EVALUATION

"How do we Learn, Manage and Make Decisions in Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation"

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"How do we Learn, Manage and Make Decisions in Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation"

Management of results information and knowledge at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

FINAL REPORT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AHA-KYT	MFA's case management system
ALI	Department for Africa and the Middle East
ARKKI	MFA's information systems
ASA	Department for the Americas and Asia
ASKI	MFA's electronic archiving and document distribution systems
COM-B	Capabilities, Opportunities and Motivation, Behaviour change
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DPC	Development Policy Committee
DPP	Development Policy Programme
DPSG	Development Policy Steering Group
EMS	Evaluation Management Service
EU	European Union
EVA-11	Development Evaluation Unit
HR	Human Resources
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
IT	Information Technology
KEO	Department for Development Policy
KM	Knowledge Management
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MTR	Mid-Term Review
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OL	Organisational Learning
OLMs	Organisational Learning Mechanisms
PBS	Programme based support
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PIF	Public Sector Investment Facility
QAB	Quality Assurance Board
RBM	Results-Based Management
RK	Results Knowledge
TTS	Financial planning and reporting
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

TIIVISTELMÄ

Evaluointi "Miten Suomen kehityspolitiikassa ja -yhteistyössä opimme, johdamme ja teemme päätöksiä" tukee ulkoministeriötä (UM) kehittämään tuloksiin liittyvän informaation ja tiedon hallintaa. Sen tavoitteena on vahvistaa tietoperustaista oppimista ja päätöksentekoa kehityspolitiikassa ja -yhteistyössä.

Evaluointi perustui muutosteoriaan tietojohtamisen oppimisesta. Tässä evaluoinnissa tietojohtaminen (*knowledge management*) käsitettiin seuraavasti: johtaminen siten, että edistetään organisaation kykyä luoda arvoa tiedolla ja osaamisella. Sillä pyritään paitsi organisaatiossa olevan ja organisaation saavutettavissa olevan tiedon hyödyntämiseen, myös sen varmistamiseen, että organisaatiossa tai sen saavutettavissa on tulevaisuudessa tarvittava tieto. Tietoa kerättiin evaluointia varten haastatteluilla, kenttävierailuilla, työpajoilla, internet-pohjaisella kyselyllä ja kirjallisen materiaalin analyysillä.

Havainnot kattavat sen, miten niin "hiljaista" kuin dokumentoituakin tulosinformaatiota ja -tietämystä käytetään sekä niiden vaikutusta oppimiseen ja päätöksentekoon. Lisäksi tarkasteltiin näiden taustalla olevia tekijöitä. Päähavainnot olivat, että tuloksellisuutta koskeva informaatio vaikuttaa kohtuullisessa määrin sekä oppimiseen että päätöksentekoon ja että UM ei ole vielä onnistunut vakiinnuttamaan tuloksia koskevaa informaatiota osaksi organisaation oppimista ja päätöksentekoa. Lisäksi henkilökunnan kapasiteetti käyttää hyväksi tuloksia koskevaa informaatiota oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa on suhteellisen alhainen eivätkä nykyiset tiedonhallinnan järjestelmät ole tarkoituksenmukaiset.

Evaluoinnin pääasiallisten suositusten tavoitteena on taata että i) **saatavilla on riittävä määrä tarkoituksenmukaista sekä "hiljaista" että dokumentoitua tulosinformaatiota ja -tietämystä tuloksellisuudesta** luomalla urapolkuja toimialakohtaisille sektorineuvonantajille ja erityisasiantuntijoille, kehittämällä tiedonsiirrolle hyviä käytäntöjä virkakierron tapauksissa ja takaamalla, että henkilökunta noudattaa näitä, kannustamalla ja investoimalla tuloksia käsittelevän tiedon ja tietouden dokumentointiin, sekä korjaamalla asiakirjahallinnon järjestelmän (AHA-KYT) tähän liittyvät ongelmat; ii) **tulostietoa ja -tietämystä käytetään tuloksekkaasti** varaamalla henkilökunnalle aikaa ja luomalla tilaisuuksia tuloksia käsittelevästä tiedosta oppimiseen, vahvistamalla henkilökunnan kapasiteettia käyttää tietoa tuloksellisuudesta, tekemällä oppimisen tukemisesta ja kannustuksesta tunnustettu johtamistaidon kriteeri sekä liittämällä tietoperustainen oppimisvastuu tulosjohtajuuden käytäntöihin, sekä iii) **evaluoinnissa esitettyjen suositusten toimeenpano taataan pitkällä tähtäimellä** liittämällä evaluoinnin seuranta käynnissä oleviin toimintatapauudistuksiin.

Avainsanat: *Tietojohtaminen, tiedonhallinta, tulosjohtaminen, tietoperustainen päätöksenteko, tietoperustainen oppiminen, Suomen kehitysyhteistyön toimintatavat ja käytännöt*

REFERAT

Denna utvärdering "Hur drar vi lärdomar av, hanterar och tar beslut inom Finlands utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete" bidrar till att förbättra utrikesministeriets (UM) hantering av resultatinformation. Syftet är att stärka evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande inom utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete.

Utvärderingen utgår ifrån en förändringsteori om evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande. Information samlades in genom intervjuer, fältbesök, workshops, en web-baserad enkät, och dokumentstudier.

Studien tittar på hur resultatinformation (underförstådd och dokumenterad information) har använts och inverkat på lärande och beslutsfattande, samt underliggande förklaringsfaktorer. Utvärderingen har huvudsakligen kommit fram till att: resultatinformation endast har haft en måttlig inverkan på lärande och beslutsfattande; UM har ännu inte lyckats institutionalisera evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande; personalen och de olika teamen har begränsad förmåga att använda resultatinformation för lärande och beslutsfattande, samt; befintliga system för informationshantering är bristfälliga.

Utvärderingens rekommendationer syftar till att a) **säkerställa tillräcklig tillgång på relevant resultatinformation, både underförstådd och dokumenterad**, genom att skapa en karriärväg för ämnesrådgivare och andra specialister; utveckla praxis för överlämnade av arbetsuppgifter mellan personal och se till att denna praxis följs; skapa incitament för och investera i dokumentering av resultatinformation och hitta snabba lösningar för AHA-KYT; b) **säkerställa att resultatinformation används på ett effektivt sätt** genom att tid sätts av till lärande och kompetensutveckling av personal; göra stöden till lärning till en meriterande chefsegenskap; införa ansvarsutkrävande för lärande från resultatinformation som en del av UM:s resultatstyrning; c) **säkerställa effektivt och långsiktigt genomförande av åtgärder** genom att göra uppföljningen av denna utvärdering till en integrerade del av pågående förändringsarbete.

Nyckelord: *kunskapshantering, resultatstyrning, evidensbaserat beslutsfattande, evidensbaserat lärande, Finlands metoder för utvecklingssamarbete*

ABSTRACT

This evaluation on "How do we Learn, Manage and Make Decisions in Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation" supports the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) in developing its management of results-related information and knowledge to strengthen evidence-informed learning and decision-making in development policy and cooperation.

The evaluation followed a Theory of Change for evidence-informed learning and decision-making. Evidence was gathered through interviews, field missions, workshops, an online survey, and desk study.

Findings covered the use and influence of tacit and documented results information and knowledge on learning and decision-making, including analysis of underlying reasons. Key findings were a moderate level of influence of results information on both learning and decision-making; lack of institutionalization of evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA; comparatively low capacity of staff and teams for making use of results information for learning and decision-making; and inadequacy of current information management systems.

Key recommendations aim at i) **ensuring sufficient availability of relevant tacit and documented results information and knowledge** through establishing a career track for sector advisors and other specialists; developing good handover practices and ensuring staff compliance; incentivising and investing in the documentation of results information and knowledge and implementing quick fixes for AHA-KYT; ii) **enabling its effective use** by reserving time for results-informed learning, creating additional learning opportunities, strengthening staff capabilities for making use of results; making support to learning from results a recognised leadership qualification; introducing "accountability for learning" from results information into Results-Based Management; iii) **ensuring efficient long-term implementation of measures** by integrating follow-up from this evaluation into ongoing reform efforts.

Key words: *knowledge management, result-based management, evidence-informed decision-making, evidence-informed learning, Finland's development cooperation practices*

YHTEENVETO

Johdanto. Evaluointi "Miten Suomen kehityspolitiikassa ja -yhteistyössä opimme, johdamme ja teemme päätöksiä: Tulosinformaation ja -tietämyksen hallinta ulkoministeriössä" tukee ulkoministeriötä (UM) kehittämään tuloksiin perustuvaa tietojohtamista. Evaluoinnin tavoitteena on vahvistaa tietoperustaisuutta oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön kaikilla hallinnon tasoilla sekä kaikissa kehitysyhteistyön ja -politiikan käyttämissä välineissä. Se vastaa neljään arviointikysymykseen:

1. Mitä UM:n sisäistä ja sen ulkopuolista tietoa kerätään, raportoidaan ja käytetään UM:n hallinnon arkipäivän toiminnassa liittyen kehityspolitiikkaan ja sen toimeenpanoon?

2. Millä tavalla ja kuinka johdonmukaisesti tietojohtamista on pantu toimeen Suomen kehityspolitiikassa ja kehitysyhteistyössä?

3. Mitä vahvuuksia ja toisaalta kehittämiskohteita on tietojohtamisessa, tietoon pohjautuvassa oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa kehityspolitiikan eri tasoilla, sen suunnittelussa ja toimeenpanossa?

4. Millä tavoin UM voi tehokkaammin edistää tietojohtamisen oppimista ja sisällyttää tiedonhallinta ja tietoon pohjautuva päätöksenteko osaksi tulosjohteista kehityspolitiikkaa ja -yhteistyötä?

Evaluointi liittyy parhaillaan menossa olevaan tulosjohtamisen sisään ajamiseen kehitysyhteistyössä sekä laajempaan kehitysyhteistyön toimintatapojen uudistukseen UM:ssä kuin myös valtionhallinnon laajuisiin aloitteisiin siitä, miten tietoa hallinnoidaan ja käytetään tulevaisuudessa.

Koska aihe kiinnostaa laajemminkin ja toisaalta siihen liittyvillä käsitteillä on useita eri tulkintatapoja, evaluoinnissa oli tärkeää määritellä käsitteet tarkasti. Esimerkiksi evaluoinnin aihe, kehitysyhteistyön tuloksiin tai tuloksellisuuteen liittyvä informaatio ja tieto/tietämys, ymmärrettiin laajassa merkityksessä tietojohtamisena. Sen katsottiin kattavan mitä tuloksia on saavutettu, ja sen lisäksi myös analyyttisen ymmärryksen siitä, miten ja miksi näihin tuloksiin päästiin. Tarkemmin ottaen tässä evaluoinnissa tietojohtaminen (*knowledge management*) käsitettiin seuraavasti: johtaminen siten, että edistetään organisaation kykyä luoda arvoa tiedolla ja osaamisella. Sillä pyritään paitsi organisaatiossa olevan ja organisaation saavutettavissa olevan tiedon hyödyntämiseen myös sen varmistamiseen, että organisaatiossa tai sen saavutettavissa on tulevaisuudessa tarvittava tieto.

Lähestymistapa. Evaluointi suunniteltiin ja toteutettiin teoriapohjaisena. Se noudatti tietoon pohjautuvan oppimisen ja päätöksenteon muutosteoriaa tietojohtamisen oppimisesta, joka kehitettiin synteesinä yhteiskuntatieteellisen tutkimuksen pohjalta kuvaamaan UM:n toimintaa. Muutosteoria kuvaa sitä, mitä pitäisi tapahtua, jotta tulosinformaatio ja -tietämys kehitysyhteistyön ja -politiikan tuloksellisuudesta ohjaisi UM:n päätöksentekoa ja henkilökunnan oppimista. Muutosteoria osoittaa kausaalisuhteet siitä, miten toimenpiteiden

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kautta siirrytään tietoon tuloksellisuudesta ja siitä edelleen kehitysvaikutuksiin. Lisäksi muutosteoria kertoo, minkä reunaehtojen ja oletuksien täytyy vallita, jotta jokainen kausaalinen syy-seuraussuhde toteutuisi. Tämä lähestymistapa teki evaluoinnille mahdolliseksi analysoida, missä määrin tietoon pohjautuvaa oppimista ja päätöksentekoa on tapahtunut sekä tutkia järjestelmällisesti asiantilan taustalla piilevät tekijät.

Evaluointi oli siinä mielessä osallistava, että UM:n henkilökunta osallistui evaluointiprosessiin ei vain tiedon antajana vaan myös oppimiskumppanina. Hypoteeseja ja evaluoinnista esiin nousevia havaintoja puitiin henkilökunnan kanssa työpajoissa sekä järjestettiin ryhmäkeskusteluja ja kuulemistilaisuuksia. Evaluoinnin sivutuotteena syntyi paljon hyödyllistä tietoa muutosteoriaan ja osallistumiseen perustuvasta evaluoinnista.

Metodologia. Koska evaluoinnin keskeisenä aiheena on oppiminen ja päätöksenteko UM:ssä, se nojautui voimakkaasti henkilökunnan kanssa käytyihin yksilöllisiin ja ryhmähaastatteluihin. Kaiken kaikkiaan toteutettiin 172 haastattelua yhteensä 130 ihmisen kanssa. Evaluointi myös etsi ulkopuolisia näkemyksiä UM:ssä tapahtuvasta oppimisesta ja päätöksenteosta. Tällä tavalla saadusta palautteesta oli hyötyä internetpohjaisen kyselylomakkeen suunnittelussa. Sitä käytettiin myöhemmässä vaiheessa todentamaan evaluoinnissa esiin nousevia havaintoja ja hypoteeseja ja mittaamaan niiden saaman hyväksyntää.

Henkilökohtaisia haastatteluja ja kyselyä täydensi tiivis ja järjestelmällinen asiakirja-analyysi. Lisäksi tilattiin asiantuntijan kirjoittama selvitys tiedonhallinnasta ja tietojohtamisen oppimisesta vastaavissa muissa kehitysyhteistyöorganisaatioissa; se hyödynsi samaan aikaan käynnissä olevaa OECD:n kehitysapukomitean DAC:n laajaa tutkimusta tulosjohtajuudesta. Kenttämatkat tehtiin Mosambikiin, Vietnamiin ja Etiopiaan. Mosambikissa ja Vietnamissa matkojen aikana evaluointitiimi myös osallistui Suomen edustustojen järjestämiin UM:n maastrategioiden itsearviointiseminaareihin.

Havainnot. Kaiken kaikkiaan evaluointi tuotti 22 kattavaa havaintoa, jotka luokiteltiin neljään aiheenmukaiseen ryhmään.

Tuloksellisuutta koskevan **informaation käytöstä oppimiseen ja päätöksentekoon** evaluointi osoitti, että UM:ssä tämä tieto vaikuttaa kohtuullisessa määrin sekä oppimiseen että päätöksentekoon. UM:n henkilökunta käytti toistuvasti työssään ainakin jotakin tuloksellisuudesta kertovaa tietoa, mutta tämä ei kuitenkaan tehokkaasti muuttunut tietoon pohjautuvaksi oppimiseksi. Kun oppimista tapahtuu, se on UM:n henkilökunnan mukaan enimmäkseen epäviralliseen, henkilökohtaiseen ajatustenvaihtoon tai työn käytäntöön pohjautuvaa, joka myös koettiin tärkeäksi. UM:ssä päätöksentekoa on ohjannut tavallisesti voimakkaammin moni muu tekijä, kuten poliittinen ohjaus tai määrärahojen riittävyys, kuin tieto tuloksista. Silloin kun tiedolla on ollut vaikutusta, se on tapahtunut pikemminkin päätösten valmisteluvaiheessa kuin lopullisten päätösten tekemisen hetkellä. Joitakin harvoja poikkeuksia lukuun ottamatta kehitystuloksista ja vaikutuksellisuudesta kertova tieto ei ole vaikuttanut määrärahapäätöksiin. Yleisesti ottaen tietoa siitä, miten ja miksi jokin tietty tulos oli saavutettu, pidettiin tarkoituksenmukaisempana ja hyödyllisempänä oppimista ja päätöksentekoa ajatellen kuin sitä, mitä ja kuinka paljon tuloksia oli saavutettu. Tämä tieto on monissa tapauksissa "hiljaista", henkilökunnan ja erityisasian-

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tuntijoiden kirjoittamatonta tietoa, joten se on vaikeasti saavutettavissa ja usein katoaa henkilökunnan lähtiessä ministeriöstä tai virkakierron seurauksena.

Evaluoinnit nousivat esiin tärkeinä hyödyllisen tuloksellisuustiedon ja -tietouden lähteinä. Keskitetyt, kehitysevaluoinnin toimeksiannosta tehdyt evaluoinnit ovat ohjanneet UM:n tärkeitä politiikkatason päätöksiä, mutta kaikkea niiden sisältämää tietoa ei ole pantu riittävässä määrin käytäntöön. Alueosastojen ja -yksiköiden teettämät hajautetut evaluoinnit ja erilaiset selvitykset ovat olleet hyödyllisiä silloin, kun niiden taso on ollut riittävän korkea ja niiden havaintoja on voitu soveltaa.

Useat evaluoinnin löydökset koskivat tulostiedon ja -tietämyksen **institutionaalista kysyntää ulkoministeriössä** oppimista ja päätöksentekoa varten. Vaikka edistystä on tapahtunut kohti tietoon perustuvaa oppimista ja UM on luonut uusia oppimisen mahdollisuuksia, se ei kuitenkaan ole vielä onnistunut vakiinnuttamaan tietoperustaisuutta organisaationsa oppimisen ja päätöksenteon kiinteäksi osaksi. Tuki oppimiselle johdon taholta vaihteli osastoittain/yksiköittäin, henkilökunnalla ei ole oppimiseen kannustavia mekanismeja, eikä UM:n organisaatiokulttuuri vielä tue virheistä oppimista. UM:n organisaatiorakenne on este tietopohjaiselle oppimiselle ja päätöksenteolle, mikä varainkäytön suunnitteluprosessin asettamien rajoitteiden kanssa vähentää organisaation kysyntää tuloksellisuutta koskevalle informaatiolle ja tiedolle. Vaikka UM asettaa suuren painon kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista tiedottamiselle, vain vähän huomiota on kiinnitetty siihen, miten UM osoittaisi oppineensa toimeenpanon kokemuksista ja käyttäisi tätä tietoa päätöksenteon pohjana.

Evaluointi osoitti, että **UM:n henkilökunnan kapasiteetti käyttää tietoa tuloksellisuudesta** oppimisen ja päätöksenteon pohjana oli suhteellisen alhainen. Ajanpuute oli tähän suurimpana syynä, ja toisena tekijänä esiin nousi oppimistilaisuuksien puute. Huomattavan suuri osa henkilökunnasta tunsi, ettei organisaatiokulttuuri tarjonnut eikä edistänyt "turvallisia tilanteita" oppimiseen. Henkilökunnan kyky ja taidot etsiä, löytää, ymmärtää ja analysoida tuloksellisuustietoja vaihteli suuresti eikä aina ollut tasoltaan riittävää. Näistä rajoitteista huolimatta UM:n henkilökunta osoitti toistuvasti korkeaa motivoituneisuutta käyttää tuloksellisuustietoja sekä vahvaa uskoa siihen, että näin saataisiin selkeästi parannettua kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön tuloksia.

Mitä tulee **tuloksista kertovan tiedon saatavuuteen ja laatuun**, evaluointi havaitsi, että nykyiset tiedonhallinnan järjestelmät eivät ole tarkoituksenmukaiset eivätkä hyvällä tavalla sovellu tiedonhankintaan ja sen sisältämän informaation analysointiin. Tästä seurauksena on, että UM:n henkilökunta turvautuu itse kehittämiinsä, viralliset rakenteet ohittaviin tiedonsiirron keinoihin kuten henkilökohtaisiin sähköpostiosoitteisiin ja ulkoisiin muistilaitteisiin. Dokumentoidun tulosinformaation tallentamisen loppuun saattamista tai virheettömyyttä ei systemaattisesti varmisteta, eikä myöskään ulkopuolelta tulevaa tuloksellisuustietoa hallinnoida järjestelmällisesti. Evaluointi ei saanut tarkkaa tietoa siitä, milloin nykyiset tiedonhallinnan järjestelmät korvautuvat koko valtionhallinnon uudella tiedonhallinta-arkkitehtuurilla.

Johtopäätökset. Näistä löydöksistä evaluointi veti seitsemän johtopäätöstä.

Näistä neljä ensimmäistä käsittelee sitä, missä **määrin oppimisen ja päätöksenteon pohjaksi on saatavilla tietoa** kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön tuloksista. Kaksi ensimmäistä johtopäätöstä koskee "hiljaista tietoa" ja kaksi seuraavaa kirjallista dokumentoitua tuloksellisuustietoa.

- Johtopäätös 1: toimialakohtaisilla neuvonantajilla ja erityisasiantuntijoilla on hallussaan suuri määrä UM:n institutionaalista muistia, mutta haasteena on säilyttää ja saada tämä tieto yleiseen käyttöön.

- Johtopäätös 2: UM menettää merkittävässä määrin hyödyllistä, toimenkuvakohtaista tuloksellisuustietoa virkakierron seurauksena tai silloin, kun neuvonantaja tai erityisasiantuntija vaihtaa työpaikkaa.

- Johtopäätös 3: UM tarvitsee enemmän dokumentoitua tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista, erityisesti sellaista tietoa, joka selittäisi, miten ja millä keinoilla tuloksiin on päästy – ja päästään tulevaisuudessa. Tällaista kokemuksellista tietoa, hiljaista ja dokumentoitua, tarvitaan, jotta oppiminen ja päätöksenteko organisaation sisällä voisi olla tietopohjaista.

- Johtopäätös 4: UM:n tämänhetkinen tiedonhallintateknologia ei edistä tuloksellisuusinformaation saatavuutta ja tarjoaa vain vähän apua tiedon analysointiin. Nykyisen tiedonhallinta-arkkitehtuurin puitteissa on nähtävissä vain vähän parannusmahdollisuuksia tilanteeseen siksi, että se rakentuu yksittäisten asiakirjojen pohjalle.

Kolme johtopäätöstä käsittelee lisäksi sitä, **missä määrin UM organisaationa edistää ja kannustaa tuloksellisuutta koskevan tiedon käyttöä** oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa.

- Johtopäätös 5: UM:n henkilökunnalla ei ole aikaa, tilaisuuksia eikä kykyä käyttää tehokkaasti hyödyksi tietoa kehitysyhteistyön toimeenpanon tuloksista. Tämä estää tietoperustaista oppimista ja päätöksentekoa ja voi pitkällä tähtäimellä vaarantaa henkilökunnan nykyisen korkean motivaation.

- Johtopäätös 6: UM:n johto kannattaa oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tietoperustaisuutta, mutta harva päättäjä pitää sitä instituution kehittämisen pääalueena. Seurauksena on, että henkilökunnalle on tarjolla vain rajoitetusti kannustimia käyttää tietoa oppimisen ja päätöksenteon pohjana.

- Johtopäätös 7: Vaikka tietoperustaisessa kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön johtamisessa on tapahtunut huomattavaa edistymistä, organisaation institutionaalinen kysyntä tuloksellisuutta koskevalle tiedolle on edelleen rajoittunutta.

Suositukset. Jokainen johtopäätös antoi aiheen suositukseen ja evaluointi antoi vielä yhden ylimääräisen suosituksen, jonka tarkoituksena on tukea muiden suositusten toimeenpanoa.

Neljä suositusta tähtää siihen, että **tarkoituksenmukaista, sekä hiljaista että dokumentoitua, tuloksellisuustietoa on saatavilla**. Kaksi suositusta käsittelee hiljaista tietoa ja kaksi seuraavaa dokumentoitua tietoa.

- Suositus 1: Suositellaan, että UM jatkaa suunnitelmia siitä, että neuvon-antajille ja erityisasiantuntijoille kehitetään palkitsevia urapolkuja, jotka pitäisivät ministeriön piirissä nämä henkilöt, joilla on hallussaan ja jotka tuottavat merkittävän määrän tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista.

- Suositus 2: Suositellaan, että UM pyrkii kaikin keinoin estämään vältet-tävissä olevan tietohukan (tiedon katoamisen) virkakierron ja työpaikan vaihtojen seurauksena ja kehittää tiedonsiirron hyvä käytäntöjä näissä tapauksissa, sekä valvoo, että henkilökunta noudattaa niitä.

- Suositus 3: Suositellaan, että UM panostaa ja kannustaa tuloksia koskevan informaation ja tiedon dokumentointiin valikoitujen tulok-sien osalta, jotta tieto niistä saataisiin tehokkaasti kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tueksi.

- Suositus 4: Suositellaan, että UM tekee pikaisia muutoksia AHA-KYT-tiedonhallintajärjestelmään ja tukee vaihtoehtoisia tiedonhankinnan ja -säilytyksen tapoja, joita henkilökunta nyt käyttää. Keskipitkällä aikavälillä olisi välttämätöntä luoda tiedonhallintajärjestelmä, joka tehokkaasti tukisi henkilökuntaa tiedon hankinnassa, säilytyksessä ja analysoinnissa.

Kolme suositusta käsittelee sitä, **miten voidaan taata tuloksia koskevan tiedon järjestelmällinen käyttö** oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa.

- Suositus 5: Suositellaan, että UM varaa henkilökunnalle aikaa käyttää tietoa, luo uusia tilaisuuksia ja tilanteita oppimiselle sekä vahvistaa henkilökunnan kykyä käyttää tuloksellisuustietoa ja -informaatiota.

- Suositus 6: Suositellaan, että UM liittää tietoperustaiseen oppimiseen kannustamisen johtajuuden arviointikriteereihin, sisällyttää sen työ-paikkojen toimenkuvauksiin sekä aiheeksi vuosittaisiin kehityskeskus-teluihin johdon ja alaisten välillä.

- Suositus 7: Suositellaan, että UM määrittää "oppimisvastuun" tulospe-rustaisuuden ja tulosjohtajuuden kriteeriksi ja harkitsee tietoperustai-sesta oppimisesta raportointia vuosittaisessa toimintakertomuksessa.

Viimeinen suositus puolestaan pyrkii varmistamaan edellä mainittujen suositus-ten toimeenpanon pitkällä tähtäimellä:

- Suositus 8: Suositellaan, että UM sisällyttää tämän evaluoinnin jatko-toimenpiteet käynnissä oleviin uudistusprosesseihin, kuten kehitys-yhteistyön toimintatapojen uudistukseen, ja valvoo näiden toimeen-panoa pitkällä tähtäimellä, jotta jopa hitaasti tapahtuvat muutokset ehtisivät toteutua.

SAMMANFATTNING

Inledning: Denna utvärdering "Hur drar vi lärdomar av, hanterar och tar beslut inom Finlands utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete" bidrar till att förbättra UM:s hantering av resultatinformation. Syftet är att stärka evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande i utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete på alla nivåer och inom alla områden. Utvärderingen har för avsikt att svara på fyra huvudfrågor:

1. Vilken typ av intern och extern information samlas in, rapporteras och används rutinmässigt av UM inom ramen för Finlands utvecklingspolitik och samarbete?

2. På vilket sätt, och hur metodiskt, hanteras information och kunskap inom Finlands utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete?

3. Vilka framsteg har gjorts och vilka kvarvarande brister finns vad gäller kunskapshantering, lärande och evidensbaserat beslutsfattande på olika nivåer inom utvecklingspolitiken och planeringen och genomförandet av utvecklingssamarbetet?

4. Hur kan UM på ett mer effektivt sätt integrera kunskapshantering och evidensbaserat beslutsfattande samt uppmuntra lärande inom ramen för den övergripande resultatstyrningen inom Finlands utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete?

Denna utvärdering gjordes som en del av pågående resultatstyrning och ett bredare förändringsarbete vad avser UM:s metoder för utvecklingssamarbete, samt mer övergripande regeringsinitiativ relaterade till hur information ska hanteras och användas av UM i framtiden.

Till följd av det stora intresset för detta ämnesområde och den varierande kunskapen om de begrepp som det innefattar var det viktigt att ta fram tydliga definitioner och skapa begreppsmässig transparens. Till exempel så definierades utvärderingens fokus ("resultatinformation och kunskap") i breda termer som information om vilka resultat som har uppnåtts men också djupare kunskap om varför och hur de har uppnåtts.

Övergripande metod: Studien planerades och genomfördes som en teori-baserad utvärdering. Den följde en förändringsteori för evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande inom UM, som hade tagits fram baserat på en sammanställning av omfattande samhällsvetenskaplig forskning. Förändringsteorin förklarar vad som krävs för att lärande och beslutsfattande inom UM på ett mer systematiskt sätt ska baseras på resultatinformation och kunskap. Teorin visar orsakssambanden mellan aktiviteter, användandet av resultatinformation, och följande effekter. Därtill beskriver den vilka omständigheter och antaganden som måste uppfyllas för att varje orsakssamband skall fungera i praktiken. Detta teori-baserade angreppssätt gjorde det möjligt för utvärderingen att inte enbart fastställa i vilken utsträckning evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande hade ägt rum, men också systematiskt undersöka de underliggande orsakerna.

Studien planerades och genomfördes som en teori-baserad utvärdering.

Utvärderingen uppmuntrade till deltagande. UM:s personal involverades, inte bara för att bidra med information men också som en del av en lärandeprocess. Såväl hypoteser som iakttagelser avhandlades med personal, gruppdiskussioner genomfördes, och en rad konsultationer hölls.

En bi-produkt av utvärderingen var att flera lärdomar drogs från den teori-baserade och deltagarstyrda metoden.

Metoder för informationsinhämtning: Med sitt tydliga fokus på lärande och beslutsfattande inom UM baserades utvärderingen huvudsakligen på intervjuer och gruppdiskussioner med personal. Totalt sett genomfördes 172 intervjuer. Även externa perspektiv på lärande och beslutsfattande inom UM inkluderades. Informationen som inhämtades på detta sätt användes sedan för att ta fram en web-baserad enkät. Denna enkät genomfördes under senare delen av utvärderingsprocessen för att testa och kvantifiera i vilken utsträckning det rådde samförstånd om iakttagelser och hypoteser.

Konsultationerna med personal och den web-baserade enkäten kompletterades med en systematisk dokumentstudie. Därutöver beställdes en expertstudie om kunskapshantering och lärande inom andra organisationer som arbetar med utvecklingssamarbete. Denna studie drog fördel av en bredare OECD DAC forskningsstudie om resultatstyrning som pågick under samma period. Fältbesök genomfördes i Mocambique, Vietnam och Etiopien. Under besöken i Mocambique och Vietnam deltog utvärderings-teamet i de interna landstrategi-utvärderingar som anordnades av UM.

Resultat. Totalt resulterade utvärderingen i 22 övergripande iakttagelser, som inordnades i fyra olika kategorier.

Med avseende på **användandet av resultatinformation för lärande och beslutsfattande**, visade utvärderingen att resultatinformation har haft en relativt måttlig påverkan på både lärande och beslutsfattande inom UM. Även om personal ofta använde en viss typ av resultatinformation och kunskap, gav detta inte upphov till evidensbaserat lärande. I den utsträckning lärande ägde rum ansåg personalen att detta var framförallt ett resultat av arbetet i sig eller den dagliga kommunikationen med kollegor. Beslutsfattande inom UM har i högre utsträckning påverkats av politiska prioriteringar, tillgänglig budget, och andra faktorer, än resultatinformation och kunskap. När resultatinformation beaktades var det vanligtvis när beslut skulle förberedas snarare än när de togs. Bortsett från några enstaka fall påverkades budgetbeslut inte av information om resultat eller tidigare prestation.

I allmänhet bedömdes information om varför och hur resultat hade uppnåtts mer relevant och användbar för lärande och beslutsfattande än information om vilka, och graden av, resultat som hade uppnåtts. Eftersom denna typ av information ansågs vara underförstådd var den inte allmänt tillgänglig och förlorades ofta när personal bytte uppgifter eller lämnade UM.

Utvärderingar visade sig vara en viktig källa för resultatinformation och kunskap. Utvärderingar på central nivå bidrog till UM:s policy-relaterade beslutsfattande men den omfattande kunskapsbank som dessa utvärderingar utgjorde användes inte tillräckligt. Decentraliserade genomgångar och utvärderingar var

> Totalt resulterade utvärderingen i 22 övergripande iakttagelser, som inordnades i fyra olika kategorier.

användbara i den mån de var av tillräcklig hög kvalité och de insikter som fördes fram kunde appliceras i praktiken.

Flera iakttagelser handlade om den **institutionella efterfrågan på resultat-information och kunskap** för lärande och beslutsfattande. Även om UM har gjort framsteg i riktning mot mer evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande och skapat ytterligare möjligheter för lärande, har evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande inte institutionaliserats; ledningens stöd varierade, personal saknade institutionella incitament. UM:s organisationskultur utgjorde ett hinder för evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande och, jämte budgetprocessen inom UM, begränsade den institutionella efterfrågan på resultatinformation. Även om stora ansträngningar gjordes för att offentliggöra utvecklingssamarbetets resultat var det lite fokus i rapporteringen på hur UM hade lärt från erfarenheter, och hade använt resultatinformation för beslutsfattande.

UM:s personal och de olika teamen visade sig ha en förhållandevis begrän-sad förmåga att använda resultatinformation för lärande och beslutsfattande. Den viktigaste orsaken var tidsbrist, och därefter brist på möjligheter. En stor andel av personalen menade att det saknades en gynnsam organisationskultur för resultatbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande. Personalens förmåga och färdig-heter att tillgå, förstå, analysera och använda resultatinformation och kunskap varierade och var ofta otillräcklig. Trots dessa begränsningar visade sig UM:s personal vara högt motiverade att använda resultatinformation, och ha en stark tilltro till att sådan information kunde ha varit av stor betydelse för resultatupp-fyllelse inom ramen för UM:s utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete.

I förhållande till hur **tillgänglig och kvalitetsmässigt lämpad resultatinfor-mation** var för lärande och beslutsfattande, visade utvärderingen att befintliga system för kunskapshantering var otillräckliga. Som en följd av detta har UM:s personal och konsulter sina egna system för att hantera resultatinformation, som till exempel epostfoldrar och minnesstickor. Det fanns inget som säkerställde att resultatinformation var fullständig eller korrekt, och extern information och kunskap hanterades inte på ett systematiskt sätt. Vid tiden för utvärderingen fanns det vidare inga tydliga indikationer på när befintliga system skulle ersät-tas av den nya, gemensamma IT-infrastrukturen som alla ministerier ska ha i framtiden.

Slutsatser. Baserat på dessa iakttagelser har utvärdering dragit sju slutsatser.

De första fyra slutsatserna har att göra med **tillgången på resultatinformation och kunskap** som kan bidra till lärande and beslutsfattande inom UM. De första två slutsatserna handlar om underförstådd kunskap om resultat, och de nästföl-jande om dokumenterad resultatinformation:

- Slutsats 1: Ämnesrådgivare och andra specialister besitter mycket av UM:s institutionella minne men det är svårt att bibehålla och sprida denna kunskap.

- Slutsats 2: UM förlorar användbar, relevant resultatinformation och kunskap när personal eller konsulter byter arbetsuppgifter eller slutar.

Baserat på dessa iakttagelser har utvärdering dragit sju slutsatser.

- Slutsats 3: UM behöver mer dokumenterad resultatinformation och kunskap som förklarar hur resultat har uppnåtts – och kan uppnås i framtiden. Denna typ av information, jämte underförstådd kunskap och erfarenheter, behövs för att säkerställa evidensbaserad lärande och beslutsfattande.

- Slutsats 4: UM:s IT-infrastruktur begränsar personalens möjlighet att tillgå resultatinformation och stödjer inte analys av sådan information. Eftersom befintliga system är dokument-baserade finns få möjligheter till förbättringar.

De tre övriga slutsatserna relaterar till **i vilken utsträckning utrikesministeriet – som organisation – underlättar och uppmuntrar till användandet av resultatinformation och kunskap** för lärande och beslutsfattande:

- Slutsats 5: Personalen har inte tillräcklig tid, möjlighet och förmåga att använda resultatinformation på ett effektivt sätt. Detta utgör ett hinder för evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande och riskerar att negativt påverka personalens motivation, som för närvarande är hög.

- Slutsats 6: UM:s ledning stödjer evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande men endast ett fåtal ser det om en prioritet för organisationen. Av denna anledning har personalen inte haft tillräckligt med institutionella incitament att använda resultatinformation för lärande och beslutsfattande.

- Slutsats 7: Även om UM har gjort betydande framsteg i fråga om resultatstyrning av utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete har den institutionella efterfrågan på evidensbaserat lärande och beslutsfattande varit låg.

Utvärderingen gav åtta rekommendationer.

Rekommendationer: Var och en av slutsatserna har utmynnat i en rekommendation. Ytterligare en rekommendation har gjorts som vägledning för genomförandet av de andra rekommendationerna.

Fyra av rekommendationerna syftar till att **säkerställa tillgång på relevant, underförstådd såväl som dokumenterad, resultatinformation och kunskap**. Två av rekommendationerna berör underförstådd resultatkunskap och två berör dokumenterad resultatinformation.

- Rekommendation 1: Fortsätta den pågående planeringen av en karriärväg för ämnesrådgivare och andra specialister som belönar och vidmakthåller denna personals viktiga roll för insamlande, dokumentering och spridning av resultatinformation.

- Rekommendation 2: För att förhindra onödig förlust av resultatinformation och kunskap, utveckla en praxis för överlämnade av arbetsuppgifter, inklusive skriftligt material, och säkerställa att personal följer denna praxis.

- Rekommendation 3: Skapa incitament för och investera i dokumentering av resultatinformation och kunskap som kan bidra till lärande och beslutsfattande om utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete inom UM.

- Rekommendation 4: På kort sikt, ta fram en rad snabba lösningar för AHA-KYT samt alternativ till befintliga system för att arkivera och tillgå resultatinformation. På lite längre sikt, skapa ett system för informationshantering som på ett effektivt sätt understödjer arkivering, tillgång på och analys av relevant resultatinformation och kunskap.

Tre rekommendationer syftar till att **säkerställa en rutin för användandet av resultatinformation och kunskap** för lärande och beslutsfattande:

- Rekommendation 5: Sätta av tid för resultatbaserat lärande, skapa ytterligare möjligheter för strukturerat lärande, samt stärka personalens förmåga att använda resultatinformation.

- Rekommendation 6: Se stöd till resultatbaserat lärande som en viktig ledaregenskap inom UM och inkludera denna egenskap i arbetsbeskrivningar och utvecklingssamtal.

- Rekommendation 7: Införa "ansvarsutkrävande för lärande" från resultatinformation som en del av UM:s resultatstyrning, och överväga att särskilt rapportera om detta område.

Den slutgiltiga rekommendationen syftar till att säkerställa ett långsiktigt perspektiv då några förändringar kan ta längre tid än andra:

- Rekommendation 8: Följa upp denna utvärderingen som en integrerad del av pågående förändringsarbetet och säkerställa ett långsiktigt genomförande av rekommendationer.

SUMMARY

Introduction. This evaluation on "How do we Learn, Manage and Make Decisions in Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation: Management of results information and knowledge at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA)" supports the Ministry in developing its management of results-related information and knowledge in order to strengthen evidence-informed learning and decision-making at all levels and in all channels of its development policy and cooperation. It set out to answer four evaluation questions:

1. What MFA-internal and -external information is routinely collected, reported and used by the MFA regarding Finland's development policy and operation?

2. How – and how coherently – is knowledge management implemented in Finland's development policy and cooperation?

3. What are the advances and shortcomings in knowledge management, learning and evidence-informed decision-making at different levels of development policy and cooperation planning and implementation?

4. How can the MFA more effectively integrate knowledge management and evidence-informed decision-making and promote learning into Results-Based Management (RBM) of Finnish development policy and cooperation?

The evaluation took place in the context of the ongoing implementation of Results-Based Management (RBM) and a broader reform of development cooperation practices at the MFA, and of government-wide initiatives with relevance for how information will be managed and used at the MFA in future.

Because of the broad interest in the subject and the variable understanding of the concepts involved, clear definitions and conceptual clarity were important. For example, the subject matter of the evaluation ("results information and knowledge") was defined broadly in this evaluation to cover information about what results were achieved but also analytic understanding of why and how this happened.

Approach. This evaluation was planned and implemented as a theory-based evaluation. It closely followed a Theory of Change for evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA that was developed based on a synthesis of extensive social science research. The Theory of Change models what it would take for results information and knowledge to routinely inform learning and decision-making at the MFA, and as a result to influence learning and decision-making. It shows the causal pathway from activities to use of results information and to subsequent impact. In addition, it describes what conditions and assumptions need to be fulfilled for each cause-and-effect relationship to function effectively. This theory-based approach allowed the evaluation to not only determine the degree to which evidence-informed learning and decision-making had taken place but, in addition, to systematically investigate underlying reasons for the observed state of affairs.

This evaluation was planned and implemented as a theory-based evaluation.

The evaluation was participatory in the sense that MFA staff was involved in the evaluation process not only as providers of information but also as learning partners throughout the evaluation journey. To this end, hypotheses and emerging findings were discussed with staff, group discussions were held, and a series of consultations were organised.

As a by-product, several lessons learned from applying this particular theory-based and participatory evaluation approach were developed.

Methodology. With its strong focus on learning and decision-making at the MFA, the evaluation relied strongly on interviews and group discussions with MFA staff. Overall, 172 interviews were conducted. External perspectives on learning and decision-making at the MFA were included as well. The feedback obtained in this way was then used to design an online survey that was administered late in the evaluation process, to test and quantify levels of agreement with emerging evaluation findings and hypotheses.

Intense and systematic desk review complemented direct staff interactions and the survey. In addition, an expert paper on knowledge management and learning in other development cooperation organisations was commissioned that took advantage of a broader OECD DAC research study on RBM that was conducted in parallel. Field missions were carried out in Mozambique, Vietnam and Ethiopia. In Mozambique and Vietnam missions included participation on the self-assessment workshops of the country strategies by the MFA.

Findings. Overall, the evaluation produced 22 comprehensive findings, grouped into four categories.

Regarding the **use of results information for learning and decision-making**, the evaluation evidenced a moderate level of influence of results information on both learning and decision-making at the MFA. While at least some results information and knowledge were used frequently by staff, this did not translate effectively into evidence-informed learning. If such learning happened, it was mostly on-the job or through informal peer-to-peer interactions that were considered important by staff. Past decision-making at the MFA was usually influenced more strongly by political priorities, available budget, and other factors than by results information and knowledge. When it had influence, it was usually while decisions were prepared rather than when they were taken. Apart from a few exceptions, budget decisions were not influenced by information about results and past performance.

Generally, information about why and how results had been realised was considered more relevant and useful for learning and decision-making than information about what and how much results had been achieved. Because this type of information was often only held tacitly by staff and consultants, it remained of limited availability and was often lost when they rotated within or left the MFA.

Evaluations emerged as an important provider of such useful results information and knowledge. Central evaluations informed important MFA decisions at the policy level but did not sufficiently put to use the comprehensive body of knowledge they had generated. Decentral reviews and evaluations were useful if of good quality and if their insights could be subsequently applied.

The evaluation produced 22 comprehensive findings.

Several findings investigated the **institutional demand for results information and knowledge** for learning and decision-making. While the MFA made progress towards more evidence-informed learning and decision-making and created additional learning opportunities, it had however not yet managed to institutionalise evidence-informed learning and decision-making: leadership support was variable, staff lacked institutional incentives, and the MFA's organisational culture did not yet support learning from mistakes. The MFA's organisational structure represented a natural obstacle for evidence-informed learning and decision-making and, together with how the financial planning process at the MA is conducted, also limited institutional demand for results information. While much attention had been paid to publicly reporting results, there was little focus on demonstrating that the MFA had also learned from experience and had used results information to inform its decision-making.

The **capacity of MFA staff and teams for making use of results information** for learning and decision-making was found to be comparatively low. Lack of time emerged as the primary obstacle, followed by lack of occasion. A significant portion of staff also felt they lacked a "safe space" for results-informed learning and decision-making. The capability and skills of staff to access, understand, analyse and use results information and knowledge varied and was not always sufficient. In spite of these limitations, MFA staff demonstrated a consistently high level of motivation for using results information, together with a firm belief that this could make a difference in terms of the results of the MFA's development policy and cooperation.

Regarding the **availability and quality of results information and knowledge** for learning and decision-making, the evaluation found the current information management systems to be inadequate for accessing relevant documents and for analysing the information they contained. As a consequence, MFA staff and consultants have resorted to individual stop-gap solutions for managing results information, such as their email inboxes and personal storage devices. Neither the completeness nor the accuracy of documented results information was systematically ensured, and external results information and knowledge was not systematically managed. Information on when current systems will be replaced by the new government-wide architecture remained inconclusive.

Conclusions. From these findings, seven conclusions were drawn.

The first four concern the **availability of results information and knowledge** that can effectively inform learning and decision-making at the MFA. The first two concern tacit results knowledge, the remaining two documented results information:

- Conclusion 1: Sector advisors and other specialists are preserving much of the MFA's institutional memory but there are challenges in sustaining and making their knowledge available.

- Conclusion 2: The MFA effectively loses useful, job-specific results information and knowledge when staff or consultants rotate within or leave the MFA.

The evaluation drew seven conclusions.

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

- Conclusion 3: The MFA needs more documented results information and knowledge explaining how results were achieved in the past – and can be achieved in the future. This type of information is required – together with tacitly held knowledge and experience – for effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making.

- Conclusion 4: The MFA's information technology infrastructure does not allow staff to access results information effectively and provides little support for analysing it. Because of the document-based design of systems currently in use, the improvement potential within the current architecture is limited.

Three additional conclusions are about the **degree to which the MFA – as an institution – enables and incentivises the use of results information and knowledge** for learning and decision-making:

- Conclusion 5: Staff lack time, opportunity and capability to make effective use of results information. This stands in the way of effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making and puts the currently high level of staff motivation at risk.

- Conclusion 6: MFA leadership supports evidence-informed learning and decision-making but only few see it as a corporate priority. As a consequence, institutional incentives for staff to use results information for learning and decision-making have remained limited.

- Conclusion 7: While significant progress has been made towards results-oriented management of development policy and cooperation at the MFA, institutional demand for evidence-informed learning and decision-making has remained limited.

Recommendations. Each conclusion gave rise to a recommendation, and one additional recommendation was issued to guide their implementation.

Four recommendations aim at ensuring the **availability of relevant tacit and documented results information and knowledge**. The first two concern tacit results knowledge, the remaining two documented results information:

- Recommendation 1: Continue ongoing planning to establish a career track for sector advisors and other specialists that rewards and retains these important experts as holders, documenters and providers of useful results information at the MFA.

- Recommendation 2: To stop unnecessary loss of results information and knowledge, develop good handover practices, including documentation, and ensure staff compliance with them.

- Recommendation 3: Incentivise and invest in the documentation of selected results information and knowledge that can effectively inform learning and decision-making in development policy and cooperation at the MFA.

The evaluation produced eight recommendations.

- Recommendation 4: In the short term, implement a series of quick fixes for AHA-KYT and support alternatives for storing and accessing results information currently used by staff. In the medium term, establish an information management system that can effectively support staff in storing, accessing and analysing useful results information and knowledge.

Three recommendation aim at **enabling routine use of results information and knowledge** for learning and decision-making:

- Recommendation 5: Reserve time for results-informed learning, create additional structured learning opportunities for staff, and strengthen staff capabilities for making use of results information.

- Recommendation 6: Make support to results-informed learning and decision-making a recognised leadership qualification at the MFA and include it into job descriptions and performance appraisals of MFA leadership and staff.

- Recommendation 7: Introduce "accountability for learning" from results information into Results-Based Management at the MFA and consider reflecting it in corporate reporting.

The final recommendation is:

- Recommendation 8: Integrate follow-up from this evaluation into ongoing reform efforts and ensure long-term implementation.

It aims at ensuring the necessary long-term horizon for allowing some of the slower envisaged changes to materialise as well as efficiently integrating the recommendations of this evaluation into ongoing reform processes at the MFA.

PÄÄHAVAINNOT, JOHTOPÄÄTÖKSET JA SUOSITUKSET

Havainto	Johtopäätös	Suositus
Tuloksellisuusinformaation ja -tiedon saatavuus (hiljaisen ja dokumentoidun)		
Havainto 7: Toimialakohtaisilla neuvonantajilla ja erityisasiantuntijoilla on hallussaan paljon tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista, ja heidän varassaan on suuri osa UM:n institutionaalista muistia. Haasteena on silti, kuinka UM voisi taata tämän tiedon jatkuvuuden ja saatavuuden organisaation sisällä.	Johtopäätös 1: Toimialakohtaisilla sektorineuvonantajilla ja erityisasiantuntijoilla on hallussaan suuri määrä UM:n institutionaalista muistia, mutta haasteena on säilyttää ja saada tämä tieto yleiseen käyttöön.	Suositus 1: Suositellaan, että UM jatkaa suunnitelmia siitä, että neuvonantajille ja erityisasiantuntijoille kehitetään palkitsevia urapolkuja, jotka pitäisivät ministeriön piirissä nämä henkilöt, joilla on hallussaan ja jotka tuottavat merkittävän määrän tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista.
Havainto 3: Hyödyllisen, tuloksellisuutta koskevan tiedon karttuminen on rajoittunutta, koska tietoa ei aina dokumentoida ja se katoaa virkakierrossa tai henkilön lähtiessä ministeriöstä muuhun työpaikkaan.

Havainto 6: Epävirallinen tiedonvaihto kollegoiden välillä on UM:ssä tärkeä tiedonsaannin tapa.

Havainto 7: Toimialakohtaisilla neuvonantajilla ja erityisasiantuntijoilla on hallussaan paljon tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista, ja heidän varassaan on suuri osa UM:n institutionaalista muistia. Haasteena on silti, kuinka UM voisi taata tämän tiedon jatkuvuuden ja saatavuuden organisaation sisällä.

Havainto 20: UM:n henkilökunta käyttää epävirallisia tiedonsiirron keinoja ratkaisuna virallisen tiedonhallinnan järjestelmän puutteisiin. | Johtopäätös 2 (Perustuu myös havaintoon 16): UM merkittävästi menettää hyödyllistä, toimenkuvakohtaista tuloksellisuustietoa virkakierron seurauksena tai silloin, kun neuvonantaja tai erityisasiantuntija vaihtaa työpaikkaa. | Suositus 2: Suositellaan, että UM pyrkii kaikin keinoin estämään vältettävissä olevan tietohukan (tiedon katoamisen) virkakierron ja työpaikan vaihtojen seurauksena ja kehittää näiden tapausten varalle hyviä käytäntöjä tiedonsiirrolle, sekä valvoo, että henkilökunta noudattaa niitä. |

Havainto	Johtopäätös	Suositus
Havainto 5: Oppimisen ja päätöksenteon näkökulmasta tieto siitä, miten ja miksi joku tietty tulos on saatu aikaan, on tärkeämpi kuin tulos itse. Vaikka UM:ssä organisaation eri tasoilla on paljon tietoa tuloksista, analyyttistä tietoa niiden taustalla olevista syistä sen sijaan on hyvin vähän. Havainto 7: Toimialakohtaisilla neuvonantajilla ja erityisasiantuntijoilla on hallussaan paljon tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista, ja heidän varassaan on suuri osa UM:n institutionaalista muistia. Haasteena on silti, kuinka UM voisi taata tämän tiedon jatkuvuuden ja saatavuuden organisaation sisällä. Havainto 8: Keskitetyt evaluoinnit, vuosiraporttien synteesiraportit ja toiminnantarkastukset (performance audits) tuottavat hyödyllistä tietoa ja ovat täten onnistuneesti vaikuttaneet päätöksentekoon UM:ssä, mutta kaikkea niiden tuottamaa tietoa ei käytetä hyväksi. Havainto 9: Hankkeiden väliarvioinnit tuottavat hyödyllistä tietoa tuloksista, mikäli ne on hyvin dokumentoitu. Sen sijaan hankkeiden loppuevaluointeja pidetään vähemmän hyödyllisinä. Hanke- ja ohjelmaevaluointeja yhteen vetävät metaevaluoinnit ovat tulleet yhä analyyttisemmiksi ja hyödyllisemmiksi. Havainto 22: UM:n ulkopuolelta tulevaa tuloksellisuustietoa ei järjestelmällisesti käytetä eikä hallinnoida.	Johtopäätös 3: UM tarvitsee lisää tietoa siitä, miten, millä keinoilla ja miksi kehitysyhteistyön tiettyihin tuloksiin on päästy, ja miten niihin voitaisiin päästä tulevaisuudessa. Tällaista kokemuksellista tietoa, sekä hiljaista että dokumentoitua, tarvitaan päätöksenteon ja oppimisen pohjaksi. (Tämä johtopäätös rakentuu myös havaintojen 6, 18 ja 20 varaan.)	Suositus 3: Suositellaan, että UM kannustaa ja panostaa tuloksellisuustiedon dokumentointiin valikoitujen tuloksien osalta, jotta ne saataisiin tehokkaasti kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tueksi.
Havainto 18: UM:n tiedonhallintajärjestelmät eivät sovellu helppoon tiedonsaantiin, eivätkä ne tee mahdolliseksi tulosten analyysiä ja vertailua eri hankkeiden ja ohjelmien välillä. Havainto 19: Ei vielä ole selvää, milloin koko valtionhallinnon laajuiset tiedonhallinnan uudistusaloitteet tulevat kohdistumaan UM:n tiedon saatavuuden ongelmiin. Havainto 20: UM:n henkilökunta käyttää epävirallisia keinoja ratkaisuna virallisen tiedonhallintajärjestelmän aiheuttamiin tiedon siirron ongelmiin esim. virkakierron tilanteissa. Havainto 21: Tuloksia koskevan tiedon paikkansapitävyyttä ei järjestelmällisesti valvota eikä myöskään sitä, tuleeko tietty asiakirja tallennettua kokonaisuudessaan.	Johtopäätös 4: UM:n tiedonhallintajärjestelmä ei tee helpoksi tietoon käsiksi pääsyä eikä tarjoa tukea tiedon analysointiin. Evaluointi näkee vain vähän mahdollisuuksia siihen, että nykyisen järjestelmän pohjalta tilannetta voitaisiin parantaa siksi, että nykyinen tiedonhallintajärjestelmä perustuu yksittäisten asiakirjojen arkistoinnin varaan. (Tämä johtopäätös perustuu myös havaintoon 22.)	Suositus 4: Suositellaan, että UM tekee pikaisia muutoksia AHA-KYT-tiedonhallintajärjestelmään ja tukee vaihtoehtoisia tiedonhankinnan ja -säilytyksen tapoja, joita henkilökunta nyt käyttää. Keskipitkällä aikavälillä olisi välttämätöntä luoda tiedonhallintajärjestelmä, joka tehokkaasti tukisi henkilökuntaa tiedon hankinnassa, säilytyksessä ja analysoinnissa.
Missä määrin UM organisaationa kannustaa käyttämään tietoa tuloksellisuudesta oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa		
Havainto 14: UM:n henkilökunta on yleisesti ottaen motivoitunutta käyttämään tietoa ja uskoo, että sillä voidaan parantaa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksellisuutta. Havainto 15: Henkilökunnan mielestä ajanpuute on tekijä, joka eniten estää pohtimista ja oppimista, ja täten haittaa tiedon käyttöä päätöksenteon pohjana. Havainto 16: Henkilökunnan mielestä oppimiselle ei ole tarpeeksi tilaisuuksia eikä turvallista ympäristöä, jossa voisi oppia virheistä. Havainto 17: UM:n henkilökunnan kyky hankkia, ymmärtää ja analysoida tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksista vaihtelee eikä aina ole ihanteellinen.	Johtopäätös 5: Henkilökunnalla ei ole aikaa, tilaisuuksia eikä kykyä käyttää tehokkaasti tietoa kehitysyhteistyön tuloksellisuudesta. Tämä estää tietoperustaista oppimista ja päätöksentekoa, ja voi pitkällä tähtäimellä vaarantaa henkilökunnan nykyisen korkean motivaation. (Tämä johtopäätös perustuu myös havaintoon 21.)	Suositus 5: Suositellaan, että UM varaa henkilökunnalle aikaa käyttää tietoa sekä luo uusia tilaisuuksia oppimiselle, sekä vahvistaa henkilökunnan kykyä käyttää tuloksellisuustietoa ja -informaatiota.

