

Evaluation strategy and procedures

1. Introduction

This document has been drawn up in connection with 'The Instruction for the evaluation function in the Norwegian Development Aid Administration' dated 1 January 2022 and seeks to establish a common understanding of roles and responsibilities of the various aid management actors in carrying out evaluations. Evaluations are part of a set of tools designed to improve knowledge management and promote learning in the aid administration.

2. Scope

Evaluations in the aid administration will normally address overall issues such as thematic focus areas, strategies or questions relating to how the aid is organised. Evaluations are to enhance knowledge-based learning and accountability.

3. Principles and standards

Evaluations are to apply recognised scientific methods for collecting information/data and analysis, including how to draw conclusions from the source data. The terms of reference and method for an evaluation are to be adapted to the complexity, scope, and available resources. Evaluation processes are to incorporate relevant quality standards and principles for evaluations relating to:

- a) **Credibility:** Credibility is to be ensured through high-quality evaluations, independence and transparency. In this context, quality entails adherence to recognised evaluation standards and scientific methods. Other aspects of credibility include the degree to which the evaluation function is seen to be independent, and the level of transparency regarding evaluation findings and how these were derived.
- b) **Independence:** The evaluation process must be independent, the selection of areas to be evaluated must be impartial, and the process must be carried out without pressure from those being evaluated or from the organisation's management.
- c) **Transparency:** Transparency is critical for holding actors accountable for the management of development aid funds. All evaluation reports, including information about how the findings were derived, must be made publicly available. This also applies to plans for following up evaluation findings.
- d) **Use:** Evaluations are to provide knowledge that is relevant for learning in the management of development aid funds. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations are to be conveyed in a manner that promotes use in the aid administration.
- e) **Ethical aspects:** Evaluations must be carried out with integrity and respect for human rights and gender equality and in line with the 'do no harm' principle and other fundamental ethical principles. If any suspected punishable offences are uncovered, this must be reported to the Foreign Service Control Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Internal Audit and Investigations Unit in Norad.
- f) **Broad participation:** Steps must be taken to involve the various stakeholders in all phases of the evaluation process – in planning, implementation, and follow-up. This includes affected parties in partner countries.

4. Procedures for implementation

The head of evaluation develops evaluation programmes, initiates and carries out evaluation processes. Completed evaluation reports and cover memos are sent to the appropriate ministry with recommendations for follow-up. When necessary, the ministry will convene a meeting to discuss the evaluation and proposed recommendations. The ministry assesses the need to take any decisions and/or draw up follow-up plans, and whether these need to be published.

5. Division of roles and responsibilities

a) The ministries are to:

- Lay down instructions and procedures for evaluations.
- Decide whether to carry out other evaluations in addition to those included in the evaluation programme.
- Allocate resources for the evaluation function in Norad's allocation letter.
- Hold regular consultations with the head of evaluation for mutual updates.
- Ensure that evaluations are appropriately addressed in management dialogues.
- As needed, conduct a review of the evaluation function carried out in the aid administration.
- Provide the best possible support for adequate and open access to oral and written sources throughout the evaluation process.

b) The head of evaluation at Norad is to:

- Draw up a three-year evaluation programme in consultation with relevant departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Climate and Environment, diplomatic and consular missions, and subordinate agencies. The decision to carry out an evaluation should be based on the requirements set out in Regulations for Financial Management regarding the nature of the activity/project, how important it is, and the level of risk.
- Initiate, implement and approve independent evaluations by drawing up the terms of reference and plans for these after consultation with stakeholders, and following an assessment of the potential usability of findings and recommendations. Relevant departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norec, Norfund and Norad are to be asked for input provided that the principles of impartiality and independence are upheld. The final reports, along with assessment of the evaluation and recommended follow-up, are to be submitted to the appropriate ministry.
- Provide information to the public by publishing evaluation reports, preparing news announcements and communicating evaluation findings appropriately to stakeholders and the public, and issuing an annual report on evaluations.

c) The Director General of Norad is to:

- Recruit the head of evaluation in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Climate and Environment.
- Ensure that there is adequate staffing for evaluations. Steps should be taken to ensure a good balance between technical knowledge and experience of evaluations and knowledge and experience of development assistance among the staff members.
- Ensure that findings from the evaluations are included in knowledge summaries in relevant areas.
- Report on the implementation of evaluations in Norad's annual report to the ministries, in line with the stipulations of the annual allocation letter to Norad.