

# Results Management in Norwegian Development Cooperation

A practical guide





## After reading and using this Practical Guide you should recognise:

- » the importance of setting **clear objectives**.
  
- » that **outcomes** represent the most important result-level in results management. You and your partner should stay focused on what ultimately matters: the effects of the intervention on people and systems.
  
- » the significance of developing a limited number of sound **indicators with targets** as these are the keys to knowing when you and your partner are making measurable progress towards desired results.
  
- » the need to collect **baseline values** for the indicators in the planning phase. It is difficult to determine what has been accomplished in 3-5 years if we don't know where we are at present.
  
- » that **risk management** is an important and integrated part of results management. What are the major risks? How should they be handled or monitored, by whom and when?
  
- » that the results framework with indicators, targets and baselines should be **linked to a monitoring and evaluation plan**. Make sure reporting and evaluation requirements are aligned with the monitoring and evaluation system of your partner.
  
- » the importance of **KISS!** If results management is to be successful, it must be grounded in reality and be perceived as useful. This suggests a simple and practical approach to result management.  
**Keep It Simple and Smart!**



# Content

Introduction	
Purpose, target groups and contents	5
1. Background and definitions	
Background	9
What is a result?	10
What is a risk?	11
2. Practical results management	
Using logical planning models	13
Selecting indicators, establishing baselines and setting targets	14
Linking the results framework to a monitoring and evaluation plan	15
Identifying, analysing and responding to risks	18
Some additional success factors	20
3. Results management in the different stages of the programme cycle	
1. Preparatory phase	23
2. Follow-up phase	26
3. Completion phase	28
Annex	
Annex I Some sources for indicators	30



## Purpose, target groups and contents

Findings from Management Reviews of Norwegian development co-operation reveal a need and a demand for a practical introduction to the main concepts, principles and especially tools of results management. This short guide is an attempt to respond to that demand, the purpose being to increase staff's knowledge of the main principles of results and risk management and what it means in practical terms throughout the various stages of programme management<sup>1</sup>.

The principal users of this Practical Guide are embassy staff with responsibility for development cooperation as well as staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Norad. It may also be useful for a wider range of development partners, such as NGOs and institutions in partner countries.

### **The Practical Guide has three parts:**

**Part 1** gives a short introduction and background to the subject, as well as definitions of the main concepts.

**In Part 2**, practical aspects of results management are elaborated:

- Using logical planning models
- Selecting indicators, establishing baselines and setting targets
- Identifying, analysing and responding to risks
- Linking the results framework to a monitoring and evaluation plan
- Some additional success factors

**Part 3** looks at the practical use of results management in the different stages of the programme cycle (preparatory, follow-up and completion). Part 3 is closely related to and compatible with the Development Cooperation Manual (DCM), and the two can be applied seamlessly.

As mentioned, results and risk management are identified as “weak spots” in Norwegian development cooperation management. This means that even small steps in the right direction will imply progress, and this Guide will be your tool to take those steps!

---

<sup>1</sup> To staff members who request a more detailed introduction to results management we recommend you study handbooks such as the World Bank's “Ten Steps to a Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation System” or explore [www.mfdr.org](http://www.mfdr.org) or similar websites.

Please note that the concepts and principles presented are internationally recognised and extensively used by other donors and partners alike, and can thus be safely brought into programme management and dialogue at country level. Also be aware that the requirements contained are in accordance with Norwegian laws and regulations, such as the Administration Act (Forvaltningsloven), the Budgetary Regulations (Bevilgningsreglementet) and the Norwegian Financial Management Regulations (Økonomiregelverket).

As you use this Guide, you may come across sections that could be improved. Any suggestions to that effect will be welcome, as will your examples of real-life experiences (that could be included in the next edition). Please submit your input to: [Post-AMOR@norad.no](mailto:Post-AMOR@norad.no).

**The Norwegian Financial Management Regulations**

(Reglement for økonomistyring i staten), in article 6.3.6, states that the *fund manager shall retrieve from the recipient, reports that make it possible to establish the degree of target achievement.*





# 1. Background and definitions

## Background

The international commitment to improve management for results is a shared responsibility between partner countries and donors. Developing countries should pursue results orientation in their national development strategies, programmes and projects. Development agencies have committed, through adherence to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, to implement the results agenda and to support capacity building in that area.

The need for information on actual results is also a shared concern. Our partner governments are accountable to their parliaments, constituencies and the beneficiaries of development interventions, to make efficient use of investments and to achieve results on the ground. Donor agencies, on their side, are accountable to their governments, parliaments, tax payers and the general public audience. Communicating results (as well as challenges) is important for donors in order to keep up public interest and knowledge of development cooperation

The concept of results management is a well established strategy and has been applied in many private and public organisations and development agencies during the 80s and 90s. In this Practical Guide, concepts such as Managing for Development Results<sup>2</sup> (MfDR), Results Based Management (RBM) and Performance Management (PM) are for simplicity referred to as “results management”.

Alice in Wonderland was told that, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there”. This lack of direction is what results management aims to fix. It is about choosing a destination first, then deciding on the route, checking progress against a map and making adjustments, as required, in order to achieve the desired results.

A results approach involves shifting management attention away from a focus on inputs, activities and processes to a focus on benefits – **from what you have done to what you have achieved**. Results management also focuses on using information on results to improve decision making.

