

EVALUATION DEPARTMENT



REPORT 10/2015



Evaluation of Norwegian support to capacity development

CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope	10
1.2 Structure of the report	11
2. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	12
2.1 Approach and analytical framework	12
2.2 Evaluation process	16
2.3 Sample interventions	18
2.4 Data collection approach	20
2.5 Synthesis approach	20
2.6 Limitations	22
3. BACKGROUND TO NORWAY'S SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	24
3.1 Patterns in Norway's support to capacity development	24
3.2 The institutional architecture of Norwegian support to capacity development	25
3.3 How capacity development is integrated into the Norwegian grant management system	28
4. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION	30
4.1 Results of Norwegian support to capacity development	30
4.2 The relevance of Norwegian support to capacity development	41
4.4 Norway's capacity to support capacity development	63
5. FACTORS THAT SHAPE SUCCESS IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE	68
5.1 Factors shaping the success of capacity development interventions	68
5.2 Situations and modalities that should be avoided	72
6. CONCLUSIONS	74
7. RECOMMENDATIONS	78
ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference for the evaluation of Norwegian support to capacity development	82
ANNEX 2: Interventions covered in the portfolio review	92
ANNEX 3: Evaluation matrix	95
ANNEX 4: Bibliography	102
ACRONYMS	120
FORMER REPORTS FROM THE EVALUATION DEPARTMENT	121

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This report is the product of its authors,
and responsibility for the accuracy of data included
in this report rests with the authors alone. The findings,
interpretations, and conclusions presented
in this report do not necessarily reflect the views
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Executive summary

Introduction

Capacity development is a core cross-cutting issue for Norway. It is estimated that projects and programmes with significant capacity development objectives account for a minimum of 20% of bilateral expenditure.

The purpose of this evaluation is to help Norway improve its decision making and strategy on capacity development in developing countries, particularly in public sector institutions. It aims to provide accountability for Norway's aid spending and generate learning on why and how capacity development has been successful (or not). The evaluation forms part of a coordinated set of evaluations commissioned by the Evaluation Departments of Danida, Norad and Sida.

The overall approach of the evaluation is theory-based. It is grounded in a general theory of change for capacity development that was developed jointly by Norad, Sida and Danida. The evaluation draws on evidence from 19 Norwegian capacity development interventions across nine countries. Eleven interventions are based on in-country work in Malawi, Mozambique

and Vietnam, the other 8 are based on desk reviews. All of the interventions that have been included for review have an explicit intention to support the development of public sector capacity.

Norwegian capacity development architecture

Norway's institutional architecture for capacity support is complex and there are a number of different ways it is implemented. Twinning is the dominant model of capacity support. Twinning involves the use of Norwegian government departments, parastatal organisations, public sector companies and its universities and research institutions to provide technical input and long term capacity support to national partners. Other modalities include: providing support through NGOs and multilateral organisations and providing support directly to national partners who manage the funds to strengthen their own capacity.

Results of Norwegian support to capacity development

Overall the evaluation found that Norway's con-

tribution to strengthening the capacity of public sector institutions has been both positive and substantial. Across the majority of interventions that were reviewed there was strong evidence to indicate that Norway's support had contributed to national partners improving the technical competencies of their staff, and strengthening wider systems and structures. As a result organisations have become stronger, more credible and better equipped to deliver on their missions. In a number of interventions changes in capacity have enabled organisations to make clear improvements in their performance and contributions to development objectives.

Table 1 overleaf provides an overview of the success of each of the 19 reviewed interventions in building partner capacity. For each intervention there are two scores: the first (Red-Amber-Green) indicates the extent of capacity change that has taken place within the national partner; the second (+++, ++, +) indicates the extent to which Norwegian support contributed to this change.

TABLE 1: ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT OF CAPACITY CHANGE AND NORWAY'S CONTRIBUTION, BY INTERVENTION

Interventions	Extent of capacity change	Extent of Norway's contribution to change	Interventions	Extent of capacity change	Extent of Norway's contribution to change
College of Medicine Malawi	●	+ + +	Geo-hazard management Vietnam	●	+ +
Aquaculture Vietnam	●	+ + +	National Statistics Office Malawi	●	+ +
Oil and Gas sector Mozambique	●	+ + +	Rule of Law Moldova	●	+ +
Petrovietnam	●	+ + +	Childrens' Rights Nicaragua	●	N/A
Agricultural University Malawi	●	+ + +	Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	●	+ +
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	●	+ +	Makarere University, Uganda	●	+ +
National Statistics Moldova	●	N/A	Electricity Tanzania	●	+
Electricity (Large Projects Contracting) Mozambique	●	+ + +	Electricity (twinning) – Mozambique	●	+
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	●	+ + +	Mercury pollution China	N/A	N/A
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	●	+ + +			
Explanation of scoring: Capacity change: ● significant change across a range of capacities, both at the individual and organisational level; ● moderate change in capacity at either organisation or individual level; ● limited change in capacity; N/A Not possible to score because of inadequate data Norway's contribution: + + + Norwegian-supported intervention played a crucial contribution to the observed capacity changes; + + Norwegian-supported intervention had some contribution to the observed capacity changes, but not crucial; + Norwegian support made limited or no contribution; N/A not possible to score because of inadequate data					

Sustainability of Norwegian support to capacity development

While Norwegian support has, in general, led to a wide range of capacity improvements among national partners, the likelihood of sustainability of these improvements is mixed. The evaluation identified a number of issues which if not addressed could undermine the long-term sustainability of the capacity gains. The most notable are the financial sustainability of national partners and the sustainability of their human resources. Across the interventions the evaluation found examples of organisations struggling to develop resource models which would enable them to sustain capacity after Norway and other donors leave. In addition, there were a number of interventions where insufficient consideration had been given to both keeping staff within the organisation and maintaining and growing their technical skills.

The relevance of Norwegian capacity support

Generally, the relevance of Norwegian support to capacity development is good. Interventions are focused on issues that are clearly aligned with

the priorities and needs of national partners and in most cases would indirectly benefit poor and marginalised groups. The evaluation also found that support aligns well with Norwegian priorities and expertise. Norway has a unique set of technical skills that it can bring to bear on key development challenges particularly through its twinning partners. This includes skills in areas such as Oil for Development, statistics and fisheries.

Despite this largely positive picture, the match between capacity development strategies and partner's capacity needs, could be stronger. In nearly half the interventions the types of capacity support didn't completely align with needs. This led to situations where too much focus was put on training, to the neglect of wider organisational issues, or where long-term capacity development strategies were pursued when what was needed, was gap-filling technical assistance.

Design of Norwegian supported capacity development interventions

The processes for how Norwegian capacity development intervention are designed is char-

acterised by a high degree of informality and flexibility. While this has its benefits, in that it can enable quick start up of interventions and allows approaches to be adapted, it also poses challenges. The relatively informal approach to assessing the capacity needs of partners is particularly problematic. In the case of twinning capacity needs often emerge and strategies develop, through a series of informal discussions and meetings between the national partner and implementing agencies. The challenge with this approach is that it can lead to a partial diagnosis of capacity needs and a mismatch between capacity strategies and capacity needs. There were a number of cases where a more structured capacity assessment process could potentially have helped clarify the focus and design of the project, helping to avoid mistakes and improve overall effectiveness.

While all projects, including those focused on capacity development, are required to have a formal written programme logic, the evaluation found that the quality of these was frequently inadequate. While the 'implicit logic' was often clear it was not well documented. This meant

there often was not a fully shared understanding among stakeholders (partners, donor and implementers) of the capacity development constraints to be addressed and the anticipated pathway for change between strengthened capacity, improved performance and longer term results. This sometimes led to ambiguity in the purpose of the project and a misalignment between the mandates of the national partners and the twinning partner and the anticipated outputs and outcomes that were sought and how these related to longer term development results.

Implementation of Norwegian supported capacity development interventions

Norwegian supported capacity development interventions are characterised by long-term commitment and a high degree of adaptation and adjustment. The long duration of support allows strong trusting relationships to form with partners, which allows ongoing and collaborative conversations to be had about evolving and emerging capacity needs. The evaluation found strong evidence of Norway's willingness to change plans, scale up efforts and fund discreet activities as needs arise.

Norway's approach to implementation also encourages partner ownership of the capacity development process. In the majority of instances, national partners shaped the overall objectives of the interventions and led implementation. In a number of cases ownership increased over time with national partners taking on more control of the intervention and implementing partners taking more of back-seat, advisory role.

While there is good evidence of adaptation and learning during the implementation of capacity support, the use of evidence in the process is mixed. While there was plenty of examples of output data being used for day to day management, reviews and evaluations being commissioned at the end of project phases to inform the next phase and project implementation being adapted based on experience, the collection of robust outcome data on how partner's capacity and performance is changing was limited. This limits the ability of national partners to manage capacity development processes according to what is working and what is not.

Norway's capacity to oversee capacity development processes

Despite at least 20% of Norwegian development expenditure contributing to projects with major capacity development objectives, the capacity of Embassies, Norad staff and implementation and twinning partners to effectively engage with capacity development interventions is limited. Embassy staff manage substantial portfolios of grants, and can only play a light touch oversight role. National staff of embassies provide continuity and much of the front-line oversight and support. At the same time they have less access to training opportunities and international experience than their Norwegian colleagues. Norad advisers can provide advice on the design of an intervention, but they normally do this only on the request of the Embassy and in practice this often tends to be restricted to the design phase. Capacity is further weakened by the lack of training available to staff on capacity development, and the weaknesses in current guidance material and the lack of a specific focal point within Norad dealing with capacity development issues.

Given the constraints faced by Norad and Embassies, in practice, the responsibility for designing and implementing capacity development sits largely with implementing and twinning partners. Arguably, they are the ones that need to be most skilled and experienced in providing capacity support. However, again there are questions about capacity. No evidence was found of advisers being provided specific training and support on capacity development, or having access to established approaches or methodologies.

The use of twinning in capacity development

Twinning is the main capacity development modality for Norway. Twinning provides national partners with highly specialized technical advice and support in niche areas such as Oil for Development where Norway has extensive expertise. As such, Norwegian twinning agencies provide a valuable resource for national partners. Twinning also forms an essential component of Norway's own institutional capacity which Embassies and Norad can draw on.

While twinning has clear strengths, how it is currently implemented can limit its full potential. Two issues are notable: First, twinning is frequently used as the de facto modality for capacity support, when in some cases there may be better alternatives, be it through multilateral, NGO, academic or private sector providers. The absence of a systematic analysis of alternative modalities means that possibly more effective, relevant and, in some cases less costly, options are not considered. Second, twinning partners are often not sufficiently open to using expertise and training opportunities from other institutions to ensure the highest quality and most relevant support is provided to national partners. The evaluation found a number of cases where national partners were locked into receiving all their capacity support from the twinning partner even when local or international actors were better qualified in certain areas, and in some instances could deliver support at lower cost.

Factors influencing the success of Norwegian capacity support

The evaluation has identified four main factors that help explain Norway's largely successful support to capacity development.

- 1.** Norway's flexibility as a funder, specifically its willingness to change plans, scale up efforts and fund discreet activities as needs arise. This has been central to enabling national partners to implement capacity development activities in a way that is adaptive and responsive to the local context.
- 2.** Norway's commitment to a partner-led approach. This helps build partner's ownership of capacity development process and creates the space for partners to play a formative role in deciding the priorities for support and take a lead role in implementation, in line with their growing capacities.
- 3.** The long term commitment that Norway makes to capacity development. The long duration of support allows strong trusting relationships to form with partners, which

allows ongoing and collaborative conversations to be had about evolving and emerging capacity needs and for success to be built upon.

4. Focusing capacity support in areas where Norway has a well-developed expertise. In areas such as Oil for Development and statistics where it has comparative strengths, Norway, through its twinning agencies, are able to provide national partners with high quality, highly technical, and oftentimes difficult to find, skills and expertise.

Other factors which are not necessarily in the control of Norway, but which were found to be key to understanding when and how capacity development has been successful include: the ability of partners to invest sufficient time and resources to a capacity development process, and the use of quick wins to build momentum, support and commitment for a process.

Recommendations for Future Use of Capacity Support to the Public Sector

Given Norway's relatively positive track record in capacity support to the public sector, recommendations are directed towards building on its strengths while addressing some of its limitations. In the light of this and the findings and conclusions of the evaluation it is recommended to:

1. Continue the current practice of investing in organisations for capacity development over a long period of time.
2. Continue to emphasise capacity development in areas where Norway has a strong track record and unique experience.
3. Further strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of capacity development interventions through improving the design of capacity development interventions. This should include: conducting structured capacity needs assessments early in the project cycle and updating this in programmes of significant duration; conducting an options analysis

and context analysis as part of the design process; ensuring the programme logic of capacity development interventions clearly map out the pathway of change between capacity, performance and results; and collecting evidence of what is working and what is not through better monitoring data and more reviews / evaluations.

4. Support the sharing of experience and the application of improved processes and methods in capacity development through the development of new guidance materials and training and designation of a focal point for capacity development in Norad.
5. Enhance the use of twinning through an assessment of the capacities of twinning agencies and the development of working standards which define clear standards of practice for how twinning agencies should operate to ensure the best long-term capacity support is being provided to national partners.

1. Introduction

1.1 EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The **purpose** of this evaluation is to help Norway improve its decision making and strategy development regarding support to capacity development in developing countries.¹ It aims to achieve this through two main **objectives**:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of a sample of Norwegian capacity support interventions, so as to provide **accountability** for Norway's aid spending;
- Generate **learning** on why and how capacity development has been successful (or not) in order to help Norway shape future and current capacity development support.

The evaluation forms part of a coordinated set of three evaluations commissioned by the Evaluation Departments of Danida, Norad and Sida. All three evaluations are working to similar terms of reference and have used similar methodologies. There has been

a steering group of the three agencies and exchange among the three evaluation teams throughout the evaluation process. Based on the evidence presented in the three evaluation reports, a synthesis report will be produced. This is intended to draw broad generalisable lessons and recommendations for the future of support to capacity development.

The evaluation synthesises evidence from 19 capacity development interventions across nine countries (11 based on in-depth country level field work and 8 based on desk reviews). Wherever possible, analysis is supplemented with reference to the wider literature on capacity development and previous Norwegian evaluations.

In terms of the **scope** of the evaluation, while it is recognised that capacity development is a cross-cutting issue in Norwegian development assistance, the focus of the evaluation is specifically on capacity support to public sector institutions,² reflecting the fact that public

BOX 1.1: DEFINITION OF CAPACITY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT USED IN THE EVALUATION*

Capacity is understood as the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.

'Capacity development' is understood as the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.

* Each of these definitions are based on the OECD/DAC 2006

sector institutions are the principle recipients of Norwegian capacity support (see Section 3). While efforts that engaged the NGO and private sectors have been included, they are still linked to strengthening public sector capacity development. All of the interventions that have been included for review in the evaluation have an explicit intention to support the development of institutional capacity. This was either a primary objective or a significant component of the intervention. The working definitions used in the evaluation for 'capacity' and 'capacity development' are explained in Box 1.1

¹ [Terms of Reference](#)

² This was required by the Terms of Reference

The intended users of the evaluation are management and staff within Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Embassies, and the various intermediaries involved in development cooperation including multilateral institutions, governments and institutions in partner countries.³

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured in seven sections:

- **Section 1** provides an outline of the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation.
- **Section 2** details the evaluation approach and methodology.
- **Section 3** provides a general overview of Norwegian support to capacity development.

- **Section 4** provides the main analysis of the report. It includes the following subsections: **4.1** describes what the evaluation found in terms of the results that have been achieved through Norwegian support to capacity development; **4.2** outlines the findings in relation to the relevance of Norwegian support to capacity development; **4.3** presents findings on the design and delivery of Norway's capacity support; **4.4** explores the extent to which Norad, embassies and those implementing capacity support have adequate capacities to deliver on their responsibilities.

- **Section 5** explores the characteristics of success in capacity development and lessons for the future.
- **Section 6** draws together the conclusions from the evaluation.
- **Section 7** presents a series of recommendations for the future strengthening of Norway's support to capacity development.

The report also includes four annexes. **Annex 1** includes the original terms of reference for the evaluation. **Annex 2** lists the interventions covered in the portfolio review. **Annex 3** presents the evaluation matrix used to organise and manage the process of data collection and analysis. **Annex 4** presents a list of references used in the evaluation.

Annex 5 – 7 and reports on each of the 19 studies and country reports for Malawi, Mozambique and Vietnam are available at <http://www.norad.no/en/front/evaluation/>

³ [Terms of Reference](#)

2. Evaluation approach and methodology

This section provides an overview of the approach and methodology used in the evaluation. It starts with an explanation of the overall approach and analytical framework (2.1). It then describes the process and methodology (2.2). It finishes by detailing the main challenges the team faced in conducting the study and the limitations of the findings and conclusions (2.3).

2.1 APPROACH AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 Overall approach

The overall approach of the evaluation is theory-based. It is grounded in a general Theory of Change (ToC) that was developed in an approach Paper,⁴ produced jointly by Norad, Sida and Danida in preparation for the evaluation. The ToC presented in this paper informed the identification of eleven evaluation questions and four focus areas. These are presented in Box 2.1. The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria covered are: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

⁴ Nils Boeson 2014

BOX 2.1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND FOCUS AREAS

Evaluation Questions

- 1) How can a generic theory of change for support to capacity development be formulated that would enhance the effectiveness of support to capacity development?
- 2) What is the relevance of the strategies and initiatives for support to capacity development? e.g. do they primarily aim at improving capacity to manage aid programmes, versus aiming at more general improvement of capacity in a sector or an institution?
- 3) To what degree are the capacities to manage capacity development processes— e.g. change management competencies, incentives, procedures, guidance, management – effectively in place and adequate among the donor agencies and partner institutions?
- 4) How have strategies and interventions been designed to fit with context-specific factors such as specific institutional dynamics or the social, cultural, political and legal environment, and to contribute to influencing factors external to the institution(s), such as demand and accountability mechanisms? To what degree are strategies based on evidence on how support to capacity development has worked elsewhere?
- 5) How do representatives of the partner institutions and/or other stakeholders in partner countries perceive the donors' role in capacity development, and what do they think is the appropriate role of donors in future capacity development?
- 6) How has results-orientation and results-based management approaches been applied in CD support, and how have they contributed to learning and improved effectiveness?
- 7) To what degree have interventions achieved the planned results at outcome level, and to what degree is there a correlation between the interventions, and observed improvements in capacity of the partner institutions in more general term?
- 8) What are the possible unintended effects of support to capacity development?
- 9) Did the interventions represent efficient use of money in contributing to CD? *
- 10) What characterises those strategies and interventions to support capacity development, which seem relatively more effective, compared to those that seem relatively less effective?

* The original wording of this evaluation question was much broader ('to what degree is it reasonable to assume that the interventions are effective and represent good use of resources (value for money), compared to alternative ways of supporting comparable development objectives in the same sectors or institutions(s)?'), however it was agreed during the inception phase, in discussion with the Norad evaluation department, to reduce the scope.





1.1) Under which circumstances, for which aspects of capacity and for which specific inputs may donor support to capacity development be appropriate and effective? Are there situations where the agencies should refrain from being involved in capacity development, and/or modalities and approaches they should no longer apply?

Focus Areas

- i.** The relevance and opportunity of a “best fit” approach for support to capacity development, well adapted to specific intra- and inter-institutional dynamics and the wider context.
- ii.** Within the “best fit” dimension, the appropriateness and the legitimacy of external (donor) involvement in different dimensions of capacity development, and whether some processes may be so complex and demanding that the ability of donors to add value is limited.
- iii.** The merits of looking beyond the supply side of public sector institutions to foster broader accountability relations or other types of collaboration with e.g. civil society, private sector, media or oversight institutions.
- iv.** How a results-focused approach to aid for capacity development can serve to improve learning and accountability among aid agencies in the future.

An evaluation matrix was used to draw together the different lines of enquiry and provide a comprehensive framework for managing the evaluation process. The matrix divided evaluation questions into sub-questions and linked these to indicators, judgement criteria and data sources (See Annex 3).

While the evaluation questions and focus areas drove enquiry and analysis throughout the evaluation, it was decided not to use them as the organising structure for this report. This was in an effort to make the report more accessible to the general reader.

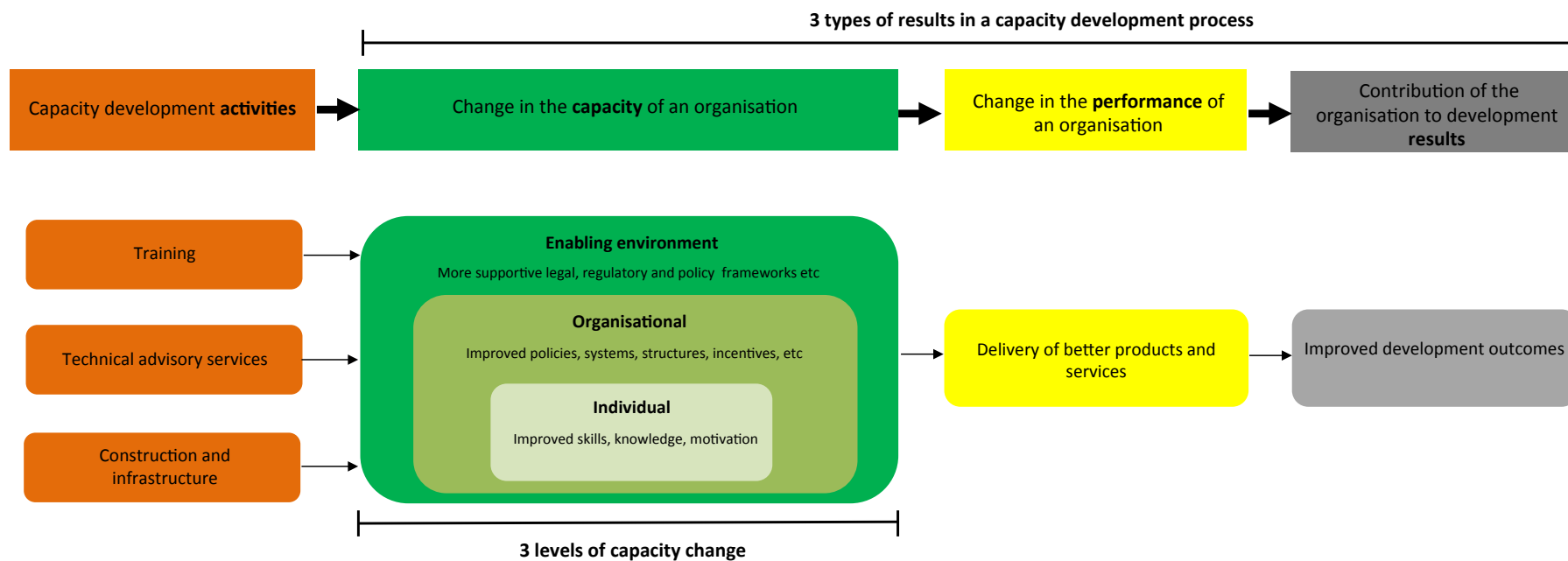
2.1.2 Analytical framework

The analytical framework that was used in the evaluation to assess capacity development has two dimensions: first, it uses the logic of a results chain to unpack the different changes that occur in a capacity development process; second, it distinguishes between three different levels at which capacity change can occur. See Figure 2.1 on the next page for a visual representation of this analytical framework.

