Department for Evaluation

Report 7, 2024

Assessment of Nansen Department's current system and practices for tracking, analysing and following up on results

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

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About this report

This Current Assessment note marks the second 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 results tracking, analysis and follow-up. Among other sources of information, it considers seven case studies from across the Nansen Programme and, from these various sources, draws insights about how the results management system is working overall.

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.

Carried out by Itad Ltd. in association with Chr. Michelsen Institute.

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Acnowledgement

Itad's Real-Time Evaluation (RTE) team would like to express their appreciation towards the Nansen Department and other Norwegian government stakeholders and partners who willingly gave their time in sharing insights to inform this report. Responsibility for the interpretation of their inputs rests with the RTE team alone.

Suggested citation

Department for Evaluation (2024) Assessment of Nansen Department's current system and practices for tracking, analysing and following up on results. Norad.

Department for Evaluation in Norad

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation www.norad.no/evaluation

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December 2024

ISBN: 978-82-8369-214-3

Cover photo: Espen Røst | Panorama
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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 second written deliverable, a current assessment, which examines the functionality of the Nansen Programme's results management system. Drawing on insights from case studies, interviews, and document reviews, it provides a detailed exploration of how the system is currently operating.

Oslo, 10 December 2024

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Abbreviations

CN	Caritas Norway
CoE	Council of Europe
BRIC	Building Resilience through Innovation and Collaboration
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EQ	evaluation question
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GMA	Grant Management Assistant
HAC	Humanitarian Appeals for Children
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
Norad	The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	Norwegian People’s Aid
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RBM	Results-based Management
RECTF	Renewable Energy Catalyst Trust Fund
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SURE TF	Support to Ukraine's Reconstruction and Economy Trust Fund
ToC	theory of change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPM	third-party monitoring
UHF	Ukraine Humanitarian Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
URTF	Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

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

Executive Summary

This note presents an assessment of the current systems and practices for the tracking, analysis and follow-up of results in the Nansen Civilian Support Programme for Ukraine. Against two main evaluation questions (EQ1 and EQ2) and related sub-questions (Figure 1), we reviewed: documentation about the Nansen Programme and the respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad); seven case studies broadly representative of the programme's results management practices across the range of sectors in which Norwegian funds are invested;[1] and background material on Norad's approach to programme and portfolio results management. We also undertook four workshops with Nansen Department, and additional interviews with Nansen Department, Norad leadership and the MFA, including the Norwegian Embassy in Kyiv.

Through our work we observed, at a number of levels and between Norad and MFA, a lack of shared understanding of what Nansen's results are, and what kinds of results ultimately matter most and why. The programme has not yet established or defined what results are anticipated and achievable between the five aspirational and political goals[2] set by Parliament (the first being the ambition that Ukraine can determine its own future) and used in budget documents, and the specific results negotiated and defined within individual agreements with partners. This means that it is not clear what results are expected or considered feasible at the *programme* level, how each agreement is expected to contribute to these results, and what additional non-grant interventions (such as diplomatic, knowledge and advisory inputs) are also expected to contribute to the overall results of the Nansen Programme.

Over the course of the evaluation, views about the results were divided roughly into

[1] (1) Governance/Human Rights: Council of Europe Action Plans; (2) Humanitarian (Multilateral); (3) Norwegian Strategic Partners – Caritas Norway (CN) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA); (4) Energy; (5) Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund (URTF); (6) War Insurance – Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) (7) Moldova.

[2] (Meld. St.8 [2023–2024] Nansen-programmet for Ukraina).The five goals are: (1) Ukraine can determine its own future; (2) Fiscal stability and critical societal functions are maintained; (3) Governance is improved in line with EU requirements for candidate countries; (4) Lives are saved, suffering is alleviated, and human dignity is preserved; (5) People in need have received necessary protection and assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles.

four definitions. While there is some overlap between them, they represent fundamentally different perspectives, which, in order to reach consensus, need much deeper and more collective exploration than has happened to date:

- Results are primarily about meeting urgent political goals as viewed by MFA/the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and Ukraine authorities. These may overlap with the intended results described in Nansen partner agreements, but not all the time. The political (not developmental) imperative comes first when deciding whether or not to act and invest.

- Results are primarily concerned with the delivery of planned results at output level, as described in agreements: goods, services, products or processes that either happen or do not happen, and can be aggregated to form a 'sum of the parts' for Nansen.

- Results are primarily concerned with the medium- and longer-term effects (or outcomes) of different outputs delivered: these effects may be positive or negative, or as yet unclear. Here, the focus is on the extent to which Nansen is 'greater or less than the sum of its parts'.

- Results need to be defined and assessed differently for Nansen because of the unusually close MFA/the office of the Prime Minister (OPM) governance and decision-making, and the circumscribed advisory role for Norad. Results need to focus on the effect of Norad's role in MFA decision-making in relation to Nansen investments and engagements, and what difference this effect then contributes to the quality of results for people, processes, goods and services on the ground.

Despite the programme being so closely governed by MFA and OPM, and operating in such a dynamic and dangerous context, consensus is yet to be reached about the results Norad itself can reasonably be held accountable for in managing the Nansen Programme. This affects the ability of both MFA and Norad to establish a shared approach to investigating and understanding the immediate, medium- and longer-term effects (intended *and* unintended) of investing massive amounts of money in the country during a devastating war of considerable geopolitical complexity.

Our conclusions report against the evaluation framework at three levels: (1) results management of individual agreements/sectors; (2) results management of 'whole of programme'; and (3) the way Nansen Department is currently responding to gaps in the current system at both levels of results management.

Level One: Individual agreements/sectors

As illustrated across the case studies, the dominant formal system for tracking results used by Nansen Programme multilateral partners is inadequate for a rapidly evolving context like Ukraine. The dominant MFA/Norad system, described through the Grant Management Assistant (GMA), reinforces this approach through a results management cycle that places most emphasis on the process leading up to fund disbursement.

Nansen Department, within its available resources and current limitations, and through its professionalism and abiding quality of curiosity, has attempted to go above and beyond these limitations. It has used different channels to assess, track, analyse and follow up on results at the level of individual agreements and partners in specific sectors.

In the space of 12 months, this effort has helped Nansen Department to establish its knowledge of aid within these agreements and specific sectors. This has helped to grow its credibility with MFA (and the embassies) with whom it has established productive relationships with increasing evidence of collaborative follow-up on results through individual grants.

Part of Nansen Department's achievement lies in managing to operate, even at a distance from Ukraine, an informal system of information gathering to compensate for the limitations of the formal results-tracking systems. This has been made possible through exemplary relationship management modelled from the top of the department; but it means that Nansen Department is effectively operating a time-consuming dual system. The necessity of using informal mechanisms contributes to a lack of consistency in how its staff engage with different partners, and to a lack of documentation in relation to this aspect of their results management efforts.

Building on efforts already made by Nansen Department, there is a need for improvement in terms of achieving more timely reporting by partners on output delivery, through structured mechanisms that are less reliant on Nansen Department having to invest in a parallel informal system.

Substantial improvement is needed in the tracking of outcome-level change (positive and negative) through individual agreements. This is a critical aspect of risk management, requiring up-to-date knowledge of and insight into how the investment of large sums of money is affecting power relationships between different actors in specific sectors and around particular interventions (such as energy, civil society and political parties). The extent that Norad can achieve this through its current reliance on the results management systems of multilateral partners is doubtful, not least because some of those organisations are now embedded in the Ukraine system.

Level Two: The 'portfolio' and wider context

Although called a 'programme' and sharing some commonalities with other Norad portfolios (such as the requirement for strategic goals to which individual agreements are expected to contribute), the Nansen Programme is unlike other Norad programmes or thematic portfolios that are focused on a specific issue such as marine litter or tax for development. This ambiguous identity affects the way in which results management of the Nansen Programme is being interpreted by different internal stakeholders, how people are being deployed and where, what practices and routines are prioritised and documented, and what gaps have emerged in the overall system.

Partly because of the lack of consensus about Nansen's 'whole of programme' results, and lack of requisite capacity and access to up-to-date knowledge, Nansen Department is not yet in a position to define, assess, track, analyse and follow up on results, intended or otherwise, at the portfolio level.

Overall, Nansen Department is not yet able to respond fully to the varying (and in some cases contradictory) requirements for results management of the government of Norway, Norad, partners (with their own results management systems and governance) and the rapidly changing security landscape of Ukraine.

This will not be solved simply by partners producing better reporting on agreement-level results (although this would help to some degree). Nor will it be addressed through crude aggregation of reported results across partners (although this might provide useful input to a discussion about defining portfolio priorities). The issue is more about the nature of the results defined at portfolio level, how these are negotiated and agreed between MFA and the Nansen Department, and what capacities the Nansen Department has available to expand its understanding and application of a broader approach to results management at this level.

Level Three: Nansen Department responses and constraints

Nansen Department is already aware of the current limitations of its results management systems, at the level of both individual agreements and 'whole of programme'. We found evidence of a number of initiatives by individuals and groups trying to tackle these, ranging from an outcome-based budget template (for NGO partners), finding ways to shorten parts of the grant-making processes, attempts at a portfolio-level theory of change (ToC), plans to curate insight on risk for each agreement against key indicators (actors, sectors and value chains), and examples of where some parts of the portfolio are being analysed together (for example, the Kakhovka dam response) or where an integrated approach is planned (the Moldova agreements).

A number of these initiatives provide potential building blocks for a more complete and joined-up approach to results management of Nansen Programme as a portfolio.

Ultimately, however, the momentum required to sustain these initiatives is stymied by the ever-growing burden of caseload management, and the absence of a single coherent and agreed strategy for managing 'whole of programme' results for what is understood to be a political programme. Gap-filling efforts are piecemeal and tend to rely on individual or small group efforts, rather than being a collective process with dedicated capacity.

Tools that are intended to support 'whole of programme' learning and evidence, risk management and portfolio results aggregation have either not yet proved themselves sufficiently useful for the Nansen Department, and/or there is too little bandwidth for Nansen Department to make use of them.

While the recently uploaded stories of results provide useful insights, we were struck by the lack of dynamic and up-to-date reporting to the Norwegian public on the Norad website for Nansen, and the absence of a 'big picture' about how money is being allocated and to which organisations.

Among other comparable large-scale Ukraine programmes managed by donor aid agencies and reviewed as part of this evaluation, the Nansen Department is an outlier in having:

- no presence on the ground in Ukraine;
- no external support, such as third-party monitoring or political economy facility;
- fewer dedicated staff;
- no staff in specialisms that are needed for a programme of this complexity: programme administration, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and proactive communications.

We understand that Nansen Department has the option to draw on other Norad administrative, technical and advisory support to assist in their overall workload. The recent internal audit notes that there has been limited uptake of these.[3] This should come as no surprise. Tasking people from outside a department to take on specific roles and responsibilities for such a complex programme takes time and effort on the part of busy senior advisors – all of whom are currently consumed by the day-to-day demands of Nansen caseload management.

[3] R2024-03 Forvaltning av Nansen-programmet: Organisering, risikostyring og informasjonssikkerhet Internrevisjonsrapport. Utgitt: 24 oktober 2024.

We note that a number of our findings overlap with those identified in the internal audit of October 2024, in particular the need to: clarify structure, responsibilities, reporting lines and decision-making (within Nansen, and between Norad and MFA) as the portfolio grows; monitor staff workloads and ensure sufficient capacity to maintain governance quality; systematise risk and control measures at the portfolio and department levels; and use more targeted tools and routines to monitor progress, risks, use of funds and results.

The remainder of this report sets out our approach to the current assessment, including the purpose, our methods and limitations. We present findings at two levels: 'whole of programme' and individual agreements. The report closes with main conclusions. The seven case studies are included at Annex 3.

The task, method and limitations

Evaluation questions. As part of the Real-Time Evaluation (RTE), we sought to assess the current systems and practices for the tracking, analysis and follow-up of results, with a view to addressing the first part of evaluation questions (EQ) 1 and 2, set out below.

Methods. Through the evaluation, we have reviewed and analysed a range of information and knowledge sources:

a) documentation about the Nansen Programme, its management model and the respective responsibilities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Norad;
b) the seven case studies, which have provided a broadly representative sample of the programme results management practices, and involved interviews with those most engaged in day-to-day grant management as well as those responsible for financial control and providing anti-corruption risk assessment support;
c) background material on Norad's approach to results management, including the increasing emphasis on knowledge of aid and portfolio results management; and
d) additional interviews conducted with Nansen Department leadership, Norad leadership, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), including the Norwegian Embassy Kyiv.

Process. Our deliberations have also benefited from the comparative research carried out across four other donor aid agencies working in Ukraine; and periodic workshops with Nansen Department. This comprised two workshops during inception; a validation workshop for the comparative research and another for the case studies; and one sense-making workshop towards the end of the process, which included a participant from MFA.

Figure 1: Nansen Programme Evaluation Framework

EQ1	**To what extent has the Nansen department established appropriate and efficient systems and practices to track and analyse results of the Norwegian civilian support?** a) How are systematic assessments conducted on partner's systems and plans for results and results management? b) How are results from partners receiving support tracked and analysed? c) How are systematic results tracking and analysis conducted by the Nansen Support Programme at the aggregate and portfolio levels? d) How well do the current systems for result tracking capture unintended results, both positive and negative? e) How well do these current systems and practices for results tracking respond to key requirements and conditions, such as Norwegian policies, Norad's frameworks, partner's own systems and practices for results tracking and the rapidly changing security landscape and challenges of the war in Ukraine?	What improvements can be made to these systems and practices, including the potential use of automation and innovation approaches?
EQ2	**To what extent is the Nansen department following-up on reported progress and results, to ensure main challenges are addressed effectively?** a) How are the results from assessments followed up and used to influence further decision? b) 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? c) What routines have the department established to collaborate efficiently with partners to ensure effective follow-up of results? d) How effectively does the department collaborate with MFA and Embassies to follow-up on partners results and strategies?	What improvements can be made to follow-up systems and practices, including the potential use of automation and innovative approaches?