---

<sup>2</sup> Emerging Good Practice in Managing for Development Results:  
Available at <http://www.mfdr.org/Sourcebook.html>

## What is a result?

A result is something that “arises as a consequence”. In development co-operation this should translate into reduced poverty or the improved lives of ordinary men and women in developing countries. However, in practice the effects of development cooperation are rarely that unambiguous, and we need look closer at different levels of results. A central element in results thinking is the “results chain”, which is an illustration of the anticipated causal relationship between various elements over time. In other words, we talk about a cause-and-effect relationship.

**Fig. 1 The Result Chain**



In line with international standards, we define a result as an output, outcome or impact of a development intervention<sup>3</sup>. While the results chain shows the causal relationship between its elements over time, one should be aware that it does not imply a linear process only. Like all models, it represents a simplification of a complex reality where many factors beyond the control of programme management may affect the results of the intervention, particularly at outcome and impact level.

Outputs are normally quantitative results; products or services which are relevant for the achievement of outcomes. Outputs are actually the short-term products of completed activities. They can typically be measured on a regular basis by keeping account of what has been produced within a specific timeframe and budget. As outputs normally are possible to attribute to the activities performed, there is a tendency for management to focus on these aspects in the performance monitoring, often neglecting the monitoring of outcomes.

It is generally accepted that **outcomes represent the most important result-level in results management**. Outcomes are the intended, intermediate effects on the target groups, such as a lower incidence of malaria in a given geographical area. Outcomes may stem from factors both within and beyond the control of the programme, i.e. a particular intervention may be only one among many contributions to an outcome. For instance, improved health services may depend on interventions in the electricity sector to ensure electricity for refrigeration of vaccines or even the implementation of a public reform programme including decentralisation of authority to local government. Even so, **the purpose of defining clear outcomes is for managers to stay focused on what ultimately matters: the effects of their interventions on people and systems**.

<sup>3</sup> When stated as objectives the three levels of results are often referred to as outputs, purpose (outcome) and goal (impact).

### What is attribution?

Attribution means to credit a result to a particular development intervention. Attribution is becoming increasingly difficult as the modes of development cooperation change. The funding of most development interventions is to an increasing extent originating from numerous sources; the partner country itself and a large or small group of donors. The funding is pooled and each donor cannot identify which results were caused by its financial support. The donors will therefore have to report on their contribution to the programme results, since attribution is impossible. Moreover, a development intervention is not isolated from society or other development interventions. In a number of ways the programme will be affected by its surroundings. Success or failure may in many cases be difficult to attribute to one intervention alone.

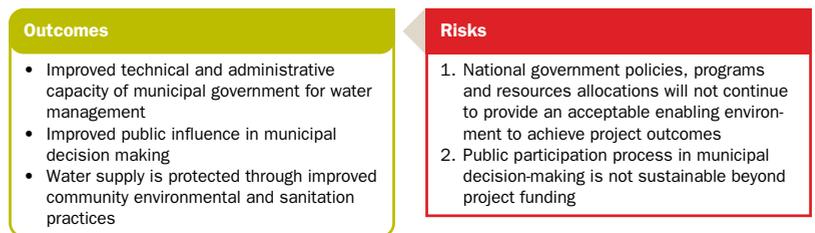
By impact we mean long-term improvements in society, such as reduced mortality rates of children. Measuring impact of a programme represents major methodological challenges. The causal relationship between the development intervention and the changes that have taken place in society are often difficult to prove. Multiple factors beyond control of the programme may influence the long term effects in both positive and negative ways. It will, therefore, normally be wrong for the programme, not to mention the donor, to take credit (or the blame) for the results at impact level.

### What is a risk?

Wikipedia in 2008 defines risks as "events or conditions that may occur, and whose occurrence, if it does take place, has a harmful or negative effect", a definition as good as any. **Risks are closely related to results and should consequently be analysed against the results framework of a programme.** There are both internal and external risk factors. Internal risks are factors under the control of the programme that may hinder success, such as corruption, human and financial resource capacity, management capabilities, incentive structures, accountability and transparency, ownership and motivation of staff. External risks are conditions outside the programme which could have a negative influence on the achievement of results. External risks could be related to political, institutional, economic, environmental, social or technological conditions.

As an example, the figure below illustrates how a decentralized water programme is dependent on the support of central government structures as well as local public participation in order to achieve its outcomes. If these conditions are not in place, they represent external risks which could have a negative influence on the achievement of outcomes (responsible institution in this case is the municipal government).

**Fig. 2 Example – Initiative to strengthen municipal capacity for effective and sustainable provision of potable water to all municipal residents** (other results levels have been excluded for reasons of brevity)





## 2. Practical Results Management

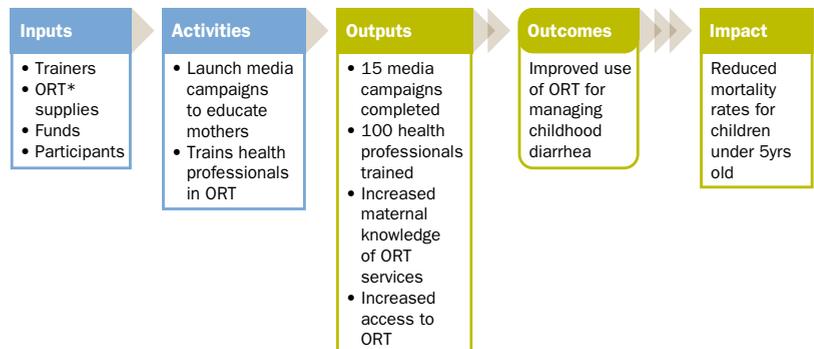
### Using logical planning models

One important aspect of results management is the use of logical planning models to improve the design of the intervention. Such models are useful in setting up a monitoring and evaluation framework during and beyond programme implementation.