The results chain of capacity development distinguishes between three types of changes:

- Changes in an organisation’s **capacity**
- Changes in an organisation’s **performance**
- The contribution of the organisation to longer term development **results**

FIGURE 2.1 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



This differentiation is important as while inter-linked, capacity, performance and results are separate issues often taking places at different points in time. An institution's capacity can be built in the absence of any changes in the quality of what it does (performance) and vice versa. Similarly performance can be improved, but it may not necessarily contribute to any specific long term development results. The distinction between levels of results can help avoid misleading conclusions being drawn about what has been achieved by a capacity development intervention.⁵

In line with existing literature on capacity development,⁶ the analytical framework also understands capacity development as a process occurring at three different levels:

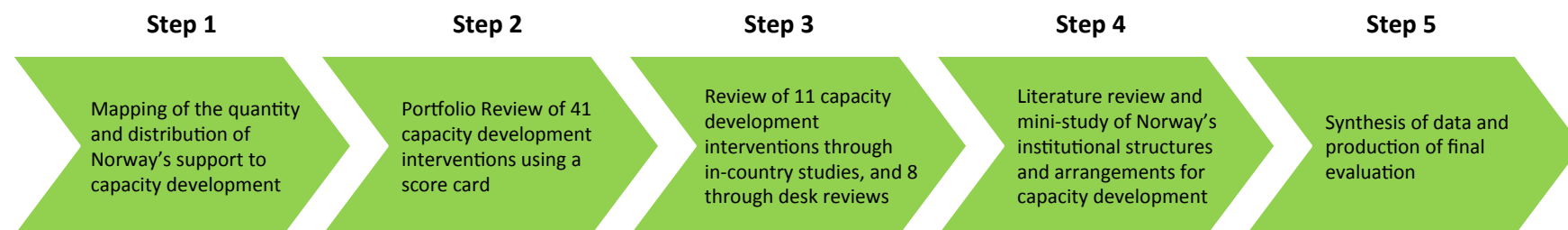
- The **individual** level (knowledge, technical skills, motivation, etc);
- The **organisational** level (policies, processes, systems, structures, incentives, resources, practices); and
- The **enabling environment** (policy, legal, social and economic context and other factors external to the organisation).

While capacity development efforts may sometimes focus on only one of these levels in most cases they involve activity at multiple levels. For example, while building individual's knowledge and skills on a particular technical issue may be necessary to improve capacity, steps may also need to be taken to change how the wider organisation functions to enable these skills to be put into practice. Likewise, changes in the organisation may only be possible with shifts in the wider enabling environment. Sustainable capacity development often requires working simultaneously across these levels. The complexity of an intervention increases at each subsequent level (individual, organisational, institutional) as it involves a more complex set of activities and actors.

⁵ Capacity Enhancement indicator, Review of the Literature, Yemile Mizrahi, WBI Working Paper 2014, p4.

⁶ See for instance: Developing Capacity? An evaluation of DFID Funded Technical Cooperation for Economic Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, Synthesis Report, EV667, June 2006, Page 49; How Can Capacity Development Promote Evidence-Informed Policy Making?, Evidence Review for the Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) Programme, Melanie Punton, Page 50, Developing Capacity? An Evaluation of DFID-Funded Technical Co-operation for Economic Management in sub-Saharan Africa, Synthesis, Oxford Policy Management Groups, Page 19.

FIGURE 2.2 EVALUATION PROCESS



2.2 EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation was undertaken in **five** overlapping steps. These are depicted in Figure 2.2 and described above.

Step 1: Mapping support to capacity development: A database of Norwegian support to capacity development was constructed using a key word search of the data base for Norwegian ODA projects combined with a manual search in programme areas known to have a high capacity development content.⁷ This provided a data base with 1625 project entries. In later phases of the evaluation, this was found to be far from complete but

it provided the initial base for the selection of interventions⁸ to be reviewed, and provided an understanding of the mix of capacity development support within Norwegian ODA.

⁷ These included Oil for Development; Institutional Cooperation in Nepal and Zambia; REDD, Fish for Development, Tax for Development, Statistics.

⁸ Interventions were defined as: support to an institution or a group of institutions working on the same topic in one country. In most cases it included several project phases, often distinguished as several projects in the Norwegian system. Interventions sometimes also included complementary projects which were focused on the same topic in the same country.

Step 2: Portfolio review: In consultation with the Norad Evaluation Department, 41 projects were selected from the database for a basic portfolio review based on a scorecard (see Annex 2). These were selected using the following criteria:

- Priority for Norwegian development policy;
- Sufficient size and duration (not less than US\$ 1 million);
- Initiated at least three years ago, and if completed, then completed not more than three years ago;
- Reflecting Norway's country focus;
- Representative of the modalities employed by Norway, including twinning;
- Focus on the public sector.

Projects that fall under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) programme were omitted as it had

recently been evaluated.⁹ The portfolio review was undertaken using a scorecard standardised across the evaluations undertaken by Norad, Danida and Sida. This provided the basis for the selection of the interventions for country and desk review. However, this review had major limitations as a diagnostic or analytical tool. It was intended to provide a snapshot on “quality at entry”¹⁰ for projects but availability of documentation was a significant challenge (see Section 2.6), and there were also definitional issues around what constituted ‘entry’, because many of the interventions had passed through several phases. Given these problems the portfolio review was relatively basic and of limited value for the overall analysis.¹¹ In the end the portfolio scorecards served only as a filter to identify the main sample of interventions as specified below.

9 Real time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, Synthesising Report 2007-13 Norad Evaluation Department Report 3/2014.

10 How aspects of intervention formulation and design measure up against what is often considered “best-practice”, e.g. the clarity of the expected results, theory of change and provisions for monitoring and evaluation

11 The results of the score card analysis and short write-up of findings will be made available on the Norad Evaluation website as working documents.

Step 3: Reviews of a sample of capacity development interventions: Of the 41 interventions identified through the portfolio scorecards, 19 were selected for in-depth review. Eleven interventions were reviewed during three country visits (Malawi, Mozambique and Vietnam), and an additional eight interventions were reviewed through a desk-based review of documentation and a small number of interviews. The 19 intervention reviews form the main evidence base for the evaluation. The basis for sampling of these 19 interventions is discussed below, as is the methodology for both the in country and desk reviews.

Step 4: Collecting supplementary information: To complement the findings from the intervention reviews, a light touch literature review of capacity development support was undertaken. This included a synthesis of the key findings from previous relevant Norad evaluations. A study of Norway's arrangements and institutional structure for capacity development support was also conducted. This was based on phone interviews with Norad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, twinning partners in Norway, Norwegian

NGOs and a review of reports provided by these agencies.

Step 5: Synthesis: The synthesis drew all the collected information together. The synthesis was primarily based on the intervention reviews, but also incorporated findings from the supplementary literature review and review of Norway's arrangements for capacity development. The methodology of the synthesis is explained in below in Section 2.5.

All aspects of the evaluation were carried out in conformity with Norway's Evaluation Guidelines, including for the rights and welfare of participants in the evaluation.

2.3 SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS

The sample of 19 capacity development interventions for desk review or country visit review was selected in consultation with Norad Evaluation Department. It was intended to be representative of the diversity of Norwegian support to capacity development. The following sampling criteria were used:

- Level of development (Least Developed Countries and Middle Income Countries);
- Region (Africa, Asia and Latin America);
- Sector (agriculture, fisheries, health, oil and gas, electricity, statistics, rule of law, children's rights, and the environment);
- Type of institution supported (higher education and research, government departments, commercial parastatals, NGOs);
- Implementation arrangement (twinning, other arrangements)
- Size of intervention; and
- Duration of intervention.

In addition to these criteria, for the selection of which countries to visits, the following three sampling criteria were also used:

- Number of relevant interventions in the country;
- Work-load of the embassy and national institutions, including recent evaluations; and
- Security situation in the country.

Table 2.1 on the next page presents the sample of interventions selected, starting with the interventions selected for country visits and followed by the interventions selected for desk reviews. The sector, type of organisation, approximate budget and duration of the capacity development intervention are included too.

TABLE 2.1: THE SAMPLE OF INTERVENTIONS SELECTED FOR REVIEW

Country	Intervention	Sector	Types of organisation	Budget in USD million	Duration in years
Country Studies					
Malawi	College of Medicine	Health	Education/ research institute	14	14 ongoing
	Agricultural University	Agriculture	Education/ research institute	15	15 ongoing
	Diplomate Nurses Training	Health	Training institutes	27	9 ongoing
	National Statistics Office	Statistics	Government department	8	11 ongoing
Mozambique	Oil and Gas Sector	Oil and gas	Parastatals	16	30 ongoing
	Electricity *	Electricity	Parastatal		
	- Large Projects Contracting			7	6 ongoing
	- Twinning			1.2	2 completed
Vietnam	Petrovietnam	Oil and gas	Parastatal	5	15 completed
	Geo – hazard management	Environment	Education/ research institute	5.8	7 ongoing
	Aquaculture Research	Fisheries	Education/ research institute	3.2	11 ongoing
	Nha Trang University (fisheries)	Fisheries	Education/ research institute	4.4	11 ongoing
Desk Reviews					
China	Mercury pollution	Environment	Education/ research institute	5.6	9 ongoing
	Cement Kiln Environmental Management	Environment	Education/ research institute	5	9 ongoing
Moldova	National Statistics	Statistics	Government department	2.2	7 completed
	Rule of Law	Governance	Government departments	12	8 ongoing
Nepal	Integrated Pest Management	Agriculture	Government departments	US\$ 6.0 million	10 completed
Nicaragua	Children's Rights	Human Rights	NGOs and local government	US\$ 9 million	4 ongoing
Tanzania	Electricity	Electricity	Parastatal	US\$ 4 million	5 completed
Uganda	Makerere University	Agriculture, governance	Education/ research institute	US\$ 9.9 million	10 ongoing

* The intervention in electricity in Mozambique had two different components which achieved different results. It also had different technical cooperation arrangements. As a result, the two interventions are referred to separately in the report.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

The overall framework for data collection was provided by the evaluation matrix (Annex 3). The matrix was developed into detailed check lists and scoring systems for questions and provided the structure for in country case studies and desk reviews. Interview templates and report outlines were also developed.

Each of the 19 sample interventions was examined in relation to its relevance, design, implementation, and results. For each of these dimensions, numerous sub-dimensions were assessed using standardised questions as per the evaluation matrix. These included assessments of context and other success factors as hypothesised in the generic ToC detailed in the Approach Paper. The evaluation also encouraged open enquiry in order to collect data on additional elements not covered in the evaluation matrix.

In-country reviews were undertaken by two core team members per country and two national consultants. Country visits were ten working days in length. The teams interviewed

a cross-section of stakeholders for each intervention and reviewed project documents, progress and evaluation reports as well as context information such as sector policies. Evidence from written material was triangulated with interview data for each intervention, providing robust data for each of the evaluation questions. Focus group discussions with intervention beneficiaries and with embassy representatives were conducted where possible. Reports were produced for each of the interventions reviewed. These were then synthesised into a country report by one of the core team members. Both country reports and interventions reports were sent to stakeholders for review and validation.

Desk-based reviews were undertaken by a core team member and a junior consultant, using a standard score sheet, a desk review outline and check list of questions based on the evaluation matrix. In the original Terms of Reference it was envisaged that more desk reviews would be undertaken, but the evaluation team felt that it was better to conduct a more limited number

so as to provide greater depth of analysis.¹² As a result, 8 desk reviews were undertaken, with each taking around 8 days to complete.

Desk reviews involved the review of all the available documentation related to an intervention and interviews with one of two stakeholders per intervention. Each report was written up using a common outline and shared with the Embassies in each of the countries for verification. Given the more limited number of stakeholders that were engaged through the desk reviews, findings are less well triangulated than those from the country based studies.

2.5 SYNTHESIS APPROACH

For the synthesis, a comparative approach was taken. A number of spreadsheets were prepared that extracted relevant information from each of the 19 intervention reports against a set of characteristics and factors. The approach taken was both inductive and deductive. Information was

¹² The team reduced the number of interventions included in the desk review by not including those that were covered by the country studies. This meant fewer interventions were looked at through the desk review, but that more time could be spent on each.

analysed against pre-defined characteristics and factors as per the evaluation matrix, focus areas and analytical framework, and against characteristics and factors that were only identified during the country visits. This allowed the evaluation to be systematic and open to new lines of enquiry at the same time.

To aid the evaluation team in making clear judgements on effectiveness, relevance and sustainability rating scales were used. These employed three point scales (Red / Amber / Green), with rich text descriptions to aid transparency and consistency. In all cases, the evidence put forward to support a rating was reviewed and checked by the team leader. A similar approach was also used to assess the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of the reviewed interventions.

In order to explore and identify which factors drive success in capacity development processes (section 5) a two-step process was used in the synthesis:

First, factors suggested by existing theory, and specified in the evaluation questions and focus areas, as influencing the success of capacity development interventions were identified. These factors had been identified at the start of the evaluation as possibly important and were systematically collected across all the interventions. These included factors such as the level of partner ownership, the degree of adaptive management and the length of engagement of an intervention.

Second, through reviewing the 19 intervention reports a number of additional factors were identified that emerged as important to success. Because these factors were only identified through the process of reviewing the interventions, data does not exist for each intervention. Therefore, the evidence base on the role of these factors is more limited. These included factors such as the partner's capacity to manage capacity development, the degree of institutional autonomy of the partner, or whether 'quick wins' were generated as a way of building partner's buy-in and support for longer term capacity change.

Having identified the above key factors, they were then linked to the assessment that had been made on the effectiveness of the reviewed interventions (the scores detailed in Table 4.1 in section 4.1). Where appropriate, characteristics and factors were rated on a three- or four point scale and presented as a Red-Amber-Green rating. Based on this, an assessment was made of whether patterns of association existed. For interventions where the evaluation judged a significant contribution to capacity had been made, analysis was undertaken to identify which success factors were frequently present. Similarly, for those interventions where there was judged to have been no/limited capacity changes, analysis was undertaken to identify which factors were frequently absent. To ensure confidence in the analysis around association, the evaluation focussed on the interventions that were clearly successful or unsuccessful (in other words, those that were rated either green or red in Table 4.1). Interventions with moderate levels of success (amber in Table 4.1) were only used as examples to explore the causal link further.

It is important to note that an association between factors and capacity changes does not necessarily imply causality. Factors where there was an association and where there was plausible evidence of a causal link provide the principal basis for the findings presented in the report. All findings were triangulated qualitatively and their validity was also assessed by checking it against the existing literature. All scores assigned to interventions were checked and validated by the core team members that had led the review

2.6 LIMITATIONS

The sample of 19 interventions, while purposively selected, is not fully representative of the diversity of Norway's support to capacity development to the public sector.

The evaluation approach was to provide in-depth analysis of a limited number of interventions, rather than cover a larger number but only superficially. The extended desk reviews and to a lesser extent, the review of previous Norwegian evaluations did serve to expand the evidence base, but this data was of necessity more limited than that from the country visits.

Some of the key limitations of the sample include:

- Several important sectors for Norway such as forests, climate and environment (REDD) were not included.
- Small projects were not covered, except when they formed part of a larger intervention.
- The range of partners included in interventions was limited. For example, not all the Norwegian institutional twinning partners were included in the sample.
- 'Demand for capacity and broader accountability relations' formed only minor components of some of the interventions, curtailing the evaluation team's ability to test the hypothesis developed in focus area iii of the Terms of Reference.
- The sample did not cover post conflict situations.

The sample tended towards success stories.

Although the sample did include some less successful projects there was limited evidence of failure to contrast with that on success. This is likely to be the case because non-successful interventions are more likely to have been terminated earlier and hence present a lower share of the overall population under study, which represents an important bias. This made it also more difficult to effectively answer evaluation question 10, which asked for a comparison between strategies used in successful interventions vis-à-vis less successful interventions. Some evidence was collected, but what the evaluation could conclude is perhaps not entirely in line with the original evaluation question.

Access to documentation was a major constraint. The archive systems of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies were found to be difficult to access. Embassies were helpful during country visits, however less so for desk reviews. For the portfolio review, access to documentation was a major challenge. The fact that documentation could not be located could not be taken as evidence that it did not exist or was of inadequate quality. Taken together with the difficulty in defining the entry level documentation, this reduced the value of the analysis generated from the portfolio review. The main value of the portfolio review, together with the database of capacity development projects, was to provide the main basis for selection of interventions for country review and desk review case studies.

The evaluation made efforts to gather evidence on evaluation question 5 (donors' role in capacity development) but the data was insufficient to be able to say anything meaningful. First, in country teams were unable to obtain a sufficient number of interviews with government donor coordinators such as Ministries of Finance and Planning or with donor coordinators (such as the UN and World Bank). These could have provided an important perspective to answer this question, but there was also insufficient time in the country to prioritise such information gathering over the work on the interventions being reviewed. Secondly, with those key informants where it was relevant to explore this question, the answers that were given frequently lacked depth. The evaluation team thus concluded that there was insufficient evidence to include this evaluation question in the report.

With respect to evaluation question 8 (unintended effects) the country evaluation teams did systematically gather evidence but concluded that there were few, if any unintended effects, negative or positive. There was thus little to say which merited treatment in the report. Those findings which were identified, were either not specific to capacity development (e.g. sub-optimal allocation of resources) or were not considered new or striking (e.g. staff that have improved their skills as a result of a capacity development process are more employable and sometimes move onto new employment). Question 8 is thus not addressed in specific sections of the report (it is mentioned under section 4.1.2).

3. Background to Norway's support to capacity development

The following section provides background to Norway's support to capacity development. It starts with an overview of basic patterns in Norwegian support to capacity development (3.1), then goes on to explore the institutional architecture for capacity support (3.2). It finishes with a discussion of how capacity development is integrated into the Norwegian grant management system (3.3).

3.1 PATTERNS IN NORWAY'S SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development is a cross cutting theme that Norway integrates into its broader technical cooperation.¹³ **While it was not possible for the evaluation team to form a full picture of Norway's total expenditure on capacity development because of the way that grants are tagged in the grant system¹⁴** in the

¹³ Technical cooperation is defined by OECD-DAC as (a) grants to nationals of aid recipient countries receiving education or training at home or abroad, and (b) payments to consultants, advisers and similar personnel as well as teachers and administrators serving in recipient countries, (including the cost of associated equipment).

¹⁴ There was no distinct label used on projects with major capacity development objectives.

period 2010-12, 11% of Norway's bilateral¹⁵ ODA disbursements were identified as technical cooperation. This encompasses the majority of Norwegian capacity development expenditure, although not construction and not all equipment provision, which as is discussed later in the report, often make up important components of Norway's capacity development. Based on a database developed for the evaluation, **the best estimate is that projects and programmes with significant capacity development objectives account for a minimum of 20% of bilateral expenditure.** Within this, about one third is estimated to be allocated to global and regional capacity development efforts often through international partners such as the World Bank and UNDP (of which about half is devoted to 10 large projects).

A number of flagship programmes have a significant capacity development component, these include: Oil for Development, Tax for Development, Statistics for Development and

¹⁵ Bilateral ODA consists of all ODA except contributions to multilateral agencies core budgets.).

Fish for Development, and Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED)¹⁶. In recent years the International Climate and Forest initiative, including support for REDD+¹⁷, has also become a major channel for capacity support.

Between 2010 and 2012, some 60% of Norway's ODA commitments were for priority sectors excluding humanitarian assistance as summarised in Table 1. In so far as the evaluation could ascertain, overall support to capacity development has followed a similar pattern. The only outlier is capacity support for Oil for Development. This has been a very prominent part of Norway's support to capacity development over the past years. However, Table 1 only indicates 0.4% of ODA going to the oil and gas sector. One explanation for this mismatch could be that some of the support for oil for development is categorised under public financial management and the strengthening of civil society.

¹⁶ Established in 2012 NORHED is specifically for collaboration between Norwegian and Developing Country Institutions which jointly apply for grants

¹⁷ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

TABLE 3.1: NORWAY'S ODA COMMITMENTS BY SECTOR *

Sector	% 2010-2012
Gov. and Civil Soc. General, including public financial management, law, elections	11.9%
Forestry, including REDD	10.3%
Education	7.4%
Peace & Security	6.7%
Energy	6.6%
Health + Population & Reproductive Health	5.8%
Environmental Protection	5.7%
Agriculture	2.9%
Fisheries	0.8%
Oil & Gas Production	0.4%

* OECD Statistics <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=TABLE2A#>

The primary recipients of Norwegian support for capacity development have been public sector institutions, followed by civil society organisations. The private sector receives some support, but this is limited.

3.2 THE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF NORWEGIAN SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The institutional architecture through which Norway offers capacity support is complex and there are a number of different ways it is implemented (see Figure 4.1).

The main actors involved include:

- Embassies
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Norad
- Twinning agencies
- Implementation agencies
- National partners

Embassies which report to and are overseen by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (MFA) are responsible for receiving and appraising Norwegian grants. They hold the contract and are responsible for most grant administration and project oversight,¹⁸ including for those grants related to capacity development. Desk officers are the main point of contact for a specific grant. In some cases, desk officers are generalists, in others they have a sector specialisation but may also handle grants outside their area of specialisation. Embassies' national staff often act as the front-line officers for projects. They provide greater continuity than the Norwegian staff who are rotated. Embassies do not implement capacity development support themselves; however they are often closely involved in selecting who does.

¹⁸ While embassies are responsible for most grants, MFA and Norad are also involved. NGO grants for example are usually managed by Norad.