Havainto	Johtopäätös	Suositus
Havainto 10: UM:n piirissä on tapahtunut edistystä oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tietoperustaisuudessa. Havainto 11: UM ei kuitenkaan vielä ole onnistunut vakiinnuttamaan tietoperusteisuutta osaksi organisaatiota, tuki johdon taholta on vaihtelevaa, henkilökunnalle ei tarjota kannustimia oppimiseen eikä UM:n organisaatiokulttuuri kannusta virheistä oppimiseen. Havainto 13: UM ei vielä tiedota eikä raportoi siitä, miten sen parissa tietoperustaisuus toteutuu oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa.	Johtopäätös 6: UM:n johto kannattaa oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tietoperustaisuutta, mutta harva päättäjä pitää sitä instituution kehittämisen pääalueena. Seurauksena on, että henkilökunnalle on tarjolla vain rajoitetussa määrin kannustimia käyttää tietoa oppimisen ja päätöksenteon pohjana. (Tämä johtopäätös perustuu myös havainnoille 10 ja 15–17)	Suositus 6: Suositellaan, että UM liittää tietoperustaiseen oppimiseen kannustamisen johtajuuden arviointikriteereihin, sisällyttää sen työpaikkojen toimenkuvauksiin sekä aiheeksi vuosittaisiin kehityskeskusteluihin johdon ja alaisten välillä.
Havainto 10: UM:n piirissä on tapahtunut edistystä oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tietoperustaisuudessa (tietojohtamisessa). Havainto 11: UM ei kuitenkaan vielä ole onnistunut vakiinnuttamaan tietoperustaisuutta osaksi organisaatiota, tuki johdon taholta on vaihtelevaa, henkilökunnalle ei tarjota kannustimia oppimiseen eikä UM:n organisaatiokulttuuri kannusta virheistä oppimiseen. Havainto 12: UM:n organisaatiorakenne on este oppimisen ja päätöksenteon tietoperustaisuudelle ja rajoittaa institutionaalista tulostiedon ja -informaation kysyntää. Havainto 13: UM ei vielä tiedota eikä raportoi siitä, miten tietoperustaisuus toteutuu kehityspolitiikkaan ja -yhteistyöhön liittyvässä oppimisessa ja päätöksenteossa. Havainto 16: UM:n henkilökunnan mielestä sillä ei ole tarpeeksi tilaisuuksia oppia ja joidenkin mielestä organisaatiokulttuuri ei kannusta oppimiseen.	Johtopäätös 7: Vaikka tietoperustaisessa kehityspolitiikan ja -yhteistyön johtamisessa on tapahtunut huomattavaa edistymistä, UM:n organisaation institutionaalinen kysyntä (tarve) tuloksellisuutta koskevalle tiedolle on edelleen rajoitettu. (Tämä johtopäätös rakentuu myös havaintojen 1–5 varaan.)	Suositus 7: Suositellaan, että UM määrittää "oppimisvastuun" tulosperustaisuuden ja tulosjohtajuuden kriteeriksi ja harkitsee tietoperustaisesta oppimisesta raportointia vuosittaisessa toimintakertomuksessa.
Pitkän tähtäimen toimeenpano		
Kaikki havainnot	Kaikki johtopäätökset	Suositus 8: Suositellaan, että UM sisällyttää tämän evaluoinnin jatkotoimenpiteet käynnissä oleviin uudistusprosesseihin kuten kehitysyhteistyön toimintatapojen uudistukseen ja valvoo näiden toimeenpanoa pitkällä tähtäimellä, jotta jopa hitaasti tapahtuvat muutokset ehtisivät toteutua.

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Availability of relevant tacit and documented results information and knowledge		
Finding 7: Sector advisors and specialists hold important results information and institutional memory. The MFA however faces challenges in terms of ensuring continued accessibility of their knowledge.	Conclusion 1: Sector advisors and other specialists are preserving much of the MFA's institutional memory but there are challenges in sustaining and making their knowledge available.	Recommendation 1: Continue ongoing planning to establish a career track for sector advisors and other specialists that rewards and retains these important experts as holders, documenters and providers of useful results information at the MFA.
Finding 3: The accumulation of useful results knowledge is restricted because it often remains undocumented and can be lost when staff change jobs. Finding 6: Informally exchanging results information between colleagues plays an important role at the MFA. Finding 7: Sector advisors and specialists hold important results information and institutional memory. The MFA however faces challenges in terms of ensuring continued accessibility of their knowledge. Finding 20: MFA staff and consultants use individual stopgap solutions for managing results information.	Conclusion 2: The MFA effectively loses useful, job-specific results information and knowledge when staff or consultants rotate within or leave the MFA. (This conclusion also builds on Finding 16)	Recommendation 2: To stop unnecessary loss of results information and knowledge, develop good handover practices, including documentation, and ensure staff compliance with them.
Finding 5: For learning and decision-making, information about the "why" and "how" is perceived to be more useful than information about the "what". While the MFA documents a wide array of results information on different organisational levels, it lacks results information of this type. Finding 7: Sector advisors and specialists hold important results information and institutional memory. The MFA however faces challenges in terms of ensuring continued accessibility of their knowledge. Finding 8: Central evaluations, their synthesis in annual reports and performance audits produce useful results information and have successfully influenced decision-making at the MFA but do not fully put to use the comprehensive body of knowledge they generate. Finding 9: Project mid-term reviews produce useful results information and influence operations if they are conducted well, while project completion reports were considered less useful. Meta-evaluations of projects and programmes have become increasingly analytic and useful. Finding 22: External results information is not systematically accessed and managed.	Conclusion 3: The MFA needs more documented results information and knowledge explaining how results were achieved in the past – and can be achieved in the future. This type of information is required – together with tacitly held knowledge and experience – for effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making. (This conclusion also builds on Findings 6, 18 and 20)	Recommendation 3: Incentivise and invest in the documentation of selected results information and knowledge that can effectively inform learning and decision-making in development policy and cooperation at the MFA.

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Finding 18: The MFA's information management systems do not allow staff to access documented results information easily and are not suitable for analysis across different projects and programmes. Finding 19: It remains unclear until when and to what extent ongoing state-wide initiatives will be able to address the MFA's access-to-information issues. Finding 20: MFA staff and consultants use individual stop-gap solutions for managing results information. Finding 21: The completeness and accuracy of results information is not systematically ensured.	Conclusion 4: The MFA's information technology infrastructure does not allow staff to access results information effectively and provides little support for analysing it. Because of the document-based design of systems currently in use, the improvement potential within the current architecture is limited. (This conclusion also builds on Finding 22)	Recommendation 4: In the short term, implement a series of quick fixes for AHA-KYT and support alternatives for storing and accessing results information currently used by staff. In the medium term, establish an information management system that can effectively support staff in storing, accessing and analysing useful results information and knowledge.
Enabling environment and incentives for using results information and knowledge		
Finding 14: MFA staff are generally motivated to use results information and believe it can make a difference. Finding 15: Staff consider lack of time for reflection and learning the most important restriction to more results-informed learning and decision-making. Finding 16: MFA staff perceive that there is not sufficient occasion and some lack a "safe space" for results-informed learning and decision-making. Finding 17: Capability of MFA staff to access, understand, analyse and use results information varies and is not always sufficient.	Conclusion 5: Staff lack time, opportunity and capability to make effective use of results information. This stands in the way of effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making and puts the currently high level of staff motivation at risk. (This conclusion also builds on Finding 21)	Recommendation 5: Reserve time for results-informed learning, create additional structured learning opportunities for staff, and strengthen staff capabilities for making use of results information.
Finding 10: The MFA has made progress towards more evidence-informed learning and decision-making. Finding 11: The MFA has however not yet institutionalised evidence-informed learning and decision-making: leadership support is variable, staff lacks institutional incentives, and the MFA's organisational culture does not support learning from mistakes. Finding 13: The MFA does not yet publicly report and demonstrate accountability for evidence-informed learning and decision-making.	Conclusion 6: MFA leadership supports evidence-informed learning and decision-making but only few see it as a corporate priority. As a consequence, institutional incentives for staff to use results information for learning and decision-making have remained limited. (This conclusion also builds on Findings 10 and 15–17)	Recommendation 6: Make support to results-informed learning and decision-making a recognised leadership qualification at the MFA and include it into job descriptions and performance appraisals of MFA leadership and staff.

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Finding 10: The MFA has made progress towards more evidence-informed learning and decision-making.

Finding 11: The MFA has however not yet institutionalised evidence-informed learning and decision-making: leadership support is variable, staff lacks institutional incentives, and the MFA's organisational culture does not support learning from mistakes.

Finding 12: The MFA's organisational structure represents a natural obstacle for evidence-informed learning and decision-making and limits institutional demand for results information.

Finding 13: The MFA does not yet publicly report and demonstrate accountability for evidence-informed learning and decision-making.

Finding 16: MFA staff feels that there is not sufficient occasion and some lack a "safe space" for results-informed learning and decision-making. | Conclusion 7: While significant progress has been made towards results-oriented management of development policy and cooperation at the MFA, institutional demand for evidence-informed learning and decision-making has remained limited.

(This conclusion also builds on Findings 1–5) | Recommendation 7: Introduce "accountability for learning" from results information into Results-Based Management at the MFA and consider reflecting it in corporate reporting. |
| **Ensure long-term implementation** | | |
| All findings | All conclusions | Recommendation 8: Integrate follow-up from this evaluation into ongoing reform efforts and ensure long-term implementation. |

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This evaluation

This evaluation supports the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) in developing its management of results-related information and knowledge in order to strengthen evidence-informed learning and decision-making at all levels and in all channels of its development policy and cooperation. It explores management and decision-making processes from the learning perspective: How the MFA is able to collect, utilise, learn and inform decisions through documented and tacitly held results information and knowledge.

It complements earlier evaluations of Results-Based Management (RBM) at the MFA. While the latter focused primarily on the "steering" aspects of RBM, i.e. to what degree intended results are achieved and how this achievement can be tracked, its interest is on how targets and approaches were – and can be – rationally informed and improved by experience and evidence on how results were achieved in the past.

The evaluation systematically analysed the degree to which results information and knowledge has been used and has influenced learning and decision-making a the MFA, and by systematically investigating supporting and hindering factors such as the level of institutional support and demand for evidence-informed learning and decision-making, the capacity of MFA staff to make use of information about results, and its availability and quality.

Based on these findings, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are made to define realistic aspirations and strengthen effective results-informed learning and decision-making in development policy and cooperation at the MFA.

1.2 Context

This evaluation should be understood in the context of ongoing management and system reforms at the MFA and against the backdrop of similar efforts in other aid agencies.

The MFA has pursued an explicit Results-Based Management (RBM) agenda since about 2012. With interruptions, RBM Action Plans have been developed since a first comprehensive evaluation of RBM in Finnish bilateral development cooperation was conducted in 2011 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011b). That evaluation was followed by another RBM evaluation in 2015 that focused on the policy level and covered all policy channels (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2015a). While also covering other aspects, both evaluations were mainly focused on the "steering" aspect of RBM, i.e. on how policy priorities, goals and objectives defined and influenced the MFA's operations and how achieved results were reported back. The present evaluation is somewhat complementary to those assessments in that it focuses on how priorities goals

This evaluation supports the MFA in developing its management of results-related information and knowledge.

and objectives are informed and influenced by what can be learned from what and how results were achieved. It finds, for example, that information about the effectiveness of steering, i.e. what results were achieved is often less useful as a basis for learning and decision-making than information about why and how results were achieved but that the MFA often lacks that type of evidence.

Experiences with RBM in other aid agencies show that different purposes of RBM tend to compete with each other. In many cases, RBM is introduced to ensure continued support and funding from domestic stakeholders. While important, a strong focus on accountability for reaching results can hinder rather than help effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making. As noted above, it can prioritise the production of results information that is less useful for learning and decision making. But it can also create incentives and contribute to an institutional environment that discourages using results information for learning, for influencing decisions and for questioning the status quo.

Beyond its RBM agenda, the MFA has recently begun a comprehensive reform of its development cooperation practices ("KeTTU"). This reform has addressed – and plans to address – several issues identified in the present evaluation and hence represents an ongoing process of institutional development the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report can be integrated with.

Beyond the MFA there are two government-wide efforts with future relevance for evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA. A two-year effort (the "Tietokiri" project) aims at generally strengthening knowledge-based management in public administration with the MFA as one pilot ministry, and a longer-term effort aims at introducing a new government-wide information management system ("VAHVA").

1.3   Earlier findings at the MFA

In this section we briefly summarise the main observations made in a few key evaluations and reports with particular relevance for this evaluation (KPMG, 2013a, 2016a; Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011b, 2015a; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012; Saarteinen, Sirenius, & Skog, 2018b). The full review is summarised in Annex 7.

Regarding the **supply of results knowledge**, several studies noted that progress had been made, but also pointed out that important challenges remained. Most studies observed difficulties in terms of access to and information retrieval from the case management system AHA-KYT and that, hence, the MFA could not yet make full use of the results knowledge it generated. It was also noted that not all information and knowledge was in electronic form.

Several studies identified the need for a professional MFA- or State-wide knowledge management system and common IT infrastructure, and one mentioned that organisational "silos" had to be broken down.

Corporate target-setting on the level of the Development Policy Programme (DPPs) and within the financial plan (TTS) remained poor, posing challenges for prioritising activities and collecting results knowledge.

Regarding **capacity for using results knowledge**, a commonly identified key challenge was related to staff rotation and different MFA career tracks that made it difficult to ensure the required expertise was always available. While special career and local staff possessed the necessary expertise their career prospects were not favourable. Local staff was little involved in planning, decision-making and training.

Several reports pointed to the improvement potential for improvement of qualitative information about why (rather than what) results were achieved. Progress was made with introducing a standard for management responses and regular meta-evaluations of central evaluations.

Regarding **demand for results knowledge**, most studies analysed the MFA's organisational culture. Earlier studies found it bureaucratic and risk-adverse, and that staff prioritised diligent compliance and accountability over careful experimentation and learning, while a recent staff survey was more favourable.

Some studies also pointed out that, because financial and results planning and reporting processes and systems remained largely separate, there was no consistent linkage between the use of funds and related results. Financial planning and reporting systems (TTS) lacked useful information on results, and corporate development policy priorities had no clear link to funding priorities.

The studies produced very little evidence on the **benefits of improved learning and decision-making**. While evidence was not explicit in Development Policy Programs, results knowledge was used during their formulation process. The last OECD DAC peer review commended Finland for using results information for "focusing on its contribution to development results" (OECD, 2017b).

1.4 Findings from other aid agencies

For this evaluation, an expert paper was commissioned, focusing on knowledge management and decision-making in the context of RBM. The paper drew on and complemented a larger RBM meta study commissioned by the OECD DAC (Vähämäki & Verger, 2019) and summarises experiences of several international aid agencies.

The expert's main conclusions along the nine questions we asked her to research are summarised in Table 1. The full paper is provided in Annex 9.

Table 1. Findings from other aid agencies

Questions	Summary conclusions from expert paper
1. To what degree is there explicit reference to the terms/concepts of knowledge management, learning and adaptive management? Are they explained and, if yes, how are they understood?	Most knowledge management definitions see it as implying some organisational activities, such as identifying creating, representing and distributing information and experiences. In general, it seems that adaptive management and learning are more fashionable concepts today than RBM.

Questions	Summary conclusions from expert paper
2. Is there a strategy/an approach to knowledge management?	Quite a few organisations have a separate knowledge management or a learning strategy, which does not form part of their RBM framework. Knowledge management and learning activities are seen as something broader than only learning from results knowledge.
3. Do the organisations have institutionalised processes and structures for learning?	The evaluations have mainly looked at the systems for bringing results knowledge together. Some evaluations have taken a broader perspective on learning and discussed how learning takes place in informal sharing and communications.
	Most RBM evaluations have come to the conclusion that results information is not used in decision-making and for learning. However, the evaluations have seldom analysed the processes or requirements (for example whether there is an organisational requirement that results knowledge is to be submitted prior to decision-making).
4. Is there a deeper understanding of how learning and decision-making informed by results knowledge actually works (or should work)?	Four evaluations provide broader descriptions and an understanding of learning and decision-making processes in the organisations. Of these, the two WB evaluations provide the broadest analysis of how staff actually and in practice have learnt. They argue that learning mainly takes place through informal ways and tacit learning. The reports have not discussed other factors that influences organisational decision-making processes. They also say little about the relation between learning and decision-making.
5. What results knowledge is produced by the organisation? What results knowledge is available to staff for learning and decision-making? How relevant, credible and useful is this information and knowledge?	For corporate reporting, donor organisations mainly use quantitative outputs and short-term outcomes. An increasing number of donors are also using standard indicators in agency-wide results frameworks. There is a lot of other information produced that is used for learning; evaluations, research information, seminars, etc. A common finding is that, at least quantitative results information, is not relevant, credible and useful for internal decision making. Staff rely more on qualitative information, information from peers and face-to face dialogue or other knowledge obtained in relations with the partners.
6. Is staff sufficiently incentivised, motivated and confident to use results knowledge for learning and decision-making? **Does the organisation provide sufficient time, space and occasion for learning and evidence-informed decision-making?** **Does staff have sufficient skills, understanding and knowledge on how to use results knowledge to improve performance and manage for better results?**	Most reports claim that there is not sufficient capacity within the organisations for use of results knowledge. Time is often raised as the main disincentive. Staff need to devote their time to other things, such as reporting and accountability. Some reports also state that there is a lack of understanding and a lack of a mind-set for result orientation. Knowledge and skills to analyse data and to disseminate it is also raised as a reason for why learning is not happening. The evaluations typically argue that insufficient staff resources have been devoted to RBM activities and that more resources are needed to do the analyses required. Another underlying reason for why results knowledge is not used could simply be that there is simply too much information for staff to act upon.

Questions	Summary conclusions from expert paper
7. To what degree and how is results knowledge considered in decision-making (and policy formulation) in the organisation?	Most evaluations state that results knowledge is considered to a very little extent in decision-making at a broader policy level. More evidence is found that results knowledge is used at project level. Moreover, results knowledge seems to be more widely used in some contexts and by some units/departments and thematic areas. Other factors, such as disbursement pressure, political processes and decisions, pressure from advocacy groups, past promises, reputation etc. also influence decisions.
8. Are there concrete examples for learning and/or decision-making informed by results knowledge? How and to what degree has results knowledge led to improved performance and results?	There exist several concrete examples that have promoted larger use of results knowledge such as "smart teams", competition events, separate results tools, learning-from failure events etc. However, it seems as none of these initiatives have only had marginal effects on contributing to a results oriented organisational culture. It has also not been possible to find any examples of organisations where it is claimed that the whole organisation has incorporated learning as a central piece. Moreover, the evidence from RBM actually contributing to improved development results is scarce.
9. What types of lessons learned, and recommendations are given related to knowledge management, learning and decision-making?	The typical recommendations given on how to increase learning are often quite simplistic and generic, such as a recommendation to increase use of results for learning and decision, enhance the mindset and value systems for RBM, improve staff commitment to and incentives for RBM, stimulate improved leadership and support leadership responsibility, encourage staff initiative, risk-taking and learning from failure as well as from success and to deliver more training.

Source: Annex 9

1.5   Concepts and definitions

The concepts used in this evaluation can easily be understood differently by different people. In this section, we therefore explain how they are understood in the context of this evaluation.

- *Results information* is evidence and knowledge about the results of development interventions. Importantly, results information reflects understanding and knowledge about what works and what does not and is thus more than just data and indicators. Results information is:

  – Data and reports from progress and results monitoring,

  – Findings and conclusions on results from evaluations, such as what has been achieved, and why and how results have been brought about,

  – Findings from other studies and research on effectiveness, efficiency and impact of development policy and cooperation, and

  – Analysis, interpretation, synthesis and generalisations of the above information to inform how the MFA can strengthen its contribution to development results.

Results information is evidence and knowledge about the results of development interventions.

In this report, we sometimes use the expression *results information and knowledge* to emphasise our broad understanding of the concept. At other times we use the term *evidence* to emphasise that results information (and knowledge) is derived from facts and analytic reasoning.

Results information can be explicit as *documented results information* in text-based or visual physical or electronic *knowledge products*, or it can exist in the heads of people as *tacit results information* as part of their skills, experiences and acquired knowledge.

Results information is *used or considered* when it is reviewed, analysed, synthesised and reflected about with the purpose of increased understanding of what and how results were brought about by MFA efforts in the past, and how future results can be best achieved.

When results information is considered, it can lead to learning and influence decision-making.

- *Learning from results information (results- or evidence-informed learning)* is the process of acquiring new, or modifying existing, knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences through consideration of results information in formal or informal settings. In this process, new tacit or documented results information can be generated, in particular new lessons learned and new insights.

- *Decisions influenced by results information (results- or evidence-informed decisions)* are decisions in which results information has been considered and has shaped, changed or confirmed what is ultimately decided. Results information can have influence during the preparation of decisions, for example by shaping what is ultimately proposed, as well as when decisions are finally taken.

With *decisions* we refer to all work-related choices made by the MFA at all organisational levels. They include budget allocation, preparation and endorsement of proposals or country strategies, policy formulation, and smaller documented and undocumented day-to-day choices made by MFA staff.

Figure 1 binds these concepts together. It shows that results information exists in two forms: in the heads of people (tacit) and on paper or in electronic form (documented). To convert tacit into documented results knowledge, it needs to be written down.

Decisions can be influenced by results information in two principal ways: through sharing and consideration of tacit results information, for example if a sector advisor shares her/his expertise and experience during a meeting of the Quality Assurance Board, or through sharing of documented results information, for example if the project proposal document summarises lessons learned in the same meeting.

In a similar fashion, learning from results information can also take place in two ways: based on documented results information, for example when collecting, studying and drawing conclusions from several reports on a specific topic, or based on tacit results information, for example when discussing the same issues with an expert during a coffee break or a field monitoring visit.

Figure 1. Documented and tacit results information, learning, and results-informed decision-making
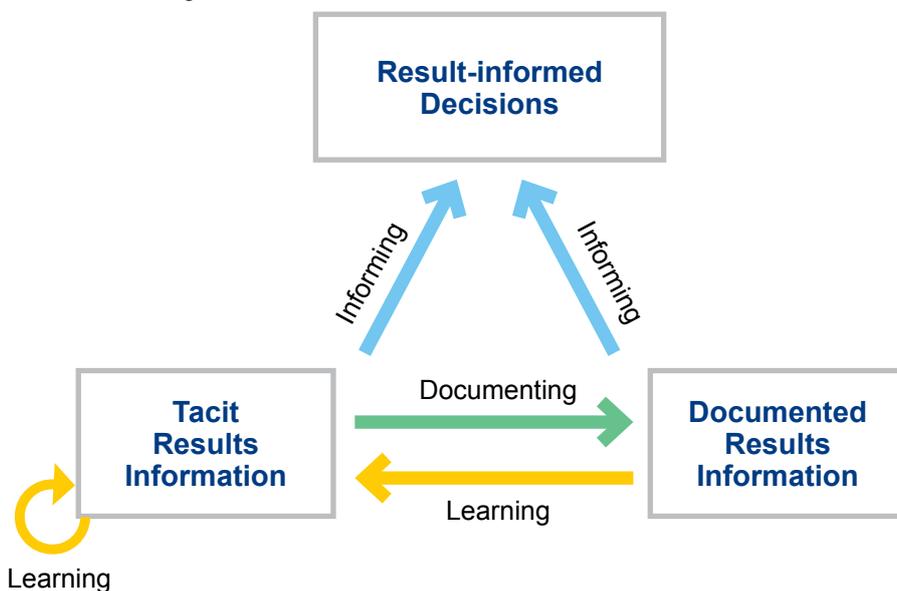
Source: Team analysis

1.6   This report

This report is structured as follows. After this introduction, Chapter 2 is describing the evaluation methodology and Chapter 3 sets out the context in which this evaluation takes place. Substantive findings are summarised in Chapter 4, followed by conclusions in Chapter 5 and recommendations in Chapter 6.

This report has nine annexes. Annex 1 contains the Terms of References for this evaluation. Annex 2 lists the people interviewed, Annex 3 the documents consulted and Annex 4 the Reference Group members. Annex 5 then describes the evaluation methodology and evaluation governance in more detail, including the evaluation questions, and Annex 6 describes the Theory of Change. Annex 7 lists the findings of earlier evaluations and audits and Annex 8 contains more details on the survey approach and analysis. Annex 9 contains a background paper commissioned for this evaluation "Knowledge management and learning in development cooperation organisations". Finally, Annex 10 depicts the key dates of the evaluation.

2 APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This section briefly summarises how the evaluation was conducted. The approach and the methodology are described in more detail in Annex 5.

2.1 Approach

This evaluation was planned and implemented as a theory-based and participatory evaluation.

It followed a theory-based framework that explains how effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA can happen, and what effects it can have. Based on social science research, we have developed a Theory of Change, shown in Figure 3 and discussed in detail in Annex 6. Here we provide a brief description.

Behaviour change requires capabilities, opportunity and motivation.

The model is based on a theory of behaviour change derived from a synthesis of extensive social science research, whereby behaviour change is brought about by three necessary elements: capabilities, opportunity and motivation (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Capabilities, Motivation, Opportunities & Behaviour change (COM-B) Model.
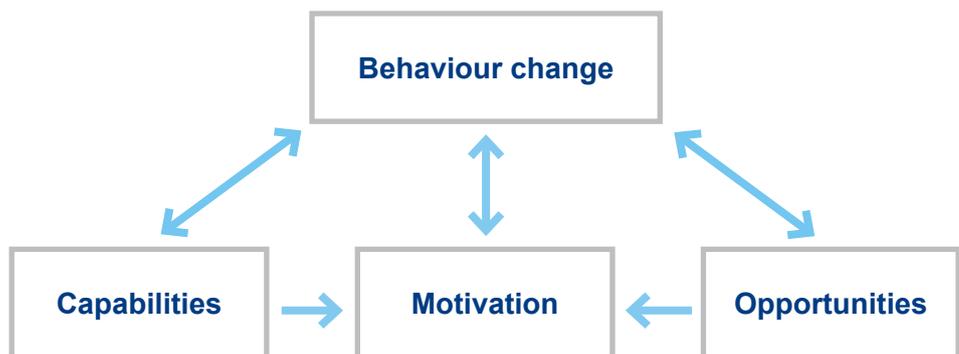
Source: Michie, Stralen & West, 2011

The Theory of Change we developed models what it would take for results information to routinely inform learning and decision-making, and as a result to influence learning and decision-making. It shows the pathway of causal links from activities to use of results information and to subsequent impact and, on the right-hand side of Figure 3, the necessary conditions are shown that are needed for each causal step in the pathway to be realized. The Theory of Change is explained in detail in Annex 6.

Figure 3. Theory of Change for evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA

Impacts
Effective development outcomes
Public trust and support for MFA efforts

Direct Benefits
Effective planning & implementation for results
An adapting, flexible learning organisation
Public accountability for learning

Immediate Direct Benefits
As appropriate, decisions reflect the results information
Lessons learned and insights are documented

MFA Needed Practices
MFA use of results information made public

Results information routinely considered in learning ⋯⋯▶ Results information routinely considered in decisions

MFA Needed Capacity
Capability
- MFA staff has adequate understanding of and ability to work with and access results information

Opportunity
- There are structured learning occasions
- Relevant and reliable results information is accessible for informing specific learning events and decisions
- Encouragement, support and incentives in place for using results information

Motivation
- Confidence and willingness to consider results information for learning and decision-making

Output
Results information is available in MFA

Activities Acquiring Results Information
Informally acquiring tacit results information
Acquiring other documented results information
Acquiring documented results information from monitoring & evaluation

Rationale Assumptions

1. A variety of factors need to be considered when arriving at decisions, incuding results information.

2. Evidence-informed learning and decision-making will lead to more effective planning and implementation of MFA interventions.

3. Publicly showing that MFA is intelligently managing public funds through demonstrating its use of results knowledge will enhance its public support.

Immediate Direct Benefits Assumptions
There are incentives to document tacit results information
The results information considered includes information on the 'why' and 'how'
Other decision factors do not push out the results information
Managers & staff have the needed authority & flexibility to implement decisions taken

Practice Assumptions
Ongoing leadership and support for using results information
Accessed results information is understandable and credible
Early discussions on results information are useful
MFA wants to publicly demonstrate its use of results information

Capacity Assumptions
Capability
- Managers and staff receive coaching or training on results information and results information sources when needed

Opportunity
- Relevant and reliable results information is available and in a user-friendly information system or a known individual
- There is visible and consistent leadership and support for RBM
- There is informed demand and an expectation for appropriate results information at learning and decision occasions
- There is time, resources and safe space to reflect on the results information
- Individual and team performance is assessed and rewarded in part on their use of results information

Motivation
- Individuals and teams want to improve results performance and be seen as contributing results information to organisational good practice

Output Assumptions
Those generating the RI have adequate capacity and resources to deliver

Source: Team analysis

The model starts with the MFA activities that gather results information which is then in some sense available in the MFA. With a capability for working with results information, the motivation to use results information and opportunities such as structured occasions to learn, accessible results information and incentives to use the information, the MFA will then routinely consider results information for learning and decision-making. However, as shown, there are numerous conditions that are needed for these three capacity-related elements to be brought about, as well as to realize the subsequent changes in practices. Recognizing that there are other factors that influence decision-making, and that the "right" type of results information is needed to have an impact on learning and decision-making, the model then describes how learning and decision-making can be tangibly influenced once results information has been considered.

The Theory of Change was the primary framework for this evaluation. We used it to guide and structure our investigation and to draw overall conclusions. Rather than considering it a rigid framework, we adapted and revised it throughout the entire evaluation to reflect and remain in line with evaluation findings, as we gained better understanding during the evaluation of how learning and decision-making is and can be informed by results information.

The evaluation was also participatory in the sense that MFA staff was involved in the evaluation process not only as providers of information but also as learning partners throughout the evaluation journey. During interviews, we invited feedback on our approach and the Theory of Change. As findings began to emerge more clearly, we increasingly shared them and invited feedback during interviews. Several group discussions were conducted to allow for exchange between colleagues about issues of interest. Later, we organised a series of consultations with MFA staff and leadership to share and discuss emerging conclusions and reflect together about realistic and useful recommendations to address them.

Evaluation activities took place from September 2018 to May 2019 and a final report is expected to be published and disseminated in September 2019. The evaluation was implemented by team of four senior independent evaluators, supported by one analyst under the Evaluation Management Services (EMS) framework agreement between Particip/Niras and the MFA. Day-to-day decisions were taken within the team and agreed with the EMS Coordinator. The team leader, the EMS Coordinator and the Evaluation Manager formed the Management Team for this evaluation in which progress and strategic decisions were discussed. A reference group representing involved MFA departments and units accompanied the entire evaluation process. The evaluation governance and management arrangements are described in more detail in Annex 5.

2.2   Methodology

With its strong focus on learning and decision-making at the MFA, ministry staff involved in development policy and cooperation were naturally at the heart of this evaluation and our interactions with them informed the evaluation greatly. We were able to achieve a very solid interview coverage and to follow up with additional people when suggested during interviews. Overall, 130 people were interviewed, some more than once, with a total of 172 interviews undertaken.

The Theory of Change models what it would take for results information to routinely inform learning and decision-making.

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

Most people (77) were interviewed at the MFA and partner institutions in Helsinki, 20 during visits abroad, and 7 through phone/video calls.

In addition, an online survey of MFA staff was conducted after most interviews had been held. This timing reflected its primary purpose of testing and quantifying levels of agreement with emerging evaluation findings by reflecting them in the survey questions. Accordingly, the survey targeted interviewed MFA staff as well as staff that not been reached before, for example in embassies with a development cooperation portfolio and the permanent mission of Finland to the United Nations. We also used the survey to rank perceptions on frequencies and relative importance by means of ratings, and to test for factors and issues we might have missed through several open-ended questions. Overall, the survey received 52 valid responses, 39 regarding staff working or who had worked in Helsinki and 13 from staff working or who had worked abroad. Valid responses were received from 32 of 135 directly targeted staff, bringing the response rate to a modest 24 percent. Another 20 respondents accessed the survey through a weblink distributed by email between MFA staff where we lacked email address information. Naturally, no response rate could be determined for this group.

A large number of MFA and non-MFA documents were reviewed and are either directly referenced in this report or listed in Annex 3. They were identified during the early stages of the evaluation, collected and systematically reviewed by us. Next to staff interviews, they represented another primary source of evaluative evidence. During the inception phase of this evaluation, we also conducted additional desk review of prior evaluations and assessments on the subject, summarised in Annex 7 and referenced throughout this report, and commissioned an Expert paper on knowledge management and learning in development cooperation organisations (Annex 9). That paper took advantage of earlier work on a broader research study conducted for the OECD DAC (Vähämäki & Verger, 2019).

Evaluation team members visited the MFA five times for meetings, workshops and interviews, conducted a field visit to Ethiopia, and participated in two regional workshops in the context of the country strategy self-evaluation processes in Vietnam and Mozambique. A planned visit to New York and Washington DC was cancelled because of overlap with a starting evaluation focused on the multilateral policy channel. The key dates of this evaluation are summarised in Annex 10.

2.3   Scope and challenges

The scope of this evaluation was as follows:

• The evaluation *focused on development policy and cooperation.* For the MFA, this meant that results-informed learning and decision-making in departments and units that are not involved in development policy and cooperation work was not assessed. However, interviews were also conducted with staff not working in development policy and cooperation about human resources management, information technology, and audit.

172 interviews with 130 people.

- The evaluation *focused on MFA staff working (in development policy and cooperation) in Helsinki and abroad*. This means that results-informed learning and decision-making taking place within other institutions was not investigated. External perspectives on how the MFA makes use of results information were however included.

- It focused on *learning and decision-making from results information*. This means that other (important) factors that also inform learning and decision-making were noted but not analysed in depth. Similarly, the evaluation looked at how information and knowledge derived from results – but not from other sources – was managed at the MFA.

- The evaluation focused on the *learning and decision-making purposes of Results-Based Management (RBM)* in development policy and cooperation. Accountability, another important purpose, is acknowledged but not further investigated apart from the recommendation to introduce "accountability for learning" (Recommendation 7).

- Related to the last point, the evaluation focused on how decisions, policies, strategies and priorities were *informed* by results information and not on *steering*, i.e. how diligently they were implemented and reported upon. This means that the evaluation focused less on the production and structure of reports and results frameworks because these had been at the attention of two earlier RBM-related evaluations the MFA conducted in 2011 and 2015. Instead, it focused on different types of results information and their usefulness for learning and decision-making.

During the evaluation, we encountered two challenges:

- We had to further develop our understanding of how decisions are influenced by results information to accommodate the finding that it oftentimes shapes the content of what is ultimately decided upon rather than the decision itself.

- MFA staff we consulted had differing views on when and to what degree new central government procedures and systems for knowledge management would replace current procedures and systems at the MFA. In response, we made clarifying this part of our recommendations and used our own judgment.

2.4 Evaluation questions

The content and scope of this evaluation are illustrated by four overarching evaluation questions (Annex 1):

1. What MFA-internal and -external information is routinely collected, reported and used by the MFA regarding Finland's development policy and operation?

2. How – and how coherently – is knowledge management implemented in Finland's development policy and cooperation?

3. What are the advances and shortcomings in knowledge management, learning and evidence-informed decision making at different levels of development policy and cooperation planning and implementation?

4. How can the MFA more effectively integrate knowledge management and evidence-informed decision making and promote learning into RBM of, Finnish development policy and cooperation?

In Section 5.3 we summarised answers to these questions based on the findings and conclusions in this report.

During the inception phase we also developed 11 more detailed evaluation questions (Annex 5). These mapped some important elements of the Theory of Change. Consequently, we used these questions to guide and structure our inquiry but did not limit ourselves to answering only them. The same holds for the four overarching evaluation questions.

Rather, we used the richer and more detailed Theory of Change (Section 1 and Annex 6) as our primary evaluation framework for guiding our inquiry and analysis, and for structuring and making sense of the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report.

This approach allowed us to investigate evidence-informed learning and decision-making in a systemic manner by taking into account interdependencies and necessary conditions along the causal chain from evidence to impact.

2.5   Evaluative lessons learned

The MFA's Development Evaluation Unit asked us to share our own lessons learned from conducting this evaluation.

- As a truly theory-based evaluation, the Theory of Change was the principal framework along which the evaluation was conducted. In hindsight, we could have skipped working out 11 more detailed evaluation questions during the inception phase of this evaluation. While they covered and translated the four overarching evaluation questions we had received in our Terms of Reference into the terms and structure of our Theory of Change, they could only map a part of that theory. This may have been confusing for stakeholders not used to theory-based evaluations in which the evaluation questions – and not the Theory of Change – represent the principal evaluation framework.

- Related to this, theory-based evaluations require some flexibility in what an evaluation exactly looks at. While audits and summative evaluations conducted for accountability purposes are probably most useful when following rigid question- or criteria-based frameworks, forward-looking evaluations for learning purposes are better served when following a theory-based framework that, itself, is changed and developed throughout the entire evaluation process and hence becomes a product of the evaluation in its own right. This requires some flexibility and adaptive management during the evaluation process to keep evaluation activities and the framework in sync.

- We designed the evaluation in a participatory manner, reflecting the MFA's intent to make the evaluation process also a learning journey for MFA staff. As the subject of the evaluation was of interest to most people we interacted with, interviewed staff reacted positively and constructively when we started sharing our emerging findings and hypotheses during interviews in the later phases of the evaluation. Group discussions also worked very well, and several times participants remarked that these had been the only occasions for reflecting with colleagues about how they approached learning and decision-making in their work. Towards the end, we organised a series of workshops and bilateral discussions with MFA staff and senior MFA leadership to discuss the "solution space" for useful and realistic recommendations, based on a draft version of the conclusions presented in this report. These interactions produced rich feedback especially with senior MFA leadership who visibly enjoyed the opportunity to brainstorm and to provide their feedback before we had finalised our recommendations. Feedback from workshops with other staff ended up focusing more on describing identified issues and challenges in more detail; for those occasions it might have been better to put together draft recommendations those groups could then react to.

- As found in this report, MFA staff perceive themselves as generally pressed for time. In our view, this limits the degree to which evaluations can become even more participatory. We felt those limitations when we didn't manage to involving the evaluation reference group more than "usual", when if was difficult to schedule any workshops in embassies, when an open house invitation for discussing possible recommendations was poorly visited, and when little feedback was received on the open-ended questions of the online survey. To this end, our advice is to plan the degree of participation in future evaluations very consciously of the time required from intended participants.

3 FINDINGS

As a framework for this evaluation we developed a Theory of Change that explains how learning and decision-making at the MFA is informed and influenced by results information, and how this helps improve the MFA's performance (Section 2.1 and Annex 6). We assessed the MFA's progress along this Theory of Change, tested its underlying assumptions and adapted it where necessary.

In this chapter, evaluation findings are presented in four groups, corresponding to four different areas in the Theory of Change. We begin with findings related to actual usage of results information for learning and decision-making (Section 3.1).

The other three groups of findings then explain these observations further. First, we move upwards in the Theory of Change to investigate institutional demand (3.2), then downwards to observations about staff motivation, opportunity and capability (3.3), and finally to the bottom stages of the Theory of Change related to the supply of results information (3.4).

3.1 Use of results information and knowledge for learning and decision-making

In this Section we present findings related to the use of results information, corresponding to "MFA Needed Practices" level in the Theory of Change (Section 2.1).

Finding 1 summarises how results information is considered in learning and decision-making at the MFA. The next three findings concern the degree this has led to individual and organisation learning (Findings 2 and 3) and influenced decision-making (Finding 4). The remaining findings in this section assess more specific issues.

> **Finding 1. Driven by strong staff motivation but limited by other factors, most MFA staff makes frequent use of at least some results information for learning and decision-making.**

Result-Informed Decisions
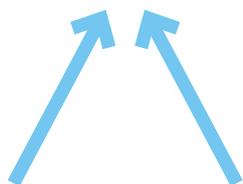
For useful results information to be considered routinely for learning and decision-making, several conditions need to be fulfilled as described in the Theory of Change developed for this evaluation (Section 2.1, Annex 6). In our analysis, we found issues with the fulfilment of most of these conditions as analysed in more detail later in this report. For example, staff lacked time, opportunity and capability for using results information. However, in spite of these limitations, interviewed MFA staff indicated that they had looked at and reflected upon results information with some regularity.

When following this up in a survey, all but one of 47 respondents indicated that they had considered results information routinely (30 percent), often (40 percent), or occasionally (28 percent). This finding is in line with other observations that are discussed later, for example a preference for exchanging results information informally a variety of sources of results information being used, and observed instances of actual influence of results information on learning and decision-making.

In view of several factors that stand in the way of effective results-informed learning and decision-making, the fact that at least some results information is used frequently by a majority of staff for learning and decision-making comes as a positive surprise. One explanation can be the overall high level of intrinsic motivation of MFA staff for improving performance by using evidence (Finding 14). At the same time, we note that frequent use does not automatically translate into effective learning and influence on decision-making as explained in subsequent findings.

At the same time, it is evident that there is significant potential for increased use of results information if the limiting factors are mitigated or removed. For example, improved availability of useful results information, together with improved staff capacity and institutional incentives to consider it for learning and decision-making, would contribute to improving the level and the quality of its use and, in turn, strengthen learning and decision-making.

Learning happens mostly during informal peer-peer exchanges and on the job.

> **Finding 2. Overall learning from results information has remained limited. If learning occurs, it happens mostly during informal peer-to-peer exchanges and "on-the-job" as part of other activities.**
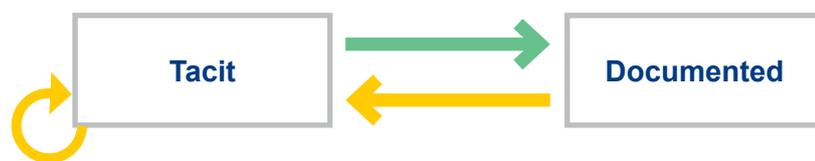
Overall learning from results information has remained limited at the MFA, both in terms of documented and tacit learning. This was found in earlier assessments and was mentioned in tandem with observations about lack of results information and a non-conducive organisational culture (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011b, 2015a; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). A recent development evaluation annual report that summarised findings of major evaluations and assessments concluded that, overall, learning from results had been weak and limited and recommended more systematic learning at all levels of the MFA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2018c).

For more specificity, we discuss learning from results information along three categories that reflect the approach to staff learning of the HR management units in the MFA's Administrative Services Department. Additional occasions for learning not covered by these categories are discussed afterwards.

- 70 percent of learning should occur through "learning on the job";

- 20 percent of learning through peer-to-peer exchange; and

- 10 percent of learning through training.

"Learning on the job" means that staff review, analyse, synthesise and reflect about documented or tacit results information. From interview feedback, this type of learning on the job seems indeed the most common form of learning at the MFA and 90 percent (N=45) of surveyed staff agreed that at the MFA most learning was "learning by doing". At the same time, this type of learning was mostly done individually. We have not been able to quantify the amount of results knowledge staff acquires through this form of self-learning but could verify in interviews that it does happen to some degree through anecdotal evidence. We can, however, conclude that overall learning from results information "on the job" is limited because it depends on a number of conditions such as extra time, opportunity, capability and institutional incentives. As these conditions are not fulfilled (Sections 3.2 and 3.3), we infer that learning from results information has remained significantly below what it could be if these conditions were fulfilled.

In contrast, learning from results information through "peer-to-peer exchange" plays an important role at the MFA. Staff places a high value on informally exchanging information with colleagues (Finding 6) and several of the factors limiting learning on the job have less impact in the case of peer-to-peer learning:

- Because information is obtained in a "pre-digested" format from colleagues, less time and capability are required for processing it; and

- The MFA offers some occasions for structured peer-to-peer learning (Finding 10) and its open office policy has increased opportunities for informal staff-to-staff exchanges.

Overall, we therefore infer that peer-to-peer learning represents an important learning modality at the MFA.

Regarding traditional training, our analysis indicates that only limited learning from results information occurs in such occasions. Beyond but including development policy and cooperation, general MFA staff training is coordinated by the MFA's Administrative Department and includes the "KAVAKU" post-recruitment training programme (about six weeks spread over 18 months) for diplomatic career staff, a less intense programme ("HALKU") for administrative career staff, and a very brief introductory training for specialist career staff ("PEREKU"). MFA leadership from unit directors upwards take part in intense leadership development programmes ("JOKO" and other courses). From our analysis, all these training programmes are general purpose-oriented and, apart from one introductory module, not specific to development cooperation.

Additional training and other capacity development activities specifically targeted to development cooperation staff are coordinated by a unit (KEO-10, Unit for General Development Policy) in the Department for Development Policy. Basic courses cover subjects such as different aid channels, principles of development cooperation, administration, evaluation, and information systems. Web-based self-learning courses have topics such as Results-Based Management, Economic

Policy Analysis, or the role of the private sector in development. To our knowledge, no course specifically focused on lessons learned or experiences in development cooperation. Those coordinating these trainings suggested that some learning from results information was likely to occur when speakers shared their experience, or when examples from the field were used to illustrate a point made. This said, several interviewees suggested that classroom or web-based self-learning courses about lessons learned in certain thematic areas could be a useful addition to the MFA's current capacity development portfolio.

A recent evaluation of development cooperation training did not directly address learning from results information. Indirectly, it identified improvement potential in several relevant areas: better timing of training to match career development and institutional planning processes, building more on the existing knowledge and experience of MFA staff, and moving away from classroom-style courses to more effective pedagogic formats for adult education that foster peer-to-peer learning and make more use of online resources (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, 2018).

In addition to traditional training, the MFA offers additional formal and informal occasions for learning from results information that do not fall into one of these three learning modalities but rather cut across two or three of them at once. These are discussed in detail in Finding 10.

> **Finding 3. The accumulation of useful results knowledge is restricted because it often remains undocumented and can be lost when staff change jobs.**

Tacit	→	Documented

Across occasions for learning from results information we could make two principal observations. These apply to general staff as discussed here, and to sector advisors and other specialists (Finding 7).

First, much useful results information exists only as tacit information and knowledge in the heads of general staff, advisors and other specialists or is stored in ways that make it unavailable to other MFA staff, for example in personal email inboxes or external storage devices. This is likely a consequence of a "do it yourself" approach to learning, lack of time and of institutional incentives for reflection and for documenting and sharing information as explained in findings in subsequent sections.

Second, and partly a consequence of the first, useful experience and insight often becomes unavailable when staff rotates or when short-term contracts end. When rotating into a new job at the MFA, oftentimes, the acquired tacit results information and knowledge accumulated by the former job holder is not transmitted effectively to the successor. Apart from the absence of useful, documented key

Useful results knowledge often remains undocumented and can be lost.

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

insights and lessons learned, this is due to ineffective handovers between incoming and outgoing staff.

In workshops and interviews, staff described many instances of when coming into the job they lacked information, guidance and felt somewhat left alone. They felt that it would have been very useful if their predecessor had better documented his or her key insights and lessons learned while holding that position. This included lessons learned on how to achieve results on the ground but also relevant managerial practices, for example how to select and work with partners in a way that maximises results.

Apart from some examples of effective transfer of useful results information and knowledge, most staff with whom we discussed handovers felt they had been inadequate. Commonly mentioned issues were lack of time and opportunity for interaction between incoming and outgoing staff, positions that remained vacant for some time before being re-staffed, very short-term job rotation decisions leading to unprepared departures, handover of raw document collections without inventory or guidance, and the lack of a structured handover process.

When surveyed, only one third of 48 respondents felt there had been an excellent handover from their predecessor while one third disagreed somewhat with that statement, and one third strongly.

Interviewed staff in charge of overall human resources management at the MFA echoed these worries. They felt that rotation represented a challenge to institutional memory especially for development cooperation. While assuming that, in most cases, some handover document was produced, they felt that no proper process was in place and that handover quality varied substantially from case to case, at times even lacking very basic information. Several ideas exist for addressing handover-related issues, for example by introducing standard templates for the handover process and make their application compulsory, by creating "friends of …" groups that could act as a sounding board for incoming staff, by strengthening and professionalising the existing voluntary mentoring programme, or by including good practice handovers into job targets and annual performance feedback.

Some interviewees objected that in the case of staff rotation, tacit results information and knowledge was not lost because the outgoing staff member still worked at the MFA. From the feedback we received, this mainly applies to staff that returns to positions in development policy and cooperation for which their formerly acquired knowledge is relevant once more. This argument remains on the individual level because that knowledge remains undocumented and since there is too little time and occasion for sharing and transferring it to others.

> **Finding 4. Overall, influence of results information on MFA decision-making was limited and has remained below expectations. While shaping strategies, policies and interventions to some extent, it does not play a role in most budget decisions.**

Only one third of the respondents felt there had been an excellent handover from their predecessor.

Influence of results information on decision-making was limited below expectations.
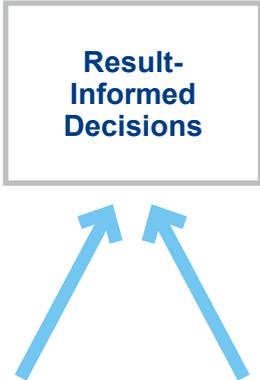
Result-Informed Decisions

Decision-making takes place at various levels and forms at the MFA. Not surprisingly, corporate-level decisions about budgets, policies and strategies are mainly driven by government priorities, interests of political and MFA leadership and continuity of partnerships and operations. If results information has influence it is usually through shaping what is brought to a decision rather than determining the decision itself. This also applies to decision-making at lower levels, for example about operational plans and interventions. When it comes to staff-level day-to-day decision-making, we assume there is an influence of results information but could not observe it explicitly because it is informal and integrated into other daily job functions.

Interviewed staff felt that budget allocation across or within departments and units was driven by political and policy priorities and a wish for budgetary continuity rather than by information about past performance and results. During the budget cuts of 2015 that reflected new government priorities, operational feasibility of quickly reducing budgets was perceived to have been the dominant factor.

- In the multilateral channel, staff perception was that past overall performance of multilateral institutions or the effectiveness of Finland's influencing activities did not have – and should not have – much influence on which institutions to work with, or on the level of support. Instead, budgets were determined by the availability of resources, operational staff capacity in the units, alignment with Finland's development policy priorities, exceeding funding thresholds to have "a seat at the table", and continuity as long-term shareholders or partners. Replenishments and capital increases of development banks were negotiated on a bank-by-bank basis based on information provided by each bank.

- Humanitarian funding to the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF had seen above average budget reductions despite good performance while that of UN OCHA had been maintained despite financial management issues.

- Staff in the CSO and the evaluation unit felt that budget cuts of about 40 percent across the CSO portfolio had been above average and stood in contrast to positive results of the CSO evaluation in 2016–2017, sending a counterintuitive message to CSO partners. Recognised by MFA, many CSOs have well-developed monitoring and evaluation systems and now there is widespread frustration as the evaluation did not influence funding decisions. The CSO unit at the MFA also indicated that they did not always have relevant result information to make fair decisions about what CSOs to allocate programme-based funding to.

- Staff working in bilateral cooperation were not clear how budgets were allocated to country programmes and did not feel it was based on results. They also felt for example budget reallocations between countries was simply not possible even if relevant for results.

- Some interviewees exemplified their perception that funding decisions were political rather than result based by noting that in this overall tense funding climate, funding to Finnfund had been significantly increased beyond what had been requested, without an evaluation having been conducted, reflecting political priorities.

However, interviewed staff also provided examples of where results information had significantly influenced decisions, for example when disengaging from bilateral trust funds or renewing the mandate of the Nordic Trust Fund on human rights. Another example was in the MFA's Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation where the International Finance Corporation (IFC) was selected to implement the Finland-IFC Blended Finance for Climate Programme in which previous results were considered; IFC had already managed the Canadian Climate Fund with good results. In bilateral cooperation, the withdrawal from Nicaragua, the decision to focus on smaller number of countries, and continued support to plantation forestry in Africa were cited examples in which results information arguments had made a difference.

Overall, and as perceived by staff, results information usually remained "one factor among many" in decision-making at the MFA. Asked to rank 10 factors previously suggested in interviews for having influenced decision-making at the MFA in the last two years, results information was ranked lowest, with most respondents considering it one factor among many (Figure 4). In interviews and reconfirmed by the survey there was a widespread perception that decision-making was more strongly influenced by the available budget, government priorities, the MFA's policies and strategies, leadership and staff preferences and other factors.

At the same time, interviewed staff felt that this situation was unsatisfactory, and that results information should play a more prominent role in decision-making in the future (Figure 5). Asked that question, survey respondents placed results information at par with top-ranked factors such as government priorities, MFA policies, international agreements and priorities of partner countries (which were also felt to not have been sufficiently recognised in past decisions).

Also visible in Figure 5 is that staff not only felt that results information should become more influential, but that other factors such as the available budget, government priorities, MFA policies and strategies and especially interests, experiences and convictions of MFA staff and leadership should become less influential.

Results information usually remained "one factor among many" in decision-making.

Figure 4. Factors *currently* influencing decision-making at the MFA.

	dominant for decision-making	important but not dominant	one factor among many	minor influence
The available budget	73	16	7	4
Government priorities	56	38	7	
The MFA's policies and strategies	38	49	13	
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA leadership (department heads and above)	31	44	22	2
International agreements and commitments	18	42	36	4
Priorities of partner countries	16	41	36	7
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA staff (unit heads and below)	4	51	31	13
Priorities of partner institutions	7	27	52	14
The actions and priorities of other donors	2	36	38	24
Results information and knowledge	2	11	60	27

Source: Answers to the survey question "In the last two years, in your opinion, to what degree have the following factors influenced decision-making at the MFA?" (N=44 to 45 depending on the answer option), Team analysis.

Figure 5. Factors that *should* influence decision-making at the MFA.

	dominant for decision-making	important but not dominant	one factor among many	minor influence
The MFA's policies and strategies	60	38	2	
Government priorities	54	43	2	
Results information and knowledge	48	52		
Priorities of partner countries	48	50	2	
International agreements and commitments	40	58	2	
The available budget	37	48	15	
Priorities of partner institutions	20	53	27	
The actions and priorities of other donors		64	36	
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA staff (unit heads and below)	2	36	56	7
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA leadership (department heads and above)	2	31	60	7

Source: Answers to the survey question *"And asking the same question regarding the future: In your opinion, to what degree should these factors influence decision-making at the MFA?"* (N=44 to 46 depending on the answer option), Team analysis.

To understand this better we found it important to differentiate decision-making into a preparatory phase in which "what is to be decided" is prepared, and a final decision-making situation in which a decision is ultimately taken. Hence, even when not driving final decision-making, results information could, in principle, shape the content of what is later adopted or decided upon.

When analysed with this understanding, we could indeed identify instances in which results information had some influence during the preparatory phase of decision-making processes. Because only some of this influence is explicitly documented, our evidence is mostly based on earlier evaluations and staff feedback.