In view of the significant proportion of evaluation time spent on developing the set of seven case studies, we provide more detail here on how these were undertaken.

a) The case study sample was selected based on the Nansen Department recommendations, an initial review of agreement documentation, and discussions with the Department for Evaluation, informed by the sampling rationale proposed by our team and detailed in Box 1.

b) Each case study was informed by a review of available documentation related to each agreement, plus an interview with at least one Nansen Department staff member familiar with the relevant agreement(s). In total, we reviewed of 835 documents and conducted an initial six interviews to inform the draft case studies. Data was collated against our Evaluation Assessment Framework (included in Annex 1), and then analysed to inform the development of a set of key findings under each EQ.

c) The complexity of each of the case studies proposed by the Nansen Department (multiple agreements and sheer quantity of documentation), and the short timeframe available to us, meant that there was only time to conduct one interview per case study (with one of those interviews covering multiple case studies). Given these constraints, each case study represents a rapid, light-touch review of the current results management systems and practices agreements, rather than an in-depth assessment. Wherever possible, cross-source triangulation has been applied, although in some cases, case study findings rely on a single source (e.g. a reflection from an interview). Where this is the case, this has been indicated.

d) Once the case studies were drafted, the RTE team met to make sense of the complete set and reflect on what they

Box 1: Sampling rationale for cases

- A range of diverse partners: a higher proportion of multilateral (because these predominate in the portfolio and reflect the highest spend) partners, but also Norwegian Strategic Partners, who are part of and influence the domestic context for Nansen.
- Mostly high-value agreements: but with the inclusion of smaller agreements/partners where there is a compelling reason (for example, where a smaller Agreement complements a bigger investment or where a cluster of smaller agreements adds disproportionate value to the Nansen Programme).
- Case studies distributed across the three main strategic areas (as defined by Nansen Department structure): Humanitarian; Governance and Human Rights; and Reconstruction – achieving good coverage across sectors and sub-sectors, but without trying to cover all.
- At least one case study to cover Moldova: with potential to look at the Moldova 'sub-programme' as a whole because of its distinctive trajectory compared with Ukraine (including relationship with Embassy in Chișinău).
- Range of Nansen Department case managers: to ensure that we understand how different partners and sectors affect how much room for manoeuvre there is for different case managers.

show about how results management is working in the Nansen Programme. A set of emerging themes were identified for discussion in a hybrid validation workshop with the Nansen Department, held on Monday 28 October 2024. During the workshop, we presented key takeaways from each case study, and Nansen Department staff provided their feedback on the case studies as well as some of the emerging themes.

e) Following the workshop, each case study was updated based on feedback received both during the workshop and via email to correct any factual inaccuracies and account for additional insights shared by the Nansen Department. Two additional interviews were also conducted to support further refinement of two of the case studies (a list of interviewees is included in Annex 2). Furthermore, to gather additional evidence on current programme-level systems and process, and support the further development of cross-case study themes, we conducted additional interviews with the Nansen Department leadership and the MFA (Norwegian Embassy Kyiv).

f) In parallel with the case studies, workshops and interviews took place with Nansen Department, Norad leadership, MFA and the Embassy in Kyiv. An additional documentation review was also undertaken.

Limitations. While the evaluation framework for the case studies sought information on the extent to which results at agreement level were being aggregated at portfolio level, only limited evidence emerged against this question. With hindsight, it may have been preferable to use some of the time on case study development to focus more on how cross-programme processes for results management were working. In the process of selecting case studies, however, it was considered important by the Nansen Department that all major agreements were covered. This has allowed the evaluation to reach fairly robust conclusions about results management at the level where most money is being spent; and these findings do offer important insights about where there are current gaps in portfolio results management.

Findings

***This section considers findings about results management at two levels: 'whole of programme' and individual agreements/sectors**. Included within these is evidence of where we have observed efforts by individuals or groups within the Nansen Department to address the gaps that they have identified themselves. We also refer to the recent internal audit (October 2024), where our findings overlap.*

Photo: Espen Røst | Panorama

Results at the level of 'whole of programme'

This section provides background on Nansen at the level of 'whole of programme' and forms part of our assessment against these questions in the Evaluation Framework:

- EQ1 c): How are systematic results tracking and analysis conducted by Nansen Department at the aggregate and portfolio levels? and

- EQ1 e) How well do current systems and practices respond to key requirements and conditions such as Norway's 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?

Overview of Nansen Programme

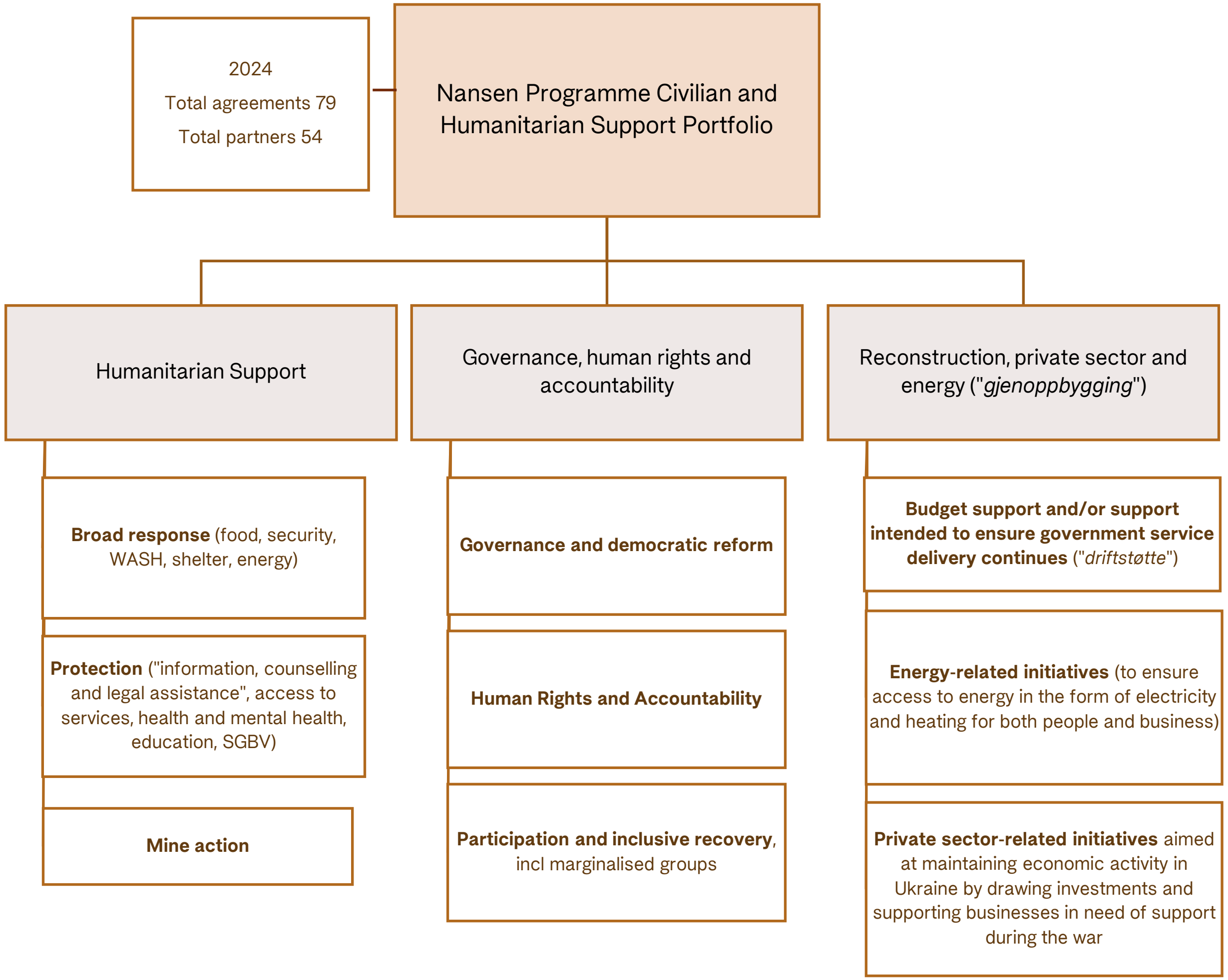
The Nansen Programme for Civilian and Humanitarian Support is currently presented by the Nansen Department as a multi-sectoral programme with three pillars. These pillars are Humanitarian Support; Governance, Human Rights and Accountability; and Reconstruction, Private Sector and Energy, as reflected in Figure 2. (This diagram was developed by the evaluation team for the Inception Report.)

This diagram also reflects the way in which Nansen Department is organised to manage the results of the programme. Case managers, working individually and in groups under each pillar, manage partnerships and agreements, based on investment decisions made by MFA. Over time, the Nansen Department has moved from inheriting a set of agreements already underway, to a process of collaboration with MFA on the negotiation and content of a new round of agreements, as well as follow-up of existing ones. The work of the case managers is complemented by a financial controller, anti-corruption advisor, legal advisor and lead for 'whole of programme' results (deputy head of department).

Figure 2: The Nansen Programme for Civilian and Humanitarian support

- The Nansen support programme aims to help Ukraine decide its own future, protect its territory and population from Russian attacks, maintain critical societal functions and reduce human suffering. Further, the Programme shall also help to rebuild a safe and free Ukraine

- Ukrainian needs form the basis for the Norwegian support, which is coordinated with the Ukrainian government and international partners. The civilian and humanitarian support is administrated by Norad, and channelled predominantely through agreements with established, internationally recognised organisations with a documented ability to deliver, good capacity and solid control systems.



Presentation based on Nansen Department practice

Figure 2 continues on following page

Ukraine	Moldova*
Total amount for Ukraine:** Kr 21 677 745 157	**Total amount for Moldova**:** Kr 1 538 966 784
Nansen partners in Ukraine	**Nansen partners in Moldova**
Eurocontrol - The European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation	Caritas Norge
FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	EBRD - European Bank for
Flyktninghjelpen	Reconstruction and Development
Forsvarsdepartementet	Flyktninghjelpen
Geneva Call	IOM - International Organisation for Migration
Helse- og omsorgsdepartementet	Kirkens Nødhjelp
IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency	Norges Røde Kors
IBRD - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	Statens Kartverk
ICMP - International Commission on Missing Persons	UNDP
IDA - International Development Association	UNFPA - UN Population Fund
IOM - International Organisation for Migration	UNHCR - UN Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
Kirkens Nødhjelp	UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
MIGA - Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency	WFP - World Food Programme
MPTF Office - Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office	WHO - World Health Organization
NEFCO - Nordic Environment Finance Corporation	World Bank
Norges Røde Kors	
Norwegian - Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce	
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	
OHCHR – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights	
Redd Barna Norge	
SSB - Statistisk Sentralbyrå	
The European Wergeland Centre	
The HALO Trust	
UN Women	
UNDP - UN Development Programme	
UNFPA - UN Population Fund	
UNHCR - UN Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees	
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund	
UNOCHA - UN Office of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs	
WFP - World Food Programme	
WHO - World Health Organization	

*The Moldova Portfolio is cross-cutting and thematically relevant to all categories.
Humanitarian Support to Moldova is managed under the humanitarian portfolio, whereas long term support to Moldova is placed under the reconstruction portfolio for practical purpose. However, many of the agreements are thematically within the area of the governance portfolio (education, media, civil society, gender equality). The programme strategic approach aims to strengthen this cross-sectoral approach for Moldova going forward.

** The areas for intervention for civilian and humanitarian support for Nansen Programme are divided into Humanitarian support, governance, human rights and accountability, and Reconstruction, private sector and energy based on Nansen Programme team usually presents the programme. However, these categories may be presented diversely in the Nansen Programme White Paper accessible at [Notify. st. 8 (2023-2024) Regjeringen.no]

*** Total amounts were provided by the Nansen Programme team and are based on the sum of actual, registered and planned amounts for the year 2022-2024.

Nansen Department's size and co-location of most staff has helped establish a strong working culture capable of assuming a huge caseload responsibility very quickly. This culture is one that has been helped in part by Nansen Department being a relatively small team of people in Oslo, and by the personal motivation (shared across staff) to contribute to the resilience and recovery of Ukraine. This has worked well for the process of shifting responsibility for Nansen Programme from MFA to Norad – allowing time for staff to build up their knowledge of aid, of the operational partners and of the different sectors in which very large investments are being made.

A programme, a portfolio or something else?

The Nansen Programme is unlike other Norad programmes or thematic portfolios focused on a specific issue such as marine litter or tax for development. This ambiguous identity affects the way in which results management of Nansen Programme is being interpreted by different internal stakeholders, how people are being deployed and where, what practices and routines are prioritised, and what gaps have emerged in the overall system.

