



Report 6, 2024

Rapid comparative review of results management principles & 'best fit' approaches for Ukraine programming

Real - Time Evaluation of Norway's Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine



Disclaimer: This rapid comparative review is the product of the authors, and responsibility for the content, including the accuracy of data rests with the authors alone. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department for Evaluation, or any individuals and organisations referred to in the report.

About this report

This rapid comparative review note marks the first written deliverable of the first module of the Real-Time Evaluation of Norway's Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine, which focuses on systems and practices for result tracking, analysis and follow up. It scans results-based management and knowledge systems in high-risk, dynamic contexts, drawing insights from four aid agencies with significant Ukraine programming.

The report is commissioned by the Department for Evaluation in Norad. The Department for Evaluation is responsible for conducting independent evaluations of activities funded over the ODA budget. The department is governed under a separate mandate and associated strategy issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Climate and Environment. The department reports directly to the Secretary Generals of these two ministries.

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Preface

The primary purpose of this real-time evaluation is to foster learning and support informed adjustments to Norway's civilian assistance to Ukraine (the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine). The focus of this first module is strengthening the systems and practices for results tracking, analysis, and follow-up.

Real-time evaluations, conducted while programmes are still underway, provide critical and timely feedback to stakeholders. They facilitate collaborative interpretation of findings and the formulation of actionable recommendations. To ensure adaptability and responsiveness, and in light of the ongoing transfer of responsibility for independent evaluations of Norwegian development cooperation from Norad to Norec in 2025, this evaluation has been designed with a modular approach. This structure enables

close dialogue and engagement with stakeholders across the Norwegian aid administration, resulting in a series of focused, substantive deliverables.

Three deliverables have been produced in this module:

- Rapid comparative review of results management principles and 'best fit' approaches for Ukraine programming;
- Assessment of Norad's current system and practices for tracking, analysing and following up on results from the Nansen Programme;
- Recommendations for improvement in systems and practices for the Nansen Programme results management.

This note constitutes the first written deliverable, a rapid comparative review, offering insights from the results management systems employed by other aid agencies operating in high-risk, dynamic contexts such as Ukraine. By drawing on these experiences, the evaluation sought to identify best-fit practices that can inspire improvements within the Nansen Programme.

Oslo, 10 December 2024

Tori Hoven
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Abbreviations

Danida	Denmark's International Development Agency
EQ	Evaluation Question
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
GoN	Government of Norway
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)
MoD	Ministry of Defence (Norway)
Norad	The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
TPM	Third Party Monitoring
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Shorthand terms

Evaluation Department	Norad's Department for Evaluation
Nansen Programme	The Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine
Nansen Department	Norad's Department for the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine
Nansen Partners	Operational partner organisations in Nansen Support Programme



Summary

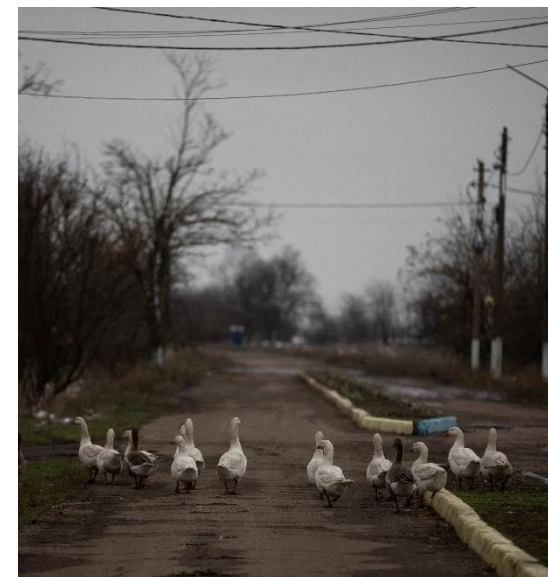
This note presents results management requirements and standards for the Nansen Programme and the findings from a rapid review of results management approaches in four other government aid agencies with substantial Ukraine programming. It also provides perspectives on results management as observed from a small sample of civil society organisations in Ukraine.

During an interview with the Nansen Department an observation was made about the tendency for donors in Ukraine to go in the same direction – in relation to where they put their funds, which organisations they invest in, and how they manage results. From our comparative review we have observed this tendency as well; and we have also been

able to identify examples where people (or groups of people) within a donor aid agency have found ways to operate differently and to try alternative approaches, including in the area of results management.

The limitations of results management systems dominated by the grant management cycles for individual agreements are well-known across aid programming; this has been one of the strong drivers for a movement of people and organisations to promote greater agility, and more adaptive management approaches to results.¹ The scale and complexity of Ukrainian programming is such that these limitations in 'normal' results management seem to be amplified. This includes the challenge of identifying and making use of emerging results to go beyond

tactical adjustments within and across agreements, towards more strategic decision-making on where and how best to use public money across a whole portfolio.



Liubomyrivka, Ukraine, November 2023
Photo: Espen Røst | Panorama

¹ Simister, N. (2019) Complex M&E Systems: raising standards, lowering the bar. INTRAC Praxis Series, Paper 7. At: [https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-](https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Praxis-Series-6.-Complex-ME-Systems.pdf)

[content/uploads/2019/03/Praxis-Series-6.-Complex-ME-Systems.pdf](https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Praxis-Series-6.-Complex-ME-Systems.pdf)



We selected the following agencies for review: UK's Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Denmark's International Development Agency (Danida) and Sweden's International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). We identified deviation from conventional results management in the following areas:

- approaches for portfolio level results tracking;
- results frameworks and annual review processes designed for adaptive management;
- the services of third parties to verify results, develop stronger local capability for managing for results, or strengthen political economy analysis;
- bilateral arrangements for specific results tracking through multilaterals;
- in-country presence to engage directly with on-the-ground realities and local coordination mechanisms;
- approaches to stimulate rapid market responses to pre-selected outcome targets;
- a city-to-country partnership for communicating results publicly in the country of operation and donor domestic context;
- and convening cross-departmental 'delivery' teams to increase sharing and analysis of knowledge and insight.

We found interest in, and some testing of, digital approaches to results management – but nothing to suggest results management is yet being transformed by digitalisation or automation.

While each of the deviations from the results management norm offers options for careful consideration, none is problem-free. The opportunity for the Nansen Programme is therefore less about applying different 'best practice' tools and approaches to results management (which can often lead to one-size-fits-all), and more about working out what is the 'best fit' for Norway's principles and ambitions for tracking the results of the Nansen Programme.



The task, method and limitations

This report is the first written deliverable of the first module of the real-time evaluation, which ran from September to early December 2024. Our task was to clarify the results management requirements and standards for the Nansen programme; and to identify and analyse approaches to results-based management and knowledge systems from across a sample of other government aid agencies with substantial Ukraine programming. The focus is on how and why conventional results management approaches are being adapted for high-risk, fast-moving contexts with multi-stakeholder interests, and what is required to manage these adaptations effectively.

Our work focusses on three main questions:

1. What are the main results management requirements for Nansen programme as set by the Government of Norway (GoN)?
2. What are the main results management requirements and practices of other donor aid agencies? In particular, what level of customization has occurred in approaches, tools and follow-up in the context of Ukraine programming?
3. To what extent are digital tools (for example, digital platforms, automation, satellite imagery) being used for results management by donors? How have the risks of these been identified and managed?

We sampled four agencies:

- FCDO and USAID. Each has invested considerably across their global portfolios in developing results management approaches designed to cope better than conventional approaches with contexts of uncertainty and volatility.
- Danida and Sida. Each brings contrasting Scandinavian experience relevant both to the extensive commitment to Ukraine and the need to manage the results management of complex, high-value programmes with relatively few staff and a smaller (or no) on-the-ground presence compared with USAID or FCDO.



We undertook a 'light touch' review which included:

- a desk review of relevant documents, literature and websites across the four agencies and in relation to specific themes which emerged during the process, such as Third Party Monitoring (TPM);
- interviews with those associated or familiar with the design and/or implementation of results management systems for Ukraine programming ([Annex 1](#));
- interviews with Norad staff on elements of the results management system in Norad, as well as a review of government documents which provide for the mandatory rules for results management of public funds, combined with a wide range of guidance;

- primary experience of real-time evaluation team members on the design and implementation of a range of results management adaptations across different donor agencies, as well as insight from the perspective of some Ukrainian civil society organisations on the receiving end of different donor practices for results management.

Our review was complemented by a workshop with the Nansen Dept on October 9th, 2024, where we discussed the emerging findings and established in what areas there was interest to find out more. Additional information has been provided in this document in response to these identified interests through the expanding Glossary at [Annex 2](#) and a collection of links to useful documentation at [Annex 3](#).

A number of limitations affected the review process and the findings. Securing interviews with agency staff most involved in designing or implementing results management in

Ukraine programming was extremely difficult. For one agency we failed to make contact with anyone despite repeated efforts. Those most closely involved in Ukraine shared only a limited amount of time, making it hard to cover all our questions. Those less involved offered more time, but were unable to shed light on how results management was currently working for Ukraine – in what is the biggest aid programme by far in each agency. While this has weakened some of the findings against our main questions (especially the last question on digital tools), we also regard these limitations as part of the evidence for the challenge of results management in a fast-moving aid programme of this scale.

Moreover, the availability of open-access information on (the components of) applied results management systems in Ukraine was limited. (By applied we mean how a strategy for results management turns out in practice, in what ways the tools and approaches are working, or not.) This is likely to be a result of different factors: the sensitive nature of the context for aid programming in Ukraine and



its relationship to donor government security interests; the fast pace of events and limited capacity or interest to convert classified information into more publicly available information; and also, the rapid turnover of staff in head offices and in embassies. As elsewhere, results management processes benefit from staff stability and good handovers during transitions.

context where events and processes are constantly evolving, and aid agency staff turnover is high.

