

September 2006



Evaluation Policy 2006–2010

Part 1 Strategic priorities

Part 2 Evaluation Programme 2006–2008

Part 3 Guidelines for Evaluation of
Norwegian Development Cooperation



Norad

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Print: Grefslie Trykkeri

ISBN 82-7548-174-0

Evaluation Policy 2006–2010

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Part 1 Strategic priorities

1. Basis

The Evaluation Department in the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) is responsible for the planning and implementation of evaluation of activities financed over the Norwegian development co-operation budget and for communicating the results to the decision-makers and public in general. The Evaluation Department also acts as the advisor to Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in technical evaluation matters, and is Norway's representative in international evaluation work. This evaluation work is based on a mandate from the MFA. Activities are based on the political priorities set out by the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) and the Government of Norway, and derive from Norad's strategy.

The Soria Moria Declaration of the Red-Green Coalition Government stresses the importance of ensuring continuous evaluation of Norway's aid efforts and to have a result driven aid policy.

Norad's new strategy makes it clear that evaluation activities are intended to help Norwegian aid administrators learn from experience by systematising knowledge, whether it is developed by ourselves, in conjunction with others, or entirely by others. Additionally the evaluation work has a control function to assess the quality of the development cooperation and determine whether resources applied are commensurate with results achieved. Stress is also given to the communication of results, which is to be based on close links between the advisory function, evaluation function, aid administration and information work of Norad.

The Norad strategy requires a more result-oriented quality assurance of the aid. To achieve this, special emphasis shall be given to the outcome level of the result chain, i.e. changes in attitudes, patterns of conduct or life situation, and the impact level, i.e. the long-term community effects of the development cooperation. The strategy builds on the principle that the different strands of Norad's activities seek to support each other.

The Mandate for Evaluation of Norwegian Development Aid Administration presents the following targets:

- Evaluate effectiveness and results in relation to plans adopted
- Evaluate whether resource application is reasonably commensurate with results achieved
- Systematise experience, so as to assure quality and improve quality of future activities by means of good learning processes, and
- Provide information to aid policy makers and the general public.

The Mandate stipulates that the evaluation shall cover all types of development work, i.e. everything funded under the aid budget. The evaluation work shall also reflect the continuing changes in Norwegian and international development work. Participation in international joint evaluations will be sought.

The fact that the Evaluation Department is responsible for evaluation of the whole development cooperation does not imply that all responsibility for evaluation in a wider sense lies with the Department. The departments, embassies and organisations that have a management responsibility for Norwegian development grants are also responsible for control, evaluation, and learning in connection with their activities. The Evaluation Department does however have the task of providing evaluation expertise to the rest of the aid administration.

The Norwegian Regulations for Financial Management in Government require the frequency and scope of evaluations to be matched to the nature, risk and importance of the activity. The evaluation work also follows certain pre-established criteria and guidelines from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). In the Guidelines for Evaluation of Norwegian Development Aid (Part 3) these criteria are explained, including definitions of terms, and the differences between “evaluation” and other forms of control and learning.

Overall goal by 2010

Improved Norwegian development cooperation as the result of increased learning and accountability across all forms of Norwegian development aid and development aid channels.

2. Priorities for 2006 – 2010

In order to follow up these targets and strengthen the evaluation work in Norwegian development cooperation the Evaluation Department will promote the following in the period 2006 – 2010:

- 1. Quality assurance of *all* development cooperation**
- 2. Stronger focus on *results* of Norwegian aid**
- 3. Adapt evaluation work to *new aid modalities***
- 4. Improved *communication* of evaluation results and improved learning**
- 5. Strengthen evaluation as basis for *policy development***
- 6. Strengthen *quality* and reliability of evaluation activities.**

2.1 Promote quality assurance of all development cooperation

The Evaluation Department is responsible for evaluation of all Norwegian activities that are funded over the aid budget, i.e. the full range of development cooperation. Over time there will therefore be a reasonable distribution of evaluation activities between, for instance, long-term development cooperation on the one hand, and humanitarian assistance and programmes for peace on the other; between bilateral cooperation and efforts through multilateral channels, and between governmental channels and non-governmental voluntary organisations. Further there should be a good balance between what is evaluated at the global or general level, and evaluation of the specific results in the field. Different tools and different forms of aid need to be evaluated. And finally the evaluation will be seen in the broader context of work to assure the quality of Norwegian development cooperation.