- For example, the 2015 RBM evaluation noted that, while MFA policy documents contained very little explicit reference to learning from results, there had been attention to collecting and using results information during the formulation process, for example to explain policy choices made (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2015a). The same is likely true for the present 2016–2019 Development Policy Programme. The only explicit references to learning from evaluation results we were able to locate at the corporate level were found in the MFA's results report (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2018b).

- The 2015 RBM evaluation also analysed the MFA's development policy steering mechanisms and its principal bodies, the Development Policy Steering Group, the Quality Assurance Board, the Development Policy Committee, and the High-Level Network for Policy Coherence for Development. It found that all of these bodies were recipients of some kind of results information in the form of RBM-related reporting and included it in their deliberations and recommendations for later decision-making.

- In bilateral cooperation, interviewees mentioned that changes to country programmes often reflected insights gained from results information. Myanmar was mentioned as an example where the whole country programme was fast changing, driven by learning from results. An example of results information used to support continuity were the good results from WASH projects in Nepal that illustrated that the MFA should not change its sector approach, which it did not.

- In private sector cooperation, the end of project evaluation of the concessional credit scheme project in Ghana (FCG International, 2018) found that maintenance of equipment had not been included in the project contract and therefore sustainability was at risk. The due diligence criterion was subsequently added to the Public Sector Investment Facility (PIF) guidelines.

- The CSO evaluation of 2016 had impact on the selection of CSOs for the programme-based support in 2018 as one of the CSOs was excluded.

- In multilateral cooperation, influencing plans were informed by assessments implemented by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) and by evaluations commissioned by the multilateral organisations themselves, by their reports, and by what was learned from the results of earlier influencing activities. For example, influencing plans would focus on issues and recommendations identified in corporate evaluations such as strengthening institutional evaluation or reporting functions where necessary. Interviewed representatives from UN Women felt that MFA influencing plans were usefully aligned with UN Women's own corporate strategy which, in turn, was informed by past evaluation and monitoring information.

Several instances in which results information had some influence during the preparatory phase of decision-making.

Finding 5: For learning and decision-making, information about the "why" and "how" is perceived to be more useful than information about the "what". While the MFA documents a wide array of results information on different organisational levels, it lacks results information of this type.

| Tacit | → | Documented |

The MFA documents a wide array of results information and knowledge on all levels. This has been investigated by earlier evaluations in more detail and is only summarised here.

- On the project level, progress reports are compiled against multilateral influencing plans and the respective units receive a wealth of information produced by multilateral agencies about their work, including evaluations and audits, as well as third party assessments (e.g. MOPAN reviews). In bilateral cooperation, CSO and private sector development cooperation, the MFA receives progress and evaluation reports from those entities entrusted with implementing projects in these policy channels, including from multilateral agencies in case of multi-bi projects. Multilateral and CSO reporting on this level also apply to humanitarian assistance which is implemented through these policy channels. The MFA also commissions decentralized project-level evaluations and audits.

- On the programme level, annual reports are compiled vis-à-vis country strategies and efforts are currently made to apply this RBM modality beyond the bilateral policy channel alone. Development cooperation on the level of country strategies has been evaluated, self-evaluations on this level have recently been piloted and the MFA's audit function increasingly focuses on this level. CSOs receiving programme-based support submit annual progress reports, evaluations and audits and were covered in a recent evaluation by the MFA's Development Evaluation Unit. Programme-level results information is less documented because that multilateral level remains largely undefined, but efforts are underway to group influencing plans and aggregate reporting on what can be understood as programme-level.

- On the level of policy channels (and departments), synthesis reports have been introduced as part of RBM Action Plans and the KeTTU reform in most policy channels. Several policy-channel-specific evaluations commissioned by the MFA's Development Evaluation Unit have been conducted.

- On the corporate level a results report was compiled. Most evaluations commissioned by the MFA's Development Evaluation Unit also speak to this level. Selected OECD and thematic markers have been introduced that allow monitoring spending along these categories. The MFA's overall financial reporting covers all of the above levels and has been improved in terms of detail and transparency. It however remains focused on inputs and activities and does hence not reflect much information about results.

Across levels, interviewed and surveyed MFA staff pointed to a wide array of documented and undocumented results information that they considered for learning and decision-making. Survey respondents indicated that most frequently, information about specific results and about how MFA interventions were implemented was used to inform learning and decision-making, followed by information on how interventions made a difference, and lessons learned from past interventions at the MFA and elsewhere.

Frequently used documents were monitoring reports on MFA projects and programmes, project evaluations, the 2018 results report and a variety of external studies, reports, evaluations and surveys. Central evaluations and meta-evaluations conducted by the MFA's evaluation unit were used somewhat less, likely because they were not primarily targeted at general MFA staff (Finding 8).

While not being used more, synthesised results information and lessons learned were generally considered more useful for both learning and decision-making than "just" information about results. This was strongly expressed in interviews and confirmed by survey respondents: all but 2 of 47 agreed that the MFA needed to invest more into drawing useful insights and actionable lessons from its reports and evaluations, and 85 percent shared that view also regarding studies, reports and evaluations published by other institutions.

For example, when visiting two regional bilateral cooperation workshops, we observed that self-evaluation results and discussions were considered useful because they addressed the "how" in addition to the "what". In its assessment of the achieved results, the self-evaluation by the Myanmar team focused mainly on how the embassy should work to achieve results rather than on what the results were and what could be learned to achieve more and better results. According to the presentations in regional workshops, lessons learned by embassies were mostly related to working modalities and not to results per se.

Staff working with or in multilateral institutions felt that their insight on how to achieve results was more useful for informing learning and decision-making than information on activities, outputs and outcomes from their results framework reporting.

As explained in more detail in Finding 8, staff within and outside MFA's evaluation unit felt that more needed to be done to draw useful insight and lessons learned from its reporting and evaluations. Apart from staff preferences, the higher usefulness of more analytic results information also appears logical. For learning, performance or effectiveness data alone do not induce deeper understanding and immediately begs for additional explanations of underlying reasons. In the case of decision-making, performance or effectiveness data,

Synthesised results information and lessons learned generally considered more useful.

for example traffic lights in a balanced scorecard, can lead to invalid decisions if taken alone. For example, if related to projects with less and more ambitious targets or if projects are implemented in different environments. In our own experience and confirmed in interviews, while very useful for raising flags, performance and effectiveness data usually needs to be complemented with additional results information about the "how" and "why" as a basis for learning and decision-making.

Verifying interview feedback, most surveyed MFA staff found analytic knowledge products very useful for learning if they explained how MFA-funded activities had led to results, analysed issues and risks, and formulated lessons learned. Also, research studies and evaluations by third parties were considered very useful by most. In contrast, only a minority considered monitoring information to be very useful, and most found it somewhat useful (Figure 6). Similar feedback was received regarding perceived usefulness for decision-making (Figure 7).

Figure 6. Usefulness of different types of results information *for learning*.
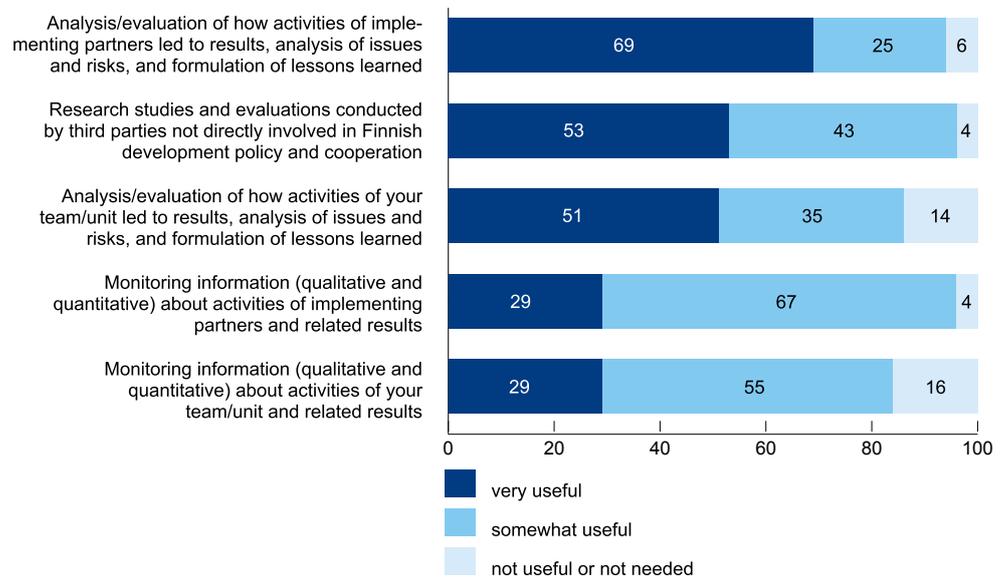
Source: Answers to the survey question *"Along the same categories, what types of results information and knowledge do you find most useful for informing learning in your team, unit and department?"* (N=51), Team analysis.

Figure 7. Usefulness of different types of results information *for informing decision-making*.
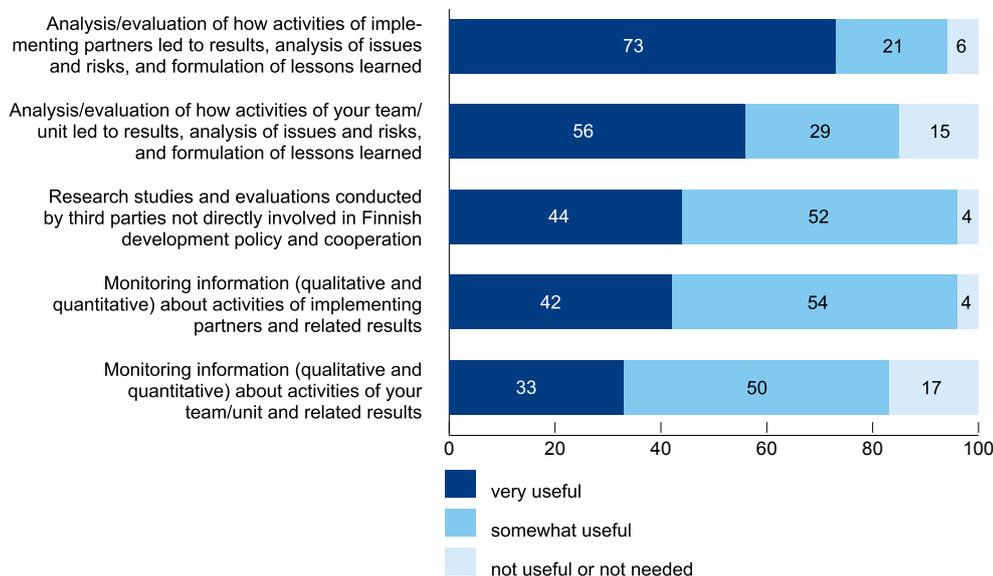
Source: Answers to the survey question *"And the same question with a focus on decision-making: Along the same categories, what types of results information and knowledge do you find most useful for informing decision-making in your team, unit and department?"* (N=48), Team analysis.

Other assessments have come to similar conclusions. The 2017 OECD DAC peer review observed that, while Finland generated a substantial amount of knowledge through monitoring and evaluation, it did not make best use of this knowledge. One identified issue was the absence of a system-wide mechanism to capture lessons and promote findings from evaluations, reviews and results monitoring (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). In 2018, a State Treasury report concluded that MFA reports did have information about what happened, but they did not necessarily answer the question "why something happened" (Saarteinen et al., 2018b).

Evaluations conducted in other aid agencies have made similar observations. A review of such evaluations found that quantitative results information could not be used for internal decision-making since it was not considered relevant, credible and useful. For decision-making purposes, staff in these agencies relied more on qualitative information, information from peers and face-to face dialogue or on knowledge obtained from partners (Annex 8).

> **Finding 6. Informally exchanging results information between colleagues plays an important role at the MFA.**

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Interviewed MFA staff place a high value on drawing from the experience of colleagues and advisors during meetings, workshops, seminars or informal *ad-hoc* interactions. The MFA's open office approach supports this type of exchange, creating more opportunities for informal staff-to-staff interactions.

MFA staff place a high value on drawing from the experience of colleagues and advisors.

Across policy channels, interviewees felt that most learning was done on the job and that informal contacts were overwhelmingly used to access information or learn how to undertake tasks. This was reported to work well by those staff who have been in the MFA for a while, but less well by those who were newer and do not have these informal networks. Some staff also brought well established external networks and understanding of how to access external sources of result information into the MFA when they were hired.

- Interviewed country desks in bilateral cooperation commented that, while a considerable amount of results information was produced by programmes and embassies, regular communication with embassies was a more important channel for results information than written reports. One factor making informal exchanges valuable was that they transported synthesised results information that was considered easily "digestible".

- Side conversations at UN or development bank meetings about what peers from other Nordic countries had taken away from their evaluations of commonly supported institutions or programmes were one example of results information considered valuable, useful and influential.

- Interviewed partners such as UN Women, Felm, Plan International, Finnfund and Finnpartnership also found that personal, face-to-face communication with MFA staff was very important for sharing result information and ensuring that learning takes place.

Capturing of tacit information from colleagues and external partners was important for staff learning.

When following up on these observations, surveyed staff indicated that informal channels were indeed important. Close to everybody (94 percent, N=47) agreed that capturing of tacit information from the colleagues and external partners was important for their learning and 79 percent felt that most of their learning happened during informal interactions with colleagues. Consistent with this feedback, 72 percent (N=50) agreed that they were able to access results information through colleagues and most indicated they had such informal interactions often or regularly, 64 percent (N=38) in the case of informal interactions with colleagues and 55 percent (N=38) with sector advisors and other experts.

Sector advisors and other MFA specialists clearly play an important role as owners and sources of tacit results information. While for example sector advisors also have formal roles (such as providing an expert opinion about proposals presented to the Quality Assurance Board), much of their work is done informally by responding to *ad-hoc* information requests from MFA staff.

The reliance on informal exchange of tacit results information described above is somewhat surprising because staff described themselves in interviews as sometimes hesitant in asking colleagues because it might be perceived as bothering them.

One explanation is that informal channels for obtaining results information present a stopgap solution because formal systems are not working (Finding 18). For example, 90 percent of surveyed staff (N=49) felt that the MFA did not have a workable system in place for accessing and working with results information.

Finding 7. Sector advisors and specialists hold important results information and institutional memory. The MFA however faces challenges in terms of ensuring continued accessibility of their knowledge.

| Tacit | → | Documented |

Sector advisors and other specialist advisors are hired for their expertise and hence bring much results (and other) information and knowledge with them into the job. Advisors then usually continue to develop their expertise and knowledge base while at the MFA, thus representing an important reservoir of tacit results information and knowledge at the MFA that is applied in various ways.

Since the job rotation principle was extended into Finnish development policy and cooperation some two decades ago, advisors have become to a significant extent the guardians of the MFA's institutional memory. This includes results information in their respective areas of expertise, for example when it comes to overall understanding of the portfolio of intervention and the past and expected future results in a specific sector.

This importance of advisors for knowledge management has been emphasised repeatedly before. For example, the 2011 RBM evaluation noted a major gulf between staff employed as technical advisors, who held the institutional knowledge and skills for development cooperation, and career diplomats who managed development programmes (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011b). From interviews and our own analysis, we identified four challenges related to tacit results information owned by advisors:

- First, advisors are not focused on documenting results information and knowledge for others. Rather, they directly provide their expert advice informally to staff upon request or directly edit documents they are asked to review, for example as part of the preparation of proposals for review by the Quality Assurance Board.

- Second, while not subject to regular job rotations, permanently employed advisors often take leaves of absence to work in another position at the MFA or in another aid organisations. Such leaves of absence provide them with additional, relevant experience and expertise and can increase their long-term job retention at the MFA through increased job satisfaction; something earlier evaluations had raised as a point of concern because advisors lacked a proper career track at the MFA. A disadvantage is that it makes their expertise unavailable while they are away and that the specialists hired to substitute them can have a high turnover due to unfavourable employment conditions: short-term contracts, the need to re-apply if contracts are extended, and uncertainty of whether and when the original job holder will eventually return. Several interviewees referred to "chain replacements" when different temporary specialists had been hired to replace a permanent job holder.

Advisors have become the guardians of the MFA's institutional memory.

Interviewed sector advisors estimated that in January 2019 about half of the colleagues in their unit were temporarily employed as substitutes. Staff in the MFA's Human Resources Units estimated that in late 2018 there were some 25 specialists with a temporary contract in development cooperation while the actual job holder was away in another position within the MFA or elsewhere.

- Third, as a natural consequence, the present setup concentrates sector specific results information and knowledge in the minds of a single of very few "lonely riders". Interviewed sector advisors commented that, in addition to their thematic expertise, they required good skills in interacting with MFA staff and that advisors lacking that skill would have difficulties getting their expertise across. Interviews with MFA staff at HQ and embassy level mirrored this sentiment and noted that there were differences between advisers in terms of outreach, activeness, accessibility, capacity and willingness to analyse and assist. Another consequence of being "lonely riders" is that some advisors felt they lacked intellectual sparring partners that could challenge and verify their expertise.

- Fourth, apart from permanently employed advisors and their substitutes, specialists are usually hired into generalist positions for three or four years after which they often apply for another generalist position for another three to four years. Many times, these specialists do not tend to come back to their original position, for example due to salary reasons. The MFA's Human Resources Units estimated that in January 2019, more than 40 specialists were employed at the MFA in this way, most of whom are in development cooperation.

> **Finding 8: Central evaluations, their synthesis in annual reports and performance audits produce useful results information and have successfully influenced decision-making at the MFA but do not fully put to use the comprehensive body of knowledge they generate.**

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"
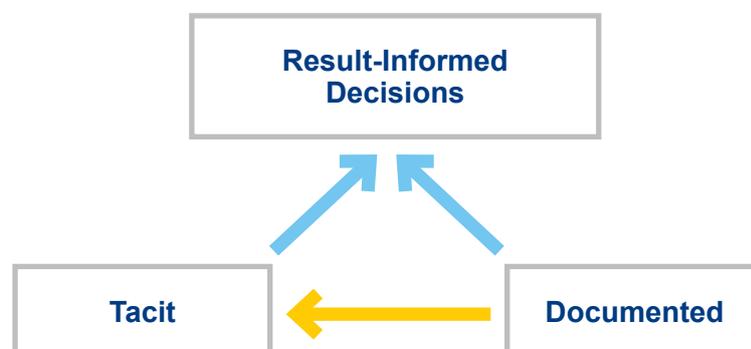
Between three to five central evaluations are managed and published by the MFA's evaluation unit per year. These are comprehensive, large-scale assessments conducted by international experts at the MFA corporate and policy level. Before 2013, the evaluation unit managed 10 or more smaller evaluations annually but then moved to fewer larger evaluations to allow for comprehensive analysis of questions concerning overall Finnish development policy and cooperation which usually required more refined methodology and expertise.

All central evaluations were considered by interviewees to have produced some useful results information. They collect and analyse different strands of evidence, draw overarching conclusions and suggest changes to current policies and practices in their recommendations.

Central evaluations have had significant influence on decision-making at the MFA. Present and former members of the Development Evaluation Unit and other staff for example indicated that the Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016a) and the Evaluation of Finland's Development Policy Programmes from a Results-Based Management Point of View 2003–2013 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2015a) had led to tangible positive changes at the MFA. The country strategy evaluation was believed to have contributed to improving country strategies and results frameworks, the RBM evaluation to a continued change process at the MFA and some of its evidence can for example be found in the MFA results reports and a recent report of the Development Policy Committee. Success factors were considered meeting interest and demand for information of policymakers and senior MFA management in terms of timing and content, good quality, relevant and credible evidence and analysis, and accessible presentation. Staff in the MFA's Unit for Civil Society makes regular use of CSO-related evaluations, finding them especially useful when all organisations were assessed along the same framework. According to interviews, other central evaluations had less influence on MFA decision-making, usually because of isolated issues: the evaluation of Programme-Based Support to Finnish CSOs found overall good performance that was not felt to contradict budget cuts conducted in parallel, recommendations made by a gender evaluation did not lead to a strong management response, and an aid for trade evaluation suffered from the fact that the evaluation scope exceeded the mandate of the MFA's development evaluation unit.

Because central evaluations are targeted primarily at senior MFA management and the Finnish government and parliament, their relevance and usefulness to general MFA staff has remained limited. Only 30 percent (N=40) of surveyed MFA staff indicated they had used central evaluations as a source of results information for learning or decision-making. This places central evaluations among the lesser-used sources of results information at the MFA. In comparison, 58 percent indicated they had used project evaluations.

In interviews, the principal targeting of central evaluations to high-level audiences was not questioned and we concur that the MFA needs these comprehensive knowledge products to inform and support its policies and approaches with credible evidence as a basis for its work.

Central evaluations had significant influence on decision-making at the MFA.

This said, there are two areas in which learning from central evaluations could be strengthened for MFA staff.

- First, even when keeping their high-level targeting intact, the relevance and usefulness of results information from central evaluations could be improved by "filtering" and "packaging" relevant findings and conclusions into suitable formats for different, more specifically defined audiences in (and beyond) the MFA. Interviewed staff from the evaluation unit confirmed this and felt that they had to move on too quickly to planning the next evaluation after an evaluation report was published. Surveyed staff confirmed this: 96 percent (N=47) agreed that they needed to invest more into drawing useful insights and actionable lessons from its reports and evaluations. We concur with this reasoning. Keeping in mind that central evaluations represent significant investments into knowledge generation worth several hundred thousand Euros and the overall scarcity of staff time for analysis and reflection, additional smaller, more focused and easier-to-digest knowledge products derived from the body of evidence of central evaluations would be very useful. Annual reports of the MFA's Development Evaluation Unit partly do this already (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011a, 2012, 2015c, 2016e, 2017, 2018c). They focus on synthesising central and other comprehensive evaluations and make observations across sectors and thematic issues of Finnish development cooperation along a similar set of evaluation criteria and cross-cutting policy priorities.

- Second, in theory, learning from central evaluations takes place during as well as after the evaluation process. In practice, learning does happen in both instances but there are also limitations. During the evaluation process, evaluation unit staff and a reference group regularly interact with the evaluation team and provide feedback on draft evaluation reports. Beyond that, MFA staff provides information in interviews, workshops or online surveys. Further participation is often limited because of time constraints of MFA staff and other staff capacity-related factors (Findings 14–17), but also because evaluations were not always designed with stronger staff participation in mind (i.e. beyond collecting evidence from staff), possibly to safeguard evaluative independence. After the evaluation process, the final report is disseminated, there is a public launch event, a webinar, and a management response process is started. We conclude that learning during the entire evaluation process can be further strengthened by increasing staff participation, for example, by encouraging extra consultations and workshops to increase understanding and ownership of evaluation findings and the realism of recommendations as piloted in the present evaluation (Section 2.1).

Another central MFA unit, the Unit for Internal Audit undertakes audits of MFA operational units and projects and programmes or commissions external auditing companies to carry these out in the case of country programmes. More recently the focus of internal audit has moved from auditing individual programmes to the country strategy as a whole and introducing a whistle-blower scheme to strengthen MFAs approach to fraud. Once audits have been carried out, there is a response provided by the relevant unit, department or Embassy

and an action plan developed which is then followed up by internal audit a year later. The internal audit department reports to the Secretary of State.

External audit reports were highlighted by programme teams as a useful source of information about financial controls and about the quality with which Results-Based Management was implemented, particularly when local auditors had been used as they were more knowledgeable about local contexts. On the other hand, many desk officers noted that they do not have the skills to interpret audit reports to use them effectively, especially regarding analysis of financial management. While not producing information about results per se, we consider performance audit reports a useful source of analysis of issues in the way of delivering results. For example, audit reports highlighted some of the issues also found in this evaluation such as problems due to rotation of staff and with regard to IT systems.

> **Finding 9. Project mid-term reviews produce useful results information and influence operations if they are conducted well, while project completion reports were considered less useful. Meta-evaluations of projects and programmes have become increasingly analytic and useful.**
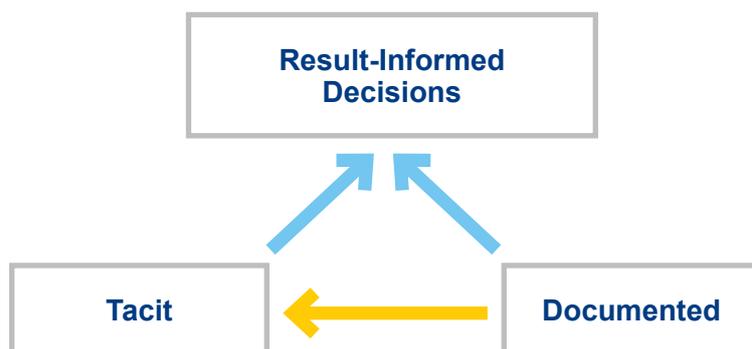
The main decentralised evaluations are mid-term reviews/evaluations that are undertaken for all projects. There are also project completion reports which are carried out by programme implementers. Sometimes, additional evaluations or *ad-hoc* reviews are undertaken if the country teams want to explore particular issues or have concerns about specific elements of programme performance.

Overall, Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs) were considered to be a useful source of results information if they are undertaken well, which was however reported to not always be the case. Findings are discussed by project steering committees and the MFA which allows for course correction mid-way through the project which strengthens programme results. Many examples were provided of evidence from MTRs resulting in changes in project structure or objectives. For example, in Ethiopia a MTR revealed that there was not much participation by women in an Agribusiness project, so the approach was reportedly changed to focus more strongly on this. Another MTR found that there were capacity gaps in financial administration in regions in Ethiopia which was then addressed by the project.

When MTRs were not undertaken well, this was often due to a lack of experience in country teams to develop good Terms of Reference and to manage the evaluations in a professional manner. However, it was noted that recent support by the Development Evaluation Unit to help in developing Terms of Reference for decentralised evaluations was very useful to address this. At the same time, this was an activity for which Development Evaluation Unit staff had only limited time available, therefore this has now been contracted out to an external helpdesk.

Another reason why MTR were found not to be useful relates to the quality of the evaluation teams who were highlighted as sometimes being 'too critical, but not in a constructive way' and 'can be good but sometimes misses the point'. From those managing these evaluations, additional feedback was that at times expectations were stretched and not in line with the available budget, and that discussions to narrow the evaluation scope were not always successful.

Similar to MTRs, *ad-hoc* evaluations and reviews or pieces of analytical work which country teams commissioned were seen as particularly helpful for ensuring programmes were on track. This allowed them to assess in more depth specific issues of concern and gave teams the flexibility to undertake this when these issues arose or in the design phase. For example, the Palestine team commissioned some small pieces of evaluation work to inform their CS, which led to changes in the programme to reflect human and financial resources and risks.

Project completion reports were not seen as useful. While some of them contained useful results information, interviewees felt that there was not much of a point to undertake them when the project was anyhow going to end. This represents another example of potentially useful results information and lessons learned not being disseminated and shared because of a focus on immediate use.

The Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation commissioned ex-post evaluations of earlier concessional credit projects with emphasis on sustainability. This was found important for developing the new instruments such as Public Sector Investment Facility.

The MFA's evaluation unit has commissioned several meta-evaluations of decentralised project and programme evaluations (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2015b, 2016b, 2018a).

Meta-evaluations have become truly analytic knowledge products.

Past meta-evaluations have focused on reviewing the quality of evaluation products and the evaluation process of decentralised evaluations, and provided an aggregate assessment along relevance, effectiveness and other OECD DAC and other cross-cutting criteria across all reviewed reports. Based on our own review of meta-evaluation reports and staff feedback, they have become increasingly analytic, moving from summaries of the degree to which quality criteria were fulfilled to truly analytic knowledge products that also aggregate and put into context the findings from individual evaluations. Meta-evaluations hence provide useful results information about, for example, the degree and quality with which some of Finland's development policy priorities are covered and derive some good practices and lessons learned regarding institutional and, to a lesser degree, development performance. Also, the meta-evaluation of individual CSO evaluations was considered valuable by the MFA's Unit for Civil Society.

3.2 Institutional demand for results information and knowledge

This section presents findings about how the MFA – as an institution – has supported and reported about evidence-informed learning and decision-making. It relates to the later stages of the Theory of Change, from "MFA Needed Practices" upwards (Section 2.1 and Annex 6).

> **Finding 10: The MFA has made progress towards more evidence-informed learning and decision-making.**

The MFA has pursued an explicit Results-Based Management (RBM) agenda since about 2012 and started planning a broader reform of its development cooperation practices in 2017. Both efforts have introduced – and plan – changes with relevance to results-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA.

After an evaluation of RBM in Finnish development cooperation was published in 2011, the MFA developed and started implementing a first RBM Action Plan in 2012. Several RBM Action Plans were developed and implemented under the leadership of the Management Committee for Development Policy and coordinated by a designated RBM Advisor.

Our review of RBM Action Plans shows an overall focus on strengthening the MFA's capacity for result-based reporting through a series of measures. Some measures introduced elements with direct relevance for results-informed learning and decision-making. For example, lessons learned were included into reporting against country strategies and description and some reflection of how progress had been achieved in reporting against multilateral influencing plans; syntheses of annual reports were introduced and there were ongoing efforts to improve the MFA's IT systems, for example through introducing markers that allowed some tracking across sectors and for thematic issues. As part of these efforts and after an informal pilot in 2017, the MFA produced a comprehensive Development Policy Results Report ("results report") that was published in late 2018 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2018b). Interviewed and surveyed staff characterised the report as an important knowledge product that, apart from demonstrating what results the MFA had contributed to, was an important source of results information.

In 2017, the MFA started a comprehensive reform process of its development cooperation practices ("KeTTU") that covered issues addressed in earlier RBM Action Plans but was overall broader in scope, covering issues related to management, systems and human resources (Figure 8). The reform plans to address several issues with relevance for strengthening evidence-informed learning and decision-making. It therefore represents an important process into which the findings and recommendations of the present evaluation can be integrated.

A central aim of the KeTTU reform is strengthened planning, reporting and management along the thematic priorities of Finnish development policy and cooperation. To this end, four thematic "results maps" have been developed, one

The 2018 results report demonstrated results and was an important source of results information.

for each of Finland's four development policy priority areas[1] (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016d). They illustrate and explain how outputs related to Finland's development policy and cooperation lead to outcomes that then contribute to each priority area as well as what assumptions are made for this to work. In addition, thematic leaders have been assigned to each priority.

Figure 8. Areas of focus in the reform of development cooperation practices.

Management	Utilization of Theories of Change in planning, monitoring, direction. Thematic management for the implementation of Development Policy.	Systems: harmonization, adjustment, effective participation and influencing in planning of govt's new joint systems
	Clarification of Strategic Management Processes	
	Evidence-based decision-making: Production and use of data and analysis	
Structure, Processes, Systems	Simple, harmonized and comprehensive dev.coop. processes (grants, bi, multi)	
	Risk management policy and its implementation (roles and responsibilities)	
	Reform of Quality Assurance (incl. quality criteria, new practices and roles)	
	Reform of process support: guidelines, advisory services, management support	
Human Resources	Staff training reform	
	Reform of dev.coop. human resource structure and management (incl. job descriptions and career paths)	
	Use of virtual platforms and joint learning	

Source: Presentation by Riitta Oksanen to the evaluation team.

As part of these results-related efforts, new occasions for learning from results information – often on the level of teams and groups – have been created, and existing ones strengthened.

As part of results-related efforts, new occasions for learning from results information were created.

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1 1. The rights of women and girls, 2. Reinforcing developing countries' economies to generate more jobs, livelihoods and well-being, 3. Democratic and well-functioning societies, including taxation capacity, and 4. Food security, access to water and energy, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

A series of occasions occurred as "by-products" of RBM-related processes. As report templates and practices increasingly required analytic reflection about past results and formulation of lessons learned, staff engaged more with results information when using them. This applied to the programme level in bilateral and the project level in multilateral cooperation after the country strategy modality had been strengthened and multilateral influencing plans had been introduced. On the level of policy channels and departments, putting together synthesis reports and subsequent validation processes also created opportunities for learning in bilateral, multilateral and CSO cooperation. On the corporate level, while the work leading up to the results report to parliament was characterised as lengthy and tedious, interviewed staff that had participated in putting the report together felt that they had learned much during the process. Because learning from results information requires intellectual engagement and reflection with results, learning is likely more effective when reports are put together by MFA staff rather than by external parties such as in CSO cooperation or in bilateral projects. In addition, across the MFA, some learning from results information is likely to take place as part of day-to-day staff interactions and meetings.

Other occasions are organised with explicit learning purposes. A prominent example are the MFA's annual, one-week long KEPO days. These are divided into two parts: in the middle there are two days that are common for everybody with presentations and panel discussions, while before and after, workshops are organized on specific issues. For example, in 2019, there was a meeting of the Gender task force where embassies gave presentations of how and what kind of results had been achieved in advancing gender equality in Finnish development cooperation. This had been suggested in the feedback to the 2018 KEPO days. Other issues discussed in 2019 covered risk management, Finland´s response to the crisis in education, training in the MFA, cross-cutting themes in the implementation of the development policy and how to develop result-based management. These workshops are usually well-attended and appreciated by the staff who felt that even more information should be exchanged between country teams, experiences on the ground, and research findings. Other structured occasion for learning were several "results days" organised to collect, discuss and synthesise existing evidence on past interventions in a systematic way on the corporate level.

Beyond present occasions but with future relevance for management and use of results information at the MFA, a government-wide ("Tietokiri") project aiming at strengthening knowledge-based management in public administration has been ongoing since late 2017 and is scheduled to terminate end of 2019. The MFA is one pilot ministry in this project. According to the project's website,[2] the "objective is to improve the visibility of results achieved through knowledge-based management and to share proven tools and disciplines. The project also aims to combine the Government's joint information resources and to provide analysis services and visualisation of information to organisations."

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2 https://tietokiri.fi/knowledge-based-management-in-public-administration/.

As described above, past and ongoing reform processes at the MFA have piloted and implemented measures towards more evidence-informed learning and decision-making. In addition, the MFA's evaluation function has also made important contributions. These efforts have however not yet transformed the MFA into a "learning institution" in the sense of providing, as an institution, a conducive organisational environment and strong and lasting institutional support to evidence-informed learning and decision-making. This is to be expected because institutional change processes take time. Factors such as leadership support, staff incentives and the MFA's organisational culture (the collective values, beliefs and principles of MFA staff) can be gradually influenced but not changed over short periods of time. In what follows these factors are discussed.

Leadership. Strong and consistent leadership plays an important role in fostering an organisational "results culture". In interviews, staff confirmed the importance of leadership, especially for enabling results-informed learning and decision-making. Staff from some units were highly appreciative of how their unit directors provided space and invited learning from past experience and using results information to inform and shape operational and strategic work focus. Feedback from other units on this type of leadership support was less pronounced or absent. When surveyed, only half (N=46) of MFA staff respondents agreed that MFA leadership clearly and consistently promoted the use of results information and knowledge. About 40 percent (N=41) worried that they could be considered a troublemaker and harm their career by challenging strategies and plans based on what they had learned from results information.

In interviews, MFA leadership from unit directors to the permanent Secretary of State showed mixed enthusiasm for challenging the status quo in order to strengthen evidence-informed learning and decision-making. In our observation, current reform efforts are mainly driven by a few individual champions. At the same time, we have not witnessed outspoken opposition to the general idea of strengthening evidence-informed learning and decision-making. In interviews, MFA staff in leadership positions were generally in agreement with issues identified in this evaluation but often felt that little could be done in view of current conditions, for example staff capacity and IT systems, to significantly improve the situation. Hence, we would characterise most of MFA's leadership as being generally supportive but without considering the strengthening of evidence-informed learning and decision-making a priority item for action.

Staff incentives. Apart from some leadership support, interviewed staff generally did not feel that the MFA provided them with incentives for using results information for learning and decision-making. In interviews, staff explained that when they considered results information for these purposes, it was rather done in spite of several restrictions (Findings 15–17) than because of institutional

incentives. Less than a quarter of surveyed staff (N=44) felt that bringing results information into decision-making was a standard requirement and most felt that making good use of results information was not recognised or rewarded (58 percent of n=38).

Based on interviews and a cursory review of some examples, use of results information for learning or decision-making is usually not explicitly required in job descriptions and annual staff performance appraisal targets. Other targets and responsibilities can be interpreted to imply it to some degree, for example the acquisition of new skills, attendance of meetings and monitoring, and reporting duties of general staff, or if specialists are required to provide expert input into planning processes. The degree to which such targets and responsibilities are later assessed based on the level of results-informed learning and decision-making remains limited and interviewed staff generally felt that the use of results information was not considered an important factor in their annual performance appraisal.

We saw examples of where staff were unable to be flexible and opportunistic when circumstances changed due to the inability of making changes to approved plans and programmes, and as a result missed out on opportunities to support good initiatives. Some examples are discussed below (Finding 12).

Organisational culture. Organisational culture was repeatedly commented on in earlier assessments. A 2011 evaluation found that the institutional culture of the MFA was not supportive of managing for results, with a highly bureaucratic and risk averse culture. In 2015, another evaluation noted that the MFA had not yet been able to create an organisational environment conducive to RBM (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2015a). It found that the organisational culture had remained largely risk-averse and that it prioritised diligent compliance and accountability over careful experimentation and learning. At the same time, the MFA's focus on development cooperation in fragile states and through cooperation with the private sector naturally require dealing with increased risk levels.

In interviews and workshops, MFA staff described how they perceived the MFA's organisational culture in more detail and with respect to evidence-informed learning and decision-making. Common elements were:

- The lack of a culture of learning from mistakes that would provide a risk-free space to investigate, analyse and learn from failures. This was considered to be also a consequence of staff rotations by some and associated with a "diplomatic" mindset by others;

- A habit of being hesitant with offering opinions to colleagues and superiors because they might consider this disturbing or annoying and then consider them troublemakers;

- Absence of a culture of "sitting down and recording knowledge"; and

- A culture of being reactive and ad-hoc because of being too busy, among other things resulting in issues being addressed after problems had occurred.

In interviews and workshops, some MFA staff were not comfortable with elements of the above characterisations and, for example, felt that characterising

Most felt that making good use of results information was not recognised or rewarded.

the MFA's results culture as risk-averse was not adequate. Interviewees managing human resources in the MFA's Administrative Services Department also reminded us that creativity was one of the MFA's three corporate values.

More broadly, staff perceived that there had been some change to organisational culture. While considering that the MFA was "probably not the vanguard of change", several felt that the reforms initiated by the Department of Development Policy had induced some cultural change. Some even described this as an "overall increase of results culture and strong interest in results data for learning" and a much increased "overall awareness for results culture".

Staff perceptions on beginning change of organisational culture are further supported by the range of institutional opportunities for evidence-based learning summarised in Finding 10. Because organisational culture change is a slow process, these efforts are likely to gradually influence rather than abruptly change the collective values, beliefs and principles of MFA staff involved in development policy and cooperation.

Another broadly shared sentiment was that organisational culture in departments and units involved in development cooperation was usually less conservative and more open to change than in other departments and units.

> **Finding 12: The MFA's organisational structure represents a natural obstacle for evidence-informed learning and decision-making and limits institutional demand for results information.**

The MFA's organisational and management structure largely determines how the MFA plans, allocates resources, and reports on progress.

Within the overall budget envelopes for development policy and cooperation at the MFA, budget planning ("TTS") is essentially a bottom-up process. It starts at the unit level, based on budgets in previous years. Several interviewees commented that there was a sense of entitlement to at least preserve the same level of budget even in view of unspent funds from previous years or parts of the budget remaining unallocated to concrete activities. Unit budgets are then aggregated to the department and corporate level. Financial and results reporting essentially follow the same logic and also reflect the organisational structure of the MFA rather than, for example, development policy priorities. As part of an ongoing reform of its development cooperation practices, the MFA aims at introducing an additional layer of reporting along thematic priorities albeit without changing basic planning and reporting processes. In addition, systematic consideration of results information and knowledge early in the TTS planning process is being suggested.

This results in planning and reporting processes that remain separated between the MFA's main development policy channels (multilateral, bilateral, CSO, humanitarian assistance and private sector) as well as within and along the contributions made by different departmental units. This means that - apart from the innovations discussed below - financial and results planning and reporting is not integrated across policy channels, instruments, units or countries. This was mirrored in numerous interviews:

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- Interviewed staff felt that the lack of an integrated approach to planning and reporting had resulted in lack of aggregated results information, for example for entire sectors, policy priorities and cross-cutting objectives.

- Interviewees also felt that it was difficult to obtain an overall view of activities and results in one sector or one country – across policy channels and instruments.

- Others felt that the work delivered by Finnish CSOs would benefit from working more in relation to the country programme and the embassy rather than depending on the assessment and monitoring by the CSO unit in Helsinki, or that for example BEAM projects were not sufficiently followed by embassies.

Overall, interviewed staff felt that the MFA worked too much in silos, and that these silos needed to be overcome to allow for access to results information across institutional boundaries and for aggregate information across policy channels and instruments. Earlier assessments made similar observations (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016a, 2016b; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017).

This has important consequences regarding institutional demand for results information when it comes to informing funding decisions. As noted earlier (Finding 4), funding decisions at the MFA are usually not influenced by results information. This is a consequence of how the MFA's financial planning TTS process works but also reflects the MFA's overall rationale for making funding decisions.

- Some staff expressed frustration about this and felt that the MFA needed to evolve from entitlement- to results-based budgeting or, in the words of one interviewee, from asking "how can I best spend the funds allocated to my area of work" to "how can the MFA – across units and departments – best achieve its objectives". One example was the perceived impossibility of shifting resources between countries, even if that shift was likely to increase net results across both.

- In other cases, for example when determining funding to multilateral organisations (Finding 4), staff was comfortable with funding decisions not being influenced by results information. Here, the rationale was that these entities were long-term partners and that results information should be used for influencing their work but not as a rationale for informing funding for one organisation relative to the others.

While other donors such as the UK systematically use comparative results information to inform decisions regarding their multilateral and bilateral aid portfolios (Department for International Development, 2011, 2016), there seems to exist only limited possibility and appetite within the MFA to do so. For example, while a similar but lighter review was conducted at the MFA regarding its multilateral aid portfolio, that study remained without budgetary consequences.

Another type of organisational fragmentation occurred in bilateral cooperation within embassies. In line with observations made in earlier assessments, local staff was perceived to hold useful results information but to not be sufficiently included when it comes to evidence-informed learning and decision-making.

We agree that these issues stand in the way of effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making because they hinder the production, availability and sharing of useful results information.

At the same time, these issues have been recognised and are being addressed by current reform processes (Finding 10). As part of RBM Action Plans and the 2018 results report, important synthesis efforts were made. In bilateral and multilateral cooperation, synthesis reports that aggregate country programme or multilateral influencing plan reports have become practice now. For CSO programme-based support and private sector instruments such reports were piloted in the autumn of 2018 and spring 2019. The KeTTU reform also appointed thematic leads as a means to convene involved staff and coordinate planning and reporting within thematic priority areas, and the currently ongoing Tietokiri project explicitly aims at the dismantling of silos for activities and information. Independent of these reforms, the MFA has made significant progress in rendering financial reporting more transparent and useful and MFA's sector advisors continue to track MFA activities on a sector-wide level.

A recommendation over the years (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016a) was to include all country programming in the country strategy process rather than leaving private sector and humanitarian activities out. Zambia, Somalia and Ethiopia have been pilots for such comprehensive country strategies. However, it seems that although these activities will be in the country strategy process, humanitarian, CSO and private sector projects will still be run by different MFA departments, making joint reporting and learning from results information potentially difficult.

Naturally, as long as not questioning the organisational and managerial structure of the MFA or the rationale for allocating funds across and within policy channels, these efforts mitigate rather than solve the underlying issues. For example, the thematic focus introduced by the KeTTU reform is not intended to replace the MFA's approach to planning and reporting but rather to add a thematic layer to it and to offer results information and knowledge earlier in the process (Finding 10).

> **Finding 13: The MFA does not yet publicly report and demonstrate accountability for evidence-informed learning and decision-making.**

Accountability and learning purposes of RBM can compete with each other.

In literature on RBM, accountability and learning/decision-making purposes of RBM are often separated and even considered to compete with each other. What is however rarely considered is how demonstrated evidence-informed learning and decision-making by an institution contributes to building trust and support for it or, in other words, how important accountability for evidence-informed learning and decision-making is. For simplicity, we refer to this concept as "accountability for learning".

In the Theory of Change underlying this evaluation, we decided to test this possibility. Our reasons were twofold.

- From our experience in the field, we doubt the silent assumption often made that those in charge of overseeing the MFA and deciding its funding are only and exclusively interested in development results achieved on the ground that are difficult to attribute to MFA activities and funding.

- Our second reason is that appetite or demand for accountability for learning would do much to support, strengthen and sustain evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA.

When testing this hypothesis in interviews, there was some positive feedback, but it was also clear that the accountability for learning concept remained elusive and abstract. When surveyed, all respondents (N=36) agreed that publicly showing that the MFA makes use of results information for learning and decision-making will enhance governmental and public support.

Interviewees in the secretariat of the Development Policy Committee and in leadership positions at the MFA felt coherently that the Finnish government, parliament and public were generally not satisfied with "rosy reports" that were "too good to be true". Several reported that an earlier results report (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2014) had been received critically by parliament because being "too rosy" and lacking solid evidence for claims of success. Interviewees felt that the 2018 results report had presented more credible evidence. Some also pointed to several instances of where some learning from evaluation results was visible and suggested that more critical self-reflection would be much appreciated and considered convincing by interest groups of Finnish development policy and cooperation. At the same time, there was an understanding that the degree to which such demonstrated critical self-reflection would lead to more support and trust for the MFA depended on the political climate and the degree to which the government prioritised development policy and cooperation.

Obviously, a convincing argument in favour of demonstrating evidence-informed learning and decision-making would be solid evidence on the positive impacts it has on institutional and development performance. However, while widely assumed, there seems to be little direct evidence of tangible effects of evidence-informed learning and decision-making in research or evaluations on the subject reviewed by us (Annex 9). In this evaluation, evidence for such impacts also remained anecdotal. When asked, MFA staff provided several examples of where they indicated that the use of results information had made a positive difference. A common example was successive learning from results and improvement for specific approaches like WASH, community-based approaches in the water sector, or private sector involvement in agricultural value chain programmes. The resulting know-how about how to maximise results with these approaches was perceived to have led to better results and potential positive influence on similar work of other donors.

Overall, in view of these observations, we conclude that reporting on learning from evidence and on how it has shaped and informed the MFA's priorities and approaches can be a useful complement to more traditional accountability reporting. While the latter focuses mostly on development performance, the former would focus on institutional performance, i.e. that the MFA learns and adapts based on experience. The latter seems relevant also in view of a wider

Finnish government, parliament and public were generally not satisfied with "rosy reports" that were "too good to be true".

trend away from "classical" understanding of RBM towards more flexible adaptive management approaches (Vähämäki & Verger, 2019).

3.3 Staff motivation, opportunity and capability for using results information and knowledge

The Theory of Change developed for this evaluation is based on robust social science research on changing behaviour (Section 2.1 and Annex 6), which concludes that behaviour change is brought about by three necessary conditions that comprise the capacity needed to change behaviour: adequate motivation, opportunity and capability. This section summarises the corresponding findings.

> **Finding 14: MFA staff are generally motivated to use results information and believe it can make a difference.**

MFA staff has a high level of motivation for using results knowledge.

MFA staff generally displayed a high level of intrinsic motivation for using results knowledge for learning and for informing decisions.

This was often explained through a strong commitment to contribute to "making a difference" in the world. Many interviewees expressed that they had primarily joined the MFA because of this reason. At the same time, MFA staff almost unanimously believed that more evidence-informed learning and decision-making will lead to more effective planning and implementation of MFA interventions, as well as to more effective development outcomes.[3]

Overall, there was strong and unanimous intent to "improve our performance using results information and knowledge" and most felt that this could also happen in practice: 87 percent (N=47) indicated they knew they could make a difference if they learned and applied lessons from past experience.

Sector advisors and other specialists also cited their interest for their respective subject-matter as an important driver for motivation. In turn, MFA staff considered sector advisors to be highly motivated.

We consider this an important and encouraging finding for two reasons.

- First, as reflected in the Theory of Change for this evaluation (Annex 6), social science research considers staff motivation a fundamental necessary condition for evidence-informed learning and decision-making. Without adequate motivation, only very little learning and evidence-informed decision-making would take place.

- Second, as described in Findings 15–17 below, most other conditions required for effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making are either not or almost not fulfilled. We expected this, in turn, to negatively influence MFA's staff motivation which, however, at least at present, does not seem to be the case. But limited capability and opportunity to use results information would, over time, likely reduce this motivation.

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3 100 percent agreement, N=41, and 98 percent agreement, N=41, respectively.

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Finding 15: Staff consider lack of time for reflection and learning the most important restriction to more results-informed learning and decision-making.

Across all factors related to the capacity of staff to make use of results information for learning and decision-making, lack of time for reflection and learning, and hence limited opportunity, represented the most important restrictions.

Lack of time was raised in most interviews and staff generally felt that most or all available time was needed to fulfil their basic job requirements. For example:

- Desk officers in bilateral cooperation reported that much time was spent 'firefighting' while there was little time to digest results information or to spot the next 'fire'. They highlighted that this made them overly reliant on advisors and Embassies as they had no time to build up their own sector expertise or knowledge.

- In Embassies, lack of time had led to "cutting corners" and not learning from results in old projects, as reading final reports would need too much time.

- A major work peak occurs for the CSO unit in autumn when the applications for project grants arrive which leads to limited time to learn from the programme CSO reports arriving simultaneously.

- In multilateral cooperation and humanitarian assistance, staff did not have enough time to adequately sort and review the wealth of publications and knowledge documents produced by development banks and UN agencies.

- Interviewed staff in MFA leadership positions also felt that staff were hard pressed to deliver on their work duties. One senior official described this as staff capacity currently being "below the pain point".

One often-cited reason was that staff levels had recently been reduced in sync with reductions in overall budgets from 2015 onwards. This was perceived to have brought staff capacity in several MFA units below what was required. Staff also indicated that reduced availability and capacity of support staff had led to situations where senior staff time was used rather ineffectively for administrative tasks they were not trained to do.

The fact that MFA staffs lacks time for reflection and learning is also illustrated by staff survey answers to another question about the amount of time and effort spent in helping to produce, collect or report on different types of results information. From our experiences with other aid agencies, we expected a large share of staff to answer: "too much". At the MFA, almost nobody felt that way and, instead, most respondents indicated that they spent too little time that way.

Most sector advisors and specialists also perceived a lack of time for their own reflection and learning, but also when offering their expertise to others, resulting in the need to reserve their time much in advance or in long wait times. This

Lack of time for reflection and learning was the most important restriction.

sentiment was mirrored by surveyed staff who felt that interactions with such specialists, while considered important, were often not timely.[4]

Lack of time to consider results information is not an issue specific to the MFA but represents a common finding in reviews of RBM in development agencies (Annex 9).

> **Finding 16. MFA staff perceive that there is not sufficient occasion and some lack a "safe space" for results-informed learning and decision-making.**

Although we have identified several structured and informal occasions for results-informed learning and decision-making (Finding 10), MFA staff still indicated that they lacked sufficient occasion and opportunity. For example, only half of the surveyed staff (51 percent, N=47) felt that their team or unit had good opportunities for meeting and discussing what they had learned. 46 percent (N=46) responded that overall there were no real opportunities for using results information and knowledge.

We consider that the perceived lack of occasions for evidence-informed learning and decision-making is to some extent linked to the lack of time for these activities. However, there also seems to be a genuine lack of occasions beyond that.

- Regarding informal interactions with colleagues and experts, staff were somewhat hesitant when it comes to soliciting or offering information. While informal occasions were considered important and often used, they can probably be further encouraged and incentivised by clarifying to staff that they are wanted, supported and part of the job.

- Staff also reported that results information was often used in preparation and during different kinds of meetings, for example on strategy, programme oversight or quality assurance. The degree to which use of results information is explicitly required in these meetings varies and depends much on how those in charge interpret and require that relevant and useful results information is made available and considered.

- While several structured occasions with the primary objective of learning from results already exist (Finding 10), interviewees suggested that these were too few and felt that more structured learning occasions would be useful, for example about lessons learned with specific instruments and approaches.

- MFA staff also reported that results information was frequently considered when working with documents by themselves and when writing reports. As concluded earlier, this type of "learning on the job" appears highly susceptible to scarcity of time and capability (Finding 2).

46 percent lacked real opportunities for using results information and knowledge.

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Figure 9 summarises staff feedback on the frequency with which results information was used for different types of situations and occasions.

Figure 9. Situations and occasions when results information is used

	regularly/routinely	often	occasionally	rarely or never
Steering committee meetings	39	22	25	14
Learning or assessing options/decisions concerning my work by myself	34	45	16	5
Writing and submitting progress reports	34	29	17	20
Planning and strategy meetings	32	42	21	5
Quality assurance group meetings, including preparations	31	11	34	23
Annual performance discussions with my superiors	30	24	24	22
Development partner coordination meetings	29	26	29	17
Informal conversations and interactions with colleagues (not sector advisors)	26	37	34	3
Policy formulation	25	36	14	25
Self-evaluation processes (as for example recently for country strategies)	22	27	32	19
Structured learning sessions, for example workshops and seminars	18	16	50	16
Resource allocation discussions and meetings	16	35	30	19
Informal conversations and interactions with sector advisors or other experts	13	42	42	3
Staff training courses	11	13	47	29

Source: Answers to the survey question *"Under what types of situations/occasions did you make use or referred to results information and knowledge?"* (N=35 to 38 depending on the answer option), Team analysis.

Apart from a perceived lack of occasion, a significant portion of staff felt that they lacked a "safe space" for making use of results information. About 40 percent (N=41) of surveyed staff worried that they could be considered a troublemaker and harm their career by challenging strategies and plans based on what they had learned from results information.

As explained in Finding 11, staff related this to whether or not MFA leadership enabled and supported reflection and learning. For example, one MFA staff member commented that when she first arrived, she had raised issues but when these were ignored, she had stopped doing that. Another example was when work done by a previous job holder was questioned when things went wrong even though there was an email trail where he had raised these issues. Some staff simply indicated that their superiors did not want to hear about problems.

> **Finding 17. Capability of MFA staff to access, understand, analyse and use results information varies and is not always sufficient.**

Apart from time, occasion and motivation, the capability of staff to make use of results information represents an important necessary condition for effective

A significant portion of staff lacked a "safe space" for making use of results information.

evidence-informed learning and decision-making. We understand this capability to consist of several elements: the capability to access results information, the capability to understand and analyse it, and the capability to use it for decision-making.

As noted later in this report, access to useful results information is limited from the supply side because of information technology (Finding 18) and lack of documentation of tacit knowledge, limiting opportunity for learning (Finding 3).

In addition, access to useful results information is limited by lack of skill or knowledge in MFA staff in how to access it, especially in the case where information is stored in the MFA's information systems AHA-KYT or ARKKI. Interviewed staff stressed that while most had received some form of introductory training for these systems, this had done little in terms of enabling them to efficiently use these systems. Instead, practical know-how was gained when there was a need to actually use them and staff indicated that this form of "learning by doing" was not very efficient. Staff, even when regularly using these systems as part of their job duties, were often unaware of basic resources such as the comprehensive operating manual for AHA-KYT or the JAHA interface that offers simultaneous full-text document search in both AHA-KYT and ARKKI. These drawbacks were confirmed by staff in the MFA's Administrative Department who serviced AHA-KYT. They indicated that online guidance and help functions could and should be improved and updated.