**A basic principle in results planning is to start with the intended impact and outcomes and then identify the outputs, activities and inputs required to achieve them.** The method implies a thorough analysis of the problem that needs to be solved, what changes are desired and what activities and inputs are necessary to achieve them. Key questions are:

- A. What is the present situation?
- B. What do we want to achieve in e.g. 3 or 5 years?
- C. How do we get from A to B?
- D. How will we know when we have arrived?

**Fig. 3 Example – A results chain for one National Development goal**



Source: Binnendiik 2000, Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System (WB)

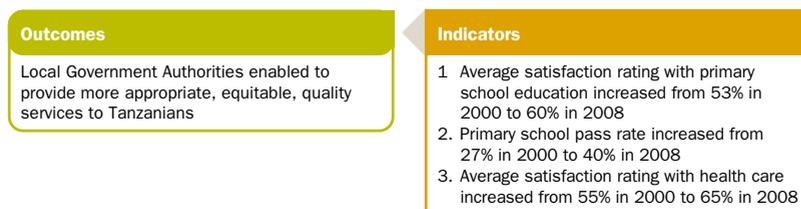
\* Oral Rehydration Therapy

In defining and phrasing of objectives, care should be taken to avoid “double” objectives. For instance “Reduced mortality rates through improved use of ORT” (see illustration above), is in fact two objectives on different levels of the results chain. This reduces measurability and certainty of what the objective actually is. In expressing the objectives, aim for precision. The more precise the objective, the higher the measurability.

## Selecting indicators, establishing baselines and setting targets

Having defined the objectives, we need indicators - and explicit targets for each indicator - to know when or whether we are making progress towards desired results. By verifying change, **indicators will demonstrate progress when things are on track and provide early warning signals when things are heading in the wrong direction.**

**Fig. 4 Example – A outcome with indicators, targets and baselines in a local government reform programme**



Even though outcome indicators represent the most important measure for performance, indicators and targets are important at all levels of the results chain. At output level these could relate to physical assets such as number of health centres, classrooms etc. Targets could also be articulated from a user's perspective, and deal with issues such as access to, and quality of, services - and the user's satisfaction with service delivery.

Indicators may be qualitative or quantitative. Quantitative indicators are numerical values such as literacy rates, agricultural productivity/crop ratios or the number of men and women with university education. Qualitative indicators reflect people's judgements, opinions and attitudes towards a given situation or subject. While quantitative outputs and efficiency express how much has been produced at what costs, quality is primarily about usefulness. Measuring quality is especially important in public sector areas for which there is no market in which users through demand demonstrate their assessments of the services or products. Quality may be measured both through quantitative indicators as well as surveys of the users' assessments i.e. their perceived quality of the services.

A limited number of key indicators should be agreed upon. There is no need to measure every aspect of service delivery and outputs. Fewer indicators may sometimes deliver a stronger message. The responsible institution or organisation should select the indicators that best measure the degree of achievement of results. Stakeholders should be involved in the process. It is important to keep in mind that the indicators must be based on valid and reliable data, and should be possible to monitor with simple data collection methods, ideally, as part of the existing system of the partner.

**Indicators should, to the extent possible, be SMART:**

**Specific** – It should be exact, distinct and clearly stated.

**Measurable** – It should be measurable in some way, involving qualitative and/or quantitative characteristics

**Achievable** – It should be realistic with the human and financial resources available

**Relevant** – Does it measure the result?

**Time-bound** – It should be achieved in a stated time-frame

In selecting indicators, attention should be given to the

» *Source of information/Means of verification:*

How and where to get the information? How often? Who is responsible for collection, analysing, reporting and commenting?

» *Cost/benefit:*

How much does it cost to provide information? How valuable is the information?

» *Alignment with national systems.* Do not establish a new indicator if one of acceptable quality and relevance is already available in the existing system of the partner country (or institution). This ensures ownership and sustainability.

There are a great number of internationally used indexes that may serve well as indicators<sup>4</sup>, in particular at the higher (outcome/impact) levels. Your partner will not always be able to rely on existing statistics or established indicators. If the task of finding relevant indicators seems difficult, consider this: What made you decide there was a problem in the first place? What kind of information made it clear an intervention was necessary? This is where you should look for indicators and baselines.

In 3-5 years time it will be difficult to determine what you have achieved, if you don't know where you started. The present situation and challenges should be described in the Programme Document, and **your partner should know the baseline values of the indicators before they start implementing programme activities**. The purpose of a baseline is to describe or measure the situation prior to the development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparison made. Normally, therefore, the initial step in setting targets is to identify the baseline. This can be done through a feasibility study or a more focused baseline study. Much too often, we start this work too late!

