONG WITH SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**]
Based on the positive or negative consequences of the aid administration RBM requirements on the partner, discuss what is the inferred impact on development outcomes [**PLEASE INDICATE THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE INFERRANCE**]
Key documents reviewed and stakeholders interviewed for the case study:

Annex 6.3 Interview template – CSO case studies: CSO stakeholders

CSO interview
Introduction: I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is ____________________________ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the use of RBM by the Norwegian aid administration. XXXXXX
Questions • Can you please explain to me the nature of the funding you get from the aid administration through grant XXX? • What are the key decision points at which you have engaged with the aid administration around the grant? • Who is your key point of contact? • To what extent was results evidence discussed / considered as part of these decisions? Probe the use of evidence at these three stages: o Initial decision to fund o Ongoing management of the grant o Decision about future funding • What results information was considered? How was it presented? • If results evidence was considered, how did it shape / inform the decision? • What factors do you think either enabled or hindered evidence of results being used in these decisions? Probe the different factors: • The organisational culture of seeking and using evidence • Key issues were identified beforehand so that appropriate results information can be provided in time to inform decisions made. • Tools and systems that allow the collection and aggregation of results evidence are available • The right results information is made available and presented in a form that suitable for use in decision making. • Users believe that the results information presented is reliable and credible • Staff have the capacity to articulate and measure results and also how such information can be presented • What effect has the aid administrations results requirements had on your organisation? • How have you found the reporting requirements? On balance have these been positive or negative for your organisation and your partners? In what ways? • Has your organisation gone through RAM? How have you found the RAM process? What have been the effects of performance based funding on your organisation and your partners? Do you have any suggestions for how RBM could be practiced differently / better by the aid administration?
Closing key components: The key points and themes that seem to be important from what you say are Is there anything more you would like to add? We'll be analysing the information you and others gave me and coming to an overall judgement in November this year. There will be a validation workshop in mid-November where people from both CSOs and the aid administration will be able to discuss our overall findings. We will also develop recommendations in close collaboration with key staff within the aid administration. Thanks for making time

Annex 6.4 Interview template – CSO case studies: SIVSA / MFA stakeholders

SIVSA / MFA interview

Introduction:

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is _____________________________ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the use of RBM by the Norwegian aid administration.

XXXXXX

Questions

- Can you please explain to me the nature of the funding you provide to organisation X through grant X?
- What are the key decision points at which you have engaged with the partner around the grant?
- Who is your key point of contact?
- To what extent was results evidence discussed / considered as part of these decisions?
  Probe the use of evidence at these three stages:
    - Initial decision to fund
    - Ongoing management of the grant
    - Decision about future funding
- What results information was considered? How was it presented?
- If results evidence was considered, how did it shape / inform the decision?
- What factors do you think either enabled or hindered evidence of results being used in these decisions?
  Probe the different factors:
    - The organisational culture of seeking and using evidence
    - Key issues were identified beforehand so that appropriate results information can be provided in time to inform decisions made.
    - Tools and systems that allow the collection and aggregation of results evidence are available
    - The right results information is made available and presented in a form that suitable for use in decision making.
    - Users believe that the results information presented is reliable and credible
    - Staff have the capacity to articulate and measure results and also how such information can be presented
- What effect do you think the aid administrations results requirements have had on the partner organisation?
- What are your views of RAM? How have you found the RAM process? What worked well, what did not?
- What are your views on RBM in the aid administration more broadly? Do you see it being practiced consistently?
  Probe views of RBM at different levels:
    - Management of grants
    - Grant scheme rules
    - Strategic level
- Do you have any suggestions for how RBM could be practiced differently / better by the aid administration?

Closing key components:

The key points and themes that seem to be important from what you say are

Is there anything more you would like to add?

We'll be analysing the information you and others gave me and coming to an overall judgement in November this year. There will be a validation workshop in mid-November where people from both CSOs and the aid administration will be able to discuss our overall findings. We will also develop recommendations in close collaboration with key staff within the aid administration.

Thanks for making time

Annex 6.5 Interview template – UNDP case study: UNDP stakeholders

Aid administration interviews

Introduction:

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is ______________________________ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the use of RBM by the Norwegian aid administration.