Making sense of results information by analysing and drawing useful conclusions from it is a capability most interviewed staff was convinced to possess, at least to some degree. When surveyed 73 percent (N=45) agreed fully or somewhat that they had the skills and know-how to use, understand and apply results information and knowledge to improve performance and manage for better results. Most had done analytic work as part of their university education and felt that job-related reporting duties required it as well. At the same time, most staff indicated that they needed additional training in how to draw actionable lessons from results information (70 percent, N=44). There was also a widespread sentiment that, while gradually and generally improving, some reports still lacked sufficiently analytic insight and that the sections dedicated to learning from results were often too descriptive, offering little actionable lessons. Based on interviews with MFA staff in Helsinki and partner countries, embassy staff seems to have a more realistic understanding of results information because they are closer to implementation whereas staff working in headquarters depended on indirect information in reports from embassies and consultants.

In our interactions with MFA staff we also observed that often there was limited concrete understanding of, and know-how on, how results information informed and influenced decisions. This is not surprising because the field of for example multi-attribute decisions making is not commonplace knowledge. When surveyed, close to 80 percent of staff indicated they required training on tools for results-informed decision-making (79 percent, N=42).

Staff were often unaware of basic resources for the MFA's information systems.

3.4 Availability and quality of results information and knowledge

This section summarises findings about the availability and quality of results information at the MFA. They relate to the initial stages of the Theory of Change (Section 2.1 and Annex 6).

> **Finding 18: The MFA's information management systems do not allow staff to access documented results information easily and are not suitable for analysis across different projects and programmes.**

In line with earlier findings, the MFA's information management systems remain of little practical use when it comes to finding, accessing and analysing results information. Before explaining this in more detail we note that this finding is not about financial management in development policy and cooperation in which significant progress has been made.

A 2011 evaluation noted that there was no information system to inform the policies and strategies of MFA and that the MFA's case management system AHA-KYT did not allow for retrieval of documents, comparative analysis of development interventions or access to information on performance (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011b). A 2017 OECD DAC peer review observed that while Finland generated a substantial amount of knowledge through monitoring and evaluation, it didn't make best use of this knowledge (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). Identified issues were the difficult-to-access knowledge management system, and the absence of a system-wide mechanism to capture lessons and promote findings from evaluations, reviews and results monitoring. A 2018 monitoring report reported that only few individuals had access to analytic tools and data stored in the IBM Cognos system and that the integration between systems was incomplete. The same report restated that the AHA-KYT system had significant challenges (Saarteinen et al., 2018b).

Interviewed MFA staff was highly critical of AHA-KYT, the principal case management system used in development cooperation. The main complaints were that the system was hard to operate and that it was difficult to locate and retrieve relevant documents. Even staff specialising in document retrieval were at times unable to locate documents they knew existed somewhere in the system.

The limitations of AHA-KYT are illustrated by issues meta-evaluations had in finding decentralised evaluation reports. One report remarked that it had proven impossible to include a systematic assessment of MFA's evaluation coverage given the way required information was stored and classified within the MFA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016c). Another report gave no guarantee that all evaluations were covered although AHA-KYT had been searched and requests had been sent to the different regional and thematic divisions (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2018a).

The MFA's information management systems remain of little practical use when it comes to finding, accessing and analysing results information.

MFA staff provided numerous reasons for these issues with AHA-KYT, the most frequent being: the way documents were stored along case pathways, multiple unexplained versions of the same document, erroneous or missing keywords, documents being inaccessible because remaining blocked in draft status, lack of an option to delete erroneously started cases or obsolete documents, some instructions inaccessible to local staff in embassies because available only in Finnish, limited access in embassies because of limited bandwidth in developing countries, and some useful information being stored elsewhere (Finding 20).

When surveyed, only 12 percent (N=51) felt that AHA-KYT was an excellent system for quickly finding useful information. Even keeping in mind that AHA-KYT was designed as a case management system and not a document library, surveyed staff felt that it was far from fulfilling that job either: three quarters disagreed that it was an excellent system for organising documents and collaborating along the project cycle (N=51). Staff was also critical of ARKKI and ASKI, the MFA's electronic archiving and document distribution systems. 83 percent (N=46) disagreed what asked whether ARKKI was an excellent system for storing information and for sharing it with others.

When it comes to analysis of results information, AHA-KYT and ARKKI are quite naturally limited by their document-based system architecture. This severely restricts any automatic information analysis and explains why results information in synthesis reports is tediously aggregated "by hand" from multiple documents and other information sources. For example, interviewees described the production of the 2018 results report as a "herculean task" that was done "manually" and required too much capacity to be repeated every year.

The only notable exception are several metadata fields for statistical information in AHA-KYT. Metadata is stored directly and can be integrated with the MFA's IBM Cognos system that allows automatic analysis. For example, several OECD DAC development markers have been added successfully to AHA-KYT and now automate the MFA's reporting to the OECD to some degree. In principle, further metadata could be added to AHA-KYT to cover principal results information as indicators or qualitative results statements as a basis for statistical or qualitative analysis. Experience with the reliability of metadata entries, however, suggests that intense quality assurance will be needed for information to be sufficiently reliable.

In contrast, staff considered that the MFA's intranet (FOORUMI) was useful for storing and sharing both MFA-internal and external results information on the level of units and teams. Here, keeping information up to date was considered a challenge, as well as the fact that integration with AHA-KYT and ARKKI was very limited. Interviewees also pointed to the MFA's internet as a source of information. For example, evaluation unit staff pointed to the MFA's website rather than AHA-KYT as a depository for earlier central and decentral evaluation reports.

Across systems, less than a quarter of surveyed staff (N=52) felt that the MFA's IT systems allowed them to access all the information they needed for learning and decision-making. About half (54 percent, N=52) felt confused with the many IT systems in the MFA and didn't know how to operate them properly. 90 percent (N=49) agreed that the MFA didn't have a workable system in place for accessing and working with results information.

When addressed in interviews, accessibility and user-friendliness of IT systems predominantly raised negative comments (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Analysis of comments made in interviews about the accessibility and user-friendliness of the MFA's IT systems
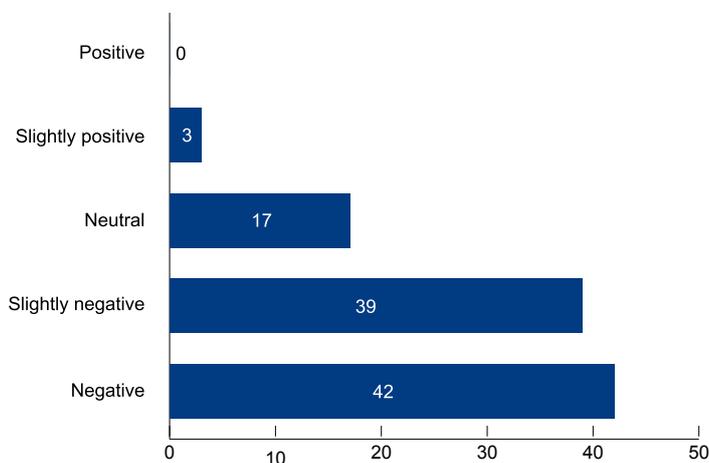
Source: Team analysis of interviews in which IT systems were discussed (N=36).

We conclude that access to documented results information represents a critical bottleneck at the MFA. Figure 11 compares staff feedback across different results information-related criteria, all of which are considered necessary as a basis for results-informed learning and decision-making. While most MFA staff is not dissatisfied with the relevance, credibility and usefulness of results information at the MFA, three quarters are regarding its accessibility.

Figure 11. Credibility, usefulness, relevance and accessibility of results-information for learning and decision-making at the MFA

I fully agree

I agree somewhat

I disagree somewhat

I fully disagree
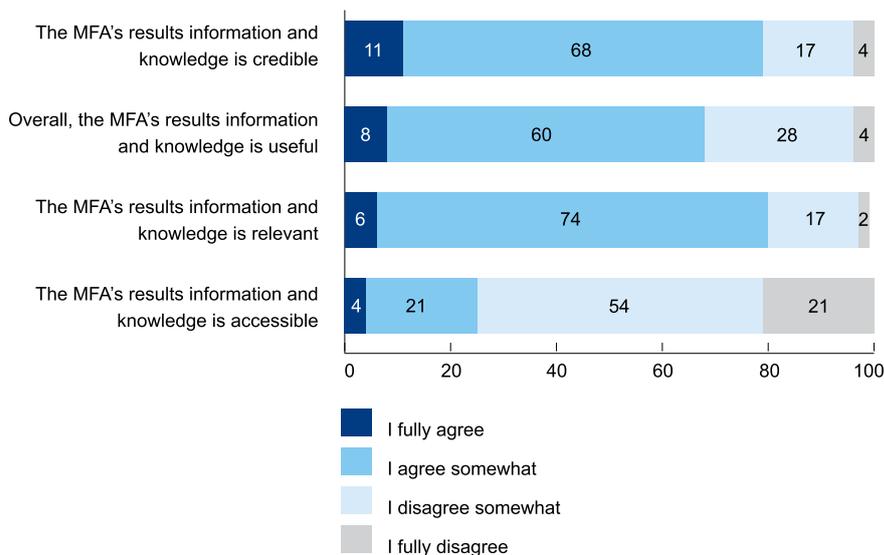
Source: Answers to the survey question *"To sum up this section, please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements."* (N=52 answered regarding accessibility, 50 regarding usefulness and 47 regarding relevance and credibility), Team analysis.

Access to documented results information represents a critical bottleneck at the MFA.

With future relevance for management and use of results information at the MFA, a government-wide project ("Tietokiri") is implemented from 2017-2019. It aims at generally strengthening knowledge-based management in public administration. The MFA is one pilot ministry in this project. According to the project's website, the "objective is to improve the visibility of results achieved through knowledge-based management and to share proven tools and disciplines. The project also aims to combine the Government's joint information resources and to provide analysis services and visualisation of information to organisations."[5]

Another effort takes place under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance. It has the objective of developing and introducing a common government-wide data management plan ("tiedonohjaussuunnitelma"). If successful, this plan may affect much of the MFA's current development policy and cooperation work from strategic planning to reporting and supervision. Among other elements, it plans to introduce a new government-wide archiving and information management system ("VAHVA"). Piloting of VAHVA started in 2018 in the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Defense with original plans to roll the system out to all 16 Finnish ministries by 2020. Reportedly, the rollout will however be delayed.

While a thorough analysis of these government-wide processes would go beyond the scope of this evaluation, we note that they need to be considered when deciding on the way forward.

From our interviews within the MFA, we have received differing views on the timeline with which new procedures and systems will be implemented at the MFA, the degree to which they will replace current procedures and systems, and their functionalities in terms of managing results information. Interviewees from the Unit for administrative and legal matters in the Department for Development Policy who represent the MFA in the government-wide initiatives argued that AHA-KYT would be replaced by new procedures and systems by 2020 whereas other staff estimated this to happen in several years to a decade, if at all.

Staff use a range of "do-it-yourself" solutions for collecting, storing and accessing results information.

MFA advisors, specialists and general staff use a range of "do-it-yourself" solutions for collecting, storing and accessing results information. Common solutions were storing documents on memory sticks that were kept in the office and using email inboxes as a depository for attached documents. This applied to 90 percent of surveyed staff (N=51). In interviews, this was explained as a stopgap solution because of the absence of easy-to-use formal systems.

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5 https://tietokiri.fi/knowledge-based-management-in-public-administration/

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

These solutions are problematic because of three reasons:

- First, they create isolated pools of results information at the MFA that remain largely inaccessible to others. This increases the degree to which results information is fragmented and inaccessible and it reinforces the focus on personal and individual use instead of contributing to organisational learning. It also exacerbates the loss of results information when staff or consultants leave their jobs after rotation or when their contracts end.

- Second, these stopgap solutions remain limited, mostly because of storage space restrictions. Web-space into which memory stick content could be secured and stored in a sharable format is limited. Interviewees also reported that because of restrictions of email inbox size they had to regularly delete emails or email attachments which they would otherwise had kept for future reference.

- Third, the widespread usage of alternative ways to store and access results information reduce incentives for using formal systems even more.

As long as easy-to-use formal systems are unavailable, these stopgap solutions are likely to be needed by staff. Hence, rather than removing them the MFA should consider supporting them in a manner that addresses the first two points made above.

> **Finding 21: The completeness and accuracy of results information is not systematically ensured.**

The MFA's archiving policies require all official documents to be stored in either AHA-KYT or ARKKI, but this does not apply to all documented results information. Interview staff commented that especially aggregated results information used for planning or reporting purposes at times existed only as a document on somebody's computer and was not stored in the formal systems. Similar remarks were made regarding external reports and studies. One reason for this is that it is unclear how and where in the case-base system AHA-KYT information not directly linked to specific interventions should be placed. Another reason is that the MFA's systems are mainly document-based, requiring especially defined meta-data fields to directly upload and access results data.

For information that is stored in AHA-KYT and ARKKI, the accuracy of documented results information is not always guaranteed. In many cases, this relates to the accuracy of information in reports received from external partners about which positive to mixed feedback was received in interviews:

- In embassies, results knowledge comes from different partners: government, multilateral organisations, local CSOs, consultancy agencies, donor groups, resulting in varying accuracy of results information. Consultancy companies implementing bilateral projects were perceived to mostly have good capacity to provide results information, with exceptions for some smaller companies and CSOs.

Not all results information is stored in the MFA's systems.

- Large CSOs and multilateral organisations were considered to have results-based systems at times superior to those of the MFA, producing accurate reports. Rather than worrying about accuracy, staff struggled with how to absorb the large amount of information contained in such reports.

- In the case of bilateral "multi-bi" funding to multilateral agencies, the capacity to deliver accurate results information varied according to the multilateral organisation funded and interviewed staff characterised the quality of reports as not always good but usually adequate.

- Results information from private sector instruments was considered to lack detail, in part due to confidentiality requirements but also because of less focus on development issues. Interviewed staff at the unit in charge of private sector cooperation considered reports from partner companies to be credible.

Quality assurance of development projects is "frontloaded".

Regarding information generated in the MFA, quality assurance of development projects is overall "frontloaded". Projects undergo scrutiny by the MFA's Quality Assurance Board at proposal stage but not anymore during and after implementation. Staff explained that for example reports sent from embassies to Helsinki often remained without reaction or feedback, and hence without additional quality assurance.

Finally, interview feedback also suggests that there are little institutional incentives for compliance with data quality standards and little control at entry when uploading documents and metadata into AHA-KYT. Important keywords needed for locating documents were missing, incomplete, differed from standards or contained typos, and multiple versions of the same document sometimes existed in parallel without guidance. We consider missing incentives also one reason for the limited accuracy of statistical data retrieved from AHA-KYT (Finding 18).

> **Finding 22: External results information is not systematically accessed and managed.**

The international research and development communities hold and generate a wealth of results information, much of which is of potential relevance for learning and decision-making at the MFA. Staff widely reflected this view and reported different ways they accessed and made use of this body of external results knowledge.

Some external results information is accessed and experienced as part of the MFA's work. In embassies, staff has access to project reports, thematic meetings, local conferences and workshops, reports from development banks, the EU and UN agencies. Heads of development cooperation meet once a month and there are regular sector groups with other donors.

Some staff have well established networks and understanding of how to access external sources of result knowledge and follow international organisations´ reports, studies and research. Often, these networks result from their work prior to their recruitment in the MFA and several staff explained that former col-

leagues working in different institutions pointed to and shared relevant information with them. Other staff lack such networks and access and felt left alone, for example after rotating into a new job. While tenured staff seemed, on average, to have developed the ability to filter and select relevant information, younger staff were at times overwhelmed by the sheer amount of external information they had access to.

Sector advisors attempt to remain up to date in their fields of expertise by attending conferences, following and studying external publications, liaising with relevant institutions, and, in some cases, doing some research in their own time. Sector advisors also maintained informal networks, including with former colleagues in other institutions.

In addition, sector advisors and staff liaising with multilateral organisations also play an important role in channelling external publications and reports to interest groups within the MFA, either by disseminating them to ASKI distribution groups or by maintaining their own email distribution lists.

Effectively and systematically spreading results information produced by large development organisations in a useful way within the MFA was perceived a challenge for staff working within or with these organisations. In interviews, staff working abroad were doubtful that documents they forwarded to MFA desk officers reached all MFA staff interested in it, describing it as an exception rather than the rule. Interviewed staff considered that there was great potential in terms of how such information was shared between MFA departments and units.

Alternatively, MFA staff can look up documented external results information on the websites of those organisations by themselves. While considered highly useful especially for the MFA's bilateral development cooperation, the extent to which the MFA accessed and made use of such reports varied.

From interviews, research funded by the Unit for General Development Policy in the Department for Development Policy and by the Unit for Policy Planning and Research was not considered an important source of useful results information.

Overall, we found that access and use of external results information has largely remained an informal and non-systematic process. Mostly, it consists in forwarding documents and reports which makes it difficult for recipients to absorb their contents. Apart from volume issues with finding the "relevant needle in the knowledge haystack", this also represents a challenge in terms of time and capability needed for distilling useful lessons and advice from documents containing a lot of detailed information. Overall, MFA staff relied much on information received orally or in personal written comments from sector advisors, other specialists, MFA colleagues and peers in other institutions.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation has systematically investigated a series of conditions for effective learning from results information and for decision-making that is informed and influenced by it. As explained in subsequent conclusions, many of these conditions are fulfilled only to a very limited degree or not at all.

In line with these findings, learning from results information at the MFA was found to have remained at a limited level compared to its full potential, and results information was found to have had only minor influence on decisions taken in the MFA relative to other factors.

These findings didn't come as a surprise to the MFA: there had been an implicit assumption from the start that both evidence-informed learning and decision-making could be strengthened considerably from the current status quo. Therefore, rather than limiting itself to restating the obvious as done in Findings 2–3 for learning and in Finding 4 regarding decision-making, the evaluation focuses on analysing and finding ways to address the factors that stand in the way of more effective use of results information for learning and decision-making, as summarised in the following conclusions and recommendations.

Overall, seven conclusions emerge from this evaluation. They are presented in two groups.

- Conclusions 1 to 4 address the availability of tacit and documented results information and knowledge suitable for informing learning and decision-making at the MFA; whereas
- Conclusions 5 to 7 concern the enabling environment and incentives for using it.

4.1 Availability of relevant tacit and documented results information and knowledge

Conclusion 1: Sector advisors and other specialists are preserving much of the MFA's institutional memory but there are challenges in sustaining and making their knowledge available.

This conclusion is based on Finding 7 and is the basis for Recommendations 7 and 8.

Since development policy and cooperation became an integrated function of several MFA departments and the development specialist career track was abandoned some two decades ago, maintaining sufficient development expertise within the MFA has been a documented challenge. In this situation, sector advisors and other staff with long careers in MFA development policy play a critical

role in conservation of institutional memory, including experience the MFA has made with its approaches and interventions over the last decades. For sector advisors, the absence of a proper career track to retain these highly qualified experts at the MFA represents a challenge.

Staff access to results information held by sector advisors is however limited by several factors: a low level of documentation of frequently required results information, frequent leaves of absence that lead to substitutes being hired on short-term contracts until the job holder returns, and the skills required to getting their expertise across.

> **Conclusion 2: The MFA effectively loses useful, job-specific results information and knowledge when staff or consultants rotate within or leave the MFA.**

This conclusion is based on Findings 3, 6, 7, 16, 20 and is the basis for Recommendations 3 and 8.

MFA staff acquire know-how and results information with relevance for their specific line of work, mainly through learning on the job and through informal peer-to-peer exchanges. Because this acquired knowledge is usually not systematically documented, it remains informal and tacit knowledge that may be difficult to quickly summarise and transmit to others. Moreover, because it remains with the job holder, it may become unavailable to the successor when that person rotates into another position or leaves the MFA.

In this way the MFA effectively loses useful results information and knowledge through ineffective knowledge transfer between incoming and outgoing staff. While there are examples of handovers with good documentation and coaching of the incumbent by outgoing staff, more than half of all handovers are done in a way that little or no useful results information is transmitted to the new person on the job. Apart from making the start on the job overall less effective, incoming staff are likely to repeat mistakes the former job holder knew about and could have easily avoided, or to miss opportunities he or she would have grasped.

A similar situation occurs when specialists leave after their short-term contracts end. In many cases, these experts leave without properly documenting useful results information and knowledge acquired as part of their work.

> **Conclusion 3: The MFA needs more documented results information and knowledge explaining how results were achieved in the past – and can be achieved in the future. This type of information is re-quired – together with tacitly held knowledge and experience – for effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making.**

This conclusion is based on Findings 5−9, 18, 20, 22 and is the basis for Recommendations 2 and 8.

Results information explaining the why and how of how performance and results have been achieved is more useful for learning and decision-making than information describing what and how much results have been produced. Based on deeper understanding and generalised lessons learned, the MFA can make more effective use of its experience (and that of others) to inform staff learning and decision-making processes.

Compared to the amount of documented results information explaining the "what" there is still too little useful and actionable documented information explaining the "why" and "how". This imbalance is related to focusing past results reporting on demonstrating results rather than learning. General staff are currently not sufficiently incentivised to generate such analytic knowledge products and sector advisors and other specialists do not sufficiently document the results information and knowledge they possess and acquire. In addition to the MFA's evaluations, several reports and reporting processes already contain such analytic elements and can be built upon, for example department- and unit-level syntheses, the corporate results report, reporting against country strategies and influencing plans, or documentation from results days and self-evaluations.

Clearly, there are also limits to the capacity staff has for producing such knowledge products and hence, in addition to generally encouraging more generation and documentation of useful results information, there is also a need to limit it to what is useful and to consider delegating the production of useful knowledge products to dedicated staff or consultants.

The MFA's evaluation function clearly plays an important role in this context and central evaluation reports and briefs as well as syntheses of central and decentral evaluations in annual reports and meta-evaluations already represent knowledge products that inform learning and decision-making at the level of MFA leadership and beyond. At the same time, the very comprehensive analysis underlying central evaluations would allow information to be extracted and packaged into additional, more focused knowledge products to inform specific functions or processes within the MFA, beyond the full evaluation reports that are primarily targeted at MFA leadership.

> **Conclusion 4: The MFA's information technology infrastructure does not allow staff to access results information effectively and provides little support for analysing it. Because of the document-based design of systems currently in use, the improvement potential within the current architecture is limited.**

This conclusion is based on Findings 18–22 and is the basis for Recommendations 6 and 8.

Overall, the MFA's information management systems provide only very limited support to evidence-informed learning and decision-making. Staff finds them hard to operate and cannot easily and reliably use them to access relevant documents. Especially AHA-KYT and ARKKI, the two principal systems for storing results information in development policy and cooperation, receive devastating

staff feedback regarding their usefulness for locating and retrieving results information.

Some of these perceived limitations are "by design" because neither system was developed with results-informed learning and decision-making in mind: AHA-KYT was developed as a case management system, and ARKKI to satisfy the MFA's strict document archiving requirements. Most information is stored as documents, naturally making automatic retrieval of specific types of results information difficult. We conclude that these limitations cannot be fully resolved without changing the system architecture.

Other limitations have less profound reasons and could have been addressed more easily but have not. Staff lack know-how on how to operate the systems and their search functions effectively, compliance with operating procedures when content was uploaded remained limited, and there has been little investment in fixing emerging issues over the past couple of years because central government systems were expected to replace the present systems at some point.

As a consequence, MFA staff has resorted to alternatives for storing and accessing results information. The MFA's intranet (FOORUMI) appears useful, including for storing and sharing external non-MFA results information, and staff keeps documents and data on storage devices in their offices and in their email inboxes. Apart from raising issues with fragmentation and continued availability of information stored by means of such stopgap solutions, they remain limited by restricted storage space.

Ongoing government-wide initiatives for harmonising and improving information management and introducing a new archiving system across all Finnish Ministries represents an obvious opportunity for addressing issues with access to results information on a more fundamental level. At the same time, they have also led to confusion as to when and to what degree currently used systems will become obsolete and to uncertainty about the cost-effectiveness of investments into improving existing systems.

4.2 Enabling environment and incentives for using results information and knowledge

> **Conclusion 5: Staff lack time, opportunity and capability to make effective use of results information. This stands in the way of effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making and puts the currently high level of staff motivation at risk.**

This conclusion is based on Findings 14–17, 21 and is the basis for Recommendations 4 and 8.

MFA consistently and convincingly demonstrated strong motivation for contributing to "making a difference" with their work at the MFA. Coupled with the strong belief that evidence-informed learning and decision-making is a way to strengthen institutional and development performance, this motivation means

that an important condition for effective results-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA is currently fulfilled.

Lack of time for reflection and learning from results information was put forward by staff as one of the most important bottlenecks towards more effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making. This lack of time was perceived to be primarily related to reductions in staff levels that weren't matched with an equal reduction in workload, leading to staff focusing on getting the job done which leaves little space for learning from results. While there is some optimism that staff levels may increase again "above the pain level" as one interviewee put it, we assume that allocating extra time for evidence-informed learning and decision-making will also require reducing time for other activities that are considered less important. Even while, based on our experience with other aid agencies, perceived lack of time for learning may also reflect a lack of importance given to learning, we do consider it a genuine limiting factor at the MFA.

While some opportunities for learning and informing decisions through evidence exist and have been created (Conclusions 1), the MFA still lacks informal as well as structured opportunities for organisational learning. Informal staff-to-staff interactions already represent one of the most important sources of results information for MFA staff but are hindered by worries that queries and remarks may be ´perceived as an extracurricular distraction or nuisance by colleagues rather than part and parcel of their job duties. Much learning also appears to take place on the job and during planning and reporting processes but remains without structured occasions for reflection and documentation of relevant and useful results information Existing structured occasions for learning as part of self-evaluation processes, results days, or workshops on evaluation findings have been generally received well but there is demand and appetite for more. MFA training and formal capacity development has to date not focused on offering and creating opportunities for learning from results information but is considered a promising vehicle for example for engaging staff with evaluation findings.

While staff overall feels capable of using results information for learning and decision-making, they face challenges when it comes to the necessary know-how for efficiently using the MFA's information management systems and, apart from specialists, for conducting more comprehensive analysis and synthesis, and for using methods and tools for decision-making. These limitations are natural and general MFA staff cannot be expected to become all-purpose experts. Nevertheless, a common awareness of available methods and tools could be established to help staff determine what can be done by themselves and what requires expert support.

Because staff lacks time, opportunity and capability for making effective use of results information the currently high level of staff motivation may be at risk. Because engaging with and learning from results information requires staff to be willing and interested to do so, we consider staff motivation for making use of results information an important necessary condition in the sense that without it, little or no evidence-informed learning and decision-making can be expected. A decrease of the currently high level of intrinsic staff motivation would negatively impact the current level of evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA and limit positive effects when addressing other impeding factors such as lack of time, opportunity and capability.

Conclusion 6: MFA leadership supports evidence-informed learning and decision-making but only few see it as a corporate priority. As a consequence, institutional incentives for staff to use results information for learning and decision-making have remained limited.

This conclusion is based on Findings 10, 11, 13, 15–17 and is the basis for Recommendations 5 and 8.

MFA leadership from unit directors to the Permanent Secretary of State are generally supportive of strengthening evidence-informed learning and decision-making but only a few "champions" consider and push for it as a corporate priority.

As a consequence, staff in different units experience different levels of support from their Unit Directors. While some perceive there is a safe space and reward for using results information for learning and for informing decisions, others worry that they are considered troublemakers and will harm their career when questioning the status quo based on results information.

Learning from results, documentation and sharing of learnings, and demonstrated use of evidence in decision-making are not explicit in job descriptions or annual performance targets of general, non-specialist MFA staff. This makes "going the extra mile", i.e. investing time and effort into working with results information beyond what is needed to deliver on immediate job duties somewhat of an extracurricular activity not incentivised by current human resource management at the MFA.

Conclusion 7: While significant progress has been made towards results-oriented management of development policy and cooperation at the MFA, institutional demand for evidence-informed learning and decision-making has remained limited.

This conclusion is based on Findings 1–5, 10–13, 16 and is the basis for Recommendations 1 and 8.

Since almost a decade the MFA has systematically progressed with implementing results-based elements in its management of development policy and cooperation and, since 2018, the Ministry has also engaged in a broader reform of its development cooperation practices. In parallel, the Finnish government is rolling out government-wide initiatives for harmonising and improving information management and for introducing a new archiving system across all Finnish Ministries, which will influence how the MFA plans for and reports on results in the future. With these reform efforts, the MFA has significantly improved results reporting on all levels and increased awareness and consideration of results.

Similar to how results-based management was introduced in other development institutions, the MFA's efforts have at first mainly been driven by the desire to

demonstrate what development results its funding and activities had contributed to. This serves the important accountability purpose of ensuring continued support by the Finnish government, parliament and other stakeholders for Finnish development policy and cooperation. One prominent example is the 2018 results report to parliament that was widely considered a success in terms of demonstrating the results of Finnish development policy and cooperation.

Results-informed learning and decision-making has however benefited much less from this focus on demonstrating accountability. We see three reasons for that. First, focusing on accountability for results can contribute to an organisational climate that values achieving targets so much that learning from results, including from failure to achieve them, becomes difficult. This has been documented in other development institutions and at the MFA, some staff worried that questioning the status quo could damage their career and that sharing or requesting results information could be considered an unwanted distraction by colleagues. Second, a focus on demonstrating results naturally favours results information about the "what" over knowledge of why and how results were achieved which would be more useful for informing learning and decision-making. Third, accountability reporting against prior approved targets can limited the MFA's ability to be flexible and manage adaptively when circumstances change.

Beyond these general conclusions, institutional demand is also limited by the bottom-up TTS budgeting process that allows little flexibility for shifting resources managed by different organisational units, and by limited appetite in MFA decision-making for questioning relative funding to different organisations or countries by comparing their past results and performance.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CLOSURE

This chapter has three sections. The first summarises and explains the eight recommendations that emerge from this evaluation. The second section suggests implementation responsibilities within the MFA for these recommendations.

The third section closes the report by returning and answering the original four questions posed when the evaluation was started.

5.1 Recommendations

Recommendations are presented in three groups.

- Recommendations 1 to 4 ensure that tacit and documented results information and knowledge suitable for informing learning and decision-making at the MFA is available;

- Recommendations 5 to 7 ensure that the MFA effectively enables and incentivises the use of results information for learning and decision-making; and

- Recommendation 8 provides the framework within which Recommendations 1–7 can be implemented over a long period of time.

The first two groups correspond to how conclusions were grouped in the Chapter 4.

5.1.1 Ensure availability of relevant tacit and documented results information and knowledge

> **Recommendation 1: Continue ongoing planning to establish a career track for sector advisors and other specialists that rewards and retains these important experts as holders, documenters and providers of useful results information at the MFA.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 1 and includes the following:

We suggest continuing ongoing deliberations for defining and implementing a career track for sector and other special advisors with the objective to incentivise these experts to spend more of their career at the MFA, to increase documentation of their knowledge and to increase the effectiveness and efficiency with which they transfer and apply their knowledge and develop their didactic skills. Communities of practice, thematic networks, seminars or trainings could be explored further to find ways for advisors to share their knowledge in more efficient ways than by dealing with staff on a one to one basis or when directly editing proposals and reports.

To the extent feasible, experts hired to replace advisors while they are abroad should be offered more job security and "chain substitutions" should be avoided.

> **Recommendation 2: To stop unnecessary loss of results information and knowledge, develop good handover practices, including documentation, and ensure staff compliance with them.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 2 and includes the following actions:

The MFA should establish guidelines and templates for good practice handovers, following examples in some units we have interacted with. These should require sufficient documentation of relevant results information and knowledge in a useful format, for example in the form of a job dossier, by individuals or on the level of teams. They should also require sufficient availability of the leaving staff for interaction with his or her successor, ideally starting with working side-by-side and coaching on the job for a couple of weeks, followed by a coach or mentor role via occasional meetings or electronic communication for at least a couple of months. In addition, good handover practices could also involve other members of that unit: by spreading knowledge in teams, identified handover issues could be mitigated.

Regarding specialists hired on a short-term basis (or staff leaving the MFA), documenting relevant and useful results information and knowledge on an ongoing basis is especially important as they cannot be expected to remain available for answering questions or coaching after they have left. To avoid that only hastily compiled and incomplete notes are left behind, the documentation of useful results information and knowledge should be made a requirement and performance criterion when specialists are hired, and from the moment in time when staff announce their departure from the MFA.

Ideally, this kind of job- or team-specific documented results information and knowledge should not just be produced shortly before staff leaves their posts but become a continuous routine activity that can also be managed and used on the level of teams and units rather than by the individuals at hand.

> **Recommendation 3: Incentivise and invest in the documentation of selected results information and knowledge that can effectively inform learning and decision-making in development policy and cooperation at the MFA.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 3 and includes the following actions:

For general staff, the MFA should encourage and incentivise the continuous documentation of evidence-informed good practices and lessons learned on an individual and, if possible, team level. This should not result in much extra work or long and detailed documents. Instead, it could become a concise "dossier" for each position and/or team at the MFA into which staff or consultants cumulatively add their insights, lessons learned, and "do's and don'ts". To ensure con-

tinued access to others, it could be saved on the unit's intranet. Such a dossier would also support more effective knowledge transfer when staff or consultants leave their post. In addition, if could become an occasion and a process for team learning. Because of the limited time and capability general MFA staff has for generating and documenting more comprehensive knowledge products, the dossier should remain focused on documenting key lessons learned "on the job" and from colleagues.

The MFA should further encourage and incentivise sector advisors and other specialists to document more of their tacit results information and knowledge in their areas of competence. This should focus on answers to "Frequently Asked Questions" such as insights, lessons learned and "do's and don'ts" that often surfaced when they provided written input or oral advice to MFA staff or into decision-making processes. It is understood that not all tacit knowledge can be documented in this way. To ensure access and distribution, these concise knowledge products could be stored in the MFA's intranet.

The MFA should also shift evaluation resources "downstream" in the sense that more focus is put on making use of the considerable body of results information and knowledge central and decentral evaluations generate, after the principal evaluation activities are over. This could result in the production of additional, smaller knowledge products that select, further analyse, synthesise and package elements of results information and knowledge contained in final evaluation reports and in the notes and tacit knowledge of the evaluators. These knowledge products should be tailored to the interests, needs and the absorption capacity of targeted interest groups within the MFA and could be produced and delivered as reports, through participatory workshops, or they could inform training and capacity development at the MFA. We expect these processes to be selective in the sense that not all information available but only what is clearly relevant for a given target group is used which depending on the evaluation topic and the targeted group may be very much or very little of what the evaluation has found.

Finally, the MFA should consider creating dedicated staff positions or contracting experts to satisfy the need for additional useful results information, including documented external knowledge gained by other actors than the MFA. For simple information needs this could take the form of a research help desk that synthesises short desk review-based answers to specific results-related questions of MFA staff in a matter of days, together with relevant literature references. One option would be to employ the MFA's research capacities in terms of staff and budget for this purpose. For more comprehensive information needs, this could take the form of dedicated research or evaluation studies or become part of the MFA's plan for central evaluations.

> **Recommendation 4: In the short term, implement a series of quick fixes for AHA-KYT and support alternatives for storing and accessing results information currently used by staff. In the medium term, establish an information management system that can effectively support staff in storing, accessing and analysing useful results information and knowledge.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 4 and includes the following actions:

To do this, we suggest to first establish clarity about when and to what degree current systems will be replaced in the course of the ongoing government-wide efforts and use this to determine what level of investment into current systems is warranted.

Several straightforward improvements to AHA-KYT are no-regret moves in any case. These include bringing existing operating manuals and search interfaces to the attention of staff, update online guidance and help functions, systematically screen for and remove obsolete document versions and erroneously started and then abandoned cases, and unblock documents frozen in draft status. To swiftly address these issues, effective collaboration on IT-related issues within and across departments is important.

If AHA-KYT is likely to remain in operation for more than a couple of years, we also suggest that compliance with information entry protocols is ensured and that additional meta-data fields are created that allow, for example, for additional qualitative or quantitative results information to directly stored (i.e. not within text documents) and analysed.

For staff in need of more storage space, quotas for email inboxes and shared intranet folders should be increased to ensure that results information is conserved and brought from offline devices into the MFA's systems. In addition, a platform for sharing external and internal results information and knowledge across MFA units and departments could be considered.

In the medium-term, the MFA should move to a more suitable information management system that allows to store, access and analyse results information more flexibly, including in non-document formats, and including external as well as internal results information. If these requirements can be integrated, the new system should be part of the currently rolled out government-wide projects and systems.

5.1.2 Enable the use of results information and knowledge

> **Recommendation 5: Reserve time for results-informed learning, create additional structured learning opportunities for staff, and strengthen staff capabilities for making use of results information.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 5 and includes the following actions:

The MFA should ensure that staff has dedicated time available for evidence-informed learning and decision-making. In addition to making it an explicit job responsibility and job performance criterion, including it into reporting requirements and encouraging that e.g. a job dossier is kept, this could be implemented by means of a "learning afternoon" once or twice a month or by supporting interested staff to build deeper expertise in relevant specialty fields and then act as part-time resource persons for colleagues in parallel to their principal job.

Building on existing formats, the MFA should develop and offer additional structured learning occasions to staff. In line with findings of a recent evaluation of capacity development at the MFA, these formats should go beyond traditional classroom approaches and incorporate modern methods and tools for adult learning. The effectiveness of such learning occasions can be increased if they are purpose-driven, i.e. if results information is selected and considered with concrete learning or decision-making objectives in mind.

We also suggest developing one or two innovative adult learning curricula for staff capacity development on i) synthesis and drawing actionable lessons from results information and on ii) tools and approaches for rational decision-making. These capacity development modules should not attempt to transform staff into experts of these specialty fields but rather provide them with an awareness and basic understanding of approaches and tools.

> **Recommendation 6: Make support to results-informed learning and decision-making a recognised leadership qualification at the MFA and include it into job descriptions and performance appraisals of MFA leadership and staff.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 6 and includes the following actions:

To do this, we suggest that MFA leadership comes together and agrees and sets a common aspiration level for results-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA. We find this important because – while there is general support – the degree to which results-informed learning and decision-making is prioritised vis-à-vis other activities varies among MFA leadership. Concrete indicators for those levels could for example be the average share of work time staff MFA leaders feel staff should be able to dedicate to these activities, the overall rank results information should have relative to other criteria in decision-making, and the degree to which MFA leadership supports overall accountability for learning.

The aspiration level should also make transparent to what degree shifting of resources managed by different organisational units in the MFA should be influenced by comparative assessments of past performance and results. If this is not part of the desired decision-making rationale, comparative results information is not required.

Moreover, the MFA should include support to results-informed learning and decision-making into the 360° performance appraisals of MFA unit directors and more senior staff. In addition, the MFA should also include demonstrated results-informed learning and support to decision-making processes into the job descriptions and performance appraisals of general MFA staff.

> **Recommendation 7: Introduce "accountability for learning" from results information into Results-Based Management at the MFA and consider reflecting it in corporate reporting.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusion 7 and includes the following actions:

The MFA should request and encourage demonstrated sharing and learning from results information and demonstrated consideration of results information in decision-making processes from staff on all levels. This can be done by explicitly including it in staff job responsibilities and annual performance targets. In addition, it can be guided by further specifying related requirements more explicitly in reporting templates, for example by introducing simple multi-criteria decision-making tables to explain why a specific approach or option was chosen.

The MFA should ensure that MFA leadership consistently demonstrates and supports this concept as further elaborated in Recommendation 5.

The MFA should also, whenever practical, support and encourage managing adaptively to be able to respond creatively to changing circumstances and as suggested by learning from past results.

In the next results report to parliament, the MFA should consider dedicating a section to accountability for learning and carefully examine whether demonstrated learning from results is an effective argument for ensuring continued support for Finland's development policy and cooperation. This could test the hypothesis we consider probable but still unproven that by publicly demonstrating accountability for learning the MFA can increase support and trust in its ability to use development funds effectively and efficiently.

5.1.3 Ensure long-term implementation

> **Recommendation 8: Integrate follow-up from this evaluation into ongoing reform efforts and ensure long-term implementation.**

This recommendation builds on Conclusions 1–7 and Recommendations 1–7.
It includes the following actions:

Because envisaged changes towards more evidence-informed learning and decision-making concerns "slow moving variables" such as leadership and staff preferences, it is necessary to plan, implement and assess progress along the recommendations made above in a coherent, continuous and coordinated manner.

To not create an additional strategy with its own oversight and implementation mechanism, we suggest integrating planning and implementation of Recommendations 1-7 as much as possible into the ongoing reform of development cooperation practices and/or with future RBM Action Plans. Only if elements cannot be handled within the scope and timeline of these efforts, a separate strategy and implementation mechanisms should be considered.

Recommendations 1-7 should also be reflected and considered, to the extent feasible, in the ongoing government-wide "Tietokiri" project and the new information management system "VAHVA".

5.2 Suggested implementation responsibilities

Table 2 below summarises the groups and units Recommendations 1–8 are addressed to.

Table 2. Suggested recipients of recommendations

Recommendation	MFA Leadership (KEO, ALI, ASA)	MFA Leadership (HAL)	Unit for General Development Policy (KEO)	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO)	Units involved in HR management and staff development (HAL)	IT-related units (HAL)	Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11)
1	✔	✔			✔		
2	✔	✔			✔		
3	✔				✔		✔
4	✔	✔		✔		✔	
5	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔
6	✔	✔			✔		
7	✔				✔		
8	✔	✔					

5.3 Closure

The findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report explore evidence-informed learning and decision-making in considerable depth, using a theory-based approach that allowed to systematically track progress and to explore the degree to which conditions necessary for effective learning and decision-making informed by results information and knowledge were fulfilled and could be fulfilled in future.

Based on this evaluative evidence, this section summarizes answers to the four evaluation questions that were posed when the evaluation was started (Section 2.4 and Annex 1).

1. What MFA-internal and -external information is routinely collected, reported and used by the MFA regarding Finland's development policy and operation?

Through its reporting, evaluation, audit and research functions the MFA documents a wide array of results information on all levels and across all policy channels (see Finding 5 for an overview). Because earlier RBM evaluations have investigated RBM-related information in detail we have not re-inventoried it in detail. Instead, we have focused on types of results information and their usefulness for learning and decision-making.

With this focus, the relative lack of analytic and documented information and knowledge about why and how results were achieved and can be achieved in the future is relevant (Conclusion 3). Information about the "what", for example about how many stakeholders were reached with an intervention is important for accountability purposes but has little usefulness for learning and for informing decisions. The relative lack of documented results information and knowledge of this type can be explained by the past focus on using RBM to demonstrate what development results the MFA had contributed to in order to ensure continued support by the Finnish government, parliament and other stakeholders. While important, it is a known fact that a strong focus on accountability can hinder rather than assist evidence-informed learning and decision-making (Conclusion 7).

In addition, MFA staff and consultants acquire and hold important tacit results information and knowledge. This form of knowledge at the MFA is non-documented (tacit) and represents what sector advisors, other specialists, and general MFA staff have experienced and learned in the past. (Conclusions 1 and 2). It covers all subject areas of Finish development policy and cooperation. Because it remains largely tacit and is integrated with convictions and beliefs not necessarily rooted in evidence, it is harder to characterise and assess.

Tacit results information represents an important complement to documented information.

Tacit results information and knowledge however represents an important complement to documented information because it covers experiences and an ability for professional judgment based on sometimes decades-long learning processes. Such results knowledge can be difficult to document without writing an entire textbook on the subject. Accordingly, those staff and consultants can be considered guardians of the MFA's institutional memory.

2. How – and how coherently – is knowledge management implemented in Finland's development policy and cooperation?

The MFA collects and uses both explicit and tacit results information and knowledge for learning and decision-making. Apart from a few exceptions, documented results information is contained in documents that are managed in several systems, primarily in AHA-KYT, ARKKI and FOORUMI and on the MFA's external website. A significant portion of documented results information is also managed individually by staff in email inboxes and on personal storage devices. External information unrelated to MFA activities is not systematically managed. Documented results information is accessed and used by staff, mostly individually and on a "when needed"-basis. But there have also been several occasions for group-level learning, for example during country strategy self-evaluations and results days, or while the corporate results report was prepared. Across policy channels, management of documented results information varies according to the amount of information that is documented but otherwise experiences similar challenges as summarized in Conclusions 1–4 regarding its availability and Conclusions 5–7 in terms of incentives for using it, as well as in the answer to the next evaluation question below. Across organisational levels, the MFA has begun to compile meaningful and comprehensive corporate or policy channel-level results information and knowledge spearheaded by synthesis reporting in bilateral cooperation and the recent corporate level results report.

Across policy channels, management of documented results information varies.

Management of tacit results information depends on the individuals holding it.

Management of tacit results information and knowledge is largely in the hands of the individuals holding it. Some is brought into the MFA when sector advisors, other specialists and staff are hired. While at the MFA, it is acquired mostly "on the job" and from colleagues. Tacit results information and knowledge held by staff is transmitted mostly informally and individually between peers and during some occasions for group-level learning. Sector advisors and other specialists mostly share their knowledge orally or in writing with staff on an individual basis, but also provide advice and input directly into documents and proposal assessment processes. In terms of coherence, much depends on the individual holding that knowledge and is reflected in how staff perceives the relevance and usefulness and completeness of information received. The sustainable management of tacit knowledge remains a challenge at the MFA and some of it becomes

unavailable because of ineffective staff handovers between incoming and out-going staff and short-term contracts or leaves of absence of sector advisors and other specialists.

3. What are the advances and shortcomings in knowledge management, learning and evidence-informed decision making at different levels of development policy and cooperation planning and implementation?

During ongoing reform efforts, the MFA has made significant progress towards more results-oriented management of its development policy and cooperation. This has increased the quantity and quality of information about results and has also created more opportunities for group-level learning.

At the same time, most necessary conditions for effective evidence-informed learning and decision-making remain only fulfilled to a limited degree:

- Starting with the supply of results information and knowledge, the MFA's current information technology infrastructure does not allow staff to access documented results information effectively and provides little support for analysing it (Conclusion 4). Tacit results information and knowledge is held by sector advisors and other specialists but there are important challenges in preserving and accessing it (Conclusion 1). Results information and relevant job-specific experience acquired by staff and consultants becomes inaccessible when they rotate or leave (Conclusion 2). Overall, the MFA lacks documented analytic results information and knowledge that can explain why and how performance and results have been achieved in the past and can be achieved in the future (Conclusion 3).

- Staff capacity for using results information and knowledge is lim-ited. While staff is generally motivated and believes in the merits of evidence-informing learning and decisions-making, they lack time, opportunity, know-how and skills to effectively translate intention into day-to-day practice (Conclusion 5).

- Institutional demand and support for evidence-informed learning and decision-making has remained limited. While MFA leadership is gener-ally supportive, few have made it a corporate priority (Conclusion 6). Therefore, institutional incentives for staff to use results information for learning and decision-making have remained limited (Conclusion 7).

In the context of the MFA's overall results-based agenda, the principal focus has been on demonstrating contributions to results rather than showing how docu-mented information and tacit knowledge was used for learning and to inform decisions. Focusing too much on accountability for results risks creating an organisational climate that is less beneficial for effectively learning and inform-ing decisions by using documented and tacit results information and knowledge (Conclusion 7).

Past focus has been on demonstrating results rather than showing how results information was used for learning and decision-making.

4. How can the MFA more effectively integrate knowledge management and evidence-informed decision making and promote learning into RBM of Finnish development policy and cooperation?

Recommendation 1–8 presented above will help the MFA developing clear and realistic aspirations and a way forward (Recommendation 8) and to effectively build on achievements and address shortcomings that stand in the way of more effective evidence-informed learning and decision making in the MFA's development policy and cooperation.

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EVALUATION TEAM

This page describes the evaluation team and the division of work as well as the management for this evaluation.

The evaluation is conducted by a core team of independent experts. It is commissioned and overseen by the MFA's evaluation unit (EVA-11), represented by Mari Räkköläinen.

Core team: The following members from the core of the Evaluation team:

- Team Leader: Markus Palenberg
- Senior Evaluator: Ann Bartholomew
- Senior Evaluator: Merja Makela
- Senior Evaluator: John Mayne

While the team leader was responsible to ensure the quality of individual inputs, each team member was responsible for work packages that were used to structure the information gathering and analysis of this evaluation (see Annex 7).

In addition, the team received inputs from **Linda Esche**, an analyst. Linda Esche also coordinated and tracked interviews and manages the team's literature.

Evaluation Management Services (EMS). Beyond the core team, the EMS Coordinator Pirkko Poutiainen supported evaluation quality and liaised between the team, the EMS consortium, and the MFA's evaluation unit EVA-11.

Overall management of the evaluation, contract and travel arrangements for the evaluation team were managed by Julia Schwarz and Mira Berger from the EMS consortium company Particip GmbH. Particip GmbH also provided additional quality assurance by Dr Georg Ladj.

Management Team. Together, Mari Räkköläinen (Evaluation Manager EVA-11), Pirkko Poutiainen (EMS Coordinator) and Markus Palenberg (Team Leader) form the Management Team for this evaluation.

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

EVA-11 Räkköläinen Mari

31.8.2018

V 0.2

UH2018-022108

UHA2018-003430, 89892875

Developing countries, Tietoperustainen johtaminen ja päätöksenteko
Suomen kehityspolitiikassa ja -yhteistyössä

1. INTRODUCTION

This evaluation focuses on knowledge management of Finland's development policy and cooperation emphasizing both decision-making and learning. The Results Based Management (RBM) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' (MFA) was evaluated 2011 and 2015 and most of the recommendations have been applied to develop more efficient and effective management. This evaluation builds on the results and the recommendations of the previous RBM evaluations and explores management and decision-making processes from the learning perspective: How the MFA is able to collect, utilize and learn from information that is made available in different levels and parts of development policy and cooperation. The MFA is constantly and systematically developing its management practices and will benefit from evidence and recommendations that this evaluation will provide.

Learning and knowledge management are crucial parts of effective RBM. The previous evaluations on RBM gave many recommendations on how to strengthen and clarify the foundation for knowledge management as part of RBM. Therefore, the MFA has decided to carry out a strategic level process evaluation on implementation of knowledge management. The evaluation will investigate the progress of Results Based Management (RBM) at the MFA from the point of view of Knowledge Management (KM) and learning. The evaluation will scope out the results and recommendations of the previous evaluations on RBM and the management responses to them. This evaluation will particularly emphasize management and policy guidance, evidence-informed decision making and learning from results. The evaluation aims to provide recommendations that can guide the future development of RBM at the MFA, in view of the future challenges in a changing context and to be able to influence those changes.

The purpose of the evaluation is to support the MFA in its endeavor to further developing its knowledge management, evidence-informed learning and decision-making and policy guidance practices. The objective of the evaluation is to examine how the MFA is implementing knowledge management with a focus on learning in development policy and cooperation. The evaluation analyses information about advances and shortcomings in knowledge management and decision-making at different levels of development policy implementation. The results of the evaluation will be utilized in further developing the strategic planning of RBM, knowledge management and evidence-informed decision making in Finnish development policy and cooperation. It will serve also the improvement of the methodology and implementation of development evaluation as well as monitoring, follow-up and reporting of development programs and projects.

The approach in the evaluation is utilization-focused. It will serve the MFA to further develop its knowledge management practices. The evaluation is also development-oriented and participatory. It aims to promote learning by enlarging participants' knowledge and understanding of the topic. The ultimate purpose of the evaluation is to strengthen the impact of Finland's development policy and cooperation.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

2.1. Results Based Management and learning

2.1.1 Key feature of the Results Based Management approach

Managing and focusing on results, not in inputs and outputs, is one of the main principles of Results-Based Management approach. Results Based Management (RBM) is an approach by which organisations ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of the intended results. OECD/ DAC (2010) defined RBM in development cooperation as a strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts. The emphasis on RBM in development cooperation has been at the core of the international aid effectiveness agenda since the Paris Declaration in 2005. It contained principles believed to make aid more effective. One of these principles was that developing countries and donors should focus on producing and measuring results. Thus, countries ought to have transparent, measurable assessment frameworks to measure progress and to assess results. (OECD 2005.)

RBM in development cooperation is both a management approach with certain principles and an approach utilizing result-based tools for planning, monitoring and evaluating the performance of development projects and programs. This means focusing more on the desired and agreed results than on inputs, activities and processes. RBM is usually linked to strategic planning and management and nowadays more and more to organisational learning and adapting programmes.

> "*RBM is a **management strategy** by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving* a set of results, **ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results** (outputs, outcomes and higher level goals or impact).
>
> The actors in turn use information and evidence on actual results to **inform decision making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting**." (United Nations Development Group 2011.)

> "A **management strategy** focusing on **performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts**." (OECD 2002)

> "RBM is a **management strategy** aimed at achieving important changes in the way organisations operate, with **improving performance in terms of results** as the central orientation. RBM provides the management framework and tools for strategic planning, risk management, performance monitoring and evaluation. Its primary purpose is to **improve efficiency and effectiveness through organisational learning**, and secondly to **fulfil accountability obligations** through performance reporting." (Meier 2003.)

RBM is also understood as an approach that tries to bring information on results to bear on management. It is considered that results information is crucial and that decisions should be based on available evidence. On the other hand, it is highlighted that result information is only one type of information, therefore it should inform decision rather than indicate them. The term "*evidence-informed policy*" is now used as an alternative to "*evidence-based policy*". It is highlighted that policy decisions are made in light of many factors and information can be used different ways. Instrumental use means that specific decision

are influenced by results information as for *enlightenment use* includes variety of information and people learn from using information. (e.g. Mayne, 2003; 2008.)

The term impact has been defined as "positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by development interventions" (OECD 2010). "Theories of Change" explain the process of change in an initiative by outlining causal linkages from shorter-term to intermediate, and eventually to long-term results and effects. It is important to note that the term impact is also used in relation to impact evaluation where it implies causal attribution. Impact evaluation is an assessment of how the intervention being evaluated affects outcomes, whether these effects are intended or unintended. Thus, proper analysis of impact would require analyzing what those outcomes would have been in the absence of the intervention (causal attribution). (OECD 2010; 2017.)

2.1.2. Aspects in knowledge management

Knowledge Management (KM) is generally defined as the process of creating, sharing, using and managing the knowledge and information of an organisation. It often refers to a multidisciplinary approach to achieving organisational objectives by making the best use of knowledge. It is about leveraging an organisation´s relevant knowledge assets to improve efficiency, effectiveness and innovation. It refers both to organisational learning of companies, public institutions or non-profit organisations and to personal knowledge management at an individual level. Descriptions of KM highlight both the success of a knowledge management strategies and the importance of intellectual capital. (see e.g. Green & Stankosky 2010; Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_management_-_cite_note-2UNC-2.)

Academic approaches vary by author and school but in many cases KM has strong connections to business administration, technology, information science, human resource management, education and training, and public policy. In addition, especially regarding the "learning society", global-wide perspectives are adapted into some objectives and goals of KM. They emphasize the necessity of knowledge management when making a transition towards a learning society or global economy. Focus is then on learning in the context of national and international cultural, social and economic change. (e.g. Nonaka 1991; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; OECD 2000; Sanches 1996; Stewart 1998; Wright 2005.)

Different types of knowledge have been defined. A distinction is usually made between *tacit knowledge* and *explicit knowledge*. Tacit knowledge is internalized knowledge that an individual may not be consciously aware of. Explicit knowledge represents knowledge that the individual holds consciously and can quite easily communicate to others. Tacit knowledge is personal and hard to formalize. It is attached for example in actions, behaviours, processes and values. Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, can be expressed in written documents and formal instructions and hence stored. There is a spiralizing interaction between implicit and explicit knowledge through the process in which implicit knowledge is extracted and becomes explicit and, vice versa, explicit knowledge is reinternalised and becomes implicit. This so called SECI-model includes socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Nonaka, Toyama & Konno 2002; Takeuchi 2001.)