## **Linking the results framework to a monitoring and evaluation plan**

A monitoring and evaluation system focusing on results will offer an evidence-based foundation for decision making. Once a results framework with indicators, baselines and targets has been established, it should be linked to a plan and a system that supplies managers and other stakeholders with reliable information about what works and what doesn't. This means putting required monitoring and reporting systems in place for measuring performance at appropriate institutional or organisational levels, ensuring availability of required data sources, agreeing on frequency of monitoring, and having competent personnel to collect information and assess whether desired results are being achieved according to plan and budget.

---

4 See Annex 1

**Fig. 5 Example – A performance measurement framework related to an education programme for girls and boys affected by armed conflict (at outcome level only)**

Outcomes	Performance indicators	Means of Verification	Collection Methods	Frequency	Responsibility
Access to education has increased for girls and boys in targeted areas	% enrolment and retention rates for girls and boys	MoE statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually</li> <li>• Review 3rd year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project director</li> <li>• Review: external consultant</li> </ul>
New education models meet the social, emotional and educational needs of girls and boys in war-affected communities	Perception of girls, boys, parents, teachers on relevance and quality of new education models	Verbal testimony/survey data from girls, boys, parents and teachers in targeted schools and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Survey questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually</li> <li>• Review 3rd year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO partners</li> <li>• Review: external consultant</li> </ul>
Girls and boys demonstrate increased capacity for democratic decision making	Nr. of instances where children are able to influence education decisions/outcomes	Verbal testimony/survey data from girls, boys, parents and teachers in targeted schools and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Survey questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually</li> <li>• Review 3rd year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO partners</li> <li>• Review: external consultant</li> </ul>
Girls and boys demonstrate increased acceptance of tolerance, diversity and non-violent solutions to conflict	Perception of girls, boys and teachers re changes in incidents of verbal/physical abuse and use of conflict resolution at school	Verbal testimony/survey data from girls, boys, parents and teachers in targeted schools and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Survey questionnaire</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Artistic and dramatic expression with children</li> <li>• Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually</li> <li>• Review 3rd year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO partners</li> <li>• Review: external consultant</li> </ul>



Essentially, a **monitoring system provides regular information on the degree of achievement of results at a particular point of time.** While monitoring provides records of activities and results, and ideally signals challenges and risks to be handled along the way, it will probably not be able to explain why a particular problem has occurred or why the programme is not reaching its planned outcome. That kind of analysis, to understand questions of cause and effect, will normally be done through Reviews and evaluation exercises.

There is a high degree of international consensus with respect to criteria and quality standards to be applied in evaluations. Bilateral aid is largely evaluated based on the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in the OECD, which are:

**Fig. 6 OECD Evaluation criteria and some relevant issues to look into in a Review/Evaluation**

Evaluation criteria	Some relevant questions to raise....
<p><i>Impact</i> The totality of the effects of a development intervention, positive and negative, intended or unintended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the intervention affected the well being of different groups of stakeholders, intended or unintended?</li> <li>• What do beneficiaries/stakeholders affected by the intervention perceive to be the effects of the intervention on themselves?</li> <li>• To what extent does the intervention contribute to capacity development and strengthening of institutions?</li> <li>• Would the identified changes have taken place without the intervention?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Effectiveness</i> The extent to which a development intervention has achieved its objectives, taking their relative importance into account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do development changes accord with the planned results of the intervention?</li> <li>• To what extent is the identified development the result of the intervention rather than external factors?</li> <li>• What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievements of results?</li> <li>• What can be done to make the intervention more effective?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Efficiency</i> The extent to which the cost of a development intervention can be justified by its results, taking alternatives into account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What measures have been taken during planning and intervention to ensure that resources are efficiently used?</li> <li>• Could the intervention have been implemented with fewer resources without reducing the quality or quantity of the results?</li> <li>• Could more of the same result have been produced with the same resources?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Relevance</i> The extent to which a development intervention conforms to the needs and priorities of target groups and the policies of recipient countries and donors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the intervention consistent with the livelihood strategies and living conditions of the target group?</li> <li>• Is it consistent with a policy of supporting partner country ownership?</li> <li>• Is it a technically adequate solution to the problem at hand?</li> <li>• Does the intervention have a potential for replication?</li> <li>• Is it consistent with Norwegian policies and priorities?</li> <li>• Is it consistent and complementary with other development interventions?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sustainability</i> The continuation or longevity of benefits from a development intervention after the cessation of development assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the intervention consistent with partner's priorities and demand? Is it supported by local institutions and integrated with local conditions?</li> <li>• Are requirements of local ownership satisfied? Did partner country stakeholders participate in the planning and intervention?</li> <li>• Are relevant institutions characterised by good governance, including effective management and organisation?</li> <li>• Is the technology appropriate to the economic, educational and cultural condition?</li> <li>• Do partners have the financial capacity to maintain the benefits from the intervention when donor support has been withdrawn?</li> <li>• Is the intervention harmful to the natural environment?</li> </ul>

Evaluations or Reviews should be seen as complementary to regular monitoring and should be used selectively to deal with information that monitoring cannot adequately provide. For an Evaluation or a Review to be feasible, however, monitoring data must be available.