In view of these limitations, the real-time evaluation team has pulled together pieces of information to portray how a particular results management system is *likely* to be working, and filtered this against our own experiences as practitioners in Ukraine and other high pressure protracted emergencies. The findings offered through this process need to be viewed from this perspective: tentative rather than definitive, and a snapshot of a



Contextualising the Nansen Programme in Government results management requirements

This section summarises Government of Norway's goals for the Nansen Programme and assumptions for how it will work, the division of responsibilities for the programme between the MFA and Norad once Nansen migrated to Norad, and the scope of results management for the Nansen Programme.

Expected high level results and resourcing of Nansen programme

The main annual priorities of the programme are decided at MFA and Parliament level. In its latest budget proposal to Parliament for 2024-2025 (Prop.1 S), the Government of Norway (GoN) re-states its main goals for the Nansen Programme:²

- Ukraine can determine its own future.
- Fiscal stability and critical societal functions are maintained.

- Governance is improved in line with EU requirements for candidate countries.
- Lives are saved, suffering is alleviated, and human dignity preserved.
- People in need have received necessary protection and assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles.

² These five goals sit alongside the six guiding principles outlined in Mld.St.8 2023-2024 which are: (1) Our goal is a Ukraine that can determine its own future ; (2) Ukraine's needs shall be the basis for Norwegian support (3) Support shall be coordinated with

Ukrainian authorities and international partners (4) Nansen programme shall maintain a clear distinction between military and civilian support ; (5) Humanitarian principles shall underpin all

humanitarian efforts ; (6) The Nansen programme will emphasise documented delivery capacity and good control systems.



Since the formation of Nansen in 2023, GoN has identified and elaborated a number of strategic choices for achieving control and transparency alongside rapid and strategic programming responses for a country at war:³

- flexible programme: quick and efficient response
- limited number of agreements
- established and well-known operational organisation
- documented delivery capacity, strong control system
- prioritisation of Ukrainian civil society organisations.

Domestic pressure and other factors have recently led to a proposed extension of the Nansen Programme from 2028 to 2030. Under this plan, NOK 15 bn will be a floor for allocations each year; allocations above NOK 15 bn in previous years will not lead to future reductions as was the initial plan. The government also plans to increase the support for 2024 by NOK 5 bn above previous budget allocations. The total allocation for the duration of the programme will be at least NOK 134.5 bn.⁴

The GoN White Paper (Mld.St.8 2023-2024) recognises that the 'complexity of providing extensive support to a country at war where corruption is a significant societal problem' requires an emphasis 'on the use of experienced actors with robust control and alert systems, as well as support for authorities and civil society actors that contribute to control and transparency'.

Norad's public and internal messaging on the ever present risk of corruption 'capturing' Norwegian public funds in Ukraine focusses on the distinction between tolerance of the risk of corruption happening where the needs are highest, and zero acceptance of any incidents or warning of corruption ('investigate every single case').⁵

This position has been re-emphasised in the latest budget proposal, with a warning that 'assistance...involves increased risk that support will not achieve planned and lasting results', that 'Norwegian aid funds may be misappropriated' and that it is crucial to ensure 'proper management of the aid, coordinated with other donors through internationally recognised organisations'.⁶

³ Meld. St. 8 (2023–2024). Nansen-programmet for Ukraina.

⁴ The recently announced budget proposition for 2024-25 (Prop. 1 S) can be found here:

https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/a33b042817174b2d80fe59513697342d/no/pdfs/prp202420250001_udddddpdfs.pdf

⁵<https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/bgVgGI/norsk-bistand-til-ukraina-der-behova-er-stoerst-er-ogsaa-risiko-en-hoegast>

⁶ Prop.1 S (2024-25). See above.



Responsibilities and Nansen programme migration to Norad

Over recent years there has been a reform of the aid administration in Norway including a clearer division of labour between the MFA and Norad, with MFA holding full responsibility for formulation of development policy, and Norad as the administrative body for humanitarian and development aid. Norad is also responsible for giving professional advice and establishing knowledge of aid.

In June 2023, the GoN decided to transfer the grant management of the civilian and humanitarian parts of Nansen programme to Norad to 'ensure the most effective and responsible use of Norwegian aid funds'. (Actual transfer occurred in September 2023.)

Political governance of the Nansen Programme is anchored in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Defence and MFA, with MFA responsible for political and strategic governance of the civilian and humanitarian aspects. Nansen falls under the MFA's security Policy Department, Section for Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Regional Organisations. The department and section have primary responsibility for the political governance of the programme and are expected to maintain close dialogue with Norad as the manager. MFA's Humanitarian Section and Banking Section are involved in political governance, with corresponding lines to Norad and Nansen programme. 'As management of Nansen occurs within a demanding security policy and elevated risk profile, there is a closer than usual dialogue and governance between MFA and Norad.'⁷

Norad's 2030 Strategy states that its primary task is to 'put money to work in collaboration with partners', and that this work must be based on knowledge and insight: 'facts should have power'. Key to these ambitions is strengthening and systematising the development, sharing and use of knowledge within Norad. This ambition is especially relevant for the Nansen Programme where one of the tasks allocated by MFA to Norad in relation to the programme is to develop a plan for evaluation, knowledge and learning based on systematic use of knowledge and continuous learning.⁸

Scope of results management for the Nansen Programme

Under Norad's Grant Management Assistant (GMA), the model for results management is tied closely to each individual (grant) agreement. Four of the six stages in the

⁷ Overall management model Nansen-programme for Ukraine. Draft working document, 16 June 2024. Joint MFA and Norad.

⁸ Meld. St. 8 (2023–2024). Nansen-programmet for Ukraina.



model focus on the process of granting (receive application, assessment and decision, enter into an agreement, disburse and follow-up) with only one on strategy (plan and dialogue), and one on completion.

At the level of government and parliament, however, there is a broader set of expectations for how results are identified, managed, reported on and used for on-going strategy development – and this is especially relevant for such a large and nationally important programme like Nansen. Table 1 attempts to map some of these high level requirements against a cycle for results management which incorporates these broader expectations.

At each stage in the cycle the questions in the central column are intended to open up thinking – and are by no means exhaustive.

The six stages do not necessarily flow in a neat sequence, but frequently overlap or double back. For example: new priorities for investment may suddenly emerge as the context changes; learning can be identified at the same time as monitoring occurs, and feed directly into tactical or strategic adjustments; and evaluative activities can be undertaken during implementation.

In terms of what is mandatory (what must be done) and what is advisory (what should be done) in results management, the review of the sources suggest there is considerable scope for meeting a mandatory requirement through a variety of different routes – not all of which may (yet) be included in existing guidance documents and manuals.



Table 1: One version of a results management cycle, with Government of Norway's mandatory requirements

	Cycle stage	Key questions	GoN high level requirements
1	Priority setting in context	<i>What evidence & analytical basis for proposed priorities?</i> <i>Who is involved?</i> <i>Who decides (and can also change) priorities?</i> <i>How is context likely to evolve in future?</i>	Donor principles of results, partnership, transparency and recipient responsibility ⁹ Must base funding on national development strategies, institutions & procedures ¹⁰
2	Objectives & strategy & results management approach	<i>What change is realistically possible in this context?</i> <i>What are the most/least likely routes to change?</i> <i>What will progress look like?</i> <i>What will failure look like?</i> <i>What are the main risks?</i> <i>Who will track and how?</i>	Aid must be managed and implemented with desired results in mind ¹¹ Use a logical planning model as a basis for a monitoring and evaluation framework in the implementation and conclusion of an aid initiative ¹²
3	Implementation and monitoring	<i>What is happening, where?</i> <i>What is working - why?</i> <i>What is not working – why?</i> <i>What tactical adjustments are needed to get back on track?</i> <i>How much is being spent?</i> <i>What (new) risks are emerging?</i>	Ensure fiscal management systems meet Ministry of Finance requirements ¹³ Ensure set objectives and performance requirements are met ¹⁴

⁹ Derived from various international declarations endorsed by Norway (Paris 2005, Accra 2008 and Busan 2011).

¹⁰ Paris (2005)

¹¹ White Paper No.24 (2016-2017). Felles ansvar for felles framtid – bærekraftsmålene og norsk utviklingspolitikk.