More recently, the strict distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge has been moved forward so that the definition of knowledge types includes also the exploratory creation of new knowledge and innovation and the transfer of established knowledge. Collaborative environments or the use of social computing tools can be used for knowledge production and transfer. This means that, specifically, for knowledge to be made explicit it must to be translated into information and use of symbols outside our heads (see also figure 12). (Hayes & Walsham 2003; Krogh, Ichijo & Nonaka 2000; Nonaka et al 2002; Nonaka & Krogh 2009.)

The concept of a *community of practice* (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) refers to a group of people who share a specific interest, craft, profession or particular domain and where group members learn from each other. A community of practice can establish itself naturally but can also be created deliberately with the goal of gaining knowledge. In these communities the groups share information and experience and have

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

an opportunity to develop. In many organisations, communities of practice have become an integral part of the organisational structure because they support capturing tacit knowledge and know-how and may lead to higher productivity. Communities of practice can affect organisational performance, for example by supporting the learning curve of new employees, by responding more rapidly to customer needs, or by producing new ideas for products and services. Furthermore, recent research on virtual reality and innovations are often connected to ideas of virtual communities, communities of practice and emerging social structures, in addition to virtuality as a technical immersive application. In fact, virtuality as a simulation of a social system has made ICT a dynamic and active element of our life, not a passive component or tool of our technical and physical environment. Even real life social systems and cultural aspects might be taken account when adopting ICT-tools and software (eg. e-learning). (Lesser & Storck 2001; Pulkkinen 2003, 138–144; Wenger 1998.)

It is not easy to assess the contribution of communities but it is argued that communities of practice are linked to organisational performance through the dimensions of *social capital* under some certain conditions. There must be a series of connections between individuals and they must perceive themselves to be part of a network (the structural dimension). A sense of trust must be developed along the connections as well (the relational dimension). The members of the community have to have also a common interest and shared common understanding (the cognitive dimension). (Lesser & Storck 2001, 833–836.)

A sense of trust is also a basis for inclusive quality assurance methods and participative evaluation that enhance learning, capacity development and change in practice. Research has shown that there are evaluative tensions between control and trust. Those tensions affect utilization of results and quality criteria of evaluation methods. Thus, certain evaluation approaches that are based on trust and enhance trust throughout the process are linked to learning and cultural change. (See e.g. Räisänen & Räkköläinen 2014; Räkköläinen 2005; 2011.)

To understand the concept of KM some researchers stress the distinction between data, information and knowledge. According to this approach data is raw facts, and data has to be processed to obtain information. Knowledge is derived from information by making comparisons, identifying consequences and making connections. Some researchers consider wisdom to be the utilization of accumulated knowledge. (Davenbork & Pusak 1998; see also Bhat 2001; Cong & Pandya 2003.) Decision-making in organisations may need all types of information (figure 12).

Figure 12. Knowledge management and decision making in organisations
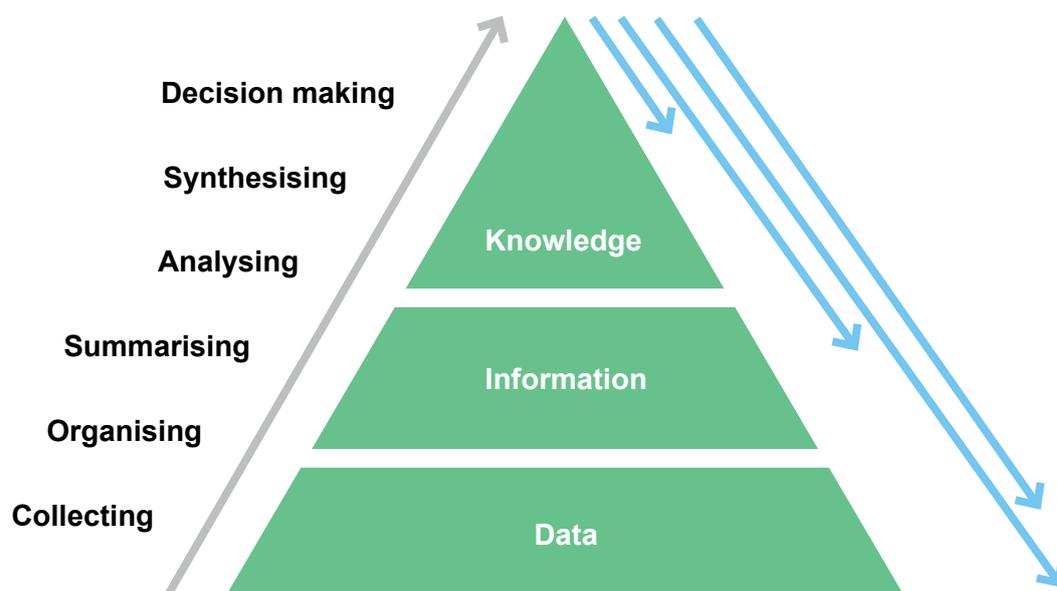
In conclusion, knowledge is generally defined dynamic, context specific and humanistic, because it is created in social interactions, depends on particular time and space and is related to human actions. Information becomes knowledge when it is interpreted by people, given the context and added with individuals' commitments. Both the content aspects and the contextual aspects can make knowledge difficult to share.

As for knowledge management, it includes strategies, instruments and technologies for gaining and for sharing knowledge. Knowledge sharing may be intra- and inter-organisational, or take place within individual projects. It can include different kind of methods such as storytelling, after actions reviews, knowledge mapping, delivering best practice or collaborative software. The key elements of the knowledge management framework are structure, processes, methods, technology and people. People are the most important component and organisation's culture affects knowledge sharing. The new technologies make knowledge accessible and support individuals and communities share data, information and knowledge.

2.1.3 Public management and decision-making

Also the public sector and governments are realizing the importance of knowledge management (OECD 2001; 2003; 2010). Knowledge management is first of all seen as an instrument to increase productivity and effectiveness of public management, but also to strengthen capacities. In Finland, special interest has been put on the use of information / knowledge, on systematic evidence-based policymaking and on improvement of impact evaluations of policy programmes.

It is often argued that public administration and policies need to be evidence-based. This implies that information and data need to be transformed into knowledge that can be used to develop decision-making and grounded policies to reform societies, economies and programmes (see figure 12). Plenty of challenges and shortages have been identified such as non-systematic utilization of evaluation results, fragmental structures of monitoring and evaluation, overlapping reporting, non-relevant data and knowledge production, and thin knowledge bases. There have been also challenges in timing and commitment to evaluations. The aim has been to make a transition to a system that integrates both ex-ante and ex-post evaluation on effects, political decision making, the sources of information and system of research and both ex-ante and ex-post impact evaluation. (Politiikkatoimien vaikutavuusarvioinnin kehittäminen, Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2009; Virtanen, Stenvall & Rannisto 2015.)

There is also a need to define what can be considered relevant and useful knowledge. Quite often the division is made between scientific evidence and "other" knowledge (such as reports, surveys, analysis, evaluations, indicators, statistics), but obviously, there is a need to combine all of these in public administration. Furthermore, effective utilization of knowledge demands competence, certain attitudes and concrete practices. The set-up in politics differs from the scientific framework – politics is about ideas, thoughts, institutions and people. All in all the evidence base and utilization of scientific knowledge are crucial parts of good governance. This means closer cooperation between research institutions and public administration. In a demand-driven research policy, there is a guided and defined call with specific topics and themes. More recently users' or beneficiaries' point of view and experiences (so called "culture of workings" and "doings") have been recognized as an important knowledge and evidence for decision making and innovations. (Bouckaert 2015; Lähteenmäki-Smith & Kuitunen 2015; Virtanen 2007.)

In Finland, there are ongoing governance experiments and experimental policy pilots incorporated into the government programme that may produce relevant data for decision-making (Valtioneuvosto 2015). The aim is to gain experience and to learn from experience. Thus in the future, these governance experiments and their evaluation might be one source for evidence-informed decision-making (e.g. PMO 2017, social experiments in Finland – Kokeileva Suomi). There is also ongoing comprehensive programme in Finland, launch by Sitra, on knowledge in decision-making. The programme investigates especially how to resolve complicated societal challenges when knowledge must be produced, compiled and interpreted

using several sources across disciplines and often collectively (Sitra 2018, https://www.sitra.fi/en/topics/knowledge-decision-making/; Sitra 2018 https://media.sitra.fi/2017/09/11103247/Tieto-paatoksente-ossa.pdf).

2.1.4 Learning and results culture

Learning and knowledge management are crucial parts of RBM. The goal should be to encourage learning from results (including evaluation) at all levels so that outcomes can be improved, and change can be achieved. Therefore capacity development and adapting have been seen as a basis for a results culture and effectiveness of management in development cooperation. Many studies (e.g. OECD 2017; USAID 2017 'Global Learning for Adaptive Management; see also Rondinelli 1993; Wilson 2016) have shown that RBM meets the challenges of changing context and adapting programs because many development challenges are in fact 'wicked' problems. Sometimes there is no choice but to be adaptive and actively learn on the job when dealing with changing context and multifold problems. On the other hand adaptive programming requires collaboration with different partners and stakeholders which calls for resources, information and capacity. Thus both the government and development partners can reduce the impact of uncertainty and improve the alignment with outcomes through deliberate processes of testing, experimenting, evidence-gathering and learning and allocating the resources required to generate the learning. In addition this is also contingent upon organisational and behavioral changes in the development community. Often information and data on the current situation and development needs is needed for collaborative learning as well as research and innovative use of new technology.

There has been a comprehensive review by USAID on the effect or impact of how a systematic and intentional collaboration, learning and adapting approach contributes to development goals as well as to organisational effectiveness (USAID 2017 https://usaidlearninglab.org/eb4cla). The aim of the study has also been to strengthen the evidence base for adaptive management because there are difficulties to measure and lack of evidence about organisational effectiveness and development outcomes. It is necessary to combine and compare evidence from multiple fields including, e.g. business, economics, education, health, psychology and sociology. Research has indicated some key findings that contribute to organisational effectiveness and development outcomes.

The USAID review (2017) showed that there is evidence that strategic collaboration improves performance at the organisational level. Critical to learning and improved performance is taking time and reflecting on own work. Furthermore, continuous learning is linked with job satisfaction, empowerment and engagement and improved performance. Quality knowledge management systems also have positive impact on project performance. (e.g. Bubwolder & Basse 2016; Kelly & Schaefer 2014; Kianto, Vanhala & Heilmann 2016; Zwarenstein, Goldman & Reeves 2009.)

According to the review (USAID 2017), there is evidence that high-quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are significantly associated with achieving development outcomes as well. This requires that M&E are incorporated into program management and designed to support learning and decision-making. Adaptive management contributes to sustainable development particularly when it has leadership support, public support and an adequate investment of time. Leadership is then seen as part of the culture rather than as a discrete influence. Studies have also indicated that locally-led development is most effective. Leaders are essential to creating a learning culture that is the foundation of learning organisations. High level of trust and psychological safety tend to contribute to better learning and adapting. (e.g. Akhtar, Tse, Khan & Nicholson 2016; Booth 2016; Booth & Unsworth 2014; Byrne, Sparkman& Fowler 2016; Faustino & Booth 2014; Raimondo 2016; Schein 1992; Segone, M. 2008.)

Overall, the conversation has moved from generating to using data. There is a need to look at the overall development cooperation data eco-system, with respect to RBM. There is also a need for sophisticated data systems which not only generate data but also build demand for data from leadership downwards.

The so-called data revolution and the emergence of big data mean more data, coming faster and from more sources. Sharing good practices and use of data and new technologies for RBM is one part of knowledge management. Data can focus on operations or on outcomes. Situating the data required, and defining roles and responsibilities for knowledge management along the results chain are important for evidence-based decision making. (see e.g. OECD 2018 results Workshop. Key messages May 2018.)

2.1.5 Challenges and critical issues

One issue of note with regards to the purpose and application of RBM is a tension between accountability reporting and management improvement. Some reviews (Bester 2016; Vähämäki, Schmidt & Molander 2011) have highlighted the conflict between result reporting (accountability) on the one side and the use of information for learning (improved management) on the other. According to these reviews, results information seems to mainly have been used for the purposes of accountability and reporting and less for learning within organisations. Much of the emphasis in the implementation of RBM has been on strategic plans and result matrices. The managing for result aspect and using information for programme improvement has been less prominent.

In addition, using the results of evaluations for learning and for developing a results culture might be overlooked. Capacity development in RBM could be more comprehensive in targeting a wider range of staff, and not only those involved in strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation. When organisations use results of evaluations to learn and improve, rather than using results for purely punitive purposes or for complying with a requirement for an evaluation, staff and stakeholders see that evaluations have value. (Bester 2016, 9-18.)

Fresh results from OECD's case-study on RBM by providers reveals interrelated challenges in managing for the results of development cooperation (OECD 2017 by R. Swart). The challenges are: linking results to development goals, ensuring that purposes of results systems is well defined, weighing up the benefits of aggregating and attributing results from standard indicators, enabling country ownership, using performance information alongside results information, and building and embedding a results culture. The study suggests that linking results information to development goals meaningfully is challenging. Especially coordinated approaches which enable analysis of the links between results (development and development cooperation) and performance information are lacking.

The study showed also that development cooperation results have become detached (and decontextualized) from development results. Development cooperation results are often reported in isolation and not embedded in context. The results information or data are primarily used for domestic accountability purposes and communication. Therefore, there is also a danger that providers build "dual track" systems, which separates domestic accountability and communication at corporate level, from learning and adaptive management at project and programme level. (OECD 2017.)

Not long ago, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) has launched the Results Community project on Learning from evaluations and reviews on RBM approaches (OECD DAC 2018 Concept note). This project will analyse various evaluations and reviews, identify emerging trends and good practices, new technologies and evolving context. The aim is to share good practices and to build evidence base to support new practices. The project will also provide guidance to set up sound RBM approaches and systems that can be used for accountability, decision-making, learning and communication.

2.2 Results from previous evaluations and reviews

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) assesses Finnish development cooperation by carrying out two types of evaluations. One type is the comprehensive, policy-level evaluations (centralized evaluations) commissioned by the Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11). The second type consist of project and program evaluations (decentralized evaluations) commissioned by the units or departments responsible for the project or program in question.

EVA-11 regularly commissions meta-evaluations to synthesize findings, explore issues and assess the reliability of decentralized evaluations. In addition, the MFA takes part in the OECD DAC peer reviews based on the standards and evaluation principles of development policy and co-operation. Annually, the MFA reports to parliament on overall results of the evaluations, surveys and management responses, and on implementation or recommendations. The latest annual report, published 2018, covers the period 2015–2017 (Ulkoministeriö 2018, Kehitysevaluoinnin vuosiraportti 2017).

These evaluations and other reports describe how the targets of the development policies have been reached as well as how RBM implementation is operationalized. Below is a short overview of the results and recommendations of several evaluations from the point of view of this evaluation on knowledge management, use of evidence, decision-making and learning from results. These evaluations form a baseline for the current evaluation on knowledge management as part of an effective RBM approach.

Evaluation of RBM approach in Finnish development cooperation (2011)

The first comprehensive evaluation on the result-based approach in Finland's development cooperation was implemented in 2011. This evaluation looked at the implementation of RBM and the use of performance information for improved decision-making. This first evaluation looked especially at the status of the RBM approach in development cooperation. The objective of this evaluation was to provide guidance on how to improve the result-based design, implementation, M&E and management. The scope was especially on development cooperation projects, the use of performance information for decision-making and procedures to assure the quality of projects. The evaluation reviewed a sample of projects.

The evaluation showed that there was no formal policy for RBM implementation or a strategic framework of development results. Also, the procedures for quality assurance of development projects were not effective. The evidence indicated that even though project design guidelines were of good quality, only a little over half of all projects achieved good standards of results-oriented design. Certainly, there were good practices among projects. The evaluation showed that the overall institutional culture of the MFA did not support RBM. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation were found to be insufficient as well.

The evaluation also indicated that reporting to parliament did not provide sufficient information to assess the nature and achievements of Finland's development cooperation. The results orientation between the projects and among the staff was uneven as well. Staff considered that there were few opportunities provided for learning from results and evaluations. The main conclusion was that there was a strong need to establish a formal policy for RBM, to create a strategic results framework, and to strengthen procedures to assure good quality design and report results in a way that conveys the contribution to development cooperation.

Since 2012, Finland has paid increasing importance to the RBM approach and topic in order to strengthen the quality and impact of its development cooperation and programs. The Ministry for foreign Affairs (MFA) adopted its first comprehensive Action Plan 2013–2014 on strengthening results-based development cooperation. As the outcome of the implementation of this Action Plan the guidance for RBM was published (MFA 2015c).

The guidance outlines the basic definitions, objectives and guiding principles of RBM and thus has provided a common framework and basic guidance for further development of results management. MFA's guidance emphasizes result frameworks as a planning and management tool, including the results chain approach. The results framework and clearly formulated targets are also seen as important tools for monitoring and independent evaluation. A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system produces information on progress towards result targets, on the final results and on the achievement of results. A strong contextual understanding and theory of change are required to design the results frameworks. MFA's guidance highlights the potential uncertainty that is quite often evident in development cooperation. Therefore risk management is an integral part of RBM.

RBM evaluation on development policy programs (2015)

MFA has carried out an evaluation of Finland's development policy programs 2003–2013 from a results based management (RBM) point of view. The evaluation investigated how the last three Development Policy Programmes (DPPs) of 2004, 2007 and 2012 succeeded in defining the foundation for result-based development policy and cooperation. The evaluation report was published 2015.

RBM was defined as a management strategy that focuses on results in order to promote accountability, decision making and learning. The purpose of the DPPs evaluation was to serve strategic planning and decision-making at the MFA. Although important progress was made towards RBM, the evaluation found that the MFA still lacked a comprehensive approach to RBM. According to the evaluation, also the future policy implementation should be guided by a long-term strategic plan underpinned by comprehensive strategic results frameworks.

Systematization of learning from results was also low and the strategic planning (for example DPPs) barely referenced evaluative findings, analysis or other learning processes. The evaluation stated that results-oriented implementation of DPPs was not possible without comprehensive reporting covering the main policy implementation channels, aid channels and instruments.

The evaluation recommended establishing long-term goals and principles of Finnish development policy as well as long-term strategic planning with concise policy statements and theory of change framework at the MFA corporate level. The evaluation suggested committing to a realistic RBM strategy and a seamless reporting hierarchy along policy implementation channels for corporate reporting to parliament. The importance of quality assurance was emphasized. In addition, it was recommended to continue with the result-oriented policy channel strategies and results frameworks such as country-strategies and multilateral influencing plans and result-oriented reporting system.

According to evaluation the MFA has made a lot of progress in policy coherence work, especially internationally, but that suffers from low status. Despite the good progress the environment does not yet support result orientation in development policy coherence. Thus one of the recommendations was that it is also important to strengthen the policy coherence mandate.

The evaluators strongly recommended systemizing the learning from results. According to the evaluation learning from results has taken place, but learning happens in an ad hoc fashion and there is no regular or systematic process for it. Direct reference to learning from results or from evaluative findings is weak in DPPs, although DPPs were influenced by learning from the past. Definitions of RBM vary in their emphasis on learning and accountability, therefore the evaluators reminded the MFA to pay sufficient attention RBM as a learning approach. The evaluation stated also that when determining the number of indicators driving a corporate results framework, benefits and risks for both accountability and learning should be balanced. The learning aspects should be emphasized by encouraging staff initiative, risk-taking and learning from failure as well as from success. Evaluation represents an integral element of results-oriented learning. The evaluators argued that the organisational culture at MFA remains risk-averse and prioritizes compliance and accountability over experimentation and learning.

Overall, the he evaluation claimed that MFA management was still focusing on inputs and not sufficiently on results. Results-related reporting and evidence on results were not yet sufficiently developed. But there were also positive exceptions, e.g. the long-term use of logical frameworks on the level of projects and country-level results frameworks as part of country strategies. The country strategy approach has brought a results-oriented structure into reporting and represents an important management tool. However, this means that a strong results culture needs to be established. There would be also need for databases and systematic information system for RBM.

The second Action Plan was adopted after the 2015 evaluation of Finland's Development Policy Programs (2004, 2007, and 2012). The evaluation showed that the measures taken during the first action plan have

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improved RBM management systems, but also noted that a lot of challenges still existed. The implementation of the second Action Plan covers the years 2016–2018. The activities encompass management, structures, processes, systems, staff and communication. The purpose of its implementation is to further systemize the management at MFA towards agreed results objectives and targets by clarifying instructions and regulations, guidance, reporting and utilization of available evidence and knowledge as basis for decisions. It also pays special attention to organisational learning. (Ulkoasianministeriö 2015. Päätös tulosten toimeenpanosta. Suomen kehityspoliittisten toimenpideohjelmien evaluointi tulosjohtamisen näkökulmasta 2003–2013.)

OECD DAC peer review results (2017)

The latest OECD/ DAC peer review report was published in October 2017. These regular reviews are based on certain DAC indicators and the external reviewers have given recommendations how to meet them. OECD DAC peer reviews have been cited as important sources for learning from results.

The report states that Finland's development policy 2016 has clear high-level policy statements and four well-defined priority areas that are also linked the sustainable development goals and the Agenda 2030. There is still strong support for gender, democracy and sustainable environment, but the tight economic situation and severe budget cuts have changed Finland's development policy. The cuts had to be made and the decisions on modalities were not always based on results and performance.

The peer review stated that there is now a new emphasis on the private sector and job creation, including how the Finnish economy benefits from investments in developing countries. Finland's support for private sector instruments has increased both in relative and absolute terms. The new emphasis on the private sector also requires new skills, knowledge and learning. According to the review the private sector instruments lack clarity in terms of development objectives.

One of the peer review recommendations was to enhance the use of results information for multiple purposes (accountability, communication, direction and learning) at multiple levels (corporate, sectoral, project) and align the information to the SDG priorities and results frameworks of partner countries. There is also need for pre-defined goals and indicators for cross-cutting priorities. These may help officials in planning and programming work with partners. The recommendations was that Finland should expand the use of existing knowledge platforms and develop a system that can easily connect officials, partners and other stakeholders with relevant information and evidence to improve decision making. Finland still has a long-term goal to increase official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI), but Finland lacks a roadmap for achieving this goal. In general, Finland provides good, timely statistical reporting to DAC. Finland however does not report foreign direct investment and since 2014 direct export credits are not reported to the DAC.

To conclude, the OECD peer review emphasized that Finland has strong political and whole-of-society commitment to global development. Despite the strong tradition of active public support for international development overall budget cuts challenge public support and there is need for maintain public support. The implementation of the Agenda 2030 is an opportunity to raise the awareness of stakeholders.

Meta-evaluation on the project and program evaluations (2018)

MFA's evaluation unit commissions regular meta-evaluations to synthesize project and program evaluations. The latest meta-evaluation has just been published in 2018 and the fresh results are available. The meta-evaluation was based on the reports of the program and project evaluations during 2015–2017. The quality of the program evaluations varies a lot and there is a need for quality assurance and methodological expertise has to be ensured. Also, this meta-evaluation pointed out that there is great need to support learning and capacity building of evaluation knowledge. The evaluation stressed that it is important to ensure that the results of this meta-evaluation are sufficiently disseminated to feedback this information to implementers. One of the objectives of the evaluation was that in order to enhance the long-term

utility of meta-evaluations assessment tools will be created, standardized and meta-evaluations will be carried out regularly every two years. This permanent system will give information for decision-making and development as well as capacity building for program staff.

Annual report of MFA's development policy and cooperation 2017

The annual report on MFA's evaluations summarises the results of meta-evaluations and management responses and follow-up on implementation. The annual report discovered also how the development policy and cooperation has been managed. The annual report pointed out that the MFA has actively developed the activities of RBM and the development work is going on. There are still challenges especially in learning from results and in the recognition of the outcomes and effectiveness.

In addition, weaknesses of decentralised/project evaluations hamper the progression of RBM. The report summarises that the MFA's evaluation results should be taken into account and systematically used as a source of learning. Systematic monitoring and follow-up methods should be improved at different stages of RBM as well as improvement of the need analysis as part of program planning.

2.3. Reforming development cooperation practices

Management responses

OECD/ DAC standards and the MFA's evaluation norm require that recommendations of evaluations are systematically responded to by management. The MFA has given formal management responses 2015 to the recommendations of evaluation on Finland's Development Policy Programmes from a Results-Based Management Point of View 2003–2013 (Päätös tulosten toimeenpanosta UH2015-032225). MFA has decided four key areas of change how to respond to the recommendations. The aim is to improve the availability of results information in a way that it supports external communication and decision-making. The aim is to strengthen policy coherence as well. The actions are divided under four areas of change which are: *Efficiency and impact of development policy, measurable variables for results and effectiveness, development of results management and policy coherence of development.*

In addition, the MFA has designed a RBM action plan for 2016–2018 and the development work has taken place. The priorities of development policy have been defined as well. The decision was to improve the measurability of results through better reporting systems and improved operating and financial plans. In order to enhance the efficiency and impact of development policy and cooperation, evidence-based decision making will be strengthened by using more effectively the information delivered from the country programs and from multilateral cooperation.

Policy coherence was also recognized as cross-sectorial cooperation. Alignment was to strengthen MFA's role to raise awareness of development policy among other policy sectors. The management response emphasized that result as well as how to monitor and evaluate them should be negotiated with other relevant ministries. In addition, roles and mandates between sectors will be defined.

Follow up

In addition, MFA has reported on implementation and completed the follow-up to the management response recently. The follow-up of the management response summarizes the actions taken. The follow-up report stated that remarkable progress happened concerning the measurement of outcomes and impact, using of indicators and applying the DAC marker system. But there are still challenges with systematic database collection, coverage of indicators, analyses of results and learning. The report emphasizes the importance of the global Agenda 2030 as basic framework for development policy and cooperation. The forthcoming evaluation on implementation of the Agenda 2030 pays important role and the results have to be taken account. The mid-term evaluation of the implementation of SDGs is about to start in summer 2018. (Ulkoministeriö 2018. Suomen kehityspoliittisten toimenpideohjelmien evaluointi tulosjohtamisen näkökulmasta. Raportti tulosten toimeenpanosta.)

To conclude, the MFA's decision has been to move more clearly towards RBM culture and a realistic long-term strategy and an action plan in order to strengthen RBM, better use of results information and enhancement of learning from results. This includes also improvement of monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems. Remarkable progress has happened concerning measurement and follow-up of results but there are challenges with knowledge management within RBM.

Currently the MFA is reforming development cooperation practices by improving and harmonizing processes and support services (for example guidelines, training, advisory support, immediate supervision) and both MFA's internal systems and Government's joint systems will be further developed (Ulkoasianministeriö, Hanke kehitysyhteistyön toimintatapojen kehittämiseksi, asettamispäätös 20.12.2016, HEL-7MO406-87). The objective is to generate more efficient processes and clearer roles and responsibilities. The MFA has already reported on the progress of the reform in cooperation practices and results management (Ulkoministeriö/ KEO-10, Kehityspolitiikan tulosohjauksen kehittämissuunnitelman 2. Puolivuotisraportti 15.11.2017; Ulkoministeriö/ KEO-01 Toimintatapauudistuksen esikartoitusvaiheen väliraportti 30.6.2017, HEL7MO621-14).

3. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

3.1. The purpose and the objectives

The evaluation "*How do we learn, manage and make decisions in Finland´s development policy and cooperation?*" has the following objectives:

1. It evaluates how the MFA manages internal and external knowledge and uses it for evidence-informed learning and decision-making in Finnish development policy and cooperation;

2. It issues recommendations that can help improving the MFA's knowledge management, learning and decision-making; and

3. It raises awareness and fosters learning among MFA staff about these issues during the evaluation process.

The purpose of the evaluation is to help improving how – and how coherently – the MFA manages knowledge and to assist the MFA in strengthening evidence-informed learning and decision-making and policy guidance practices. This, ultimately, should contribute to improving MFA performance and increasing the impact of Finland's development policy and cooperation at different levels.

The evaluation assesses whether the chosen management activities enhance knowledge management, effectively focus on results, generate and utilize knowledge and promotes the evidence informed decision making of Finland´s development policy and cooperation. The evaluation gives practical recommendations for information collection, storing and analyzing and use of information, including monitoring data, centralized and decentralized development evaluations and other possible information sources for enhancing collaboration and promoting organisational learning and attainment of results. Therefore, the implementation of the evaluation benefits MFA in practice and supports the ongoing organisational reform and capacity development. The main users of the evaluation results will be the MFA, Finnish Embassies, leaders of development programmes and projects, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), private sector, policy makers, such as the Development Policy Committee, the Parliament, and other stakeholders.

The ultimate purpose of the evaluation is to strengthen the impact of Finnish development policy and cooperation.

The evaluation focuses particularly on knowledge management, decision making and learning as part of the RBM, as well as different levels of implementing the development policies/development cooperation, including country and project level. It also investigates collaboration, organisational learning and capacity development throughout the implementation of RBM loops. It investigates the progress of RBM and

deepens the recommendations of the previous evaluations. It assesses how coherently the MFA implements knowledge management in development policy and cooperation. The evaluation gives information about advances and shortcomings in knowledge management and decision making at different levels of development policy implementation throughout the processes from strategic policy level to practical implementation.

The evaluation enhances also participants' knowledge and understanding of knowledge management, evidence-informed decision-making and organisational learning. It investigates collaboration, organisational learning and development throughout the implementation of RBM loops and results-chain. In addition, it assesses how to improve monitoring, reporting and development evaluation methods and processes in order to support knowledge management, evidence-informed decision-making and learning from results.

3.2. The scope of the evaluation

The tentative scope of the evaluation is 2015–2019. The evaluation focuses on the application of RBM after the evaluation on Finland's development policy programmes 2003–2013 from an RBM point of view (published 2015). It covers the management response to that evaluation and the follow-up on the implementation of that management response (2018). The evaluation looks at the focal areas of the reform of development cooperation practices in the MFA's action plan for 2016–2018.

The evaluation covers both internal and external knowledge. Internal knowledge is generated by the MFA itself and covers development results, development cooperation results, performance information and findings and recommendations of reviews and evaluations. External knowledge comes from third parties, including other aid agencies and research institutions and can also cover open data sources and big-data. Information can be quantitative or qualitative and can be generated by range of actors and sources. Special attention should be paid to current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) information and use and usefulness of M&E from knowledge management point of view.

While internal and external knowledge is considered, the evaluation focuses on how the MFA (and not other institutions) manage that knowledge.

The evaluation covers all departments and units of the MFA directly involved with Finland's development policy and cooperation. It covers information used for accountability, communication (both internal and external), guidance (steering and decision making) and learning but emphasizes especially MFA's management and guidance processes, evidence-informed decision-making and learning from results. Special attention should be paid to the current M&E information, its use and usefulness from the KM perspective.

Knowledge management and the use of information should be tied to the whole results chain and result-based management loops. An Example of Results based management loops at MFA development policy are described in figure 13. Thus, it is important that the evaluation covers both policy level and implementing levels, focusing on all stages: project results, country strategy results, bilateral cooperation results and strategic development policy results. The results cover the priorities of Finland's development policy and cooperation and the cross-cutting themes.

The evaluation reviews knowledge management, learning and decision-making in the context of stronger private sector development in development policy and cooperation, and in the context of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The evaluation pays special attention to how evidence is used in capacity development of personnel and in-service training of MFA staff. It also takes account how the MFA's data-bases and information management systems are being used for knowledge management, learning and decision-making.

Figure 13. Results based management loops at the MFA development policy

Country and region specific cooperation	Multilateral cooperation	CSO cooperation	Private sector cooperation
St. C. Individual project/ programme	**Desk** Individual MO results and performance monitoring	**CSO** Individual project/ programme	**CSO** Individual project/ investment
Dpt Country programme	**Dpt** Influencing plan	**Dpt** CSO programme	**Dpt** PSI instrument
KEPO All country programmes	**KEPO** All influencin plans	**KEPO** All CSO programmes	**KEPO** All PSI instruments*

Parliament → **All of Development Policy**

St.C. = Steering Committee

CSO = Civil Society Organisation

DFI = Development Finance Institution

Dpt = Department within MFA

KEPO = Development Policy Steering Group

(* = not yet in place – 3 September 2018)

In addition to evaluating the past and especially the current situation, the evaluation also has strong focus on the future challenges and options for supporting the MFA to look ahead and increase the effectiveness of RBM, decision making and learning. Thus, the evaluation itself is a tool for evidence-informed decision making and for collaboration between the MFA and other key actors along of results chain. The evaluation promotes the learning and decision-making purposes of RBM and knowledge management, and supports learning throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation may be also developmental oriented and participative by nature. The evaluation gives opportunity for learning from peers and adaptation of the feedback loops throughout the evaluation process especially for those who are in responsible of the implementation of action plan for RBM and for reforming development cooperation practices at the MFA.

4. EVALUATIONS QUESTIONS

The main evaluation questions focus on knowledge management, evidence-informed decision-making, collaboration, learning and adapting at policy level and operational level in Finland's development policy and cooperation. The OECD/DAC criteria relevance, efficiency and effectiveness from knowledge management point of view will also be investigated, but do not form the basis for the evaluation framework.

1. **What MFA-internal and -external information is routinely collected, reported and used by the MFA regarding Finland's development policy and operation?**

   • Type and format

   • Analysis and reports/ reporting

   • Production and continuity (sources/producers/users)

   • Refining and processing

   • Dissemination and reforming

   • Other topics and subjects

2. **How – and how coherently – is knowledge management implemented in Finland´s development policy and cooperation?**

   • Foundation for knowledge management

   • Content and context of knowledge

   • Creating, sharing, using and managing knowledge and information

   • Collaboration, learning and adapting

   • Other topics and subjects

3. **What are the advances and shortcomings in knowledge management, learning and evidence-informed decision making at different levels of development policy and cooperation planning and implementation?**

   • Strengths and good practices

   • Most critical issues

   • Main challenges and risks

   • Tensions to be solved

   • Future options

   • Other topics and subjects

4. **How can the MFA more effectively integrate knowledge management and evidence-informed decision making and promote learning into RBM of Finnish development policy and cooperation?**

   • Various aspects of the knowledge

   • Timing /time bound of the information and evidence

   • Information and data-systems

   • Roles and responsibilities

   • Capacity building

- Organisational culture
- Reforming development cooperation practices and knowledge management
- Other topics and subjects

In the inception phase, the evaluation team will define a number of sub-questions that will be prepared as a part of the inception report.

5. GENERAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

As the topic of the evaluation is very broad, and the definition of the key concepts have advanced during the time, a brief and concise desk study is needed prior to the evaluation to analyse what is known already through existing domestic and international evaluations, surveys, reviews, concept analysis, research, and studies etc. The desk study will be part of the inception phase and report.

The purpose of the desk study is to form a theoretical framework for the evaluation. The main focus of the desk study will be on the definition of the concepts relating to RBM, evidence-based and -informed decision-making and knowledge management (KM).

The inception report will include the framework and further definitions of the terms, concepts and internationally relevant practices concerning knowledge management as part of RBM in development policy and development cooperation. In the desk study there will also be a summary of the main findings and "the lessons learned" from the current and previous evaluations concerning the implementation of knowledge management in development policy and cooperation, both from MFA evaluations and other reports, reviews and evaluations. Special attention should be paid to incorporate the results of the ongoing comparative RBM study by the OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) results team.

Optionally, the evaluation can organize visits to selected peer organisations to foster peer-to-peer exchange and foster learning between MFA staff and their colleagues in other countries. Whether or not these visits will be undertaken will be determined during the inception phase of this evaluation.

The purpose of the desk study is to inform the design of the upcoming evaluation, finalizing evaluation questions, methods, resources and expertise needed. The conclusions and recommendations of the review will be used for the planning and preparation of the evaluation, possible evaluation visits and other field work enabling a quick, focused and efficient start. In addition, the desk study will be the basis for development the evaluation framework and other methodological choices of the evaluation. The evaluation matrix will be designed and finalized in the inception phase.

The evaluation results will be based on analysis of the relevant documents, potential benchmarking visits, but also on data produced by other methods (for example in surveys and interviews). Interviews could be targeted at staff at the MFA and at Finnish Embassies, and actors of the development projects. Suggested field visit countries may be three Finland´s long-term partner countries, and the selection will be made between the MFA and the Evaluation Team based on jointly agreed upon criteria during the inception phase.

The evaluation may also use an online survey tool to collect information, but care should be taken to ensure that the questionnaire is issue-driven and based on emerging findings to ensure relevance and usefulness of the collected feedback. Whether or not a survey is conducted will be determined in the inception phase.

The approach of the evaluation is utilization-focused, emphasizing participation and learning. Therefore, special attention should be paid to participation and learning from the results during the implementation of the evaluation process and workshops for dissemination and learning at the MFA.

The evaluation consists of a planning phase (supported with the Service Order 1), a start-up phase, an inception phase, an implementation phase, and a final reporting and dissemination phase.

All parts of the evaluation shall adhere to the MFA's evaluation principles and the OECD DAC's quality standards for development evaluation.

The evaluation recognizes Finland's commitment to a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and reflects it by investigating to what degree information and knowledge help learning and decision-making towards a more effective HRBA. Because the evaluation is focused on knowledge-management, learning and decision-making within the MFA it is not expected that ultimate beneficiaries are to be interviewed.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is managed through the Evaluation Management Services (EMS). The responsibilities of the EMS Consultant (Particip-Indufor) and the MFA are defined in the EMS contract in more details. MFA's Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11) will be responsible for the overall management and steering of the evaluation. EVA-11 will work closely and inform other relevant units/departments of the MFA as well as Embassies on the evaluation and will also initiate the contacts with main stakeholders in Finland and abroad.

Consultant implementing the EMS (Particip-Indufor) is in charge of the overall contract management and is the main point of reference for the contractual issues. They assure the administrative and financial management including submission of reports and other official communications concerning accounting, payments and financial reporting towards the MFA. They set up a dedicated and secure platform for the evaluation, and in consultation with the EMS Coordinator and the Team Leader will be responsible for managing the platform of the EMS Consultant (Particip-Indufor). The Consultant will closely cooperate with the EMS Coordinator and support her in ensuring the coordination with the Team Leader to carry out a feasible work plan and timely delivery of outputs, in respect of the application of the quality control system. They also provide quality assurance of deliverables (Inception Report, Draft Final Report, Final Report) by senior advisors.

There will be one Management Team, responsible for the overall coordination of the evaluation. The EVA-11 Evaluation Manager, the evaluation Team Leader and the EMS Coordinator will form the Management Team. The Team Leader and EMS Coordinator will represent the team in major coordination meetings and major events presenting the evaluation results.

A reference group for the evaluation will be established and chaired by EVA-11. The reference group is constituted to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, quality assurance throughout the process and in disseminating the evaluation results. The mandate of the reference group is to provide quality assurance, advisory support and inputs to the evaluation, e.g. through participating in the planning of the evaluation and commenting deliverables of the Consultant.

The use of a reference group is a key step in guaranteeing the transparency, accountability and credibility of an evaluation process and in validating the findings. The reference group has a key role in adapting and in dissemination the evaluation results and in enhancing learning.

The members of the reference group may include:

- Representatives of the units and departments of the MFA with special expertise in development policy, RBM approach and results management, development statistics and reporting, development research, Agenda 2030, private sector, personnel training and capacity development, country programmes and multilateral cooperation.

The members will be defined and may also added during the evaluation if needed.

The tasks of the reference group are to:

- act as source of knowledge for the evaluation;

- act as an informant of the evaluation process;

- participate in the planning of the evaluation (providing inputs to the ToR, identifying key external stakeholders to be consulted during the process etc.);

- assist in identifying external stakeholders to be consulted during the process;

- participate in the relevant meetings (e.g. start-up meeting, meeting to discuss the evaluation plan, debriefing and validation meetings after the field visits);

- comment on the deliverables of the evaluation (i.e. inception report, draft final report) to ensure that the evaluation is based on factual knowledge about the subject of the evaluation;

- play a key role in disseminating the findings of the evaluation and support the implementation, dissemination and follow-up on the agreed evaluation recommendations.

7. EVALUATION PROCESS, TIMELINES AND DELIVERABLES

The planning of the evaluation started in 2/2018 and the evaluation will tentatively end in 9/ 2019.

The evaluation consists of the following phases and will produce the respective deliverables:

The evaluation is divided into five phases. A summary of the deliverables defining each phase is listed here, with more details below:

- Phase A: Planning phase [start in 2/ 2018 and end in 8/2018]: Submission of Team Leader's comments on ToR and discussion with the MFA

- Phase B: Start-up phase [start in 9/2018 and end in 9/2018]: Start up meeting in Helsinki

- Phase C: Inception phase [start in 9/2018 and end in 12/2018]: Submission of Draft Inception Report and Final Inception Report end 12

- Phase D: Implementation phase [start in 1/2019 and end in 3/2019]: Implementation of field visits

- Phase E: Reporting/Dissemination Phase [start in 4/2019 and end in 9/2019]: Draft Final Report submission early 5/2019; Final Report end 6 /2019; report published and Findings Presentation in 9/2019.

During the process, particular attention should be paid to strong coordination and information sharing within the evaluation team. Communication between EVA-11, the Team Leader, and the Evaluation Management Service (EMS) Coordinator is crucial. It is highlighted that a new phase is initiated only when the deliverables of the previous phase have been approved by EVA-11. The revised reports have to be accompanied by a table of received comments and responses to them.

It should be noted that internationally recognised experts may be contracted by EVA-11 as external peer reviewer(s) for the whole evaluation process or for some phases/deliverables of the evaluation process, e.g. final and draft reports (inception report, draft final and final reports). In case of peer review, the views of the peer reviewers will be made available to the Consultant and the evaluation team.

The language of all reports and possible other documents is English. Time needed for the commenting of different reports is 2 weeks. The timetables are tentative, except for the final reports.

A. PLANNING PHASE

The planning phase will start in 2/2018 and end in 8/2018

EVA-11 will finalize the ToR of the evaluation in consultations with the Team Leader. Therefore, the EMS will provide the Team Leader of the evaluation already in the planning phase. Service order 1 will describe the required services of the EMS for the planning phase in details.

The following meetings will be organized during the planning phase. Meetings can be face-to-face or video meetings.

- A planning meeting with the EMS coordinator on required services, especially the qualifications and skills of the Team Leader.

- A planning meeting with the Team Leader on evaluation approach and methodological requirements (with TL and EMS coordinator)

- A meeting for finalizing the ToR and identifying the skills and qualifications of the rest of the team (with TL and EMS Coordinator, liaison with the reference group, if in place)

Deliverable: TL suggestions on how to finalize the ToR (an issue paper and revisions to the ToR as track changes)

B. START-UP PHASE

The Start-up phase will start in 9/2018 and end in 9/2018

The service order 2 will describe the required EMS services in detail.

The following meetings will be organized during the start-up phase:

1. **The start-up meeting with the reference group** will be held right before the administrative meeting in September 2018. Its purpose is to establish a community to enable dialogue and learning together as well as to get to know the evaluation team and the reference group. The purpose is also to provide the evaluation team with a general picture of the subject of the evaluation. The Team Leader/evaluation team will present its understanding of the evaluation, the initial approach of the evaluation and the evaluation questions.

Participants in the start-up meeting: EVA-11 (responsible for inviting and chairing the session), reference group, Team Leader and EMS Coordinator in person.

2. **The administrative meeting** will be held in Helsinki in September 2018. The purpose of the meeting will be to go through the evaluation process, related practicalities and to build common understanding on the ToR and on administrative arrangements. Agreed minutes will be prepared by the Consultant.

Participants in the administrative meeting in Helsinki: EVA-11 and the Team Leader and the EMS Coordinator in person. Other Team Members can participate in person or via electronic means.

Deliverables: Presentation of the approach and methodology by the Team Leader, agreed minutes of the two meetings by the Consultant.

C. INCEPTION PHASE

The Inception phase will start in 9/2018 and end in 12/2018

The Inception phase includes desk analysis and preparation of the detailed evaluation plan (see the current 2018 evaluation manual). The desk study includes a comprehensive context and document analysis.

The inception report consists of the evaluation desk study and the evaluation plan which include the following:

- context analysis and potential benchmarking visits;

- initial findings and conclusions of the desk study, including hypotheses;

- constructed framework of concepts;

- finalization of the methodology and an evaluation matrix including evaluation questions, evidence, indicators, methods for data collection and analysis;

- final work plan and division of work between team members;

- tentative table of contents of final report;

- information and data gaps;

- detailed implementation plan for field visits (and potential benchmarking visits) with clear division of work (participation, interview questions/guides/notes, preliminary list of stakeholders and organisations to be contacted);

- evaluation budget.

The inception report will be presented, discussed and the needed changes agreed in the inception meeting November 2018. The inception report must be submitted to EVA-11 2–3 weeks prior to the inception meeting.

Plans for the field work, preliminary list of people and organisations to be contacted, participative methods, interviews, workshops, group interviews, questions, quantitative data to be collected etc. must be approved by EVA-11 at least three weeks before going to the field, or as part of the inception report.

Participants to the inception meeting: EVA-11, reference group and the Team Leader (responsible for chairing the session), and the EMS Coordinator in person. Other team members may participate in person or via electronic means.

Venue: MFA, Kirkkokatu 12, Helsinki.

Deliverables: Inception report including the evaluation plan, desk study and the minutes of the inception meeting by the Consultant.

D. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The Implementation phase will start in 1/2019 and end in 3/2019

The Implementation phase includes field visits to three Finland's long-term partner countries and debriefing/validation workshops in each country. Attention has to be paid also to the adequate length of the field visits to enable the real participation. The team is encouraged to use statistical evidence whenever possible.

Adequate amount of time should be allocated for the field visits and for the interviews conducted with stakeholders in Finland. The purpose of the field visits is to triangulate and validate the results and assessments of the document analysis. It should be noted that a representative of EVA-11 may participate in some of the field visits as an observer for learning purposes.

Direct quotes from interviewees and stakeholders may be used in the reports, but only anonymously ensuring that the interviewee cannot be identified from the quote.

The Evaluation Team will organise a debriefing/validation workshop at the end of each country visit. A debriefing/validation meeting of the initial findings (not yet conclusions or recommendations) will be arranged in Helsinki in April/May 2018. The purpose of the meeting is to share initial findings, and also

validate them. An alternative meeting could be a workshop on initial findings, conclusions and recommendations when the draft final evaluation report is available. The purpose of the work shop is to share findings and conclusions and facilitate preparing concrete, practical and useful recommendations.

After the field visits and workshops it is likely that further interviews and document study in Finland will be needed to complement the information collected during the earlier phases.

The MFA and embassies will not organize interviews or meetings with the stakeholders on behalf of the evaluation team but will assist in identification of people and organisations to be included in the evaluation.

Deliverables/meetings: Debriefing/validation workshops supported by PowerPoint presentations on preliminary results. One debriefing/validation workshop in each of the countries visited. A debriefing work shop on initial findings or validation workshop on findings, conclusions and recommendations in Helsinki.

Participants in the country workshops: Evaluation team members participating in the country visit (responsible for inviting and chairing the session) and the the Embassy of Finland and possible other relevant stakeholders.

Participants in the MFA workshops: EVA-11, reference group, other relevant staff/stakeholders, the Team Leader (responsible for chairing the session), team members and the EMS Coordinator

E. REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION PHASE

The Reporting and Dissemination phase will start in 4/2019 and end in 9/2019

The reporting and dissemination phase will produce the final report. Dissemination of the results is organized during this phase as well.

The report should be kept clear, concise and consistent. The report must follow writing instructions and templates provided by EVA-11 and it should contain inter alia the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The logic between those should be clear and findings should be based on evidence.

The final draft report will be sent for a round of comments by the parties concerned. The purpose of the comments is only to correct any misunderstandings or factual errors. The time needed for commenting is 2–3 weeks.

The final draft report must include an abstract and summary (including a table on main findings, conclusions and recommendations). It must be of high, publishable quality. The Consultant and the evaluation team are responsible for the editing, proof-reading and quality control of the content and language.

The report will be finalised based on the comments received and must be ready by end 6/2018. The final report must include abstract and summaries (including the table on main findings, conclusions and recommendations) in Finnish, Swedish and English. It must be ensured that the translations use commonly used terms in development cooperation. The Finnish member of the evaluation team is responsible for the translations in Finnish, and the Consultant for translations in Swedish as reimbursable costs. The final report will be delivered in Word-format (Microsoft Word 2010) with all the tables and pictures also separately in their original formats.

As part of reporting process, the Consultant will also explain how quality control has been addressed during the evaluation.

In addition, the MFA requires access to the evaluation team's interim evidence documents, e.g. completed matrices, although it is not expected that these should be of publishable quality. The MFA treats these documents as confidential if needed.

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

Deliverables: Final report (draft final report and final report) and methodological note by the quality assurance expert.

A management meeting on the final results will be organized in Helsinki tentatively 9/2019 and the Team Leader and the EMS Coordinator must be present in person.

A public presentation on the results will be organized on the same visit as the management meeting in 9/2019, once the report is ready for publishing. It is expected that at least the Team leader is present. It will be agreed later which other team members will participate.

A public Webinar will possibly be organized by EVA-11 after the public presentation. The Team Leader and other team members will give short presentation of the findings in a public Webinar. Presentation can be delivered from distance. Only a sufficient internet connection is required.

The MFA will prepare a management response to the recommendations.

8. EXPERTISE REQUIRED

During the planning phase there will be a consultative process to agree the core evaluation team members. Other team members can also be presented if feasible.

One Team Leader level expert will be identified as the Team Leader of the whole evaluation. The Team Leader will lead the work and will be ultimately responsible for the deliverables. The evaluation team will work under the leadership of the Team Leader who carries the final responsibility of completing the evaluation.

The minimum criteria of the team members are defined in the EMS Consultant's tender which is annexed to the EMS Contract.

The team should cover the following knowledge/expertise areas:

- Expertise in development policy and cooperation and knowledge of Finland´s main goals and policy priorities;
- Strong thematic expertise in knowledge management, management and leadership, and organisational learning and capacity development;
- Strong thematic expertise and experience in RBM, use of TOCs and the evaluation on RBM implementation;
- Expertise in knowledge production, information and database systems in general;
- Expertise and experience of management in development policy and cooperation;
- Readiness to implement both survey, in-depth interviews and participative evaluation methods;
- Expertise in analyzing and reporting quantitative and qualitative data;
- Readiness to disseminate the evaluation results and recommendation in the way that it supports managing and learning of MFA staff and management.

A small core team of a Team Leader and 3-4 senior evaluators is preferred. The team can be supported by 1–2 junior/emerging evaluators and other possible consultancies as required, and agreed upon with the EVA-11.

Field visit countries and potential benchmarking visits will be selected according to certain criteria in the beginning of the evaluation. If required, the EMS Coordinator will propose evaluators from the selected case study countries as members of the evaluation team. The skills and experience of the proposed experts have to correspond or exceed the minimum requirements of the evaluation team members. The EVA-11 will approve the experts.

The competencies of the team members shall be complementary, and between them cover the above competencies. All team members shall have fluency in English and at least one senior evaluator must have fluency in Finnish because part of the documentation is available only in Finnish. MFA documents classified as restricted use (classified as IV levels in the MFA, or confidential in other organisations) cannot be saved, processed or transmitted by any cloud services or unsecured emails. Google translators or any other web-based translators cannot be used to translate these documents.

The Team Leader and the team have to be available until the reports have been approved by the EVA-11, even if the timetables change.

Quality assurance

Internal quality assurance

The internal QA System put in place will aim at ensuring that the individual studies are implemented in a timely manner, with rigour and impartiality, and fully respecting MFA's evaluation principles and standards, including ethical standards.

The TL and the EMS Coordinator play a key role in making sure that the system is adequately applied, especially for each product prepared by the team. Where deemed necessary by the EMS Coordinator (e.g. to enhance the QA of some crucial products or identify solutions to unexpected challenges), she will mobilise in-house senior advisors with extensive track record in complex evaluation. If required, corrective measures will be initiated by the EMS Coordinator at an earliest possible stage to avoid the accumulation of quality deficiencies that may be hard to remedy at a later stage. Internal QA is an incremental process which, in particular, requires adequate efforts in the initial stages of the process (both planning and inception phases).

Figure 14. Internal quality assurance process

EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"
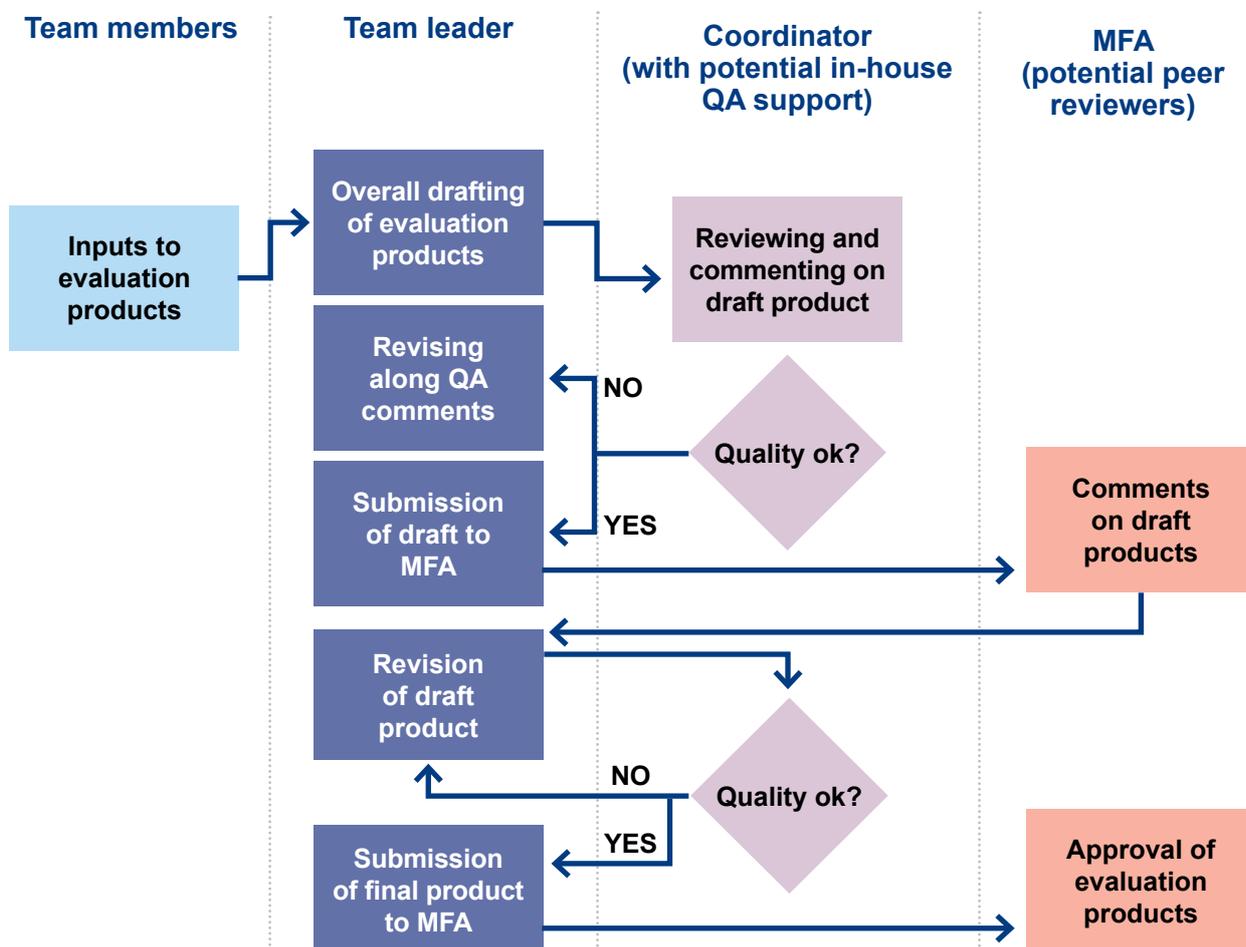
External quality assurance

The Consultant will provide external quality assurer to support the evaluation process and ensure the quality of deliverables.