Remember that donors often contribute to the fragmentation of the partner country's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. Try not to require customised reports or support parallel systems with data incompatible with the country's monitoring system. It is important that donors, as far as pos-

sible, align their reporting and evaluation requirements with the partner's own planning, reporting and monitoring and evaluation system. If alignment is not possible due to shortcomings in the partner's system and data collection methods, donors should harmonise their requirements and also offer support for capacity development.

### Identifying, analysing and responding to risks

Risk management is an integral part of results management. Based on the definition in Part 1, we can say that the core of risk management is to identify, analyse and react to internal or external factors that might impede implementation or have a negative influence on the achievement of results. What are the major risks? How should they be handled, by whom and how?

The first step in risk management normally is to identify the risk factors. Early identification in the planning phase is the most rewarding, as there is still time to alter the design, organisation or management of the programme. The identification process should focus on specific risk factors that are directly relevant for the programme. The OECD/DAC sustainability elements<sup>5</sup> are useful reminders of risk factors to any programme.

Identification of risks is not sufficient. The next step is to analyse the risks in terms of the probability of their occurrence, and the consequences they are likely to have for the success of the programme. The purpose of risk analysis is to assess the level of threat to the development intervention. A simple diagram like the one in Fig. 7 is a useful tool to assess each of the risk factors identified. The total analysis will also reveal whether the design of the programme is robust enough to achieve its planned results in the presence of uncertainty and risk.

Fig. 7

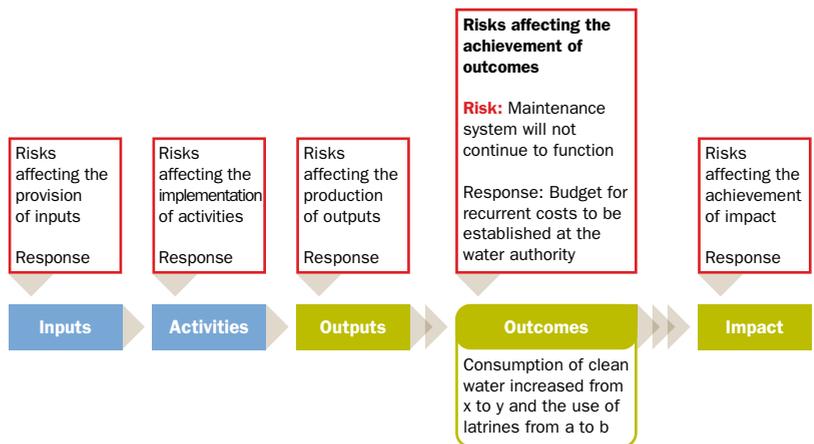


<sup>5</sup> "Assessment of Sustainability Elements/Risk factors, Practical Guide", Norad, 2007 is a helpful tool to identify and follow up potential risk factors to any programme

The next step is risk response, or risk mitigation. The approach is to accept the presence of risks and plan accordingly. Management strategies can then be considered and resources allocated, if it is feasible and cost effective, to bring the factors under manageable control of the programme. This includes a variety of actions related to these two options:

- » Reduce the probability that a risk factor will occur by changing the design or the implementation plan, or introducing mitigating measures
- » Reduce the consequences if the risk factor occurs

**Fig. 8 Example – Managing and responding to risks in a drinking water programme**  
(one example at one result level highlighted for reasons of brevity)



However, the further one progresses along the results chain, the less control the programme will have over these factors, and the ability to bring risk within manageable control becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible. Often, neither of the two options is possible. If the risk level and consequences are significant, carrying on with the implementation should be questioned. If not rejected, the high risk tolerance level should always be documented.

Implementing development cooperation activities in the poorest, often conflict-torn countries with significant institutional inadequacies, necessitates acceptance of significant uncertainty and risk. Based on the fact that controlling risks often is not possible, the best alternative is to monitor the status of the risk assumptions, giving the greatest attention to those with the highest risk rating and taking corrective actions when required.

Having the responsibility for planning and implementation, the partner also has the day-to-day responsibility for identification, analysis and response to risks in all phases of the programme. It is the partner and (local) stakeholders who possess the most detailed information on what risk factors exist or may emerge. It takes inside knowledge to be able to identify, analyse and handle risk factors. However, one should be aware that stakeholders in some cases are reluctant to inform about potential risks as they fear that the programme may not be supported.

The donor is responsible for assessing risks in all phases of the programme cycle and to raise risk factors in the dialogue with the partner. It is particularly important in connection with Appraisals and Reviews. The donor's responsibility is to control and react if risk management is not performed satisfactorily and results are not forthcoming.

### **Some additional success factors**

All the described systems and methods are important tools for planners and implementers of development interventions in our partner countries and partner organisations. We must, however, keep in mind that results management is much more than technical tools and methodological challenges. There are other factors that are equally important, such as:

» *A results oriented leadership*

A major precondition for successful results management is management commitment. A results oriented leadership defines clear objectives and strategies for the programme or organisation, demands information and documentation of results and actually uses this information in decision making. Leaders are role models in demonstrating attitudes and behaviour that are essential for the success of the organisation/programme. The focus on outcomes must be supported from top political or management level. Parliaments play an increasingly important role in demanding results and result information.