The Evaluation Department will:

- Develop rolling plans which ultimately cover the main input areas in Norwegian development cooperation in a more systematic manner
- Undertake evaluation of the entire Norwegian cooperation with a given country and take part in donor cooperation on the evaluation of the total aid to a given country
- Cooperate with Norad’s Department of Quality Assurance and possibly other departments to help coordinate the different strands of the quality work
- Assist in bringing an evaluation perspective and evaluation issues to the fore in the planning of major activities at country level
- Engage the efforts of the Embassies to a greater extent in the evaluation (visits before commencing evaluation, etc)
- Strengthen and clarify the advisory and service function of the Department to other parts of Norad and MFA and to the embassies
- Use the partner agreements with the World Bank and UNDP more strategically in relation to Norwegian priorities and for professional cooperation, such as for methodology development and competence-building
- Cooperate more systematically with and make use of evaluation expertise available in Norway
- Apply competence and results of Norwegian development research more systematically for evaluation purposes

- Participate more systematically in the international cooperation on evaluation, especially with the aim of cooperating with and strengthening networks based in developing countries.

2.2 Promote focus on results in Norwegian development cooperation

In international development cooperation it is now accepted that in recent years there has been too little focus on the final results in the field. We know too little about whether aid works, or, indeed, what does work. The strong focus on overall planning and donor cooperation may have spurred this trend. Therefore there now seems to be a general desire to focus more on results and the impacts of aid. To this end evaluation has advantages compared with other forms of quality assurance, because it provides greater opportunities to look beyond the activity level and apply a more long-range perspective.

In our evaluation work it is nonetheless the case that studies of strategies, institutions, structures and processes have often dominated. For that reason there is a need to more strongly aim our evaluation efforts at the lower links in the result chain, the results for the people who the cooperation is intended to benefit (outcome and impact). At the same time, changes in aid forms are making it harder than hitherto to draw reliable conclusions about the impact of Norwegian assistance alone.

The Evaluation Department will:

- More strongly analyse the intended and unintended changes for the target groups when planning evaluations
- Encourage responsible departments, embassies and organisations to establish baseline data when planning major activities
- Collect and communicate more systematically results of other donor countries' and aid organisations' evaluation activities in specific areas
- Consider new forms and working methods for evaluation, often in cooperation with other bilateral donors
- Cooperate with the Department for Quality Assurance in taking the initiative for shared methodology development in result assessments jointly with partners in Norway
- Jointly with other departments systematise the results of reviews, self-assessments, etc. in Norwegian development aid
- Focus on results in the annual report on evaluation and coordinate them with Norad's new annual report on results of Norwegian development cooperation.

2.3 Adapt evaluation work to new aid modalities

In recent years Norwegian and international development cooperation has changed significantly in character. Sector programs and budget support have now become more dominant forms of development co-operation, and also the multilateral agencies now participate more fully in such cooperation. Further, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness sets new requirements for harmonisation between donors and for national ownership. The evaluation activities adapt to these changes with more joint evaluations and closer cooperation within the OECD/DAC evaluation network. The Evaluation Department nevertheless has a mandate to assist in assuring the quality of the Norwegian co-operation, which means that evaluation of Norwegian aid per se will continue to be important.

The Evaluation Department will:

- Allocate its resources between its own evaluations of Norwegian assistance on the one hand, and joint evaluations and evaluations done in cooperation with others on the other – roughly on a 50-50 basis
- Continue to conduct our own evaluations of Norwegian assistance whenever this is deemed necessary
- Jointly with other donors and organisations help strengthen the evaluation capacity of developing countries

- Promote the use of national institutions in evaluation in partner countries and promote greater participation by these countries in the evaluations
- Take the initiative for or take part in evaluations of the new aid modalities and channels
- Use our partnership agreements (World Bank and UNDP) to conduct pilot evaluations.

2.4 Contribute to improved communication of results and improved learning

One of the main purposes of evaluation is to help spur learning in the organisation. There is a need to strengthen the learning aspect of the Norwegian aid evaluation. This task demands standards not just of high quality in our evaluation work, but also in the professional communication of the results and its internalisation within the aid administration.