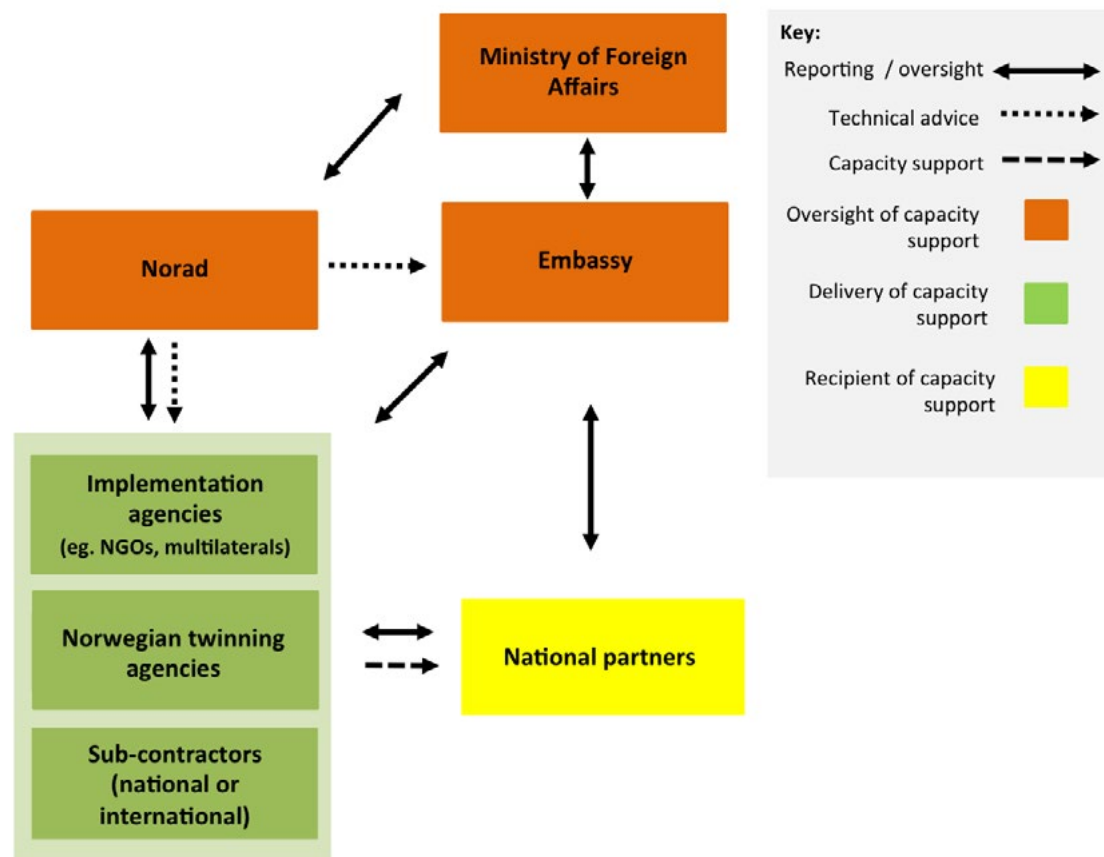
Norad is a directorate of the MFA in Oslo that provides advice and quality assurance to Norwegian grants. Norad staff are technical specialists grouped into five technical departments. There is no specific focal point for capacity development in Norad, as it is treated as a cross-cutting issue. Norad's advice is provided on request from Embassies or the MFA. Similar to Embassies, Norad does not implement capacity development, but advises on design and implementation. It has direct oversight of some projects such as those for NORHED, and some projects where this is requested from the Embassy. It also manages many of the grants to Norwegian NGOs, which are often involved in capacity development. Norad often uses subcontractors to assist in fulfilling its adviser role.

Twinning agencies are frequently used to deliver the technical capacity development support. They are one of the sets of actors that work directly with national partners to identify capacity gaps, deliver training, provide technical advice, etc. As they often hold substantial parts of the budget under sub-contract, they also have an implementation management role and may provide support to project management. For example, twinning partners generally attended annual review meetings as observers. Twinning partners may issue sub-contracts for part of their capacity work.

In cases where a twinning arrangement is not being used, the delivery of capacity support can sit with other types of **implementation agencies**, such as international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), national NGOs or multilateral agencies. Where these other types of implementation agencies are used they often hold the contract for capacity support directly with the Embassy.

National partners are the recipients of the capacity support. They are the organisations whose capacity is being developed. A capacity development intervention can be focused on a single organisation or multiple. Sometimes the formal responsibility for the grant lies with a ministry but the day-to-day responsibility is with the institution being strengthened. In other cases it lies directly with the institution being strengthened. The national partner holds the contract with the Embassy and is responsible for formal reporting.

FIGURE 3.1: INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF NORWEGIAN SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



Depending on the context, these actors can come together in a number of different implementation arrangements:

- **Twinning** – The Embassy, MFA or Norad provides support to a national partner that enters into a twinning arrangement with a Norwegian public sector institution. The Norwegian partner works with the national partner to diagnose capacity issues and provide support. In some cases, multiple twinning agencies are involved, and in others the national partner supplements support from the twinning agency with inputs from other local and/or international experts. Twinning is the dominant model for capacity support among the interventions reviewed for this evaluation.
- **NGO / multilateral led** – The Embassy, or more frequently Norad, provides support to an implementing partner such as an NGO or multilateral agency, that then works with a national partner(s) in country. This is the case in the Diplomat Nurses Training project in Malawi, where implementation

responsibility sat with Norwegian Church Aid and, later, the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI). In the Integrated Pest Management project in Nepal the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) was responsible for implementation.

- **National partner led** – The Embassy provides support directly to a national partner in country, such as a government department or ministry that then manages the funds to strengthen its own capacity. The national partner may contract local or international expertise to support the capacity development process. This arrangement was used for the projects in Mozambique, the two fisheries projects in Vietnam and for the university-based projects in Malawi and Uganda.

3.3 HOW CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IS INTEGRATED INTO THE NORWEGIAN GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The grant management system provides the overall framework for how grants are requested, approved and managed within the Norwegian system. The following section looks at how the process functions when a grant is for capacity development or for a programme that has a strong capacity development component.

The grant process has three main phases: preparatory, follow up and completion.

The preparatory phase starts with a grant proposal being developed and submitted by partners to an Embassy, MFA or Norad¹⁹. The partner could be the national government, a national institution, an NGO, an international agency or a twinning agency. Proposals should include a rationale for the project, a budget, the goal hierarchy and details of how the intervention will be monitored. In the case of interventions

¹⁹ Given that only parts of the interventions reviewed for this evaluation were overseen by Norad, this is not elaborated on in the following description of the grant management process.

with a strong focus on capacity development, the proposal should identify capacity gaps and how they are going to be addressed, although in reality, given that any activities undertaken before a grant is agreed needs to be funded from an organisations own resources, this often does not happen.²⁰

A desk officer at the Embassy (or Norad, or MFA) reviews the application and assesses it based on its realism and feasibility. At this stage they can commission an external appraisal of the proposal or request technical input from Norad.²¹ An assessment of the partner's capacity may also be undertaken at this point in the process. The document *Assessment of Sustainability Elements/Risk Factors: A Practical Guide*, contains a chapter on institutional capacity

²⁰ A number of stakeholders indicated that this approach to grant funding puts limitations on how much capacity assessment and base line studies can be done during the preparatory phase and before a grant is given. It was noted however that this can vary, with programmes such as Oil for Development which has a relatively large secretariat and budget, being able to fund country analysis, capacity assessments and baseline studies before entering into a long term cooperation.

²¹ Whether to commission an external appraisal or to request advice from Norad is at the discretion of the desk officer and depends on available funding. Appraisals are usually managed by Norad, using external consultants and/or a twinning partner.

assessments and can be used to support this review. Its use, however, is optional.

In the case of twinning arrangements, when a capacity assessment is undertaken as part of the preparatory phase, it takes place through a series of scoping missions and informal discussions between the twinning partners. The duration of the scoping process varies.²²

Following this, a decision document is produced that outlines the case for funding (or not). Whether and how recommendations from the appraisal and/or Norad adviser are reflected in the decision document is at the discretion of the desk officer. Grant agreements are then signed with partners.

Once contracts are signed, a grant enters into the **follow-up phase**. During this phase, the Embassy (or Norad, or MFA) is responsible for overseeing the grant. This involves attending

annual project meetings organised by national partners and implementing partners, reviewing and commenting on progress reports, plans and budgets and making sure that legal requirements are met. The Embassy may also commission mid-term reviews and evaluations during implementation. In most instances the scope of the review is agreed with the national partner, who in turn may hire part of the team or propose national member(s).²³

At the end of a grant (the **completion phase**) a final report is produced by the partner that provides their assessment of performance. This is reviewed by the desk officer. End reviews or evaluations can be commissioned at this stage to provide an independent perspective on performance and lessons learnt. They can also often play an important role in informing future phases of the project.

²² The preparatory phase for Electricity project in Tanzania lasted for 2 years. In the case of the National Statistics Office Malawi initiative, scoping took place over a 3-year period, with an initial fact-finding mission (2000), followed by a scoping mission (2002). A grant agreement was only signed in 2003.

²³ Mid term review can be funded from project funds or from funds allocated from the Embassy's – or Norad's – consultancy allocation.

4. Findings of the evaluation

This section presents the main findings from the evaluation. It has three main sections, each with a number of subsections.

Section 4.1 presents the results of Norwegian support to capacity development.

Section 4.2 discusses the relevance of Norwegian support to capacity development.

Section 4.3 presents the evaluation's findings in terms of the design and delivery of Norway's capacity development support.

Section 4.4 looks at the extent to which Norway and its implementing partners have the necessary skills, processes and system to deliver effective capacity support.

4.1 RESULTS OF NORWEGIAN SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

This section focuses on understanding what results have been achieved through Norwegian capacity support. It starts with a discussion of what effect Norwegian support has had on the capacity of national partners (**4.1.1**). Following this there is a discussion of the likely sustainability of the capacity improvements (**4.1.2**). The section concludes with exploration of the extent to which changes in capacity have led to improvements in the performance of partners (**4.1.3**).

4.1.1 Norway's contribution to strengthening the capacities of partners

In the majority of interventions there have been improvements in the capacity of national partners. In a number of cases, these improvements have been significant. Out of 19 interventions, the evaluation found 15 where there was evidence of improvements in capacity. In 8, the change was judged to have been *significant* (indicated in green in Table 4.1). This reflected the fact that a range of capacities, both at the level of the individual and organisation, had been strengthened. In only 3 cases did the evaluation judge there to have been limited change in capacity (indicated in red in Table 4.1). In terms of the contribution of Norwegian support to the capacity improvements, 8 interventions were found to have made a *crucial* contribution, while 6 made *some* contribution. In the other cases either there was insufficient data to make a judgement, or the evidence pointed towards very limited or no contribution.

TABLE 4.1: ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT OF CAPACITY CHANGE AND NORWAY'S CONTRIBUTION, BY INTERVENTION

Interventions	Extent of capacity change	Extent of Norway's contribution to change	Interventions	Extent of capacity change	Extent of Norway's contribution to change
College of Medicine Malawi	●	+ + +	Geo-hazard management Vietnam	●	+ +
Aquaculture Vietnam	●	+ + +	National Statistics Office Malawi	●	+ +
Oil and Gas sector Mozambique	●	+ + +	Rule of Law Moldova	●	+ +
Petrovietnam	●	+ + +	Childrens' Rights Nicaragua	●	N/A
Agricultural University Malawi	●	+ + +	Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	●	+ +
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	●	+ +	Makarere University, Uganda	●	+ +
National Statistics Moldova	●	N/A	Electricity Tanzania	●	+
Electricity (Large Projects Contracting) Mozambique	●	+ + +	Electricity (twinning) – Mozambique	●	+
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	●	+ + +	Mercury pollution China	N/A	N/A
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	●	+ + +			

Explanation of scoring:
Capacity change:

● significant change across a range of capacities, both at the individual and organisational level; ● moderate change in capacity at either organisation or individual level; ● limited change in capacity; N/A Not possible to score because of inadequate data

Norway's contribution:

+ + + Norwegian-supported intervention played a crucial contribution to the observed capacity changes; + + Norwegian-supported intervention had some contribution to the observed capacity changes, but not crucial; + Norwegian support made limited or no contribution; N/A not possible to score because of inadequate data

Box 4.1 provides short case studies of three national partners where the changes in capacity have been judged to be significant

BOX 4.1: CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSES IN DEVELOPING PARTNER'S CAPACITY

Strengthening the capacity of the College of Medicine Malawi

Over 15 years and with inputs of some US\$ 14 million, Norway has worked to raise the number of qualified doctors in Malawi. The health indicators for Malawi were poor even by standards for the Least Developed Countries of Africa and more doctors are essential, if the health status of Malawians is to be raised. To do this, Norway has mobilised the core funds administered by the Embassy and has integrated inputs under NORHED, as well as the professional volunteer programme (Fredskorpset (FK)). Twinning arrangements were with Norway's universities, and training has also been supported through twinning with universities in other countries. Norway's funding included: construction of teaching facilities and student accommodation; post-graduate medical training; and administrative training of College staff and technical support. Medical equipment, library and IT resources were also strengthened. Post-graduate training has increasingly been in Malawi.

This is an undoubted example of success in terms of enhancing the numbers and capacity of medical practitioners in Malawi, and improving relevant infrastructure, but challenges remain. For example, the growth in numbers at the College has made it more difficult

to provide appropriate practical training for student doctors and supervision of practice on graduation (internships). An additional issue for all government programmes in Malawi, one of the world's least developed countries, is the major shortfall in recurrent funding. Despite these challenges, the College is now a competent and self-confident institution, well respected in the Southern and East African regions. It has over 100 professional staff, of whom the very great majority are Malawians. The number of graduates has risen from less than 20 per year at project start to over 100 today, of which some 40% are female. The graduates largely remain working in Malawi and most of those who do not stay in country serve elsewhere in the region.

Strengthening the capacity of the Mozambican oil and gas sector

Norway has provided capacity development support to the Mozambican oil and gas sector since the early 1980s with inputs of some US\$ 35 million. Initially, support was focused on highly specialised technical support to the state company Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos (ENH). After the regulatory function was removed from ENH to the autonomous Instituto Nacional de Petróleo (INP), Norwegian support shifted towards broader institutional strengthening in areas such as strategy, management support and human resources. During

the last few years, this was complemented with additional support to civil society and parliamentarians to strengthen demand for accountability in the sector.

Capacity development support has been largely provided through over 30 years of twinning arrangements with the Norwegian National Petroleum Directorate (NPD). As Mozambican institutions have matured, Norwegian support has become more limited and shifted more towards an advisory role. Much of the support has been provided by the same individuals who have developed working relationships, characterised by high levels of trust and mutual respect, with Mozambican partners. Support has included long-term technical assistance through resident advisors, training courses and specialised university degrees in engineering areas in Norway, on-the-job training secondments to NPD and international oil and gas companies, training courses, study visits, and legal and other short-term advice provided through short-term visits and remotely.

Today, ENH and INP are effective and efficient institutions and are able to perform most of their roles independently. A legal and regulatory framework relying on international standards is in place, institutions, processes and structures have been set up for oil and gas exploration and production, 4 exploration licensing rounds have been





conducted and a number of licenses are operational. This has led to the discovery of significant gas resources in the country. Mozambique has secured a share of future oil and gas revenues through the introduction of taxation and participation schemes and competent contract negotiation. Whether, or the extent to which, this will translate into real benefits for the population at large remains to be seen.

Strengthening the capacity of Petrovietnam

Norway provided project support to the Vietnamese oil and gas industry between 1996 and 2012 with inputs of some US\$ 8 million. From 2005, the various phases of the project were implemented as part of Norway's Oil for Development programme. The support has focused on the development of management systems for safety, the working environment, and pollution control in Vietnam's oil and gas industry. The Norwegian Embassy in Hanoi was responsible for overseeing implementation of the project on behalf of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the Vietnamese side, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) acted as the coordination ministry at the national level with PVN serving as the project implementing agency. Institutional collaboration (twinning) was the main mechanism for collaboration between Vietnamese and Norwegian partners. In practical terms, this entailed Norwegian partners providing technical expertise to their Vietnamese counterparts, supporting study tours, and exposing Vietnamese participants to Norwegian practices.

The project led to the establishment of a sustainable and efficient management system for health, safety and environmental (HSE) issues in Vietnam's oil and gas industry, which has served to minimise risk of personnel injury, major accidents and environmental damage. The project succeeded in developing or strengthening the capacity of Petrovietnam, and other sector actors, on HSE issues. As a result, Petrovietnam and its subsidiaries are now seen as credible actors in this realm who can function comfortably with domestic and international players engaged in the oil and gas sector. Petrovietnam is also now seen as being on the same level as other Asian countries on HSE issues.

The most common type of capacity change observed across the interventions was in relation to improvements in individuals' knowledge, technical skills and competencies.

In 14 of the 19 interventions there was evidence that through modalities, such as training and mentoring, individuals had gained new technical skills (see Table 4.2). These were wide ranging and included: skills in economic modelling and advanced statistical analysis (the two statistics projects in Moldova and Malawi), the ability to produce and communicate policy-relevant research (Nha Trang University in Vietnam), and health, safety and environment standards (Petrovietnam).

TABLE 4.2: TYPES AND PREVALENCE OF CAPACITY OUTCOMES OBSERVED IN INTERVENTIONS

Levels of capacity development	Types of capacity changes observed in reviewed interventions	Number of interventions where evidence for capacity change was found
Individual level change	Development of new skills (technical, managerial)	14
Organisational level change	Development and upgrading of systems (HR systems, planning processes, financial systems etc.)	9
	Improved equipment and infrastructure (construction, IT systems etc.)*	8
	Development and implementation of new policies, regulations, standards and guidance	7
	Strategy development	5
	Improved external outreach and communication	3
	Strengthened networks/relationships with external stakeholders	3
Enabling environment	Influence on legal and regulatory frameworks affecting the organisation	6
	Coordination of actors working on specific issue sector	2
	Stimulation of demand side	3

* Most of the interventions included some form of equipment, but this can often times be relatively minor. Therefore this assessment is based on where the evaluation judged an intervention to have a significant equipment and/or construction component.

Changes at the organisational level were also present across the majority of interventions and cut across a number of areas.

As illustrated in Table 4.2, the most common organisational level changes were: the development and revision of human resource, financial and administration systems (9 interventions), improved equipment and infrastructure (8 interventions), and the development of new policies, standards and guidelines (7 interventions). In most cases, change took place across a number of areas. For example, in the case of the Nha Trang University (fisheries) in Vietnam, a new library was constructed, a new credits-based system was introduced and new collaborations with international and national universities were established. The multifaceted nature of the changes achieved by interventions is a reminder of the complexity of developing organisational capacity.

There seems to have been more success in supporting partners in developing technical capacities, than softer capacities such as improving outreach and network building.

The evaluation found that a limited number

of interventions (5) strengthened partners' capacities in outreach and relationship building. Outreach and network building are generally considered to be core capacities for sustainability.²⁴ Organisations that are outward looking and well networked are usually better able to collaborate with others, to form new partnerships and achieve shared results that can help secure funding. They are also more engaged with and responsive to users and stakeholders, which improves relevance and effectiveness.

Where outreach and networking capacities were built, the evaluation found that organisations benefited in a number of ways. One example is the Agricultural University in Malawi where a greater outward focus has meant staff now spend more time engaging in practical research in food security and agriculture which has brought them closer with farmers (the intended ultimate beneficiaries of their research). Links have also been developed with

24 In ECDPM's 5C's framework, this is referred to as the 'capacity to relate to external stakeholders'; in INTRAC's capacity development framework this is called 'the capacity to relate'. It is also recognised in a number of other organisational performance frameworks, such as IDRC's organisational assessment framework, through reference to interorganisational linkages.

other universities which has helped strengthen the organisation's reputation and credibility in the region and helped bring in additional resources through research and teaching.

Where strategy development was the focus of an intervention, it was found to have been effective in developing the capacity in managers to think through relevant issues and helping guide shifts in organisational direction. New strategies were developed with Norwegian assistance in a range of interventions, including the Agricultural University in Malawi, the National Statistics Office in Malawi and the Aquaculture Research Institute in Vietnam.

The extent to which interventions have focused on (and been successful in) influencing the enabling environment for capacity development has been mixed. As Table 4.2 indicates, the enabling environment has been successfully influenced in just over half of the interventions (11). This is an important issue given how changes in the wider context can either support or undermine capacity gains at

various levels. Where there have been specifically targeted interventions to reform the enabling environment, this has supported and helped sustain capacity development. In National Statistics Moldova for example, NBS was involved in helping to reform the legal framework for statistics and helping to push for the Law on Official Statistics that sets the overall framework for how statistics are used in government.

Where the enabling environment has not been addressed, contextual factors have presented barriers to long-term sustainable capacity gains at individual and organisational levels. For example, in the case of Children's Rights in Nicaragua, while Save the Children has put significant efforts into building the capacity of partners such as municipalities, local government and civil society organisations (CSOs) to integrate child rights into planning and practice, the government has abandoned its two main policy frameworks for protecting children's rights,²⁵ which means these gains are likely to be eroded.

25 The National Council for the Comprehensive Care and Protection of Children and Adolescents and National Action Plan and National Action Plan 2002–11.

4.1.2 Sustainability of the Organisational Capacities

While Norwegian support has, in general, led to a wide range of capacity improvements among national partners, the likelihood of sustainability of these improvements is mixed.

As detailed in Table 4.3, out of 19 interventions, only 5 were judged to have *high* sustainability, while 9 have *moderate* sustainability and 6 have *low* sustainability.

TABLE 4.3: ASSESSMENT OF THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS, BY INTERVENTION

Intervention	Sustainability of capacity improvements	Intervention	Sustainability of capacity improvements
Oil and Gas Sector Mozambique	●	Geo-hazard management Vietnam	●
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	●	Electricity (Large Projects Contracting) Mozambique	●
Mercury pollution China	●	Agricultural University Malawi	●
Aquaculture Research Vietnam	●	College of Medicine Malawi	●
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	●	Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	●
Petrovietnam	●	Rule of Law Moldova	●
National Statistics Moldova	●	Electricity (Twinning) Mozambique	●
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	●	Electricity Tanzania	●
National Statistics Office Malawi	●	Children's Rights Nicaragua	●
		Makerere University Uganda	●

Explanation of scoring

- **high sustainability.** Good evidence to suggest that the intervention will be sustainable. Where sustainability issues exist, clear plans are in place and measures already taken to address them;
- **moderate sustainability.** Intervention could be sustainable, but some clear challenges exist. Plans in place for addressing some of the challenges;
- **weak sustainability.** Major challenges to sustainability and no evidence of a plan to address them.

Financial sustainability is a key challenge for most partners.

The challenges faced by partners in maintaining capacity gains are myriad, but one of the most common is financial sustainability. In Malawi and Uganda, the absence of sustainable resource models was identified as a major barrier. For example, in the case of the Agricultural University in Malawi, while attempts have been made to address financial sustainability by setting up a commercial farm, these have been largely unsuccessful; if financial support from donors such as Norway was withdrawn, it is unlikely that capacity gains will be sustained.²⁶

In the limited number of interventions where financial sustainability has been addressed, it has been a result of either the government or the national partner putting additional resources into the areas supported by Norwegian funds. This was the case in the two projects addressing the environment in China, the long term sup-

²⁶ The evaluation also considered that the University had failed to put in place reforms that were needed for greater financial sustainability, including some of the most difficult measures to institute, such as those for cost-cutting through support staff reductions and outsourcing, and persuading staff to accept a proportion of consultancy fees and research grants passing to the University.

port to the Oil and Gas Sector in Mozambique, and the intervention with Petrovietnam in Vietnam. Based on the reviewed projects, it seems easier to mobilise resources for sustainability where the intervention operates in a highly commercial sector, in particular the oil and gas sector.