A portfolio is, generally speaking, a collection of interventions and investments brought together usually by theme, or geography, or both – to serve a higher purpose. These interventions are often complemented by other smaller activities and non-grant-based interventions such as diplomatic activity, risk management and both internal and external learning and advisory processes to support ongoing adaptation and risk mitigation. Simply aggregating results across a cluster of agreements does not, therefore, create a portfolio – although there can be very good portfolio reasons for wanting to aggregate certain kinds of results to understand better the sum of investments, or some of the parts of the overall investment.[4]

The Nansen Programme is currently not configured as a portfolio of any kind. Beyond the five aspirational and political goals set by Parliament,[5] which starts with the ambition for Ukraine to decide its own future, there is no consensus about 'whole of programme' results, or the purposes that could be served by attempting to aggregate results across individual agreements beyond

[4] For example, it can be useful to establish: how many women and men have been reached directly or indirectly through a combination of investments in a given time period and geographical areas; what different types of capacity-building approaches have been tried across a portfolio; or how much land has been restored to productive use through a combination of interventions.

[5] a. Ukraine can determine its own future; b. Fiscal stability and critical societal functions are maintained; c. Governance is improved in line with EU requirements for candidate countries; d. Lives are saved, suffering is alleviated, and human dignity is preserved; e. People in need have received necessary protection and assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles. (Meld. St.8 [2023–2024] Nansen-programmet for Ukraina).

being able to attach sums of money to claimed achievements.[6]

The emerging Norad portfolio management system provides a five-step process[7] for establishing a portfolio with a few commonalities with the Nansen Programme. These include the need to assess whether each element of the programme aligns with strategic goals and the role of Norad to provide professional advice to MFA on this. Portfolio-level strategic goals are intended to guide programmes and projects within a portfolio; and programmes and projects are meant to contribute to these goals. Development of a knowledge plan is also a common expectation across Norad portfolios.

Nevertheless, Norad thematic portfolios operate very differently to the Nansen Programme. The Norad version of a portfolio gives scope for devolved decision-making to Norad within an agreed framework with MFA, and the potential to set development objectives based on more deliberative theories of change (ToC), which can be tested and adjusted in slower time. On the other hand, with Nansen Programme there is much closer and more detailed governance and decision-making exerted by MFA and OPM, often working to very rapid timescales in terms of requesting Norad professional advice. The five aspirational and political goals used in the budget documents are currently the *de facto* 'strategic goals' for Nansen Programme.

Nansen's uniqueness

From almost any angle, therefore, Nansen Programme is a unique case for Norway, suggesting that it needs an approach to results management that can accommodate this uniqueness while remaining rooted in Norad. Its singularity is defined by the political nature of its existence and ambitions; its detailed governance by MFA and the OPM; the extraordinary scale of investments across multiple sectors and actors, managed by Norad; the context of a fast-moving theatre of direct and proxy war between opposing geopolitical forces and alliances, contending with daily shifts at the front lines; and its connection to the Norwegian public. It is for these reasons that the term 'superportfolio' emerged during the

[6] This, of course, can be useful for public communications purposes but such reporting of results is crude and has limited reliability unless the same methods for identifying and verifying results can be guaranteed for all investments included in the aggregation exercise.

[7] The Norad portfolio management five-step approach: (1) Setting and refining portfolio objectives & strategy (2) Developing and refining portfolio approach to Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (3) Selecting grants and agreements which align with portfolio objectives (4) Managing and coordinating grants/interventions towards portfolio objectives (5) Collecting, analysing and using evidence to inform adaptations to portfolio implementation and strategy. Taken from: *Evaluation of Norwegian Aid Administration's Approach to Portfolio Management*, Itad, November 2024.

evaluation workshops as a more suitable moniker for Nansen.

The results management priorities and principles established by the Norwegian government and Parliament are much broader than MFA/Norad's Grant Management Assistant (GMA) requirements, which currently define the formal Nansen results management system. The weight of GMA emphasis is on the process leading up to disbursement of funds. By contrast, the broader expectations of results management from government and Parliament include: a well-grounded understanding of context to inform priority-setting; evaluative activities to assess appropriateness of investments (within and across sectors); the use of performance information and risk assessment to improve decision-making at different levels, not just tracking performance against targets, but also informing initial allocations and other decisions; and quality assurance to cover all efforts, including reporting and learning.[8]

The Nansen Department's heavy focus on agreement approval processes over the last year is a reflection of the drive to grow the programme quickly, but it is not certain that this pressure will abate in the year ahead. While it may be possible for Nansen Department to shift some of its efforts to later stages in a broader results management cycle, the likely continued requests for immediate information, the uptick in budget requiring renewed or extended agreements, and the absence of a 'whole of programme' approach to results management may hamper this progression. The experience of a more deliberative approach to Nansen investments in Moldova may offer some useful internal learning in terms of Ukraine; but Moldova is not currently as affected by the pressures of war, and staff working on the country are therefore more likely to have some space for deliberation.

Comparative capacity for results management

Among the aid agencies reviewed as part of this evaluation, Norad is an outlier in having no presence on the ground in Ukraine, and staffing levels that appear lower than comparable aid agencies like Sida. Nansen Department is also mindful of pressures on the Embassy in Kyiv, while being unable to gain insight from classified MFA communication. It is trying to manage results through a very long delivery chain of actors, with each actor in this chain influenced by different incentives with regard to what they feel safe to report on, and what they do not. MFA interviewees also emphasised the

[8] This issue is covered in more detail under the first report of this Real-Time Evaluation: *Rapid comparative review of results management principles & 'best fit' approaches for Ukraine programming*, November 2024. Section C compares the scope of results management expectations of the Nansen Programme against the GMA cycle and a broader results management cycle. (p 9)

importance of Nansen Department being 'on the ground' in Ukraine and being part of more continuous conversations – for example, in relation to the Ukraine Reform agenda.

The Nansen Department is hampered by a lack of dedicated capacity in a number of key areas relevant for 'whole of programme' results management; this includes programme administration, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), and proactive communications. More expensive senior staff time is being used on administrative tasks, eating into their time for tasks that cannot easily be delegated to others. Senior staff who try to lead on specific areas (such as an evaluation) have little bandwidth to engage with it fully. While automation and AI are seen as potential solutions for reducing some of the workload currently driven by the vast quantity of documentation Nansen Department is dealing with, such tools need human capability in place to understand their potential and risks, to work out the optimal way of using them, and to champion their application alongside other staff who may be less comfortable or convinced.

Aggregating results across multiple agreements to develop a cross-programme picture of Nansen results was cited by multiple case studies interviewees as a key challenge confronting them and one for which they have yet to identify an appropriate solution. P-Dash did not appear to have been embraced in any of the cases examined, with interviewees tending to see its use as entailing an overburdensome manual process. In the view of a number of case managers, the system is not well suited to communicating the results of complex agreements where assessment seeks to analyse both quantitative and qualitative results, and the extent to which partners' interventions have actually contributed to the claimed results.

Three instruments with the potential to support a 'whole of programme' approach to results management have not yet established their utility for Nansen. This is our assessment of each:

a) The **Knowledge, Evaluation and Learning (KEL) Plan** is a commitment in the white paper for the Nansen Programme, intended as a tool to ensure continuous learning. (Knowledge plans are also a requirement for Norad portfolios.) Work on KEL started as part of the transfer of the Nansen Programme from MFA to Norad. The document articulates important learning questions (including on corruption and comparative experience from other conflicts), with plans to draw on internal and external research. Reporting against this plan thus far suggests that the emphasis is on the production of documents (in order to meet target deliverables) rather than on the processes for deep learning to inform strategic decision-making, and what effect this learning has had on Nansen Department's professional advice to MFA. From interviews with MFA and with Nansen Department, we drew the conclusion that this KEL Plan is not yet in a form that works well for either party because it is presented as a set of deliverables rather than a strategy to support learning. In the absence of strong and shared ownership of the KEL by MFA and Nansen Department, and without the headspace and routines to deliberate on key learning questions, it is unlikely to contribute to the robust and continuous learning culture it was intended to support. We are informed that KEL has now been replaced by a lighter annual plan; we note that this is not the same as a strategy for learning.

b) The **Risk Management Framework** for Nansen Programme is nearing completion. An earlier draft reviewed under this evaluation suggests that despite the scope for wider portfolio-level risk assessment (and mitigation), the focus is primarily on risks associated with individual grants. These are, of course, extremely important given the scale of investment in individual agreements. But a key aspect of 'whole of programme' risk management is to maintain an overall and up-to-date understanding about how different interventions impact each other. At this stage, Nansen Department's capacity and access to useful political economy analysis limits its scope for utilising a risk framework in a more dynamic manner – which can both monitor and respond to real-time risks.

c) The **Portfolio Dashboard, or 'P-Dash'** as it is widely referred to, is a Norad Microsoft Power-Bi-based tool intended to support the analysis and communication of results and financial spending across different agreements within Norad portfolios. While most Nansen Department staff see value in achieving this kind of analysis, views differ about the extent to which the effort involved in extracting and inputting data manually is worth the cost of setting aside other tasks – especially when Nansen Department has no administrative support and lacks a clear articulation of the kinds of 'whole of programme' results it would like to aggregate. In view of the intention to replace P-Dash within two years, we question the value of trying to get the most complex of all of Norad's portfolios onto P-Dash – especially as Nansen Programme enters a new era of both political and military hiatus. There are likely to be more cost-effective ways of achieving an aggregated picture of results.

We also note the current limitations of the Nansen public website, where much of the information is out of date, but for a few periodically updated stories about results. This is in contrast to a number of other donor aid agencies whose websites provide an accessible overview of spend and partners, and more regular updates and news.

Two findings from the internal audit overlap with our findings at the level of 'whole of programme'. The report identifies the need to:

- monitor staff workloads and ensure sufficient capacity for the growing number of agreements and partners to maintain governance quality;
- systematise risk and control measures at the portfolio and department levels and for the department to work holistically, systematically and strategically.

Staff within the Nansen Department are aware, to different degrees, of the current limitations in the definition, tracking, analysis and follow-up of 'whole of programme' results, and some are taking initiatives to address this.

Examples include:

- parts of the portfolio are being analysed together, such as the humanitarian results from the Kakhovka dam response, and a more integrated overview of the Moldova agreements;
- a proposal has been drafted to bring on board an intern to complete the manual data entry required for P-Dash;
- an attempt has been made at developing a visual portfolio-level ToC to provide a 'big picture' of the portfolio under the five aspirational and political goals set by Parliament.

Results at the level of agreement/sector

In this section we present headline findings from the seven case studies. *The complete set of case studies is available at Annex 3; each includes an overview of the agreement(s) examined, our methods and data sources, and then detailed findings under EQ1 and EQ2, and sub-questions. This summary responds to multiple sub-questions focused on individual agreements.*

Across all of the case studies, staff responsible for managing the relevant agreements demonstrated significant expertise on, and commitment to, grant-based results management. There was strong evidence of significant effort made by everyone to apply GMA guidance conscientiously. This was most evident at the design/agreement phase, where proposals, design documents and draft agreements were scrutinised thoroughly to ensure partners' planned results, results monitoring and reporting systems/processes satisfied minimum Norad standards. Formal results reporting and follow-up processes are clearly defined in all agreement documents.

Attention is also paid to the requirement that all agreements meet the fiscal requirements of the Ministry of Finance;[9] in most cases, assessment is light touch. Staff make some kind of assessment of what fiscal management policies/systems partners have in place for each agreement, in line with the GMA guidelines. This appears to be very light touch in most cases, although for new partners (e.g. EBRD), there is evidence that there is a more detailed interrogation (for example, the decision documents reference specific policies/systems that the partner has in place). When the focus is a familiar partner, staff tend to draw on past experience of working with the partner, combined with any available external assessments (for example by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network) as a basis for reaching a judgement on the appropriateness of systems in place and any issues worthy of highlight. The thoroughness of the

[9] Regulations and Provisions of Financial Management in Central Government (latest update 2021), Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management.

assessment does not seem to differ depending on whether the partner is a multilateral or civil society partner.

The degree to which these efforts and scrutiny have substantially influenced partner approaches to results tracking and financial and narrative reporting appears in most cases fairly minimal. For many cases (particularly for multilateral partners) there was an acceptance from Nansen staff that there is only limited ability to influence partner approaches. This is evident in the variable quality of design, monitoring and reporting tools (e.g. ToC, Results Frameworks, Annual Reports and formal follow-up mechanisms, such as annual meetings) across the cases. In many cases, staff interviewed reported that these formal systems and processes were inadequate in terms of providing them with a detailed, up-to-date understanding of progress – limiting scope for follow-up.

In the Ukraine context, an emphasis on up-front planning precision may be of limited value given the volatility of the context and likely need to adapt to that once implementation begins. This reality tends to be acknowledged by Nansen Department with a degree of comfort: multilaterals are viewed as Norway's preferred type of partner, in part because their existing principles and systems are in line with Norway's own. However, the degree of trust in the existing systems of multilateral partners may arguably be misplaced in some cases. Evidence from other contexts suggests that the model of multilaterals can shield donors from direct responsibility for episodes of financial corruption, but the multilaterals themselves are not immune, especially when they have been embedded in a specific context for a number of years.[10]

In response to widespread shortcomings of these formal mechanisms, frequent evidence was found across the case studies, of Nansen Department staff utilising more informal channels to monitor and follow up on results. This included, for example, email correspondence to probe for additional detail on formal reporting, requests for additional meetings with partners, and engagement with project teams to interrogate progress related to specific projects within broader interventions.

Excellent relationship management was evident across the case studies, with Nansen Department staff invariably maintaining positive working relations with partners, drawing on support from Norwegian colleagues in MFA and/or

[10] The recent example of the UN Office for Special Projects is a case in point, reported in Devex, among many other sources. https://www.devex.com/news/devexplains-an-inside-look-at-the-unops-scandal-103265

embassies, and engaging with likeminded donors to exert influence over partner approaches. This has helped support results tracking and follow-up beyond formal systems. These positive relationships, combined with the levering of support, has led to partners being more responsive than might otherwise be expected to additional requests for information outside formal channels.