The Evaluation Department will:

- Allow staff to take part as observers during the evaluation provided this does not conflict with the principle of neutrality and independence
- Consult reference groups of stakeholders in the evaluations where appropriate
- Bring in different parts of the aid administration in the preparations and discussions of the results and follow-up of evaluation activities, for instance by holding meetings and seminars
- As provided in Norad's strategy, assist in strengthening meeting places among Norwegian aid actors to discuss and exchange experience from evaluations and quality assurance in development cooperation
- Monitor the requirement in the Evaluation Mandate for a more binding follow-up of the evaluations by the responsible department
- Jointly with embassies and delegations facilitate active review of the evaluation results in the partner countries and in organisations where the evaluated activities are taking place.

2.5 Strengthen evaluation as the basis for policy development, making the evaluation as relevant as possible

It is inherent in the character of the monitoring and learning functions of the evaluations that they must be well planned and that implementation takes time. This will be no less demanding when even greater emphasis is to be put on documenting results. Still, evaluation can be made even more politically relevant, and it may become easier to apply the results more directly within the political decision processes.

The Evaluation Department will:

- Let main challenges in development cooperation and in partner countries play an important part in the decision on theme and object to be evaluated.
- Prepare synthesis reports from Norwegian and international evaluations and research projects on selected topics that are relevant to the development debate
- Present the results of the evaluations in clear and concise messages
- In the Annual Report on Evaluation focus on the results documented through the evaluations and their relevance to Norwegian and international development cooperation.

2.6 Strengthen quality and reliability of evaluation activities

Strengthened knowledge and quality assurance are key terms in Norad's new strategy. The Evaluation Department will work continuously to increase its professional competence. In the same way there is a need to increase the quality of the evaluations. The Evaluation Department will:

- Implement a training and competence plan for the staff in the department throughout 2006 and ensure that competence building is an integral part of the department's activities in the future
- Allow staff to take part in other countries' and organisations' evaluations and reviews if possible and convenient
- Hold annual meetings or seminars with consulting industry and research circles on technical subjects

- Consider how the evaluation activities can benefit more from Norwegian development research. Help the Norwegian Foreign Service Institute (UKS) implement regular courses in evaluation for the Norwegian development cooperation community and strengthen awareness of evaluation and quality assurance.

3. Resources

These many tasks demand resources. The Evaluation Department will from autumn 2006 have a larger staff of 10 individuals. In addition we may draw on consultants to perform temporary and extraordinary tasks.

Resource use in the Department will follow the following guidelines:

- 50-50 split between self-initiated Norwegian evaluations on the one hand and joint evaluations and cooperation with others on the other
- Increased commitment to technical advice to the aid administration will make up maximum 20 per cent of the time of the department's staff
- Measures to strengthen evaluation capacity in partner countries will mainly take place in cooperation with others, through DAC or possibly with the World Bank and UNDP. Greater use of institutions in developing countries may also contribute to such strengthening.

Part 2 Evaluation Programme 2006 - 2008

This is a rolling programme that will be revised annually in June/July. It covers basically a period of two years. The programme may be changed, and the implementation will at any time depend on available resources and budget.

1. PRESENT PROGRAMME

Norwegian Evaluations

Institutional co-operation. Support for co-operation between the ministries of education in Norway and Zambia and Norway and Nepal.

Timetable: Report September 2006 Resp. officer: Anette Hauge

The New Norwegian Volunteer Service (Fredskorpset)

Timetable: Report fourth quarter 2006 Resp. officer: Tale Kvalvaag

Norway's development co-operation within the oil and gas field

Timetable: Report December 2006 Resp. officer: Jon Teigland

Norway's development co-operation in the energy sector (outside oil and gas)

Timetable: Report April 2007 Resp. officer: Jon Teigland

World Bank Trust Fund for Environmental, Social and Sustainable Development

Timetable: Report in 2007 Resp. officer: Beate Bull

Joint Evaluations

The International Response to the Tsunami. Tsunami Evaluation Coalition

Timetable: Report July 2006 Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

Exit Strategies. Co-ordinated by Sweden

Timetable: Phase 2 report in 2007 Resp. officer: Agnete Eriksen

Development of Guide for Evaluation of Conflict-Preventing and Peace-Building Activities