There is, of course, no easy solution to the issue of financial sustainability. In less developed countries, such as Malawi in particular, donor financing is the norm and there are real questions as to whether organisations that are not in revenue-generating sectors such as oil and gas can be financially sustainable in the foreseeable future. The evaluation found that in Malawi a continued stream of essential organisational outputs, such as medical graduates, trained nurses, etc., simply could not be sustained if reliance was only on national resources. The situation is different in middle-income countries, such as China and Vietnam, where prospects for sustained domestic support for capacity development interventions are greater.

Sustaining human resources is a key challenge that most interventions have not adequately addressed.

There are two dimensions of sustaining human resources: retaining staff and maintaining staff capacity. In interventions in Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, retaining staff who had improved their technical skills was identified as a major challenge to sustainability. In all cases, the dynamic was the same: capacitated staff with broader and deeper technical skills became more employable and, in the absence of attractive employment conditions, moved on. In Moldova, for example, NBS struggled to retain its IT staff who were attracted to the private sector. In Mozambique, governmental agencies and ministries struggled to retain staff as a result of the attractive salaries offered by international companies operating in Mozambique's oil and gas and energy sectors.²⁷

This finding is not new to Norad or the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The recent

²⁷ Of course, this movement of staff does not necessarily mean that the skills are lost to the country or the developing region, but they are lost to the organisation.

evaluation of Norway's Oil for Development refers to this dynamic as 'training for organisational failure' and argues that Norwegian twinning partners need to focus more on the enabling environment, specifically the labour market, to sustain capacity gains.²⁸

Where staff with highly competitive skills were retained, such as in the College of Medicine in Malawi and the research and academic institutions for fisheries in Vietnam, it was because of strategies to make continued employment attractive, for example by supplementary-income-earning opportunities, or negative incentives, such as qualifications not being immediately transferable elsewhere. For example, in Malawi the post-graduate training strategy in medicine was adjusted to make employment outside the country both less desirable and less possible.

Maintaining the knowledge and skills of staff once the intervention ends was identified as another important sustainability consideration

²⁸ Facing the Resource Curse: Norway's Oil for Development Programme, 2012.

related to human resources. This tended to be a concern in initiatives that have relied heavily on building or enhancing technical skills through training. While none of the interventions had put in place measures to manage this risk, efforts were underway in a number of cases. For example, the National Statistics Office in Malawi is working on options to ensure ongoing training for staff through its Statistics School, while one of the Petrovietnam subsidiaries is considering providing higher level courses on health, safety and the environment itself in the absence of relevant degree programmes in Vietnam.

National ownership of capacity development efforts is generally high. This plays an important role in ensuring the capacity gains achieved through Norwegian support are sustained. Ownership can be split into ownership by central government and ownership by the management of the institution. The evaluation looked at both.

In most interventions, the management of national partners had a formative role in deciding the priorities for support and played a lead role

in implementation. While examples were found of the interests of twinning partners having undue influence over the design of an intervention, skewing the focus away from partners' stated capacity or service delivery requirements, these were limited.²⁹ Only in one case, the Rule of Law Moldova project, was the design entirely driven by the twinning partner. During implementation, a common model was for partners to take on increasing levels of responsibility as the phases of the intervention unfolded and their capacity enhanced. This was the case in the projects dealing with the oil and gas sector in Mozambique, Cement Kiln Environmental Management in China, the College of Medicine and Agricultural University in Malawi, and Petrovietnam (see Section 4.3.1 for further discussion).

Central government ownership, or put another way political ownership, was found to be more mixed. The intervention in the oil and gas sector

²⁹ In Nha Trang University (Fisheries), the research and training interests of the Norwegian partners had undue influence over the eventual design. In the case of the National Statistics Office Malawi, the Norwegian partner (SN) was seen as significantly influencing aspects of the approach, due, in part, to the capacity imbalance between the two partners. Since NSO did not have the resources to lead the proposal process, SN took the lead with inputs from the national partner.

in Mozambique, for example, was not able to achieve significant results on environmental regulation, because of a lack of political support. This issue has been raised in previous Norad evaluations. In the evaluation of the Oil for Development (OfD) programme for example, it was found that twinning with environmental institutions has been the least successful part of the programme due to limited political backing for this in programme countries.³⁰ Similarly, the Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative found reform most successful in countries where there had been significant political support.³¹

Fostering shared ownership in complex multi-actor interventions is challenging and was far less successful. The evaluation found that there was less, and at the extreme, no, ownership of the intervention as a whole if it was delivered across several organisations. Of the interventions, three addressed multiple

³⁰ Facing the Curse: Norway's Oil for Development Program, Norad, January 2013, page 100.

³¹ Real-time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative Synthesising Report 2007–2013, page 76.

organisations contributing to a common purpose (Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi, Rule of Law Moldova and Children's Rights Nicaragua). A further two involved a large number of organisational entities (Integrated Pest Management Nepal and Geo-hazard Management Vietnam). In these cases, while there might have been ownership by individual organisations for their specific piece of the intervention, rarely was there strong leadership and therefore ownership for the intervention as a whole.

4.1.3 Norway's contribution to strengthening the performance of partners

In some interventions, strengthened capacity has translated into improved organisational performance. Capacity and performance are not synonymous. A failure to distinguish the two can lead to misleading conclusions in the measurement of capacity development.³² For example, a research organisation could build staff skills in producing policy-relevant research,

³² Capacity Enhancement indicator, Review of the Literature, Yemile Mizrahi, WBI Working Paper 2014, page 4.

but the quality of its research could remain low and its uptake by policymakers limited. Capacity may seemingly be high, but performance is poor. Likewise, an organisation could have a reputation for high-quality research, but in fact it's because of the influence of a few individuals, rather than distributed capacities within the organisation. Here, performance is good, but capacity is low. Ideally, an organisation wants both, as good performance in the absence of capacity is not sustainable, and good capacity without strong performance will undermine an organisation's credibility and reputation.

Unfortunately, due to the inadequate quality of outcome level data collected by interventions, understanding changes in capacity and its relationship to performance changes was challenging.³³ This made it difficult for the

³³ The evaluation faced 3 challenges: first the distinction between capacity and performance was not always reflected in the data collected; second, the data collected on organisations' performance is limited. Where it has been collected it often focuses on the number outputs, e.g. number of people trained. In most cases though, there is no assessment of the quality of the outputs, let alone the effect those outputs are having on behaviours and practices; and, last, baselines were not always collected, so, for example, while the number of graduates are reported by some interventions, it is not always clear how significant the increase is.

evaluation to make a consistent judgement across interventions as to whether, or the extent to which, strengthened capacity has led to improvements in an organisation's performance. However, in 6 interventions the evaluation team felt that the body of evidence was both sufficient and adequately robust to conclude that strengthened capacity has led to improvements in performance.³⁴ These are listed in Box 4.2 with a summary of the supporting evidence.

BOX 4.2: INTERVENTIONS WHERE THERE IS EVIDENCE OF IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

National Statistics Office Malawi – There has been an increase in both the quantity and quality of statistical outputs from the National Statistics Office (NSO), including with respect to reporting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This includes both time series statistics and one-off studies. NSO figures are now considered more reliable and provide a better basis for economic policy.* The demand from national ministries for statistical expertise from NSO has also increased.**

College of Medicine Malawi – Undergraduate intake has improved, as has the gender ratio of students, suggesting confidence in College of Medicine's program. The alignment of graduating students' skills with needs in the health sector is also good. Anecdotal evidence and some one-off studies suggest graduates remain in country, get employment in the public sector and contribute to the delivery of health services.

Electricity (large projects contracting/twinning) Mozambique – The purpose of Norwegian support to the electricity parastatal EDM was to improve the capacity of the business development team to contract, develop, structure, finance and implement new large-scale generation and transmission products. Over the course of the intervention, the EDM business development team has seen 3 substantial projects brought to financial closure with a combined value of US\$ 600 million. A further three are nearing closure.

Petrovietnam – The objective of the intervention was to build the capacity of Petrovietnam and its subsidiaries to apply international standards in health, safety and the environment, reducing worksite accidents and environmental pollution. There is evidence of a notable reduction in worksites accidents, including at Petrovietnam Technical Services Corporation, one of its subsidiaries.

Agricultural University Malawi – There has been an increase in the number of graduates and an increase of intake of female students. It is reported that graduates generally find employment.

Oil and gas sector Mozambique – The legal and regulatory frameworks have been put in place for the oil and gas sector to operate. Institutions, processes and structures have been set up to allow for oil and gas exploration and production and have secured high levels of investor attention. At the same time, Mozambique has managed to secure a share of future oil and gas revenues through the introduction of conducive taxation and participation schemes and competent contract negotiation. Four licensing rounds have been conducted and a number of licences are operational, which led to the discovery of significant gas resources in the country.

³⁴ Although the evaluation is unable to judge how significant these changes are or what the contribution of the capacity changes are.

* For example, the Welfare Monitoring Survey is now widely used in government and by donors.

** For example, the Ministry of Labour asked the NSS Secretariat to carry out a review of its plans for setting up a labour market information system and the NSO offered input into the strategic plan for statistics for the Ministry of Agriculture.

4.2 THE RELEVANCE OF NORWEGIAN SUPPORT TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

This section focuses on the extent to which Norwegian support to capacity development has been relevant both in its intent and its delivery. In order to explore this issue, each intervention has been assessed against four criteria:

- Relevance to the priorities and needs of the country
- Relevance to Norway's specific expertise and priorities (donor fit)
- Relevance of the partner to the development results that the intervention aims to generate (point of entry)
- Relevance of the capacity strategies to the capacity needs of the partners.

The results of the assessment are outlined in Table 4.4 and the reasons for the underlying scores explained below. It starts with relevance to country needs (**4.2.1**), then relevance to Norway (**4.2.2**). This is followed by relevance of the partner (**4.2.3**), and, finally, relevance of the capacity development strategy (**4.2.4**).

TABLE 4.4: ASSESSMENT OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE CAPACITY SUPPORT, BY INTERVENTIONS

Intervention	Relevance to country needs	Relevance to the donor	Relevance of the point of entry	Relevance of strategies for addressing the capacity development need
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	●	●	●	●
National Statistics Office Malawi	●	●	●	●
Petrovietnam	●	●	●	●
Aquaculture Research Vietnam	●	●	●	●
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	●	●	●	●
Electricity (Large Projects Contracting) Mozambique	●	●	●	●
National Statistics Moldova	●	●	●	●
Oil and Gas Sector Mozambique	●	●	●	●
Children's Rights Nicaragua	●	●	●	●
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	●	●	●	●
Geo-hazard management Vietnam	●	●	●	●

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Intervention	Relevance to country needs	Relevance to the donor	Relevance of the point of entry	Relevance of strategies for addressing the capacity development need
Rule of Law Moldova	●	●	N/A *	●
Electricity (Twinning) Mozambique	●	●	●	●
College of Medicine Malawi	●	●	●	●
Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	●	●	●	●
Mercury pollution China	●	●	●	●
Electricity Tanzania	●	●	●	●
Makerere University Uganda	●	●	●	●
Agricultural University Malawi	●	●	●	●

Explanation of scoring

● very relevant. ● moderately relevant; ● not relevant

* It was not possible to judge the relevance of Rule of Law project in Moldova given that the intervention had no specified point of entry. Advisers worked across agencies building up relationships with senior Moldavian officials and pursuing opportunities as they emerged. Because this was an intervention that was assessed through desk review, it was not possible to explore this issue in any depth with stakeholders involved in NORLAM. As a result it was not possible to make a judgment on this criteria.

4.2.1 Relevance to the countries' needs

The objectives of the majority of the interventions were judged to be very relevant to a significant national need. As Table 4.4 indicates, 17 out of the 19 interventions were judged to be very relevant to country needs. For instance, in Vietnam, fisheries were identified as an important area for economic growth and addressing poverty. In Moldova, weak statistics were a major hurdle for evidence-based policymaking. While the oil and gas sector in Mozambique was experiencing rapid growth and Norwegian capacity development was considered essential to help the country avoid a 'resource curse'.

In only two instances was an intervention considered to be only moderately relevant. This included the Agricultural University in Malawi, where the focus on climate change (away from food security) in Phase III seemed to be at odds with priority needs within Malawi, and Makerere University in Uganda, where tertiary education did not seem to be of high importance to the Ugandan government.³⁵

In a number of interventions, Norwegian capacity development support was addressing problems where there was sense of political urgency, which helped catalyse the reform process. Some argue that a sense of urgency is a key ingredient to successful reform as it helps to focus minds and resources.³⁶ This sense of urgency was present in a range of interventions in China,

³⁵ The 2005 appraisal of the intervention, for example, concluded that it was not addressing a national priority based on the absence in the draft education sector strategy plan of any evidence that the University is a vital link in the governments' plans. The appraisal also noted that the University was not ingrained in the Ugandan government's thinking.

³⁶ Peterson, Stephen. 1996. 'Making IT Work: Implementing Effective Financial Information Systems in Bureaucracies in Developing Countries.' In *Information Technology and Innovation in Tax Administration*, edited by Glenn Jenkins, pp. 177–93. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

Moldova, Tanzania, Mozambique and Vietnam. In the Rule of Law Moldova project, there was a political urgency to meet European Union (EU) requirements to support the government accession plans. In Mozambique's oil and gas sector, the discovery of significant gas reserves meant there was an urgency to get revenues flowing. Strengthening the capacity of the Mozambique regulators was key to this. Reducing pollution and improving environmental management were key political priorities in China and provided the foundations for both the Mercury pollution China and the Cement Kiln Environment Management interventions.

4.2.2 Relevance of the donor ('Donor Fit')

The majority of the interventions were judged to be very relevant to Norway's priorities and expertise. In most cases there was a very good 'donor fit'. As Table 4.4 indicates, in 13 out of the 19 interventions, the interventions were judged to be very relevant to the experiences and priorities of Norway and none of them was a poor fit. For example, Norwegian expertise is particularly

strong in the oil and gas sector. Norway is the leading donor internationally and benefits from its in-country experience managing oil and gas resources and has a strong twinning partner (National Petroleum Directorate). This makes for a good fit with the interventions in Mozambique and Vietnam. Norway is also considered a lead donor in strengthening statistics, and the twinning partner, Statistics Norway, is a long-standing partner in international cooperation. So, once again, interventions in Moldova and Malawi fit well with Norway's expertise. Fisheries is also considered a niche area for Norway support, making the interventions in Vietnam very relevant in terms of the donor fit.

In the cases where interventions were judged to be only moderately relevant, it was unclear how Norway had a donor fit stronger than that of other donors with arguably more relevant experience in a given sector. This was the case for the Geo-hazard management intervention in Vietnam and the College of Medicine and Diplomat Nurses Training initiatives in Malawi. In some instances, it was also suggested that

the fit with the Norwegian twinning partner was not always appropriate. For example, in the case of the Agricultural University in Malawi, questions were raised by some members of the University management as to whether the Norwegian University for Life Sciences (NULS) was the most appropriate partner compared with institutions outside of Norway. This was not acted upon because NULS was seen as a part of the support package that was being offered. Similarly, in the case of the Mercury pollution project in China, it was noted that while the Norwegian implementing partner, the Norwegian Institute of Water Research (NIVA), may have had strong capabilities for the first phase of the intervention (mercury pollution), it didn't for the second (developing pollution policies).

4.2.3 Relevance of the Point of Entry

In the majority of cases, Norway's selection of partners (its point of entry) was relevant to the achievement of the long-term development results that were sought through the intervention. In 13 out of 19 of the interventions, the evaluation judged the entry point for the intervention as very relevant (see Table 4.4).

In Vietnam, the logical point of entry for health, safety and environmental regulations in the oil and gas sector was a government department, but the evaluation found that a fully justified decision was made to work instead through the national oil and gas company which had the resources and business incentives to pursue this agenda. Similarly, in Mozambique, environmental management of the oil and gas sector was pursued through the national oil and gas regulator instead of the responsible Ministry of Environmental Coordination, which did not have the capacity, incentives or political interests to do so.

Only in the electricity twinning projects in Tanzania and Mozambique were the points of entry judged to be of only moderate relevance. For example, in Tanzania, while TANESCO plays an important role in the domestic energy market, its future structure and role was being redefined by the government. This created a level of uncertainty within the organisation that caused problems throughout the intervention.

There was sometimes a lack of clarity as to whether the principal objective of the intervention was to build the capacity of the organisation to fulfil its mandate or to use the institution's capacities to fulfil a more direct development objective.

In a number of projects it was not always clear whether capacity development was the primary or secondary objective. This lack of clarity was strongest in some of the support provided to and through academic and research institutions. In the cases of the College of Medicine and the Diplomat Nurses Training initiatives in Malawi and the support to Makerere University in Uganda, there was no doubt that the primary objec-

tive was the development of the institutions' capacities. In the case of the China environmental projects (Mercury pollution and Cement Kiln Environmental Management), the intention was very clearly to use the national institutions to directly tackle specific development problems. However, in three cases in Vietnam (Nha Trang University – fisheries, Aquaculture Research and environmental hazards) there was ambiguity as to whether the primary purpose was to strengthen the institutional capabilities or to directly address the development of fisheries, aquaculture and the environment. This led to some ambiguity in the direction of the projects. Interestingly, this potential ambiguity was addressed in the agricultural university project in Malawi by one project being designed for development of agricultural research and piloting and one for parallel support to development of the university.

4.2.4 Relevance of the Capacity Development Strategy Given the Needs of the Partner

Norway has not always effectively matched its capacity development strategy to the capacity needs of the national partner.

In 10 of the 19 interventions, the capacity development strategy pursued was considered to be very relevant to the needs of the national partners; however nine were considered to be either only moderately relevant or not relevant at all (see Table 4.4). There were a variety of reasons why strategies were rated lower for this criteria. For example, in the National Statistics Office project in Moldova and the Geo-hazard management initiative in Vietnam, there was too narrow a focus on skills development to the neglect of strengthening the wider organisation, while for the Nha Trang University (fisheries) in Vietnam, the skills provided by the Norwegian partners should have been complemented with technical assistance from other institutions in Vietnam and the region so as to enable the University to build up a network of international and national research collaborations.

The twinning electricity interventions in Mozambique and Tanzania were considered to have pursued capacity development strategies that were not relevant at all. In Tanzania, the approach to capacity development support was taken from Uganda and applied to Tanzania with too little contextualisation to clarify where the most pressing capacity gaps were; as a result a number of inappropriate strategies were pursued. In the case of support to the electricity parastatal EDM in Mozambique the approach advocated by the twinning partner were perceived to be inappropriate to the partner. EDM had a strong felt need for urgent gap-filling technical assistance in mission critical areas of its business, while the Norwegian partner Statnet wanted to scope out long-term capacity needs.³⁷

The challenges in effectively matching capacity development to capacity needs relate very much to the absence of a systematic approach to assessing organisational capacity early in the

³⁷ This is not to argue that the discussion around long-term capacity needs didn't need to take place; it just took place at the wrong time in the partnership, when EDM had more pressing and immediate delivery needs.

process. As discussed in the next section, there was a lack of systematic capacity assessments prior to most interventions.

4.3 DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF NORWEGIAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

This section of the report is about the mechanisms, processes and practices through which Norway delivers capacity development. It starts by looking at how capacity development interventions are designed in the Norwegian system (**4.3.1**). The next section looks at how the capacity development interventions are implemented (**4.3.2**) followed by a look at the different modalities used by Norway, and reflections on their relevance and effectiveness for building sustainable capacity (**4.3.3**). The sections finished with a look at the issue of cost-efficiency/effectiveness (**4.3.4**).

4.3.1 Norwegian approach to designing a capacity development intervention

Assessments of a partner's capacity needs and the wider context are conducted, but they happen in an ad hoc way and rarely prior to designing an intervention. Current thinking on what works in capacity development emphasises that context analysis is an important precondition to effective capacity development.³⁸ Table 4.5 lists for each intervention the various assessments that were conducted, and at what stage of the intervention they took place. In the majority of cases (13 out of 19) no evidence was found of an assessment and/or needs analysis being commissioned. At what stage of the intervention the studies were commissioned varied. In only 6 instances were studies conducted at the start of Phase I. All others were commissioned at later phases. This suggests that as the interventions progressed it became increasingly clear that the context and/or partner's capacity needs needed to be better articulated and defined.

³⁸ Capacity Development Literature Review, Sida, page 21

This echoes two previous Norad evaluations that highlighted the problems of not undertaking a systematic approach to assessing needs prior to the start of capacity development interventions.³⁹ Both emphasised that the lack of needs assessments led to overestimating the political will for the capacity development and to delays in implementation, which together limited the achievement of results.

³⁹ Norad (2013) Facing the Curse: Norway's oil for Development Programme, January 2013, Norad, Oslo, page 101; Norad (2006) Inter-ministerial Cooperation: An Effective Model for Capacity Development?, Norad, Oslo, page 24; Norad (2011) Evaluation of Norwegian Health Sector Support to Botswana, Norad, Oslo, page 58.

TABLE 4.5: LIST OF ASSESSMENTS UNDERTAKEN TO INFORM INTERVENTION DESIGN

Intervention	Capacity assessment / institutional assessment /context analysis undertaken and at what phase
Agricultural University Malawi	Institutional problem identification and needs analysis (Phase III)
National Statistics Office Malawi	Situational analysis (Phase II); training needs assessment and functional review of NSO & NSS (Phase III)
Oil and Gas Sector Mozambique	Political Economy Analysis (2013) The support to the oil and gas sector in Mozambique did not have phases per se, as it consisted of support to a number of different organisations and initiatives. The political economy analysis took place before Norway started to fund a number of demand-side initiatives.
Electricity (Twinning) Mozambique	SIDA capacity assessment (Phase I)
Petrovietnam	Fact finding mission and report (pre-inception); Training needs and capacity assessment (Phase III)
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	Survey of fisheries education capacity in Vietnam (Phase I); comparative institutional assessment of the University in the national education system (Phase II)
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	Baseline reports on the state of hazardous and industrial waste management in China and feasibility of cement kiln co-processing conducted (Phase I)
Mercury pollution China	Policy landscape analysis and gap analysis (Phase II)
National Statistics Moldova	Master Plan for the Development of Economic statistics (Phase I)
Makerere University, Uganda	University's Institutional Development (Phase I)

Intervention	Capacity assessment / institutional assessment /context analysis undertaken and at what phase
Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	Nurse/midwife training operational field plan assessment: analysis and scale up plans for nurse training institutions (Phase III)
Children's Rights Nicaragua	No formal assessment Capacity assessments are supposedly undertaken with individual partners.
Rule of Law Moldova	No formal assessment A feasibility mission report was conducted pre-inception.
Electricity Tanzania	No formal assessment A feasibility study was conducted pre-inception and Statnett produced an assessment of where it felt it could add most value during the inception phase.
Electricity (large projects contracting) Mozambique	No formal assessment
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	No formal assessment
Geo-hazard Management Vietnam	No formal assessment
Aquaculture Research Vietnam	No formal assessment
College of Medicine Malawi	No formal assessment

It is important to note however, that all the interventions went through several phases, therefore, even in those instances where no assessment was undertaken, a picture of both the context

and capacity strengths and weaknesses was still to some extent built up as the intervention progressed.