There are two notable gaps in formal results management systems across the agreements: up-to-date and nuanced monitoring of the context, and tracking of unintended results. There was little, if any, explicit system to track unintended results (either positive or negative), or even any formal acknowledgement in design or reporting documents of the potential for such results. Context analysis presented in design documents (e.g. proposals, decision documents), tended to be fairly high level and overly general. This was especially surprising for some of the complex multi-sector funds examined in the case studies. In addition, the typical infrequency of formal reporting (annual for most multilaterals) means that these formal systems are ill-suited to enabling Nansen Department to maintain an adequate understanding of contextual developments in relation to specific agreements.

Nansen Department may be overlooking opportunities to use Norway's considerable financial leverage to insist that multilaterals pay more attention to the unintended effects of huge sums of Norwegian public funding. A more thorough context-specific political economy analysis of each multilateral partner could help identify key areas in which there may be potential to exert influence within the operational context. Nansen Department could then seek to influence in collaboration internally with MFA and the Embassy, and externally with likeminded donors. This could involve working through existing arenas, that is, Norway's position on the organisation's board, as well as through other channels (such as Ukrainian partners).

Some of our findings resonate with those identified in the internal audit, including these areas requiring improvement as the number of agreements continues to rise.

The report describes the need for:

- greater clarity of structure, responsibilities, reporting lines and decision-making (within Nansen, and between Norad and MFA) to ensure that routines and procedures are well documented and that effective case processing is maintained as the portfolio grows;

- strengthened and more targeted tools and routines to monitor progress, risks, use of funds, and results.

A number of initiatives are being tried by Nansen Department to tackle problems in results management at agreement level.

These include:

- **an outcome-based budget template**, which may be used to help NGO partners focus beyond output delivery, as multilaterals would be unable to change their own budgeting templates;

- **additional and less formal meetings** incorporated into agreements with partners to improve the quality of learning exchange;

- **sharing summary information across agreements** to shorten some of the GMA processing time for each case manager;

- **co-developing with communications personnel in MFA/OPM periodic 'results' stories** for the Nansen public website;

- **growing investments in alternatives to multilaterals**, where there may be more scope for useful and localised results management approaches (Ukraine civil society and private sector);

- **planning to generate and curate from open sources insight on risk** for each agreement, focused on actors, sectors and value chains.

Conclusions

In this final section, we present our conclusions about Nansen Department's current systems and processes for defining, tracking, analysing and following up on results at the level of individual agreements and the level of whole of programme. *These findings offer reflections for further discussion as part of the development of recommendations for future improvements.*

Between Nansen Department, Norad and the MFA and OPM, there is not yet a shared understanding of what Nansen's results are, and what kinds of results ultimately matter most and why. The programme has not yet established or defined what results are anticipated between the five aspirational and political goals set by Parliament and used in budget documents, and the results negotiated and defined within individual agreements with partners (the majority of which are multilaterals).

Over the course of the evaluation, views about the results were divided roughly into four definitions. While there is some overlap between them, they represent fundamentally different perspectives. In order to reach consensus, there would need to be much deeper and more collective exploration than has happened to date:

- Results are primarily about meeting urgent political goals as viewed by MFA/OPM and Ukraine authorities. These may overlap with the intended results described in Nansen partner agreements, but not all the time. The political (not developmental) imperative comes first when deciding whether or not to act and invest.
- Results are primarily concerned with the delivery of planned results at output level, as described in agreements: goods, services, products or processes that either happen or do not happen, and can be aggregated to form a 'sum of the parts' for Nansen.
- Results are primarily concerned with the medium- and longer-term effects (or outcomes) of different outputs delivered: these effects may be positive or negative, or as yet unclear. Here, the focus is on the extent to which Nansen is 'greater or less than the sum of its parts'.

- Results need to be defined and assessed differently for Nansen because of the unusually close MFA/OPM governance and decision-making, and the circumscribed advisory role for Norad. Results need to focus on the effect of Norad's role in MFA decision-making in relation to Nansen's investments and engagements, and what difference this effect then contributes to the quality of results for people, processes, goods and services on the ground.

This means that it is not clear what results are expected or considered feasible at the *programme* level, how each agreement is expected to contribute to these results, and what additional non-grant interventions (such as diplomatic, knowledge and advisory inputs) are also expected to contribute to the overall results of the Nansen Programme. For a programme that is so closely governed by MFA and OPM, and operating in such a dynamic and dangerous context, consensus is yet to be reached about the kinds of results Norad itself can reasonably be held accountable for in managing the Nansen Programme. Nor is there yet clarity on the roles and responsibilities of MFA, OPM and Norad in relation to immediate, medium- and longer-term effects (intended and unintended) of investing massive amounts of money in a country at war.

Our conclusions are presented at three levels. Level One is an assessment of results management of individual agreements; Level Two is an assessment of results management at the level of 'whole of programme' or portfolio; and Level Three draws conclusions about the way Nansen Department is grappling with the gaps at both levels.

EQ1: To what extent has Nansen Department established appropriate and efficient systems and practices to track and analyse the results of the Norwegian civilian support?

Relevant sub-questions are: a) systematic assessments of partners' systems; and b) how partner results are tracked and analysed; d) tracking of unintended results (of individual grants); and e) response to key requirements and conditions – Norway policies, Norad frameworks, partners' own systems, rapidly changing security landscape.

EQ2: To what extent is Nansen Department following up on reported progress and results, to ensure main challenges are addressed effectively?

Sub-questions are: a) how results from assessments are followed up and used to influence further decisions; b) how significant lack of results is being addressed; c) routines for collaborating with partners to ensure follow-up; and d) collaboration with MFA and embassies to follow up partner results and strategies.

Level One: individual agreements – relating to these EQs and sub-question

a) As illustrated across the case studies, the dominant (and conventional) formal system for tracking results used by all Nansen Programme multilateral partners is inadequate for a rapidly evolving context like Ukraine. The dominant MFA/Norad system, described through the GMA, reinforces this approach via a results management cycle that places most emphasis on the process leading up to fund disbursement.

b) Nansen Department, within its available resources and current limitations, and through its professionalism and abiding quality of curiosity, appears to have gone above and beyond Norad's grant-based results management system to attempt to assess, track, analyse and follow up on results at the level of individual agreements and partners in specific sectors.

c) In the space of 12 months, this effort has helped Nansen Department to establish its knowledge of aid within these agreements and specific sectors. This has helped to grow its credibility with MFA (and the embassies) with whom it has established productive relationships, with increasing evidence being seen of collaborative follow-up on results through individual grants. The example of three-way structured engagement between Nansen Department, MFA and the embassy in the Moldova programming may offer learning in terms of how even better alignment and complementarity can be achieved on Ukraine.

d) Part of Nansen Department's achievement lies in managing to operate, even at distance, an informal system of information gathering to compensate for the limitations of the formal results tracking systems of most multilateral partners. This has been made possible through exemplary relationship management modelled from the top of the department; but it means that Nansen Department is effectively operating a time-consuming dual system, which leads to inconsistency, wasted effort and only a partial record of the results management process.

e) Building on initiatives already being tried by Nansen Department, there is a need for improvement in terms of achieving more timely reporting by partners on output delivery, through structured mechanisms that are less reliant on Nansen Department having to invest in a parallel informal system.

f) Considerable improvement is needed in the tracking of outcome-level change (positive and negative) through individual agreements. This is a critical aspect of risk management, requiring up-to-date knowledge of and insight into how the investment of large sums of money in the Ukraine context is affecting power relationships between different actors in specific sectors and around particular interventions (such as energy and civil society). The extent that Norad can achieve this through its current reliance on the systems of multilateral partners is very doubtful, not least because most of those organisations are now embedded in the Ukraine system.

Level Two: the 'portfolio' and wider context – relating to these EQ sub-questions:

EQ1 sub-questions:

c) Systematic results tracking and analysing at aggregate and portfolio level;

d) unintended results (at portfolio level);

e) response to key requirements and conditions – Norway policies, Norad frameworks, partners' own systems, rapidly changing security landscape. And assumes that these questions are also relevant for EQ2 (follow-up).

EQ2:

while none of the sub-questions refer to follow-up at portfolio level, we assume that this is of interest to Nansen Department and MFA.

a. Partly because of the lack of consensus about Nansen 'whole of programme' results, and the lack of requisite capacity and access to up-to-date knowledge, Nansen Department is not yet in a position to assess, track, analyse and follow up on results, intended or otherwise, at the portfolio level. Nor is it yet able to respond fully to the varying (and in some cases contradictory) requirements for results management of the government of Norway, Norad, Partners (with their own results management systems and governance) and the rapidly changing security landscape of Ukraine.

b. This will not be solved simply by partners producing better reporting on agreement-level results (although this would help to some degree). It is more at portfolio level and what capacities Nansen Department has available to expand its understanding and application of a broader approach to results management. In other words, how can Nansen Department make better use of the information that it can obtain from partners *and* other sources?

c. There is a significant gulf between the five Nansen aspirational and political goals, and the more specific intended results that are defined at agreement level; as noted in the case studies, the reporting on these often appears to get stuck at the output level. Bridging this gap, by articulating a more realistic and concrete *selection* of portfolio-level objectives, and the assumptions underpinning these, is a necessary starting point for better portfolio-level tracking and analysis of results. In the absence of these, current efforts to aggregate results of different agreements are a questionable use of time. We note the way that the Moldova sub-programme is increasingly being seen as a set of integrated investments, perhaps offering scope for a similar approach for Ukraine itself; at the same time, Moldova is not yet affected by direct conflict.

Level Three: Nansen Department initiatives – relates to all EQs

a. To different degrees, members of Nansen Department are aware of the current limitations of the results management systems at the level of individual agreement and 'whole of programme'. We found evidence of a number of initiatives by individuals and groups trying to tackle these.

b. Ultimately, however, the momentum required to sustain these initiatives is stymied by the ever-growing burden of caseload management, the lack of capacity and specific expertise, and the absence of a single coherent and agreed strategy for managing 'whole of programme' results. Gap-filling efforts are piecemeal and tend to rely on individual rather than collective efforts.

c. We understand that Nansen Department has the option to draw on other Norad administrative and advisory support to assist in their overall workload. The recent internal audit notes that there has been limited uptake of these.[11] This should come as no surprise. Tasking people from outside a department to take on specific roles and responsibilities for such a complex programme takes time and effort on the part of busy senior advisors – all of whom are currently consumed by the day-to-day demands of Nansen caseload management.

d. Tools that are intended to support 'whole of programme' learning and evidence (the Knowledge Plan), risk management (Risk Matrix) and portfolio results aggregation (P-Dash) have either not yet proved themselves sufficiently useful for Nansen Department, and/or there is too little bandwidth for Nansen Department to make use of them.

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[11] R2024-03 Forvaltning av Nansen-programmet: Organisering, risikostyring og informasjonssikkerhet Internrevisjonsrapport. Utgitt: 24 oktober 2024.

List of Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Assessment Framework (EAF)

Evaluation question/sub-question	Indicators	Data sources
EQ1: To what extent has the Nansen Department established appropriate and efficient systems and practices to track and analyse the 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 are systematic assessments conducted on partners' systems and plans for results and results management?	– Evidence that partner systems/plans for results management were assessed as part of tender process	Tender assessment criteria; proposal review documentation; interviews with Nansen Department
	– Evidence that Nansen Department engaged with partners during intervention design/assessment phase to discuss/review intended results and plans for results management	Meeting minutes; feedback on proposals/design documents; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
	– Evidence that partner results management systems are being periodically reviewed by Nansen Department – including alongside other co-funders	Meeting minutes; written communications; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
b) How are results from partners receiving support tracked and analysed?	– Extent to which systems and appropriate levels of capacity (aligned to Norad norms) are in place at department/programme level to track and analyse partner results	Department/programme-level results management policy and procedural documents, platforms or tools; interviews with Nansen Department (inc. caseload comparison with other Norad departments)
	– Evidence that requirements for results tracking and reporting are clearly defined in intervention contracting/design documents	Tender, contracting and intervention design documents
	– Extent to which planned results have been clearly defined at intervention design phase	Intervention design documents (e.g. theories of change, logframes, monitoring and reporting plans, etc.)
	– Evidence that partners are providing regular reporting to the Nansen Department on progress	Partner reporting; meeting minutes; interviews with Nansen Department and staff

Evaluation question/sub-question	Indicators	Data sources
EQ1: To what extent has the Nansen Department established appropriate and efficient systems and practices to track and analyse the 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?		
c) How are systematic results tracking and analysis (including of results failure) conducted by the Nansen Support Programme at the aggregate and portfolio levels?	– Extent 'portfolio' is defined and informs programme-wide results-tracking systems, and mechanisms in place for assessing failure risk in time to inform course correction	Programme/portfolio-level results management platforms/tools; interviews with Nansen Department
	– Extent to which Nansen Department are regularly drawing together intervention-level results data to develop programme/portfolio view of progress	Nansen Programme reporting, briefings, meeting minutes; interviews with Nansen Department, MFA, Department for Evaluation
d) How well do the current systems for results tracking capture unintended results, both positive and negative?	– Evidence that Nansen and partner systems have been designed to enable the tracking and reporting of unintended results	Nansen and partner monitoring platforms and tools; reporting templates and reports; intervention design documents
	– Evidence that any unintended results have been reported by partners to Nansen Department	Partner results/progress reporting; meeting minutes; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
e) How well do 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?	– Alignment of Nansen systems and practices to Norwegian government/Norad policies and guidelines	Norwegian government policy/guidelines; Nansen Department policy/procedural documentation; ongoing Norad audit and Grant Management Assistant (GMA)
	– Consistency between Nansen Department systems and practices and partner systems and practices	Nansen Department policy/procedural documentation; partner proposals; intervention design documents; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
	– Evidence that current systems and practices have been tailored/adapted to Ukrainian security context	Tender and proposal documentation; Nansen Department policy/procedural documentation; minutes from inception meetings; interviews with Nansen Department and partners; Department for Evaluation literature review on Ukraine corruption risks; interviews with subject-matter experts; external data sources, infrastructure and platforms on aid to Ukraine