¹² Regulations and Provisions of Financial Management in Central Government (latest update 2021). Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ *ibid*



	Cycle stage	Key questions	GoN high level requirements
4	Learning and real-time adaptation	<i>Who is learning what?</i> <i>What does this mean for current strategy and/or activities?</i> <i>What strategic adjustments are required to achieve results?</i>	Ensure sufficient management information and an appropriate basis for decision-making ¹⁵
5	Evaluation of claimed results	<i>What changed, and why?</i> <i>What didn't change, and why?</i> <i>Were the results worth the cost?</i> <i>What could have been done differently?</i>	Ensure evaluations are carried out to obtain information on effectiveness in areas of responsibility and to assess appropriateness of investment ¹⁶
6	Communication & utilisation of verified results and learning	<i>Who needs to know what about verified results?</i> <i>What are the best ways to communicate these to each audience?</i> <i>How do these results and learning feed into current & future priority setting and strategy?</i>	Performance information used to improve decision-making processes ¹⁷ Quality assurance covers all efforts relating to development measures: planning and execution, reporting and learning. ¹⁸

¹⁵ ibid¹⁶ ibid¹⁷ White Paper No.24 (2016-2017), Felles ansvar for felles framtid – bærekraftsmålene og norsk utviklingspolitikk.¹⁸ ibid



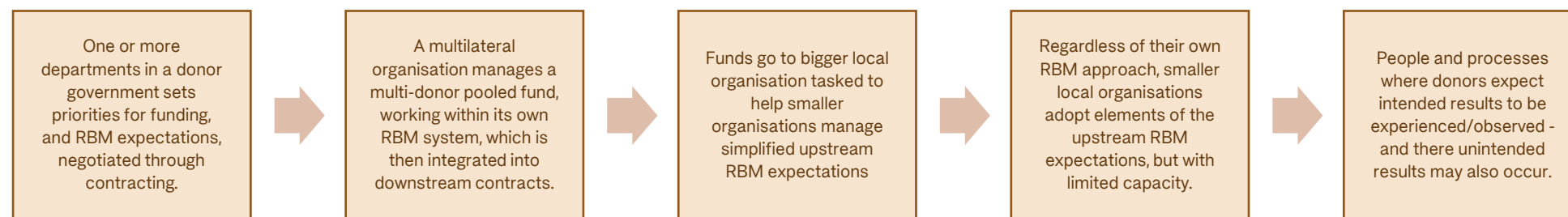
A view from Ukraine – on the receiving end of different results-management approaches

With input from two other colleagues in the local NGO sector, our Ukrainian team member used the same six stage results management cycle to reflect on her experience of the results management systems of different donor organisations. Their insights provide a glimpse of how things work from their perspective, but do not

represent the formal position of any organisation; nor are these insights an objective assessment of the results management system of any one organisation. The findings from our limited team exercise are similar to those found in many other contexts.¹⁹ What may distinguish Ukraine programming at this time, however, is the

degree to which donors rely on long and complex actor chains to convert their funding into priority investments – and the effect this can have on results management behaviours of the different actors in the chain.

A typical actor chain may look something like this:



¹⁹ Gutheil, L, Koch D-J (2022) Civil society organizations and managerialism: on the depoliticization of the adaptive management agenda Development Policy Review ODI. At <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dpr.12630>



Such chains create an array of beliefs about what each link in the chain thinks it *should* report on (and what it should not) – and how this may be connected (or not) to future funding decisions and/or the future provision of equipment, services or other resources. These complex incentives are often implicit rather than explicit and can profoundly affect how results (intended and unintended) are understood in a specific context.

In brief, our mini-review suggests that:

- **Priorities for funding are perceived (most often) to be set upstream**, by the donor or the multilateral organisation.
- **Those towards the end of the long actor chain tend to report on what is asked for in the link above** (and this is not necessarily the same as the wishes of a back donor at the beginning of the chain).
- **While the output (rather than outcome) emphasis of results management dominates, there is considerable variation in donor results management practices** and how this affects local organisations. Such effects may include perverse incentives: for example, when a local organisation feels safe to share 'success' stories with the donor, but keeps 'mess-up' stories for internal use only.
- **Stages 1-3 in the cycle appear to demand relatively high transactional processes, combined with slow decision-making**; that said, there appear to be some interesting outliers among some donors or downstream operational partners where faster 'work arounds' have contributed to more responsive decision-making.²⁰
- **Stages 4-6 in the cycle appear to be given less emphasis, with less consistency in how organisations are encouraged to embrace deeper learning and adaptation** processes or evaluative activities. Where learning is a specific objective in donor requirements, it may be described through indicators which can foster a mechanistic approach ('number of learnings per quarter') with limited space or support for linking learning to adjusting strategy and/or proposing different activities – what may be called 'actionable learning'.²¹
- **There appears to be limited commitment to communicating results and learning more widely within Ukraine**, and to donors' domestic audiences – again, with some

²⁰ This includes the practice of one organisation using WhatsApp channels for faster responses to requests for tactical changes of plan.

²¹ Such practice is not unusual for aid programming. The INTRAC paper on learning provides a useful summary as well as associated sources on this issue. Simister, N. (2018) Learning, M&E Universe. INTRAC. Accessed at:

<https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Learning.pdf>



unexpected outliers among the donors or downstream operational partners.²²

In relation to the final point above on communications, there is a further observation to make from the evidence of the sampled aid agency websites. From these there appears to be limited exposure of some of the more interesting and useful aspects of a local organisation's 'on the ground' experience in Ukraine. It has also been hard to establish the extent to which there is coherent capacity for communication about results in each of the aid agencies. This seems to contrast with some of the larger Ukrainian organisations which have identified a need for strong communications capability. In one case, the communications department is reported to be the biggest team in the whole organisation. This investment appears to contribute to a vibrant culture of

communication on claimed results in Ukraine itself – an area that aid agencies could learn from.



²² This includes a multilateral organisation which apparently maintains a learning register across its downstream implementing partners. Periodically, learning is harvested to feed into updated

guidance on elements of delivery. The interviewee reported that this was considered useful by downstream partners.

Liubomyrivka, Ukraine, November 2023
Photo: Espen Røst | Panorama



Comparing other agency approaches to results management of Ukraine programming

Agency snapshots

Through a broad-brush picture of each selected aid agency, we considered these dimensions: capability for contextual understanding; programming spend, priorities and investment channels; personnel and donor government inter-departmental relationships (including in Ukraine); approach to results management; innovation and automation; and public communication on results.

From these snapshots, we identified two key characteristics which all four agencies appear to share to different degrees:

- **Ukraine is the biggest ODA programme in all four countries – by far; and one of the fastest to grow in size.** This appears to be taking its toll on people involved – at all levels, including those responsible for the management of funds and results. There are anecdotal signs of burn-out and sickness, combined with limited bandwidth for thinking or reaching out to other colleagues. One consequence

is that much of what is happening within an aid agency's Ukraine programme appears to remain largely invisible – to the outside, and even to other staff within the same agency.

- **All four agencies struggle with the dominance of formal conventional results management approaches which emphasise delivery of predictable outputs** over the more complex task of understanding whether, how and why outcome level change is happening. To address this gap most seem to be attempting adaptive approaches²³ to results

²³ The term adaptive is used in contrast to conventional or traditional approaches to results management, and is increasingly applied to programming in contexts which are complex and uncertain, and where it is difficult to design with any confidence a programme in its entirety. Conventional RBM has three key weaknesses in such contexts: it fails

to capture results that are not predicted in logical frameworks or similar linear planning tools; it fails to recognise alternative contributions to change; and it fails to recognise the unique set of conditions and circumstances that lead to changes being realised. Adaptive approaches seek to address these blind spots by developing planning and M&E processes that can handle complexity; build in

space to collect, analyse, learn and act on information more continuously; and finally integrate adaptive results management processes with both tactical and strategic decision-making. (Simister, N. (2018) Adaptive Management, M&E Universe, INTRAC.)



management, using different tools and processes within specific agreements or sub-components of the overall Ukraine programme. At least two agencies are also purposefully starting to use adaptive results management approaches across their Ukraine portfolio.

To different degrees, all agencies are grappling with long, complex actor chains, with each link in the chain driving or responding to different incentives for results reporting. What further distinguishes the Ukraine context is that these actor chains operate in a highly sensitive context where the safest option may often lead to communicating in general rather than specific terms. With the dominance of multilateral partnerships where conventional, linear and output-driven results management templates are the norm, this can skew reporting towards shorter-term descriptions of 'success', regardless of the openness of donors further back in the chain to more 'mixed' or reflective reporting about intended and unintended results over a longer trajectory.

All aid agencies are grappling with/chasing capable but over-loaded local organisations (civil society and private sector) with limited availability to support results management processes on the ground. This demand also risks forcing the sector to grow in a 'boom and bust' manner. The local civil society sector is part of the wider political economy of Ukraine, and needs to be understood better by all donors, as well as requiring approaches which enable its healthy rather than bloated growth.

The sensitivity of the context and each country's security interests and policies make it difficult to share insight which may be useful for others – and this results in obvious as well as hidden duplication of efforts. It has been difficult for us to assess the extent to which this behaviour differs between thematic areas of work. We were also unable to test the extent to which 'security' classifications are sometimes a convenient reason given by one part of any government to avoid sharing with another part of the same government.

Digital take-up is currently low, but the appetite for use in results management is there. While our interviews suggest that there is sufficient interest in digital tools for results management for some donors to invest in pilot studies, one agency reported that the findings were inconclusive. Another reported that attempts to invest in data-driven decision-making processes for investment fell by the wayside under the pressure to respond to fast-changing events in Ukraine. At this stage, there is little evidence that digitalisation is transforming any results management processes – except possibly in USAID where capability for this work has been brought into the agency through a private company. (See section on Office of Transition Initiatives in [Annex 3](#).)

Digitalisation and/or automation is more likely to help future rather than current data analysis challenges. It is still early days and this area needs more purposeful testing. Advice from one interviewee directly involved in this field, cautions that digitalisation or automation will do little to help speed up the



process of making sense of existing data. Its value comes in setting out a question and putting in place the mechanism by which data (in a consistent form) can be generated and then analysed at some point in the future. Meanwhile digitalisation within Ukraine is booming across sectors.

Aid agency presence on the ground is the norm. A fundamental similarity between the sampled agencies (bar Danida where data was not available) lies in the fact that these agencies have a presence on the ground in Kyiv (with some having a presence in other parts of Ukraine, as well as some neighbouring missions). FCDO and USAID have a considerable presence in-country. We understand that half of the 20-strong Sida team is located in the Embassy in Kyiv.

This presence seems to be a key factor in the timeliness of results tracking, especially when it comes to short-circuiting the different links in the actor chain. Recognition of the pressure on these personnel on the ground has led most of the agencies to invest also in technical support to the mission coming from the agency head office, and/or contracted-in MEL assistance from commercial companies (Ukrainian and international).

Where do agencies diverge to some degree?

FCDO has a well developed Programme Operating Framework which combines the rules for results management (based on aid regulations and provisions) with a range of periodically updated guidance on how to put those rules into practice. The rules are few, high level and very concise (ie. 'each programme must have a theory of change')

but with no stipulation on what form this must take. Guidance which follows is wide-ranging, with links to additional guidance and templates – none of which is mandatory.