There were a number of interventions, particularly the more complex ones, where the use of a more systematic approach to assessing both partner's capacity and contextual constraints early in the process could have been beneficial.

In several of the interventions more attention to the organisational context pre-project might have improved the intervention. In the National Statistics Office intervention in Malawi, a mid-term evaluation noted that the Norwegian twinning partner had not taken adequate account of the actual and potential capacities of the national institutions including the ministry, and tried to introduce too much, too fast and at too sophisticated a level.⁴⁰ In the case of the Rule of Law Moldova project, a review of the intervention indicated that in a number of engagements there had been a failure to understand needs well enough and to appreciate the specific

40 Concerns were raised regarding a macroeconomic model advanced by the Norwegian partner. Some respondents noted that the economic modelling wasn't working as planned, in part due to data gaps. Malawian partners expressed concern that the model was too complicated, which led to the eventual adoption of a simpler approach. The process for adopting the model was flawed, as there appeared to be insufficient exchange up front as to what was most suitable for the Malawian context. Associated concerns related to the turnover of staff, which made it difficult to orient new staff, and the cost of the software licences (and how it could be covered at the end of the project).

drivers of change within the Moldovan legal system. Moreover, the review noted, individual adviser's ad hoc process for identifying needs, while robust, tended to lead to supply-led approaches that were often at odds with sustainable capacity development. In the case of the electricity project in Tanzania, the informal process of designing the intervention resulted in overlapping processes not being captured and oversight of key capacity gaps.⁴¹ Interestingly, Norad, in its appraisal of the proposal, highlighted the lack of clarity around capacity needs, but its recommendation to undertake a capacity assessment was not taken on board (see Section 4.4.3 for more discussion of the role of Norad in reviewing capacity development interventions).

Arguably, the need for more formal and in-depth contextual analysis and capacity assessment increases with the complexity of the intervention. As more actors are involved, understanding the broader system becomes key. For example, the po-

41 It was only once into implementation that the Norwegian partner Statnett realised that TANESCO had insufficient computers to deliver on the ICT work-stream and needed training to use the software the World Bank had provided the company.

litical economy analysis undertaken in Mozambique to inform support to the oil and gas sector was essential to understanding the drivers of change, and identifying key actors that needed to be targeted, to achieve the goals of the interventions. Likewise, the absence of an institutional analysis may have led to insufficient attention being given to building central capacity in the multi-actor Diplomat Nurses Training project in Malawi.

The absence of a formal capacity assessment or study does not mean that an intervention has not taken into account contextual and organisational factors.

All interventions involved some sort of pre-project studies and missions where capacity issues were discussed. The tendency however is to identify capacity needs through a process of informal discussion and dialogue between implementing partners and national organisations. This is likely related to the use of twinning as the dominant channel for capacity development. The intention of twinning is that two parties come together to enter into a long-term partnership. Dialogue and debate is key to the process of building trust. So, even in those interventions

where no formal assessment study was conducted, there was still evidence of capacity needs being discussed and identified.

For example, in the case of the Geo-hazard management intervention in Vietnam, capacity needs and subsequent priorities were identified in ongoing discussions between local partners. Likewise, in the Cement Kiln Environmental Management initiative in China, the process of identification and articulation of capacity priorities was principally through meetings, workshops and discussions, with primary responsibility for identification of needs being with the Chinese partners. Whether these more informal approaches are sufficiently robust and analytical to get at the heart of what an organisation's capacity gaps are is arguable. Previous Norad evaluations, for example, have indicated that this informal flexible approach can be an important way of building up trusting relationships, and ensuring commitment and ownership on the part of key stakeholders.⁴²

42 Inter-Ministerial Cooperation: An Effective Model for Capacity Development?, pp. 21 & 24; Institutional Development in Norwegian Bilateral Assistance, Development through Institutions: Synthesis Report, page 39.

There is no distinct or formal difference in the way that Norway deals with what may be described as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' capacity countries. This is likely due, in part, to the tendency to assess capacity shortcomings or needs associated with specific project investments through informal exchanges between implementing partners and national organisations. In some of interventions though, the approach pursued in implementation did reflect qualitative differences between 'high', 'medium' and 'low' capacity countries. For example, the investments in Vietnam's oil and gas sector (a relatively 'high capacity' context) were informed by exchanges and diagnostics which led to the partners focusing on specialised needs relating to Health-Safety-Environment (HSE) issues, without seeking to address broader organisational issues given PetroVietnam's recognized strengths as a public corporation. In 'lower' capacity contexts such as Malawi, investments in the area of statistics, for example, focused substantially on enhancing specific skill sets, but these efforts were complemented by investments aimed at addressing organisational needs, including inter-institutional collaboration,

reflecting acknowledged shortcomings in the broader national statistics system.⁴³ Despite these examples, it is arguable, whether the more informal assessment approaches normally employed by twinning partners are sufficient to reveal not only the heart of organisational capacity issues, but also the qualitative differences that distinguish higher capacity environments, such as China and Vietnam, and lower capacity countries like Malawi.

For all but one of the interventions, the explicit documented programme logic (how, and which forms of capacity were to be developed, what effect this will have on organisational performance and how this will contribute to longer-term results) was of low quality. As outlined in Table 4.6, of the 19 interventions, 9 were judged to have poor quality explicit intervention logics,⁴⁴ while 8 had basic quality and one was considered

43 However, as noted elsewhere in this report, the investments in Malawi's statistics sector were still not sufficiently informed by other challenges in the broader system, e.g. low public service wages, that represented a risk to sustainability of results.

44 These are often called results frameworks in the Norwegian system.

comprehensive (Children's Rights Nicaragua). The major deficiencies in design included: the absence of 'bridging outcomes' which linked long-term outcomes and outputs;⁴⁵ a failure to articulate the assumptions underpinning the intervention design; and a lack of clarity about how strengthening the capacity of organisations contributed to longer-term development outcomes (the logic often ended with the organisation will produce outputs, but not an analysis of how these would in turn make a contribution to development results).

In only one intervention (Aquaculture Research Vietnam) was an explicit theory of change (ToC) developed. This was developed part way through implementation.⁴⁶ Theories of change, while similar to logic models, push thinking further and require a deeper analysis and articulation of how an intervention brings about change, the assumptions being made and the wider context. They are increasingly used in the design

⁴⁵ This was identified by the SIDA literature review as a common deficiency in the intervention logics of capacity development initiatives.

⁴⁶ In practice, the ToC was not applied as the project was changed without the ToC being reformulated.

phases of capacity development interventions, given the flexibility and scope they provide to thinking through complex interventions.⁴⁷

The absence of explicit document programme logic did not however always mean that the interventions had no implicit logic. The evaluation found a number of instances where interventions that had low-quality document programme logic actually demonstrated a very clear logic in how activities were implemented in practice. By implicit logic the evaluation means that, in looking at how the interventions were actually implemented, it was possible to see a clear logic to why and how things had been done to achieve certain changes. In 7 instances, the evaluation found this implicit logic to be strong.

Whether or not an implicit logic is sufficient for effective programming is questionable. The evaluation team would argue that articulating the underlying logic of an intervention and the assumptions that are being made about how

⁴⁷ Capacity Development Literature Review, Sida, page 17.

change will happen (and putting this on paper) is key to good design. It helps build common understandings of the purpose of an intervention, and the pathway for change. Moreover, it forces people to be explicit about the assumptions that are being made; this means they can be challenged and probed. Ultimately, this helps improve programme design.

The extent to which the design of capacity development efforts were based on evidence of what has worked in other contexts is unclear. While there are examples of learning informing design, this tended to be based on 'experiential' rather than 'research' or 'evaluative' evidence. Across the interventions, none of the project designs or implementation strategies explicitly reflected learning about how capacity development (e.g. methods, strategies) worked elsewhere. However, they all seemed to draw, to different extents, on experiences in and outside of their country contexts. This informed their approaches to the technical issues addressed in the interventions.

TABLE 4.6: ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF DOCUMENTED INTERVENTIONS LOGIC

Intervention	Quality of documented intervention logic
Children's Rights Nicaragua	Comprehensive
Agricultural University Malawi	Basic
National Statistics Office Malawi	Basic
Petrovietnam	Basic
Geo-hazard Management Vietnam	Basic
Aquaculture Research Vietnam	Basic
Nha Trang University (Fisheries) Vietnam	Basic
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	Basic
Electricity Tanzania	Basic
College of Medicine Malawi	Poor
Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	Basic
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	Poor
Mercury pollution China	Poor
National Statistics Moldova	Poor
Rule of Law Moldova	Poor
Makerere University, Uganda	Poor
Oil and Gas Sector Mozambique	Poor
Electricity Mozambique (Twinning) *	Poor
Electricity Mozambique (Large Projects Contracting)	Poor

* While the twinning intervention never moved beyond inception, the evaluation was still able to assess the quality of the objectives and logic of the proposed intervention.

Most twinning partners also have considerable prior overseas experience that they drew on both in their contribution to the design and in ongoing support of capacity development. Statistics Norway refers to this as part of its approach and clearly brought its international experience to the interventions in both Malawi and Moldova. Likewise, the Oil for Development programme, which is coordinated by Norad, brings together its global experience in designing interventions.

In very few of the interventions was there a systematic consideration of alternatives when deciding on capacity development modalities and approaches. The evaluation found very few examples of the selection of modalities and approaches being informed by a systematic consideration of alternatives that takes into account, the relative contribution of different approaches to contribute to the intervention's objectives. As was found in a number of interventions, because this rarely happens, modalities such as training are selected as the default without consideration of how it would contribute to results and how it might

be combined with other inputs or approaches to achieve those results. Or it means that study trips to Norway are used to build technical skills, when in fact a study tour to another developing country may be both cheaper and more effective in supporting learning.⁴⁸ As discussed in section 4.3.3, the same has been found with twinning.

4.3.2 Implementation of Capacity Development

4.3.2.1 Monitoring and review

Across all interventions, the quality of how results were monitored was poor when assessed against what is considered good practice.⁴⁹ As indicated in Table 4.7 below, none of the interventions were considered to have more than moderate quality indicators and monitoring and reporting processes. While activities and outputs were tracked

⁴⁸ Aquaculture Vietnam is an example of a project where regional study tours were organised but no study tour to Norway.

⁴⁹ This finding is consistent with other Norad evaluations, for example, Norad (2014) Can We Demonstrate the Difference that Norwegian Aid Makes? Evaluation of results measurement and how this can be improved, Evaluation Report 1/2014, Norad, Oslo.

(and reported on) systematically, outcomes were generally not.

This is problematic as it means that national partners are not tracking whether capacity support is leading to the production of more products and services, or whether these products and services are in turn leading to the achievement of organisational outcomes. So, for example, whether the research outputs being produced for fisheries and aquaculture in Vietnam is actually being used to inform policy, or whether improved statistical outputs in Moldova and Malawi are used by government and citizens. This is essential information for adjusting improvements in capacity to organisational output and organisational outputs to needs.

The use of baselines was also patchy. Where interventions had commissioned some form of capacity assessment / organisation analysis, this often served as a baseline of sorts, but as discussed in Section 4.3.1, these rarely took place in the first phase of an intervention. This undermines their utility as a tool for monitoring changes in the capacity of an organisation.

While previous Norwegian evaluations that have looked at capacity development confirm the finding on the quality of results monitoring and reporting, some studies have also cautioned that too much emphasis on developing detailed results frameworks at the start of an intervention can negatively affect working relationships and can hinder engagement and ownership.⁵⁰ It has also been noted that used in the wrong way an overly rigid use of results frameworks can undermine a more flexible approach to achieving outcomes. These are important points. While measuring results is important for managing day-to-day implementation, it needs to be appropriate to the context. Capacity development interventions are often complex and it may not always be possible to clearly articulate up-front exactly what needs to be measured and how.

It is also worth remembering that capacity is an inherently difficult concept to measure; it does not lend itself to the use of clear,

⁵⁰ Synthesis Study on Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Capacity Development in Low-Income African Countries, page 31.

TABLE 4.7: ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERVENTIONS APPROACHES TO RESULTS MEASUREMENT

Intervention	Quality of indicators	Quality of monitoring and reporting	Use of reviews and mid-term evaluations
Agricultural University Malawi	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	Moderate quality	Low quality	Yes
National Statistics Office Malawi	Moderate quality	Low quality	Yes
Oil and Gas Sector Mozambique	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
Electricity (Large Projects Contracting) Mozambique	Moderate quality	N/A	Yes
Petrovietnam Vietnam	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
Geo-hazard management Vietnam	Moderate quality	Low quality	Yes
Aquaculture Research Vietnam	Moderate quality *	Moderate quality	Yes
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	Moderate quality	Low quality	Yes
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
Rule of Law Moldova	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
College of Medicine Malawi	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
Electricity Tanzania	Moderate quality	Moderate quality	Yes
Mercury pollution China	Low quality	Moderate quality	Yes
National Statistics Moldova	Low quality	Low quality	No
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	Low quality	N/A	Yes
Makerere University, Uganda	Low quality	Low quality	Yes
Children's Rights Nicaragua	N/A	Good quality	Yes
Electricity Mozambique (Twinning) **	N/A	N/A	N/A

Explanation of scoring

Indicators

High quality – SMART*** indicators cover all parts of the results chain (including capacity and performance);

Moderate quality – indicators covering activities and outputs;

Poor quality – indicators covering activities;

NA – not assessable

Monitoring and reporting

High quality – consistent reporting of activities, outputs and outcomes;

Moderate quality – consistent reporting of activities and outputs;

Poor quality – inconsistent activity and output reporting;

NA – not assessable

* Outcome indicators defined, but not updated when project redesigned.

** The Statnett twinning intervention never moved beyond inception, therefore no results monitoring or reporting took place.

*** Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound indicators.

objective indicators. Therefore, the indicators and tools used for monitoring it need to be appropriate.

The majority of interventions did commission reviews (mid-term and end) to help understand progress in capacity development and to identify lessons. Out of the 19 interventions, all but 2, commissioned reviews and/or mid-term evaluations (often times multiple) at some point in the intervention⁵¹ (see Table 4.7). Reviews provided important independent, and oftentimes quite critical, views of how the projects were progressing, the extent to which capacity was being developed and recommendations for moving forward. The quality of the reviews/evaluation was generally good.⁵² That said, many reviews failed to undertake systematic assessments of capacity and in the absence of good outcome data from the interventions struggled to provide an indication of

⁵¹ The reason for this is, arguably, because such reviews were donor requirements.

⁵² The quality of the reviews was not assessed systemically using standard criteria, but evaluation team members were asked to capture their general impressions of the quality of the review / evaluation reports.

whether strengthened organisational capacity led to improvements in performance. The extent to which the reviews were in turn used to inform in-course correction and future planning was also, on balance, positive. This point is addressed in the section below.

4.3.2.2 Adaptive and results-based management

The implementation of interventions has been characterised by a high degree of adaptation and learning. This has been enabled by Norway's flexible approach to grant management. Flexibility and adaptation characterised the majority of interventions. The evaluation found a wide range of examples of how the interventions have adapted over time, based on their experiences of implementation. These adaptations included: shifting in the focus of phases, so as to institutionalise earlier gains (Aquaculture Research Vietnam); adapting the nature of capacity support, based on the evolving needs of the national partner (Rule of Law in Moldova), and the electricity (large projects contracting) initiative in Mozam-

bique); reducing the scope of the intervention and focusing resources more, as the needs of the national partner became clearer (National Statistics Moldova); and changing the composition of actors involved in providing capacity support as the needs of the partner evolved (Geo-hazard management Vietnam and Diplomat Nurses Training Malawi).

Norway's flexible approach to grant management is a key contributing factor to the adaptation and learning that has been observed in interventions. The evaluation found that Embassy staff were frequently willing to listen to partners, discuss progress and find ways to support evolving needs. An illustration of this is how the Norwegian Embassy in Mozambique agreed to 4 addendums to the initial contract, which included increased funding and revised schedules, to accommodate the variability in the workflow of the electricity parastatal's business development function.

The extent to which adaptation has been evidence based is mixed. While the use of monitoring data has been inadequate, reviews and mid-term evaluations have played an important role in shaping how some interventions have evolved.

The absence of quality monitoring data and in-depth studies means there are limits to how evidence based the management of the interventions can be. While the monitoring of activities and outputs can help implementers manage on a day-to-day basis, they do not give insights into what is working and what is not. This is not to say that interventions have no understanding of outcomes, but information is not collected systematically. The use of reviews to shape implementation is more positive. The evaluation found three examples where reviews informed course correction and future design (Geo-hazard management Vietnam, Integrated Pest Management Nepal, Agricultural University Malawi). In the other interventions, it was not possible to make a conclusive judgement on whether and how reviews were used.

Norway's provision of long-term funding enables trusting relationships to develop and capacity gains to be institutionalised over consecutive phases. Norway's approach to funding capacity development is characterised by investing in the long-term development of partners. As illustration of this, Table 4.8 details the duration of each of the reviewed interventions. The commitment to long term funding has a number of advantages.

First, it allows for trusting relationships to develop between the national and Norwegian partners and, in general, a greater understanding by twinning and other partners of the context and needs. This was noted as important in a number of interventions including: National Statistics Office Malawi, the electricity (large project contracting) initiative in Mozambique, in the Oil and gas sector in Mozambique, and in Petrovietnam.

Second, long-term support allows for the relationship between the twinning and national partners to evolve, and for the national partner to take on increasing responsibility over time. This was the case in support to the oil and gas

sector in Mozambique, Petrovietnam and Aquaculture Research Vietnam, where in all cases the twinning partner gradually stepped back from the delivery of capacity support, and provided technical back up and advice on request.

Third, the duration of Norwegian support allows, where appropriate, capacity development interventions to take a phased approach. This may involve an intervention starting relatively small and focused (for example developing technical skills of staff), then over time, and through consecutive phases, scaling up the ambition and complexity of the intervention to cover issues of organisational strengthening and the wider enabling environment. This approach characterised a number of interventions including: Integrated Pest Management in Nepal, Petrovietnam and support to the oil and gas sector in Mozambique. On the other hand, several other projects started addressing a wide range of issues and then narrowed the focus and complexity. This was the case in both the Agricultural University and the College of Medicine in Malawi.

TABLE 4.8: DURATION OF INTERVENTIONS

Intervention	Duration of intervention
Oil and gas sector Mozambique	30 years
Agricultural University Malawi	15 years
Petrovietnam	15 years
College of Medicine Malawi	14 years
National Statistics Office Malawi	11 years
Aquaculture Research Vietnam	11 years
Nha Trang University (fisheries) Vietnam	11 years
Makerere University Uganda	10 years
Integrated Pest Management Nepal	10 years
Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi	9 years
Cement Kiln Environmental Management China	9 years
Mercury pollution China	9 years
Rule of Law Moldova	8 years
Geo-hazards Vietnam	7 years
National Statistics Moldova	7 years
Electricity (Large Projects Contracting) Mozambique	6 years
Electricity Tanzania	5 years
Children's Rights Nicaragua	4 years
Electricity (Twinning) Mozambique	2 years

Norway is willing to build the capacity of groups of actors working in a specific area, as well as of individual organisations.

The evaluation found a number of examples of where Norway, over multiple phases of engagement, has sought to build the capacity of a range of complementary initiatives and organisations within a specific sector or area of work. For example, in the fisheries sector in Vietnam, efforts were made to improve the technical skills and strengthen research available to the sector through support to Nha Trang University (fisheries) and Aquaculture Research, while also seeking through a parallel project to create an enabling environment for fisheries by supporting amendments to the fisheries' legal frameworks.⁵³ Similarly in Mozambique, Norway, in efforts to ensure the sustainable and equitable development of the oil and gas sector, has provided support not only for oil and gas resource

⁵³ Although it should be highlighted that the example of Norway's support to the fisheries sector in Vietnam is sector support by luck rather than design. The evaluation found that this was not an example of sector support or funding to a broad programme of work. The support consisted of three separate and independent projects with limited internal coordination and communication. There is a logical connection between the 3 mutually reinforcing interventions, but the evaluation was not made aware of any master plan guiding support of the fisheries sector in Vietnam

assessment and allocation of licences, but also to strengthen capacity in monitoring and auditing the industry and the application of health safety and environmental standards. It also provides support to the revenue authority to improve its capacity to tax the oil and gas sector and a range of civil society actors and the media with the aim of improving public understanding and accountability in the oil and gas sector.

4.3.3 Different Capacity Development Modalities

4.3.3.1 Training

Training was used across the majority of interventions, often combined with other support. It was found to be a relevant and largely effective modality for supporting skills development. Training was the dominant capacity development modality across the interventions. The nature of the training varied from formal short courses to on-the-job training to pilot demonstrations. In the case of the Petrovietnam intervention for example, participants were exposed to formal learning and practical oppor-

tunities in Norway to enhance their skills and knowledge on safety and environmental issues. Under the Geo-hazard management project, Vietnamese participants benefited from sharing of experiences and materials with Norwegian partners, training in Norway (at University of Oslo and at the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute), and participating in international conferences. In only one case, National Statistics Office Malawi, did the evaluation find that more emphasis on formal training would have been valuable.

In the instances where the modality of training was questioned, it was because the training was carried out without sufficient attention to the implications for the organisations involved. Nha Trang University (fisheries) in Vietnam wished to develop its own PhD programmes with support from the twinning partner, but the Norwegian twinning university insisted the PhD trainees be directly trained by them. In both the Geo-hazard management project in Vietnam, and the Diplomat Nurses Training project in Malawi there was a mis-alignment between training and participants' needs.

4.3.3.2 Technical Advisory Services

Technical advisory services were important in almost all the interventions and largely an effective form of capacity support.

Technical specialists provided by the Norwegian twinning partners were important drivers of programme design and its implementation. The majority were respected for their technical expertise and many had at least some previous exposure to developing countries.

In some interventions, support from the same individual over a sustained period was found to be more effective than visits for relatively short periods by specialists. However, in most cases it was a combination of both short- and long-term advisers that provided the most responsive and effective support. For example, in the case of the National Statistics Office Malawi, short-term advisers were used for discrete technical tasks, while long-term advisers offered more ongoing capacity support. In the case of the oil and gas sector in Mozambique, long-term advisers were used during the early phases of the intervention

and then, as the national partner strengthened its capacity and took on more responsibility, short-term advisers became more useful.

Where the main intention of the technical assistance was capacity development, rather than gap-filling, a delicate balance needed to be achieved between developing national capacity to do the job and actually doing the job. The evaluation found that, where evidence was available, this was generally achieved.