To complement the internal QA, an External Quality Assurance Expert (EQAE) will be recruited. The EQAE will carry out an independent review of the deliverables. If deemed feasible, the EQAE could be engaged in the evaluation process early-on rather than only commenting completed documents. This approach ensures that the evaluation is able to benefit from his/her expertise and guidance given the complex nature of the assignment. S/he is also in charge of the formal quality assurance of the evaluation deliverables, and submits comments in a written form by using a peer review template (EVA-11). EQAE will be presented as part of the evaluation team for the approval by the EVA-11.

If deemed useful the MFA will organize a peer review or other potential external quality assurance to support evaluation process and learning.

In the beginning of the evaluation, all team members involved will be briefed on and will need to subscribe to a confidentiality agreement which will comply to MFA norms for information security (including the different levels of protection of MFA's internal information management system).

9. BUDGET

The evaluation will not cost more than 350,000 € (VAT excluded).

10. MANDATE

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organisations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland or the Ministry. The evaluation team does not represent the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in any capacity.

All intellectual property rights to the result of the Service referred to in the Contract will be exclusive property of the Ministry, including the right to make modifications and hand over material to a third party. The Ministry may publish the end result under Creative Commons license in order to promote openness and public use of evaluation results.

11. AUTHORISATION

Helsinki,

Anu Saxén

Director

Development Evaluation Unit

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

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EVALUATION "HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

The list below features all people who were interviewed as part of the evaluation, in alphabetical order of the last name. People who were interviewed multiple times are just listed once. The features "position", "department", and "entity" respectively, represent the information at the time of the interview.

Last name	First name	Entity	Position	Department
Airaksinen	Helena	MFA	Ambassador	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Ala-Rantala	Anu	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30)
Alarcón	Eva	MFA	Senior adviser	Department for Africa and the Middle East (ALI-01)
Altay	Jasmin	MFA	Executive secretary	Executive Secretary, Under-secretary of the State (Development Policy)
Antila	Sinikka	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Development Policy (KEO-01)
Arlander	Helena	Finnfund	Director	Risk Management
Berglund	Marko	MFA	Team leader	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Blumenthal	Gisela	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Dahlvik	Åsa	UN Women	Specialist	Strategic Partnership Division
Eshetu	Workaferahu	MFA	Special adviser	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Eskelinen	Jouko	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy (KEO-70)
Eskonheimo	Anu	MFA	Program officer	Unit for the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa (ALI-20)
Haavisto-Koskinen	Miia	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (Finnpartnership), (KEO-50)
Hakoila	Risto	MFA	Director	Financial Management Unit (TAS-10)
Halinen	Saana	MFA	Director	Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Happo	Katriina	MFA	Project officer	Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30)
Harlahti	Emmi	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for South Asia (ASA-40)
Heikka	Riina-Riika	MFA	Director	Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30)
Heinimaa	Sauli	MFA	Senior officer	Unit for Internal Audit (STY-00)
Heino	Erja-Outi	MFA	Director	Unit for Development Communications (VIE-30)
Heinonen	Nea-Mari	PME	Senior adviser	PME, Finland
Heydemann	Markus	MFA	Coordinator	Embassy of Finland, Mozambique
Hong	Mac Thi Thu	Embassy	Coordinator	Embassy of Finland, Vietnam
Hyrkkänen	Minni	MFA	Program officer	Unit for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ITÄ-20)
Ilmonen	Saara	MFA	Specialist	Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy (KEO-70)
Iso-Markku	Elina	MFA	Program officer	Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30)

Last name	First name	Entity	Position	Department
Järvelä-Seppinen	Ulla	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for General Development Policy (KEO-10)
Järviaho	Jyri	MFA	Director	Human Resources Unit (HAL-11)
Järvinen-Seppinen	Ulla	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11)
Kaarakka	Vesa	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Kaipola	Annika	MFA	Senior specialist	Embassy of Finland, Vietnam
Kajakoski	Tiina	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Civil Society (KEO-30)
Kalkku	Elina	MFA	Under-Sec	Under-Secretary of the State (Development Policy)
Kandolin	Katja	MFA	Coordinator	Unit for Development Policy (KEO-10)
Karakoski	Jussi	MFA	Senior adviser	Department for Africa and the Middle East – ALI 01
Karlsson	Lotta	MFA	Director	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO-80)
Karppinen	Hannele	MFA	Training coordinator	Unit for General Development Policy (KEO-10)
Kass	Oskar	MFA	Senior officer	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Kataja	Nina	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Kettunen	Milma	MFA	Content and Communications Specialist	Unit for Development Communications (VIE-30)
Komulainen	Meeri	AgroBig	Chief technical adviser	AgroBig, Ethiopia
Koskinen	Juhani	MFA	Program officer	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO-80)
Kujala-Garcia	Marianne	MFA	Senior specialist	Embassy of Finland, Mozambique
Kuvaja-Xanthopoulos	Kristiina	MFA	Deputy director general	Department for Africa and the Middle East (ALI-02)
Laatu	Riika	MFA	Ambassador	Embassy of Finland, Myanmar
Laisi	Karita	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Somalia
Lakso	Mikko	MFA	Administrative officer	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO-80)
Lassila	Matti	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for General EU Affairs and Coordination (KEO-20)
Le	Nghia	Embassy	Coordinator	Embassy of Finland, Vietnam
Lehtinen	Eeva	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for South Asia (ASA-40)
Leino-Nzau	Katri	FELM	Director development cooperation	FELM, Finland
Leppänen	Kari	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Tanzania
Liikanen	Vilja	Plan International	Specialist	Plan International, Finland
Lindroos	Claus	MFA	Director	Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy (KEO-70)
Mäkinen	Marianne	MFA	Team leader	Unit for the Middle East and Northern Africa (ALI-10)
Malan	Paula	MFA	Head of development cooperation	Representative office of Finland, Ramallah, Palestinian territory
Malaty	Ramses	MFA	Deputy head of mission	Embassy of Finland, Kenya

Last name	First name	Entity	Position	Department
Malinen	Anna	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Mannelin	Anni	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Kenya
Markkinen	Tiina	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Mattila	Ilona	MFA	Program officer	Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11)
Mengitsu	Meseret	MFA	Coordinator	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Mikkola	Heli	MFA	Former deputy director & team leader	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector (KEO-50)
Mustonen	Juha	MFA	Director	Human Resources and Administration (HAL-13)
Nevala	Birgit	Finnpartnership	Program director	n.a.
Nigusu	Tesfaye	FELM	Development cooperation manager	FELM, Ethiopia
Niskanen-Tamiru	Maritta	Finnish Red Cross	n.a.	FLC Workshop, Ethiopia
Oksanen	Riitta	MFA	Deputy director general	Management of Department of Development Policy (KEO-01)
Paaiavuori	Miikka	MFA	Senior officer	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO-80)
Paananen	Pauliina	MFA	Evaluation expert	n.a.
Palmberg	Christopher	Business Finland	n.a.	n.a.
Palmula	Sarianne	MFA	Team leader	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters
Paloposki	Jyrki	MFA	Director	Unit for Information and Service Management (HAL-44)
Parviainen	Simo-Pekka	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Paukkunen	Sini	MFA	Director	Unit for policy planning and research (STU-00)
Pekkola	Marjaana	MFA	Adviser	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Pellinen	Sini	FCG	n.a.	Finish Consulting Group FCG
Peltonen	Jorma	FCG	n.a.	Finish Consulting Group FCG
Peltonen-Siri	Sisko	MFA	Team leader	Unit for Information and Service Management (HAL-44)
Piispanen	Antti	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Poysari	Pasi	MFA	Director	Unit for Sustainable Development and Climate Policy (KEO-90)
Pulkkinen	Jyrki	MFA	Ambassador	Embassy of Finland, Nigeria
Puustinen	Pekka	MFA	Under-Secretary	Under-Secretary of the State Internal and External Services
Rajala	Pasi	Finnfund	Director	Communication
Rajander	Silja	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Myanmar
Räkköläinen	Mari	MFA	Senior specialist	Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11)
Rautavaara	Antti	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Rinkineva	Hanna	MFA	Desk officer	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)

Last name	First name	Entity	Position	Department
Ruohomäki	Olli	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Rusten	Caroline	UN Women	Director	Nordic Office, UN Women
Sallinen	Harri	MFA	Team leader	Unit for Southern and Western Africa (ALI-30)
Sandell	Toni	MFA	Team leader	Embassy of Finland, Somalia
Santala	Satu	MFA	Deputy director	Department of Development Policy (KEO-01)
Särkioja	Tomi	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters (KEO-80)
Sarkkinen	Hanna	n.a.	Committee member	Development and Policy Committee
Savola	Pauliina	FINGO	Adviser	n.a.
Savolainen	Juha	MFA	Director	Unit for Southern and Western Africa (ALI-30)
Saxen	Anu	MFA	Director	Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11)
Seppälä	Pekka	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Development Policy (KEO-10)
Silfverberg	Paul	n.a.	Consultant	n.a.
Sjöberg	Jenny	MFA	Program officer	Unit for the Middle East and Northern Africa (ALI-10)
Soiri	Iina	MFA	Director	Nordic Africa Institute
Stocchetti	Marikki	MFA	Secretary general	Unit for Development Policy (KEO-10)
Suoheimo	Maria	MFA	Head of International Programmes	Finnish Red Cross
Suokko	Maria	MFA	Senior adviser	Management of Department of Development Policy (KEO-01)
Suominen	Arto	COW-ASH	Chief Technical adviser	n.a.
Tadesse	Gezahegn	MFA	Special Adviser	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Taifour	Habab	World-bank	n.a.	Worldbank, Ethiopia
Taipale	Pilvi	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy (KEO-70)
Taivalmaa	Sanna-Liisa	MFA	Senior adviser	Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy (KEO-20)
Takala	Sanna	MFA	Senior specialist	Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA-02)
Tervo	Matti	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Zambia
Toivonen	Juhani	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ITÄ-20)
Uusikartano	Ari	MFA	Chief Information officer	Information and Documentation Unit (HAL 40)
Väänänen	Matti	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Zambia
Valjas	Arto	MFA	Desk officer	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Väyrynen	Sai	MFA	Senior specialist	Embassy of Finland, Ethiopia
Viinikka	Katri	MFA	Ambassador	Unit for Human Rights Policy (POL-40)
Viljanen	Leena O.	ADB	Alternate executive director	Board of Directors for Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden
Virkkunen	Suvi	MFA	Senior adviser	Unit for Development Policy (KEO-10)
von Bonsdorff	Max	MFA	Director	Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50)
Voutilainen	Venla	MFA	Program officer	Unit for Eastern Asia and Oceania, ASA-10
Vuokko	Jutila	MFA	Deputy director	Unit for the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa (ALI-20)

Last name	First name	Entity	Position	Department
Wallendahl	Åsa	MFA	Counselor	Embassy of Finland, Kenya
Wallenius	Tapio	Finnfund	Senior adviser	n.a.
Wanner	Petri	MFA	Desk officer	Unit for South Asia (ASA-40)
White	Pamela	FCG	Senior manager	n.a.
Yrjölä	Tuula	MFA	Ambassador	Department for Development Policy (KEO-01)

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ANNEX 4: EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP

A reference group has been established to inform and advise the evaluation team and to facilitate sharing of information about and from the evaluation into the MFA.

REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS ARE:

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ANNEX 5: DETAILED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND GOVERNANCE

The methodology and overall approach for the evaluation was outlined in the Terms of Reference and further developed during the inception phase and is summarizes in this annex.

Overall Approach

The evaluation was conducted as a theory-based, participatory evaluation.

- **"Theory-based"** means that our data gathering, analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations relied on a Theory of Change for results-informed learning and decision-making that is explained in more in Annex 6.

- **"Participatory"** means that we involved MFA staff in the evaluation process not only as providers of information but also as learning partners. This implied sharing emerging findings and conclusions with MFA staff early on and inviting their feedback and ideas. It implied investing time to explain the Theory of Change and to merge our at times theoretical and outside-in understanding of the subject matter with the experiences and contextual understanding MFA staff have. And it implied acknowledging ongoing developments in the MFA, especially the RBM action plans and the ongoing reform of development cooperation practice processes.

- Finally, **"evaluation"** means that we produced findings based on robust evidence in a transparent way. Findings are supported by information we obtained through interviews, document review, field visits or online surveys. Usually, evidence was triangulated from different sources.

Our methodological approach was to explore in the MFA, through document reviews, interviews, field visits and a survey, the extent to which the various results and assumptions in the ToC (Annex 6) were present, namely the events and conditions needed to enhance MFA results information capacity and then to use results information to inform learning and decision making. These findings, along with those from the literature review and review of learning in other aid agencies, led to suggestions for actions that MFA can take to improve its use of results information. Along the way, the ToC was modified to better reflect the MFA context and reality.

Evaluation Questions

Building on the Theory of Change (Annex 6) we have developed 11 specific evaluation questions that are explained here. They are organised into four groups and cover all policy channels and all organisational levels.

Each group of questions corresponds to a different area in the Theory of Change, from the bottom to the top. and focus on its most pertinent features. It should be noted that the evaluation questions do not cover all results steps and assumptions in the Theory of Change and should therefore be understood as starting points for our inquiry that were followed up by more detailed questions that are directly informed from the Theory of Change.

Group 1: Supply of results information

Evaluation questions	**A.** What results information is produced by the MFA? **B.** What results information – both internal and external – is available to MFA staff for learning and decision-making? **C.** How relevant, credible and useful is this information and knowledge?
Coverage of ToC	These three questions cover the activity and output levels in the TOC and test for the related assumptions. Together, they provide the basis for studying evidence-informed learning and decision-making by identifying what information and knowledge – among all that is theoretically available at the MFA – can inform learning and decision-making.
Explanation	Question A maps principal sources and types of results information across the MFA without getting into too much detail as this has been covered by the two earlier RBM evaluations. It includes all types of results information from monitoring, evaluation, and from outside sources that are made available to MFA staff. Question B then focuses on information and knowledge that is *offered to MFA staff* on learning and decision-making occasions, and on sources that *can easily be accessed by staff* with minor effort and without needing special skills. This requires first understanding what those occasions are. Question C then assesses *relevance* of that information and knowledge[6] vis-a-vis learning and decision-making needs, its *quality* and *reliability*, and its *usefulness* as a basis for learning and for informing decision-making.
Evaluation tools	Interviews Desk review Field visits Online survey

Group 2: Capacity for using results information

Evaluation questions	**D.** Are MFA staff sufficiently incentivized, motivated and confident to use results information for learning and to prepare and inform decision-making? If not, what are the underlying reasons? **E.** Does the MFA provide sufficient time, space and occasion for learning from results for informing decision-making through evidence? If not, what are the underlying reasons? **F.** Does MFA staff have sufficient skills, understanding and knowledge on how to use results information to improve performance and manage for better results? If not, what are the underlying reasons?
Coverage of ToC	These three questions cover the elements of motivation, opportunity and capability in the central box of the ToC and are part of the underlying COM-B framework Together, they investigate the next logical step after the questions in group 1, i.e. assuming that relevant, credible and useful results information is available, they look at the capacity of MFA and its staff to actually make use of it. This may happen at several levels. Staff may, for example, use results information to inform own decision-making, or to inform decisions taken at a higher organisational level.
Explanation	The three questions logically build on each other. Question D is about staff motivation for evidence-informed learning and decision-making. Question E goes one step further and investigates (assuming sufficient motivation) whether there also is sufficient occasion. Question F then looks at staff capabilities for evidence-informed learning and decision making (assuming motivation and occasion). All three questions probes for underlying drivers and challenges along the corresponding assumptions in the Theory of Change from the perspective of staff. These underlying factors are further explored from an organisational perspective by questions in the next group.
Evaluation tools	Interviews Desk review Field visits Online survey

6 Information identified in question B, not that in question A.

Group 3: Demand for results information

Evaluation questions	**G.** To what degree and how is results information considered in learning and decision-making in the MFA?
	H. To what degree and how should results information be considered in a "realistically ideal" scenario?
	I. What needs to change to make this happen?
Coverage of ToC	These three questions correspond to the practice change level in the Theory of Change (i.e. the behaviour change in the COM-B framework). Together, they define the organisational demand for evidence-informed learning and decision-making.
Explanation	Question G maps the status quo of evidence-informed learning and decision-making at the MFA.
	Question H then establishes an understanding of the desired degree to which results information should inform learning and decision-making and explicitly recognizes that there may be other important factors driving these processes. It asks for the degree in a "realistically ideal" scenario, meaning that views and opinions should be based on a good understanding of the Theory of Change, the recognition that decision-making is also driven by other factors, and weigh benefits and costs associated with generating and using additional information.
	Question I then investigates underlying reasons for why evidence is not used to the degree it should from an organisational perspective.
Evaluation tools	Interviews Desk review Field visits Online survey

Group 4: Benefits and impacts of improved learning and decision-making

Evaluation questions	**J.** How and to what degree has results information contributed to improved institutional performance and development results in the past?
	K. How and to what degree could improved consideration of results information contribute (or have contributed) to improved institutional performance and development results?
Coverage of ToC	These two questions correspond to the outcome and impact level in the Theory if Change. Although causal linkages between the use of evidence and MFA performance and development results cannot be rigorously established, they attempt to shed at least some light on whether more evidence-informed learning and decision making may – or can – indeed lead to significant outcome- and impact-level effects, as is often assumed.
Explanation	Question J collects concrete anecdotal evidence for when results information was perceived by MFA staff to have had positive effects on performance and results. Question K asks the same question hypothetically, i.e. what changes would be expected if the MFA (had) moved further towards a results culture.
Evaluation tools	Interviews Desk review Field visits (Online survey)

Work Packages

Information gathering and analysis was structured into eight "work packages". These work packages are briefly described here. More detailed descriptions including information gathering protocols along evaluation questions that had been adapted to each work package were summarised in "Approach Papers" that were part of the inception report of this evaluation and can be obtained from the Development Evaluation Unit.

Four work packages covered the MFA's principal policy channels:

- Work package 1: Bilateral (country and regional) development cooperation[7]

- Work package 2: Multilateral development cooperation

- Work package 3: CSO cooperation

- Work package 4: Cooperation with the private sector

As the MFA's humanitarian assistance is delivered through multilaterals or CSOs, this channel is covered through work packages 2 and 3.

To render our evaluation work manageable, we followed the MFA's main policy channels with our basic inquiry. If we were, for example, to structure our inquiry along the current development policy program's thematic priority areas, we would end up interviewing the same people and reviewing the same documents within each work package which would not be efficient.

This said, this structure of our basic inquiry did not translate into how we developed our overall findings, conclusions and recommendations. These followed the Theory of Change and hence synthesised and put into relation findings from different channels and departments.

The remaining four work packages covered cross-cutting functions:

- Work package 5: Planning, M&E and systems, consisting of three sub-packages:
    - 5a: Corporate financial/strategic planning and policy
    - 5b: Central M&E
    - 5c: Systems for planning and reporting
- Work package 6: Human resources
- Work package 7: Research
- Work package 8: Review of external literature

The tables below summarize how these work packages related to how information was obtained (Table 2) and to the four groups of evaluation questions (Table 3).

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7 Including multi-bi.

Table 3. Work packages and information gathering

	Work packages	Information obtained through...			
		Documents review	Interviews	Survey	Field visits
Policy channels	1. Bilateral (including multi-bi)	X	X	X	X
	2. Multilateral (including Humanitarian Assistance through multilaterals)	X	X	X	X
	3. CSO (including Humanitarian Assistance through CSOs)	X	X	X	X
	4. Private sector	X	X	X	(X)
Other MFA functions	5. Planning, M&E and systems	X	X	(X)	
	6. Human resources	X	X		
	7. Research	X	X		
Other	8. Literature review	X	(X)		

Evaluation activities and end products in each work package are guided by the evaluation questions. For this purpose, the evaluation questions have been selected and adapted for each work package as detailed in the Approach Papers.

The following table provides an overview of how work packages contribute to answering each group of evaluation questions.

Table 4. Overview of how work packages contribute to answering each group of evaluation questions

	Work packages	Evaluation questions (by group of questions)			
		1. Supply	2. Capacity	3. Demand	4. Impact
Policy channels	1. Bilateral (including multi-bi)	X	X	X	X
	2. Multilateral (including Humanitarian Assistance through multilaterals)	X	X	X	X
	3. CSO (including Humanitarian Assistance through CSOs)	X	X	X	X
	4. Private sector	X	X	X	X
Other MFA functions	5. Planning, M&E and systems	X		X	
	6. Human resources		X		
	7. Research	X			
Other	8. Literature review	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)

Evaluation governance and management

The evaluation was conducted by a core team of independent experts. It was commissioned and overseen by the MFA's Development Evaluation Unit (EVA-11), represented by Mari Räkköläinen. A reference group was established to provide advice (Annex 4). Contracting, logistical support and quality assurance was provided by the Evaluation Management Services (EMS) consortium.

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Core team. Four senior evaluators form the core team, with responsibilities as indicated below. They were supported by an analyst, Linda Esche, in their respective work. Linda Esche also coordinated and tracked interviews and managed the team's literature.

Table 5. Core team members and responsibilities

Core team member	Work package lead	Field visits (tentative)	Coordinating task
Ann Bartholomew	Work packages 1 and 5 (together with Markus)	Ethiopia country visit	Country field visit planning
Merja Makela	Work packages 3, 4 and 7	Ethiopia country visit, both regional workshops	Country field visit planning
John Mayne	Work package 8	N/A	Theory of Change, online survey
Markus Palenberg	Work packages 2 and 5 (together with Ann)	N/A	Team leader, multilateral visit planning
Linda Esche	N/A	N/A	Interview and document management

Reference group. A reference group was been established to inform and advise the evaluation team and to facilitate sharing of information about and from the evaluation into the MFA. Reference group members are listed in Annex 4.

Evaluation Management Services (EMS). Beyond the core team, the EMS Coordinator Pirkko Poutiainen supports evaluation quality and liaises between the team, the EMS consortium, and the MFA's evaluation unit EVA-11.

All contracts and travel arrangements for the evaluation team were managed by the EMS consortium company Particip GmbH which can also provide additional quality assurance.

Management Team. Together, Mari Räkköläinen (EVA-11), Pirkko Poutiainen (EMS Coordinator) and Markus Palenberg (team leader) formed the Management Team for this evaluation.

The Management Team is the place where all major decisions regarding the evaluation are discussed and decided. Day-to-day management was left to the evaluation team.

ANNEX 6: THEORY OF CHANGE

In this annex, the Theory of Change (ToC) on learning from and using results information in the MFA is described. The ToC was developed by the team in the course of this evaluation.

Key Terms

Terms in this section follow the definitions used in the main evaluation report (Section 1.3). Results information is abbreviated as RI.

In addition, we earlier set out organisational learning as the process by which an organisation uses results knowledge to change what it does over time. It is more than the sum of individual staff members' knowledge and know-how. (Independent Commission for Aid Impact, 2014).

As noted earlier, our basic model is that organisational learning from results information requires:

- specific results-related institutionalized practices in place,

- individuals to change practices on considering results information,

- a supporting organisation results-oriented learning culture, and

- an appreciation that results information informs learning and decisions not determines them.

All of these features are seen as necessary and hence should be evident in the ToC.

Results-related institutionalized practices involve measurement and analysis, knowledge management, review and consideration and accountability (Barrados & Mayne, 2003). In more detail:

For Measurement and Analysis:

Procedures in place

- for ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluation.

- to seek out relevant result information from outside the organisation.

- to provide for analysis, interpretation, synthesis and generalization of results information.

For Knowledge Management:

- Systems (IT and others) to bring together and make available results information in a useable manner.

- Procedures in place to ensure the timely delivery and sharing of relevant information in useable formats to all who might be able to use the information.

For Review and Consideration: Processes

- for regular and routine review by decision-makers at different levels of past results accomplishments and failures.

- to ensure that relevant results information is at the table when policy and programming decisions are being taken.

For Accountability:

- Practices and incentives in place for reporting on how the organisation and individuals take results-informed decisions and learn.

Building the Theory of Change

Behind the ToC are several basic premises about the foundation on which the ToC model would rest. They are the *rationale assumptions* of a theory of change. One has already been mentioned:

1. That there are a number of factors in addition to RI that need to be considered when taking decisions.

RI informs but does not determine decisions. Other legitimate factors to consider when making decisions could be political and institutional priorities and policies, budgets, cost-effectiveness, or staff career prospects.

There are two other such rationale assumptions that need to set out:

2. Evidence-based learning and decision-making will lead to more effective planning and implementation of MFA interventions.

3. Publicly showing that MFA is intelligently managing public funds through demonstrating its use of results knowledge will enhance its public support

In the ToC model of learning, it is clear that what is being aimed for is behaviour change in individuals and the organisation in MFA regarding the use of RI. Behaviour change has been extensively researched in the social sciences. A model that has proven very useful (Mayne, 2018) comes from the research of (Michie, van Strahlen, & West, 2011) who set out the COM-B model of behaviour change: behaviour (B) occurs as the result of interaction between three *necessary* conditions, capabilities (C), opportunities (O) and motivation (M).

Capability is defined as the individual's psychological and physical capacity to engage in the activity concerned. It includes having the necessary knowledge and skills. *Motivation* is defined as all those brain processes that energize and direct behaviour, not just goals and conscious decision-making. It includes habitual processes, emotional responding, as well as analytical decision-making. *Opportunity* is defined as all the factors that lie outside the individual that make the behaviour possible or prompt it (Michie et al., 2011, p.4; emphasis added). Their behaviour change model is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. The Capabilities, Motivation, Opportunities & Behaviour change (COM-B) Model.
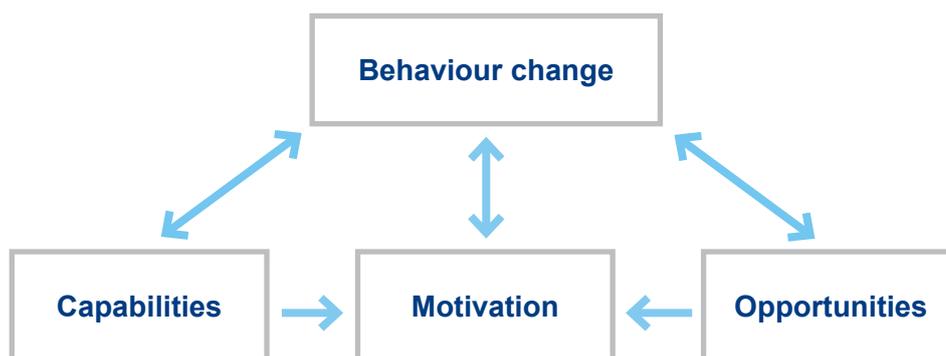
The associated generic *COM-B ToC model* from Mayne (Mayne, 2018) is shown in Figure 16, showing the pathway from outputs to impact and the various causal steps along the way, with the needed assumptions. Further discussion on this type of behaviour- change based ToC model can be found in (Mayne, 2015). Key theory of change terms in the model are:

•   *Outputs* are the goods and services provided by the intervention.

•   *Assumptions* are the salient events and conditions necessary for the specific causal link to work – for the prior cause to lead to the subsequent effect. These are *causal link assumptions*.

- *External influences* are events and conditions unrelated to the intervention that could contribute to the realization of the intended results. As such, these *other influencing factors* could be contributory causes, explaining in part the observed results.

- *Supporting activities* are actions undertaken by an actor to ensure that the assumption(s) in question will be realized, i.e., engagement efforts needed to help ensure the assumptions are brought about.

- The *enabling environment* comprises all those events and conditions needed to make the ToC work – to enable the ToC. It usually refers to things beyond the intervention, and hence comprises a subset of the ToC assumptions.

Figure 16. The COM-B Based Theory of Change
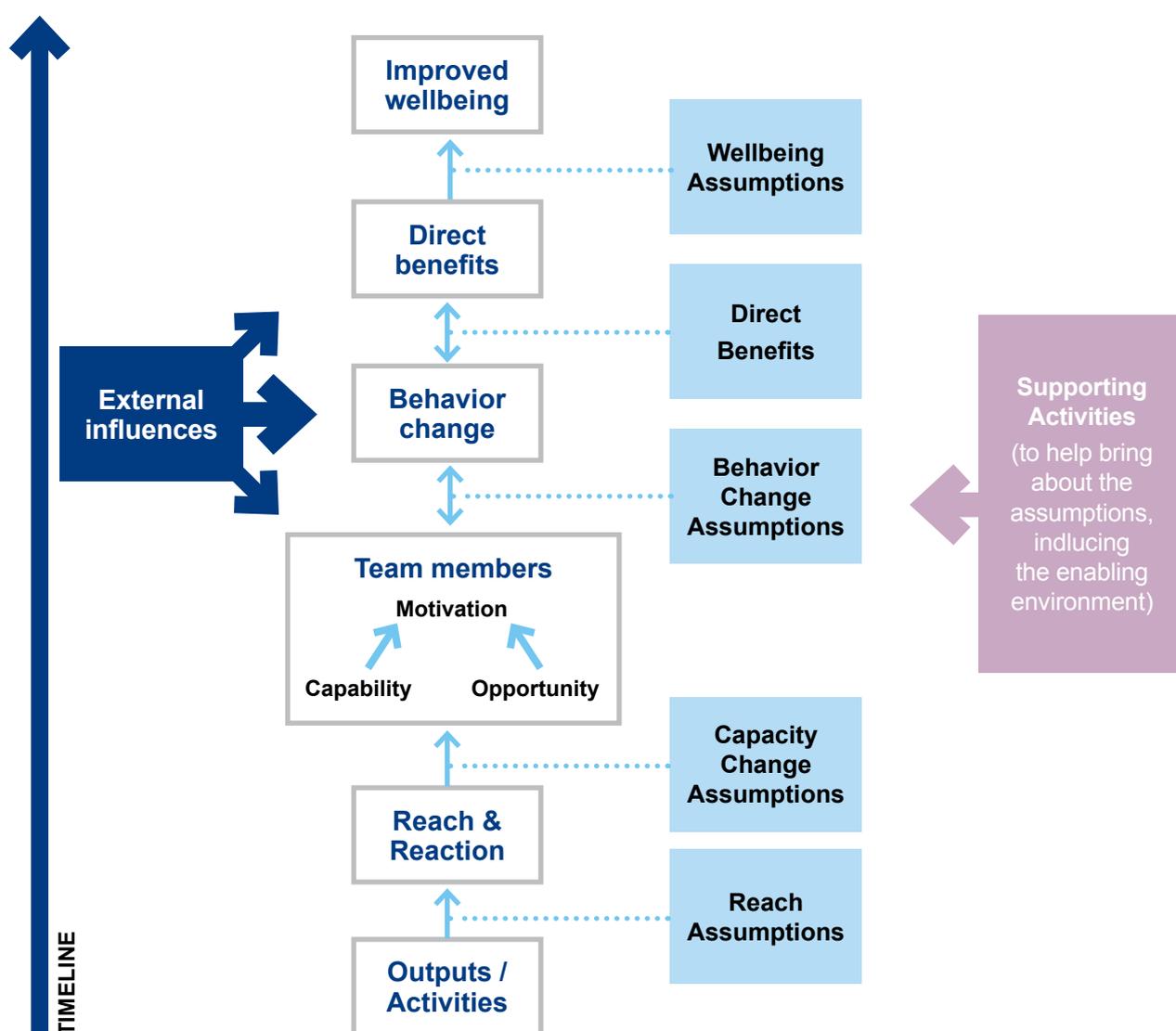
The detailed learning MFA ToC model

Unlike most ToCs, the ToC we have built is not a model of an intervention per se, but rather a model of what it would take for RI to routinely inform learning and decision-making, and as a result to influence learning and decision-making.

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The short 'elevator ride' narrative ToC is that: Relevant and credible results information is acquired by MFA and made available in understandable formats in time for consideration when decisions are being taken and learning occurs. This results in better MFA development outcomes and enhanced trust in MFA by taxpayers.

Using the COM-B ToC model to build on, the MFA learning ToC is discussed and explained below and shown in Figure 16. This ToC on the use of results information covers both *Instrumental* Use for decision-making and *Enlightenment* Use for building knowledge and understanding, i.e., learning.

Following the steps laid out in the COM-B model (Figure 16), we set out and explain the detailed learning and decision-making ToC (Figure 17) below.

MFA Activities

- E1: Acquiring documented RI from monitoring and evaluations, typically from delivery agents

- E2: Acquiring other documented RI from evaluations and research outside the MFA

- E3: Acquiring tacit RI via informal means such as from experience and conversations with others

These are the regular activities undertaken to acquire RI in the organisation, both from formal means through monitoring and evaluations (E1) as well as from studies done outside MFA (E2), and from informal means (E3).

Getting to Outputs

The expected output is then having RI available to MFA managers and staff. 'Available' here means that it is somewhere in MFA, in some format. To get this output a key assumption is needed.

Output:

- R1: Results information is available

Output Assumptions:

- A1: MFA and delivery partners have the capacity and resources to generate RI from monitoring, evaluation and research

Discussion

The organisation's measurement and analysis activities (E1 to E3) generate a variety of documented and tacit RI. All these activities can be assumed to be carried out with the intent of acquiring RI that is to some degree credible and relevant. But credibility and relevance depend on who is using the RI for what purpose. Hence, the Output is stated as just whatever is acquired, and is dependent on capacity and resources of those generating the results information (A1). A1 could equally be associated with the activities E1, E2, and E3.

A1 is clearly a significant assumption and one could develop a nested ToC to model just how the RI is gathered, stored and communicated, but this is beyond the scope of our study. What is indicated is that associated with A1there could be efforts undertaken to enhance this supply of RI, both within the MFA as well as with partners. (SA4).

Normally, a ToC models an intervention that is trying to reach a target group to change behaviour. In this case, the situation is different. There is no current intervention. The output is a variety of RI in MFA's current information systems and with individuals. The 'reach' here is the other way around, namely people or teams seeking out RI. The Reach and Reaction component of the COM-B model therefore is not needed. And the ToC is about getting people to use the available RI, identifying the needed MFA capacity and practices to bring this about.

Figure 17. The MFA Learning from Results Information Theory of Change

Impacts

Effective development outcomes (R16)
Public trust and support for MFA efforts (R15)

Direct Benefits

Effective planning & implementation for results (R14)
An adapting, flexible learning organisation (R13)
Public accountability for learning (R12)

Immediate Direct Benefits

As appropriate, decisions reflect the results information (R11)
Lessons learned and insights are documented (R10)

MFA Needed Practices

MFA use of results information made public (R9)

Results information routinely considered in learning (R7) ⋯▸ Results information routinely considered in decisions (R8)

MFA Needed Capacity

Capability
- MFA staff has adequate understanding of and ability to work with and access results information (R6)

Opportunity
- There are structured learning occasions (R5)
- Relevant and reliable results information is accessible for informing specific learning events and decisions (R4)
- Encouragement, support and incentives in place for using results information (R3)

Motivation
- Confidence and willingness to consider results information for learning and decision-making (R2)

Output

Results information is available in MFA (R1)

Activities Acquiring Results Information

Informally acquiring tacit results information (E3)
Acquiring other documented results information (E2)
Acquiring documented results information from monitoring & evaluation (E1)

Rationale Assumptions

1. A variety of factors need to be considered when arriving at decisions, incuding results information.

2. Evidence-informed learning and decision-making will lead to more effective planning and implementation of MFA interventions.

3. Publicly showing that MFA is intelligently managing public funds through demonstrating its use of results knowledge will enhance its public support.

Immediate Direct Benefits Assumptions

There are incentives to document tacit results information (A16)
The results information considered includes information on the 'why' and 'how' (A15)
Other decision factors do not push out the results information (A14)
Managers & staff have the needed authority & flexibility to implement decisions taken (A13)

Practice Assumptions

Ongoing leadership and support for using results information (A12)
Accessed results information is understandable and credible (A11)
Early discussions on results information are useful (A10)
MFA wants to publicly demonstrate its use of results information (A9)

Capacity Assumptions

Capability
- Managers and staff receive coaching or training on results information and results information sources when needed (A8) **SA1**

Opportunity
- Relevant and reliable results information is available and in a user-friendly information system or a known individual (A7) **SA2**
- There is visible and consistent leadership and support for RBM (A6)
- There is informed demand and an expectation for appropriate results information at learning and decision occasions (A5) **SA3**
- There is time, resources and safe space to reflect on the results information (A4)
- Individual and team performance is assessed and rewarded in part on their use of results information (A3)

Motivation
- Individuals and teams want to improve results performance and be seen as contributing results information to organisational good practice (A2)

Output Assumptions

Those generating the RI have adequate capacity and resources to deliver (A1) **SA4**

Supporting Activities/Possible Interventions
SA1 Training/coaching
SA2 Building/maintaining an effective KM system
SA3 Generating new specific results information
SA4 Supplying appropriate results information

Getting to the MFA Needed Capacity

The needed Capacity components are the Capabilities, Opportunities and Motivation needed to bring about the desired Practice Changes: enhanced understanding and appreciation of RI (R6), coupled with confidence in considering RI (R2), and the opportunities to actually access RI in specific situations (R4), to consider RI in structured occasions (R5), and support and incentives to use the RI (R3).

MFA Needed Capacity

Capabilities:

- R6 MFA has adequate understanding of and ability to work with RI and access sources of RI.

Opportunity:

- R5 Structured occasions (safe space, time and resources) to discuss relevant RI;

- R4 Relevant and reliable RI is accessible for informing specific learning events and decisions;

- R3 Adequate support and incentives are in place to encourage use of RI

Motivation:

- R2 Confidence and willingness to consider RI for learning and decision-making

To bring about these capacity components, numerous assumptions are required.

Needed Capacity Assumptions

Capabilities:

- A8. Managers and staff receive coaching or training on RI and RI sources when needed.

Opportunity:

- A7. The RI acquired is relevant, and reliable, and stored in a user-friendly information system or a known individual,

- A6. There is visible and consistent leadership and support for RBM

- A5. There is informed demand and an expectation for appropriate RI

- A4. There is time, resources and safe space to reflect on the RI

- A3. Individual and team performance is assessed and rewarded in part on use of RI

Motivation:

- A2. Individuals and teams want to improve results performance and be seen as contributing to organisational good practice.

These are the assumptions needed to bring about the three needed components of Capacity: Capability (C), Opportunity (O) and Motivation (M).

Discussion on Assumptions

Motivation: A2 for motivation, assumes people as individuals and in teams want to improve performance, and to be seen doing so.

Capability: The capability assumption is that those intending to use RI have access to coaching and/or training on the strengths and limitations of RI, and hence are able to make a reasoned interpretation of what the RI implies, and also that they have the ability to access both tacit and documented RI in the MFA (A8).

Opportunities: Without the right opportunities, however, capabilities and motivation are not enough to bring about capacity change. First, of course, the needed RI, i.e., relevant and reliable RI, has to be accessible, either in a user-friendly information system, or, for tacit RI, in a known individual (A7). The implied assumption is that MFA and other monitoring and evaluation products, and sources of tacit RI, generate relevant and reliable RI. Opportunities is where the need for a supporting organisational learning culture comes in (A3, A4, A5, A6). There needs to be visible and consistent leadership (A6) (Binnendijk, 2001; General Accounting Office; 2002; World Bank Roundtable, 2006; MfDR Workshops, 2006; Moynihan, 2012, Vähämäki & Verger, 2019)). A5 points to the need for demand for appropriate RI, either an expectation or requirement to be included in discussions on decisions, or a felt need for RI to inform issues on performance. Not enough time, resources or safe space to consider RI is often stated as reasons for limited use it (A4) (Annex 9). In addition to that support and the related incentives, using RI has to count for something. This is A3: Individual and team performance being assessed and rewarded in part on use of results information. The *appropriate* kind of RI depends on the given situation in terms of relevant and timely information to inform specific learning and decision-making. Thus, it may require the generation of new RI through assessment of existing RI, a needed supporting action (SA3). Appropriate is also meant to include consideration of the costs of acquiring certain RI. Even if it would be useful and relevant, demanding some RI may not be worth the costs in terms of time and resources to produce it.

Several of these Capacity assumptions (A3 and A4) would be realized through institutionalized arrangements in place. A2 can probably be assumed, i.e., that people are motivated. The remaining three, however, could need **supporting actions** to bring them about: an effective knowledge management system (**SA2** for A7), training or coaching (**SA1** for A8), and the generating new context specific RI (**SA3** for A5).

None of these changes will happen quickly. There are time lags between the Needed Capacity and the Needed Practice, and between the Needed Practice and the Direct Benefits. The feedback loops reflect these time lags:

- *Feedback Loop 1:* As increased use of RI to inform learning and decision making become clearer, there will be increased efforts to enhance capacity.

- *Feedback Loop 2:* Efforts to enhance capacity will likely increase interest in the availability of RI.

Getting to MFA Needed Practice

The needed practices are that RI is considered in both learning and decision-making situations, and that MFA reports publicly on its use of RI. And indeed, learning from RI will usually result in new RI, which can then be considered when decisions are being taken, as indicated in Figure 17.

MFA Needed Behaviour (Practice)

- R9. MFA use of RI made public
- R8. RM is considered in making different decisions across MFA
- R7. RI is considered in learning in MFA

We believe that a key goal of RBM is that RI is considered for learning and decision-making.

Keeping in mind the time lag involved, to realize the Needed Practices several additional assumptions are needed.

Behaviour (Practice) Assumptions

- A12. There is ongoing leadership and support for using RI
- A11. The accessed RI is understandable and seen as credible
- A10. Early discussions on RI are found useful

- A9. MLA wants to demonstrate its use of RI

Discussion on Assumptions

Several of these assumptions are needed in part to acknowledge the fact that the desired practice will take some time to become routine. Thus, there needs to be some early success in considering RI (A10); if early on the 'consideration of RI' is seen as a waste of time (for whatever reason), current practice is unlikely to change. Leadership needs to continue to visibly support the use of RI (A12). Senior leadership support is an oft noted requirement for use of RI to become routine in an organisation. Indeed, as management over time moves within MFA, this should further support RI use throughout the organisation.

A9 is part of 'accountability for learning' whereby individuals, teams and the organisation need to demonstrate that they are indeed using and learning from RI. Without some accountability for learning, use of RI is unlikely to be taken seriously.

- *Feedback Loop 3:* As RI is increasingly seen as a routine and useful part of learning and decision-making, there will be an increased interest in having use made of RI.

Getting to Immediate Benefits

The Immediate Benefits stage in the ToC is an addition to the TOC set out in the Inception report. It was felt that the jump between considering RI and the direct benefits was too large; that an import result needed to be added, namely, the immediate consequences of considering RI. These are, as outlined in the start of this Annex: (1) the learnings that occur, in particular documented lessons learned and insights gained, and (2) the decisions that reflect the RI considered. Thus,

Immediate MFA Benefits

- R10. Documented lessons learned and insights
- R11. As appropriate, decisions that reflect the RI

It is recognized that considering RI also results in new tacit results information, and this RI would be used to inform the decisions being taken. Here the intent is to focus on the new RI that is accessible across MFA in documented form (R10). R11 acknowledges that while RI can be routinely considered when taking decisions, as set out in the rationale assumptions behind the ToC, other information and factors also need to be considered. As a result, not all decisions will reflect the relevant RI.

Immediate MFA Benefits Assumptions

- A16. There are incentives to document tacit RI
- A15. The RI considered includes information on the 'why' and 'how'
- A14. Other decision factors do not push out the RI
- A13. Managers & staff have the needed authority & flexibility to implement decisions taken

Discussion on Assumptions

Documenting lessons learned and insights that individual or teams have arrived at takes time. Without some incentive (A16), these learnings will not likely be documented, remaining only as tacit RI, not readily available to others. Further, we learned from our surveys and interviews, that simple RI such as data on indicators (the 'what') is often not seen as very helpful in informing learning and decisions. What is greatly valued is RI on how and why changes in intended results have been influenced (or not) by MFA efforts (A15). A15 is a refinement of the relevance aspect of A7.

A reasonable expectation is that, after considering relevant RI, many decisions will indeed reflect the RI, even after other factors have been considered (A12). If other factors always dominate, then there will be no, or very little decisions made reflecting RI. Finally, if managers and staff take the time to consider Ri and take decisions that indeed reflect the RI, they would expect to be able to implement those decisions. Without that flexibility, it is hard to imagine the RI being taken seriously.

- *Feedback Loop 4:* As the value of decisions that reflect RI becomes apparent, part of learning and decision-making, there will be an increased in decisions that do reflect RI.

Getting to Direct Benefits

Direct Benefits

- R14. Effective planning and implementation for developmental results

- R13. An adapting and flexible, learning organisation

- R12. Public accountability for learning

This evaluation is focussed on learning and decision-making. It does not explore in any detail the direct benefits shown. We have not set out specific assumptions for the Direct Benefits. R12 and R14 follow from the rationale assumptions. R13 should follow logically from the set of earlier assumptions.

Getting to Impact

As a "learning organisation", the MFA will (if managed well) deliver better on its development mandate (R16). In addition, demonstrating RI and knowledge-informed learning and decision-making contributes to increasing trust and support for the MFA by its domestic stakeholders (R15).

ANNEX 7: FINDINGS OF EARLIER EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS

In this section we briefly summarize the main observations made in a few key evaluations and reports, namely:

- The 2011 Evaluation of Results Based Approach in Finnish Development Cooperation (MFA, 2011);

- The 2015 RBM evaluation (MFA, 2015);

- The most recent OECD DAC peer review of Finland (OECD, 2017a);

- Audit of the MFA performance management system (KPMG, 2013b);

- Follow-up of the 2013 performance management audit (KPMG, 2016b);

- The status and development perspectives of the evidence-based decision making in the Finnish State Administration (Saarteinen, Sirenius, & Skog, 2018a).

Following the evaluation framework, we structure the observations as follows: supply of results knowledge, capacity for using results knowledge, demand for results knowledge and benefits of improved learning and decision-making.

Group 1: Supply of results knowledge

The 2011 RBM evaluation concluded that the MFA did not have a well-functioning RBM system or system for managing for results. There was 'no information system to inform the policies and strategies of MFA nor is there a conduit for learning' (MFA, 2011). The extent of reporting was deemed to be inadequate to hold the MFA accountable for the development programme, while project reporting was poor quality and focused on the implementation of activities or financial information. Procedures to assure the quality of projects were not effective, while neither Finland's development cooperation policy, regional policy frameworks or sector policies included measurable objectives or indicators. The MFA's case management system AHA did not allow for retrieval of documents, comparative analysis of development interventions or access to information on performance.

The 2015 RBM evaluation noted that MFA policies[8] for development cooperation exhibited poor target-setting qualities which made it difficult to monitor their implementation in a meaningful way (MFA, 2015). Since it takes time until Development Policy Programs (DPPs) can influence development activities and results, there was a risk that results originating from earlier DPP are reported under different goals of a subsequent DPP. This threatened the relevance of results monitoring by encouraging window-dressing (creative reporting to make old projects fit new policies) or by silently dropping some DPP targets, reached or not reached, without discussion.

Another challenge to the relevance of reported results was the large number of more detailed downstream policies, and that the validity of their status was not clear. As with the DPPs, it was not clear with respect to which targets M&E should be conducted.

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8 The Development Policy Programs of 2004, 2007 and 2012 and other, more detailed "downstream" policy guidance documents.

The evaluation commended the progress made with RBM along some policy channels, for example the formulation of bilateral country strategies and multilateral influencing plans, both with associated reporting. Overall, there didn't seem to exist a standardised, systematic process for distilling results knowledge and incorporating it into policy formulation on the corporate level.

The 2013 audit of the MFA performance management system concluded that the starting point for efficient management in the ministry was good, but the functionality of the system was still to be developed (KPMG, 2013b). A special challenge for design, management and the reporting was the target setting: the large number of goals set out in the planning documents made it difficult to prioritize operations and monitor their achievement, especially when the goals were usually described verbally and the assessment criteria and indicators were missing. While the audit recognized that the aim was to use systematically the electronic Case Management System (AHA-KYT) as project management tool by the Ministry and all the delegations, it still recommended the strengthening of information systems to support result-based management in planning and tracking results.

The 2013 audit report was followed by a monitoring report in 2016, which noted that the number of MFA strategies had been reduced to four but the ministry's operational and financial plan (TTS) for 2016– 2019 still had six priorities and under them 25 goals (KPMG, 2016b). Since the 2013 audit report their number had increased by seven. In the same time, the results set for impact and operational performance numbered 61 which was one third less than earlier. Much of the emphasis was still in monitoring activities and outputs rather than results. The report concluded that the development of indicators and measures was still under way.

The monitoring report also noted that the electronic transaction system (AHA-KYT) had reinforced the monitoring and control of the use of funding. Along this "data repository" project, data collection and reporting had been extended, such as reporting to OECD DAC.

In 2018 the State Treasury made a detailed analysis of the status and development perspectives of the evidence-based decision making in the Finnish state administration, including a needs assessment study (Saarteinen et al., 2018a). The study was implemented through a series of workshops in eight ministries and the State Audit Office, but the presented views did not necessarily represent more than a small part of each organisation. A separate workshop was organized in the MFA and the participants scored the difference between the current state and the target state in different proposals to improve knowledge management of four aspects: leadership, management and organisational culture; knowledge and capabilities; technologies and tools; and availability and usability of data and information. The current state and the development needs for different aspects were identified by workshop participants.

Regarding the availability and usability of data and information, an IBM Cognos system has been built to report all financial information and automatic, partly visualized reports are available for different needs. There is plenty of need for information that is not collected or is collected only manually; sometimes the information is contradictory. In terms of result reporting, the challenges are related to data on effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to technology and tools, few individuals have access to analytic tools or to Cognos. The AHA-KYT system has significant challenges, as does the integration between different systems.

Based on the overall assessment, the needs in state administration are focused on shared data analysis and visualization services. There is a large demand for knowledge management and its development in the state administration. It was found that a major obstacle to the implementation of knowledge management is the lack of a common knowledge architecture, which is perceived as contributing to the slowness and difficulty in accessing the necessary knowledge. The interviewed organisations also identified the need to develop know-how both at management and at expert level, especially in terms of competence on the management related to the evidence of their own substance and on measuring and analysing their effectiveness.

A key observation was also the widely recognized need to break down silo structures in the activities and information. The dismantling of the silos is one of the key tasks of the *Tietokiri* project, which started in 2017 and will run until the end of 2019. The project also aims to promote the formation of a common knowledge architecture in order to develop information management in a digital society.

The 2017 OECD DAC peer review observed that while Finland generated a substantial amount of knowledge through monitoring and evaluation, it didn't make best use of this knowledge (OECD, 2017a). Identified issues were the difficult-to-access knowledge management system, and the absence of a system-wide mechanism to capture lessons and promote findings from evaluations, reviews and results monitoring.

Group 2: Capacity for using results knowledge

The 2011 RBM evaluation found that there was a major gulf between staff employed as technical advisors, who held the institutional knowledge and skills for development cooperation and career diplomats who managed development programmes (MFA, 2011). Although a high proportion of staff had been trained in RBM topics and considered themselves competent, the evaluation observed that in practice they lacked the practical skills or application to manage and design results-based projects.

The 2013 audit report noted that Ministry was not monitoring the utilization of information produced through research and studies, while the recommendations of bilateral development project evaluations were usually taken into account quite well (KPMG, 2013b). It was recommended that ex post evaluation would be one way to explore the use and usefulness of research results and that the Ministry should strengthen monitoring of the results of decentralized evaluations through the introduction of a formal process. The 2016 follow-up reported that to improve the response and follow-up processes of the management of decentralized evaluations the Ministry had introduced the standard 1/2015 (KPMG, 2016b). This requires that units have to formalize the follow-up of evaluation recommendations (management response) and that the evaluation unit must carry out meta-evaluations every 1–2 years to assess the quality and content of the decentralized evaluations.

For knowledge and capabilities in using the data and information, the 2018 State Treasury report concluded that the reports do have information about what happened but they don't necessarily answer the question "why something happened"; also, the management aims to promote management by theme, but there is no clear link between the higher level objectives and data or knowledge management (Saarteinen et al., 2018a). Information is collected *ad hoc* rather than systematically, while in the absence of a proper archiving system, the high turnover of staff leads to the loss of institutional memory. Also, the information on misuse or suspicions of misuse of development funds has been collected but was not available in one place.

The 2017 OECD DAC peer review noted the absence of long-term career prospects for special career employees which made it difficult to ensure availability of necessary development cooperation expertise (OECD, 2017a). It found that a lack of qualified staff coupled with high turnover undermined the quality of Finland's aid. The review also noted the importance of locally-employed staff, but that input into strategic planning and monitoring from that group was reduced because they had limited opportunities to participate in field visits, decision-making and training.

In view of reductions of research budgets, less staff and increased accountability, the review found it critical that the MFA used innovative learning and training tools to maintain institutional memory and to share knowledge widely. To this end, the review recommended to "expand the use of existing knowledge platforms and develop a system that can easily connect officials, partners and other stakeholders with relevant information and evidence to improve decision making."

Group 3: Demand for results knowledge

The 2011 RBM evaluation found that the institutional culture of the MFA was not supportive of managing for results, with a highly bureaucratic and risk adverse culture (MFA, 2011). A low priority was given by managers to monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Human resource systems did not give prominence to managing for results and there was a lack provision for incentives/rewards to promote this. Reforms were constrained by the shortage of personnel well conversant with development cooperation which was further aggravated by a rapid staff turn-over in posts. According to the evaluation, the culture and systems of MFA did not sufficiently support managing for results.

The 2015 RBM evaluation noted that policy formulation and budgeting processes at the MFA had remained largely separate, and that budget planning itself was not results-driven (MFA, 2015). This had two consequences. First, results reporting vis-a-vis the MFA's development cooperation policies and plans was not demanded by MFA's principal four-year planning and reporting system (TTS). Second, there was no systematic reporting in the TTS on the level of results. Together, this led interviewed staff to conclude that management was largely input- and not results-based.

The 2013 audit found that due to the inefficiencies of the performance accounting the information contained in the MFA annual report on operational efficiency could not be considered as accurate and sufficient (KPMG, 2013b). The MFA also reported more the operations rather than the results and the annual report did not show how much and for which activities the Ministry had used the funds or how much revenue it had earned. According to the 2016 monitoring report, the Ministry had worked on improving result-based management as indicated by implementing the 2013–2014 plan for developing RBM as well as the recommendations of the 2015 RBM evaluation. It was, however, also concluded that the implementation of RBM and related reporting would require further development of monitoring and information systems.

The audit also concluded that the units should improve risk analysis as the audit was not able to identify risks or mitigation measures in the unit-specific TTS. The 2016 follow-up report found that the guidance and instructions for risk analysis had improved but risk management was still fragmented and the linkage between risk analysis and everyday work required further development (KPMG, 2016b).

The 2015 RBM evaluation found that the MFA had not yet been able to create an organisational environment conducive to RBM. The organisational culture remained largely risk-averse and prioritized diligent compliance and accountability over careful experimentation and learning. The evaluators concluded that although not uncommon in public service agencies, this represented a serious barrier for successful implementation of RBM.

The 2015 RBM evaluation also analysed the MFA's policy steering mechanisms[9] and its principal bodies, the Development Policy Steering Group (DPSG), the Quality Assurance Board (QAB), the Development Policy Committee (DPC), and the High-Level Network for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). All these bodies are recipients of some kind of results knowledge in the form of RBM-related reporting as basis for their deliberations and decision-making processes.