FCDO has been initiating a gradual opening up of options for more adaptive results management, with additional tools and guidance.²⁴ This is combined with a socialisation process through the MEL advisers across the organisation to help create 'champions' with experience of working in this way. Also recently introduced is an (adaptive) Annual Review process for complex programmes/portfolios which allows for scoring across four dimensions, rather than just one (*Delivery of Outputs*). The other three are: *Contribution to Meaningful Change* (outcome results); *Actionable Learning* by the programme/portfolio as a whole; and *Fitness for Purpose* for how the programme/portfolio is designed and implemented. FCDO-led

²⁴ This includes an 'adaptive results framework' which creates space for tracking context and for monitoring the extent programme or portfolio learning is converted into action

(tactical/strategic). It also allows for incorporation of specific adaptive MEL tools such as Outcome Mapping and Harvesting, Contribution Analysis and Strategy Testing. The adaptive annual

review process supports reviewers to assess a programme or portfolio against an adaptive results framework.



annual reviews are mandatory for programmes above a certain financial threshold.

In the context of Ukraine, FCDO's MEL technical adviser for the region has been supporting use of adapted approaches through a trial and error process. Early MEL measures have been described as 'reactive' and designed to verify UK donations in-kind (such as energy equipment) using Third Party Monitoring. An Outcome Map was developed at portfolio level across the different delivery sectors. Delivery groups were pulled together under different sectoral leaders (MoD, FCDO etc.) to maximise cross-departmental coordination and sharing. While the Outcome Map appears not to have worked as a mechanism for portfolio-level results tracking, we understand that the delivery groups have continued. These combine people in London and Kyiv and work best where there is strong leadership which allows for the utilisation of information for relevant insight which may otherwise be classified and inaccessible for other departments (including FCDO).

At policy level, **Sida** promotes a devolved approach to results management which is intended to empower different organisations in the actor chain to use their own monitoring and evaluation systems to respond to these four questions:

- What is to be achieved?
- What was achieved?
- Why or what are the reasons for results, or lack of results?
- What to do to increase the chances of achieving results?

Sida does not provide centrally developed templates as the intention is to encourage partners to explore creative methods, including adaptive management, and to build on their own tools and processes. To this end, Sida does provide brief guidance and videos which explain what Sida means by adaptive management.

In practice, at the programme management end of the actor chain, and with multiple operational partners, we understand that less flexible results management processes are sometimes introduced. Sida reports that it tries to use its leverage with other donors to encourage multilaterals to pay more attention to reporting against its four key questions. It will sometimes invest bilaterally with a multilateral partner to ensure that certain kinds of information are gathered.

While **USAID** is the biggest contributor to most of the same multilateral operational partners as the Nansen Programme, its far greater investment is in bilateral channels where US can assert more influence over results management practices, with and through companies/NGOs over which the agency has more direct control. USAID's performance management system is widely perceived to be demanding, especially for local organisations – making it necessary for USAID to work through organisations which can handle these demands.



At the same time, USAID especially is trying approaches which 'cut to the chase' by stripping out the lengthy back-and-forth of traditional calls for proposals. Traditional calls for proposals often incur high transaction costs (on all sides) and long delays from the time a call is issued, concept notes and then full applications submitted and reviewed, to reaching approval decisions, contracting and disbursement of funds. (In such processes, the majority of applicants usually fail to win a grant despite the effort they have invested in applying.) With a faster turnaround, USAID (through the Office of Transition Initiatives) invites ideas for how to solve a specific problem. The best idea (or ideas) receive funds for immediate implementation. (See [Annex 3](#).) Such approaches require up-to-the-minute and targeted political economy analysis to enable the identification of time-sensitive entry points (such as the need to repair a local electricity circuit or to provide

seeds in time to plant up de-mined land for the coming harvest) around which rapid outcome driven challenges can be launched into the local market of potential 'suppliers' of solutions. These may be private sector or NGOs.

Despite the dearth of data on **Danida**, we include this agency in this report for two reasons. The first is that, according to a recent study by ODI, Danida (like the US) appears to be drawing on domestic private companies to provide capacity for operational delivery in Ukraine.²⁵ The second is Danida's use of a city-to-country link in the form of the Mikolaiv-Denmark Partnership. With its own dedicated website, this arrangement seems to provide a manageable focus for results reporting by building a sustained narrative about a specific city with which the Danish public can identify, and then follow a series of thematic stories around energy,

reconstruction, business etc. Our review has not been able to establish the extent to which this mechanism is achieving reach in both Denmark and Ukraine, and what is involved in maintaining it.

An additional finding relates to two approaches that can be found in results management tool boxes: **Political Economy Analysis (PEA)** and **Third Party Monitoring**. As Ukraine and the donor community moves from short to medium and long term trajectories for the war, and the recovery and reform of the country, attention is turning to the deeper processes of change caused by the prolonged war and donor responses to it. Ukraine is a context fraught with 'wicked' problems requiring deep understanding of how things work and how things are changing, including beneath the surface. This is stimulating in different donors greater interest in deeper, better and more timely PEA –

²⁵ Chen, Y, (2024) Navigating Aid and National Interest in Ukraine: the development toolbox of European Donors. ODI. At: <https://odi.org/en/insights/navigating-aid-and-national-interest-in-ukraine-the-development-toolbox-of-european-donors/> This

article suggests that the relationship between aid and national interest through commercial companies is an evolving and complex trend

in Europe: <https://odi.org/en/insights/navigating-aid-and-national-interest-in-ukraine-the-development-toolbox-of-european-donors/>



customised to specific issues and geographical areas.

At the same time, there are (apparently) 650 Technical Assistance projects taking place across donors in Ukraine at this time – most of which are doing their own forms of contextual and sectoral analyses.²⁶ USAID undertakes different forms of PEA continuously and FCDO has recently launched a tender for dedicated PEA functions which includes building local capability to do PEA as well. What potential is there for these resources to be more widely shared and better used, especially as the real challenge of PEA is converting this knowledge into insights which inform better decision-making?

This, along with the potential for more donors than the US and UK to opt for Third Party

Monitoring,²⁷ is another example of donors tending towards the same direction. In the absence of careful coordination, these emerging donor trends on PEA and TPM may increase duplication still further while there remains an apparent under utilisation of existing knowledge resources. Expansion of PEA and TPM, if done without sensitive understanding of local market conditions, also risks distortion of the civil society and private sectors in Ukraine – for example, by stimulating rapid growth of some parts of the non-state sector and contributing to unequal power relations between different local actors.

This is an area where the Ukraine Donor Platform²⁸ could potentially provide greater support in future, given its role to “direct resources in a coherent, transparent, and

inclusive manner, enabling efficient planning and delivery of assistance to Ukraine and avoiding duplication”. Brokering better sharing of knowledge and insight between donors could help to ensure that donors are in a better position to partner well with the re-launched Kyiv-based Sector Working Groups, which provide a Government of Ukraine-led in-country coordination structure to complement the Ukraine Donor Platform’s work.

²⁶ This comment was reported as part of the feedback session to FCDO’s virtual early market assessment for a Political Economy Analysis Facility held at the British Embassy in Kyiv on September 4th 2024. [UK PEA Facility Tender](#)

²⁷ In our review we heard of at least one other donor actively pursuing this option.

²⁸ <https://ukrainedonorplatform.com/>

List of Annexes

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Annex 2: Glossary

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Annex 4: Terms of Reference



Annex 1: People interviewed

In addition to interviews and discussions with Norad and MFA staff, the following people were interviewed:

Role	Organisation
Deputy Head of Programmes, Advisory and Results Group, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate	UK FCDO
Monitoring and Evaluation Advisers Ukraine (2)	UK FCDO
Itad Inc Director (US)	USAID contractor for Ukraine
Senior Adviser on Results Based Management and Adaptive Management	Sida



Annex 2: Glossary

The real-time evaluation team has collated a glossary of the most common terms used in aid programming & RBM to promote conversation about how to more accurately use these terms.

Term	Interpretation
Adaptative (Management)	The deliberate process of testing – through programme design and delivery – different approaches to solving complex problems; using monitoring and learning feedback to inform on-going adjustments to actions and investment in a strategic manner.
Agility	The flexibility in an organisation's financial and management system to increase or decrease spend and pace of implementation; and responsiveness to amend activities, objectives or strategic direction in response to client needs or major unexpected events – while remaining consistent with the agreed goal. Without agility, it is hard to manage programmes adaptively.
'Best Fit' & 'Best Practice'	'Best practice' sets out the most appropriate way – on average – of implementing a given action objective (such as achieving gender inequality or supporting a policy reform process); whereas 'best fit' seeks to identify the most appropriate way of going about a particular action or objective <i>in a given context</i> – where 'best practice' approaches may be impossible to apply or may have undesired consequences, such as 'doing harm' to delicate local balances of power.
Context	Refers to how things work in a country or region (or a smaller geographic location or community, or sector) especially in relation to informal rules and power relationships, and how these affect the formal rules and the political system of decision-making – especially relating to resources. Understanding context is important because of its effect on how and whether proposed interventions can be effective, and how they may need to be adapted to work better. This includes understanding how the organisation and its activities are perceived by others. Strong and up-to-date contextual understanding is key to <i>strategic</i> (rather than tactical) programme adaptation.
Contribution Analysis	A method used to identify the contribution a development (or humanitarian or political) intervention has made to a change or set of changes. The aim is to produce a credible, evidence-based narrative of contribution that a reasonable person would be likely to agree with, rather than to produce conclusive proof. Contribution analysis can be used during a development/humanitarian intervention, at the end, or afterwards.