» *An organisational culture and structure conducive to improvement and learning*

Involvement of staff in developing and implementing a results approach is important in order to create support for the necessary change of orientation. This implies training, as well as participation, in setting realistic goals and targets, assessing risks and reporting on performance. In addition, incentive structures for management and staff to change a traditional compliance-oriented culture are important. A results oriented organisation is structured so that knowledge and learning from e.g. reporting and evaluations are used systematically in order to improve decision making. What should be changed in order to improve the achievements? Focus on learning implies that flexibility in responding to the demands and needs of the target group is encouraged. Decentralisation of authority to bring decision-making closer to the target population may be a means to achieve stronger results management.

Accountability requires that there are clear roles and responsibilities for achieving results and that the responsible authority is held answerable for its performance.

Supporting this kind of capacity building in partner institutions is highly recommended, either as part of a bigger programme or as a separate initiative.

» *Stakeholder/beneficiary involvement*

Participation by all stakeholders and beneficiaries is of vital importance to set relevant and realistic goals and identify risk factors. In order to uncover what matters to the society and keep this in focus, it is necessary to involve stakeholders and integrate target group concerns. Stakeholders may be individuals, institutions and interest groups who are affected by the development intervention and want to exercise influence on the decisions. By encouraging this kind of involvement, we will also contribute to democratic development in general.

» *KISS!*

There has been a tendency in results management to develop too complicated and comprehensive results frameworks and systems, not least because of donor pressure. For instance, a large number of indicators can make monitoring complicated, unfocused, impractical and expensive. If results management is to be successful and sustainable, it must be grounded in reality and be perceived as useful. This suggests a gradual, realistic, simple and practical approach to results management. Keep It Simple and Smart!





# 3. Results management in different stages of the programme cycle

**Partners and donors have different roles in results management.** Our partner governments and implementing organisations are responsible for producing and monitoring results in accordance with the goals and objectives of their national development plans, sector policies and strategies and programmes. As a donor, our responsibilities are to appraise and discuss programme proposals, assess plans and reports, carry out a dialogue on results and risks, initiate Reviews and Evaluations and react if obligations are not followed up or results are not coming as planned. In the following section, we will look at what results management means for staff at the embassies, in Norad and MFA in our daily management of development cooperation programmes in the various phases of the programme cycle. This part is closely linked to the Development Cooperation Manual.

## 1. Preparatory phase – Quality at entry

The preparatory phase of a programme lays the foundation for success of a development intervention. The term “Quality at entry” implies a participatory process whereby the process and documentation in the planning phase achieve optimal quality. Investment of time and resources in results-oriented planning of a programme and a precise Agreement bring rewards in the form of smoother implementation even in a risk prone environment.

### Platform for Dialogue

The purpose of the Platform for Dialogue (Pfd) is to clarify important issues concerning results management which should be raised in the early dialogue with the Partner government and/or other potential development partners regarding support to the programme.

#### *Issues to consider:*

- » Are the planned outcomes aligned with national development plans?
- » Is there a need for a separate baseline study?
- » What are the sources of information/means of verification to provide evidence of results?
- » If relevant, review experience from previous support to the programme, or use other information sources, to identify possible risk factors that may hinder the success of the programme.
- » The Pfd’s description of experience from previous phases of the programme should focus on outcomes achieved- or not achieved.

- » Share your views regarding possible risk factors with the partner, so that the partner's programme documentation may incorporate relevant risk analysis and risk management measures. Alternatively, separate/more in-depth studies may be undertaken.
- » The possibility of offering financial and/or technical support to the Partner to arrange planning workshops to ensure stakeholder involvement in the planning process should be kept in mind. A participatory approach may contribute to realistic plans both with regard to risks and desired results. Are there any domestic institutions that provide training in results management (e.g. log frame planning, monitoring and evaluation)?

### **Programme Document**

A results framework and risk assessments are supposed to be included in the partner's Programme Document (if they are not, see below). Where risk factors are identified and analysed, mitigation measures and risk management procedures should be incorporated in the document. Description of the monitoring system and accountability structures on different levels is an important part of the Programme Document.

### **Appraisal**

The Appraisal is a quality control of the programme proposal. An assessment of the results framework and risks that may hinder the programmes success is a major part of an Appraisal. The format for Terms of Reference (TOR) for Appraisal in the DCM covers important results and risk issues, and should be used as appropriate.

#### *Issues to consider:*

- » Does the partner/organisation in question practice results management? Has the partner in question a results oriented organisational culture? (This question is relevant when assessing institutional capacity.)
- » Is the programme design clear and logical and based on cause-and-effect relationships? Are there unclear linkages between the different levels of results so that it becomes hard to establish how a specific result will be achieved? Are the outcomes realistic and relevant for the problem to be solved?
- » Is the partner clear about what outputs it intends to produce as contributions to outcomes? Does it have specific targets or benchmarks for its outputs like service coverage, standards of quality, and timeliness? Is the partner confusing completed activities with outputs?
- » Are key indicators formulated? Are they SMART?
- » Is baseline data available?