For leadership, management and organisational culture, the State Treasury Report of 2018 concluded on the basis of a workshop held at the MFA that currently the method of management is based on trust and experience (Saarteinen et al., 2018a). It is not always thought what kind of skills and information is really needed while mostly the easily available information and basic analysis is used. Evidence-based management is not considered as a crosscutting approach and it is often done separately.

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9 With respect to development policy and development cooperation.

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Group 4: Benefits of improved learning and decision-making

The 2015 RBM evaluation found that MFA policy documents contained very little explicit reference to learning from results (MFA, 2015). From analysing policy formulation processes the evaluation found however that there was attention to collecting and using results knowledge even if this was not mentioned explicitly in the resulting policies, for example to explain policy choices made.

The 2017 OECD DAC peer review commended Finland for using results information for "focusing on its contribution to development results" (OECD, 2017a). The review pointed out that Finland needs to invest resources in developing a results culture and pointed out that this was challenging when human resources, research and training budgets were diminishing.

ANNEX 8: SURVEY APPROACH AND ANALYSIS

This annex provides more details on the survey method and results. The first section provides comprehensive info on the survey approach, response statistics, and analysis. The second section discloses all survey results in detail as reference to the summarized survey charts and tables in the evaluation report. This supplement could be further used by MFA staff or its respective knowledge management units for additional analysis or to substantiate future decision making in the context of MFAs knowledge management.

Target Groups and Timelines

To analyse knowledge management processes at the MFA, two target groups were specified for the survey:

1. **MFA Helsinki staff** targeting at those working at the MFA in Helsinki who fulfilled the following requirements:

   – Staff working at the following units including all sub-units: Department for Development Policy (KEO), Department for Africa and the Middle East (ALI), Department for the Americas and Asia (ASA), Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Development Evaluation (EVA-11).Staff not solely working in an administrative function and staff of a lower hierarchy than "Director General" and "Deputy Director General" of the respective unit.

2. **MFA Non-Helsinki staff** aiming at MFA staff working at embassies, civil society organisations, or similar institutions abroad.

Both targets groups answered the same questionnaire with one difference: Non-Helsinki staff received an additional question at the beginning of the survey asking for the respondent's name. This was necessary to receive accurate data sets and to avoid any duplication when analysing the results.

The following approaches were applied for collecting the answers of the two different target groups:

- Direct targeting: For targeting MFA Helsinki staff the evaluation team send out individualized email invitations. The email addresses were obtained from a staff directory put forward by the MFA as well as from the MFA website.

- Indirect targeting: For targeting non-Helsinki MFA staff the evaluation team created a generic link for accessing the questionnaire and sent it out with email invitations to the Heads of Development Cooperation in relevant embassies, to the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in New York, and to selected additional contacts working with development banks. They were then asked to forward the survey invitation to relevant colleagues at the MFA outside of Helsinki.

The survey was administered in English.

Response rate

The following table illustrates the number of responses received from survey invitees and the number of eligible responses which were finally included in the survey analysis. For Helsinki staff the table also indicates statistics on the response rate. Due to the indirect targeting approach for collecting feedback from Non-Helsinki staff these statistics are not applicable for that group.

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Table 6. Response rate.

Target Group	Way of targeting	No. of invitations sent out	Bounced invitations	Number of respond-ents	Share of respond-ents*	No. of respond-ents included in analysis	Share of respond-ents*
Helsinki Staff	direct	146	11	41	30%	32	24%
Non-Helsinki Staff	indirect	n.a.	0	25	n.a.	20	n.a.

(*Bounced invitations are deducted)

The level of completion of the questionnaire was decisive if a survey response set from a respondent was included in the survey analysis. Respondents (both target groups) who replied to less the 20% of all survey questions (multiple answer sets included) where excluded from the survey analysis. In terms of data confidentiality, the identity of respondents and individual responses were treated strictly confidential and were only visible to the evaluation team.

Survey timeline

The timeline of the survey can be obtained from the following table. All dates were set in accordance to the overall timeframe of this evaluation. Subsequent to the launch and first reminder, the decision to extend the deadline and send a second reminder had been made to ensure a greater number of respondents.

Table 7. Survey timeline.

Approach of collecting answers	Individualized email invitation	General link disseminated
Date survey launched	18.3.2019	18.3.2019
Date survey deadline extended (1st time)	24.3.2019	24.3.2019
Date survey deadline extended (2nd time)	27.3.2019	27.3.2019
Date last survey results received	29.3.2019	03.4.2019
Date survey finally closed (according to last reminder)	29.3.2019	29.3.2019

Margin of error

In order to reveal how trustworthy the survey results are the margin of error was calculated. This statistical number highlights to what degree the answers from the surveyed sub-population resemble the answers if all survey invitees had answered the questionnaire. Accordingly, the representativeness of the results increases with the size of the surveyed sample.

The margin of error E was calculated using the following formula:

$$E = Z \times \sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1}} \times \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$$

It informs about the representatives of the survey sample in relation to the whole survey population. While N stands for the whole survey population size (all persons of the target group), n indicates the sample size (number of persons included in the analysis). Z which is here 1.96 is a standard score for a statistical confidence level of 95%. P indicates the probability of proportion of the population and is assumed to be equal to 0.5.

Table 8. Survey sample size.

Target Group	No. of invitations sent out	No. of respondents included in analysis	Margin of error (95% confidence interval)
Helsinki Staff	146	32	15.3%
Non-Helsinki Staff	n.a.	20	n.a.

Due to the decent response rate among the MFA Helsinki staff the margin of error[10] of that group is relatively high and accounts to 15.3%. In fact, this means the following for the survey results: If 50% of the survey participants from the MFA in Helsinki chose answer "abc" to a survey question, with a confidence level of 95%, between 35% to 65% of the survey invitees from the MFA in Helsinki would have provided response "abc". The indirect targeting approach for requesting input to the survey from MFA's Non-Helsinki staff made it impossible to calculate the margin of error for that group. Other factors like misunderstanding of questions or self-selection[11] might bias survey responses and should also be taken into account when reading the survey results section in this annex.

Survey questions and question types

Overall, the survey comprised 31 questions[12] which are listed below:

Table 9. List of survey questions.

No	Survey question	Type	Detail on type
0	Please tell us your name	Closed	No comment
1	Where do you currently work?	Closed	Comment
2	If you work for the MFA in Helsinki, please choose your department and unit from the drop-down list below.	Closed	Comment
3	For how long have you worked in your current position?	Closed	No comment
4	For how long have you worked at the MFA in total? If you worked somewhere else in-between only count the time at the MFA.	Closed	No comment
5	During your time at the MFA, how many different positions have you held?	Closed	No comment
6	What career track are you currently on? Please choose only one option.	Closed	Comment
7	Do you feel comfortable answering survey questions based on your current position or would you prefer to answer them based on a previous position you held at the MFA, for example in case you rotated recently into your current position?	Closed	Comment
8	Please indicate how much time and effort you spend in helping to produce, collect or report on the following types of results information and knowledge. Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
9	Along the same categories, what types of results information and knowledge do you find most useful for informing learning in your team, unit and department? Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
10	And the same question with a focus on decision-making: Along the same categories, what types of results information and knowledge do you find most useful for informing decision-making in your team, unit and department? Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
11	Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about access to results information and knowledge. Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	No comment
12	To sum up this section, please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements. Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	No comment

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10 This measure can of course not exceed 0% or 100%.

11 People who are more positive about the surveyed topic might respond more likely to that survey.

12 An additional question was added to the questionnaire for Non-Helsinki staff as explained in the 1.1 section of this annex. This question was not included in the counting here and is marked with a 0 at the beginning of the table.

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No	Survey question	Type	Detail on type
13	Motivation. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your motivation for using results information and knowledge to inform learning and decision-making. Please choose one option for each row. Some statements are provocative to trigger your reaction; they do not necessarily reflect findings or opinions of the evaluation team.	Closed	Comment
14	Opportunity. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about opportunities for using results information and knowledge to inform learning and decision-making. Please choose one option for each row. Some statements are provocative to trigger your reaction; they do not necessarily reflect findings or opinions of the evaluation team.	Closed	Comment
15	Capability. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your capability of using results information and knowledge to inform learning and decision-making. Please choose one option for each row. Some statements are provocative to trigger your reaction; they do not necessarily reflect findings or opinions of the evaluation team.	Closed	Comment
16	To what degree is it required to bring results knowledge into the MFA's decision-making processes? Please choose only one option.	Closed	Comment
17	In the last two years, in your opinion, to what degree have the following factors influenced decision-making at the MFA? Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
18	And asking the same question regarding the future: In your opinion, to what degree should these factors influence decision-making at the MFA? Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
19	How frequently have you considered specific results information and knowledge for learning and/or informing decisions? Please choose only one option; the following survey questions will depend on your answer.	Closed	No comment
20	What was the results information and knowledge considered for? Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
21	Under what types of situations/occasions did you make use or referred to results information and knowledge? Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
22	What type of results information and knowledge was used? Please choose one or multiple options.	Closed	Comment
23	What was the source of the results information and knowledge? Please choose one or multiple options.	Closed	Comment
24	To what extent do MFA's policies, strategies, work plans, structure and processes, and interventions reflect lessons learned from results information? Please choose only one option.	Closed	Comment
25	Please describe briefly one example where you felt results knowledge successfully informed learning and/or decision-making, and how this led to improved performance and results.	Open-ended	Prompted
26	Please describe briefly one example where you felt an opportunity was missed because available results knowledge was not used to inform learning and/or decision-making, and what consequences this had.	Open-ended	Prompted
27	Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please choose one option for each row.	Closed	Comment
28	If you know, could you briefly describe a case where the MFA has publicly reported on using results information and knowledge to increase its performance and impact?	Open-ended	Prompted
29	What is the one thing that does already work well at the MFA and should not be changed regarding knowledge management and using results knowledge to inform learning and decision-making?	Open-ended	Prompted
30	What is the one thing the MFA should change in terms of knowledge management and using results knowledge to inform learning and decision-making?	Open-ended	Prompted
31	Do you have any additional feedback for us?	Open-ended	Not prompted

The questionnaire consisted of 25 closed-ended questions with predefined answer options as well as six stand-alone open-ended questions. 19 of the closed-ended questions had open-ended questions annexed which gave respondents the opportunity to add their additional comments and individual input. All six stand-alone open questions were either prompted (in five cases) when narrowing down the answer scope or (in one case) not prompted.

Colour coding

A colour coding scale was applied to the tables in the survey results section of this annex in order to highlight the results and to enable the reader to grasp the conclusions quickly. Based on the number of answers received per question higher numbers of responses are maked in GREEN, while lower numbers of responses are indicated in RED. Please find the color coding scheme here:

Color coding	No. of responses	1	2	3	4	5

Analysis of closed-ended questions

For assessing all closed-ended questions with predetermined answer options all responses per answer set were counted in absolute numbers. Additionally, all relative numbers were calculated respectively. Both statistical numbers are indicated in the subsequent charts including as well as excluding all respondents who did not answer the question.

Analysis of open-ended questions

Due to the relatively small number of survey respondents, sometimes low numbers of qualitative answers received per open question made it difficult to assess answers to open-ended questions systematically. Outputs, statements or suggestions from respondents to open survey questions were therefore directly considered, at par with feedback on specific issues received in interviews. This annex only discloses the numbers of responses received per open-ended question quantitively. The same applies to open-ended answers which were annexed to closed-ended questions.

Survey Results

In total 52 survey respondents were eligible for the analysis. All their responses are summarized in this survey results section:

Table 10. Results survey question 1

Question 1: Where do you currently work?				
Responses	No. of Respondents[a]	Share of Respondents	No. of Respondents[b]	Share of Respondents
I work for the MFA in Helsinki	36[13]	69%	36	71%
I work in an embassy (please specify below)	14	27%	14	27%
I work in another posting outside of Helsinki (please specify below)	1	2%	1	2%
No response	1	2%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**51**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

If you work outside of Helsinki, please tell us where and in what position: 17 additional comments

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13 Four respondents collected through indirect targeting and previously referred to as "Non-Helsinki staff" indicated that they are actually working at the MFA in Helsinki

Table 11. Results survey question 2

Question 2: If you work for the MFA in Helsinki, please choose your department and unit from the drop-down list below. [14]				
Responses	**No. of Respondents[a]**	**Share of Respondents**	**No. of Respondents[b]**	**Share of Respondents**
Department for Development Policy, Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy – KEO-70	3	6%	3	8%
Development Evaluation – EVA-11	4	8%	4	11%
Department for Development Policy, Unit for General Development Policy – KEO-10	2	4%	2	5%
Department for Development Policy, Unit for Sustainable Development and Climate Policy – KEO-90	5	10%	5	14%
Department for Development Policy, Unit for Administrative and Legal Development Cooperation Matters – KEO-80	3	6%	3	8%
Department for Development Policy, Unit for Sectoral Policy – KEO-20	7	13%	7	19%
Department for Africa and the Middle East, Deputy Director General – ALI-02	2	4%	2	5%
Department for Africa and the Middle East, Unit for the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa – ALI-20	3	6%	3	8%
Political Department, Unit for Human Rights Policy – POL-40	1	2%	1	3%
Department for Development Policy, Unit for Civil Society – KEO-30	2	4%	2	5%
Department for Development Policy, Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation – KEO-50	1	2%	1	3%
Department for the Americas and Asia, Unit for Eastern Asia and Oceania – ASA-10	1	2%	1	3%
Department for the Americas and Asia, Deputy Director General – ASA-02	1	2%	1	3%
Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Unit for Eastern Europe and Central Asia – ITÄ-20	1	2%	1	3%
Consular Service, Service Centre for Entry Permits – KPA-30	1	2%	1	3%
No response	15	29%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**37**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

Please comment if your department or unit is not listed: 3 additional comments

14 This survey question offered more response options, but the table above only indicates answer options which were actually ticked on

Table 12. Results survey question 3

Question 3: For how long have you worked in your current position? [15]		
Responses	**No. of Respondents[a]**	**Share of Respondents**
Less than 3 months	4	8%
3 to 6 months	5	10%
6 months to 1 year	5	10%
between 1 and 2 years	15	29%
between 2 and 3 years	8	15%
between 3 and 4 years	4	8%
between 4 and 5 years	3	6%
between 5 and 6 years	2	4%
between 6 and 7 years	1	2%
between 7 and 8 years	2	4%
between 8 and 9 years	2	4%
between 20 and 25 years	1	2%
No response	0	0%
Total	**52**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses

Table 13. Results survey question 4

Question 4: For how long have you worked at the MFA in total? If you worked somewhere else in-between only count the time at the MFA.				
Responses	**No. of Respondents[a]**	**Share of Respondents**	**No. of Respondents[b]**	**Share of Respondents**
Less than 3 months	0	0%	0	0%
3 to 6 months	2	4%	2	4%
6 months to 1 year	1	2%	1	2%
between 1 and 2 years	4	8%	4	8%
between 2 and 3 years	1	2%	1	2%
between 3 and 4 years	2	4%	2	4%
between 4 and 5 years	1	2%	1	2%
between 5 and 6 years	3	6%	3	6%
between 6 and 7 years	5	10%	5	10%
between 7 and 8 years	1	2%	1	2%
between 8 and 9 years	1	2%	1	2%
between 9 and 10 years	4	8%	4	8%
between 10 and 15 years	16	31%	16	31%
between 15 and 20 years	4	8%	4	8%
between 20 and 25 years	2	4%	2	4%
between 25 and 30 years	4	8%	4	8%
more than 30 years	0	0%	0	0%
No response	1	2%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**51**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

15 This survey question offered more response options, but the table above only indicates answer options
which were actually ticked on

Table 14. Results survey question 5

Question 5: During your time at the MFA, how many different positions have you held?				
Responses	No. of Respondents[a]	Share of Respondents	No. of Respondents[b]	Share of Respondents
1	12	23%	12	24%
2	5	10%	5	10%
3	7	13%	7	14%
4	5	10%	5	10%
5	9	17%	9	18%
6	2	4%	2	4%
7	2	4%	2	4%
8	3	6%	3	6%
9	1	2%	1	2%
10	2	4%	2	4%
More than 10	3	6%	3	6%
No response	1	2%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**51**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

Table 15. Results survey question 6

Question 6: What career track are you currently on? Please choose only one option.				
Responses	No. of Respondents[a]	Share of Respondents	No. of Respondents[b]	Share of Respondents
Diplomat	11	21%	11	23%
Specialist	33	63%	33	69%
Administrative Staff	1	2%	1	2%
Locally hired staff (e.g. embassy)	3	6%	3	6%
No response	4	8%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**48**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

Other, please specify your answer: 6 additional comments

Table 16. Results survey question 7

Question 7: Do you feel comfortable answering survey questions based on your current position or would you prefer to answer them based on a previous position you held at the MFA, for example in case you rotated recently into your current position?		
Responses	No. of Respondents[a]	Share of Respondents
Yes (I'll answer all survey questions thinking of my current position)	47	90%
No (I would prefer to answer all survey questions thinking of a position I held until recently at the MFA)	5	10%
No response	0	0%
Total	**52**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses

In case you answered "no", please tell us what that earlier position was: 5 additional comments

Table 17. Results survey question 8

Question 8: Please indicate how much time and effort you spend in helping to produce, collect or report on the following types of results information and knowledge. Please choose one option for each row.						
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**too much**	**an appropriate amount**	**too little**	**none**	**no response**	**Total**
Monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) about activities of implementing partners and related results	2	23	17	9	1	52
Analysis/evaluation of how activities of implementing partners led to results, analysis of issues and risks, and formulation of lessons learned	0	20	21	10	1	52
Monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) about activities of your team/unit and related results	1	22	16	11	2	52
Analysis/evaluation of how activities of your team/unit led to results, analysis of issues and risks, and formulation of lessons learned	1	18	20	12	1	52
Research studies and evaluations conducted by third parties not directly involved in Finnish development policy and cooperation	2	15	32	2	1	52
Other (please specify)	6					

a. Includes no responses

Table 18. Results survey question 9

Question 9: Along the same categories, what types of results information and knowledge do you find most useful for informing learning in your team, unit and department? Please choose one option for each row.					
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**very useful**	**somewhat useful**	**not useful or not needed**	**no response**	**Total**
Monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) about activities of implementing partners and related results	15	34	2	1	52
Analysis/evaluation of how activities of implementing partners led to results, analysis of issues and risks, and formulation of lessons learned	35	13	3	1	52
Monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) about activities of your team/unit and related results	15	28	8	1	52
Analysis/evaluation of how activities of your team/unit led to results, analysis of issues and risks, and formulation of lessons learned	26	18	7	1	52
Research studies and evaluations conducted by third parties not directly involved in Finnish development policy and cooperation	27	22	2	1	52
Other (please specify)	4				

a. Includes no responses

Table 19. Results survey question 10

Question 10: And the same question with a focus on decision-making: Along the same categories, what types of results information and knowledge do you find most useful for informing decision-making in your team, unit and department? Please choose one option for each row.					
Responses by Sub-questionᵃ	**very useful**	**somewhat useful**	**not useful or not needed**	**no response**	**Total**
Monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) about activities of implementing partners and related results	20	26	2	4	52
Analysis/evaluation of how activities of implementing partners led to results, analysis of issues and risks, and formulation of lessons learned	35	10	3	4	52
Monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) about activities of your team/unit and related results	16	24	8	4	52
Analysis/evaluation of how activities of your team/unit led to results, analysis of issues and risks, and formulation of lessons learned	27	14	7	4	52
Research studies and evaluations conducted by third parties not directly involved in Finnish development policy and cooperation	21	25	2	4	52
Other (please specify)	2				

a. Includes no responses

Table 20. Results survey question 11

Question11: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about access to results information and knowledge. Please choose one option for each row.							
Responses by Sub-questionᵃ	**I fully agree**	**I agree some-what**	**I disagree some-what**	**I fully disagree**	**I don't know**	**no response**	**Total**
The MFA ensures that results information and knowledge is easily accessible to me	4	15	20	13	0	0	52
The MFA's IT systems allow me to access all the information I need for learning and decision-making	3	9	22	18	0	0	52
I am confused with the many IT systems in the MFA and don't know how to operate them properly	8	20	17	7	0	0	52
AHA-KYT is an excellent system for organizing documents and collaborating along the project cycle	1	11	12	27	1	0	52
AHA-KYT is an excellent system for quickly finding useful information	1	5	9	36	1	0	52
ARKKI is an excellent system for storing information and for sharing it with others	1	7	23	15	6	0	52

Question11: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about access to results information and knowledge. Please choose one option for each row.							
Responses by Sub-question[a]	I fully agree	I agree some-what	I disagree some-what	I fully disagree	I don't know	no response	Total
The MFA does not have a work-able system in place for access-ing and working with results information	24	20	3	2	3	0	52
MFA advisers quickly provide me results information that I need in my work	7	12	20	7	6	0	52
I am able to access results infor-mation through other members of my team	7	29	11	3	2	0	52
I rely on informal systems for accessing information i.e col-leagues who previously did my job or contacting colleagues in other departments.	10	26	8	6	2	0	52
I store and manage results infor-mation and knowledge by myself, for example on a USB stick or in my email inbox.	19	27	2	3	1	0	52

a. Includes no responses

Table 21. Results survey question 12

Question 12: To sum up this section, please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements. Please choose one option for each row.							
Responses by Sub-question[a]	I fully agree	I agree some-what	I disagree some-what	I fully disagree	I don't know	no response	Total
The MFA produces, collects and reports on the right types of results information and knowledge (to inform learning and decision-making)	2	18	23	6	3	0	52
The MFA produces, collects and reports the right amount of results information and knowl-edge (to inform learning and decision-making)	3	19	19	7	4	0	52
The MFA's results information and knowledge is relevant	3	35	8	1	5	0	52
The MFA's results information and knowledge is credible	5	32	8	2	5	0	52
Overall, the MFA's results informa-tion and knowledge is useful	4	30	14	2	1	1	52
The MFA's results information and knowledge is accessible	2	11	28	11	0	0	52

a. Includes no responses

Table 22. Results survey question 13

Question 13: Motivation. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your motivation for using results information and knowledge to inform learning and decision-making. Please choose one option for each row. Some statements are provocative to trigger your reaction; they do not necessarily reflect findings or opinions of the evaluation team.

Responses by Sub-question[a]	I fully agree	I agree some-what	I disagree some-what	I fully disagree	I don't know	no response	Total
My superiors expect and support that I use results information and knowledge for learning and for informing decision-making	12	27	3	5	2	3	52
I feel that by challenging strategies and plans based on what I learned from results information I can be considered a troublemaker which may harm my career	5	11	13	12	7	4	52
I want to improve our performance using results information and knowledge	32	16	0	0	0	4	52
I know that I can make a difference if I learn and apply lessons from past experience	19	22	4	2	1	4	52
Making good use of results information and knowledge is recognized and rewarded in MFA	4	12	15	7	10	4	52
MFA leadership clearly and consistently promotes the use of results information and knowledge	2	21	16	7	2	4	52
My performance is based in part on my use of results information and knowledge	6	21	10	11	0	4	52
Do you have further comments about the motivation for using results information and knowledge?	8						

a. Includes no responses

Table 23. Results survey question 14

Question 14: Opportunity. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about opportunities for using results information and knowledge to inform learning and decision-making. Please choose one option for each row. Some statements are provocative to trigger your reaction; they do not necessarily reflect findings or opinions of the evaluation team.							
Responses by Sub-questionᵃ	**I fully agree**	**I agree some-what**	**I disagree some-what**	**I fully disagree**	**I don't know**	**no response**	**Total**
I have too little time for reading and making sense of important reports	26	16	2	4	0	4	52
In my team/unit we have good opportunities for meeting and discussing what we have learned	7	17	20	3	1	4	52
The MFA's training courses have helped me understand how to best use results information and knowledge in my job	2	14	17	11	4	4	52
In the MFA most learning is "learning by doing"	21	19	5	0	3	4	52
Capturing of tacit information from my colleagues and external partners is important for my learning	30	14	3	0	1	4	52
Most of my learning happens during informal interactions with my colleagues	13	24	10	0	0	5	52
There are no real opportunities for using results information and knowledge	2	19	14	11	2	4	52
When I started my job, there was an excellent handover from my predecessor; he/she provided me with what I needed to know and shared his/her experience	8	9	15	16	0	4	52
The MFA needs to invest more into drawing useful insights and actionable lessons from its reports and evaluations	31	14	2	0	1	4	52
The MFA needs to invest more into drawing useful insights and actionable lessons from studies, reports and evaluations published by other institutions	29	10	6	1	2	4	52
Do you have further comments about the opportunity for using results information and knowledge?	5						

a. Includes no responses

Table 24. Results survey question 15

Question 15: Capability. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your capability of using results information and knowledge to inform learning and decision-making. Please choose one option for each row. Some statements are provocative to trigger your reaction; they do not necessarily reflect findings or opinions of the evaluation team.							
Responses by Sub-questionᵃ	**I fully agree**	**I agree some-what**	**I disagree some-what**	**I fully disagree**	**I don't know**	**no response**	**Total**
It is difficult to find relevant and usable advice in all the results information that is available	9	20	12	3	2	6	52
There is a big difference between managing and implementing development cooperation. While there is a lot of information and knowledge related to implementation, I am lacking information about how to manage partners and contractors	3	22	12	1	9	5	52
I have the skills and know how to use, understand and apply results information and knowledge to improve performance and manage for better results	9	24	11	1	2	5	52
I do not get enough support from my team to analyze result information	1	12	19	8	7	5	52
I need training in how to draw actionable lessons from results information	12	19	10	3	3	5	52
I need training on tools for results-informed decision-making	11	22	6	3	5	5	52
Do you have further comments about the capability for using results information and knowledge?	5						

a. Includes no responses

Table 25. Results survey question 16

Question 16: To what degree is it required to bring results knowledge into the MFA's decision-making processes? Please choose only one option.				
Responses	**No. of Respondents[a]**	**Share of Respondents**	**No. of Respondents[b]**	**Share of Respondents**
It is a standard expectation and requirement	10	19%	10	23%
It is often done but is not always required	17	33%	17	39%
It is done occasionally	17	33%	17	39%
it is almost never done	0	0%	0	0%
No response	8	15%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**44**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

Do you have any comments? 5 additional comments

Table 26. Results survey question 17

Question 17: In the last two years, in your opinion, to what degree have the following factors influenced decision-making at the MFA? Please choose one option for each row.							
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**dominant for decision-making**	**important but not dominant**	**one factor among many**	**minor influence**	**hardly any influence at all**	**No response**	**Total**
Government priorities	25	17	3	0	0	7	52
The MFA's policies and strategies	17	22	6	0	0	7	52
The available budget	33	7	3	1	1	7	52
Results information and knowledge	1	5	27	8	4	7	52
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA leadership (department heads and above)	14	20	10	1	0	7	52
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA staff (unit heads and below)	2	23	14	4	2	7	52
The actions and priorities of other donors	1	16	17	10	1	7	52
International agreements and commitments	8	19	16	2	0	7	52
Priorities of partner countries	7	18	16	3	0	8	52
Priorities of partner institutions	3	12	23	6	0	8	52
Did we forget an important factor?	8						

a. Includes no responses

Table 27. Results survey question 18

Question 18: And asking the same question regarding the future: In your opinion, to what degree should these factors influence decision-making at the MFA? Please choose one option for each row.						
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**dominant**	**important**	**less important**	**negligible**	**No response**	**Total**
Government priorities	25	20	1	0	6	52
The MFA's policies and strategies	27	17	1	0	7	52
The available budget	17	22	7	0	6	52
Results information and knowledge	22	24	0	0	6	52
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA leadership (department heads and above)	1	14	27	3	7	52
Interests, experience or convictions of MFA staff (unit heads and below)	1	16	25	3	7	52
The actions and priorities of other donors	0	29	16	0	7	52
International agreements and commitments	18	26	1	0	7	52
Priorities of partner countries	21	22	1	0	8	52
Priorities of partner institutions	9	24	12	0	7	52
Any other factor that should influence decision-making at the MFA?	6					

a. Includes no responses

Table 28. Results survey question 19

Question 19: How frequently have you considered specific results information and knowledge for learning and/or informing decisions? Please choose only one option; the following survey questions will depend on your answer.				
Responses	**No. of Respondents**[a]	**Share of Respondents**	**No. of Respondents**[b]	**Share of Respondents**
regularly/routinely	14	27%	14	30%
often	19	37%	19	40%
occasionally	13	25%	13	28%
rarely or never	1	2%	1	2%
No response	5	10%		
Total	**52**	**100%**	**47**	**100%**

a. Includes no responses   b. Excludes no responses

Table 29. Results survey question 20

Question 20: What was the results information and knowledge considered for? Please choose one option for each row.					
Responses by Sub-question[a]	Mostly for this purpose	Also for this purpose	Not really for this purpose	No response	Total
My own learning	20	20	1	11	52
Learning of colleagues	3	30	8	11	52
Learning of MFA management	8	23	10	11	52
Learning of partners	5	23	12	12	52
Informing my own decisions	22	14	4	12	52
Informing decisions of colleagues	3	26	9	14	52
Informing decisions of MFA management	16	16	9	11	52
Informing decisions of partners	6	17	15	14	52
Did we forget an important purpose?	3				

a. Includes no responses

Table 30. Results survey question 21

Question 21: Under what types of situations/occasions did you make use or referred to results information and knowledge? Please choose one option for each row.						
Responses by Sub-question[a]	regularly/ routinely	often	occasion- ally	rarely or never	No response	Total
Informal conversations and interactions with colleagues (not sector advisors)	10	14	13	1	14	52
Informal conversations and interactions with sector advisors or other experts	5	16	16	1	14	52
Staff training courses	4	5	18	11	14	52
Structured learning sessions, for example workshops and seminars	7	6	19	6	14	52
Self-evaluation processes (as for example recently for country strategies)	8	10	12	7	15	52
Learning or assessing options/decisions concerning my work by myself	13	17	6	2	14	52
Annual performance discussions with my superiors	11	9	9	8	15	52
Planning and strategy meetings	12	16	8	2	14	52
Quality assurance group meetings, including preparations	11	4	12	8	17	52
Resource allocation discussions and meetings	6	13	11	7	15	52
Policy formulation	9	13	5	9	16	52

Question 21: Under what types of situations/occasions did you make use or referred to results information and knowledge? Please choose one option for each row.						
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**regularly/ routinely**	**often**	**occasion-ally**	**rarely or never**	**No response**	**Total**
Writing and submitting progress reports	12	10	6	7	17	52
Steering committee meetings	14	8	9	5	16	52
Development partner coordination meetings	10	9	10	6	17	52
Did we forget an important situation/ occasion?	1					

a. Includes no responses

Table 31. Results survey question 22

Question 22: What type of results information and knowledge was used? Please choose one or multiple options. (n=52)		
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**No. of Respondents**[a]	**Share of Respondents**
Information on specific outputs delivered	26	50%
Information on specific outcomes/impacts achieved	30	58%
Information of how MFA interventions have been implemented	27	52%
Information of how and in what manner MFA interventions made a difference	20	38%
Information on lessons learned from past MFA interventions	20	38%
Information on lessons learned from others (e.g. researchers, other development institutions)	15	29%
Did we forget an important type?	0	

a. Includes no responses

Table 32. Results survey question 23

Question 23: What was the source of the results information and knowledge? Please choose one or multiple options. (n=52)		
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**No. of Respondents**[a]	**Share of Respondents**
Monitoring reports on MFA projects and programs	28	54%
Monitoring by myself or by colleagues	21	40%
Scoping studies or research commissioned by you or your team/unit	13	25%
Colleagues in my unit	20	38%
Colleagues from other units / departments / embassies	18	35%
Project evaluations (not conducted by EVA-11)	23	44%
Central evaluations (conducted by EVA-11)	12	23%
Syntheses and meta-evaluations (conducted by EVA-11)	9	17%
Research funded by the MFA through Academy of Finland, UNU-WIDER, Nordic Africa Institute and others	13	25%
The 2018 results report (Tulosraportti)	19	37%
Sources from outside the MFA (please specify below)	16	31%
Did we forget an important source?	9	

a. Includes no responses

Table 33. Results survey question 24

Question 24: To what extent do MFA's policies, strategies, work plans, structure and processes, and interventions reflect lessons learned from results information? Please choose only one option.						
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**They fully reflect important lessons learned**	**They reflect some but not all important lessons learned**	**They don't reflect most important lessons learned**	**I don't know**	**No response**	**Total**
Policies	2	22	12	5	11	52
Strategies	3	23	10	5	11	52
Work plans	2	26	7	5	12	52
Structure and processes	2	19	12	8	11	52
Interventions	3	28	6	3	12	52
Do you have any comments?	0					

a. Includes no responses

Question 25 – open-ended question: Please describe briefly one example where you felt results knowledge successfully informed learning and/or decision-making, and how this led to improved performance and results.

10 responses provided

Question 26 – open-ended question: Please describe briefly one example where you felt an opportunity was missed because available results knowledge was not used to inform learning and/or decision-making, and what consequences this had.

12 responses provided

Table 34. Results survey question 27

Question 27: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please choose one option for each row.							
Responses by Sub-question[a]	**I fully agree**	**I agree some-what**	**I disagree some-what**	**I fully disagree**	**I don't know**	**no response**	**Total**
More evidence-based learning and decision-making will lead to more effective planning and implementation of MFA interventions	26	13	0	0	2	11	52
More evidence-based learning and decision-making will lead to more effective development outcomes	23	16	1	0	1	11	52
Publicly showing that the MFA makes use of results information for learning and decision-making will enhance governmental and public support	20	16	0	0	5	11	52
Do you have any comments?	3						

a. Includes no responses

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Question 28 – open-ended question: If you know, could you briefly describe a case where the MFA has publicly reported on using results information and knowledge to increase its performance and impact?

5 responses provided

Question 29 – open-ended question: What is the one thing that does already work well at the MFA and should not be changed regarding knowledge management and using results knowledge to inform learning and decision-making?

19 responses provided

Question 30 – open-ended question: What is the one thing the MFA should change in terms of knowledge management and using results knowledge to inform learning and decision-making?

26 responses provided

Question 31 – open-ended question: Do you have any additional feedback for us?

7 responses provided

ANNEX 9: EXPERT PAPER 'KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ORGANISATIONS'

Janet Vähämäki 2019-01-20

Summary and main conclusions

This paper reviews how knowledge management (KM) and learning aspects have been brought up in different Results Based Management (RBM) or KM evaluations and reviews on bilateral and multilateral aid donor agencies. A main interest of the review has been to search information on if/how results information has informed learning and decision-making in the organisations. However, this question has not been the focus of any of the evaluations. Quite a few aid donor organisations have a separate KM or a learning strategy, which does not form part of their RBM framework. KM is thus often seen as something broader than learning from results information. KM is often seen as implying some organisational activities, such as identifying creating, representing and distributing information and experiences. Few of the KM definitions emphasise the need to better capture knowledge embodied in the minds of individuals and their personal experience. Some of the evaluations have a narrow view on KM and have only reviewed what information exists on websites and other portals, i.e. they have not at all reviewed how information is developed and how is used. In general, it seems that adaptive management and learning are more trendy concepts today than RBM and KM.

Most evaluations have not systematically documented whether the organisations have institutionalised processes and structures for learning. The evaluation teams have mainly looked at the systems for bringing results information together. The systems are thus often seen as a proxy for learning. Some evaluations have taken a broader perspective on learning and discussed how learning takes place in informal sharing and communication, in peer-contacts and in contacts with partners. Institutionalised processes and structures for learning have mainly been established for the project preparation phase, and not for the implementation or follow-up phase.

Most RBM evaluations have come to the conclusion that results information is not used in decision-making and for learning. However, the evaluations have seldom analysed the processes or requirements, for example, whether there is an organisational requirement that results information is to be submitted prior to decision-making. Learning is often not understood as something that could be a combination of what is written in reports and personal meetings/discussions/feed-back loops.

Four evaluations provide broader descriptions of learning and decision-making processes in the organisations (UN 2018b and WB, 2014 and WB, 2015, DFID, 2014). Of these, the two WB evaluations provide the broadest analysis of how learning happens in practice. They have a perspective that learning mainly takes place through informal ways and tacit learning. The reports have not discussed other factors that influences organisational decision-making processes. They also say little about the relation between learning and decision-making.

For corporate reporting, donor organisations mainly use quantitative output and short-term outcome information. An increasing number of donors are also using standard indicators in agency-wide results frameworks. There is a lot of other information that is produced for and by staff in donor agencies that is used for learning; evaluations, research information, seminars, etc. A common finding is that quantitative results information, cannot be used for internal decision-making since it is not considered relevant, credible and useful. For decision-making purposes, it seems as staff rely more on qualitative information, information from peers and face-to face dialogue or on knowledge obtained in relations with the partners.

Most reports claim that there is not sufficient capacity within the organisations for use of results information and knowledge. Time is often raised as a constraint. Staff need to devote their time to other things, such as reporting and accountability. Some reports state that stall lack understanding and a result oriented mind-set. Knowledge and skills to analyse and disseminate data are also raised as reasons for why learning is not happening. The evaluations typically argue that insufficient staff resources have been devoted to RBM activities and that more resources are needed to do the analyses required. However, another reason for why results information is not used could simply be that the old saying of "what gets measured gets done" does not work since today, too much is measured. Not everything that is measured can be acted upon. There is simply too much information for staff to act upon.

Most evaluations state that results information is considered to a very little extent in policy direction. Results information is used to a wider extent in decision-making at project level. Moreover, results information seems to be more widely used in some contexts and by some units/departments and thematic areas. Other factors, such as disbursement pressure, political processes and decisions, pressure from advocacy groups, past promises, reputation etc. also influence decisions.

There exist several concrete examples of organisations who have promoted larger use of results information such as "smart teams", competition events, separate results tools, learning-from failure events etc. However, it seems as many of these initiatives have been implemented as separate, isolated initiatives and that they have not been able to change the overall organisational culture. It has also not been possible to find any examples of organisations where it is claimed that the whole organisation has incorporated learning as a central piece. Moreover, the evidence from RBM actually contributing to improved development results is scarce.

The typical recommendations given on how to increase learning are often quite simplistic and generic, they often just say that a recommendation is to increase use of results for learning and decision, enhance the mindset and value systems for RBM, improve staff commitment to and incentives for RBM, stimulate improved leadership and support leadership responsibility, encourage staff initiative, risk-taking and learning from failure as well as from success and to deliver more training.

Background

This paper reviews how knowledge management (KM) and learning aspects have been brought up in different Results Based Management (RBM) or KM evaluations and reviews mainly on bilateral and multilateral aid donor agencies. Some references are on other types of aid donor organisations (for example civil society organisations). Initially, only RBM evaluations and reviews were reviewed since these formed part of an assignment (and a specific search for documents) made to the OECD/DAC Results Community on RBM performance in donor agencies. A finding made from the initial analysis was that KM and learning have become neglected aspects in RBM implementation. In principle all documents state that results information mainly is produced for and used in reporting and accounting, and that its use for learning and decision-makin purposes is rare.

However, after a further search on KM and learning in aid organisations, it was found that many organisations see KM as something separate from their RBM systems; they have separate KM strategies which have been separately evaluated and reviewed. Due to time constraints for this assignment, it has not been

possible to scrutinize the KM and learning evaluations and reviews very deeply, but efforts have been made to include findings from the evaluations in the review. In total around 25 evaluations and reviews are included in the review. The section on documents reviewed contains a table of the main documents reviewed and how the documents bring up KM and learning aspects in RBM.

The paper focuses on 10 themes with specific questions:

1. Terms and concepts used

2. Strategy/approach to Knowledge Management

3. Organisational Learning Mechanisms

4. Deeper understanding of how learning happens

5. Supply of results information

6. Capacity for using results

7. Demand for results information

8. Concrete examples and evidence for RBM

9. Recommendations and lessons

10. Discussion – why is it so difficult for organisations to learn from results?

The final section discusses why it is so difficult for organisations to learn from results. It is discussed what other factors (from results and RBM) contribute to how aid organisations are managed, and to what extent one could expect that organisations actually will and are able to use results information for decision-making and learning.

Terms and concepts used

To what degree is there explicit reference to the terms/concepts (Knowledge management, Learning, Adaptive Management)? Are they explained and, if yes, how are they understood?

KM is often seen as something broader than learning from results information. KM is often seen as implying some organisational activities, such as identifying creating, representing and distributing information and experiences. Few of the KM definitions emphasise the need to better capture knowledge embodied in the minds of individuals and their personal experience. Some of the evaluations have a narrow view on KM and have only reviewed what information exists on websites and other portals, i.e. they have not at all reviewed how information is developed and how is used. In general it seems that adaptive management and learning are more trendy concepts today than RBM and KM.

The Joint Inspection Unit, JIU (2007) differentiates between meaning of knowledge, data and information in the following way:

> *Data are discrete, objective facts about events, including numbers, letters, and images without context. Information is data with some level of meaning. It is usually presented to describe a situation or condition and, therefore has added value over data. Knowledge is built on data and information and created within the individual [or the organisational unit]. Knowledge, of course, has many levels and is usually related to a given domain of interest. In its strongest form, knowledge represents understanding of the context, insights into the relationships within a system, and the ability to identify leverage points and weaknesses and to understand future implications of actions taken to resolve problems (JIU, 2007:4)*

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This definition is echoed in JIU (2016). They provide the following picture to illustrate the conceptual differences:

Figure 18. Data, information, knowledge: conceptual differences (JIU, 2016)

Knowledge
Know how, understanding, experience, insight, intution and contectualised information

Information
Contextualized, categorized, calculated and condensed data

Data
Facts and figures which relay something specific, but which are not organized in any way
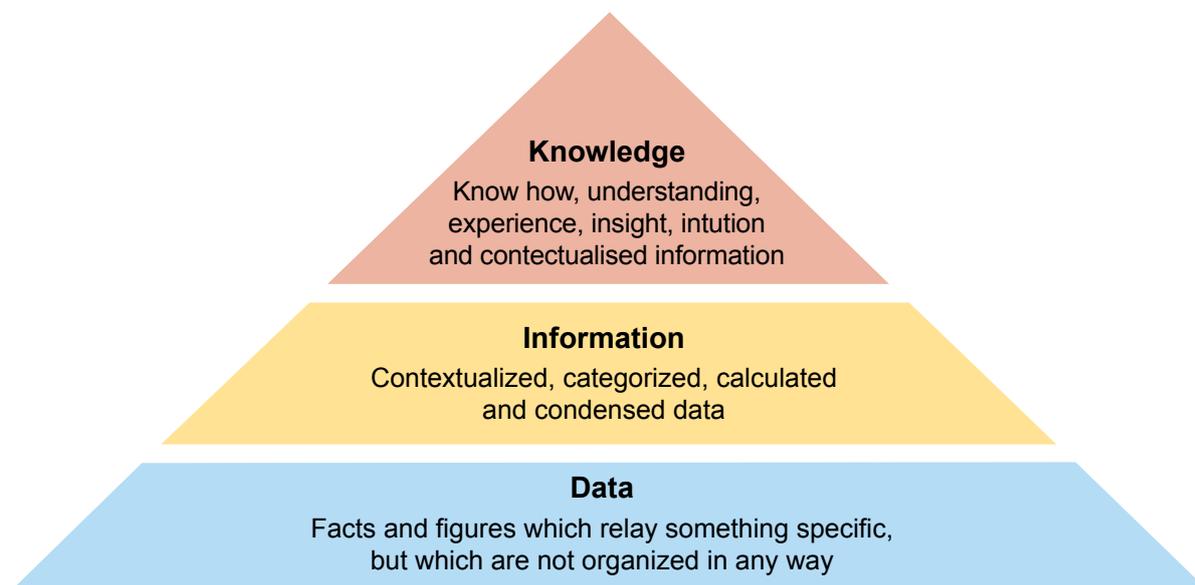
Source: JIU, 2016:8

The following definitions on KM are found in the reports:

Treating the knowledge component of business activities as an explicit concern of business reflected in strategy, policy and practice at all levels of the organisation, and making a direct connection between an organisation's intellectual assets […] and positive business result. Joint Inspection Unit (JIU, 2016:5).

Knowledge management comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organisation to identify, create, represent, distribute and enable the adoption of experiences, best practices, lessons, processes, technologies and information. This knowledge may be either embodied in individuals or embedded in organisational processes or practices. UN Habitat (JIU, 2016:6)

The mission for knowledge management […] is to foster an environment that encourages the creation, sharing and effective application of knowledge through three essential components – people, process and technology. UNEP (JIU, 2016:6)

Refers to the management of knowledge flows – into, through and out of an organisation. As such, knowledge management enhances overall organisational effectiveness by consolidating collective individual knowledge, including lessons learned from past experience, and applying it to new situations and environments, continually improving and refining what works and what doesn't in a given context. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (JIU, 2016:6).

A discipline that promotes an integrated approach for the identification, capture, retrieval, distribution, sharing, use and reuse of […] information and knowledge assets. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) (JIU, 2016:6).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines KM as "the summary of all measures designed to address its knowledge-related challenges" and recognizes that knowledge is both "a key output that it delivers to its clients, as well as a key resource that the organisation needs in order to deliver its results" (JIU, 2016:6).

UNESCO defines KM as: "the establishment of a knowledge management system involves enhancing knowledge generated during project and programme implementation under a systematic, coherent and predefined approach" (JIU, 2016:6).

IAEA considers that "corporate knowledge management is an essential component of quality management and key to quality performance in the Agency". The corporate knowledge management policy "enables the Agency to create, acquire, capture, codify, store, retain, share, use and transfer knowledge" (JIU, 2016:6).

GEF use the following definitions for KM:

- Knowledge Management (KM): the systematic processes, or range of practices, used by organisations to identify, capture, store, create, update, represent, and distribute knowledge for use, awareness and learning across and beyond the organisation.

- Knowledge Management Systems (KMS): any kind of IT system that stores and retrieves knowledge, improves collaboration, locates knowledge sources, mines repositories for hidden knowledge, captures and uses knowledge, or in some other way enhances the KM process.

- Knowledge Products and Services: these refer to outputs such as databases, publications, visual material, maps (knowledge products) and outcomes such as awareness raising, information sharing, and capacity building (knowledge services).

- Knowledge Assets: are the accumulated intellectual resources of an organisation in the form of information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills, and capabilities (GEF, 2017).

In their RBM review the JIU (2018) uses the concepts learning, knowledge management, adaptive management, accountability and learning management. However, they have not explicitly defined what they mean with the different concepts.

The WB uses the term Knowledge Management and has dedicated staff for KM but does not (based on the reports reviewed) define what it is. The (WB, 2014) uses the following definitions for learning:

- *Learning* is a process or flow, which involves obtaining or acquiring knowledge and capabilities. As related to Bank lending operations, learning occurs importantly by:(i) bringing knowledge into the design of operations (learning into lending); (ii) gaining and using knowledge in the modification and implementation of ongoing projects (learning while lending; and (iii) transmitting or feeding back lessons from projects to other projects or follow-on projects (learning from lending). *Learning in lending*, a term used throughout this program, includes (i), (ii), and (iii). To the extent that learning in lending is effective, it results in changes in operational behaviors, policies, or processes that inform current or subsequent operations and helps to build the Bank's base of operational knowledge. Thus, there is a feedback loop from knowledge to learning and back to enhanced knowledge with the purpose of improving development outcomes. Knowledge and learning in the World Bank can typically be divided into operational, what is needed to design and implement projects; sector or thematic, often geared to a community of practice; and country specific, referring to institutional capacity and political economy.

Knowledge and learning can take the following forms:

- *Documented knowledge* is written down or entered into a database. It is knowledge that is captured, stored, and collated, and in principle will remain permanently available, although the systems and technology for accessing it will influence how much it is used.

- *Tacit knowledge* is contained in the heads of individuals. It may entail technical expertise or practical experience.

- *Learning through training* refers to courses and learning events that would typically be part of a staff member's work plan and explicitly budgeted.

- *Tacit learning* refers to tacit knowledge that is transmitted to others through verbal exchanges and nonverbalized copying and mirroring of behaviors – the full gamut of interpersonal exchanges, which are powerfully mediated by connections to teams and social networks in and beyond the workplace (WB, 2014).

The WB also uses the following concepts:

- *Orientation* activities are designed to induct staff into the Bank and impart the mission, values, strategy, and culture of the institution. The activities lay foundations for basic organisational and operational knowledge and allow staff to reach full productivity more quickly.

- *Operational learning* activities are designed to build basic project processing skills to enable staff to adequately manage Bank operations and projects. This includes the Operational Core Curriculum.

- *Managerial learning* activities are designed to update and strengthen the basic managerial skills of current managers and high potential staff. They include the corporate managerial programs organized by HRS as well as managerial training activities organized by VPUs/Departments/Units for their staff.

- *Professional and technical learning* activities are designed to enhance core sectoral capacity and develop and maintain cutting-edge technical skills related to a specific profession. This includes Sector Weeks.

- *Interpersonal learning* activities are designed to develop interpersonal (e.g., working in teams, managing relationships, etc.) and communications (e.g., language training, speaking, presentation, writing, etc.) skills in individuals.

- *Unit and individual learning* activities are those designed to develop general skills in staff that are fungible across professions and/or targeted toward specific learning needs in the unit. These include computer skills (e.g., Microsoft Office, Lotus Notes). (WB, 2014:2)

Norad (2018b) does not use the concept knowledge management but defines the following concepts:

- *Learning and results culture*: a culture in which staff systematically seek out and learn from robust evidence (results data, evaluations) on what works and what does not and takes action based on this.

- *Evidence use:* Our understanding is that when results data inform decision making rather than decision making being results based, then that is the use of results information. This understanding recognises the growing literature on evidence-informed policymaking that argues that evidence is just one part of a patchwork of factors influencing decisions, alongside political and strategic considerations, expert opinion, stakeholder and public pressure, and resource constraints. We also understand that the use of results information can be both instrumental and conceptual in nature.

- *Summarising:* Summarising results is a broad term that can cover a range of different approaches to present an overview of what has changed, what an organisation's contribution to that change has been, and what has been learned in process (Norad, 2018b).

The EU evaluation uses the concept *mutual learning* and argues that joint results frameworks have the potential to support mutual learning among donors and recipients of aid. They do however not provide any examples of cases where it has.

The CIDA evaluation uses the term *horizontal learning* meaning learning within the agency, across departments.

The US state of dept discusses knowledge management only as information that exists on websites and other portals. I.e. they do not discuss how this information actually is used.

Strategy/approach to knowledge management

Is there a strategy/an approach to knowledge management? If yes, describe.

Quite a few organisations have separate KM or a learning strategies, which does not form part of their RBM framework. KM and learning activites are thus seen as something broader than only learning from results information.

The two JIU KM evaluations (one from 2007 and the other from 2016) shows that KM activities in many UN organisations evolved in between the years 2007 and 2016. The JIU KM evaluation (2007:5) stated that "most of the organisations surveyed lack a formal KM strategy" and that none of the surveyed (15 UN organisations) had undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the knowledge and information needs of their clients (internal and external). They therefore recommended all UN organisations to develop KM strategies and that the strategy should answer the following questions:

(a) What is the knowledge required by the organisation and its clients?

(b) What is the knowledge available within the organisation?

(c) What knowledge, therefore, needs to be gathered?

(d) With whom is it to be shared, how and when?

In 2016 this recommendation was followed up (JIU, 2016). It seems as the recommendation made in 2007 had spurred UN organisations to do more with KM. The evaluation found that quite many organisations now have strategies and some sustainable knowledge management policies. Some of the good examples raised in the report are:

- IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) who has a KM strategy for nuclear knowledge and information.
- IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) who, according to the JIU have adopted one of the most comprehensive KM strategies.
- WHO (World Health Organisation) has adopted a new strategy in 2010 which both deal with external and internal KM aspects.
- FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) who has a KM strategy from 2011, however according to the JIU, this was not seen as essential anylonger in 2016.
- UNFPA had a well developed KM strategy in 2009, but this was later absorbed into their strategic plan process.
- UNDP has according to JIU one of the most complex and convincing experiences in knowledge management. They have, with the help of their KM strategy, moved from not knowing what UNDP does to one of the pioneers of KM within UN (JIU, 2016).

According to JIU (2016) UNDP, IAEA, UNESCO, UNEP, UN-Habitat, WIPO and IFAD have stand-alone organisational knowledge management strategies. A conclusion drawn by JIU (2016) is that despite various concepts used, and different terminology for KM, whether KM is seen as stand alone or integrated in other strategies/planning many of the organisations seem to have done well with KM integration. They argue that despite that common terminology is not a major obstacle in the pursuit of coherent and compatible system-wide approaches to knowledge management. What matters is that there is an underlying vision.

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The JIU 2007 KM evaluation encouraged KM and RBM to implemented in a joint manner. It stated that:

> There is a growing awareness among the organisations about the need for embracing knowledge management as a key management support tool, which can be used to reinforce and complement RBM since both have the ultimate goal of making organisations more effective, thus improving their performance. Organisations could successfully implement RBM without the need to put in place a knowledge management strategy or vice versa, although the Inspectors are of the view that a concerted implementation of both concepts would be mutually reinforcing. (JIU, 2007:4)

Despite this recommendation it seems that ILO has been the only UN organisation that has embraced their KM strategy within their RBM approach (JIU, 2016). In the JIU (2016) report it is stated that UNDP also intends to integrate their KM strategy to their RBM framework.

The UN (JIU, 2018) has developed a *benchmarking framework for RBM*, of which learning, and KM forms a part. The framework consists of the following pillars:

Figure 19. UN Benchmarking framework for RBM
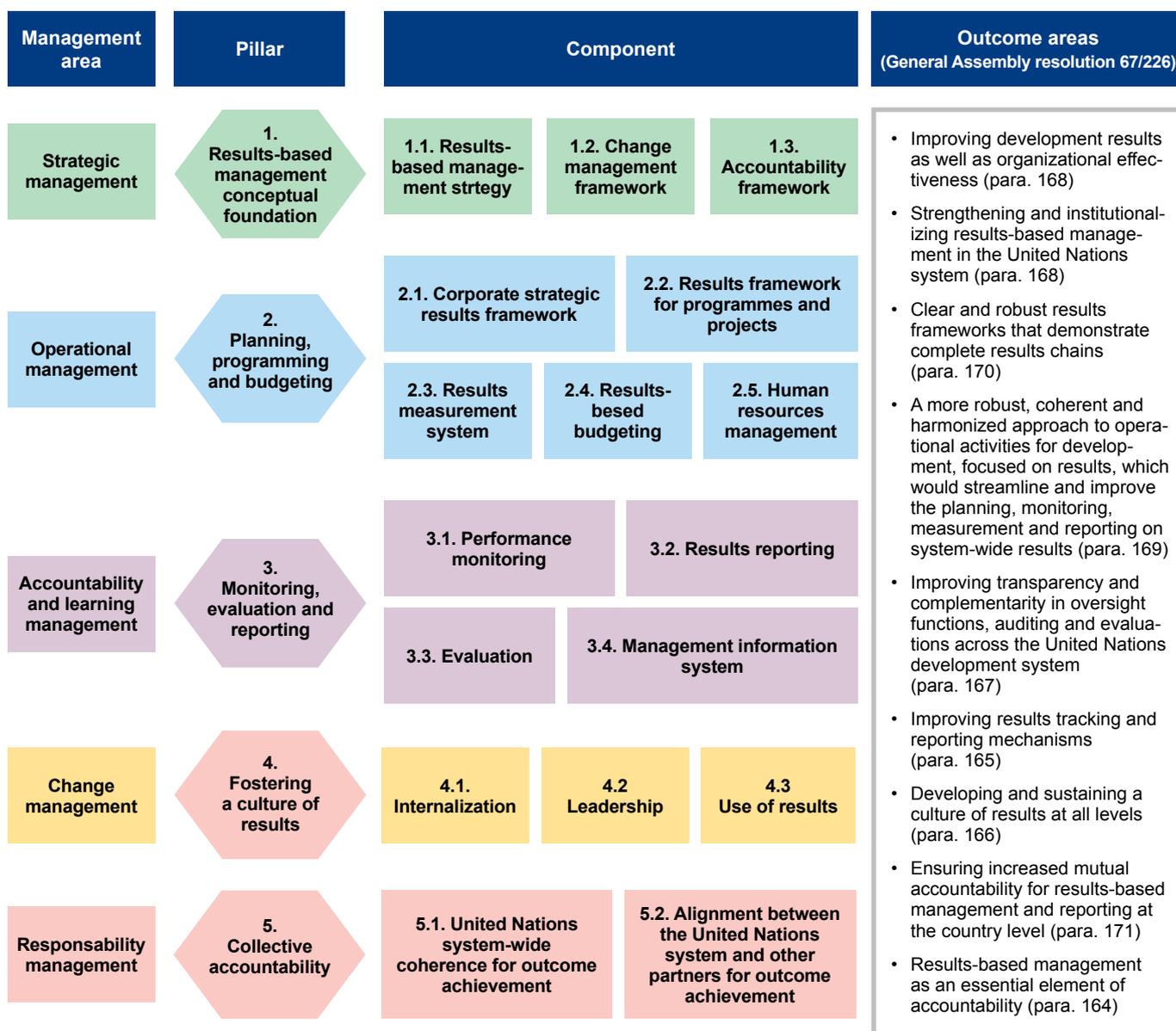
Source: UN, 2018b:52

In the description of pillar 1 the need for a plan for knowledge management is mentioned. "Pillar 1 provides the overarching vision and strategic framework for the adoption of resultsbased management as a management strategy and its role in the change and transformation needed for organisational effectiveness. The existence of such a framework is seen as critical in ensuring: common policies and norms; common understanding for flexible and professional action; and a common framework for transparency. It is also necessary to focus efforts and resources on a welldefined plan for the adoption or the adaptation of results-based management, for the development of a strategy on how to reform the system and for developing its accountability, and knowledge management" (UN, 2018b:52).