Evaluation question/sub-question	Indicators	Data sources
EQ2: 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?		
a) How are the results from assessments followed up and used to influence further decisions?	- Extent to which programme/portfolio-wide systems have been established for following up on results reporting	Interviews with Nansen Department; Nansen policy/procedural documents; programme/portfolio-level results management platforms/tools
	- Extent to which any programme/portfolio-level systems are being applied systematically across all interventions	Intervention design documents; partner reporting and follow-up communications; meeting minutes; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
	- Evidence that follow-ups to reports or assessments of reports have influenced decisions. including adaptations to intervention design/implementation or future funding decisions	Intervention review/evaluation documents; re-tender documents; revised design documents; meeting minutes; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
b) 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?	- Evidence of deviation from expected results, or lack of progress towards expected results	Partner reporting; intervention theories of change and logframes; Nansen and partner monitoring platforms; intervention reviews/evaluations; interviews with Nansen Department and partners
	- Evidence that Nansen Department has identified instances where there has been deviation from expected results, or lack of progress towards expected results	Interviews with Nansen Department; meeting minutes and other communications between Nansen Department and partners
	- Action that has been taken in cases where Nansen Department has identified a deviation from expected results, or lack of progress towards expected results – and extent to which action was timely, sufficient and effective	Interviews with Nansen Department; partner reporting; revised intervention design and monitoring documents

Evaluation question/sub-question	Indicators	Data sources
EQ2: 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?		
c) What routines has the department established to collaborate efficiently with partners to ensure effective follow-up of results?	- Evidence that discussions on results are part of regular engagement between Nansen Department and partners – and also in coordination with other co-funders	Meeting minutes and other communications between partners and Nansen Department; interviews with partners
	- Evidence of routine follow-up to results reporting from partners (e.g. written comms or meetings) with focus on quality (outcome tracking), materiality, and closing the feedback loop (i.e. follow up actions agreed and monitored)	Meeting minutes and other communications between partners and Nansen Department
	- Extent to which Nansen Department has sought and responded to feedback on results management systems with partners, prioritising those where feedback can have influence	Meeting minutes and other communications between partners and Nansen Department; interviews with partners and Nansen Department
	- Feedback from partners on the degree they feel they have been appropriately supported on results management by the Nansen Department	Interviews with partners
d) How effectively does the Department collaborate with MFA and embassies to follow up on partners' results and strategies?	- Extent to which Nansen Department has been able to meet the information and insight needs of MFA – Oslo and Ukraine/Moldova?	Interviews carried out as part of case studies
	- Extent the department has been able to leverage MFA access and influence to improve delivery, coordination and results with and through partners?	Interviews carried out as part of case studies

Annex 2: List of interviews

Role	Organisation
Senior Advisor, Team Coordinator on governance, human rights and accountability	Nansen Department
Senior Advisor, Crosscutting: Knowledge, Results and Analysis	Nansen Department
Senior Advisor, Humanitarian team, Knowledge, Results, Institutional Cooperation.	Nansen Department
Senior Advisor, Coordinator: Humanitarian Team	Nansen Department
Senior Advisor, Anti-corruption	Nansen Department
Head of Humanitarian Unit	Caritas Norway
Senior Advisor, Coordinator for Reconstruction, Private Sector and Energy	Nansen Department
Senior Advisor, Trust Funds and Multilateral support	Nansen Department
Advisor, Moldova Portfolio Manager	Nansen Department
Head of Department	Nansen Department
Deputy Head of Department	Nansen Department
Counsellor	Royal Norwegian Embassy Kyiv
Director	Norad

Annex 3: Seven case studies from the Nansen Programme

This Annex presents the full case studies developed as part of the assessment of the current Nansen Programme results management system. Each case study includes an overview of the agreement(s) examined, our methods and data sources, and then detailed findings under EQ1 and EQ2.

Case study 1: Governance/Human Rights: Council of Europe Action Plans

What we looked at	Methods and sources
Case study looked at two agreements with the Council of Europe: UKR-23/0010 **Council of Europe Ukraine Action Plan**, 2023-2026, **NOK 50 million** MDA-23/0002 **Council of Europe Moldova Action Plan**, 2021-2024, **NOK 32 million** The two Action Plans are intended **to contribute to overall stability and democracy in the two countries**. They assist each country in fulfilling its obligations as a Council of Europe member state by **bringing legislation, institutions and practice further into line with Council of Europe standards in the areas of human rights, rule of law and democracy.** Both Action Plans were initially developed prior to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, but then adjusted. Norway is the **second largest donor** to the Moldova Plan (after the European Union (EU)). Norway is **one of the largest donors** to the Ukraine Plan, after Finland, Germany and the EU.	Desk review of **76 documents** related to the **two agreements** – including design and decision documents, email correspondence, progress reporting, and meeting summaries/minutes. Interview conducted with a Senior Advisor in the Nansen Department who is Team Coordinator on governance, human rights and accountability, including having oversight of the Council of Europe Action Plan agreements.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

There is limited ability to engage with the Council of Europe (CoE) at the design phase to influence intended results and approaches to results management. Under previous agreements, Norway has raised concerns about the regularity of the CoE's engagement in the design of the plan. However, CoE has pushed back on this, arguing these Plans should be exclusively nationally owned. [EQ1a]

There is no theory of change (ToC) for either Action Plan,[12] **or, as far as the Nansen Department is aware, an overarching organisational one.** Each Action Plan only sets out a broad set of objectives ('outcomes') and a detailed list of activities intended to contribute to each. The Ukraine Action Plan logframe does articulate a set of assumptions against each objective, but this remains an insufficient articulation of the intended causal pathways; it is difficult to judge whether objectives are realistic and rooted in a proper assessment of the Ukraine context. [EQ1b]

A system for results tracking and reporting is clearly defined in each agreement, consisting primarily of the submission of an annual report for each Action Plan which sets out progress against the Action Plan logframe. The logframe for each Plan is relatively comprehensive, although the Ukraine one is stronger. There is no system for capturing unintended results – documentation shows that this is an issue the Nansen Department has previously raised with CoE, although it is not clear the extent to which this has been addressed. [EQ1b]

An evaluation of the previous Ukraine Action Plan made a series of recommendations on strengthening approaches to results management.[13] The CoE appears to have taken measures to respond to some of these recommendations – borne out by the fact the logframe for the current Ukraine Action Plan is more comprehensive than that for the Moldova Plan. The interviewee reported having a sense that the Ukraine reporting is slightly stronger as a result, and this reflects the evaluation team's own observations. [EQ1a, e]

Annual reporting is lengthy but seen by the interviewee as being overly broad, making it hard for the Nansen Department to assess progress efficiently. Although the Action Plan logframe is used as a framework for reporting, this does not extend to reporting against specific indicators, making it

[12] For civil society and private sector partners, in contrast to multilateral partners, a ToC is a formal requirement for all grant applications: https://www.norad.no/en/for-partners/guides-and-tools/grants-handbook/4.-application

[13] It is unclear who conducted the evaluation, but it would appear to have been internally commissioned.

hard to scrutinise reported progress towards objectives. **Nansen Department reports having confidence in the accuracy of reported changes, but not in reported contributions of CoE to those changes**. Although the Nansen Department has requested project reporting, the CoE has continued to be reluctant to provide it. [EQ1b]

There is clear evidence from the documentation that Nansen Department along with some other donors (most notably the Swedish International Development Agency [Sida]) has at various points raised issues related to results monitoring and reporting, pushing for CoE to strengthen their approaches. The interest amongst donors on results management varies – Sida and the United Kingdom (UK) are key allies, while the EU appears less interested in engaging. There are some indications that CoE is responding to issues raised to some degree. For example, CoE has revised its Annual Report template, although it is unclear whether this will be a substantial improvement. [EQ1a]

The agreement is managed by a senior Norad advisor with an evident substantial commitment to and expertise in results management, but they have been significantly constrained by capacity limitations, given other competing commitments. They report that, until recently, they were the only Nansen staff member responsible for managing all Human Rights, Democracy and Accountability agreements, of which the Council of Europe Action Plan agreements are just two. [EQ1a, b, e]

Sida has contracted CoE to provide a consolidated report summarising progress from all Action Plans they are supporting. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the report sets out clear requirements for the structure and content of the report, in line with Sida's organisational requirements. This runs counter to the Norwegian government's policy of not requesting additional reporting from partners; this practice is viewed by Norway as being potentially less efficient, with the risk of introducing inconsistencies into results tracking and management. [EQ1a, b, d]

Given the length and detail of the CoE annual reporting, the task of consolidating this into a succinct analysis for the purpose of Nansen portfolio-level reporting is a significant challenge. The responsible Nansen team member reviews the reporting, picks out key results based on their interpretation, and shares these with MFA for use in the Annual White Paper. [EQ1c]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

Annual meetings are the key formal mechanism for discussing results but are seen by Nansen Department as overly formal and providing limited opportunity to discuss progress and results to a sufficiently nuanced and granular level. The meetings cover all Action Plans and are structured around already very broad reports for each Action Plan. [EQ2c]

Despite these constraints, there is clear evidence from the documentation that Nansen Department, as well as other donors (most notably Sida), are utilising those meetings to raise issues related to results reporting, as well as doing so as part of of ad hoc follow-up outside those formal meetings (for example, email follow-up to address questions on results which were not able to be covered in the annual meeting). Often this follow-up has related to the need to enhance reporting and/or communication of results. [EQ2c]

The Nansen Department is clearly making efforts to interrogate progress reporting and regularly follow up with requests for additional information; the Department also queries reported results where deemed necessary. For example, email records show that Nansen Department raised questions about the last Moldova annual report and how judgements on the degree of progress against individual objectives had been reached. [EQ2c]

The CoE has given the Nansen Department access to engage with the teams implementing individual Action Plan projects. According to the interviewee, this has significantly increased the Nansen Department's confidence that they have a sufficient understanding of what is being delivered and that they can access sufficient detail on the progress of specific activities when required. [EQ2c]

Norwegian delegations for the annual CoE meetings are led by MFA, but the Nansen Department has joined that delegation and engaged effectively with MFA in advance to agree on messaging. This includes messaging on reported progress, results and results management approaches. [EQ2d]

In an example of good practice, Sida has utilised their annual meeting with the CoE to pose a set of questions related to results to the Head of the CoE Country Office for each agreement in turn. Given annual reports are, according to the interviewee, largely produced by the Council of Europe Strasbourg Office, this appears to be a potentially useful avenue to enable a nuanced interrogation of progress. The questions are well structured to examine both positive progress and challenges. [EQ2c]

Norwegian delegations for the annual CoE meetings are led by MFA, but the Nansen Department has joined that delegation and engaged effectively with MFA in advance to agree on messaging, including on reported progress, results and results management approaches. [EQ2d]

Case study 2: Humanitarian (Multilateral partners)

What we looked at	Methods and sources
This case study looked at two multilateral agreements: UKR-23/0022 **Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Ukraine Office,** 2022–2026; a total of **NOK 360 million** maximum contribution,[14] subject to parliamentary approval. This agreement was initially signed in September 2023 between Norad and the United Nations (UN), represented by OCHA, regarding support to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund and (UHF) the OCHA Ukraine Office between 2022 and 2026. The agreement supports a range of activities expected to produce the following results: **save lives, alleviate suffering, maintain human dignity based on humanitarian needs, identify priority at the country level, and enhance the effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian response in Ukraine.** RER-23/0010 **UNICEF, 2022–2026**, through which a total of **NOK 414 million** has been disbursed to date The Framework Agreement was initially signed between the Norwegian MFA and UNICEF in November 2015. In November 2023, a Special Agreement was signed between Norad and UNICEF for the period 2022–2026, the amount not exceeding NOK 298,000,000,[15] including NOK 208,000,000 transferred from UNICEF's agreement QZA-22/0074 with the Norwegian MFA. Additional funds allocated under RER-23/0010 aim to support the following activities: **Humanitarian Appeals for Children (HAC) Response in Ukraine for 2023–2024; promote the integration of children in Ukraine as per the Programme for 2023–2026; and support the Regional refugee HAC response in Moldova for 2023–2024.**	**OCHA:** **57 documents** related to the OCHA agreement – including design and decision documents, email correspondence, progress reporting, and meeting summaries/minutes. Interview conducted with Senior Advisor, Crosscutting, for the Nansen Department: Knowledge, Results and Analysis, who is OCHA agreement lead. **UNICEF** **87 documents** related to the UNICEF agreement – including design and decision documents, email correspondence, and progress reporting. Interview conducted with agreement lead: a Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Team, Knowledge, Results, Institutional Cooperation. Limitations: from the outset, given time constraints it was agreed that the case study would focus on the UHF/OCHA agreement, supplemented with a 'shallower dive' into the UNICEF agreement.

[14]Although this can be increased through addenda to the original agreement.

