

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation to the Western Balkans

1. Introduction

The total Norwegian assistance to the Western Balkans for the period from 1991 to the end of 2007 was close to ten billion Norwegian kroner. The overarching aim of this support has been to contribute to peace, reconciliation and democracy. Norad's Evaluation Department is now commissioning an evaluation of the Norwegian support to the region during the period 1991 to date.

2. Background¹

2.1 The Western Balkans

As the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke up and new countries were created, ethnic and civil wars affected all the countries in the region. The war in Croatia and Bosnia (1991-1995) caused severe damage and led to immediate humanitarian needs within its population. Infrastructure was ruined and more than three million people fled the war, either as refugees to other countries or as internally displaced people.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina ("the Dayton Agreement"), provided a temporary solution in 1995. According to this agreement "Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia agree to fully respect the sovereign equality of one another and to settle disputes by peaceful means".

In 1998-99 tensions in then Serbian province of Kosovo, developed into a full scale war between Serbia, Albanian militants and NATO. The conflict led to a wave of refugees to Albania and Macedonia, to destruction of infrastructure in Serbia, and indirectly to the fall of the Balkans last authoritarian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, in October 2000. The Kosovo conflict also contributed to the ignition of armed conflict in Macedonia in 2001 that led to the Ohrid Agreement, giving provision for the representation of ethnic Albanians in Macedonian politics and administration. Kosovo remained an international protectorate under the UN until 2008 when the country declared its independence.

In June 1999, based on an EU initiative, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was adopted. With this pact more than 40 partner countries and organisations undertook to strengthen the countries of South Eastern Europe "in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity in order to achieve stability in the whole region".²

¹ For more detailed background information see "Norwegian Assistance to the Western Balkans 1991-2007 – Document Review", NIBR, 2009. The review was commissioned by Norad to serve as a background document for the evaluation.

² <http://www.stabilitypact.org/about/default.asp>

The term “Western Balkans” became customary in 1999, after the Stabilisation and Association Process was adopted.³ The term includes Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Today the Western Balkans is being characterised as an emerging region in transition⁴, the countries are however still facing acute social problems such as unemployment, poor infrastructure, human trafficking and organised crime. Moreover, the region is weighed down by divisions along the lines of religion, nationality, cultural heritage, politico-economic system and level of economic development.

2.2. Norwegian aid - From Humanitarian Aid to Development Cooperation

Sparked by the civil wars in former Yugoslavia, the Western Balkans became one of the main target areas for Norwegian humanitarian aid during the 1990s.⁵ In the time period from 1991 to 1995 Norway provided almost 1.5 billion NOK to the Western Balkans. After Dayton, from 1996 until 1999, Norway contributed with more than 2.5 billion NOK. In financial terms, the Western Balkans had become one of the main recipients of Norwegian development aid as stability in the Western Balkans was seen as the major challenge for European security at the time. The Western Balkans was also seen as test case for the Common Foreign and Security policy of the EU as well as EUs increased responsibility for peace keeping in Europe.

The end of armed conflict and the introduction of democratically elected governments in all countries in the region changed the focus of Norwegian assistance. During the period 2000-2008, Norway provided close to 6 billions NOK in bilateral aid to the Western Balkans. The major priority areas for Norwegian aid during this period included support to economic and political reform, capacity and institutional development, security and justice reform, human rights, and private sector development, in addition to support to combat organised crime and trafficking of women and children.

At the regional level, Norwegian support has mainly been channelled through the Stability Pact. The need to promote stability, democratisation and integration in Euro Atlantic structures has been seen as key both by Norway and the countries themselves.

In terms of financial support, the main recipients of Norwegian assistance to the Western Balkans have been the States of Ex-Yugoslavia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Neither of these exists today as the political development in the region led to disintegration and the establishment of new states. However, throughout the period from 1991 until today, Bosnia-Herzegovina has been among the largest recipients of Norwegian aid. After 1999 there was a major increase in aid to Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo and since 2000, Serbia has become a major receiver of Norwegian Aid.