The WB documents reviewed do not mention that the WB has a separate KM or learning strategy. However, on the WB webpage it is stated that they do have a "Framework for a Knowledge-based Economy", which seems to be some sort of a KM strategy. However, has not been possible to access it through the web-page. In the evaluation on how WB learns the WB uses the following picture to demonstrate how knowledge is transferred to results (WB, 2015).

Figure 20. WB model "From Knowledge to Improved Development Outcomes: A Stylized Learning Model"
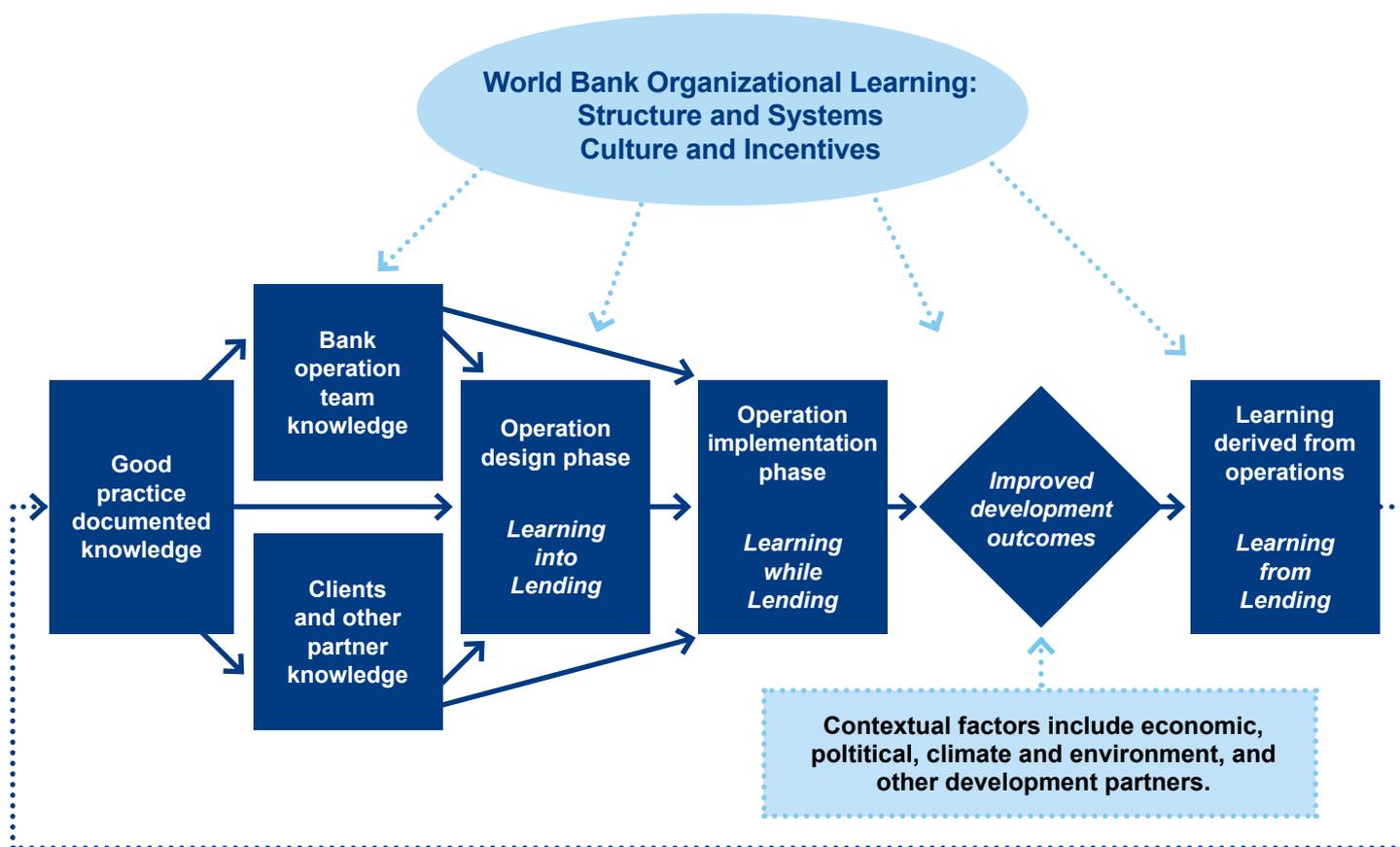
Source: From WB (2014: 3)

The picture illustrates how the process of acquiring knowledge, sharing knowledge, and engaging with it could lead to learning, which when acted on should lead to better operations and improved development outcomes. The study however recognised that the learning model is inevitably stylized; learning in lending is likely to be complex and nonlinear. None of the steps is automatic. It says that knowledge can be hoarded rather than shared; it can be selectively perceived or retained (whereby people interpret and remember facts to suit their existing biases); and opportunities to apply lessons learned to improve impact on the ground may not be seized. For each of the steps in the virtuous learning cycle to materialize, the incentives, culture, structure, and processes need to be aligned (WB, 2014:3).

Both the WB (2014) and WB (2015) evaluations have a broad understanding of how learning happens within the WB. WB (2015) establishes two principles for the process:

1. Developing a robust system for measuring results (for example, a results framework).

First, desired results are identified, defined, and communicated clearly; and, second, data related to the results and to preceding factors important for ongoing decision making (based on a change theory) are collected and monitored on an ongoing basis.

2. Instituting adaptive management and ongoing learning. First, data from the measurement system are used for different types of decision making for continual improvement to achieve results; and second, data and evidence are also used to learn about and understand the drivers of results (WB, 2017:2).

Norad (2018b) has used the Stetler model to discuss three types of evaluation use:

Instrumental: Knowledge from an evaluation is used directly to inform an ongoing policy or programme;

Conceptual: No direct action is taken as a result of the evaluation, but the knowledge from the evaluation influences people's general thinking around what works;

Symbolic: When people use the mere existence of an evaluation, rather than its specific findings, to persuade or convince. A version of this – political/strategic use – is when an evaluation is used to justify or legitimate a policy or decision (Norad 2018a:19)

The ICAI (2015) report states that DFID has a learning strategy (see ICAI, 2015). It has however not been possible to access and find it on the web.

Organisational Learning Mechanisms

Do the organisations have institutionalized practices and arrangements for:

- accountability for learning such as reporting on how results information has been used
- informing decisions such as requirements that results information be submitted when decision are being made
- regular review of performance
- sharing and communicating results information
- systems for bringing results information together
- Useful analysis and interpretation

Most evaluations have not systematically documented whether they have institutionalised Organisational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs). The evaluations have mainly looked at the systems for bringing results information together. The systems are thus often seen as a proxy for performance on learning. Some evaluations have taken a broader perspective on learning and discussed how learning takes place in informal sharing and communication, in peer-contacts and in contacts with partners. OLMs are mainly established for the project preparation phase, and not for implementation and follow-up.

Most RBM evaluations have come to the conclusion that results information is not used in decision-making and for learning. However, the evaluations have seldom analysed the processes or requirements (for example whether there is an organisational requirement that results information

is to be submitted prior to decision-making). Learning is often not understood as something that could be a combination of what is written in reports and personal meetings/discussions/feed-back loops on the report.

The WB has a well developed system for storing, searching and collating knowledge which are called Spark, SkillFinder and CommunityFinder. However, WB (2014) states that these have not yet been used to a larger extent for learning. This is since Bank employees feel that they do not have the time to search widely for knowledge or to experiment with new ideas and approaches since they are pressured to meet short-term goals (lending and disbursement targets). Moreover, while in general people are able to find the knowledge they need, they experience frustration in navigating the systems. Time involved in searching for knowledge reduces time for reflection and exploration. Moreover, it is argued that information and knowledge in the systems are poorly collated, storage is not systematic and the records in the electronic archives are patchy.

The WB (2014) found that interpersonal exchanges are the most important source of learning and knowledge sharing in the Bank: these exchanges are mediated by the networks to which people are connected and the teams in which they operate. It is argued that staff mainly learn by doing and talking to others. According to the evaluation staff are five times more likely to turn to a co-worker than to a book, manual or a database when they are to search for information. Staff state that the main source of learning during project preparation was learning by doing (87 percent) followed by person-to-person conversations (83 percent) (WB, 2014:40). Interpersonal learning in the WB includes mentoring, a practice that is highly valued by Bank staff. However, there is now less mentoring than there used to be although attempts are being made to revive it. The evaluation also adresses that the handover between team leaders of projects is a source of learning.

The WB has an institutionalised annual practice of individual staff performance. However, the evaluation states that this practice does not appear to reward learning and knowledge sharing. According WB (2014) staff within the Bank believe that their human resource framework dis-incentivises to go the extra mile during design and follow-up, learning and to work for the achievement of results.

WB staff believe that most learning occurs during the project preparation phase and when decisions are to be taken on new projects. Staff use information and analyse past performance of projects, mainly from WBs own sources. The WB (2014) states that managers tend to be less involved in the quality assurance of implementation and completion than they are in preparation. There is also limited managerial oversight of implementation status and completion reports. However, the evaluation also states that during implementation, informal feedback from managers is often more important than what is written up in reports i.e. repeating that most learning occurs from in informal discussions and not from reading the progress reports. In general the WB (2014) thus seems to be of the opinion that sharing and communicating results information seems to contribute to a larger extent to learning than regular reviews of performance.

The WB also has piloted some OLMs, such as the Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL) and the Intensive Learning Implementation Completion and Results report (ILICR). However, the evaluation concludes that these pilot initiatives have not led to more learning. The WB has introduced some "smart learning tools" which according to the evaluation hold promise and are valued by staff, but it is too early to say if they will be sustained. The evaluation states that, by themselves, they will not be sufficient to consolidate a culture of learning in lending (WB, 2014).

The CGIAR has a system called MARLO which is an online platform designed to assist the centers in planning and reporting research projects and in learning and sharing information. The information in the system has however been seen as inadequate (quality of information etc.) to actually be used for these purposes. The CGIAR (2017) states that staff believe that too much time would be required to feed and maintain the system, taking away time from actual research and face-to face interactive work with partners and

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stakeholders. The system is thus not fully supported by staff. The evaluation does not discuss other OLMs (CGIAR, 2017).

The SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation) has standardised procedures for providing written feedback to partners on their annual reports. This exercise has been highly valued by the partners. The SDC also has a standardised written Management Response from the Head Quarters on their country Annual Reports (R&C2). Staff in field offices however have criticised the written management response and argue that neither the annual report nor the management response have had any implications for steering. A more successful tool for learning is the MERV (Monitoring System for Development Related Changes) which is updated annually. When it is updated, gatherings are organised by field offices where staff jointly discuss development changes. This exercise has been appreciated at least in some country offices (SDC, 2017).

The GEF (Global Environment Facility) has a system for RBM information (but information from it is mainly used for reporting, the report states that information from the system is not used for decision-making and learning. The evaluation does not discuss other OLMs (GEF, 2017).

At the corporate level, Norad collates results information in the annual budget proposal. The evaluation however states that this information is not comprehensive and does not cover all the grants. It also states that the purpose of compiling results at this level is to enable reporting and not to inform prioritisation, i.e. the information is not used for decision-making and learning. At portfolio level results data is being compiled annually, but the evaluation found no evidence that this data was used to inform decision making or learning across the portfolio. The evaluation concludes however that aggregating data has been challenging and data is typically coming in too late to allow their potential use for decision making (Norad, 2018b).

At grant level Norad has Annual Progress reports, mid-term reviews and they conduct regular field trips to partners. The evaluation states that grant managers build on different sources of information to gather a picture of how the projects are developing. The evaluation however states that there was a mixed picture to the extent evidence of progress was discussed with partners, i.e in some occasions partners did receive feed-back on their reports but not in all. The evaluation states that the main use of the progress reports was to ensure compliance and accountability of the grant and not learning from how projects were developing (Norad 2018a).

Deeper understanding of how learning and decision-making informed results information actually works

Is there a deeper understanding of how learning and decision-making informed by results information actually works (or should work)? If yes, describe this. For example, is there an understanding of other factors/sources/drivers for learning and decision-making? Is there an understanding of how results information enters learning and decision-making processes? Is there an understanding of the relation between learning and decision-making?

Four evaluations provide broader descriptions of learning and decision-making processes in the organisations (UN 2018b and WB, 2014 and WB, 2015, DFID, 2014). Of these, the two WB evaluations provide the broadest analysis of how learning happens in practice. They have a perspective that learning mainly takes place through informal ways and tacit learning. The reports have not discussed other factors that influences organisational decision-making processes. They also say little about the relation between learning and decision-making.

The WB (2015) evaluation has tried to answer the question whether World Bank projects learning leads to improved results.

They found that:

1. learning could be seen as necessary but not sufficient to guarantee results. What was viewed as having a greater impact on results was having a highly committed counterpart and the environment in which the project works. Two factors stood out as contributing to the development of a close learning partnership with the client: frequent face-to-face interaction and continuity of project teams. Moreover, the following variables stood out as contributing to a stronger learning-to-results chain:

   - The ownership of the project by the counterparts and their commitment to its success

   - The capacity of institutions, counterparts, and stakeholders and the extent to which the incentive structure provides motivation for successful outcomes.

   - The quality of the project design in providing a technical and institutional model which is appropriately tailored to the country context, including political economy considerations.

   - The quality of support and oversight during the implementation process and the capacity to respond both to risks that materialize and to unforeseen events.

   - The ability to identify and respond to implementation challenges in a proactive manner

   - The quality of monitoring and evaluation

2. The evaluation analysed how slack time, organisational experience, and decision-making autonomy influenced results and found that greater knowledge gathering at entry increased the chances of receiving a highly satisfactory project quality rating (WB, 2015).

The World Bank (2015) found that when it comes to managing projects, Bank staff rely first and foremost on a process of informal learning, leading to a gradual accumulation of tacit knowledge. The study argues that this type of learning and knowledge are based primarily on observing and copying the behavior of others in the group. The study states that:

> *By definition, informal learning and tacit knowledge are not written down or captured in a database – they reside in the heads of individuals. Informal learning and tacit knowledge are built on the behaviours that flow from mindsets and from the characteristics and operating rules of the groups that individuals belong to. These behavioural underpinnings are mediated by incentives that institutions like the Bank provide to staff. Mindsets, group effects, and institutional incentives form the behavioural substrate that helps determine how effectively the Bank operates and how good it is at delivering results (WB, 2015:ix).*

The study argues that the effectiveness of the operating strategy depends on three aspects:

   - how well it balances the need to deploy the best technical knowledge that is globally available with the need to customize that knowledge to meet the needs of country clients;
   - how adaptive the Bank is, meaning its ability to make timely design changes within and between projects; and
   - how effectively it frames and measures results.

These elements are seen as mutually reinforcing. They could be woven into a new strategy for learning and knowledge sharing – a strategy that gives sufficient weight to behavioural drivers, to rigorous measurement of results so that meaningful learning can take place, and to the achievement of results so that learning for learning's sake is avoided.

The UN evaluation discusses the need for development of "knowledge workers" in RBM. It says that RBM requires an organisation and its staff to think and act differently about their day to- day work and its value. Being a "knowledge worker" would mean that staff have a focus on results and outcomes and alignment of their work with the longer-term goals and outcomes. It states that:

Given the fast pace and need for real-time learning for action, those involved in implementation have to develop the competencies of evaluators and apply a culture of critical inquiry and reflective learning in their day-to-day work. They have to be strategic thinkers. This needs to be supported by an extensive knowledge management system and an environment in which old practices give way to one in which sound empirical evidence on performance is valued, sought out and seen as essential in supporting sound decision-making and good management; in which the leadership demands and uses information on results and encourages learning; and in which the incentive system is geared towards rewarding excellence and innovation by enabling measured risk taking and experimentation (UN, 2017:55).

The UN evaluation argues that there are several shortcomings in the use of information on results but says that the following factors play a role and characterize use and decision-making: (a) the primary driver of use is in accountability and reporting and not in what results-based management is intended to serve as; (b) limitations in the effective use are tied to (i) the quality of information presented; and (ii) a focus on outputs rather than outcomes, and reporting on such; (c) unevenness in the areas of focus in the use of results and thus (i) the use of results in projects and programmes and adjustments to the portfolio; and (ii) limited use of results in human resources management and accountability; and (d) structural factors about budgets and finance that are particular to the United Nations system.

Supply of results information and knowledge

What results information and knowledge is produced by the organisation?
What results information and knowledge is available to staff for learning and decision-making? How relevant, credible and useful is this information and knowledge?

For corporate reporting, donor organisations mainly use quantitative output and short-term outcome information. An increasing number of donors are also using standard indicators in agency-wide results frameworks. There is a lot of other information that is produced for and by staff in donor agencies that is used for learning; evaluations, research information, seminars, etc. A common finding is that quantitative results information, cannot be used for internal decision-making since it is not considered relevant, credible and useful. For decision-making purposes it seems as staff rely more on qualitative information, information from peers and face-to face dialogue or on knowledge obtained in relations with the partners.

The OECD (2017) study distinguishes between three types of results information produced by donor organisations:

Tier 1: *development results:* global results, country results (impacts and outcomes)

Tier 2: *development co-operation results:* direct results of interventions (outputs and outcomes)

Tier 3: *performance information:* financial and performance information (inputs and management information)

The report states that among studied aid donors (Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, SDC and UK) most donors have focused their results supply activities on tier 2 and tier 3 level. More and more attention and resources are directed towards aggregating and attributing input and output data for accountability purposes. The report argues that "Development co-operation results have become detached (and de-contextualised) from development results" (OECD, 2017:9). The OECD (2017) study also states that findings from the case studies show that some providers are placing increased emphasis on performance information. The distinction and the relationship between *performance* (inputs and management

information) and *results* (output and outcome) information is not always clear in reporting, and policy level steering and decisions are often based on performance rather than results information.

A general finding made in the OECD (2018) study is that donor organisations have made progress in reporting on outputs and short-term outcomes. This means that they are also mainly report outputs and short-term outcomes (and not long-term outcomes and impacts). An increasing number of donors are also using standard indicators in agency-wide results frameworks. According to OECD (2017a) some providers claim direct attribution for aggregated data from standard indicator sets, while others take a contribution approach. Standard indicator sets aggregate project-level data and summarise agency-wide achievements and are increasingly used for agency-wide reporting (OECD, 2017a). The standard indicator metrices require results information that is easy to aggregate, which is the case with output data. In addition, some donors (WB, Sida, DFID) include, or plan to include, project rating information i.e. assessments of the extent to which output and outcome results have been achieved, or are on track to be achieved in projects, and are assigned by agency staff.

Whilst the organisations have improved output and short-term outcome level information, they have not become more outcome or impact focused in their tracking of results data. This lack is criticised in several of the evaluations, since the organisations then lack data to explain how they contribute to changes in the countries where they work as well as how they contribute to overall global goals such as the SDGs (see for e.g. OECD, 2017a).

In general, it seems as more is reported. The Norad (2018a) evaluation for example argues that the dominant effect of the RBM requirements is that partners now report more. The WB evaluation discusses whether the volume of indicators and the reported data makes sense and whether they support adaptive management and learning. However, a challenge with all data lies in the credibility and availability of data (specifically outcome data), which in turn has increased verification loops of data or that the data is not used in the end. There is little evidence in the reports on systematic use of data. Use could happen in some regions/parts of the organisation. Both the SDC evaluation and the GEF evaluation for example found an uneven use of results information for direction and learning. The SDC evaluation found progress in use of results data in some geographical departments of the organisation, whereas other geographical departments had not used results data for analysis or planning (SDC, 2017:27). Similarly, the GEF evaluation could find use in some parts of the organisation or some focal areas (GEF, 2017). The evaluation concludes "RBM in the GEF is perceived as an exercise focused on reporting to the Council and conventions, whereas its role in evidence-based decision making is perceived to have not received as much attention" (GEF, 2017:5). This statement echoes findings in several of the other evaluations, i.e. that use of results for decision-making and learning had not been the primary focus of RBM efforts.

The WB (2014) states that the range of knowledge sources is limited, and that WB staff use limited number of non-Bank knowledge sources. They do use country and region-focused analytical work when preparing projects, however less attention is given to research, impact evaluations and IEG evaluations. The main source of learning is according to the evaluation, the WBs own analytic work during project preparation.

The CGIAR evaluation states that although the organisation produces research information their management information systems are inadequate and underdeveloped. The report does not state exactly what type of results information is gathered.

The GEF uses a corporate scorecard to track information. GEFs corporate scorecard reports on 32 indicators. 10 indicators track environmental results, 12 corporate efficiency and effectiveness, 3 programming and resource utilisation and 7 corporate efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluation states however that there are many gaps in the submission of information and that the quality of submitted information often is poor. It seems and discussions held during implementation is mostly on whether there are delays in submitting information but not on how the projects actually are developing. The evaluation mostly dis-

cusses information gaps but not how staff actually understand or what they do with the information. The report however says that "the information gathered through the RBM system is not used for decision-making and strategy development nor learning" (GEF, 2018:13).

Both Norad (2018b) and USAID, (2016) arrive to positive conclusions on the use of qualitative evaluations within the respective organisations. The Norad evaluation states that:

> *Reviews were well used by the unit responsible for managing the grant for these interventions. Reviews were most often used in instrumental ways (for management of and decisions related to the intervention being evaluated). Conceptual use (for wider learning or policy beyond the specific intervention being evaluated) was limited. Symbolic use (where a review was used to justify a decision or as a routine requirement in closing an intervention) was higher than would have been expected (Norad, 2018b:5).*

Four main factors determined use of reviews:

1. Formulation of high quality TORs and the delivery against them, influenced by stakeholder engagement from the beginning and ensuring clarity of purpose of the review task

2. The production of realistic and actionable recommendations

3. Planning and delivering reviews in a consultative way

4. Ensuring a review was completed at the right time to feed into a decision (Norad, 2018b:5).

Similarly, the USAID evaluation found that the evaluation utilisation practice was strong within the agency. The study found that respondents indicated that the evaluations had stimulated learning amongst USAID and partners. 90% of the evaluations were reported to have resulted in decisions being made and actions being taken at appropriate stages in USAID's program cycle. Evaluation findings were mainly used at project design and implementation stage. The evaluations were not used at broader policy level decisions, simply because USAID evaluations rarely focus on the policy level. Evaluation results were mostly used for new project and activity design, and less to modify existing projects and strategies. Evaluation results also affected decisions on changes were also made in revising delivery mechanism work plans, extending activity time limes or expanding activity geographic areas. 27% of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of the programmes and projects increased as a result of use of the evaluation findings (USAID, 2016).

The Usaid evaluation found that learning from evaluations often occurs within the first three months after an evaluation is completed (USAID, 2016). In some cases, the learning period has been up to two years. 52% of the respondents said that the evaluations affected their opinions on the merits of the project or activities evaluation and 54% said the evaluations provided insights about the soundness or adequacy of the activity design. Some said they learned about how to make projects more effective in the future or why objectives had not been achieved. However, 74% of the respondents said that what they learnt confirmed what they felt they already knew. Dissemination of evaluations to country partners was found to lead to that partners also used the evaluations. However, simply delivering the evaluation reports to online libraries etc. did not link to improved utilisation by USAID or its partners.

The evaluation found that use increased when:

1. The evaluation reports were delivered timely for decision making.

2. The average evaluation quality scores were higher (USAID, 2016).

Capacity for using results information and knowledge

Is staff sufficiently incentivized, motivated and confident to use results information and knowledge for learning and decision-making? If not, what are underlying reasons? Does the organisation provide sufficient time, space and occasion for learning and evidence-informed decision-making? If not, what are underlying reasons? Does staff have sufficient skills, understanding and knowledge on how to use results information to improve performance and manage for better results? If not, what are underlying reasons?

Most reports claim that there is not sufficient capacity within the organisations for use of results information and knowledge. Time is often raised as a constraint. Staff need to devote their time to other things, such as reporting and accountability. Some reports state that stall lack understanding and a result-oriented mind-set. Knowledge and skills to analyse and disseminate data are also raised as reasons for why learning is not happening. The evaluations typically argue that insufficient staff resources have been devoted to RBM activities and that more resources are needed to do the analyses required. However, another reason for why results information is not used could simply be that the old saying of "what gets measured gets done" does not work since today, too much is measured. Not everything that is measured can be acted upon. There is simply too much information for staff to act upon.

The US evaluation brings up that while the State of Department's responsibilities for managing resources have grown, corresponding policies, guidance and staff resources have not expanded (US, 2015), i.e. they argue that staff need to do more with less resources, there is thus not time for learning.

Similarly, the Norad (2018a) evaluation state that interviewees consistently stated that for MFA, staff do not have sufficient time to prioritise learning and RBM, both at the grant and portfolio level, given their current work load and priorities (Norad, 2018a).

The World Bank evaluation states that low quality and use of M&E is a cross-cutting finding and can be traced to a lack of rewards and incentives for results-based management (WB 2017). Insufficient time to manage for results, lack of experience and understanding of RBM are moreover raised as common challenges.

A common argument in the reviewed documents is also that RBM requires significant resources, for data gathering, analysis etc. A typical solution provided is that there is a need of strengthening staff skills and competencies in measurement, analysis and evaluation, for example in methods for evaluation in complex and unpredictable contexts (WB, 2017; SDC, 2017; UN, 2017b).

Demand for results information and knowledge

To what degree and how is results information and knowledge considered in decision-making (and policy formulation) in the organisation?

Most evaluations state that results information is considered to a very little extent in policy direction. Results information is used to a wider extent in decision-making at project level. Moreover, results information seem to be more widely used in some contexts and by some units/departments and thematic areas. Other factors, such as disbursement pressure, political processes and decisions, pressure from advocacy groups, past promises, reputation etc. also influence decisions.

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The Norad (2018a) evaluation states that results information, plays a minor role in decision making and there is no expectation that formal analyses of results are either required or necessary (Norad 2018a). The evaluation states that staff believe that other things are more important for decision making such as political priorities and whether grant recipients can be trusted on past experience to deliver. There is a common view that priorities shift quickly, are politically driven and Norway's comparative advantage is its ability to maintain flexibility and respond quicker than other donors to emerging needs, which means that formal analysis of past performance and results against different policy priorities and objectives has little added value (Norad 2018a). However, the evalution also states that during project planning, grant managers do draw on a wide range of different types of information on results in their decision of a new grant. This was both tacit knowledge based on an individials knowledge and empirical evidence based on data and research. The evaluation found that past information on the projects results and the quality of the applicants were the key factors that influenced allocation decisions.

The WB (2014) evaluation states that staff rather believe that there are incentives to information hoarding than information and knowledge sharing with others within the organisation. Lending is the priority, not learning, and senior management do not encourage and signal needs for learning. The report states that "Staff perceives the lack of institutional incentives as one of the biggest obstacles to learning and knowledge sharing" (WB, 2014:70.

The CGIAR evaluation finds that the standard indicators used by the organisation have had limited validity as measures of how well the organisation actually performs and how well the programmes develop. There has been a large frustration within the organisation with all challenges related to standard indicators which have been declared as "problematic, time consuming and ultimately of limited value" (CGIAR, ;48).

Concrete examples

> Are there concrete examples for learning and/or decision-making informed by results information? How and to what degree has results information and knowledge led to improved performance and results in the past? How and to what degree could improved consideration of results information and knowledge lead (or have led) to increased performance and better results in the future?

There exist several concrete examples that have promoted larger use of results information such as "smart teams", competition events, separate results tools, learning-from failure events etc. However, it seems as many of these initiatives have been implemented as separate, isolated initiatives and that they have not been able to change the overall organisational culture. It has also not been possible to find any examples of organisations where it is claimed that the whole organisation has incorporated learning as a central piece. Moreover, the evidence from RBM actually contributing to improved development results is scarce.

The WB (2015) study promotes heavily the idea of "smart teams", ie. Teams in which members have diverse backgrounds and equal voice, and can imagine how people outside of the team are likely to think, feel, and behave in a particular situation. The study concludes that these team effects are network effects since the links that individuals have to persons in a large network are potential learning channels, influencing how knowledge flows across the organisation. The study states that Bank staff are keenly aware of the importance of informal learning and group work in operations. They report that learning by doing and talking to others are the most important sources of learning in operational work. It is stated that Bank staff and its case studies show that high value that is placed on mentoring and learning from peers.

The WB report moreover argues that signaling from top managers, the budgeting process, and the rewards and recognitions conferred on staff are likely to influence performance (WB, 2015 chapter 3). The report

argues that the stronger the Bank's relation with the client, the more likely that learning and results will be sound, an impression that also emerges from the country case studies. The study shows that project monitoring and evaluation frameworks – how objectives are defined, how indicators are derived, and how baselines are deployed help determine how effectively results are reported.

The WB (2014) discusses some events organised by WB on learning-from-failure, which have proven to be succeful for reflection about a managers own role when managing projects.

The WB (2014) evaluation discusses how WB could learn from the U.S. Army's Opposing Force (OPFOR) who is considered to be consistently successful, and its success is attributed to the way it uses after action reviews (AARs), a method for extracting lessons from one event or project and applying them to others. The idea is simply that a discussion is held on what can be learnt from failed projects in an After Action Review, however before embarking on a new project a Before Action Review is held where four questions are asked

- What are our intended results and measures?

- What challenges can we anticipate?

- What have we or others learned from similar situations?

- What will make us successful? (WB, 2014:76)

The WB (2014) study argues that staff perceive that recognition by peers and managers is the highest incentive to learning. They WB has organised events such as Innovation Marketplace, where staff are solicited nominations for new ideas and approaches and where awards are provided to the winners. This event has proven successful for innovation and learning. Moreover, the WB has a practice of "Smart Lessons", a voluntary program started in 2005, which offers guidance for writing narratives to post online and editorial services to ensure that the articles and multimedia presentations posted on the SmartLessons site really work as stories. They also have an initiative called "the Knowbel award" a programme designed to recognize those who promote knowledge sharing and learning. However, the evaluation states that while it makes sense to promote "smart" interventions like these, research evidence shows that they are not sufficient in themselves to transform the culture of the organisation.

The Norad (2018a) evaluation states that a new initiative that holds potential for learning is a new initiative in which the grant manager is to assess goal achievement at the end of a grant and extract learning from it. This step was introduced in the grant management cycle in 2016. The Norad evaluation also states that there are instances of learning activities that have been organised where learning has taken place, on themes cutting across grant schemes.

The GEF (2018) report demonstrates a successful practice in the Caspian Sea project. The study says that one of the factors for its success was that the project considered countries' sensitivity to sharing data. The report states that "Through a KM component, the project supported countries' efforts on information gathering, accessing knowledge, and implementing a protocol for using the knowledge. Because governments understood the data, and agreed to the KM protocol, the countries requested continuously data and information. Having a strong KM and data plan increased cooperation between the countries, which led to policy harmonization in the Caspian. The project's lessons emphasized that project design should:

1. Include a detailed KM and data plan for the project with the tools necessary to manage the project monitoring; and,

2. Appoint a KM proponent in each country to manage the data, liaise with the government, and develop data management and KM protocols to support the countries" (GEF, 2018:6).

The UN evaluation argues that a strategic planning network for knowledge-sharing across UN organisations has proven successful for learning. Within this network learning has taken place on theory of change, adaptive management, various pilots in human resources, financing dialogues, integrated budgets, trend analysis of results over time and data platforms structured to report on results and enhance learning. The evaluation states that "the knowledge-management approach has had a positive effect in advancing results-based management and has resulted in a degree of homogeneity in the practices of the organisations reviewed. However, it is noted that the innovation adoption process is not always based on proven evidence of what works" (UN, 2017:145).

Evidence of RBM supporting development results

The topic of whether RBM is supportive to development results is discussed in three evaluations (SDC, 2017[16]; Norad 2018b; WB, 2017). All three evaluations discuss methodological difficulties for proving or disproving whether RBM is supportive to development results. Outcomes and impact are in general more difficult to measure, and it is seldom possible (nor desirable due to global agreements on alignment to partner countries' results frameworks) to attribute an aid provider's interventions to development outcomes in a country. The WB evaluation discusses in length challenges with data availability on outcomes and impact. They argue that there often is insufficient emphasis in WB programmes on measuring outcomes, and that they found a paucity of data on the impact on how WBs work contributed to outcomes (WB, 2017).

The closest measure used for outcomes and project performance are self-evaluations or ratings done by staff. The WB evaluation refers to two studies (Raimondo, 2016 and IAD, 2015) which have found a positive correlation between the quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at project level and project outcome ratings done by WB staff as well as the Independent Evaluation Group. In the study done by Raimondo (2016) the positive correlation holds even when controlling for factors such as project manager identity. The study argues that there are common markers of good quality M&E, such as clear institutional set up and division of labor, simple M&E framework that is well aligned with partners M&E frameworks and good integration with operational tasks (Raimondo, 2016). The WB evaluation has not assessed whether RBM implementation at agency level is supportive to development outcomes. As for RBM implementation at agency level, the evaluation discusses whether the volume of indicators at corporate level make sense, whether they support appropriate adaptive management and learning at different organisational levels. They argue that corporate results reporting where only achievements are important might distort incentives and lead staff to favour reporting positive outcomes. Therefore, the evaluation also highlights the need to better understand which factors might affect outcomes.

Both the SDC and the Norad evaluations point to factors that could be seen as supporting the proposal that RBM is supportive to development results, simultaneously they argue that there is no direct evidence supporting the proposal. The Norad evaluation for example argues that whilst there could be some benefits of RBM supporting for example greater transparency on how resources are used, which could improve public understanding and trust in aid, use of results information for decision-making, analysis and learning has not evolved, concluding that RBM efforts do not contribute to the delivery of better development outcomes by partners. The SDC evaluation argues that whilst RBM has supported an improved SDC information base, monitoring capacity and programming focus which increases likelihood of more effective and efficient development impact, the elaboration of results frameworks and analyses in key SDC strategic instruments is on the whole insufficient for effective poverty orientation of SDC programming. The evaluation therefore states that "It cannot be generally concluded, for example, from SDC results reporting that poverty impact has improved" (SDC, 2017:iv).

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16 The evaluation's aim was to discusss how RBM had contributed to poverty reduction

Recommendations and lessons learnt

> What types of lessons learned and recommendations are given related to knowledge management, learning and decision-making? How generic are they? Are there good practice examples of realistic, concrete and actionable lessons/recommendations?

The typical recommendations given on how to increase learning are often quite simplistic and generic, they often just say that a recommendation is to increase use of results for learning and decision, enhance the mindset and value systems for RBM, improve staff commitment to and incentives for RBM, stimulate improved leadership and support leadership responsibility, encourage staff initiative, risk-taking and learning from failure as well as from success and to deliver more training.

The following table on the most common solutions or recommendations provided in the evaluations is taken from the OECD (2018) report:

Table 35. Solutions and recommendations to RBM challenges and unintended consequences

Challenge/unintended consequence:	Solution/Recommendation – as suggested by the evaluation team:
Lack of understanding and guidance of what RBM is and why we are doing it	• Develop guidance and strategies for RBM with a purpose statement or a theory of change for RBM • Conduct more and new evaluations that can assess progress on RBM implementation • Deliver more training
Structural and system issues	• Improve guidance documents • Improve systems • Improve HR strategies • Change management style; avoid a regime dominated by compliance
Capacity constraints and costs of RBM	• Increase resources for RBM • Recruit other types of competencies • Deliver training • Re-organisations and re-structuring within organisation
Measurement and method issues	• Improve measurement systems • Increase measurements on different aspects (e.g. outcomes performance rating) • Introduce quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that measurements are robust • Deliver more training
Lack of a results culture	• Enhance the mindset and value systems for RBM • Improve staff commitment to and incentives for RBM • Stimulate improved leadership and support leadership responsibility • Encourage staff initiative, risk-taking and learning from failure as well as from success
Ownership and harmonisation	• Support partners with RBM development • Support partners to develop learning oriented RBM systems • Support and use country-led results frameworks • Incentivise adaptive and flexible management • Develop a collective accountability framework • Harmonise indicators with those used by partner countries

Challenge/unintended consequence:	Solution/Recommendation – as suggested by the evaluation team:
Measure fixation	• Reduce number of indicators • Promote narratives and qualitative results information
Suboptimisation	• Balance benefits and risks for both accountability and learning • Assess implementation of the entire RBM system (not only parts)
Reduced motivation and risk taking	• Develop incentive systems that promote innovations • Stimulate management capacities • Establish joint responsibility for tasks • Enlist a network of change champions
Increased transaction costs and administrative burden	• Streamline measurement and reporting requirements • Remove requirements on for e.g. a log frame

The recommendations provided in the studies on Knowledge management (GEF, and WB) have in general the very same recommendations that one finds in the RBM evaluations; strengthen KM across the organisation, mainstream it into the project cycle, publish information, include indicators on KM in the RBM framework, provide incentives for learning and KM etc.

The Niras (2018) study, has studied five successful adaptive management programmes within civil society. Recommendations and findings provided in that study are quite interesting and a bit broader. They for example argue that what matters for learning and adaptive management is:

a) *donor engagement.* They found in their study that those donors – particularly field staff – who have the possibility to actively engage in their partners' pro-grammes through field visits, open dialogue and frequent communication seem to be in a better position to embrace the idea that "the future is uncertain". As a result, they understand when the reality deviates from the plan and become an ally in defending course corrections and uncertainty to their more risk-averse institutions.

b) *People matter.* They found in their study that a commonality seen in programmes that have been successful in applying an adaptive approach is people in management and operations with certain personal skill-sets and competences that fully embrace risk-taking, flexibility, and learning. They argue that adaptive management doesn't happen without the right people in the right positions – this applies to partner organisations and donors alike. Skills that enable adaptation include strong critical and strategic thinking and the ability to experiment and be creative in developing new approaches. Since experimentation is a central aspect of the adaptive approach, those who are uncom-fortable with uncertainty and tend to lean towards a more traditional approach of planning, delivering against plans, and reporting against plans, are not necessarily well placed to embrace an adaptive ap-proach. This suggests that donors and organisations need to consider how to best nurture the needed competencies, attitudes and behaviour conducive to adaptive management through coaching, training and creating incentives.

c) *that learning and adaptive management requires funding flexibility from donors side.* (Niras, 2018)

The WB (2014) evaluation on learning asked in their questionnaire how to best promote learning. 65% of the respondents stated that time alloted in the work programme agreement was the best incentive. Second on the incentive list was budget alloted for preparation and supervision. Lower on the list (35%) was that top management signals priority and salary reviews (25%).

Discussion

This review has shown that knowledge management and learning typically is a neglected part of RBM reforms. Results information is mainly collected for the purposes of accountability and reporting. RBM reforms, that during the past 10–20 years have dominated the way how development cooperation (as well as public management) is to be managed and governed. The predominant idea in RBM reforms behind how learning happens is that data on past performance of aid projects is used for policy direction and steering of projects. However, along with this review research on RBM points to challenges in using results information for policy direction and decision-making (see Eyben, 2010; Hvidman and Andersen, 2014; Natsios, 2010; OECD, 2018; Vähämäki, 2017; Vähämäki et al.2011; Jacobsson et.al, 2015; Honig, 2018; Sundström, 2006).

Why is it so difficult for organisations to use results information for learn and decision-making? I will discuss some possible explanations below.

The **first** is that the organisations seldom have learning as an explicit purpose of their RBM approaches and that they therefore do not have a clear picture or a theory of change on how learning actually occurs in practice and what type of information is needed for learning and decision-making. This explanation is posed in some of the evaluations reviewed, such as (Norad, 2018a, CGIAR, 2017). The Norad evaluation for example argues that in the absence of guidance on RBM, individuals within the aid administration have interpreted RBM in the way that makes most sense to them, and as a result how RBM is practiced varies considerably (Norad 2018a). Similarly, the CGIAR evaluation argues that the absence of a RBM purpose has reduced the learning potential of RBM, created a confusion within the organisation about what RBM was meant to do and undermined the motivation for RBM (CGIAR, 2017). In a review of evaluations and reviews among approximately 15 development cooperation agencies, it was found that only three of the agencies had actually defined a purpose (OECD, 2018 forthcoming).

That a purpose is needed and could be useful for increasing learning in donor organisation was confirmed at the OECD-Results Community workshop (29-30th October, 2018) when a question was posed to all participants: Do you think that defining a RBM purpose would support you in implementation of RBM? All groups answered that a purpose was important, some said that it was essential whilst other said that a purpose only was a starting point and that it would need to be accompanied by management support, training initiatives etc.

The **second** is that RBM has led to suboptimisation, i.e. that one part of the organisation becomes more effective at the expence of pursuing effectiveness of the whole organisation (Smith, 1995; Thiel and Leeuw, 2002). Most reports reviewed for this assignment come to the conclusion that the accountability purposes has been pursued at the expense of learning and knowledge management, this means that one of the RBM purposes has been pursued at the expense of the others. The pressure for accountability to domestic and international constituencies has for most organisations been the principal driver for how RBM systems have evolved within the organisations. All organisations must respond to their authorising environments. Commonly, organisations not only respond to the current pressure but also to an anticipation of future threats (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Therefore, when public aid resources for example are under threat, aid providers do what they believe is the most appropriate to re-gain external support and confidence. The organisations have mainly operated under the belief that communication in the form of simple measurable facts will lead to increased trust and legitimacy. Since receiving funding, for any organisation is important, organisations simply comply with what they experience is requested from them. However, this adaptation can, lead to management strategies which only to comply with that they believe is expected from them and what will support their survival, and not a management strategy that supports them to achieve development results.

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A **third** is, an explanation commonly raised in governance literature, is that it is not results that are the most important determinant for learning and that, it is not results, but other issues that are considered when taking decisions. Jacobsson et al (2015) for example argues that ever since 1970's when management by results became the dominant management strategy in public managament "it made all other discussions about how to govern virtually nonexistent". They argue that at this time there were two dominant ideas on how to govern public sectors: the modern way (management by results) and the obsolete way (detailed input regulation or micromanagement). They argue that Management by results took over all other discussions and ways of managing.

Similarly, Birgegård (1984) has argued that although it has been said that goals and results steer aid decisions, this has not been the case in practice. Factors such as; type of support; government policy ambition and opinions of individuals and political parties influence aid decisions to a larger degree than results. Which aid projects in the end are funded thus rather depends on a political process which is influenced by political parties, media, advocacy groups, and individuals.

In literature on governance and management there exists several different models and discussions on how steering actually happens. Jacobsson et al. (2015) argue that in reality governance is combined by what they call metagovernance (meaning for example creating formal organisations, establishing boards and councils and departments/units, allocating funds to certain thematic areas/actors/countries) combined with microsteering (meaning informal exchanges wherw topics are discussed, changing allocations/appointments etc). According to them all this steering depends on individuals and organisations interests and preferences. Interests and preferences are within public administration typically unclear and changing. Since perfect or even close to perfect knowledge is unattainable and since the world is highly complex, policy decisions are constantly in conflict. Jacobsson et. al (2015) argues that bureacrats and politicians use other governing strategies simply because these are perceived as better than traditional RBM/management by objectives .

In other management literature it is commonly argued that hierarchy, market and networks steer public organisations. Hierarchy means that public organisations, and aid organisations are managed in hierarchical relations -in a top-down manner. Funding is for example allocated by governments to aid agencies, who in turn allocate funding and control beneficiaries of aid. Market means when competition among actors is organisation. In development aid this is for example often the case with allocation of funds to civil society actors, or in bidding procedures. Network governance means that public organisations are to a large extent governed and influenced by international conventions, legal institutions, international actors, such as the EU, normative work done by OECD, UN etc, as well as media and external audits etc.

According to Adler (2001) public management is dominated by market and hierarchy related management mechanisms since these often are routine based and innovation therefore seldom flow freely. However, trust, which forms the main coordinating mechanism in network coordination, is essential for knowledge creation. Adler (2001) for example argues that "Trust can dramatically reduce both transaction costs – replacing contracts with handshakes – and agency risks – replacing the fear of shirking and misrepresentation with mutual confidence". Trust could thus reduce the need for targets, indicators, and continuous performance measurement as promoted in RBM-ideas. Therefore, he argues that trust is an essential precondition for effective knowledge transfer and that trust should be an increasingly attractive mechanism and a performance determinant knowledge management. Similarly, in aid literature scholars point to the role of trust as an important factor supporting learning and adaptation (USAID, 2017; Honig, 2018; Honig & Gulrajani, 2018; Bringselius, 2018).

Factors (apart from results and goals) that influence bilateral aid agencies decisions and learning:

- Reactions to external pressure and media

- Disbursement pressure; the 0,7% or 1% goal

- Market mechanisms; competition and price

- National and international legislation

- Norms and standards

- Professional values

- Ethics

- Whether a trusting relation exists

Some ways in which decisions are taken (apart from using results information for decision-making):

- Creating new organisations, establishing boards and councils and/or departments/units

- Appointing Leaders/Directors

- Recruiting specific types of competencies (for e.g. gender experts)

- Allocating funds to thematic areas; type of partnership; type of countries or context

- Contracting a consultant with specific competencies/tasks

- Setting up informal meetings, telephone conversations, lunches etc. with the intention influence certain people about a certain topic

A **fourth** is that it is not results that is the main information source for individual learning but that learning actually happens in other ways. As found in the WB (2014) that WB staff learnt more from peer-to peer discussions than from (results) reports. This peer to peer communication and tacit learning could of course be about results or what is happening in the projects and be very important for results achievement, however this is not documented. A conclusion drawn from this review is also that many organisations have defined a learning strategy or developed ideas for learning and KM besides their RBM reforms, i.e. they do not see that learning and knowledge management forms part of the RBM reforms but is something separate.

The two latter points raises questions on how much of a "results culture" actually is possible to expect given that aid organisations always are dependent on their external constituencies, market mechanisms, hierarchical and power relations, and their history. A more realistic assumption and expectation of RBM reforms could rather be not to expect that results information does not will not be the main determinant for learning. An alternative way would be to simply trust that if people and organisations are trusted, they will themself be interested and creative enough to seek the knowledge they need in order for development interventions to perform better.

This review has shown that the pressure for accountability to domestic and international constituencies is for most providers the principal driver for how RBM systems have evolved within the organisations. Many providers have a disproportionate focus in favour on accountability and the belief that communication in the form of simple measurable facts will lead to increased trust and legitimacy. This takes time from learning. Some factors that may counteract this and free up space and time for learning are:

- To build a communications approach explaining how aid works and the conditions in which it supports development. An effective communications approach could support providers to build a shield against external pressure, which in turn could free up space for the organisation to focus more on internal organisational matters.

- Develop a clear purpose for RBM and learning, defining when one could expect that learning happens based on results information and when could one expect that it will happen anyway.

- Make a clear analysis of what information actually is demanded and only produce what is demanded

- Un-learn staff from doing certain accountability and control routines that might be counterproductive for the organisation.

Documents reviewed

Table 36. Donor organisations: RBM evaluations and documents on learning and KM systems

Organisation *Title of evaluation* Evaluator	Purpose of the study	Assessment of whether results information is used for learning and decision-making
United Nations (UN) *RBM in the UN Development System -Analysis of progress and policy effectiveness. 2017.* JIU (Joint Inspection Unit)	To conduct a system-wide review of results-based management	"The primary driver of the use of information on results is not for organisational learning and improvement but for reporting".
Global Environment Facility (GEF) *Review of Results-Based Management in the GEF. 2017.* GEF Independent Evaluation Office	The extent to which the GEF RBM system captures key results of GEF activities and promotes adaptive management.	"The GEF RBM system has played a strong role in supporting reporting, accountability, and communications. In comparison, so far, its role in supporting evidence-based decision making and learning has been limited"(p.5)
Global Environment Facility *Managing knowledge for a sustainable future* GEF	Provides definitions, status and some recommendations for KM work.	"KM is often treated as an afterthought, and lacking relevance for operations. An under-exploited resource, whereas it should be a primary source of value for the GEF. KM remains a 'niche' topic – often accepted as useful, but regarded as optional"(p.4)
NORAD *The aid administration's practice of results-based management* Itad in association with Chr. Michelsen Institute	To understand how RBM has been operationalized. To understand the consequences of the current RBM approach. To look at how RBM contributes (or not) to development outcomes.	"While a number of the foundational features of RBM are in place in the aid administration, a results and learning culture is not". "The current orientation of RBM does not effectively balance the two main purposes of RBM – learning and accountability".
NORAD: *Experiences with Results-Based Payments in Norwegian Development Aid. 2015* Evaluation Department.	To summarize the experiences from results-based initiatives in Norwegian development cooperation and enhance the knowledge base for future decisions involving results-based payments.	

Organisation *Title of evaluation* Evaluator	Purpose of the study	Assessment of whether results information is used for learning and decision-making
EU *Analysis of Joint Results Frameworks in EU Joint Programming* Alexander O'Riordan Katarina Courtnadge-Kovačević	To inform and discuss current experience in developing joint results frameworks To assess to which extent data quality mechanisms are active in the view of formulating approaches how to best engage in this process.	Discusses joint learning mechanisms
World Bank *Results and Performance of the World Bank Group. 2016* Independent Evaluation Group (IEG)	The World Bank Group's status and degree of success with integrating M4R's key principles—measurement of outcomes and use of evidence for adaptive management and learning—to drive results. The World Bank Group's engagement on developing client M4R capacity.	"Progress is notable on instituting a structureand process for measurement and less so on adaptive management and learning".
Word Bank Learning and Results in World Bank Operations. How the Bank learns. Evaluation. (2014) IEG	How well has the World Bank generated, accessed, and used learning and knowledge in its lending operations, and what is the scope for improving how it does so?	Provides concepts and a framework for assessing learning in an aid organisation.
World Bank *Learning and Results in World Bank Operations, towards a new learning strategy, 2015.* IEG	How well has the World Bank learned in its lending operations? What is the scope for improving how it generates, accesses, and uses learning and knowledge in these operations?	Broad descriptions on how learning and KM takes place in WB operations
World Bank *Behind the Mirror – A Report on the Self-Evaluation Systems of the World Bank. 2016* IEG Independent Evaluation Group	To support ongoing efforts to enhance effectiveness, promote learning, foster the move toward a "Solutions Bank," and simplify processes.	Review of WBs self-evaluation systems. Contains info on how well WB learns from these.
US Office of Foreign Assistance at the Department of State (US). *Evaluation of the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance resources' implementation of the managing for results framework. 2017.* PwC Public Sector LLP	To assess the effectiveness of the Managing for Results framework as it relates to the management of FA programs and resources.	Contains some info on US Department of States learning systems. Hardly no positive results in regards to implementation of their managing of the results framework.

Organisation *Title of evaluation* Evaluator	Purpose of the study	Assessment of whether results information is used for learning and decision-making
USAID *Evaluation Utilization at USAID. 2016.* Management Systems International	To help USAID determine the extent to which its evaluations are being used and what guidance, tools, or Agency practices might be improved to enhance evaluation utilization	Contains info on how evaluations are utilized within USAID and how staff learn from these.
Six US Agencies in charge of Development Cooperation *Agencies Can Improve the Quality and Dissemination of Program Evaluations.2017.* U.S Government Accountability Office (GAO)	The quality, cost, and dissemination of foreign aid program evaluations.	Contains info on quality of evaluations -preconditions for learning. Not how learning takes place in reality.
SDC *Evaluation of SDC's Results Based Management System with a Focus on Poverty Reduction. 2017.* SPM Consultants	The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of SDC's RBM System; a system covering most SDC management processes from the corporate to the project levels and all domains.	"A main malfunction lies in the uneven use of performance information for strategic planning purposes (decision-making and learning)".
CGIAR, Global agricultural research partnership *Evaluation of Results-Based Management in CGIAR* Vanderberg R, Wigboldus S	To province evidence and lessons as an input to implementing RBM framework. To formulate recommendations for increasing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness or RBM	
Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the World Bank. *Strenghtening the results chain: Synthesis of case studies of results-based management by providers. 2017.* OECD/DAC	Analysis of results-based management approaches by development co-operation providers To identify and document key themes, current challenges and good practice in results-based management, and to make use of this analysis to encourage dialogue and drive collective learning amongst the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Results Community.	The detailed country studies contain some info on how the seven donors work with learning and KM.
Global Affairs Canada *Synthesis of Evaluations of Grants and Contributions Programming funded by the International Development Assistance Envelope, 2011–2016, 2017* Universalia	Identify lessons and recurring challenges to inform future departmental programming and foster horizontal learning Including. How well RBM tools are used in programme evaluation	Contains some info on how learning happens within CIDA

Organisation *Title of evaluation* Evaluator	Purpose of the study	Assessment of whether results information is used for learning and decision-making
Sadev (2008) *Organisational learning at Sida – a twenty-year perspective* In swedish: Lär sig Sida mer än förr?	Evaluation/comparison made on learning within Sida in a 20 year perspective	
JIU *Knowledge Management in UN organisations* 2016	to identify best practices to be considered, emulated and adapted in accordance with the resources and needs of each organisation.	
JIU *Knowledge Management in the United Nations system* Juan Luis Larrabure	how the Secretariat, funds and programmes share knowledge, within and among them-selves, both generally and within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).	

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ANNEX 10: KEY DATES OF THE EVALUATION

The timeline below features the key dates for activities and landmarks of the evaluation. The kick-off took place in late September 2018 and the inception report was submitted in December 2018. Most data collection took place between November 2018 and March 2019. Three trips to Helsinki, Finland, as well as the regional workshops in Vietnam and Mozambique, and the field trip to Ethiopia took place during this time. In addition, single interviews that could not be arranged as part of those activities were scheduled in-between and conducted remotely. Furthermore, two workshops, i.e. one in Freiburg, Germany, and Helsinki, Finland, in April and May, were used to discuss first conclusions. The final report was handed in at the end of June 2019.

Figure 21. Timeline with key dates of the evaluation

EVALUATION

"HOW DO WE LEARN, MANAGE AND MAKE DECISIONS IN FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND COOPERATION"