Lead: Norway and the DAC Secretariat

Timetable: Autumn 2006 Resp. officer: Beate Bull

The Harmonisation Initiative in Zambia. The Netherlands co-ordinates

Timetable: Start autumn 2006 Resp. officer: Agnete Eriksen

In partnership with the World Bank and UNDP

Ten Years of World Bank Support for Transport

Timetable: Report 3rd quarter 2006 Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

World Bank Support to Regional Programmes

Timetable: Report 3rd quarter 2006 Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

World Bank Support to Middle-Income Countries

Timetable: Report 2007 Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

World Bank Support to Low Income Countries under Stress

Timetable: Report September 2006 Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

World Bank Support for Client Training

Timetable: Report February 2007

Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

UNDP Support for Countries in Post-Conflict Situations

Timetable: Report 3rd quarter 2006

Resp. officer: Beate Bull

2. NEW EVALUATIONS

Norwegian Evaluations

Strategies to fight Female Genital Mutilation

Evaluation of strategies against female genital mutilation. How has the Norwegian Action Plan against FGM been implemented. Special emphasis on efforts in two or three partner countries.

Timetable: Start 2nd half of 2006

Resp. officer: Gørild Mathisen

Impact of Norwegian Development Programmes

In order to try to answer questions on impact of Norwegian development aid studies will be done of 2 – 3 Norwegian programmes 5 – 15 years after implementation. The programmes will be selected with the view of what may provide knowledge useful for planning of future development cooperation.

Timetable: Start 2nd half of 2006.

Norwegian Humanitarian Aid

An evaluation of total Norwegian Humanitarian Support for a Region or a Country

Timetable: Start 4th quarter 2006

Resp. officer: Anette Hauge

Comparative Studies on Efforts against Corruption

What development aid works in the fight against corruption? Searchlight on Norwegian support. Possibly comparative studies in Africa and Asia.

Timetable: Start 1st half of 2007

Resp. officer: Tale Kvalvaag

Country Studies of Norwegian Support to Civil Society

Two country studies of total Norwegian support for Civil Society. One of the studies should be a joint study with national government using only national or regional consultant. Pilot project.

Timetable: Start in 2007

Resp. officer: Gørild Mathisen

Involvement of Norwegian Institutions in Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building

Timetable: Start 2007

Resp. officer: Eivind Engebretsen

Norwegian Support for the Fight against HIV and Aids

Will cover 10 – 20 years. Changes over time. Adaptation to increasing number of actors and increased volume. Outcome mapping.

Timetable: Start 2007

Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

Norwegian Development Cooperation with One Partner Country

Since the country studies in the 80ies there has been no study of all Norwegian development aid to one country. Coherence and impact will be emphasised.

Timetable: Start 2007

Resp. officer: Eivind Engebretsen

Reorganisation of Development Cooperation Administration in 2004

The implementation and results of the comprehensive reorganisation of Norwegian development aid administration in 2004 is scheduled to be evaluated in 2007.

Timetable: Start 2007/2008

Evaluation of the Research Programme: Development Paths in the South

The largest research programme funded from the development aid budget will end in 2007.

Timetable: Start in 2008

Administration of Norwegian Support to Countries in Transition

Evaluation of Norwegian support to countries in post-conflict situations. A comparative study of channels for aid.

Timetable: Start in 2008

Joint Evaluations (DAC)

Voice and Accountability

Co-ordinated by DFID. Development of evaluation framework for assessing effects of support in strengthening citizens' voice and the accountability of authorities towards citizens.

Timetable: Start 2nd half of 2006

Resp. officer: Beate Bull

Aid Effectiveness at Country Level

Total development co-operation with one country. Sweden in the lead

Timetable: Start 2nd half of 2006

Resp. officer: Gørild Mathisen

Joint Impact Evaluations

The Evaluation Department will take active part in the international efforts to promote impact evaluation, i.a. a "network of networks". DFID and the World Bank are leading actors.

Timetable: From 2006

Resp. officer: Jon Teigland

Capacity Development in Low-Income Countries (Proposal)

Proposed as a multi-donor evaluation of various forms of capacity development strategies, including technical cooperation.

Timetable: Start 2007

Resp. officer: Eivind Engebretsen

Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building in One Country (Proposal)

Pilot testing of the Guide on evaluation of conflict prevention and peace-building activities.

Follow-up of the Utstein evaluation of peace-building.