Technical assistance designed to supplement capacity (fill gaps) often played an important role in overall package of support for institutions. Technical assistance that supplements capacity is frequently criticised for not being sustainable. However, the evaluation found that it played an essential role in several of the interventions. This was the case in the support to the energy sector (large projects contracting) in Mozambique, Integrated Pest Management in Nepal and in all of the Malawi projects.

Technical assistance may be used with no intention to build capacity because either

the organisation and/or country has no early prospect of developing capacity or because a one-off input is required. For example, in the case of the support to EDM in Mozambique there was no medium-term expectation that nationals could undertake major contract finalisation.

While there needs to be clarity in deciding what category of support is required, capacity development or capacity supplementation, they are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in the same intervention and sometimes the same individual. However, it is important that the roles and objectives are kept distinct.

4.3.3.3 Construction and Infrastructure

Norway's willingness to invest in construction as part of a wider package of support was essential to capacity development in a number of partners. For example, investment in construction formed a valuable component of the interventions in the higher education sectors in Malawi and Uganda. Construction was sometimes emphasised early

in interventions to allow for increased student intake, improved teaching facilities or both. There were also cases where construction was a feature of all phases, enabling the infrastructure to keep pace with the organisation's growth. No cases were identified of facilities being constructed and underutilised. In two cases (College of Medicine and the Agricultural University in Malawi), construction facilitated improvements in gender balance, through the building of student accommodation. In general, the facilities constructed matched well with needs, but there was one case (Diplomate Nurses Training Malawi) where there might have been a better match if there had been a more robust needs assessment earlier in the intervention.

4.3.3.4 Twinning

Norway uses its government departments, parastatal organisations, public sector companies and its universities and research institutions to provide the technical input for most of its capacity development support. Norwegian institutions are heavily relied upon

through all phases of design and implementation of capacity support. Twinning can involve short- and long-term technical advisers, training and education, research cooperation and provision of some equipment. It is not a uniform modality. The twinning agencies have considerable influence on the determination of needs and the design and implementation of projects. In some interventions, such as in Vietnam, the Embassy seems to have left most substantive matters of the interventions to the twinning agencies, which also interacted with the Norad technical advisers. In the specific case of NORHED, which is a Norad-operated grant programme for education and research, a condition of the grant is a joint application by a Norwegian institution and a developing country institution.⁵⁴

The decision whether or not to use a twinning partner is theoretically up to the national partner, but in most cases the organisation

⁵⁴ In the sample, complementary resource inputs for the College of Medicine in Malawi were funded in this way, and in relation to Nha Trang University (Fishes) Vietnam, project continuation will be NORHED funded, as is that for Makerere University in Uganda.

BOX 4.3: HOW TWINNING PARTNERS ARE SELECTED

The process through which the twinning takes place varies. Three different models were identified:

- The national partner includes a Norwegian partner as part of the proposal, possibly following some informal consultation and review of the potential alternative partners in Norway. For example, this was the case for both the Geo-hazard management initiative in Vietnam, and the College of Medicine in Malawi, which finally twinned with several medical faculties in Norway. It is also the modality for NORHED.*
- The role of the Norwegian twinning partner is occasionally put out to competitive tender in Norway. For example, this model was used in the later stages of the Geo-hazard management intervention in Vietnam.
- The Norwegian twinning partner is put forward by the Embassy as the implementing partner that will be providing the capacity support. In this model the national partner does not have a choice about who the twinning partner is. This model was used in the twinning as part of the Nha Trang University (fisheries) initiative in Vietnam.

* The China projects in the sample represent a slight variation of this model. China is one of the countries where the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment (MCE) has signed a MoU with its counterpart ministry (in China MEP) for technical cooperation. MCE and MEP have annual consultations to discuss priority areas for cooperation. In these consultations, both areas of cooperation and possible partner institutions are discussed and tentatively agreed on. The formal decision to support a specific project is made by the Embassy based on a proposal submitted by MOFCOM, but prepared by the Chinese and Norwegian institutions.

being supported had little choice. There are three different ways in which twinning partners are selected: 1) the national partner and twinning agency submit a joint proposal to Norway; 2) the selection of the twinning partner is put out to competitive tender; and 3) the Norwegian twinning partner is put forward by the Embassy as the agency that will be providing capacity support (see Box 4.3 for further details.)

While the evaluation found examples of the first approach being used, the reality is that choice in twinning partner is not possible in all sectors. While in higher education and research in medicine, there may be a range of university faculties and research institutes available in other areas, such as statistics, there is only one potential Norwegian partner available – Statistics Norway.

The evaluation only found one example of the twinning partner being selected through a competitive tender (the second approach). This happened in the later stages of the Geo-hazard management intervention in Vietnam.

The third approach was the most common. In the interventions where this model was used, the terms of the project agreement stated that substantial parts of the project, including much of the technical cooperation, training and sometimes equipment provision, were to be provided through the twinning partner(s). This decision was often taken by the Embassy or, for those projects that are a Norad responsibility, Norad.

Twinning can appear expensive to national partners. The twinning partners receive full reimbursement for their inputs and this allows them to maintain institutional capacity for cooperation, so there is a built in overhead, but it is not explicit. Most of the Norwegian governmental institutional partners have international depart-

ments and some of these are large.⁵⁵ The evaluation confirmed that the providers of twinning expertise were often expensive when compared with the potential alternatives for providing technical inputs.⁵⁶ The evaluation was unable to confirm the extent to which twinning partners contribute their own funds to the partnership. Some governmental partners interviewed said they did not, but one university was identified that committed some of its own resources.⁵⁷

National partners respected the technical capacity of the twinning partners, but many would like to have more choice in training opportunities and sometimes in the source of advice. A frequently heard frustration of partners is that twinning arrangements determine where the capacity support comes from.

55 The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) has over 50 staff members in its international cooperation department and over 40 call-down contracts with consultancy firms to fill ad hoc gaps. Statistics Norway has had a separate division for development cooperation for over 20 years. It currently has 18 staff members. Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) has a 7-person international division.

56 One Norwegian institution said they had difficulty in filling requests for input from other agencies such as the World Bank because their fees were too low.

57 Haukeland University Hospital, University of Bergen.

While the twinning partner may itself contract externally to fulfil parts of its role, including provision of technical advisory services and training, and a few of the projects allowed some flexibility for provision of services by alternative providers,⁵⁸ the policy of most Norwegian institutions is to rely on their own capacity.⁵⁹ In some cases this means that partner's may feel that more appropriate support could be found elsewhere, but are locked into using the services of the twinning agency.

There are technical disciplines where the expertise provided by Norwegian twinning agencies is critical and not easily available elsewhere at less cost. This is the case, for example, in oil for development, some aspects of fisheries and in contracting for electrical power. However, the evaluation found

58 E.g. higher level health and agricultural education Malawi.

59 E.g. Statistics Norway see working in cooperation development projects as a response to the Norwegian MFA's expectations that Norwegian government institutions assist sister organisations in developing countries. These projects are also part of SN's participation and support of the international statistical community as part of its social responsibility and in support of the UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. For these reasons, SN projects primarily use experts from SN for short-term and long-term interventions rather than going out on the market to find less expensive expertise that is not part of the national statistical system.

that the application of Norwegian approaches may not always be the best fit for all situations and sometimes expertise may be less pertinent than that from comparable developing countries or the wider international pool of consultants and academic institutions.

Twinning advisers do not always have the skills and expertise to effectively diagnose and support capacity development.

In a number of instances, twinning partners used advisers that, while technically very competent, did not necessarily have the skills to transfer knowledge and support longer-term capacity development efforts. This at times has led to supply-led approaches to capacity support⁶⁰ and instances where advisers simply didn't have the necessary skills to strengthen partners' capacities in priority areas.⁶¹

60 In Malawi, with the institutional collaboration between Statistics Norway and the National Statistics Office (NSO), concerns were raised about the capacities of some advisers who were highly qualified technically, but not necessarily best suited for providing training, supporting skills transfer and facilitating capacity development processes.

61 In Geo-hazard management intervention Vietnam it was noted that twinning partner advisers may be technically competent but they may not have the skills to facilitate complex organisational change processes.

This issue has been raised by past Norad evaluations. In the Norwegian evaluation of the Oil for Development Programme (OfD) it was argued that technical assistance is often at too high a level for the capacity of national partners and more attention should be given to preparing technical advisors for deployment.⁶² Similarly, the evaluation of Norwegian institutional development found that high technical competence is not a substitute for cultural awareness and the ability to transfer knowledge and work in different contexts.⁶³

While the evidence does raise some concerns about how twinning partners select, prepare and support advisers, it is important to note that the evaluation also found positive examples of advisers combining both technical and capacity development skills. The intervention in the Oil and gas sector Mozambique is notable

62 Norad (2013) Facing the Curse: Norway's Oil for Development Programme, Norad, January, Oslo.

63 Inter-Ministerial Cooperation: An Effective Model for Capacity Development?, pp. 31 & 33.

in this regard.⁶⁴ Examples were also found of twinning partners providing structured support to technical advisers, both in preparation for and during assignments.⁶⁵ The extent to which this support included specific guidance on designing and implementing capacity development is unclear.

4.3.3.5 Supporting demand for capacity and accountability

Only three of the 19 interventions were focused on generating demand for capacity and broader accountability relations.

Of those 3 interventions, 2 had relatively minor components focusing on those areas. This suggests a tendency of Norwegian support for capacity development to be focused on the supply side of capacity.

64 The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) demonstrated high levels of capacity to manage complex capacity development processes. NPD has been a trusted partner of the national petroleum institute INP since the 1980s and has helped the design and implementation of almost all capacity development processes, at times through resident advisers. NPD knows the Mozambican partner inside out and has the management and technical capacities to drive capacity development forward.

65 Statistics Norway, a major twinning partner in the areas of statistics, has a dedicated department of 18 staff that supports technical advisers in working in new environments and provides training to staff in cross-cultural working.

4.3.4 Efficiency and value added

The direct costs of most Norwegian twinning partners were comparatively high. The costs of twinning agencies and consultancy firms were sometimes considered by national partners to be excessive and were viewed to be more expensive than equally competent alternatives. This appeared to be particularly the case for training in Norway and the provision of short-term expertise.

The indirect costs of the Embassies were lower than for most comparable donors, but this had a substantive cost, in that Embassies could not provide close monitoring and support to the interventions.⁶⁶ There are undoubtedly some bilateral programmes that employ higher cost modalities than those of Norway, such as those of the USA, but also others that tie their aid less and hold down their costs. In general, those agencies with lower cost modalities have more staff directly employed on the management of

⁶⁶ This is partially because Norway tries to follow the Paris, Accra and Busan principles; i.e. planning, implementation and monitoring is left to the country partner (the 'owner') and no 'monitoring support' as such goes into the projects.

programmes, and larger overseas development assistance (ODA) programmes allow for efficiency gains not previously open to Norway with its widely dispersed aid programme. This could change with Norway now having focus countries, and would also change if projects were larger.

In only one intervention was a range of implementation options considered as part of the design phase. In practice this means that modalities such as twinning may be selected, without consideration of possible alternatives. An important aspect of efficiency and delivering value for money more broadly is considering whether there are alternative ways of delivering the same output or outcome more effectively (or with the same effectiveness) but at less cost. The evaluation found only one instance of this type of thinking informing the design of a capacity development intervention: the Rule of Law Moldova.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ When the concept of deploying Norwegian legal professionals to countries such as Moldova was developed, different options were explored. The main alternative option considered was to provide Norwegian legal professionals in a multi-lateral initiative, such as the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE). The Norwegian Ministry of Justice decided to offer bilateral support because it allowed for greater flexibility and the ability to send out more personnel than did a multilateral setup.

This is a gap as it means, for instance, that twinning is pursued as the de facto modality for capacity development, without consideration of whether other implementation arrangements may be more cost effective.

4.4 NORWAY'S CAPACITY TO SUPPORT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The following section looks at Norway's own capacities for capacity development. It starts by looking at the capacity of Embassies and Norad to oversee and advise on capacity development (4.4.1); it then explores the support and guidance that is available to Embassies and implementing partners on capacity development (4.4.2).

4.4.1 Embassies' and Norad's Capacity to Oversee and Advise on Capacity Development Processes

The capacity of Embassies to offer support to partners in the design and implementation of capacity development processes is generally limited. In general, embassy staff neither have the time nor, in some cases,

the technical expertise to provide support to capacity development processes. This was a consistent finding across the country studies in Malawi, Vietnam and Mozambique.⁶⁸ Many desk officers are generalists and most are managing large portfolios of grants. National staff in embassies often provide the first line of oversight. Many of these staff were found to be competent and have some specialisation. However, the opportunities for them to obtain wider training were found to be limited. Given these capacity constraints, most national and Norwegian staff focus on providing general oversight. This involves handling the approval process, including commissioning appraisals as necessary, then providing varying levels of support and oversight during implementation through participation in annual project meetings and commissioning periodic reviews.

68 The evaluation was only able to investigate this issue through the country studies. Time was too limited to do the same for the desk reviews.

Norad's ability to provide advice on how best to design and implement capacity development processes is also limited. The country studies revealed a mixed picture regarding the utility of Norad's support and advice. One of the key issues raised by Embassy staff, both in Malawi and Vietnam, was that Norad was sector focused and tended to pay less attention to cross-cutting issues such as capacity development in the advice they provided.⁶⁹ The evidence from across all of the interventions would seem to support this: of the 19 interventions assessed, only four had evidence of Norad providing comments specifically on capacity development issues.⁷⁰ However, this figure could be misleading, as the decision to seek Norad advice rests with the desk officer in the Embassy. Therefore the low figure may also be a result of Embassy staff not always requesting support.

It's important to note, however, that the evaluation team found examples of Norad advice

69 Statistics Malawi; Vietnam Country Report.

70 These included: National Statistics Office Malawi, Nha Trang University (Fisheries) Vietnam, Geo-hazard management Vietnam, Electricity Tanzania.

on capacity development being ignored. For example, the appraisal of Phase II of National Statistics Office Malawi indicated the need for better capacity assessments and plans before the next phase started. Neither were acted upon. Similarly, In the case of the electricity intervention in Tanzania, Norad reviewed the project document and provided a number of recommendations, including the need to conduct a formal capacity assessment to better understand the capacity needs. The intervention was approved anyway. During the transition to Phase III of the Mercury pollution China intervention, it was noted in the decision document that the intervention had a flawed programme logic. The intervention proceeded into Phase III unchanged.⁷¹ These examples raise questions about the actual influence Norad has to address problems in the design of capacity development interventions even if they see them.

Another issue raised, again in both Malawi and Vietnam, was that there was no clearly identifiable contact point for issues of capacity

71 Mercury pollution China.

development or institutional analysis within Norad.⁷² While in the past Norad has had an institutional capacity development adviser this position no longer exists. The challenge this presents to Embassy staff is that when they have questions or require input specifically on capacity development issues they are not sure who the best person is to approach.

This lack of capacity in both the Embassy and Norad to engage in detail in the design and management of capacity development processes makes the selection of implementing and twinning partners key to the success of Norwegian capacity development interventions. Twinning partners and implementers, including NGOs and the international agencies, are the actors that Norway relies on to undertake capacity assessments and provide inputs on project design. The Embassies and Norad do not have the time to manage a system where technical inputs are tendered widely. The institutional partners are

72 Agricultural University Malawi Intervention Report; Petrovietnam Intervention Report.

an extension of the central capacity for provision of technical assistance. As such they provide institutional memory (although often reliant on personal contacts, rather than a system) and an easily accessible source of inputs throughout the project cycle and in some areas provide a source of unique expertise.

4.4.2 Guidance and Support on Capacity Development

Existing guidance on how to design and oversee capacity development processes is lacking: it lacks a clear framework for approaching capacity development and guidance on putting this into practice. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer review of Norway noted back in 2008 that there were ‘no overarching policies or guidelines to indicate how to design and implement capacity development... and that more work could usefully be done to deepen capacity development analysis as part

of development cooperation’.⁷³ The evaluation team have found little evidence to suggest the situation has changed significantly.

In the formal Norad/MFA process for managing grants, a partner’s capacity should be assessed before a decision is made on whether to fund them.⁷⁴ However, this step is not mandatory,⁷⁵ and, as has been indicated in previous sections, is rarely taken. To support the process, the document *Assessment of Sustainability Elements/Risk Factors: A Practical Guide*⁷⁶ has been developed. This is a guide to help staff assess and mitigate the risks inherent in an intervention and support sustainability. Along with other cross-cutting issues, such as women’s empowerment, corruption, human rights and equity, the *Guide* has a chapter on institutional capacity assessments.

73 OECD/DAC 2008 Peer Review, page 61.

74 The specific step in the grant management system at which a partner’s capacity should be reviewed is in preparation of the decision document.

75 Grant Management Manual, pp. 75–76.

76 MFA/Norad (2010), *Assessment of Sustainability Elements/Risk Factors: A Practical Guide*, Revised Edition, July, Norway

BOX 4.4: EXTRACTS FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT GUIDE

- Identify the organisational structures to be involved to execute the activities; have they been consulted and how do they assess the project (capability, ability and willingness)?
- Assess structures and mechanisms in the environment of the project, including capacity, policy and regulatory arrangements, and legitimacy with key stakeholders.
- Political will, understanding of ownership and division of roles.
- Possible sociocultural dimensions to consider.
- Identify possible gaps in administrative and individual capacities; human resources compared to required needs (volume/quantity and quality/competencies).
- Assess if measures to mitigate possible shortcomings are provided for, e.g. if they are gap-filling arrangements or have sustainable impacts (e.g. development assistance, technical resource provisions, institutional twinning, etc.).
- May donor harmonisation or donor behaviour influence the executional capacity of the project, for example by imposing transition costs related to the project design and governance structure?

The assessment outlines a series of basic questions to help the users diagnose the possible capacity problems of a partner, identify strategies to address them and then to follow up on their implementation. Box 4.4 includes an extract of some of questions included in the *Guide*.

The *Guide* includes a short introduction to the different levels of capacity development (individual, organisation and institutional), but this conceptual framework does not follow through into the key questions. Moreover, the *Guide* provides limited advice on diagnosing capacity gaps other than to ask what capacity gaps exist at the level of

the individual, nor does it help the user think about the relationships between the different levels of capacity. It also offers no guidance on the process through which the capacity assessment should be undertaken. The implicit assumption seems to be that the desk officer reviewing the proposal will conduct an external review. How this should take place is not detailed. Moreover, there is nothing on some of the specific issues that need to be taken into account when monitoring and evaluating capacity development (something the evaluation has indicated as particularly problematic). In short, the *Guide* is simply a series of questions, without any real framework for helping the users think about capacity development. It can be adopted or ignored. Its use is at the discretion of the person appraising and managing the grant. Therefore, how capacity development interventions are designed and managed varies considerably within the Norwegian system (as has been borne out in the evidence presented in previous sections of this report). Given that we have estimated that projects with significant capacity development objectives account for approximately 20% of Norwegian ODA,

the absence of detailed material that helps guide capacity development design and implementation is a gap.

To provide a point of comparison: Sida provides a comprehensive package of support to staff and partners including a guidance document, *Capacity Development: How to Assess, Support and Monitor Capacity Development Among Partners of Swedish Development Cooperation* (2011), and a detailed manual, the *Manual for Capacity Development* (2008). Together these documents provide both an overarching framework for approaching capacity development and clear tools for assessing and managing it.

It is also unclear the extent to which implementing and twinning partners have established approaches and methodologies for assessing and delivering capacity development in their respective fields of technical expertise. The evaluation is unable to say conclusively whether all twinning institutions have their own internal guidance for advisers, as it was not possible for the team to conduct a systematic assessment of twinning partners'

internal policies and practices. For those twinning partners that were consulted,⁷⁷ no frameworks or tools exist. In the case of partner NGOs, Norwegian Church Aid does not have a framework and Save the Children Norway claims to have a process, but details of this were unclear. The one international agency included in the sample, FAO, also does not have a process or guidelines.

No internal training is available to Embassy staff or Norad advisers specifically on capacity development. While special courses in institutional development have previously been offered through the Foreign Service Institute,⁷⁸ (the training provider for MFA and Norad staff) they no longer exist. Interviews with Norad staff in the Oil for Development Programme, did indicate that they are considering putting together a course on how to prepare for capacity

development interventions.⁷⁹ As mentioned above in Section 4.3.3 in the case of twinning partners and other implementing agencies, it is unclear whether training support is provided to their staff and advisers on designing and implementing capacity development.

⁷⁷ Statistics Norway and Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE).

⁷⁸ Einar Braathen and Alf Morten Jerve: Kompedium for kurs i institusjonsutvikling til NORADs bistandsskole. Bergen: Senter for Utviklingsstudier/-Chr.Michelsens Institutt

⁷⁹ Vegard Pedersen, Norad Oil for Development Secretariat, 23/4/2014.

5. Factors that shape success in capacity development and lessons for the future

The following section steps back and tries to draw some broader conclusions about capacity development support. It has two parts: the first (5.1) looks at what characterises interventions that have been successful, and those that have been less successful. It links different features of the sample of interventions to the capacity changes achieved, thereby identifying the key factors that were found to determine success or contributed to interventions being less successful. The second (5.2) looks at whether, based on the evidence from the evaluation, there are situations in which Norway should not be involved in capacity support and whether there are certain modalities or inputs that should be stopped.

5.1 FACTORS SHAPING THE SUCCESS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

Ownership of capacity development interventions was found to be a key factor in explaining success. The more national partners felt that they had been involved in the design, were responsible for implementation, and where senior management were committed to capacity development, the more effective the capacity efforts.

In nine out of 16 interventions,⁸⁰ interventions with high levels of ownership achieved significant capacity changes, and interventions with low levels of ownership did not achieve capacity improvements. In the seven remaining interventions, the relationship was weaker,⁸¹ but in no case was it entirely absent.

The successful interventions in the oil and gas sector in Mozambique and Vietnam provide good examples to illustrate this finding and

evidence the causal contribution of ownership to success. In both cases, the partner led the design and the implementation of the intervention, and senior management was actively driving the process. This did not only ensure that capacity support was meeting the needs of the organisations, but also that there was leadership at senior level to sustain the capacity gains. Conversely in the Diplomat Nurses Training in Malawi, weaker levels of ownership resulting from, amongst other things, the lack of national partner involvement in implementation contributed to the intervention being less successful. In the twinning intervention in the electricity sector in Mozambique, the lack of common vision by the twinning partner and the institution meant that there was not a shared ownership of the objectives.

⁸⁰ In 3 interventions, insufficient data were available to test the relationship.

⁸¹ This means that there were, for instance, cases where moderate levels of ownership were associated with capacity changes, or similar.