- » What are the sources of information/means of verification to provide evidence of results? Does the programme design integrate monitoring and evaluation systems and practices that yield an evidence based foundation for decision making? Is the monitoring and evaluation system adequate, sufficient and aligned with the partner's ordinary system? Are the reporting requirements kept simple and realistic?
- » Have Reviews and Evaluations been planned for, including in the budget?
- » Have stakeholders been involved in the planning process?
- » How does the partner work with, and manage risk? Are relevant risk factors identified, analysed and are mitigating actions integrated in the programme design?
- » Is there a need for support to capacity development for results/ risk management including monitoring systems? Keep in mind that capacity development should support the partner country's national development strategy and be part of a country-led, coordinated capacity development plan.
- » In the dialogue with the partner subsequent to the Appraisal, one should not miss the opportunity to improve the results and risk management of the programme.
- » Are lessons learned from previous Reviews and Evaluations systematically embedded in the programme design?

If the Programme Document does not address these issues satisfactorily, you should request an improved version to be made (or reject the programme proposal altogether). Remember: Quality at Entry is important in the long run!

### **Appropriation Document**

Based on the Appraisal, the donor's Appropriation Document (AD) presents the final assessment of the programme documentation with special attention to results and risk management.

#### *Issues to consider:*

- » If previous support has been given, describe what has been achieved (outcomes), and what have been the obstacles.
- » Make sure the goal hierarchy/results framework in the AD is identical to the goal hierarchy/results framework in the Programme Document.
- » Your assessment of the partner's risk acceptance and risk management including follow-up actions should be documented in the AD. You and your partner's view on risk issues may differ, and should be brought into the dialogue and documented in the AD.
- » Risk factors that need to be monitored during programme implementation must be described in the AD and reflected in the Agreed Programme Summary.

- » Reporting requirements should be assessed and described in the AD. Reporting requirements should be kept simple. Relevant and good quality data is more important than quantity. Information on key figures, a selective set of indicators and analyses of risks and challenges are more important than frequent quantitative information. If your partner's ordinary performance monitoring system is not being used in the programme, you should explain the reasons why.
- » Description of the partner's implementing procedures should, where possible, include description and assessment of responsibility and accountability at different levels.

## **Agreement**

The Agreement shall reflect the requirements for monitoring and results information described in the AD or as resolved with the partner during Agreement negotiations.

*Issues to consider:*

- » The Agreement must be precise with regard to reporting requirements. Try to make this section of the Agreement as clear as possible regarding who is responsible, contents, means of verification and timing of reports.
- » The goal hierarchy/results framework described in the Agreement must be identical to the goal hierarchy/results framework in the Programme Document and the Appropriation Document.
- » Make sure it is stated in what form and through what media the partner will report on results to their constituency and superiors.
- » Assumptions and conditions related to risks should be mentioned in the Agreed Programme Summary for easy reference during implementation.

## **2. Follow-up phase**

### **Progress reports and work plans**

Progress reports (semi-annual or annual) normally provide results information at output level. However, data collected on indicators should also measure progress toward the desired outcomes.

*Issues to consider:*

- » Make sure that progress reports focus on actual outputs, not activities.
- » If relevant, has the programme reached its targets or benchmarks for the outputs like service coverage, standards of quality, and timeliness?
- » Are options for improved effectiveness considered or/and acted upon?
- » To promote output based reporting; make sure that the partner's annual work plans, against which progress is measured, are formulated as planned outputs, not activities.
- » To promote outcome based reporting; make sure that data is regularly provided on relevant key indicators.

## Annual Meeting

Annual Meetings or other monitoring meetings are normally decision-making forums where i.a. results and risk management are discussed. The discussions are based on progress reports and work plans submitted by the partner prior to the meeting. If a Review or Evaluation has been carried out, the follow-up is often discussed in an Annual Meeting. Therefore, issues to remember under “Progress Reports” and “Reviews” are relevant topics for discussions in Annual Meetings. Focus the dialogue on results at various levels.

### *Issues to consider:*

- » If results are not materialising as planned, the partners and donors together should analyse why the programme is not developing as planned and how it could be brought back on track. It should not be a trigger for rigid application of penalty rules. Results information should be used for learning and lead to improved decision making and risk management.
- » Keep focus on outcome, to the extent possible, using output data and information based on indicators to assess the progress towards desired outcomes.
- » Use the Programme Document, Appropriation Document and Agreement as reference documents in the preparation for an Annual Meeting in order to check risk issues to be followed up. Does the reporting from the partner or other sources indicate the occurrence of new risk factors?
- » Although not mandatory, it is highly advisable to prepare a follow-up note subsequent to the Annual Meeting, focusing on results and handling of risks. Such a note may also be of use for the embassy’s input to the annual reporting to MFA and Norad’s annual Results Report. It may also be the basis for communication of results on the embassy’s website or through other media.
- » If a lead donor has a specific responsibility to assess and approve reports on behalf of other co-funding donors, make sure that such division of work is formalised (e.g. through an Agreement on delegated cooperation). As a co-funding donor, make sure that your comments to the lead donor regarding reports, prior to meetings with the partner, focus on results and risks.



## Field visits

Field visits offer a possibility to verify results that have been reported and to discuss possible risk factors with stakeholders.