Timetable: Start 2007

Resp. officer: Beate Bull

Evaluation Capacity of Multilateral Agencies

If studies of the evaluation capacities of multilateral agencies continues under the DAC evaluation network, the Norwegian evaluation department may be ready to participate in a study in 2008.

Timetable: 2008

Partnership Agreements with the World Bank and UNDP

UNDP: Total cooperation with South Africa

UN's evaluation group UNEG is about to start an evaluation of total UN cooperation with South Africa. The evaluation will be lead by the South African authorities. Norway will co-finance the study under our partnership agreement with UNDP. A possible evaluation of total UN cooperation with a low-income country will be considered for 2007.

Timetable: Start 2006

Resp. officer: Beate Bull

Other UNDP Evaluations

Possible projects to be included under the partnership agreement includes an evaluation of energy and environment in governance and poverty reduction programmes and another of UNDP's role in new modes of development cooperation.

World Bank: Impact Evaluation of WB Support to Rural Electrification

A study of the impact of rural electrification to be included under the partnership agreement.

Timetable: Start in 2006

Resp. officer: Jon Teigland

World Bank: Thematic Study

One thematic evaluation will be included, probably on WB Support to Governance and Public Sector Reform. Alternatives are the health sector and/or WB support to judicial reform.

World Bank: Country Assistance Evaluation

Norway will co-finance and cooperate with the Bank in implementing one of the Bank's country study.

Timetable: Start in 2007

Resp. officer: Kristin Teigland

Other Evaluation Projects

Evaluation of Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI)

The Evaluation Department will provide technical advice to the board of GAVI in evaluating the Alliance, and we will also take part in the managing of the evaluation.

Timetable: Start in 2006

Resp. officer: Tale Kvalvaag

Part 3 Guidelines for Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation

The Evaluation Department is responsible for the planning and implementation of evaluations of activities financed over the Norwegian aid budget, and for communicating the results to decision makers and the general public. The Department should also function as the advisor to employees in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Norwegian Embassies and Consulates, and to Norad, in matters of a professional nature to do with evaluation, and be Norway's representative in international evaluation cooperation.

1. Purposes of evaluation of Norwegian development cooperation

The two main purposes of evaluation of Norwegian development cooperation are as follows:

- a) Systematise knowledge of results and performance which can help improve similar activities in the future (learning function)
- b) Evaluate whether an activity has been performed as intended and/or whether the expected results have been achieved (control function, documentation).

Learning:

Evaluations seek to determine the causes why an intervention was more or less successful, the value of results achieved, and to supply information to planners and decision makers that will help future interventions to be more relevant and effective.

The intended users of the evaluation results are people who are responsible for planning and implementation of interventions within Norwegian aid administration (MFA, embassies, Norad), partners in Norway and in partner countries, and international organisations.

Control and documentation:

Evaluations shall seek to document the use of aid funds and the results that ensue, for decision makers and the general public. They shall also contribute to increasing our understanding of aid, its limitations and its potential to bring about social, economic and political change. Intended users are political decision makers and the general public.

The relative emphasis on the learning and control/documentation functions will vary from one evaluation to the next. Communication of knowledge to the relevant planners and decision makers is a key tool for influencing the design of future interventions and modalities of cooperation.

2. What is evaluation? Clarification of terminology¹

Evaluation is used here of assessments of an aid activity, program, policy, modality or strategy (ongoing or concluded), carried out as systematically and objectively as possible. The assessments can include the design of the activity, its implementation and the results achieved. Its purpose can be to determine the activity's relevance, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, impacts, and whether the intervention is sustainable.

Evaluations are primarily backward-looking (*ex-post*) and focus on our experience with a type of activities that have been concluded, but may also be performed for ongoing activities. The learning function suggests we give priority to experience that will be useful also in the

¹ See Development Aid Handbook (Bistandshåndboken) and the OECD DAC's "Glossary and Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management" at http://NoradNoradNorad.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=3514

future, but an evaluation is not an appraisal of a new activity. Evaluations are also distinguished from reviews and systematic monitoring of ongoing or completed interventions in that more rigorous standards of methodology, sources, and independence apply. Evaluations are also distinguished from the Completion Document, which, in the words of the Norad Development Cooperation Manual, is a formal conclusion of a project by the embassy or other responsible unit. The Completion Document seeks only to *summarise* results, relevant experiences, and the partner country's adherence to the reporting requirements.