The ability of national partners to manage capacity development processes was found to play a significant role in explaining success. Where partners were able to invest the time, resources and commitment to engaging in a capacity development process, the results are positive. In seven out of 12 interventions,⁸² interventions with high levels of partner capacity to engage with and manage capacity development processes achieved significant level of success. Interventions where partner's absorptive capacity was low struggled to achieve capacity improvements. In the five remaining interventions, the relationship was weaker, but never entirely absent.

In the case of Cement Kiln project in China, for instance, the evaluation found that Chinese capacity to effectively take on new responsibilities contributed strongly to the overall success of the intervention. Similarly, the two oil and gas interventions were driven by highly capable partners, who managed the capacity

⁸² The factor proved to be too complex to be 'scored' in most of the interventions, and the evaluation team focussed on the cases where it was clearly articulated by stakeholders as a key factor influencing success or failure.

processes themselves, particularly in the later stages, thereby achieved strong capacity results. In the case of Makerere University in Uganda, the partner lacked coherent and strong leadership at the most senior levels of the University to take the institutional development plan forward. Likewise, in the electricity parastatal in Tanzania (TANESCO), the high turnover of staff and lack of interest from senior management in some areas of cooperation meant it was impossible for the Norwegian twinning partner Statnett to build effective working relationships and to take the capacity support forward in those areas.

Flexible and adaptive management by Norway was found to be a driver of success. Interventions that were able to evolve and adapt based on their ongoing experiences of implementation and shifts in context, were more effective at delivering improvements in capacity. In nine out of 17 interventions,⁸³ interventions which demonstrated significant adaptation to evolving needs of partners

⁸³ In 2 interventions, insufficient data were available to test the relationship.

and changes in the operating context, achieved significant capacity changes. Interventions which demonstrated limited adaptation did not achieve capacity improvements. In 6 of the remaining interventions, the relationship was weaker,⁸⁴ and in one case it was absent.⁸⁵

The geo-hazard management intervention in Vietnam provides evidence to support this finding. When a review of Phase 1 showed that results did not extend beyond local authorities, Phase 2 was adapted and support was extended to community level beneficiaries, significantly increasing the likelihood of achieving sustainable capacity changes. In the case of Aquaculture Research Vietnam, the intervention evolved from a focus on training in research skills in Phase 1 to developing broader skills

⁸⁴ All interventions with significant capacity changes had significant levels of adaptation and learning. Some of the less successful interventions displayed adaptive management too, but an absence of adaptation and learning was always associated with unsuccessful projects. Therefore, flexible and adaptive management was found to be a necessary but not sufficient factor for effective capacity development.

⁸⁵ In the case of Makerere University, Uganda, significant adaptation was not associated with capacity changes. The intervention changed its approach from one phase to the other but this did not address the underlying incentive structure of the university.

in phase 2, and reaching out to a broad range of other stakeholders in Phase 3. This was based on learning from previous phases and was key to ensuring comprehensive capacity changes beyond changes at the individual level. On the other hand, there was limited evidence of an adaption approach to implementation in the Cement Kilns intervention in China, which may explain why the intervention did not effectively respond to some of the key market factors and incentive structures that emerged over the course of implementation as essential to sustaining capacity changes.

Long-term engagement was found to be an important determinant of success. In those instances where Norway committed to funding national partners over 10 years, significant capacity gains were observed.

In 7 out of 19 interventions, interventions with long-term engagement achieved significant capacity changes. Conversely, 3 interventions with more shorter-term engagement did not achieve capacity changes. In the 9 other interventions, the relationship was weaker, but in no case was it entirely absent.

In the successful oil and gas interventions in Mozambique and Vietnam, the support to the agricultural university and the College of Medicine in Malawi as well as Aquaculture Research in Vietnam, the duration of the cooperation was found to be essential in explaining capacity changes. Long-term engagement allowed partners to build trusting relationships, to evolve their partnership over time and to take a phased approach to capacity development, all of which contributed to success. In the two unsuccessful twinning arrangements in the electricity sector in Mozambique and Tanzania, the interventions were terminated after a relatively short time. Although the termination was due to other reasons, the short time frame limited the interventions' ability to contribute to capacity changes.

The use of a 'quick wins' strategy was found to be conducive to success.

In 5 out of 7 interventions,⁸⁶ the generation of 'quick wins' early in the life of the capacity development process contributed to the

86 This factor was deductively identified and the evidence base remains relatively weak.

achievement of significant longer term capacity changes. In the remaining two interventions, the relationship was weaker but never absent.

While the number of interventions supporting this finding is comparatively limited, the evaluation found strong evidence in a limited number of cases. In various cases, the provision of urgently needed technical assistance, infrastructure and equipment or legal advice in early phases of the intervention led to quick wins and was key to generating buy-in and motivation of national partners which contributed to subsequent progress in capacity development. In the oil and gas sectors in Mozambique and Vietnam, the electricity contracting technical assistance intervention in Mozambique, the Cement Kilns intervention in China, National Statistics Office Malawi, Integrated Pest Management in Nepal, and the health sector in Malawi, such practical support was highly valued and contributed directly to longer term capacity achievements. This finding also aligns with what was discussed in Section 4.3.3: that an appropriate mix of support for capacity supplementation and capacity development can be highly effective.

Addressing the wider institutional environment such as the legal, policy or institutional framework and accountability relationship in which an organisation works, was found to be important for achieving success in some contexts.

This finding was found to be highly contextual and it was not possible to establish clear associations. Addressing the institutional environment was crucial where there were institutional bottlenecks to capacity changes, but it was irrelevant where such bottlenecks didn't exist. The importance of the factor therefore depended on the specific context.

However, the cases supporting the finding provided a strong and compelling argument. For instance, partly as a result of the Norwegian support the agricultural college in Malawi became an independent university with greater autonomous decision making, which was essential for achieving sustainable capacity changes. In the oil and gas interventions in Mozambique and Vietnam, addressing the legal and policy framework and the demand side were found to be drivers of success. Capacity support to Makerere University, Uganda,

on the other hand, illustrates how inadequate attention institutional environment can undermine capacity changes. The intervention failed to address the perverse incentive structure that promoted a focus on driving up the intake of students to the neglect of the quality of teaching. This had emerged because of limited government funding for the university. This was ultimately a key factor in the limited success of this intervention. Where there were bottlenecks in the institutional environment, addressing them was essential to achieving capacity changes and where this wasn't done, interventions failed.

Institutional autonomy of partner institutions was found to be a success factor in some contexts. The more a national partner had the ability to determine its own development and growth, the more effective capacity support was.

This finding was found to be very contextual and no clear association could be established. Whether autonomy was beneficial depended on the context of the organisation, and was not always a success factor. However, strong evidence was found for the importance of this factor in some interventions.

Two mechanisms have been identified through which a partner organisation's autonomy and independence from government and other public entities contributed to success: First, autonomy from public wage structures allowed organisations in competitive sectors to mitigate the challenges of retaining staff whose technical skills had been built. In the cases of the oil and gas sector in Mozambique and Vietnam, autonomy allowed partner organisations to offer competitive salaries and avoid losing trained staff to the private sector. In the National Statistics Office in Malawi and the Ministry of Environmental Coordination (MICOA) dealing with environmental management of the oil and gas sector in Mozambique, being bound to public wage structures led to significant losses of trained staff. Second, institutional autonomy allowed organisations to take ownership and leadership of capacity development processes and to mitigate political interference. For example, the Mozambican environmental ministry MICOA was subject to political pressures that did not allow it to fulfil its mandate.

However, it has also been noted that too much autonomy can lead to inefficiencies and a lack of adherence to common policy. Wage competition between public sector institutions is not generally positive. Autonomy can also lead to fragmentation with institutions expanding their functional mandate. An important caveat to this finding is thus that, while a degree of autonomy seems to be important, independence, common policies and political oversight need to be balanced. This is important to ensure that government feels responsible for the continued financing of the autonomous organisation and that it continues to be directed towards achievement of national priorities.

5.2 SITUATIONS AND MODALITIES THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

5.2.1 Situations in which Norway should not be involved in capacity development

In terms of identifying situations where Norway should refrain from supporting capacity development, the evaluation team reached no categorical conclusions. The landscape of capacity development interventions that Norway supports is too diverse to say definitely that when certain contextual factors are present support should not be provided. A more helpful way of looking at the issue is in terms of what situation factors make an intervention more risky and that if not actively managed could erode the potential for capacity gains. If one or a combination of these factors is present in an intervention, it should be the responsibility of those managing and overseeing the intervention to put in place measures to mitigate them and provide ongoing attention.

The evaluation has identified four issues that if present in an intervention, pose risks to capacity being built:

- 1. There is weak ownership of the capacity development intervention.** As discussed in Section 5.1, ownership is essential for the effectiveness of capacity development. An absence of it can significantly undermine the potential for capacity to be built and sustained.
- 2. The national partner's capacity to engage in the process is weak.** As discussed above in Section 5.1, the ability of partners to be able to effectively engage with and manage capacity support is a key to success. In situations where partner's capacity to dedicate time and commitment to a capacity development process is absent or limited, the risk that the intervention could fail will be high. In these instances other approaches such as technical assistance may be more appropriate.

3. The sector in which the partner operates is undergoing significant reform.

When a national partner operates in a sector that is undergoing major reform, its future role and function is likely to be unclear. As such, pin pointing exactly what the organisation's capacity needs will be in the future will be highly problematic. This was the case with the support to electricity in Tanzania.

4. Political interests are not conducive to the capacity efforts being supported.

Where political interests are working against an institution strengthening its capacity, the risk of failure are likely to be high.

The environment Ministry (MICOA) in Mozambique is a case in point. Here political interest actively sought to keep MICOA weak, with the result that capacity building efforts were ineffective.

5.2.2 Modalities and inputs that should no longer apply

In terms of modalities and inputs that should no longer apply, again the evaluation team felt it unwise to be definitive in judgement. These should be determined by the circumstances and needs of the national partner. For example, while overseas training may be appropriate in some circumstances, it may be considered costly and relatively ineffective in developing organisational capacity and performance in others. The package of capacity support provided to a national partner should be determined by a clear understanding of needs and context.

6. Conclusions

The following section draws together the findings from the evaluation of Norway's support to capacity development in the public sector and presents a set of overall conclusions.

Overall results of Norwegian support to capacity development

Overall, there is a positive story to tell around Norway's contribution to developing the capacity of public sector institutions. Norway has had significant success in supporting partners from a range of sectors and countries in strengthening their capacity. Norway has a unique set of technical skills in areas such as Oil for Development, statistics and fisheries that it can bring to bear on key development challenges, both through its twinning partners and staff in Norad and the Embassies, and it does this effectively. Across a wide number of contexts Norwegian support has contributed to national partners improving the technical competencies of their staff, strengthening systems and structures and enabling them to become stronger, more credible organisations, better equipped to deliver on their missions. In a number of cases changes in capacity have also

enabled partners to make clear improvements in their performance.

The evaluation has identified four main factors that help explain Norway's success in supporting capacity development.

- 1. Norway's flexibility as a funder**, specifically its willingness to change plans, scale up efforts and fund discreet activities as needs arise. This has been central to enabling national partners to implement capacity development activities in a way that is adaptive and responsive to the local context.
- 2. Norway's commitment to a partner-led approach.** This helps build partner's ownership of capacity development process and creates the space for partners to play a formative role in deciding the priorities for support and take a lead role in implementation, in line with their growing capacities.
- 3. The long term commitment that Norway makes to capacity development.** The long duration of support allows strong trusting

relationships to form with partners, which allows ongoing and collaborative conversations to be had about evolving and emerging capacity needs and for success to be built upon.

4. Focusing capacity support in areas where Norway has a well-developed expertise.

In areas such as Oil for Development and statistics where it has comparative strengths, Norway, through its twinning agencies, are able to provide national partners with high quality, highly technical, and oftentimes difficult to find skills and expertise.

Other factors which are not necessarily in the control of Norway, but which were found to be key to understanding when and how capacity development has been successful include: the ability of partners to invest sufficient time and resources to a capacity development process, and the use of quick wins to build momentum, support and commitment for a reform process.

Despite this largely positive picture, the evaluation identified four areas where further improvement is possible:

1. The long term sustainability of partner's capacity gains are a concern. The evaluation found a number of examples of organisations struggling to develop resource models which would enable them to sustain capacity after Norway and other donors leave and/or giving insufficient consideration to how to retain staff and maintaining their technical skills. Both, if not addressed, will undermine partner's capacity. There is of course no easy answer to the challenge of achieving financial sustainability, especially in low income countries, where donor funding is often central to organisational stability and growth, and where opportunities for the development of alternative resource models are limited. Norway commits to supporting organisation, longer than most, but still eventually draws back from support.

2. The capacity development strategies used are not always fully aligned with partners' capacity needs. In nearly half the interventions that the evaluation looked at the types of capacity support provided didn't completely match the need. This led to situations where too much focus was put on training, to the neglect of wider organisational issues, or where long-term capacity development strategies were pursued when what was needed, in some instances, was gap-filling technical assistance. The absence of a systematic approach to assessing and diagnosing the context and the capacity needs of partners at the start of an engagement may be among the contributing factors to this as may be the orientation of twinning partners (for example an academic institution may tend to emphasise research and training). While the evaluation found no correlation between context analyses and capacity assessments and success, it found a number of cases where a more structured assessment process could potentially have helped clarify the focus and design of the project, helping avoid mistakes and improving overall effectiveness.

3. The quality of the design and the programme logic of capacity development interventions could be improved. While the 'implicit logic' of Norway's capacity support was often clear, i.e. it was possible to retrospectively see what and how things were done, and the tacit assumptions that had been made, what was written down was not. This meant there often wasn't a fully shared understanding among stakeholders (partners, donor and implementers), of the capacity development constraints to be addressed and the anticipated pathway for change between capacity, performance and results. This sometimes led to ambiguity in the purpose of the project and a misalignment between the mandates of the national partners and the twinning partner and the anticipated outputs and outcomes that were sought and how these related to longer term development results.

4. The use of evidence in programme implementation could be improved. While output data is used for day to day management of capacity development

processes, the collection of outcome data is weak. While this does not prevent interventions from learning and adapting based on experience (and the evaluation found good evidence that this takes place) it limits the ability of partners to manage according to concrete evidence of what is working and what is not in terms of building capacity and improving performance. It also inhibits what conclusions can be drawn about the success of capacity support in driving performance and its contribution to development results.

The effectiveness of twinning as a core capacity development modality

Twinning is the dominant capacity development modality for Norway. Norwegian government departments, parastatal organisations, public sector companies and universities and research institutions provide the technical input to most of Norway's capacity development support to the public sector. They are a core actor in the institutional architecture of Norwegian capacity support. Twinning provides national partners with highly specialized technical advice and support in niche areas such as oil for development where Norway

has extensive expertise. As such, Norwegian twinning agencies provide a valuable resource for national partners. Twinning also forms an essential component of Norway's own institutional capacity which Embassies and Norad can draw on. It remains essential to Norway's development infrastructure to maintain that capacity.

While twinning has clear strengths, how it is often implemented can limit its full potential. The evaluation identified a number of areas where there is scope for improvement.

- Twinning is frequently the default modality for capacity support, when in some cases there may be better alternatives, be it through multilateral, NGO, academic or private sector providers. The absence of a systematic analysis of alternative modalities means that possibly more effective, relevant and, in some cases less costly, options are not considered. Despite the prominence of twinning, there is no internal guidance for staff on the strengths and weaknesses of the modality, the circumstances under which its use is most appropriate or the available twinning partners.

- The way twinning partners are selected and the conditions placed upon them is not always ideal. In most cases the Norwegian twinning partner is presented to national partners as part of the package of support that is being offered. Rarely are national partners able to review a range of possible twinning partners and select the one they believe would be best suited to meeting their needs. This can reduce the alignment between capacity needs and the technical expertise being offered, and ultimately lessen the relevance and effectiveness of the support.
- Twinning agencies do not give sufficient consideration to preparing technical advisers in not only delivering their technical tasks, but also the diagnosis of capacity needs and implementation of sustainable support.
- Many twinning partners are not sufficiently open to using expertise and training opportunities from other institutions to ensure the highest quality and most relevant support is provided to national partners. Too often the evaluation found national partners locked into

receiving all their capacity support from the twinning partner even when local or international actors were better qualified in certain areas, and in some cases could deliver support at lower cost.

Norway's capacity to oversee, design and implement capacity development

Despite capacity support accounting for at least 20% of Norwegian support, the capacity of both Embassies and Norad staff to effectively engage with capacity development interventions is limited. Embassy staff manage substantial portfolios of grants, and can only play a light touch oversight role. National staff of embassies provide continuity and much of the front-line oversight and support. At the same time they have less access to training opportunities and international experience than their Norwegian colleagues. They are also less likely to be aware of the capacities in Norad or with twinning partners. Norad advisers can provide advice on the design of an intervention, but they normally do this only on the request of the Embassy and in practice this often tends to be restricted to the design phase. Capacity

is further weakened by the lack of training available to staff on capacity development, and the weaknesses in current guidance material. The lack of a specific focal point within Norad dealing with capacity development issues that can serve as a source of specific knowledge and guidance either directly to embassies or to other Norad advisers, is also problematic. It is also surprising given the importance of capacity development projects in Norway's portfolio that there is no distinct label on projects with major capacity development objectives. This lack of distinct recognition makes it more difficult to focus support and effectively bring together knowledge and experience.

In practice, given the constraints faced by Norad and embassies, the responsibility for designing and implementing capacity development often sits largely with implementing and twinning partners. Arguably, they are the ones that need to be most skilled and experienced in providing capacity support. However, again there are questions about capacity. No evidence was found of advisers being

provided specific training and support on capacity development, or having access to established approaches or methodologies.

7. Recommendations

The evaluation has found that Norway has a relatively strong record of results in capacity development. Recommendations are thus directed towards further building on strengths, without reducing efficiency. They build on the internal strengths of Norway's institutional architecture, while addressing some of the limitations.

The evaluation team has understood that there are certain realities which need to be recognised in making viable and actionable recommendations. These include that:

- International staffing in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its Embassies and Norad is unlikely to be expanded and may be reduced;
- An indispensable role in the support for capacity development is played by the Norwegian institutional twinning partners, but this evaluation was unable to form a rounded and in-depth picture of their capacities;
- Norwegian bureaucratic culture resists the application of highly rules-based approaches

and values flexibility and the value of informal interchange.

In the light of this and the findings and conclusions of the evaluation a number of recommendations are made:

1. Continue the current practice of investing in organisations for capacity development over a long period of time. Norway's long term commitment to supporting organisations and sometimes groups of organisations working in a similar area or sector is a distinctive feature of its support to capacity development. It is also a key factor in explaining success. Norway should consider in lower income countries where resources are more restricted, continuing budget support to organisations of which the capacity has been strengthened. In the absence of such support the capacity development may prove unsustainable.

2. Continue to emphasise capacity development in areas where Norway has a strong track record and unique experience, building on Norway's comparative strengths, while at the same time respecting countries priorities and needs.

3. In order to further strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of capacity development interventions:

a. Implementing organisations and twinning agencies should work together with national partners to conduct systematic and documented capacity assessments at appropriate stages in the project and ideally during the first phase. Ad hoc and informal capacity assessments can mean that there is only partial diagnosis of needs and there is not full alignment between capacity development strategies and capacity needs. It is proposed that this documented assessment takes place periodically (when it may be combined with evaluations and/or preparation of project phases) and would ideally be an essential step during the first phase

of the project. This approach recognises that conducting a formal assessment too early in a capacity development process can undermine trust between partners and that a quick start up can be an effective way of generating buy-in and momentum among partners for longer term efforts.

b. As part of the process of designing a capacity development process a context analysis should be undertaken. Context analysis should form an integral part of the project design process and ideally happen before cooperation begins. The contextual analysis will assist in understanding the limitations and opportunities provided by both the institution's formal mandate and the wider environment in which it functions. This analysis is fundamental to initial programme design. Key insights from the context analysis may need to be reflected in the programme logic as assumptions and periodically monitored and reviewed.

c. As part of the process of designing a capacity development process an explicit options analysis should be undertaken. This should substantiate the rationale for the capacity development inputs, methods and modalities (such as twinning) that are being used, with evidence that alternatives were considered (along with their costs) and why they were rejected. In the absence of such analysis there may be decisions made by default which both reduce effectiveness and efficiency.

d. The existing requirement should be fully implemented, that all capacity development grants (or grants that have a significant capacity development component) have clear and documented programme logic (results frameworks). Only with a documented programme logic that has been discussed between stakeholders can there be complete clarity and agreement on what the project is intended to achieve and a basis for assessing progress. The programme logic should clearly detail the pathway from capacity development,

to improved performance and development results and the assumptions underpinning this causal chain. These should be updated as the intervention evolves particularly when there is a revision in funding levels, time-frames or significant outputs.

e. The existing requirement should be fully implemented, that all capacity development grants detail how outputs and outcomes are going to be measured. Evaluations and reviews need to be budgeted and commissioned as part of the broader M&E plans for capacity development interventions. The evaluation has found that periodic reviews and evaluations have been a key driver of evidence based learning and adaptation. It is important that these are budgeted for and planned. Alongside this, intervention should specify how changes in the capacity and performance of partners is going to be monitored.

4. To support the sharing of experience and the application of improved processes and methods in capacity development:

- a. Develop more detailed material on the design and the delivery of capacity development interventions that staff, implementing partner, twinning agencies and national partners can use.** This should include guidance on diagnosing capacity needs, analysing the wider external environment and what modalities are effective in capacity development to meet what need.
- b. Support use of the guidance material through the periodic provision of an associated training course on capacity development.** This should be voluntary for Embassy, MFA and Norad staff, but special attention needs to be given to the training needs of national staff in Embassies. Training should be mandatory for twinning partner staff involved in capacity development. It should cover concepts and practices of capacity development support and include soft-competencies in communication,

skills transfer, mentoring, etc. It is also suggested that the basic concepts and tools of capacity development are integrated into the existing mandatory training for Embassy, MFA and Norad staff.

c. Consider if a focal point for capacity development is required in Norad.

The evaluation notes that cross-cutting themes with a few exceptions do not have a focal point in Norad. However, as the evaluation found that at least 20% of resources go to projects with significant capacity development objectives, it is recommended that consideration be given to the recruitment of a capacity development focal point.

d. Set up structures that support the sharing of learning on capacity development.

While the evaluation found evidence of informal exchanges on capacity development, more structured opportunity for sharing learning and experiences between twinning agencies, Norad and interested individuals in Embassies could contribute to improvement in effectiveness and efficiency.

- e. At an early stage of the project identification process those responsible in the Embassies, MFA and Norad should be required to specify when a project is primarily support to capacity development:** The absence of any clear label within the Norwegian grant management system that identifies projects that have a major capacity development objective makes it difficult to focus advisor support and share knowledge and practice for both design and implementation.

5. Recognising twinning is an integral component of Norway's capacity development architecture enhance its appropriateness as a capacity development modality through the following steps:

- a. Carry out a systematic study of twinning partners** in order to assess their capacities and experience and inform Embassies, MFA and Norad on choice of partners.

b. Develop and provide a set of working standards for twinning partners to adhere to.