The thematic focus of Norwegian aid has been adapted as the situation in the countries has changed from primarily humanitarian assistance, through rehabilitation to reform work and processes which are believed to help the countries enter the Euro-Atlantic structures. Today the support comes primarily as support to institutional development, economic and private sector development, educational reform, the social sector and peace and reconciliation.

³ “Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans”, Milaca Delevic, Caillot Paper no 104, July 2007, Institute for Security Studies.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ “Norsk bistand gjennom femti år”, p. 245.

2.3 Channels for Norwegian Contributions

Around the time of civil war in Bosnia, Norway was the largest contributor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which coordinated international aid to the Balkans. In addition, many Norwegian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) participated in the reconstruction in the Western Balkans. In 1997 as many as 160 NGOs received financial contributions from the Norwegian government. The largest Norwegian NGOs were the Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian People's Aid, The Norwegian Refugee Council and Norwegian Church Aid.

At this time a multitude of international donors were to act simultaneously. Only in Bosnia-Herzegovina more than 14 multilateral development agencies, 60 bilateral donors, and 400 NGOs pledged support to and became active in the country's post-conflict recovery and reconstruction"⁶. These could be seen as having varied and sometimes conflicting agendas.

Today the channels for Norwegian development cooperation include Norwegian, international, regional and local NGOs, Norwegian state institutions, the UN system and other multilateral actors. The Norwegian embassies in the Western Balkans also administer their own funds for projects, mostly for local projects of lesser magnitude.

3. Purpose of the Evaluation

Based on the vast amount of financial contributions to the Western Balkans, there is a need to take stock of the outcome of Norwegian aid. The purpose of this evaluation is therefore to document effects of Norwegian aid in the time period from 1991 until today.

During this period the Norwegian aid to the region can be divided into three different phases corresponding to the development in the countries:

1. Humanitarian aid/ relief
2. Reconstruction/development
3. Reforms and adjustment to the Euro-Atlantic integration process

The main users of the findings of this evaluation will be the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and other stakeholders who have and are still playing an active role in the Western Balkans. In this context the MFA refers to its officials in Oslo, the Norwegian Embassies and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The stakeholders include partners in the recipient countries (public and private), non-governmental organisations and multilateral organisations.

4. Objectives

The major objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess and document achievements of Norwegian assistance to the Western Balkans during the above mentioned phases in relation to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability.

⁶ "Project Performance Assessment Report – Bosnia and Herzegovina", Report No.: 28288, the World Bank, March 2004.

- Identify lessons learnt contributing to improving the planning, organization and implementation of future Norwegian interventions in countries where needs are changing from humanitarian relief to longer term development collaboration.

The achievements will be evaluated against the overall objectives as formulated in various documents including:

- reports and propositions to the Storting⁷
- allocation memorandums
- letters of allocations
- national development plans

The findings and lessons learnt of the evaluation should be translated into recommendations to the Norwegian Government regarding planning and implementation of future Norwegian interventions in countries where needs are changing over time.

5. Scope of Work

The evaluation will encompass the main recipient countries of Norwegian support in the Western Balkans, namely Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia/Kosovo.

The main focus of the evaluation is the processes involved in establishing and maintaining support in societies where needs are changing over time. The evaluation will focus on the major channels for Norwegian support and assess achievements at outcome and to the extent possible impact level, specific to the three phases of support.

Special emphasis should be placed on the role and interplay of the various actors/channels of Norwegian aid analyzing synergies and comparative advantages. Efforts and achievements should be assessed against the context and standards prevailing at the time, when decisions were made. As the nature of the activities varies, the responses may also have varied over time. The focus will be on the quality and results of Norwegian assistance so far and reasons for successes and failures. The evaluation will document the areas in which the allocated resources have been spent and describe the administration of the funds in terms of reporting, accounting and auditing procedures.

Emphasis shall also be on decision making/administrative (internal organizational) processes in MFA and whether these have been suitable for changing conditions in the areas of intervention.

In brief the focus of the evaluation will be describing and assessing the following:

- The process of how the Norwegian assistance to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia/Kosovo evolved during the different phases
- The plans, strategies and timing for the intervention
- The coordination and interplay between various actors
- The administrative/logistical set-up.

⁷ Including St.meld. nr 13 (1999-2000) and St.prp.nr.1 (1999-2000).