Term	Interpretation
Evidence	One or more pieces of information about something, from a variety of sources (observation, records, tests); can be in written, visual or aural form (qualitative), or numerical form (quantitative) or both. Reliability depends on who produced it and how, and whether it can be validated, and/or triangulated with other sources of evidence.
Knowledge	Process by which evidence/information (raw facts, opinions, observations, documentation) is organised through storage, processing and analysis to answer questions and draw conclusions.
Localisation	Emerging from the humanitarian sector, Localisation means increasing international investment and respect for local actors, to increase the reach, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian action. Now more widely applied, it also suggests that whatever outside agencies are trying to do in a specific context, they must understand, work through and support the local processes for representative decision-making so as not to undermine the relationship between locally elected officials and citizens. By-passing these structures (through, eg, hand-picking civil society actors and deciding who gets money and who does not) feeds patronage systems, creates jealousy and distorts local organisations and markets.
Outcome	In the context of a programme's goal, this describes changes in behaviours of target actors (people, organisations or groups) over which a programme does not have direct control – but to which a programme team/partner believes it has contributed in some way (alongside other factors). Usually assumed to be a change 'for the better' in a specific context, reflecting the ambition of the programme owner. Usually incorporated into a Results Framework.
Outcome Harvesting & Outcome Mapping	Use of the word 'outcome' here is more open than the single word 'outcome' (see above). Here it refers to any changes in how target actors are behaving either: discovered by the programme through an exercise which seeks to gather together ('harvest') observed changes and the contributory causes (as they relate to the programme); or purposefully anticipated and monitored by the programme through a 'Map' of hoped-for changes which are divided into three levels: expect to see, like to see and love to see.
Output	Observable products, processes and events delivered by a programme as a result of its activities. Usually planned; often expressed in blended qualitative and quantitative indicators.
Political Economy Analysis	A formal/informal attempt to find out what is really going on in a situation (country, community, sector); what lies beneath the surface of the immediate problem, eg. whether competing interests exist. It usually involves understanding different actors and how formal and informal power relationships affect their choices and behaviours. Increasing focus on 'gendered' and 'inclusive', and on participatory PEAs.



Term	Interpretation
Portfolio (management)	<p>A portfolio is a collection of interventions brought together usually by theme, or geography, or both – to serve a higher purpose. A superportfolio usually comprises a collection of very big programmes (portfolios in their own right) which come together under a higher ambition, often complemented by other smaller investments and non-grant based interventions such as diplomatic activity.</p> <p>Portfolio management is the practices and procedures used to design, plan, organise and coordinate a collection of interventions, grants and initiatives towards the effective and efficient delivery of specific development assistance objectives. It involves setting overall portfolio objectives and strategy, aligning resources towards these, and then using evidence to oversee and coordinate grants and initiatives, monitor overall progress, learn and adapt, and report.</p>
Result	<p>A change that happens in someone or something, caused by a set of prior activities or actions – which may or may not be connected. A result is usually observable and may be positive or negative or both; it may also be intended or unintended. The term overlaps with 'output' and 'outcome'.</p>
Results (Based) Management	<p>A management strategy that involves setting clear objectives, based on analysis of the current situation/problem, having a plan for collection of information on progress towards these objectives, and using this information to adapt, report, learn and improve. (GMA)</p> <p>A results approach involves shifting management attention away from a focus on inputs, activities and processes to a focus on benefits – from what you have done to what you have achieved. Results management also focuses on using information on results to improve decision making. (Norad Practical Guide to RM). In contexts of high uncertainty and complexity results management is required to adopt more agile approaches associated with 'Adaptive Management' where there is an expectation from the outset that not all interventions will work, but learning from the intervention is essential for working out better strategies.</p> <p>Results management is not a neutral term. Behind the label lie power dynamics between different actors (donors, implementing organisations, local actors and intended beneficiaries) which all parties need to be clear about and manage: from priority-setting to evaluation of results.</p>



Term	Interpretation
Results Framework	A window on a programme through the selection of specific measures to test a theory of change and programme strategy over an agreed time period. The Logical Framework is the most widely used RF, based on linear pathways of change where combined 'outputs' are predicted to deliver a clear 'outcome'. In practice, this kind of RF is only suited to contexts where programmes have high levels of control over context and target actors. Because this is usually not the case, logframes tend either to be over-ambitious, or set very modest outcomes. Alternative RFs better suited to volatile contexts are now becoming more popular across different donors and INGOs.
Strategy & System	<p>In relation to results-based management, the terms strategy and system are often used interchangeably; but it can be helpful to distinguish between them.</p> <p>A <u>strategy</u> can be seen as the <i>political</i> approach to tracking, measuring and utilising knowledge about results, a rationale and ambition for how and why things will be done, and the trade-offs involved. This is usually on paper.</p> <p>A <u>system</u> describes the <i>technical</i> approach and is primarily about people and how they behave. This includes the tools and processes they use, what they do (and what they don't do – for whatever reason) with emerging information.</p>
Theory of Change	A process (and a product) for helping a programme owner to understand and explain how things work (formally and informally) in a given context, and the potential for aligning different interests towards realistic change that the programme owner wants to support. A ToC provides the <i>rationale</i> for <i>how</i> a programme works (its strategy) in a given context – as well as where the risks are. As contexts continually change it is vital to revisit the theory of change regularly to assess whether the strategy needs to change as well. The programme owner is not a neutral actor and therefore also needs to be part of the ToC, with an honest reflection on its own strengths, limitations and profile in the context where it wishes to effect change.
Third Party Monitoring	An RBM approach used where the context for aid is uncertain, unstable and/or insecure, and inaccessible – and where the programme owner is unable to conduct required RBM processes. TPM is the systematic and intentional collection of performance monitoring and/or contextual data by an organisation/team that is not the programme owner or an implementing partner directly involved in the work.
Wicked problem	A complex problem with no straightforward solution: eg. made up of elements totally outside the control of the people who are trying to resolve the problem and its underlying causes. Collective action is compromised and insufficient for shifting the problem. Single interventions achieve limited traction and are regularly undermined.



Annex 3: Additional materials and links from the comparative review

This Annex is intended to supplement the main body of the report by offering links to some of the trends, tools and approaches to results management uncovered through the comparative review.

The harvest of resources is based on both web-based searches and cross-referencing, and access that the evaluation team members have to documents which are either open source or unclassified, but not easily retrievable through the internet. This list is not intended to be comprehensive or to cover all relevant materials. The structure of this annex starts with Ukraine itself, then moves onto specific documents/resources referenced under each of the four reviewed agencies (FCDO, USAID, Sida, Danida); this is followed by a section on multilaterals.

Part I Trends in (and influences on) results management in Ukraine (government and non-government)

1. Approaches to results management in Ukraine by the government

What is happening in results management in development and humanitarian aid programming in Ukraine? Our findings suggest that the dominant model of input-to-output results management pervades, based on the idea of predicting results through a linear pathway of inter-related activities. With this comes the expectation that 'success' is attached to the delivery of these activities, rather than testing whether or not these are the right ones for achieving the desired (medium and longer term) result - or indeed,

whether the desired result is anyway achievable.

- a) **The Government of Ukraine began embracing Results Based Management some years ago (c. 2014)** – as explained in the examples below. Take up of RBM has accelerated with the commitment to reform, and with the support of the Government of Canada and the SURGe programme.

The *"RBM Methodology in Strategic Community Planning: How to Achieve Results Instead of Planning Processes"* article²⁹ provides some background on RBM and its emergence in Ukraine. This references two key documents – the 2011 UN Guide on RBM³⁰ and the OECD Toolkit for RBM of public administration reform (undated, but c. 2018).³¹

²⁹ <https://decentralization.ua/news/18703>

³⁰ Available at: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>

³¹ Available at: <https://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/SIGMA-Strategy-Toolkit-October-2018.pdf>



In 2023 the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service (NAUCS) announced the introduction of RBM tools in the civil service to increase the capacity of civil servants in strategic planning in accordance with RBM methodology. It also launched online and other training.³²

³³, ³⁴

- b) **At a national level, Ukraine's Reform Matrix³⁵ serves as a kind of super results framework with 520 indicators across six clusters.** Indicators are also divided into key legislative deliverables and serve more as delivery targets. Indicator descriptions lie between Output and Outcome levels of ambition – in that their achievement takes considerable effort and political will. The extent to which, once passed, these laws help deliver the higher level change described

will require additional monitoring and evaluative approaches. The methodology of the preliminary expert evaluation of the actions included into the reform matrix³⁶ aims to *'provide a holistic perspective on Ukraine's reform program, viewing it as an integrated whole rather than a collection of separate indicators'*. Current data on the website is from June 2024.

- c) **Furthermore, Ukraine has invested in a digital revolution;³⁷ ³⁸ this is through the flagship Diia initiative supported by the US, and well underway.** It may not be long before Ukrainian private sector organisations become the go-to organisations for looking at digital solutions to results tracking. This growing digital expertise at national level is also reflected in DREAM – the government

interactive platform for tracking restoration projects and priorities across communities in Ukraine.