Evaluations need to be of high quality and shall be:

Objective, verifiable, and transparent: Evaluations shall be based on facts, which is to say reliable data or observations. The results must be publicly accessible, not least to enable others to check facts and soundness of the analysis. The responsible authorities, partner country and target groups in Norway, internationally or in the partner country, must be consulted in connection with the facilitation of an evaluation and its implementation, including in the formulation of the Terms of Reference and discussion of the Draft Report.

Impartial: Evaluations must provide a balanced view of strengths and weaknesses. In so far as different parties have conflicting views, the evaluation report should reflect and acknowledge these.

Independent: To ensure the greatest possible objectivity the Evaluation Department requires evaluations to be undertaken by independent professionals with no personal interest in the results; they must be thorough and their recommendations should be based on systematic collection and presentation of data. This implies that members of the evaluation team must not have been personally involved in the activities which are being evaluated, or have any personal interest in the conclusions. The organisation conducting the evaluation shall not have been involved in the planning or implementation of the intervention being evaluated.

Norad may initiate evaluations on its own and at its own initiative, but may also take part in joint evaluations with other donors and partners. Joint evaluations are useful when the intervention is funded jointly with other donors, or in cases where the activities of a multilateral body are being evaluated.

3. Evaluation criteria

There is a high degree of international consensus with respect to criteria and quality standards to be applied in evaluation. Bilateral aid is largely evaluated based on the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in the OECD², whereas activities carried out by UN bodies are evaluated using the criteria and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).³ They reflect more or less the same quality requirements.

Under the DAC evaluation criteria each evaluation shall shed light on:

Relevance: Is the development intervention relevant in relation to goals and strategies of Norwegian aid policy? Is the intervention relevant in relation to the beneficiaries' and partner country's needs and priorities? Is it relevant in relation to the development issue it seeks to address? Are we doing the right things? Are there better ways of doing them?

Effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved. Are we doing things right?

Sustainability: Can the intervention benefits continue after aid funding has been completed? Is there local ownership?

² DAC principles on Evaluation of Development Cooperation, review 1998 at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/39/35343480.pdf>

³ <http://www.uneval.org/index.cfm?Fuseaction=UNEG>

Efficiency: Are the investments and running costs justified? How economically are resources/ inputs converted to results? Could the same results have been achieved using smaller funds?

Impact: Positive and negative long-term impact of the interventions, direct and indirect, intended or unintended.

If any of the above criteria are not included in the evaluation this is explained in the Terms of Reference and report. The same applies if one or more supplementary criteria have been used.

4. Selection of evaluation object/coverage

The Norwegian Regulations for Financial Management in Government (Reglement for økonomistyring i staten). Issued by the Ministry of Finance, state that the frequency and scope of evaluations shall be determined on the basis of the intervention's *character, risk, and significance*.⁴

Risk: This is the risk that an incident occurs that causes financial loss to the operation, or otherwise reduces the capacity of the operation to achieve its goals.⁵ All matters that may hamper effectiveness are potential risk factors. Risks might stem from political factors, economic factors and funding, structural or organisational factors, skills and expertise, culture and attitudes. There may also be certain risks associated with interventions, activities, and schemes which have been going on for a long time without ever being evaluated. Risks may also include negative and unintended consequences of development interventions, which may threaten life, health, property and the environment.⁶

Significance: Significant factors are those that, for instance, concern large sums of money, have a strong policy relevance, directly affect many individuals, or are by nature experimental or innovative. Significance and risk are intimately related. The limits for what is acceptable are much stricter if the significance is critical.

Character: The character of the activity will largely influence its risk and significance and be a factor in the evaluation. Complex organisations will need more frequent and more extensive evaluations than activities that are transparent and have a single purpose.⁷

In addition to the above criteria the decision to undertake an evaluation should be based on an assessment of cost-benefit. By this we mean that the evaluation under consideration should be relevant to Norad's and the MFA's interests, plans, and priorities, and to the Norwegian public and our partners in Norway, international partners and partners in partner countries. The need for and benefits from an evaluation must clearly exceed its costs. Questions to be asked include: Who will use the findings and recommendations from the proposed evaluation? Will it be possible to make use of the evaluation findings and results within reasonable time?