6. Key Issues

The evaluation should cover but not be limited to the key issues below. The evaluation team is also free to propose other evaluation questions in the inception report and in the draft report as needed.

Planning and implementation

- How has the various programmes/initiatives been generated/initiated?
- Has the Norwegian support been responsive to the challenges facing the region?
- How was the planning and implementation of the various programmes/activities organized within MFA?
- How effective was the coordination between various MFA departments involved?
- Which internal and external factors have determined the planning, management and results of the programme, including the transition from one phase to another? E.g. to what extent have departments involved in long term development aid been involved in the planning?
- How have issues such as political prioritisation, public attention, demand for speed and visibility influenced the programme planning and implementation?
- Were the programme objectives clear and how were they translated into activities?
- Did the staffing at MFA and embassies adequately correspond to the tasks to be performed?
- How did the various programmes/initiatives ensure response to evolving needs?
- To what extent have activities in the early phase of the programme shaped the options for activities and their outcomes in later phases?
- Briefly how has Norway organized and administered the support to the Western Balkans compared to other donors?

Funding

- Which channels and sources of funding were applied for the various programmes /activities and which constraints were encountered?
- What are the various systems in place for administration of funds in terms of accounting and auditing?
- Are there areas of assistance to the Western Balkans that are particularly subject to misuse?

The role and performance of the various actors

- Assess performance against objectives/targets set in project proposal/descriptions.
- Assess the contribution of the various agencies in terms of coordination of activities.
- What measures have been taken during the planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used and administered? Assess the potential gap between attention to inputs and concern for results.
- Do the agencies give adequate attention to effects and impacts of their assistance on recipients and local communities?
- To what extent is interventions gender sensitive?

Coordination/coherence

- Assess and analyse coordination and organisational change in the various phases. To what extent and how was the activities supported by Norway coordinated with each other and with other programmes in Serbia/Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina?
- Was the need for speed and visibility balanced with the need for co-ordination and co-operation?
- Were the various actors willing and able to engage actively in coordination of their operations?

Local involvement

- How did the various actors identify and support local partners?
- To what extent were local stakeholders' incl. beneficiaries, internal displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, involved in planning, decision-making and implementation of Norwegian support in the various phases?
- To what extent has the Norwegian assistance contributed to building local capacity?
- Assess the relationship to local communities (authorities and populations) in host areas. What measures are taken to protect or mitigate damage to local communities – economic and environmental?

Sustainability

- Do local partners have the capacity to maintain the benefits from the interventions when donor support has been withdrawn?
- To what extent are exit strategies developed?
- Assess and analyse connectedness – are activities of a short term emergency nature carried out in a context which takes longer term and interconnected problems into account.

7. Evaluation Approach/Methods

It will be part of the assignment to develop a methodological and conceptual framework to ensure an objective, transparent and impartial assessment of the issues to be analysed in this evaluation as well as ensuring learning during the course of the evaluation.

The evaluation team should make use of empirical methods such as document analysis, questionnaire surveys, interviews, focus groups, field visits, case studies and data/literature surveys to collect data which will be analysed using specified judgement criteria and suitably defined qualitative and quantitative indicators.

The team is expected to interview different stakeholders including MFA, the Norwegian Embassies, Norad, and partners at country level including international, multilateral and non-governmental organisations as well as beneficiaries at national level (e.g. individuals, communities that benefit directly or indirectly from the interventions).

In order to document results at outcome and impact level as well as identifying lessons learnt, the consultant will propose a few cases at project/programme level in the two countries for closer scrutiny. In Bosnia-Herzegovina possible case studies could cover the areas reconstruction (houses), justice and education. In Serbia possible case studies could be within

law enforcement, institutional support and democratisation and in Kosovo reconstruction and support to ethnic minorities could be covered. The proposed case studies should be presented in the Inception report for discussion with MFA and Norad.

Guiding principles: Triangulate and validate information, assess and describe data quality in a transparent manner (assess strengths, weaknesses, and sources of information). Data gaps should be highlighted.

Data collection

A document review of the Norwegian Assistance to the Western Balkans during the period (1991-2007) is provided together with this document. Further data collection is the responsibility of the evaluation team. Access to archives will be facilitated by MFA/Norad.