2. Approaches to donor coordination in Ukraine

The Ukraine Donor Platform³⁹ is the high level space where donors review collectively their commitment to partnership with the Government of Ukraine, as well as their expectations – including around results. In the most recent communique (Oct 9th 2024) the donors 'welcomed the Government of Ukraine's update of the Reforms Matrix as a public tool for accountability, transparency, and stakeholder coordination, as well as the update on conditionalities. We appreciated

³² Announcement on RBM available at: <https://nads.gov.ua/en/news/naucs-introduces-results-based-management-tools-in-the-civil-service>

³³ Online training syllabus available at: https://decentralization.ua/en/search?query=RBM&other_section=false&min_date=&max_date=&by_popularity=

³⁴ Online sessions are available at: Онлайн-курс з методології управління, орієнтованого на результат - YouTube

³⁵ Available at: <https://reformmatrix.mof.gov.ua/en/index/>

³⁶ More information on the methodology is available at: <https://reformmatrix.mof.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/methodology-eng.pdf>

³⁷ Information about Ukraine's flagship topic available at: <https://ukraine.ua/invest-trade/digitalization/>

³⁸ More information available at: <https://dream.gov.ua/about>

³⁹ Available at: <https://ukrainedorplatform.com/news/joint-communiques/>



the Government's report on actions taken and reiterated donor support for Ukraine as it continues to implement reforms'.

The note also commended the '*re-launching of Kyiv-based Sector Working Groups, which provide a Government of Ukraine-led in-country coordination structure to complement the Ukraine Donor Platform's work. This mechanism contributes to donors' ability to collectively and effectively support Ukraine's priorities, including in advancing its ambitious reform agenda, while ensuring that efforts are aligned, complementary, and avoid duplication*'. The note flags greater on-the-ground presence of the Platform '*including by increasing its presence and capabilities in Kyiv*'.

3. Alternative approaches to results management

Alternative perspectives on results management are emerging, for example on

Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)

mainly developed by the Building State Capability initiative at Harvard Kennedy School of Government⁴⁰. This initiative has strongly critiqued public reform processes that are driven by conventional results-based management approaches – where the tendency is to see 'the problem' as primarily an issue of capacity, and therefore to be fixed by 'building capacity' through technical assistance, measured through blunt instruments like logical frameworks. As this technical assistance usually comes from outside and is modelled on other states, the researchers⁴¹ contend that this creates 'isomorphic mimicry' rather than genuine state capability for solve its own problems. Instead, the Harvard team contends that, for complex (often wicked) problems facing governments, it is important to slow down the rush to 'solutions' (especially those imported from elsewhere), and focus more on these four principles:

- Local Solutions for Local Problems – transitioning from promoting predetermined solutions to allowing local nomination, articulation, and prioritisation of concrete problems to be solved.
- Pushing Problem Driven Positive Deviance – creating (and protecting) environments within and across organisations that encourage experimentation and positive deviance.
- Try, Learn, Iterate and Adapt – promoting active experimental learning with evidence-driven feedback built into regular management that allows for real-time adaptation.
- Scale through Diffusion – engaging multiple agents across sectors and

⁴⁰ PDIA Tool Kit information available at:
<https://bsc.hks.harvard.edu/tools/toolkit/>

⁴¹ Faculty Director Matt Andrews and team.



organisations to ensure reforms are viable, legitimate and relevant.

At the heart of this is an understanding that the causes of wicked problems are often more political than technical, and more about incentives than lack of capacity (although capacity may be a factor which can affect incentives).

There is now a growing community of government practitioners coming out of this work – although the approach is often adopted and adapted for commercial companies and large NGOs as part of their bids to compete for government contracts which require adaptive management expertise.

The whole PDIA approach is set out in the PDIA toolkit which includes an array of useful 'pause and reflect' tools and exercises – many

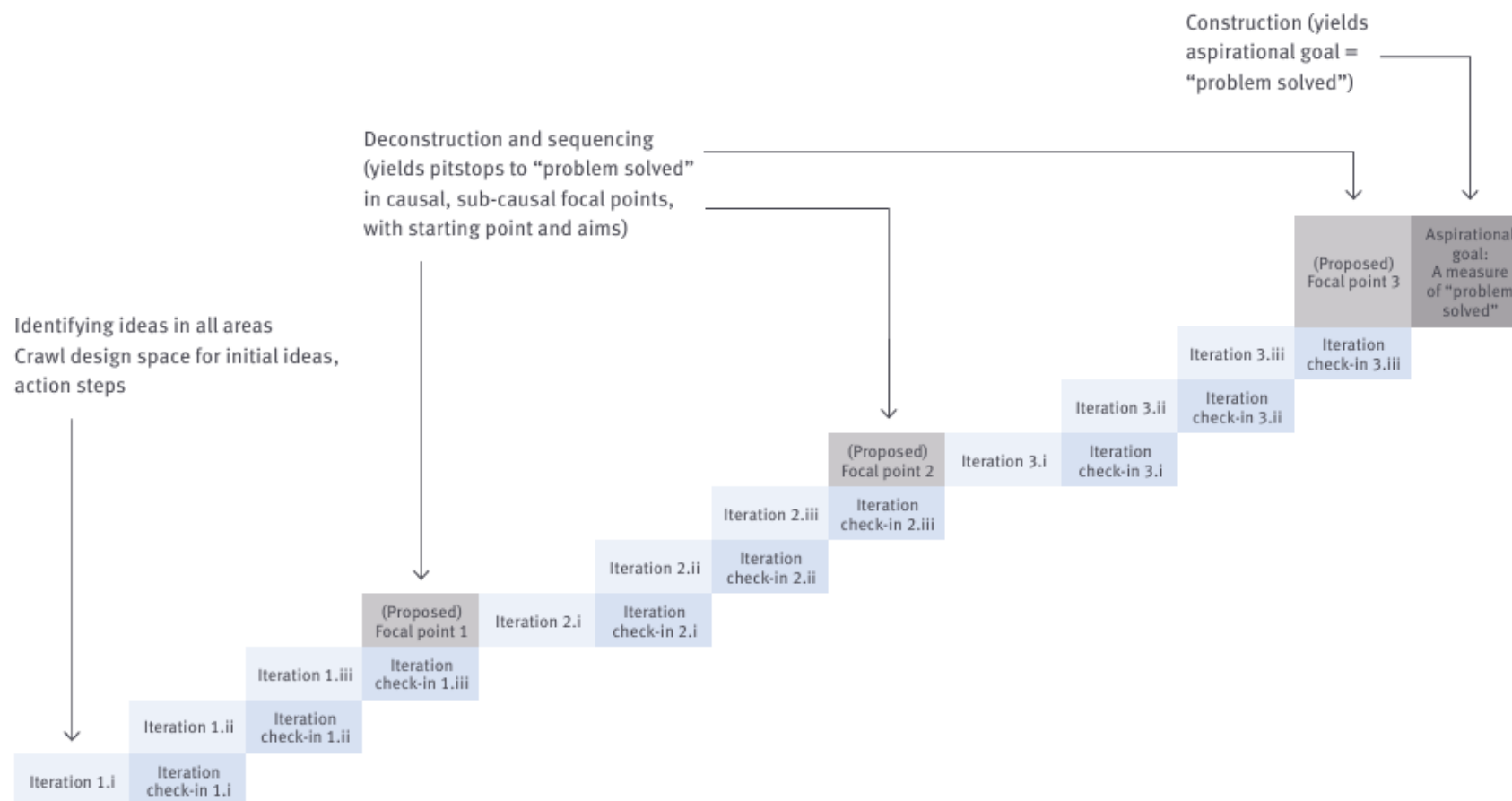
of which can be used as standalone processes.⁴² This toolkit includes an alternative to the logical framework – called the SearchFrame.

⁴² The PDIA toolkit A DIY Approach to Solving Complex Problems is available for download at:
<https://bsc.hks.harvard.edu/tools/toolkit/> and

<https://thepolicypractice.com/sites/default/files/2023-03/PDIA%20Toolkit.pdf>



Figure 7: The searchframe as a logframe alternative for complex challenges





Our research suggests that some of this PDIA thinking seems to be coming into Ukraine – perhaps in response to the sense of transition from crisis, to longer term trajectories. The NGO “Kyiv School of Public Administration named after Serhiy Nyzhnyi” (KSPA)⁴³ brands itself as ‘a school where the state is reborn’. In June 2024, it co-launched with Better Evaluation⁴⁴ and the World Bank, a debate on how to monitor and evaluate public reform work through PDIA principles:

“Approaching complex problems with a willingness to experiment, iterate solutions and adapt them based on lessons learned is the basis of the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach and a comprehensive opportunity to build a capable Ukraine in the face of transformational change and security challenges.”

The hybrid event was advertised as: The Kyiv School of Public Administration, the State Tax University of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (STU), PGA, and the Harvard Club of Ukraine are organising a bilingual Ukrainian-English teleconference on “Ukraine's Approach to Monitoring and Evaluation in Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation” (KSPA, 2024).⁴⁵ The recording of the event is publicly available.⁴⁶

Also available on the Building State Capability website is a recent article on moving to PDIA from a Solutions-based approach to reform in Ukraine.⁴⁷

Part II Results management approaches in comparative aid agencies

In relation to each of the comparator aid agencies, material is clustered according to their external communication about overall strategy and emerging results, evidence of adaptive approaches to results management at programme and portfolio levels, and other interesting features of the agency's approach (such as evaluations or partnering schemes).

a. FCDO

FCDO has scaled up its support in UK and in Kyiv and other missions to manage the huge uplift in funding. It has also brought in a private company to provide TPM – a facility it is in the process of extending – alongside an investment in customised political economy

⁴³ Information available at: <https://www.kspa-ngo.com/>

⁴⁴ Event details available at: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/community/events/ukraine-approach-monitoring-evaluation-problem-driven-iterative-adaptation>

⁴⁵ Hybrid Event (Virtual And F2f At Two Locations) Ukraine's Approach To Monitoring And Evaluation In Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation, 2024. Text available at: <https://www.kspa-ngo.com/en/events/telemist-ukraine-approach>

⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/live/1gGZD-Z8IYA>

⁴⁷ <https://bsc.hks.harvard.edu/2024/06/05/organizing-for-success-ukraines-economic-recovery-post-war-and-eu-integration/>



analysis. Its internal MEL experts have been adapting results management approaches to the local reality, although attempts at portfolio results management and learning have faltered. The approval of much more longer-term aid will require a rethink of portfolio learning and managing, using some of the emerging tools from the FCDO Centre for Delivery – and an annual review process which is able to accommodate the highly fluctuating situation. The following points display main information sources and approaches:

- **UK website on Ukraine programming (Fact Sheet)**⁴⁸
- **UK Government main website on support to Ukraine**⁴⁹

⁴⁸https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/671270859cd657734653d806/UK_support_to_Ukraine_factsheet.pdf

⁴⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/world/ukraine/news>

⁵⁰ <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/html-version/uk-aid-to-ukraine-2/#:-:text=A%20%C2%A333%20million%20contribution,a%20country%2Dbased%20pooled%20fund> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-commission-for-aid-impact-recommendations-on-uk-aid-to-38>

- **UK's Independent Commission on Aid rapid evaluation of UK's Ukraine programme (2024).**⁵⁰
- **FCDO Programme Operating Framework (public version) with the Rules**⁵¹

These are the high level rules for UK's use of aid. This sets out what is mandatory. In the full PRoF (not available online) there is considerably more guidance, and links to other guidance. But programmes are not bound by this guidance. What matters is compliance with the high level rules, and using judgement to work out what is most appropriate guidance for the context.