XXXXXX

Questions

- Can you please explain to me the nature of the funding cycle for core funding to UNDP?
- What are the key decision points at which you have engaged with the aid administration?
- Who is your key point of contact?
- To what extent do you think results evidence is discussed / considered as part of these annual allocations of core support to UNDP?
- What results information has been considered? How was it presented?
- If results evidence was considered, how did it shape / inform the decision?
- What factors do you think either enabled or hindered evidence of results being used in these decisions?
  Probe the different factors:
    - The organisational culture of seeking and using evidence
    - Key issues were identified beforehand so that appropriate results information can be provided in time to inform decisions made.
    - Tools and systems that allow the collection and aggregation of results evidence are available
    - The right results information is made available and presented in a form that suitable for use in decision making.
    - Users believe that the results information presented is reliable and credible
    - Staff have the capacity to articulate and measure results and also how such information can be presented
- How do you think the aid administration has influenced and supported UNDP in developing its own RBM systems?
- To what extent is the aid administration's approach unique among funders?
- Do you consider there to be any negative consequences to UNDP of Norway's focus on RBM?
- Do you think the aid administration should be doing anything differently with UNDP around RBM?

Closing key components:

The key points and themes that seem to be important from what you say are

Is there anything more you would like to add?

We'll be analysing the information you and others gave me and coming to an overall judgement in November this year. There will be a validation workshop in mid-November where people from both CSOs and the aid administration will be able to discuss our overall findings. We will also develop recommendations in close collaboration with key staff within the aid administration.

Thanks for making time

Annex 6.6 Interview template – UNDP case study: Aid administration stakeholders

Aid administration interviews

Introduction:

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is ______________________________ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the use of RBM by the Norwegian aid administration.

XXXXXX

Questions

- Can you please explain to me the nature of the funding cycle for core funding to UNDP?
- What are the key decision points at which you have engaged with UNDP?
- Who is your key point of contact?
- To what extent do you think results evidence is discussed / considered as part of these annual allocations of core support to UNDP?
- What results information has been considered? How was it presented?
- If results evidence was considered, how did it shape / inform the decision?
- What factors do you think either enabled or hindered evidence of results being used in these decisions?
  Probe the different factors:
  - The organisational culture of seeking and using evidence
  - Key issues were identified beforehand so that appropriate results information can be provided in time to inform decisions made.
  - Tools and systems that allow the collection and aggregation of results evidence are available
  - The right results information is made available and presented in a form that suitable for use in decision making.
  - Users believe that the results information presented is reliable and credible
  - Staff have the capacity to articulate and measure results and also how such information can be presented
- How do you think the aid administration has influenced and supported UNDP in developing its own RBM systems?
- To what extent is this approach unique among funders?
- Do you consider there to be any negative consequences to UNDP focus on RBM in its interactions with UNDP?
- Do you think the aid administration should be doing anything differently with UNSP around RBM?
- What are your views on RBM in the aid administration more broadly? Do you see it being practiced consistently?
  Probe views of RBM at different levels:
  - Management of grants
  - Grant scheme rules
  - Strategic level
- Do you have any suggestions for how RBM could be practiced differently / better by the aid administration?

Closing key components:

The key points and themes that seem to be important from what you say are

Is there anything more you would like to add?

We'll be analysing the information you and others gave me and coming to an overall judgement in November this year. There will be a validation workshop in mid-November where people from both CSOs and the aid administration will be able to discuss our overall findings. We will also develop recommendations in close collaboration with key staff within the aid administration.

Thanks for making time

Annex 6.7 Interview template – Grant scheme rules

Aid administration interviews

Introduction:

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is ______________________________ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the use of RBM by the Norwegian aid administration.

XXXXXX

Questions

- Can you please explain to me the nature of the management cycle around grant scheme rules XX
- What are the key management decision points? What are the decisions that are taken at these points?
- To what extent do you think results evidence is discussed / considered at these decision points?
- What results information has been considered? How was it presented?
- If results evidence was considered, how did it shape / inform the decision?
- What factors do you think either enabled or hindered evidence of results being used in these decisions?
  Probe the different factors:
    - The organisational culture of seeking and using evidence
    - Key issues were identified beforehand so that appropriate results information can be provided in time to inform decisions made.
    - Tools and systems that allow the collection and aggregation of results evidence are available
    - The right results information is made available and presented in a form that suitable for use in decision making.
    - Users believe that the results information presented is reliable and credible
    - Staff have the capacity to articulate and measure results and also how such information can be presented
- How do you think RBM at the level of the grant scheme rules could be improved?
- What are your views on RBM in the aid administration more broadly? Do you see it being practiced consistently?
  Probe views of RBM at different levels:
    - Management of grants
    - Grant scheme rules
    - Strategic level
- Do you have any suggestions for how RBM could be practiced differently / better by the aid administration?

Closing key components:

The key points and themes that seem to be important from what you say are

Is there anything more you would like to add?

We'll be analysing the information you and others gave me and coming to an overall judgement in November this year. There will be a validation workshop in mid-November where people from both CSOs and the aid administration will be able to discuss our overall findings. We will also develop recommendations in close collaboration with key staff within the aid administration.

Thanks for making time