Validation and feedback workshops shall be held in the two case countries before departure, involving those that have provided information, and others who are relevant.

Where relevant, gender shall be accounted for in the report, in the data collection, the analysis and the findings and recommendations.

8. Organisation and requirements

8.1 Composition of Team

The evaluation team will report to Norad through the team leader. All members of the team are expected to have relevant academic qualifications and evaluation experiences. In addition the evaluation team should cover the following competencies:

Competence	Team Leader	The evaluation team
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher relevant degree, M.Phil, PhD 	Relevant qualifications
Discipline	Relevant discipline	Relevant discipline
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proven successful team leading; the team leader must document relevant experience with managing and leading evaluations. ▪ Advanced knowledge and experience in evaluation principles and standards in the context of international development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competence/ experience in evaluation and/or research of such programmes
Development Cooperation	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of Norwegian development cooperation policy and instruments. ▪ Expertise in institutional/management aspects incl. economics,
Country Region		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge about the Western Balkans region and in particular knowledge about Bosnia-

		Herzegovina, Serbia/Kosovo including cultural context.
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competence in financial management of aid, including accounting and auditing of aid programs.
Language:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English 	Written, reading, spoken	Written, reading, spoken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scandinavian 		Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local languages 		Spoken

Gender balance in the team is an asset.

Quality assurance shall be provided by the company delivering the consultancy services, including a person that is external to the evaluation team.

8.2 Organisation

The evaluation will be managed by Norad's Evaluation Department (Norad). An independent team of researchers or consultants will be assigned the evaluation according to the standard procurement procedures of Norad (including open international call for tenders). The team leader shall report to Norad on the team's progress, including any problems that may jeopardize the assignment.

The team is entitled to consult widely with stakeholders pertinent to the assignment. All decisions concerning these TOR, the inception report, draft report and final report are subject to approval by Norad.

The evaluation team shall take note of comments received from stakeholders. Where there are significantly diverging views between the evaluation team and stakeholders, this should be reflected in the report.

8.3 Budget

The tender shall present a total budget with stipulated expenses for fees, travel, field work and other expenses. The evaluation is budgeted with a maximum of 65 consultant person weeks.

The team is supposed to visit the case countries as well as MFA in Oslo and other relevant stakeholders. Additionally, two team members are expected to participate in the following four meetings in Oslo: A contract-signing meeting, a meeting to present the inception report, a meeting to present the draft report and a meeting to present the final report to relevant stakeholders. Direct travel costs related to the possible dissemination in a case country will be covered separately by the Evaluation department on need basis and are not to be included in the budget.

The budget and work plan should allow sufficient time for presentations of preliminary findings and conclusions, including preliminary findings to relevant stakeholders in the countries visited and for receiving comments to the draft report.

8.4 Reporting and Outputs

The Consultant shall undertake the following:

- Prepare an inception report in accordance with the guidelines given in annex 3.1 in this document. This includes a preliminary description of the country context, a description of the methodological design to be applied and suggested selection of case studies in the two countries. The inception report should be of no more than 20 pages excluding necessary annexes.
- At the end of each country visit, present preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations in a meeting to relevant stakeholders, allowing for comments and discussion.
- Prepare a draft final report and a final report in accordance with the guidelines in annex 3.2 of this document. The final report shall not exceed 80 pages, excluding annexes.
- Present the final report at a seminar in Oslo and/or in one of the case countries.

All reports shall be written in English and are to be submitted in electronic form in accordance with the deadlines set in the time-schedule specified under *Section 2 Administrative Conditions in Part 1 Tender Specifications* of this document.

The Consultant is responsible for editing and quality control of language. The final report should be presented in a way that directly enables publication. The Evaluation Department retains the sole right with respect to all distribution, dissemination and publications of the deliverables.

The evaluation team is expected to adhere to the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards as well as Norad's Evaluation Guidelines.⁸ Any modification to these TOR is subject to approval by Norad. All reports shall be submitted to Norad for approval.

⁸ See. http://www.norad.no/items/4620/38/6553540983/Evalueringspolitikk_fram_til_2010.pdf