[15] Although, as for the OCHA agreement, this can be increased through addenda to the original agreement.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

While annual reporting is the default vehicle of formal communication between the Nansen Department and agreement partners, both parties keep close and frequent informal communication. OCHA shares a regular newsletter and has a situation report website, which provides the Nansen Programme team with access to information on events, humanitarian response highlights in Ukraine, key figures, funding, situation analysis, and humanitarian impact visualisation. [EQ1b]

UNICEF shares annual progress reports with Nansen and in addition publishes monthly reports on its website, which are available for open access.[16] These reports offer general information about overall progress and contributions from all donors and do not enable Norway's contribution to be traced to specific outcomes – as is typically the case for multi-donor agreements. In addition, reports do not enable comparison between planned reports or with results from previous reports – with one interviewee reporting that this can make assessing planned versus actual progress a time-consuming process involving reading across multiple reports. In addition, the monthly reports are, according to one interviewee, not always sent directly to Norad. This can lead to some inconvenience as Norad is expected to download them from the website. [EQ1b]

Existing correspondence indicates strong relationships between the Nansen Department and agreement teams, fostering frequent communication despite limited formal feedback mechanisms. This collaboration allows partners to address funding decisions and programme implementation challenges effectively. The Nansen Department aims to gather an overview of existing knowledge from partners regarding the Ukraine context and response, primarily focusing on readily available information without the need for new reports. [EQ1b and d]

Outside of formal mechanisms of communication, it is clear from documentation and interviews that the Nansen Department is open to discussions, for clarification, and does this with a view to minimising additional work for partners. They have specific areas of interest, including evaluation plans for the Ukraine response, tracking results from the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund with regular updates, monitoring the continuous use of funds against total needs, and identifying the conflict analyses used by partners, including requests for relevant links to these analyses. [EQ1b and d]

Across the programme, Nansen Department is weighing up the pros and cons of using P-Dash, a Norad Power BI-based tool intended to provide an overview of various agreements across different portfolios, and to enable tracking of progress, goals, and time/effort contributions. While this indicates efforts to centralise data tracking and establish a unified system, the operation of P-Dash is reported by interviewees to involve burdensome manual processes. These inefficiencies may lead to duplication of work,

[16] https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/ukraine-situation-reports

i.e. reports from UN partners must be assessed, archived, and then manually entered into P-Dash – making the system time-consuming and less effective. [EQ1c and e]

Norway operates according to the Grand Bargain principles and focuses on support rather than earmarked funding. The Nansen Department is strongly aligned with this approach. This is especially the case when it comes to UHF being a pooled fund, which does not accommodate earmarked funds. [EQ1e]

While the basis of funding allocations is based on specific agreements in response to appeals, there is a clear need for a mechanism to assess the Nansen Programme's results on a broader scale to enhance strategic planning, particularly given its geographical focus. The agreements only specify that reporting must encompass the entire activity, not just the Norwegian contribution, and should display the status compared to previous periods. [EQ1a and b]

The UHF/OCHA agreement is accompanied by a common Performance Framework, which outlines five areas of results, management-level indicators and outcome-level indicators against which the partner reports. As for other multilateral core support agreements, the Nansen Department is not able to disaggregate results by funding, due to the multilateral and multi-donor nature of the pooled fund, which operates within its own defined results-based management (RBM) system. However, there is an online publication of contributions on the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), where the Nansen Department can assess Norway's levels of financial contribution to UHF and OCHA Ukraine Country Office. [EQ1a]

While there is a history of cooperation between Norway and UNICEF spanning several decades (with Norway sitting on UNICEF's Executive Board and providing both core and project support), recurring feedback from Norway highlights a desire for more analysis of the results achieved. This includes the wish for more information about progress in the programme countries, as well as mentions of results achieved jointly by the UN.[EQ1b]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

Formal follow-up mechanisms are varied and may include, but are not limited to, annual reports on results in Ukraine, plus other reports such as evaluations and internal or external audit reports. However, it is not possible to directly and exclusively trace most of the reported results and progress back to Norway's contributions. To mitigate such limitations, the Nansen Department keeps regular contact and informal discussions with the agreement's partners – which is evident from the documentation reviewed. Specifically, OCHA sends a daily newsletter, ensuring good information flow. [EQ2a]

In the main, reports reviewed by the evaluation team appear to focus on specific positive outcomes and are more reserved when it comes to reporting information about what challenges they face, although Nansen Department appears satisfied with the balance of the reports. Moreover, the current approach to reporting does not allow for tracking any unexpected or unintended results from Norwegian funding. [EQ2a]

The long-term relationship between Norway and UN system organisations in general is based on trust and allows for

constant dialogue and strategic trade-offs. This is evident in the close relations with UNICEF and OCHA maintained by Nansen Department, reported by interviewees. At the start of the year, the Nansen Department analyses the appeals, and once the MFA decides on funding allocations, the Department follows up to determine the actual needs at that time. It is noteworthy that MFA's funding decisions on recipients and amounts are also based on Nansen's Department's technical input, including the review of appeals conducted at the beginning of the year. [EQ2d]

From our consultations with the Nansen Department, there is a sense that reporting and follow-up on results in a proportionate and balanced manner remains a challenge, given context complexity and volatility and capacity challenges within the Nansen Department. There are several channels through which informal reporting is done, which differs from the agreements. However, there is a need to assess, share and store both formal and informal reporting on results more efficiently. Although there is some following-up on reported results, it was noticeable that only a small amount of the regular correspondence between Nansen and partners which was reviewed by the evaluation team was focused on reported results. [EQ2a and c]

UHF-reported results influence decisions on thematic funding levels. Other thematic areas important to Norway, such as work by other UN agencies like Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP), also receive significant funds. [EQ2a]

The MFA and the Embassy in Ukraine play a role in following up on reported progress of the two agreements by maintaining close contact with partners on the ground. The Embassy may pick up on issues more easily than the Nansen Department, due to its geographical proximity. Similarly, the Embassy participates in more field visits, writes reports to the MFA and attends meetings; thus, the Nansen Department may not always receive this information in real time. Nevertheless, the Department participates in regular meetings held with various partners, including weekly meetings with the Ministry, Embassy, and the EU. [EQ2d]

The Nansen team and UHF team visited Ukraine in June 2024 and reportedly found it difficult to obtain an overview of donor contributions as a proportion of total project costs. Although the Nansen Department supports UHF's disbursements to smaller NGOs (which supports localisation and local agency, as well as the possibility of smaller NGOs accessing smaller humanitarian funds), tracking and attributing specific results to Norway's funding becomes challenging. [EQ2d]

Case study 3: Norwegian Strategic Partners – Caritas Norway (CN) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

What we looked at	Methods and sources
Case study looked at two agreements with Caritas Norway (CN) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA): **RER- 23/008 Caritas Norway** Strategic Partnership Ukraine and Neighbouring countries, 2023–2024, **NOK 154 million** The agreement between the MFA and CN was signed in April 2020 based on the application by CN for the period 2020–2023. The total grant contribution was NOK 120 million. In November 2023, the project was extended until 31 December 2024, while the total contribution grew to NOK 154 million. The project's expected impact is to **save lives, alleviate suffering and protect human dignity in humanitarian crises**. This impact must be achieved through four outcomes, including access to lifesaving food and necessary non-food items assistance (NFIs), provision of the necessary protection, WASH, and reduced vulnerability for people in need in line with the humanitarian principles. **RER-23/0015 NPA** Strategic Partnership Agreement Ukraine, 2023–2024, **NOK 295 million** The agreement was initially signed between the MFA and the NPA from 2020 to 2023. In November 2023, the project was extended until the end of 2024 while the maximum grant contribution was increased to NOK 295 million. The project's main objectives are focused **on protection against explosive weapons, sexual and gender-based violence, and food security and livelihoods**.	**Caritas Norway** Interviews conducted with the Nansen agreement lead, who is a Senior Advisor and Coordinator, Humanitarian Team; and with the Head of Humanitarian Unit, CN. Desk Review of **82 documents** related to the Caritas agreement – including design and decision documents, email correspondence, and progress reporting. **NPA** Interview conducted with the Nansen agreement lead, who is a Senior Advisor, Crosscutting, for the department: Knowledge, Results, Analysis. Desk Review of **81 documents** related to the NPA agreement, including email correspondence, progress and yearly reporting, design and decision documents.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

Both agreements are based on applications and include results frameworks that support monitoring of project progress. The documentation showed that during the application process, the Nansen Department (and previously the MFA) assessed the results frameworks and previous cooperation records of the partners. New proposals require additional documentation and undergo new and time-consuming reviews. [EQ1a, b]

All requirements outlined in the Grants Handbook for Civil Society and Other Private Actors are being followed, with requirements for reporting outlined in the agreements and being followed. Annual reports describe challenges, risk factors, deviations, and unintended effects. [EQ1b]

Formal progress reports are supplemented by informal mechanisms, including regular emails, digital meetings, phone calls and occasional visits to Ukraine. In addition, in August, NPA shared a newsletter outlining some of its key achievements, which was seen by the Nansen Department as a useful addition. [EQ1b]

While formal and informal reporting complement each other well, Nansen Department is concerned that partners might be overburdened or feel disempowered by the current requirements and practices. CN has expressed concerns about losing flexibility due to increasingly rigid reporting requirements. Both Nansen Department and CN emphasise that Nansen conducts significantly more detailed and regular follow-up than that of the MFA. [EQ1a]

NPA is one of three biggest actors in demining in Ukraine. Annual reporting highlights short-, medium- and long-term effects, with Nansen Department evaluating and showing interest in all these dimensions. However, the ToC for demining is relatively uncomplicated. It is unclear the extent to which it serves as a useful tool for articulating the complexity of the longer-term effects of demining (such as land being restored to agricultural use and other developmental impacts), or assessing some of the assumptions that underpin demining investments. [EQ1b]

According to a Nansen Department interviewee, a key factor contributing to CN's efficiency in progress tracking is its cooperation with its Ukrainian sister organisation, Caritas Ukraine. Caritas Ukraine is a reputable network with a broad presence across the country, enabling access and insights. [EQ1e]

Nansen Department wishes to aggregate results across partners and projects to gain a more holistic view of achievements and challenges but currently lacks the necessary time and a suitable digital system for this purpose. Norad's P-Dash is being considered for more automated results tracking, although it is currently viewed as cumbersome by interviewees due to its dependency on manual data entry. [EQ1c]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

Nansen Department conducts formal and thorough assessments of annual reports and progress reports; these assessments focus primarily on outputs and deviations from the agreements. Nevertheless, Nansen Department shows flexibility and understanding with regard to the volatile context and challenges in war-torn Ukraine. For example, the contextual reasons provided for NPA's slower than initially anticipated progress on demining were understood and accepted. [EQ2a]

Progress is also monitored through informal mechanisms, including emails, phone calls and meetings. Nansen Department appreciates partners' honesty and self-reflection. While they are grateful for regular updates, there is evidently some concern about potential micromanagement, with Nansen cautious about becoming 'a cog in the machine' and careful to emphasise that partners should feel empowered to make independent decisions. [EQ2a]

Informal communication is constructive, polite and effective, used to answer questions, share success stories, clarify misunderstandings, and ensure timely updates. It reflects the significant investment by the Nansen Department in building relationships with partners. [EQ2c]

The culture of regular informal contact and reporting enables Nansen to keep stakeholders, such as the MFA, updated. Demining is a high-priority political issue, with frequent information requests from the MFA. The information needed to respond to these requests is often not available in formal reports, but Nansen can follow up with NPA informally to access it. [EQ2a]

When monitoring partners' activities, Nansen Department uses the agreements' intentions as a reference point. For NPA, this allows for a flexible approach, but feedback from CN indicates a concern that this can lead to the opposite effect. NPA frequently contacts Nansen Department for approval on new initiatives; Nansen Department typically and quickly agrees if the project aligns with the agreement's intentions. CN, however, worries that focusing on the agreement's intentions might limit flexibility and create 'over-administration', especially when the funding serves a political purpose. [EQ2b]

Weekly status calls with the Embassy, MFA, and the EU delegation facilitate information exchange and broader discussions. This partly compensates for the absence of an effective system to aggregate results at a portfolio level. [EQ2c, d]

During a visit to Ukraine, Nansen Department conducted a 'spot check' on NPA following concerns raised about the procedures for the procurement of high-value mechanical demining machines. Such checks are helpful to verify information and establish mutual understanding, but are relatively infrequent given that Nansen Department do not have a permanent presence or third-party monitoring capability in Ukraine. [EQ2b,d]

CN believes that its projects have contributed to the unintended result of strengthening local civil society. They stress the importance of the Nansen Programme investing in local partners, not just multilateral organisations. This feedback, communicated to Nansen Department, demonstrates how informal reporting channels can amplify local experiences and priorities, aligning with the localisation agenda. [EQ2b, c]

Nansen Department members recognise the need to go beyond basic grant management to focus strategically at the portfolio level. In addition to assessing achievements and challenges, they wish they had more time to reflect on and implement the Knowledge, Evaluation and Learning Plan. [EQ2a]