### *Issues to consider:*

- » A report or back-to office memo should be written, with focus on results and risks (re. the DCM)
- » Knowledge and impressions gained from field visits may be of general interest and should be communicated through the embassy’s website

## **Reviews/Evaluations**

Reviews may have different purposes (re. the DCM). Reviews are commonly used during implementation to assess progress and whether the desired outcomes are being achieved. Unfortunately, experience shows that too little is said about results in Review reports. This needs to change. The impact of a programme can normally be established only through an in-depth Evaluation.

### *Issues to consider:*

- » When a Terms of Reference for a Review is being prepared, make sure to direct the attention towards assessment of outcomes and what hinders progress towards desired outcomes (see the OECD evaluation criteria on page 17 with some relevant questions to include in a Review). Reviews also provide an opportunity to update risk assessments from the preparatory or implementation phase.
- » Encourage the use of local resources (consultants) to perform Reviews and Evaluations. Two reasons: build capacity by using capacity, and of course, the local knowledge.
- » In the follow-up of a Review, use the dialogue with the partner to pursue the results and risk focus and how it may contribute to learning and better decision making.
- » Use the embassy and other websites and databases to expose information on results, displaying Review reports, evaluation findings etc. Do not forget to submit the Review report to “Norad Collected Reviews” (e-mail to NORAD-Post-INFO) in order to reach a wider audience (will be published on [www.norad.no](http://www.norad.no)).

## **3. Completion phase**

### *Issues to consider:*

- » End Reviews should always have a focus on outcome and, if possible, on the impact of the programme.
- » Communication of results and lessons learned is important! See above for existing channels. Since results communication is an emerging top priority, watch out for new and improved channels and products in the future!



## **ANNEX 1 – SOME SOURCES FOR INDICATORS**

(at high level, outcome/impact)

<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Default.aspx>

Millennium Development Goals Indicators. The official data, definitions, methodologies and sources for more than 60 indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

<http://www.ssb.no/lenker/>

Gives access to all national statistical agencies

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/databases.htm>

Overview over the available statistical databases within the UN

[http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index\\_step1.php](http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_step1.php)

UNICEF Statistics. Economic and social indicators for 195 countries, with special emphasis on the living conditions for children

<http://www.devinform.info/urbaninfo/>

UN Human Settlement Programme. Key indicators for cities and regions

<http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>

World Development Data Query. The World Bank's database, which contains 54 different indicators for 206 countries.

<http://genderstats.worldbank.org/home.asp>

Gender statistics and indicators

<http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/>

United Nations Environment Programme.  
Its online database holds more than 450 different variables, as national, subregional, regional and global statistics or as geospatial data sets (maps) covering themes like Freshwater, Population, Forests, Emissions, Climate, Disasters, Health and GDP.

<http://www.worldwater.org/data.html>

Detailed statistical information about access to water and sanitary conditions

[http://www.statbel.fgov.be/census/links\\_en.asp](http://www.statbel.fgov.be/census/links_en.asp)

Census information from many countries

<http://www.unhcr.org/statistics.html>

Online database that gives information about refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people

<http://www.measuredhs.com/start.cfm>

Data on population, HIV and nutrition

<http://dolphn.aimglobalhealth.org/>

An online statistical data resource of selected demographic and health indicators gathered from various sources for several countries of the world

<http://www.globalhealthfacts.org/>

Online database on HIV/TB and Malaria

<http://www.unfpa.org/worldwide>

Indicators on health, women's rights and social conditions for developing countries

<http://www.unaids.org/en/>

Facts and statistics about HIV/AIDS

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/socind/default.htm>

Social indicators covering a wide range of subject-matter fields

<http://www.who.int/whosis/en/>

WHO Statistical Information System (WHOSIS). Interactive database bringing together core health statistics

[http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=2867\\_201&ID2=DO\\_TOPIC](http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=2867_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)

Global and internationally comparable statistics on education, science, technology, culture and communication

[http://www.ilo.org/global/What\\_we\\_do/Statistics/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/Statistics/lang-en/index.htm)

International Labour Organization. Covers official core labour statistics and estimates for over 200 countries

<http://www.intracen.org/menus/countries.htm>

UNCTAD/WTO International Trade Centre. Presents trade and market profiles, Country Map, based on trade statistics that benchmark national trade performance and provide indicators on export supply and import demand.

<http://faostat.fao.org/>

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Data relating to food and agriculture

[http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices)

Transparency International seeks to provide reliable quantitative diagnostic tools regarding levels of transparency and corruption at the global and local levels.

[http://www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_33935\\_36225815\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html#data\\_base](http://www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3343,en_2649_33935_36225815_1_1_1_1,00.html#data_base)

Gender Database that provides indicators that contains a set of innovative measures to quantify inequalities between men and women.

For inquiries about  
*Results Management*  
*in Norwegian Cooperation*  
*A Practical Guide*  
please contact Norad,  
Department for Quality Assurance  
Telephone + 47 22 24 20 30  
post-amor@norad.no

Published by Norad, on behalf of  
The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Photo: Ken Opprann  
Design: Agendum See Design

December 2008  
ISBN 978-82-7548-351-3



---

**Norad**

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

Postal address:

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO-0030 OSLO

Office address:

Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway

Tel: +47 22 24 20 30

Fax: +47 22 24 20 31

[postmottak@norad.no](mailto:postmottak@norad.no)

[www.norad.no](http://www.norad.no)