5. Planning the evaluation

The Evaluation Department is responsible for presenting a rolling evaluation program with the aim to documenting the results in relation to the above criteria against the overall priorities of the Norwegian development aid. Basically, this entails looking at:

- Completed programs
- Types of aid and channels of aid
- Sectors

⁴ Regulations for Financial Management in Government: Provisions on Financial Management in Government: (Reglement for økonomistyring i staten: Bestemmelser om økonomistyring i staten). Ministry of Finance, 2003, p. 57 (<http://odin.dep.no/archive/finbilder/01/14/regle002.pdf>).

⁵ Guidelines for implementation of evaluations (Veileder til gjennomføring av evalueringer), Ministry of Finance 2005, p. 13. (<http://odin.dep.no/filar/kiv/258841/Evalueringsveileder.pdf>)

⁶ From "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management", OECD DAC, 2002, p. 34

⁷ Regulations for Financial Management in Government: Provisions on Financial Management in Government (Reglement for økonomistyring i staten: Bestemmelser om økonomistyring i staten), p. 57.

- Themes
- Instruments used by aid management
- Policies
- Strategies.

The evaluation program seeks, over time, to review the full scope of Norwegian development cooperation and to contain a brief justification for each evaluation, its purpose (control and/or learning), a description of the target group, and a notion of how the results might be used by the aid administration.

6. Preparing for evaluation

Although the Evaluation Department has the final responsibility, relevant technical departments in Norad, MFA and the embassies, and representatives of our partners (non-governmental organisations, multilateral organisations, authorities in partner countries) should be included in the preparations for the evaluation, including when drawing up the Terms of Reference. A mapping and analysis of the different stakeholders may be required to make decisions on whom to involve and when; whom to include in a reference group and whom to consult when collecting data during the evaluation to ensure a relevant coverage of people's views and opinions. The point here is to ensure the relevance of the evaluation topic and evaluation questions.

When an evaluation is started and its Terms of Reference is drawn up, the following issues need to be decided:

1. What do we intend to evaluate, and why?

- a. What: A description of the evaluation object (intervention, activity, program, policy, etc), and the background and context
- b. Why: Scope of Norway's contribution, parties directly affected in partner country, political importance, etc.

2. What is the purpose of the evaluation?

- c. What will the evaluation be used for?
- d. Who will use the evaluation (target group)?
- e. When do we want to have the results available?

3. What focus do we want?

- f. Do we want to concentrate on special themes or issues?
- g. Is the main focus on the process, or on results?

4. What limits should be fixed relative to the object of evaluation?

- h. Are there special factors that decide the choice of time period, geography, or level?

As part of the planning process it is an advantage to develop a knowledge status (*state-of-the-art*) to document the experiences we have acquired from previous evaluations, review reports, other technical papers, and experience-based knowledge held by resource persons. Further, it will often be an advantage to conduct an "evaluability" study in connection with the planning.

Based on the above the Terms of Reference is drawn up, including a timetable. This forms the basis for selecting the consultants which is undertaken according to public procurement rules and regulations.

Evaluators from developing countries (not necessarily the same countries as are being evaluated) should be included in the evaluation team to the extent possible, provided they have the necessary expertise.

7. Implementation of evaluation

Evaluations are normally carried out in two phases. During the first phase the Evaluation Team, based on document studies and interviews in Norway and possibly in the partner country, draws up an Inception Report (oppstartsrapport). Here issues, feasibility, and challenges are discussed, hypotheses are presented, and choice of methodologies are justified. A plan for the further work is also included. It should cover data collection, method, design, field studies, analysis and structure of the report.

In evaluations where learning is a primary goal, the responsible body, partner and – in some cases – the target groups, shall also take part in the discussion of the results of data collection, analysis, conclusions and recommendations. Where the purpose is largely documentation of results, participation by the responsible body and partner will be less comprehensive and may be limited to a role in connection with document compilation, interviews, and debriefing or validation.⁸

The second phase is based on further collection of data, like the collection of primary data in the form of documentation, field studies, interviews and perhaps direct observation. To implement the evaluations, the consultant will need to be open to, and have good access to, oral and written sources in the MFA, Norad and embassies. The responsible department in the MFA or Norad will consult with the archives and the Evaluation Department to facilitate the consultants' work. Basically the consultant should have access to all written material relevant to the evaluation.

Based on this, the Draft Report is then presented to the Evaluation Department, which makes an assessment of the report with respect to adherence to national and international evaluation standards adopted.⁹ Comments are also invited from the various parties and communicated in full to the consulting team who must relate to them in the Final Report.