Case study 4: Energy

What we looked at	Methods and sources
The case study examined two agreements through which Nansen provides **support to the Ukrainian energy sector**: Agreement UKR-23/0006 with the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** for **Power sector support to Ukrenergo – Immediate support to the electricity sector for continuity of system operations** Agreement UKR-24/0016 with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),** to support the **Green Energy Recovery Project – Crisis Response for Maneuverable Energy Generation Capacity** The objective of the **EBRD** agreement is to **'support Ukraine's energy security and ensure uninterrupted supply of energy to the Ukrainian population and businesses across the country'**, by supporting the financial liquidity of the Ukrainian state-owned energy company **Ukrenergo**. The agreement, signed in December 2023, has a value of NOK 865 million. The UNDP agreement seeks to ensure reliable and accessible energy access for the Ukrainian people while enhancing decentralised renewable energy generation capacities, through the purchasing of equipment and provision of capacity-building support. The agreement, signed in June 2024, has a value of **NOK 1.12 billion.**	Desk review of **79 documents** related to the two agreements – including design and decision documents, email correspondence, progress reporting, and meeting summaries/minutes. Interview with a Senior Advisor in the Nansen Department who is Coordinator for reconstruction, private sector and energy, which includes oversight of the EBRD and UNDP agreements. From the outset, given time constraints it was agreed that the case study would focus on the EBRD agreement, supplemented with a 'shallower dive' into the UNDP agreement. Limitations: the interview covered several agreements related to several case studies, limiting the depth to which any one agreement could be discussed.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

Support to the Ukrainian energy sector is a political priority for the Norwegian government; combined with significant interest from the MFA and the Norwegian public, this seems to have influenced considerations of results management. These two agreements, along with a separate agreement with EBRD to support the Ukrainian state gas company Naftogaz, represent the backbone of Nansen's support to the Ukrainian energy sector. As a result of this political prioritisation, the Nansen Department/MFA have accepted that a higher degree of risk is acceptable for these agreements than for others. This is reflected in the evident urgency in relation to signing agreements and disbursing funds. Scrutiny of results management systems seems, from the documentation, to have been a secondary consideration. The key information interest for the MFA is that funds have been distributed and put to use in Ukraine to help maintain the energy sector; the results management system appears sufficient for these ends. [EQ1e]

Nevertheless, an assessment of results management systems/plans was conducted as part of both agreement processes, in line with Grant Management Assistant (GMA) guidance, as documented in the 'decision document' for each agreement. The assessment of UNDP systems/plans is more favourable (reflecting the RTE team's own assessment). The assessment of the results management systems/approach notes some issues (including a lack of a ToC articulating the causal chain between outputs and outcomes, and a lack of baselines for Results Framework [RF] indicators). However, it also noted the limited ability of Norway to influence its approaches/systems, given they are in line with standard EBRD approaches. Ultimately they are deemed 'satisfactory'. Norway's confidence is based in part on EBRD's systematic use of third-party monitoring, plus its extensive Ukraine experience. [EQ1a]

Both agreements lack an explicit ToC. From the RFs for the two agreements, which set out intended outcomes and outputs, it is possible to deduce the expected causal pathways. For both agreements, these are relatively simple/straightforward. The interviewee also reflected that, given the unpredictable impact of the war on the energy sector, defining precise results is challenging. [EQ1b]

The UNDP agreement sets out a detailed logframe, which although primarily output-focused, stands out as a comparatively strong example, and is accompanied by a detailed results monitoring plan which could also be considered an example of good practice. The plan sets out requirements for results reporting as well as how UNDP will internally monitor progress and results, providing a level of transparency often not evident for Nansen agreements with comparable multilateral organisations. It also sets out processes for learning and adaptation, which again are often not evident in comparable agreements, although it should be emphasised that it remains to be seen whether and how these processes will be applied in practice. The ERBD RF is less detailed, although the agreement is viewed as a relatively simple one where this does not represent a significant issue. [EQ2b]

To some degree, Nansen Department has sought to influence partner approaches to results management during the design phase, building on experience from previous EBRD agreements. There is evidence from correspondence between the two parties that Nansen Department engaged with UNDP during the design phase to provide feedback and seek more detail on proposed results. As part of a previous EBRD Ukraine agreement, Nansen Department provided feedback on results reporting and what was included/not included in that; the interviewee expects this to have been addressed for this agreement. [EQ1a]

Formal reporting has not been received for either agreement given they are at an early stage. According to the interviewee, there is an expectation based on a previous EBRD agreement that formal reporting may be input/output-focused (and the RF would indicate this), but that there will be the ability to follow up and request additional information on progress informally. [EQ1b]

There is no evidence that systems for either agreement have been designed to capture unintended results (positive and/or negative). Given the complexity of the operating context, large value of the grant, and aforementioned political and public interest associated with support to the Ukrainian energy sector, this would appear a notable gap. [EQ1d]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

The EBRD agreement includes more limited allowances for formal follow-up than many other Nansen agreements. There is a perception that this is not a standard agreement (primarily involving the transfer of funds to UkrEnergo to maintain their liquidity), and that this is straightforward from a results management perspective. There is also a good degree of confidence in the reliability of EBRD's systems for results monitoring, and in its contextual experience. Nevertheless, Nansen Department is now, according to the interviewee, considering a request for an annual bilateral meeting. Previously, the main formal mechanism for following up (as defined in the agreement) is for the sharing of comments/questions by donors in relation to each annual report. [EQ2a, c]

There is evidence from the previous EBRD agreement that Nansen Department has been following up on reported results and that reporting has been revised/further explanations provided by EBRD in response. There is an expectation that this will continue to happen (formally and informally) under the current agreement. There is an expectation that reporting will be heavily input/output-focused, but there is currently uncertainty from a Nansen Department perspective about what leverage if any they will have to influence this and push for better tracking/reporting of outcome-level results. [EQ2b, c]

There is evidence from email correspondence relating to an initial meeting with the project board for the UNDP agreement that Norway (represented by the Norwegian Deputy Head of Mission in Kyiv) has already raised questions about the intended results. In addition, the ToR for the Project Board, which has Norwegian representation, explicitly outlines that the key purpose of board meetings will be to review and discuss progress. [EQ2c, d]

Since the agreement with EBRD was signed, the documentation shows that there has been significant engagement between Nansen (supported by MFA) and EBRD around a request to convert the funded guarantee into grants to respond to UkrEnergo's acute need for liquidity/increased financial support. Both Nansen Department and MFA seem to have a flexible attitude, sensitive to partners' pressures and needs – even if they slightly disagreed with some points (i.e. the timing of the conversion), had some suggestions, and requested some clarifications before granting the request. [EQ2a, b, c]

Case study 5: Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund (URTF)

What we looked at	Methods and sources
Agreement UKR-22/0012 with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (part of the **World Bank)** for its **Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund (URTF)** The URTF is a **multi-donor trust fund** that supports a range of large-framework projects intended to provide operational support for critical services and infrastructure, with two main objectives: Maintain the Ukrainian state's ability to provide services to the population and operate the relief effort; Support it to plan and execute rehabilitation and sustainable reconstruction. Agreement initially signed in November 2022 with MFA, then transferred to Norad. A total of **NOK 6.635 billion** has been dispersed to date As of end of 2023, **Norway was the largest contributor**. Japan, Netherlands, Canada and Sweden were the next largest donors. Since then, the United States (US) began contributing, and Nansen expects that they may soon surpass Norway as the largest donor.	Desk review of **144 documents** related to the URTF agreement – including design and decision documents, email correspondence, progress reporting, and meeting summaries/minutes. Interview with a Senior Advisor in the Nansen Department responsible for oversight of the URTF and other World Bank agreements.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

The World Bank's systems/plans for results management were assessed as part of the agreement process, in line with Norad GMA guidance. The decision document notes that the RF is only very general and may need refining. There appears to have been little engagement with the World Bank (WB) as to design/agreement around the URTF ToC or RF, with an acceptance that, as a large multi-sectoral, flexible, multilateral fund, there is a) minimal ability to influence the partner's system and b) difficulty in aggregating results at fund level, which means ToC and RF are always likely to be very general. [EQ1a]

There is evidence that the Nansen Department has at various points taken stock of the results management system and requested adjustments. For example, at the first Partnership Council meeting for the URTF, a need to refine the RF was raised and this was subsequently done. As evident in the documentation, Nansen Department has also engaged with other donors in terms of satisfaction with results reporting and jointly requested more regular progress updates. [EQ1a]

The ToC and RF approved at the design phase are very broad/general, although there are more detailed and specific ones for individual projects. The rationale for this given by the WB was that that the fund was intended to be flexible; it remained unclear at the design phase what it would fund. This made it hard to define specific agreement-level results, beyond general outcomes. The RF was subsequently revised once projects began to be funded, but remains general/top-level. Although there is a mechanism for the tracking of crosscutting issues, a risk management system, and a whistle-blowing mechanism, there is no mechanism for the more systematic tracking of unintended results. In the first annual report, there was an acknowledgement that, given the volatile, unpredictable context, the ToC and RF would need regular reviewing and updating, but there is little evidence of this having been done to date. [EQ1b]

Results tracking and reporting requirements were clearly defined in the agreement document and have been adhered to. In line with WB standards, this consists of a fund-level aggregate RF, and annual reporting, submitted in advance of annual Partnership Council meetings. WB has adhered to these processes, although the first annual report was delayed. [EQ1b]

There is general acknowledgement among the Nansen Department and other donors that the agreed systems are insufficient to provide a full, up-to-date understanding of URTF progress. Based on experience of working with the WB through previous and other ongoing agreements, there is an informal understanding on the part of Nansen Department that additional reporting can be requested and that WB is usually responsive to these requests. In practice, WB does provide additional ad hoc progress updates (e.g. newsletters, project-level publications), and Nansen Department and other donors have made requests for additional information. [EQ1a, b]

URTF results are, according to the interviewee, fed into Nansen Programme/portfolio-level reporting primarily through the 'white paper' process each year – with information requested by and shared with MFA. Internally to Nansen, aggregation of URTF results is seen as challenging enough, let alone aggregating them with other agreements. P-Dash is not seen as well suited to communicating URTF results given their broad nature and challenges around aggregation into the required format. [EQ1c, e]

On the whole, URTF systems/processes for results management are largely in line with Nansen policies and guidelines, and staff responsible for managing the agreement are highly experienced, familiar with and supportive of the results management agenda. They have the sectoral expertise to assist in the application of Norad results management guidelines to the specific agreement. [EQ1b, e]

Working with the WB is in line with Norad guidance to prioritise working with multilaterals, and they are seen as a trusted partner in which Norway has a stake, as well as an expectation, expressed by the interviewee, that its institutional processes are already in line with minimum Norad standards. There is therefore a degree of comfort in WB's existing approaches/systems for results management. [EQ1a, e]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

The agreement establishes a governance body for the URTF – a Partnership Council (PC) – with the responsibility to 'review progress reports provided by the Bank based on the results framework for the Trust Fund'. The PC is expected to meet annually, and comprises members of the WB, Ukrainian government and donors. MFA represents Norway on the PC. Nansen Department has not been directly involved in PC but the documentation showed that it has been able to inform discussions, including by feeding in assessments/questions on results reporting and RF to MFA. [EQ2c, d]

PC meetings to date have reportedly been 'over-formal' and not allowed for detailed discussion of results. More regular PC meetings and informal updates have been requested, specifically to enable more regular discussion of progress, and WB appears to have responded to this request to put these in place. [EQ2c]

Outside of the formal PC process, there is clear evidence from agreement documentation that Nansen Department is interrogating reported progress and results and following up informally (including in coordination with other donors). This follow-up largely consists of requests for additional information and the flagging of any concerns on progress. Given reporting is fairly general, follow-up does not really extend to discussions on adaptation, lesson learning, interrogating quality of data, etc. Additionally, Nansen Department does have access to detailed project-level information. The challenge is how to prioritise which project-level results to interrogate, particularly given capacity limitations. [EQ2c]

The desk review revealed several examples of where Nansen Department has identified deviations from expected results and raised these either directly or indirectly (through MFA PC representative and Embassy) with WB. These include in relation to speed of disbursements and installation of bridges. WB has acknowledged these concerns. While it is not clear that they explicitly took corrective action as a result, progress in these areas has subsequently improved. [EQ2b]

The Nansen Department appears from the documentation to be making good use of the Embassy in Kyiv's leverage and convening ability. It draws on them to reinforce/relay messaging around the concerns on progress in bridge installation, for example, and to organise meetings for the Norad delegation with WB in relation to specific projects. [EQ2d]

Case study 6: War Insurance – Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

What we looked at	Methods and sources
Agreement UKR-23/0023 with the **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)** for its **Support to Ukraine's Reconstruction and Economy Trust Fund (SURE TF)** **MIGA** is part of the World Bank Group. Its mandate is to **promote cross-border investment in developing countries by providing guarantees (political risk insurance and credit enhancement)** to investors and lenders The SURE TF is a **multi-donor trust fund** intended to **facilitate private sector investment in the Ukrainian economy**, by providing political risk insurance to alleviate the risk facing investors and businesses. The agreement has two intended phases: During active conflict, MIGA's focus is on sustaining economic activity, particularly by relieving the banking sector so that they in turn can facilitate trade. Post-conflict, MIGA's focus will be more on real sector projects in reconstruction. Agreement signed in **November 2023**, with an initial value of **NOK 240 million** Norway is one of the largest donors, slightly surpassed by US, UK and Japan.	Desk review of **22 documents** related to the MIGA agreement – including design and decision documents, progress reporting, and email correspondence between Nansen and partners/other donors. Interview with a Senior Advisor in the Nansen Department, who is Coordinator for reconstruction, private sector and energy, which includes oversight of the MIGA agreement. Limitations: only limited documentation was available given the agreement is only at its early stages; and the interview covered both MIGA and other agreements related to separate case studies, limiting depth of discussion of the MIGA agreement.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