[ukraine-fcdo-response/fcdo-response-to-the-independent-commission-for-aid-impact-recommendations-on-uk-aid-to-ukraine](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-commission-for-aid-impact-recommendations-on-uk-aid-to-ukraine)

⁵¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-programme-operating-framework/fcdo-programme-operating-framework-overview#programme-operating-framework-principles>

⁵² <https://www.usaid.gov/ukraine/transition-initiatives-humanitarian-assistance>

b. USAID

USAID continues to apply fairly tight results management through its granting, at scale. This is one reason it has adopted (outside the normal multilateral partners co-funded with other donors) experienced US-based or international NGOs and private companies to implement other parts of its portfolio.

- **US website on Ukraine programming and Country Document**⁵²
- **Multi-media news from Ukraine**⁵³
- **Country Development Plan**
Strategy document to 2026, with nested Portfolio Results Framework⁵⁴
- **Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI)**

⁵³ <https://www.usaid.gov/ukraine/multimedia>

⁵⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/ukraine/country-development-cooperation-strategy-ukraine> and https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Ukraine_CDSCS%202019-2026_EXTERNAL.pdf



OTI is currently run for USAID by the commercial company Chemonics. Started in 2014 in Ukraine, USAID scaled up OTI when the war broke out with the intention of having in place a facility to respond quickly to opportunities/needs, and to propose 'fast solutions' for which the most relevant and interested local or external actor is 'cut a cheque'. This requires a level of grounded analysis on locations and issues such that an OTI response can be made – whether the rapid supply of bicycles, the repair of a local electricity circuit, provision of seeds and machinery to grow on de-mined land – or running specific social programmes. It works on the basis of rapid sub-contracting – cutting out the back and forth of Calls for Proposals.^{55 56 57 58 59}

- **Bureau of Humanitarian response information is available on its website,**⁶⁰ through which can be accessed the USAID emergency fact sheet and emergency map of Ukraine.
- **MEL providers (including Third Party Monitoring, TPM) can be found on a number of websites.** This includes one of USAID's data harvesting organisations (NORC at University of Chicago),⁶¹ a USAID TPM scope of work through an external advertising portal,⁶² and the USAID evaluation of the need for additional capacity for oversight.⁶³ TPM has become increasingly popular for large donors working in severely conflict-affected contexts and/or when corruption

risks are considered very high. In Ukraine, US and UK are currently the (only) aid agencies using TPM to verify their 'own' inputs. But other agencies may be moving in this direction. This raises a number of questions for local capacity – as well as role of aid agency personnel, as and when the context for monitoring becomes less dangerous. There are a number of documents providing different perspectives on the dilemmas associated with TPM and the extent it should be used to substitute for a donor's own monitoring capability.^{64 65 66}

Conclusions from the last report (Insecure Contexts) – (our emphasis):

- *TPM can provide a meaningful contribution to the broader monitoring*

⁵⁵ Transition Initiatives and Humanitarian Assistance | Ukraine | U.S. Agency for International Development

⁵⁶ Ukraine | Stabilization and Transitions | U.S. Agency for International Development

⁵⁷ Using Values-based Communications to Strengthen Confidence in Ukraine's Future - Chemonics International

⁵⁸ Spurring Grain and Oilseed Sector Recovery and Transformation in Ukraine - Chemonics International

⁵⁹ Further project updates available from the website for Chemonics.Com:

https://chemonics.com/projects?fwproject_region=426

⁶⁰ Ukraine | Humanitarian Assistance | U.S. Agency for International Development

⁶¹ Ukraine Monitoring & Learning Support | NORC at the University of Chicago

⁶² <https://www.devex.com/jobs/third-party-monitoring-specialist-ukraine-monitoring-and-learning-support-ums-project-1211055>

⁶³ USAID evaluation of staffing for oversight

⁶⁴ UNSDG Guide to RBM 2012

⁶⁵ USAID discussion note on TPM

⁶⁶ TPM in Insecure Contexts (Syria + experience)



and evaluation toolbox by strengthening compliance in places where access is limited. For donors, TPM offers an option to verify monitoring information from partners. For aid agencies, TPM can provide a source of primary field data to inform programming and help verify partner reporting.

- However, agencies **should do as much of their own monitoring as possible**. TPM works best when **used as a last resort measure or in conjunction with recipient agencies' internal monitoring and verification approaches**.
- Aid agencies should **limit their primary reliance on Third-Party Monitoring to exceptional areas with constrained access**.

- The practice of TPM needs to be regularly reassessed, and options for internalising monitoring should be regularly re-evaluated.
- To facilitate as much of their own monitoring as possible, TPM should always be complemented by acceptance-building measures, community feedback systems, and transparent communication with communities overall (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries).

c. Sida

Sida has a policy preference for a very high level set of questions on results – being demanding about what it wants to know about, but being very flexible about how organisations choose to go about it. And it has an explicit commitment to the idea of

adaptive management – in that it recognises that most of its ambition is in contexts where change is highly complex and it is impossible to know in advance what results you can achieve.

- **Sida website on Ukraine programming information.**^{67 68}
- **Results Management policy information, including adaptive management.**^{69 70}
- SIDA also provides an **RBM and adaptive management training course** for implementing partners. It is necessary to create an account to log on to this.⁷¹
- **Sida "Reclaiming Results" conference & evaluation sample information.**^{72 73}

⁶⁷ Sida's public reporting on Ukraine results

⁶⁸ Humanitarian analysis (March 2024)

⁶⁹ Sida's 4 results management questions

⁷⁰ Adaptive Management Guidenote

⁷¹ <https://partnership.sida.se/enrol/index.php?id=21>

⁷² Sida's Reclaim the Results Conference

⁷³ Climate energy and Environment Evaluation Ukraine



d. Danida

The Mykolaiv partnership offers a good vehicle for results reporting which is contextualised and where 'what happens next' can be followed – but it is not clear from the website (in English) that this is what is happening.

- **Denmark website on Ukraine programming (static) – & news on Embassy website.**^{74 75}
- **Results management policy information.**⁷⁶
- **Mykolaiv-Denmark Partnership website and document information.**⁷⁷

There is also a website set up by the Mykolaiv City administration (Mykolaivaid) which apparently reports on all aid being

received. This can be found by searching for Mykolaiv Denmark Partnership. It is not possible to provide a working link.

Mikolaiv is not the first time that donors have used a specific location to allow for more continuous story telling about results. The Guardian newspaper in UK initiated the Katine idea in the late 2000s called 'It starts with a village'. The newspaper then used Katine (in Uganda) as a basis for exploring a variety of development dilemmas and to report more thoughtfully on how change does and doesn't happen. The initiative lasted for a number of years – and infrequent updates still take place.^{78 79}

e. Trends in Multilaterals

Multilaterals – as noted in the earlier UN documents on RBM (2012 above), results management is dominated by the input-output relationship of programme delivery. This is partly a result of the way internal incentives are structured, including the effect of performance-related pay and contract compliance. There is some evidence that the discourse is shifting very slowly in *some* parts of the multilateral system, but with little evidence that this reflects a broader institutional change.

Findings from the UNFPA Developmental Evaluation in 2020 suggests that there is some appetite to rethinking current application of a more rigid results-based management systems towards more adaptive approaches.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Denmark pdf overview of Ukraine programme

⁷⁵ Danish Embassy website

⁷⁶ Danida view on RBM

⁷⁷ <https://ukraine.um.dk/en/mykolaiv-denmark>

⁷⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/katine>

⁷⁹ The Guardian Katine initiative evaluation (video) 2010

⁸⁰ UNFPA Developmental Evaluation 2020



Annex 4: Terms of Reference

Background

Norway's support to Ukraine

In response to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Norway established the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine for the period 2023-2027. There is a political agreement on this multi-year support programme for Ukraine, at NOK 75 billion. The programme encompasses both military and civilian support, with a commitment to clearly separate the two.

The Nansen Support Programme is flexible and long term and based on Ukraine's needs. It encompasses several sectors and areas, including energy supply, nuclear safety, rehabilitation, private sector development, transport, agriculture, democracy and accountability institutions, civil society and humanitarian needs.

Due to the need for coordination and to minimize risks, Norwegian funding is channelled to a large degree to multilateral and international partners with a proven track record. The World Bank's multi-donor trust fund (Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund) has received more than NOK 6 billion to maintain government services through budget support and initiating reconstruction efforts. Other key support measures provided by Norway include: NOK 1.5 billion to secure energy supply and security in Ukraine through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; NOK 50 million to Ukraine to the OECD Country Programme.