8. Report

The Final Report is a public document and the Evaluation Team has the final responsibility. However, the Evaluation Department must undertake the quality assurance in accordance with DAC standards. This quality process demands, among other things, the following:

1. Findings, conclusions, recommendations and "lessons to be learnt", should be presented separately and be logically coherent
2. Each recommendation should be directed to a specific addressee
3. Strict requirements for triangulation¹⁰ of information and validation of findings
4. Partners and persons responsible for the activity must have an opportunity to state their views on the quality of the data, the analysis and the assessments
5. Where there is a significant divergence in the views of the evaluation team and different parties in Norway or the partner country, this should be reflected in the report
6. The presentation in the report should be balanced and impartial
7. The data basis for the analysis should be verifiable
8. The report should contain practical and useful recommendations targeted towards identified problems.

The need for recommendations in the Final Report to be aimed at specific addressees will make it clear who the consultant believes to be responsible for following up the evaluation. Where several partners are involved the parties should have an opportunity to discuss how they can best follow up in partnership and individually. This can be done in connection with the parties giving their concluding comments on the draft of the report.

⁸ Validation means measures (here, for example, consulting), to ensure that data collection strategies and instruments actually measure what they are meant to measure.

⁹ DAC Evaluation Quality Standards 2006 <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/62/36596604.pdf>

¹⁰ Triangulation means using three or more theories, information sources, data sets, or analyses to verify and support an assessment.

The report shall be in English, but if it is believed to be of interest to the broader public in Norway, it must also be published in Norwegian. Consideration may be given to translation of the report to another language if this makes it more accessible for the partners. The report should be distributed to all parties.

For each evaluation an Executive Summary should be produced and published. This should contain the major findings of the evaluation, the conclusions and recommendations. The presentation needs to be in easily comprehensible language to enhance communication. The Evaluation Department will distribute the report according to established lists of recipients, including the Auditor General and the Office of the President of the Storting.

9. Follow-up

Based on the Final Report and substantive comments obtained, the Evaluation Department will prepare a Memorandum with suggested points to be followed up in Norwegian development aid policy. This Memo will be sent via Norad's Director to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attention of the Secretary General.

The Memo will sum up the experiences from implementation of the evaluation, the content and recommendations of the Report, and the views expressed by the various parties. The Memo will particularly point at results of the evaluation that suggest changes of some substance to Norwegian development policy. Norad's Director may append his own comments to the Memo when it is sent to the Ministry.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Secretary General, will decide – based on the response from the department, office or embassy responsible for the intervention or activity being evaluated – what issues need to be followed up, within what time-frames, and by whom. This follow-up plan will be announced within six weeks to the partner country, the Evaluation Department and Norad's Director. The decision will be publicised as required under the Freedom of Information Act.

The department responsible will, no later than one year thereafter, report to the Secretary General, or in the case of Norad, to the Director of Norad, with a copy to the Evaluation Department as to what measures have been implemented, or are planned, in order to follow up the decisions following from the evaluation.

The results of the evaluation are brought back into the results-based management system through the implementation of the *follow-up plan* (oppfølgingsplanen) for the department in question, and through contributions to policy development in terms of advising the political leaders of the results.

10. Knowledge communication

Hearings and seminars, plus information dispatches and home pages will be used to inform about ongoing and concluded evaluations and lessons learned.

The Evaluation Department will each year summarise the results and findings that arise from evaluations and the lessons learned, in an annual report.

Through participation in and funding of different evaluation networks that share experiences from evaluation work, the Evaluation Department works to promote result-orientation, accountability and learning within the Norwegian aid administration. In addition the Evaluation Department will communicate the results of relevant national and international evaluations where Norad has not participated, but where the results are deemed relevant also in the Norwegian context.

11. Harmonisation, partnerships and capacity-building in partner countries

In line with the harmonisation agenda the Evaluation Department takes part in joint evaluations with other donor organisations, the UN system and partner countries. This is so as to reduce the workload on partner countries and promote synergies.

In addition the Evaluation Department will encourage evaluations spearheaded by a partner organisation in a partner country where the necessary expertise is already in place or can be built up during the course of the evaluation.

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No of copies: 250

September 2006

ISBN 82-7548-174-0