MIGA systems and processes for results tracking and reporting were, as detailed in the decision document and associated correspondence, assessed as part of the agreement process and deemed sufficient, although some challenges were expected. At that time, those systems were not fully defined (e.g. a logframe had not been fully developed) but were based on an assessment of another Norad agreement with MIGA (the Renewable Energy Catalyst Trust Fund [RECTF]). It was judged that MIGA results management approaches to SURE agreement could be expected to be 'adequate'. MIGA is seen as a trusted partner for Norway, although the interviewee anticipates some challenges given MIGA's limited experience of managing grant-type agreements. [EQ1a]

There is no explicit ToC defined for the SURE TF, although broad objectives, workstreams and expected results (in terms of quantified expectations of level of funds leveraged) are defined in the agreement documents. Nansen Department has not really influenced this. According to the interviewee, one area in which they might have wished to have done this is around provision of internal investment guarantees (MIGA only provide guarantees for cross-border investments). This would only be feasible, however, if there were consensus among donors, which there does not appear to be. [EQ1b]

Requirements for results tracking and reporting are clearly defined in the agreement document. In practice, MIGA is actually providing more reporting than the annual cross-trust fund report mandated in the agreement – having provided two biannual reports to date. [EQ1b]

The quality of results reporting is – compared to some other multilateral partners – relatively good, providing Nansen Department with a concise overview of high-level progress and results on a biannual basis; Nansen Department has been able to supplement this through requests for additional information. The SURE TF provides guarantees to both the financial sector and real sector projects. Outcome data is better reported on for real sector projects, with clear indicators such as on job creation, tax contributions, etc., providing Nansen Department with useful data on the development benefits of those projects. Outcome results of the financial sector guarantees provided by SURE TF are less clear, according to the interviewee – and this was evident from the documentation. Another weakness of the reporting is that there is no consideration of any unintended results. [EQ2b, d]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

An annual meeting, covering all MIGA trust funds, is the main formal mechanism for discussion of results between MIGA and partners, but this forum has been seen by both Nansen Department and other donors

as insufficient to enabled detailed discussions on progress. As such, email correspondence shows that in consultation with another donor, Nansen Department has requested additional SURE-specific technical meetings with MIGA, which MIGA has agreed to. The first one is due to take place in the spring of 2025, so it remains to be seen whether this new format will offer more satisfactory opportunities for Nansen Department and other donors to follow up on reported results. [EQ2c]

On receipt of both of the first two biannual SURE progress reports, correspondence showed that Nansen Department followed up with MIGA to ask detailed questions on the reporting – probing for additional details on specific results, and explanations on methodology employed to gather and present specific data on results. MIGA responded constructively to these requests, sharing additional information which Nansen Department reports being pleased with and which has been circulated by Nansen Department to other donors (such as UK). [EQ2c]

Based on the above points, the approach and process for following up on reported results and progress appears, in comparison to some other multilateral agreements, to be a well-functioning and constructive one. Overall, the process seems to be going a reasonable way to satisfying Nansen Dept information needs. [EQ2c]

Case study 7: Moldova

What we looked at	Methods and sources
The case study examined the following four agreements through which the Nansen Department provides **support to Moldova.** **Agreement: Council of Europe Moldova Action Plan – 2021–2024. UKR-0006 Good governance, judicial reform and human rights MDA-23/0002, NOK 32 million.** This Action Plan is a strategic programming instrument to support reforms in the Republic of Moldova, bringing the country's legislation, institutions and practices further into line with European standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy and therefore to support the country's efforts to honour its obligations as a Council of Europe member state. The original agreement was transferred from MFA to Norad, a revision signed in 2024. **Agreement: MDA-0001 Moldova MDA-23/0003. Support gas purchase in Moldova through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – ('Moldova Gas Security Supply Extension') – 2023–2024, 2023–2024, NOK 400 million.** The overall expected impact that this project aspires to meet is to ensure Moldova's energy security and thereby ensure the continuous supply of gas to meet energy needs in Moldova. The total financing package stretches beyond gas purchases to introduce reforms into the energy sector and improve corporate governance standards at Energocom. The Norwegian contribution will, however, be solely used for the acquisition of gas. **Agreement: Moldova MDA-24/0009. Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Programme – Building Resilience Through Innovation and Collaboration (BRIC) – 2024–2026, NOK 19 million.** The BRIC programme aims to strengthen the capacity, collaboration and effectiveness of local Moldovan organisations to counter disinformation operations and improve the resilience of the Moldovan public to disinformation, malign influences and interference from hostile actors. **Agreement: MDA-24/0005 UNDP Programme – Transforming education in Moldova through Model Schools, 2024–2026, NOK 204 million.** UNDP proposes to support the implementation of the national school network reform, transforming district schools into 'model schools'. The overall objective is to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Moldova's education system.	Overall, **207 documents** were investigated across the four agreements. Our desk review entailed the analysis of several documents including concept notes, correspondence between Nansen team members, partners and MFA, draft agreements and final agreement documents and proposals. We also carried out three interviews with Nansen Department staff responsible for leading Moldova-related agreements. Limitations: the interviews covered several agreements related to many case studies, limiting the depth to which any agreements could be discussed. Most of the analysed agreements are in their initial stages and available reporting is limited.

Current systems and practices for tracking and analysing results [EQ1]

The Moldova portfolio was recently established to support Moldova's priorities across three main outcome areas: energy efficiency, education, and societal resilience. Additionally, specific agreements focus on countering disinformation and supporting civil society. Although there are no systematic portfolio-level mechanisms in place to track and measure results, there are separate results frameworks and theories of change (ToCs) within the projects.

There is also, according to interviewees, an appetite within the Nansen Department to develop an overarching system or ToC for the Moldova portfolio. This reflects the recognition that the clear thinking behind the selection of agreements has not been formally documented yet. Currently, the portfolio's overall results are guided by a recommendations document produced by the Nansen Department in March 2024 and approved by the MFA. These are currently being reviewed with a view to exploring whether they could be adjusted to better take into account Moldova as part of the Nansen Programme. One motivation for developing this overarching ToC is to ensure effective alignment between the humanitarian and 'non-humanitarian' parts of the Moldova portfolio – with Moldova seen as a context that is well suited for successful realisation of the 'humanitarian-development nexus'. [EQ1a, d]

The Nansen Department's systems and practices have been newly established for the EBRD and CoE (previously managed by MFA and running since 2021) agreements and there are some evident differences and limitations between the Ukraine and Moldova agreements. For instance, for the Ukraine Action Plan agreement, the CoE appears to have taken measures to respond to some recommendations on results management from a previous evaluation of the Plan. Consequently the Ukraine Action Plan logframe is noticeably stronger than for the Moldova Plan; and the Nansen Department perceives the reporting to be superior. Nonetheless, the Moldova Action Plan annual reporting format applies the use of labels to describe progress against results for each area of the Action Plan, potentially allowing Nansen Department to assess progress relatively efficiently. The EBRD agreement – like the CoE agreement – lacks an explicit ToC, and previous reports remain input/output-focused rather than outcome-based. The interviewee expressed uncertainty about Nansen Department's available leverage to advocate for more outcome-level reporting. [EQ1a, b]

Although in its initial stages, the Nansen Department leveraged well-established communication channels with IWPR and UNDP to develop concise and specific agreements regarding fund-channelling and results-tracking mechanisms. Formal project proposals include a comprehensive logframe and indicators, with expected reporting aligned to output-based indicators. For BRIC, the final report, as stipulated by the Specific Conditions, will detail the results achieved by the project during the Support Period, and outcome-level results are established around three main areas: improve resilience to disinformation; strengthen the capacity of Moldovan organisations to counter disinformation, malign influences, and interference from hostile actors; and strengthen cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration among actors. Furthermore, Nansen Department has access to a detailed RF, and additional key MEL tools and processes for the project, including a ToC for the BRIC project, mid-point assessment and learning, and an independent evaluation, which will facilitate the tracking and analysing of expected results. [EQ1a]

The new agreement negotiation phase between the Nansen Department and CoE team involved revision of the actions framework to address both immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term objectives, influenced by the Ukraine war's impact on Moldova. The agreement document emphasises the intention of well-coordinated communication between Norwegian embassies and CoE with the CoE facilitating visits and providing evaluation reports. [EQ1a, e]

During design and tender phases, Nansen Department's active engagements, for example with the BRIC programme team, ensured that intended results and plans for results management were effectively discussed and reviewed. Similarly, before signing the agreement, documentation shows **that Nansen consistently engaged with UNDP during the design phase around the project duration, and budget allocation for phases I and II to reflect intended knowledge and evidence-based results and plans for results management.** For this case, Nansen Department argued that, while there was an underlying assumption that larger schools with more resources would provide better learning outcomes than other possible interventions, there were insufficient links to the evidence supporting this assumption. Therefore, partners should reference the evidence they base their decisions on when choosing specific interventions to plan for results. Furthermore, during the design phase, Nansen discussed with partners the importance of authorities assessing the benefits against social and economic impacts on the surrounding communities of schools and including such issues in the programme proposal risk assessment. [EQ1a]

Informal updates are perceived by one interviewee to be more productive than formal reporting at this stage. The Nansen Department commends partners' proactiveness in this area, as these ensure and facilitate communications about progress tracking. These updates are often brief emails, video calls and informal check-ins, which are used to plan large interventions, for example the UNDP education project, and to monitor progress. [EQ1b]

Current approaches and practices for following up on reported progress and results [EQ2]

The Nansen Department has made efforts to highlight the need and importance of results tracking and measuring in formal meetings with the Council of Europe (CoE), though the degree to which it has been able to exert influence upon the CoE remains somewhat limited. From our desk review and interviews, we learned that follow-up on results with CoE happens through formal and structured meetings. Furthermore, outside of formal mechanisms, there is an active engagement with the project teams. This access has been beneficial, helping to understand progress and address issues directly. Nonetheless, the Nansen Department still faces some challenges in influencing the CoE's results management approaches, with reluctance from the CoE to share detailed project reporting. Reported results are used to identify areas and feed into the state budget and annual reports, but the lack of detailed project reporting limits comprehensive progress tracking. [EQ2a]

For the CoE agreement the Nansen Department collaborated with Sida, who is interested in funding to improve results management. Sida has agreements with the CoE and another group within the Moldova Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which should give the Nansen Department more time to discuss results but not necessarily more leverage. Other donors are, according to an interviewee, less interested in results management, with Sida and Norway being the main ones. The European Union (EU), the biggest donor, works separately and does not engage with Nansen Department directly. Nansen Department has been sent an outline for the revised annual report template, which may be easier to read but not necessarily better for analysing results. According to one interviewee, currently reports are written centrally in Strasbourg, not by the country office, and the organisation is very centralised. [EQ2a, b]

The Nansen Department has established specific follow-up mechanisms for the EBRD agreement due to the absence of a formal annual meeting. These mechanisms include annual reports at both the agreement and fund levels, with initial interactions involving formal comments and follow-up questions. Previous annual reports for Ukraine have been noted for not addressing interest earned on funds held by the EBRD before disbursement, which is an area identified for improvement. The EBRD mandates third-party monitoring (TPM) to ensure the appropriate use of funds, although their long-standing presence in Ukraine instils confidence in their operations. Additionally, the EBRD agreement establishes the possibility of additional review or evaluation of activities funded by the Contribution at any time up to 12 months after receiving the Completion Report upon scope and conduct understanding between the parties. [EQ2a, c] **There are opportunities for the Nansen Department to leverage UNDP partnerships to follow up on reported results and progress, both through and beyond the current formal structures.** The programme is designed in close alignment with the country's strategic development priorities, particularly those from the Education Strategy 2030 and its implementation plan (also known as the Education Sector Plan [ESP]) as well as synergies with other ongoing actions implemented by other international donors and development partners.

Considering the complexity and magnitude of the current intervention, there is an opportunity for the Nansen Department and UNDP to strengthen their relationship through additional consultations, beyond the currently agreed formal annual project Board meeting. Owing to the board setup, the Nansen Department is involved in decision-making processes more than usual. This setup, although initially met with some scepticism, has according to an interviewee proven to be beneficial for closely monitoring large and complex projects such as this. Nansen Department continues to have some concerns about this setup given that it positions Norway on 'both sides of the table' and may, as a result, make it more difficult to hold UNDP to account. Nansen Department's legal advisor has initiated a process along with MFA to engage with UNDP on this issue. The willingness of the Embassy to act as Nansen Department is regarded as an important mitigation measure [EQ2a, c]

Despite recognising the need to refine the overall direction and grant management rules for Moldova, the close and frequent dialogue (described by an interviewee as teamwork and a relationship of trust) between Nansen Department, the local embassy in Chișinău and the MFA, facilitates synergies and mutual support in decision-making and follow-up on progress. Reporting from partners was recently established in August and entails communications sent to both the Nansen Department and the Embassy office. Formal emails are sent to the MFA for major updates or decisions; however, informal communications are also maintained through quick emails, WhatsApp, or Teams messages. Furthermore, weekly Moldova update meetings are held with the MFA and the Embassy office to discuss progress, upcoming plans, and any issues. This trilateral communication ensures everyone is on the same page and follows up on progress. This communication is seen as particularly important in facilitating effective alignment of the humanitarian and non-humanitarian parts of the Moldova portfolio. There may be further opportunities to facilitate this through, for example, more engagement between the Moldova and humanitarian teams in the Nansen Department, or for the Moldovan embassy to participate in Norad–MFA humanitarian coordination meetings. [EQ2d]

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.[17] 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

[17] Meld. St. 8. 2023-24

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 contextually relevant information, ensuring that evaluations are immediately applicable and facilitate continuous improvement.[18]
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,

[18] 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/

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 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 portfolio[19] 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,

[19] 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.

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 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 separtment 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-Dash[20]) 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

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

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 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).

Department for Evaluation

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