Humanitarian assistance is also part of the Nansen Support Programme: In 2023, NOK 2.8 billion were disbursed to Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Norway has a goal to be among the leading humanitarian donors in Ukraine and to the refugee response in neighboring countries, where Moldova is given priority.⁸¹ Moldova also benefits from long-

term development assistance in the Nansen Support Programme.

Real-time evaluation of Norway's civilian support to Ukraine

The Department for Evaluation has a mandate to perform independent evaluations of Norway's development cooperation. Following various consultations, the Department for Evaluation has decided to conduct a real-time evaluation of the ongoing Norwegian civilian support to Ukraine.

Real-time evaluations are dynamic assessment processes that provide timely feedback for ongoing projects and programmes. It is not unusual for a real-time evaluation to include different types of learning loops, including a single-loop learning focusing on aligning commitments with reality, emphasizing corrective actions at the programme implementation level. Moreover, real-time evaluations are characterized by their adaptability in providing timely and

⁸¹ Meld. St. 8. 2023-24



contextually relevant information, ensuring that evaluations are immediately applicable and facilitate continuous improvement.⁸²

To facilitate adaptability and learning, this real-time evaluation is structured into modules of shorter duration with built-in flexibility. The first of these modules is described in detail in this document.

The real-time evaluation builds on and will benefit from other ongoing studies and evaluations. The Department for Evaluation has recently conducted a rapid literature study of key corruption risks in providing aid to Ukraine and how donors like Norway can mitigate them. Similarly, the Department for Evaluation is engaged in an ongoing joint Nordic evaluation of contributions to trust funds where the Ukraine Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction multi-donor trust fund is one of the case study analyses. Moreover, the internal audit and investigations unit in Norad

is conducting an audit of Norad's management of Norway's civilian support to Ukraine. Lessons and findings from all these processes will be considered for this real-time evaluation.

Overall purpose

The primary purpose of this real-time evaluation is to foster learning and enable Norway to make informed adjustments to its civilian support to Ukraine. The evaluation aims to ensure that efforts funded from the Nansen Support Programme align effectively with the programme's overarching mandate and aid development management principles.

The primary intended user of this evaluation is Norad and in particular the Department for the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine (herein Nansen department) considering its responsibility for managing the Nansen Support Programme. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs could also potentially use

this real-time evaluation due to its role in the policy and strategic development of the Nansen Support Programme. Other potential users include the Norwegian Parliament, Norwegian civil society organisations, Ukrainian and Moldovan government institutions and organisations and other development partners engaged in Ukraine and Moldova, and the general public in Norway.

Evaluation Objective and Questions

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the systems and practices to ensure results of the ongoing Nansen Support Programme, enabling continuous improvement and enhanced results.

The evaluation will address the following questions:

- 1. To what extent has the Nansen department established appropriate and efficient systems and practices to**

⁸² For further details, see Rogers, P. (2020). Real-Time Evaluation. Monitoring and Evaluation for Adaptive Management Working Paper Series, Number 4, December. Available at:

<https://www.norad.no/en/toolspublications/publications/2021/working-paper-real-time-evaluation/>



track and analyse results of the Norwegian civilian support? What improvements can be made to these systems and practices, including the potential use of automation and innovative approaches?

- a) How well do these current systems and practices for results tracking respond to key requirements and conditions, such as Norwegian policies, Norad's frameworks, partners' own systems and practices for results tracking and the rapidly changing security landscape and challenges of the war in Ukraine?
- b) To what extent, and how, are results from partners receiving support tracked and analysed?

- c) To what extent, and how, are systematic results tracking and analysis conducted by the Nansen Support Programme at the aggregate and portfolio⁸³ levels?
- d) To what extent, and how, are systematic assessments conducted on partners' systems and plans for results and results management?
- e) How well do the current systems for result tracking capture unintended results, both positive and negative?

2. To what extent is the Nansen department following-up on reported progress and results, to ensure main challenges are addressed effectively? What improvements can be made to follow-up systems and practices, including the potential use of

automation and innovative approaches?

- f) How are the results from assessments followed up and used to influence further decisions?
- g) In what areas have there been significant deviations to expected results or high risks for lack of results, and how is the department working to address these?
- h) What routines have the department established to collaborate efficiently with partners to ensure effective follow-up of results?

The evaluation will provide tailored recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Nansen department's result management systems and practices. The recommendations will also

⁸³ A portfolio, in this context, refers to a collection of grants, interventions and initiatives that together contribute to a common set of objectives and have a common underlying logic. See Department for Evaluation

(2020). Evaluation of the Norwegian Aid Administration's Approach to Portfolio Management. Report 2 / 2020.



consider the need to manage the burden of reporting on partners, including governmental ministries and agencies. It will offer specific improvements to address identified gaps and leverage best practices, and ensure recommendations are practical and feasible within the programme's operational context.

The evaluation will attempt to facilitate conditions for learning and use by the primary intended user. This will be achieved, for example, by synchronizing the evaluation timeline with existing processes and plans from the Nansen department to the extent possible.

Scope

While the focus is real-time, the evaluation will look backwards into 2023, when the Nansen department in Norad was established and responsibilities for the management of agreements transferred to Norad. In addressing the evaluation objective and questions, the evaluation will consider various factors, including the timeline and context surrounding the transfer of the civilian part of the Nansen Support Programme to Norad.

The evaluation is geographically focused on Ukraine. Support to interventions from the Nansen Support Programme in neighboring countries, especially Moldova, will also be considered as appropriate.

The evaluation focuses exclusively on official development assistance funded through the budget of the Norwegian Foreign Affairs (*budsjettområdet 03 Internasjonal bistand*).

Approach and methodology

The evaluation will begin with identifying relevant standards and good practices on **results-based management and knowledge systems within the development aid sector**.

This includes a review of how Norad and other development agencies are managing portfolios or similar types of support, including the use of digital interfaces, and identifying good practices from those. Previous evaluations by the Department for Evaluation, evaluations nearing completion, evaluations by other development actors, and relevant academic research will be considered to identify relevant standards and good practices. Moreover, there will be a

focused analysis on how systematic assessments of partners' systems are designed and applied at Norad and other development agencies, ensuring all findings are based on proven methodologies that consider the diverse nature and type of partners.

Furthermore, the desk review may also include a sub-component to map out results-based management systems for development aid used in Ukraine, as well as international collaborative efforts on result management.

A thorough **desk review of project and programme documents** will be the cornerstone of this evaluation. This involves systematically gathering and analyzing existing documentation and reports related to Norway's civilian support to Ukraine, including minutes and reports from bilateral and multi-lateral meetings and discussions with other donors. The desk review will map the current



systems, practices, and tools (as P-Dash⁸⁴) used by the Nansen department, providing the backbone for the analysis. In addition, analyses of quantitative data sources will also be carried out as appropriate.

Interviews with Nansen department staff will be particularly important in the early stages of the real-time evaluation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the systems and practices employed. These interviews will be limited in number and take place following the desk review to clarify and expand on initial findings. **Interviews with other informants**, including other Norad staff working with Norad's portfolio approach, MFA officials, partners and subject matter experts, will be used to guide the analysis.

The evaluation will incorporate a **case study approach** to provide in-depth analysis and insights into results management of specific aspects of Norway's civilian support to Ukraine. This may involve selecting specific

funding pools, themes, and partners for detailed examination.

Automated processes, including AI-driven pipelines, might be employed for the document review and analysis of other data gathered to enhance efficiency and generate new insights. Each use will undergo a thorough assessment to ensure its rigor, validity, effectiveness and safety.

The real-time nature of the evaluation will be reflected in **periodic updates** to the methodology, examining new documents as they come in and re-evaluating the data considering new developments within Norad, the Nansen Support Programme and its partners, or in the country.

The evaluation will adhere to the evaluation quality standards and criteria, along with recognized academic and ethical principles. It will be utilization-focused, with processes designed to engage the primary intended

users to ensure that the findings are practical and applicable. Regular feedback loops with the Nansen department will be established to facilitate continuous learning and timely adjustments.

Organisation of the evaluation

The Department for Evaluation in Norad is responsible for the overall management of the evaluation. The evaluation team will report to the Department for Evaluation through the team leader. Given the nature of the evaluation and the necessity for nuanced understanding of Norad's operations and coordination with the Nansen department, the Department for Evaluation in the persons of its project leader and sparring partner is expected to actively contribute to the process and its deliverables. Stakeholders will be invited to contribute throughout the process, including by sending comments on draft deliverables and participating in stakeholder

⁸⁴ «P-dash» is a Power-BI based dashboard including grant agreements and results. The system is in development by Norad.



workshops. In addition, experts or other relevant parties may be invited to comment on reports or specific issues during the process.

Deliverables

The schedule for deliverables may be modified, contingent upon the resource availability in the Department for Evaluation and the operational capacity of the Nansen department. Stakeholder workshops will be organised for selected deliverables. These pre-determined deliverables may be complemented with alternative, more agile forms of knowledge production. This may include infographic, dynamics graphs, dashboards or chatbots.

1. A brief inception report describing, among other things, the approach and suggestions on additions to the predetermined deliverables. The inception report needs to be approved by the Department for Evaluation before proceeding further.

2. A brief note (max. 3,000 words, approx. 6 pages) on key principles and standards in results tracking and results analysis and in assessing partners' systems for results management,
3. An assessment report covering evaluation question 1 not exceeding 5,000 words (approx. 10 pages) excluding summary and annexes.
4. An assessment report covering evaluation question 2 not exceeding 5,000 words (approx. 10 pages) excluding summary and annexes.
5. A summary report covering evaluation questions 1-2 not exceeding 3,000 words (approx. 6 pages).

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