Twinning partners are a core part of the institutional architecture, they are deeply involved in design and implementation. Yet they fulfill their role in the absence of any common standards of practice as it relates to capacity development and the provision of technical assistance. The standards should include requirements that include:

- Commitment to match national institutions' capacity needs with the most appropriate technical advisors/inputs, even if this means contracting experts or providing training opportunities from outside the twinning organisation;
- Commitment to involve national partners in all decisions on the selection of technical advisers /inputs;
- Commitment to conduct a documented capacity assessment with the partner in line with recommendation 5a);

- Commitment to, within an appropriate timescale given the context, transfer greater leadership and management responsibility to national partners for the capacity development process.

c. Introduce specific guidance on the use of twinning,

including a list of recommended twinning partners and the situations under which twinning is and isn't a suitable capacity development modality. In addition, it may be beneficial to look at ways of improving internal knowledge sharing within Norad, MFA and embassies of twinning agencies. The evaluation found that staff, especially within Embassies often simply do not have a clear picture of what twinning partners exist, their areas of specialism and relative strengths. Greater knowledge sharing around this could help open up the number of agencies that are considered.

d. Open up the selection process

for twinning partners where feasible

so that national partners and Embassies have more choice regarding which Norwegian agency to partner with.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the evaluation of Norwegian support to capacity development

A part of a joint Scandinavian evaluation of support to capacity development

1. INTRODUCTION

Development assistance has always had the ambition of delivering sustainable results, and, by implication, foster endogenous capacities that eventually would make aid redundant. Skills training and technical assistance delivered inside individual organisations have been among the main inputs expected to create capacities that could deliver sustainable outcomes.

Numerous reviews and evaluations have indicated that expectations did not match reality.⁸⁷ Attention has also been drawn to the potential negative effects of excessive reliance on technical assistance and training, such as cost, distortions in local labour markets, disruptions in formal hierarchies, weak and twisted accountability mechanisms, and distorted incentives through e.g. salary supplements and workshop allowances.

⁸⁷ E.g. Arndt, Channing (2000): "Technical Co-operation", in Foreign Aid and Development. Lessons Learnt and Directions for the Future. Finn Tarp and Peter Hjertholm (eds). London: Routledge.

Even if the term technical assistance is still in use, capacity development (CD) is today seen as a much more comprehensive process in theory and development practice. The mainstream view⁸⁸ has been that capacity development is first and foremost an endogenous process where outsiders can at best contribute, but they can normally not claim attribution. The drivers and constraints to capacity development include a whole range of factors in the specific context, as well as the interests and priorities of key stakeholders, which shape the arena for support to CD. However, even if this is a dominant message in evaluations as well as donor guidance, it still seems that these insights have not always been transformed into practice.

In parallel with the broadened view on capacity development, donors have over the last decades insisted on results-based approaches, also in

⁸⁸ See DAC (2006): The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice. Paris, OECD. See also the five "Perspective notes on Capacity Development" prepared by the OECD/DAC ahead of the 2011 Busan High-Level Forum (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance-development/capacitydevelopment-keypublicationsanddocuments.htm>) as well as the "Cairo-consensus on Capacity Development" from March 2011 (available on same webpage).

the area of CD. Despite the focus on results, it has been difficult to provide hard evidence as to whether capacity development support actually contributes to strengthened endogenous capacities and performance. This also means that it has been difficult to verify the mainstream view that more recent forms of support to capacity development – contextually well aligned, results-oriented approaches – are likely to be more effective.

Over the last decade, we have also seen emerging interest in interventions that go beyond the actual institutions expected to improve their capacity. The assumption is that the dominant approach of working from the inside in public sector organisations ("supply side focus") may be insufficient or even ineffective if not also working on political, legal and other external factors, as well as strengthening the demand for accountability from citizens. This "demand side approach", while heralded in theory, has not yet demonstrated its effectiveness through evidence-based evaluations.

Another key issue in capacity development is the question of who sets the priorities with regard to the more specific rationale and objectives for capacity development. In line with the Paris agenda, one might expect that the centre of attention would be on strengthening general capacities within given sectors. Nonetheless, efforts to support capacity development may target the capacity of institutions to improve delivery of aid-financed services specifically, or may address aspects of capacity deemed to be of particular importance to donor priorities rather than aiming at more general capacity development. A distinction between ‘aid effectiveness’ and ‘development effectiveness’ may be relevant here.⁸⁹

Throughout these different developments in the theory and practice of capacity development, an underlying key issue has been the broad range of relations between donors and partners. This regards the characteristics of the relationship between partners with regard to trust,

89 Stern, Elliot D. et al: Thematic Study on the Paris Declaration, Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Evaluation of the Paris Declaration 2008.

mutual respect and accountability, the legitimacy of donor interventions, the actual roles each partner play and the incentives for both partners to pay attention to the often delicate and cumbersome processes of change, and the ‘ownership’ by each partner to the processes and results.

This Joint Scandinavian Evaluation aims to cast light on the issues above. It will consist of three separate, but closely coordinated evaluations covering support to capacity development by Denmark, Norway and Sweden, respectively. These Terms of Reference lays out the evaluation commissioned by Norad and covers Norway’s support to capacity development. Similar Terms of References, with some agency-specific amendments, have been developed for parallel evaluations commissioned by Danida and Sida. The three evaluations will respond to the same questions, while each agency may prioritise to look into additional areas of particular high interest. The findings across the three evaluations will be presented in a Synthesis Report based on the individual agency reports.

While focus is on the support to CD from the three agencies, the evaluation is based on the recognition that because capacity development is first and foremost an endogenous process, it is not meaningful to look at what the agencies are doing without seeing this in the wider picture of the efforts of the partner institutions and the context within which this takes place. That may point to recommendations about when donor engagement in capacity development in partner institutions is appropriate and legitimate, and under which circumstances donor support to capacity development is likely to be effective.

The field of capacity development is characterised by broadly defined concepts, reflecting the heterogeneity of the field. The OECD/DAC’s definition from 2006⁹⁰ will serve this evaluation: “Capacity is understood as the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. ... ‘Capacity development’ is understood as the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole

90 DAC (2006).

unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.” This evaluation is concerned with capacity development for organisations, acknowledging that both individual and system capacities may be a part of what is required to make an organisation (or a group of organisations) perform better.

As background notes to the evaluation the Scandinavian agencies have commissioned three studies that will inform the evaluation:

- Literature Review for the Joint Evaluation on Capacity Development
- Methodological approaches to evaluate support to capacity development⁹¹
- Nordic Evaluation of Capacity Development – Approach Paper (Annex 2)⁹²

The evaluation will be guided by the Approach

91 www.Sida.se/English/About-us/How-we-operate/Sida-Evaluation/Ongoing-evaluations/Capacity-development/

92 Ibid

Paper (Annex 2), which expands on the issues mentioned above and lays out an analytical model and generic theory of change behind capacity development support, to enable a shared approach and methodology findings across the three evaluations.

The primary audience for and intended users of this evaluation are management and staff within Scandinavian and other aid agencies, and various intermediaries involved in development cooperation including multilateral institutions and governments and institutions in partner countries.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to improve decision-making and strategy development regarding support to capacity development in developing countries. This purpose has both learning and accountability elements.

With regard to learning, the evaluation aims to produce knowledge that enables policy, strategy and decision makers to design good strategies for support to capacity development and

to review, adjust or discard planned and ongoing interventions based on previous experience with support to capacity development.

With regard to accountability, the evaluation aims at assessing results of support to capacity development and to what degree it represents value for money in terms of both relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

By contributing to a better understanding of how to manage for results in a relevant and adequate manner, the evaluation aims at improving both learning and accountability in future support to capacity development.

Referring to the evaluation criteria of OECD DAC, the evaluation will in particular assess the *relevance and effectiveness* of the Scandinavian agencies’ support to capacity development, and will address issues of efficiency. It may also generate knowledge about the sustainability and impact of the support to capacity development.

3. FOCUS AREAS

The evaluation will look particularly at some focus areas seen as critical dimensions of capacity, capacity development and support to capacity development. They are briefly mentioned below, and further explained in the Approach paper (Annex 2):

- i. The relevance and opportunity of a “best fit” approach for support to capacity development, well adapted to specific intra- and inter-institutional dynamics and the wider context.
- ii. Within the “best fit” dimension, the appropriateness and the legitimacy of external (donor) involvement in different dimensions of capacity development, and whether some processes may be so complex and demanding that the ability of donors to add value is limited.
- iii. The merits of looking beyond the supply side of public sector institutions to foster broader accountability relations or other types of collaboration with e.g. civil society, private sector, media or oversight institutions.

- iv. How a results-focused approach to aid for capacity development can serve to improve learning and accountability among aid agencies in the future.

4. SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

The evaluation addresses aid that has an explicit intention to support institutional capacity development in the recipient country, be it as a primary objective or as integrated components of strategies and programmes having other primary objectives. This may include capacity development pursued with targeted inputs provided to specific institutions as well as interventions addressing factors external to the institution (for instance, by stimulating accountability via non-governmental institutions) and capacity development expected to happen as a result of the way support is given (i.e. budget support).

The evaluation will focus on public sector institutions. Interventions addressing private and non-profit institutions may be included if directly relevant to public sector capacity, or if there are other reasons to assume that examining those interventions can shed light

on key aspects of support to capacity development in public sector.

Selection criteria for which interventions to study in-depth will be decided during the inception phase based on a portfolio screening described in section 6 (approach and methodology) and Annex 3.

When assessing effectiveness, this evaluation will focus on the achievement of planned outcomes of donor support, as well as to which degree this correlates with actual capacity improvement of the relevant institutions in more general terms, acknowledging that the latter depends primarily on other factors than aid and that in many cases, causality may not be established. When assessing relevance, the evaluation will focus on how aid for capacity development fits with institutional and external factors.

This understanding of effectiveness and relevance implies that the evaluation focuses on the interaction between donors and the respective institutions, whose capacity is to be improved. Whether support to capacity

development constitutes value for (aid) money depends of course on a wider assessment that goes beyond the respective institutions, taking into account to what degree and how improved institutional capacity is associated to achievement of development objectives. Although this is a crucial parameter in every strategy and intervention to support capacity development (normally seen as the expected impact from successful capacity development), it is not addressed in this evaluation that looks at support to capacity development as such.

5. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation will be designed to respond to the following questions based on the study of selected interventions:

- 1) How can a generic theory of change for support to capacity development be formulated that would enhance the effectiveness of support to capacity development?
- 2) What is the relevance of the strategies and initiatives for support to capacity development? E.g. do they primarily aim at improving capacity to manage aid programmes, versus aiming at more general improvement of capacity in a sector or an institution?
- 3) To what degree are the capacities to manage capacity development processes– e.g. change management competencies, incentives, procedures, guidance, management – effectively in place and adequate among the donor agencies and partner institutions?
- 4) How have strategies and interventions been designed to fit with context-specific factors such as specific institutional dynamics or the social, cultural, political and legal environment, and to contribute to influencing factors external to the institution(s), such as demand and accountability mechanisms?
To what degree are strategies based on evidence on how support to capacity development has worked elsewhere?
- 5) How do representatives of the partner institutions and/or other stakeholders in partner countries perceive the donors' role in capacity development, and what do they think is the appropriate role of donors in future capacity development?
- 6) How has results-orientation and results-based management approaches been applied in CD support, and how have they contributed to learning and improved effectiveness?
- 7) To what degree have interventions achieved the planned results at outcome level, and to what degree is there a correlation between the interventions, and observed improvements in capacity of the partner institutions in more general term?
- 8) What are the possible unintended effects of support to capacity development?
- 9) To what degree is it reasonable to assume that the interventions are effective and represent good use of resources (value for money), compared to alternative ways of supporting comparable development objectives in the same sectors or institutions(s)?

10) What characterises those strategies and interventions to support capacity development, which seem relatively more effective, compared to those that seem relatively less effective?

11) Under which circumstances, for which aspects of capacity and for which specific inputs may donor support to capacity development be appropriate and effective? Are there situations where the agencies should refrain from being involved in capacity development, and/or modalities and approaches they should no longer apply?

6. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The nature of the evaluation object poses some challenges with regard to methodology including data issues including questions around whether certain indicators precisely reflect key aspects of capacity development, and limitations to the degree to which institutional changes can be attributed to aid. The heterogeneity of aid supported interventions, as well as the heterogeneity of organisations and country contexts limit the usefulness of a general methodological approach.

The evaluation will apply an approach that optimises the likelihood of producing evidence-based assessments and that is realistic given the limitations identified above as well as time and resource constraints. The approach will be informed by the methodology study developed for the purpose of this evaluation⁹³ and based on the conceptual and analytical models laid out in the attached approach paper (Annex 2).

The inception phase will include a preliminary screening of a larger sample of capacity development interventions, followed by desk-based study of a smaller sample. This will result in a standardised set of data collected for each intervention. The aim is both to inform the remaining phases of the evaluation, and to compile data from all three Scandinavian evaluations to enable future statistical analysis beyond the assignment laid out in this Terms of Reference. The details for this phase are described in Annex 3.

⁹³ See <http://www.Sida.se/English/About-us/How-we-operate/Sida-Evaluation/Ongoing-evaluations/Capacity-development/>

The main evaluation phase will include three country studies. Each will encompass Norway's support to capacity development in that country over a given time period. Each country visit will comprise about six to nine work weeks combined for all relevant team members.⁹⁴ The evaluation team will suggest the approach of the country studies, guided by the approach paper (annex 2) and the methodology study.⁹⁵ Both the inception phase and the main evaluation phase will be coordinated with the other evaluation teams and the three Scandinavian agencies. Norad will have the final word in approving the methodological approach.

When analysing data, the evaluation will apply theory/-ies of change as one analytical approach. The generic analytical model and specific theory of change outlined in the approach paper should be used as a starting point unless an alternative proposed by the consultants

⁹⁴ Those six to nine weeks will include all work done by team members including senior national expert(s) to be recruited after countries have been selected, but excluding junior research assistants or other national support.

⁹⁵ See <http://www.Sida.se/English/About-us/How-we-operate/Sida-Evaluation/Ongoing-evaluations/Capacity-development/>

has been accepted. The theory of change is (as all theories of change) a hypothesis (or a set of hypotheses), and the evaluation aims to test to what degree the interventions under evaluation fit with this hypothesis, followed by suggestions for revised or alternative formulations of a theory of change that may serve to explain the findings and provide directions for future CD support.

When assessing results of support to capacity development, focus will be on to what degree programmes achieve their owned planned outcomes, as well as a broader view on to what degree they are likely to have contributed to improved capacity and/or better performance of the institution. Due to the nature of support to capacity building, where aid interacts with many other internal and external factors that are likely to be stronger determinants for capacity development, in most cases the evaluation will not be able to conclude on attribution. The contribution of aid to observed capacity improvements should be assessed based on the in-depth and country case studies of selected interventions, using theories of change or other analytical approaches.

Capacity can be assessed by looking at organisational capacity parameters (e.g. enhanced systems, processes, skills, management, internal relations etc.) as well as actual performance of the organisation, whether in terms of quality, quantity, cost or relevance or a combination of these. Due to the heterogeneity of interventions and institutions, improvements in capacity will primarily be measured against improvement according to indicators specific to the interventions and institutions, rather than standardised indicators.

The evaluation team may propose an alternative approach that responds to the purpose in this Terms of Reference in other ways than those laid out above and in the Approach paper (except for the preliminary portfolio screening and review), demonstrating comparable rigor and ability to respond to the evaluation questions and address the focus areas. If it does, it should, to the extent feasible, frame its proposal in ways that are compatible with concepts and models of the Approach paper, to enable coordination and comparison with the evaluations in the other Scandinavian countries.

7. ORGANISATION

The evaluation shall be managed by Norad, which will have the final word in approval of the approach and methodology and deliverables. The mechanisms for consultation and quality control will involve:

- (i) The evaluation Steering Group consisting of representatives from Danida, Norad and Sida. This group is the decision making body in regards to all aspects of the approach and methodology which will cover the joint elements of the evaluation.
- (ii) An advisory group composed of representatives from partner countries and donor representatives. The role of the group is to guide and provide feedback to the three parallel evaluations during the inception phase, draft and final reports.

Representatives of each evaluation team will meet with the Steering Group shortly after contract signing, at the end of the inception phase, and after country visits, at dates and venues (in Scandinavian capitals) to be decided by

the Steering group. The purpose of the meetings are to share ideas and findings and to discuss key issues to lay the foundation for Steering Group decisions on the way forward, and to coordinate the work between evaluation teams. The communication between the evaluation team and the advisory group will likely be via email. Each team is accountable only to its contracting authority, which will clarify any issues relating to how to interpret discussions and decisions in the Steering group and other forums, and how the evaluation team shall follow-up.

8 DELIVERABLES AND TIME FRAME

The evaluation will be organised into four work phases; (i) inception phase; (ii) country visits; (iii) analysis and report writing; and (iv) dissemination. The main parts will be carried out over the period October 2014 – June 2015, while dissemination is planned for fall 2015. Each phase is associated with certain deliverables, specified below.

Deliverables include both written products as well as presentations and participation in the relevant meetings. All reports shall be written

in English and adhere to the OECD/DAC quality standards for evaluation and relevant standards, requirements, and guidelines set out by Norad's evaluation department.

a) Preliminary portfolio screening note

The team shall deliver a draft, preliminary note based on the portfolio screening (see Annex 3), including identification of samples for the desk-based review, and a preliminary indication of countries that seem appropriate for the country studies.

b) Inception report

The team shall deliver an inception report not exceeding 30 pages, excluding annexes, and including, but not limited to:

- A brief historical background of the agency's work with capacity development and its current approach
- The results of the portfolio screening and the desk-based review (Annex 3)

- Elaboration on the evaluation approach and evaluation questions and how to respond, including an evaluation matrix, a strategy for all necessary data collection and analysis, and a discussion on limitations
- Proposal for selection of countries and the methodological approach for the country studies
- A detailed work programme
- A draft Table of Contents for the main evaluation report
- A draft communication plan

c) Country studies

Findings and conclusions from each country study shall be presented separately as stand-alone working papers, preferably not exceeding 10 pages excluding annexes. The main contents shall be discussed at wrap-up meetings in each of the countries visited, then revised and submitted to Norad as draft country reports.

The team leaders will meet with the three agencies in a joint meeting in Scandinavian capital city to present and discuss the country reports followed by a discussion on commonalities across the country studies and possible common or joint approaches of relevance to the remaining data collection and analysis. The presentation may include an outreach event to invited participants by the Scandinavian agencies.

d) Main report

The main report shall synthesise results from the inception phase, the country studies and other in-depth studies. Apart from responding to all parts of this ToR and requirements further detailed during the inception phase, it shall to the greatest possible extent present actionable recommendations.

The report shall not exceed 60 pages excluding annexes and shall adhere to guidelines from the Evaluation department. The final results of the portfolio screening and the desk-based review, as well as country reports, shall be presented together with the main report, whether as annexes or as stand-alone products.

e) Synthesis report

The team leader shall contribute to the process of producing a synthesis report for the three parallel Scandinavian evaluations. This will include working in close collaboration with the two other team leaders as well as an assigned consultant responsible to coordinate and finalise the synthesis report. It is anticipated that each team leader must allocate one week of work for the synthesis report

f) Dissemination of results

The team leaders shall present the final evaluation report and the synthesis reports at a seminar in Oslo as well as a joint workshop/seminar in a European city organised by the Steering Group during the fall 2015.

TABLE 1: TENTATIVE TIME PLAN

Time	Activity
September 2014	Signing of contract
Ultimo September	Start-up workshop in a Scandinavian capital to agree on a common way forward as well as the methodology for the joint parts of the evaluation.
30 October	Draft portfolio screening note with identification of samples for desk studies and an identification of countries that seem feasible for country studies.
30 November	Draft inception report
Primo December	Inception workshop in a Scandinavian capital to conclude on key issues regarding methodology and present initial findings from the portfolio screening.
30 December	Final inception report
January – March 2015	Country visits
20 March 2015	Draft country working papers
March/April	Workshop to discuss findings from country visits in a Scandinavian capital city.
20 April	Final country working papers
8 May	Draft evaluation report
29 May	Final evaluation report
June	Provision of inputs to evaluation Synthesis report
30 June	Draft synthesis report
30 August	Final synthesis report
Fall 2015	Two dissemination events in a European capital as well as in Oslo.

Annex 2: Interventions covered in the portfolio review

Country	Name of Intervention	Intervention period under review	Million NOK
Afghanistan	Norwegian Red Cross in Afghanistan multi-year cooperation agreement	2009 - 2011	20.4
Afghanistan	Trust-Building Initiatives between State and Non-state Institutions	2011 - 2013	25
Bhutan	Institutional Cooperation between Bhutan's Department of Energy (DOE) and Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) for Strengthening of the Energy Sector Phase III	2008 - 2012	14.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)	Support to the Registry for War Crimes and Organized Crime of the Court and Prosecutor's Office of BiH	2010 - 2012	180
China	Waste Management in Cement Kilns – Phase II	2010 - 2013	18.9
China	Sino-Norwegian Cooperation Project on Mercury – Capacity Building for Reducing Mercury Pollution (SINOMER II)	2009 - 2012	19.7
China	Sino-Norwegian Cooperative Project on POPs – Capacity building for implementing the Stockholm Convention (SiNoPOP2)	2011 - 2013	23.2
East Timor	Assistance in Management of oil and gas resources	2008 - 2013	67.5
Ethiopia	Grant Proposal For Save the Children Norway 2014 – Ethiopia Country Office	2014	57
Ethiopia	Sustainable support to Ethiopian Mine Action Office	2008 - 2011	46
Ghana	Strengthening resource management of the oil and gas sector in Ghana	2010 - 2014	50
Kirgizstan	Strengthening Public Financial Management Programme	2013 - 2016	15
Liberia	Institutional Cooperation between the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME) in Liberia and the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE)	2010 - 2015	51.4
Malawi	Improved Health Training in Malawian Nursing Colleges (PHASE 2)	2009 - 2012	25
Malawi	Project for Institutional Strengthening of National Audit Office of Malawi (NAO) in Cooperation with the Office of the Auditor General of Norway(OAGN)	July 2009 - June 2012	5.1

Country	Name of Intervention	Intervention period under review	Million NOK
Malawi	Institutional Technical Cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (Economic Planning Division & Economic Affairs Division), Reserve Bank of Malawi and Statistics Norway	2012 - 2014	6.6
Malawi	Bunda College Capacity Development Programme	2008 - 2010	20
Malawi	Support to Malawi Health Sector Strategic Plan 2011-2016	2012 - 2014	180
Malawi	Capacity Building in Postgraduate Surgical Training and Research in Malawi	2013 - 2018	7.9
Mozambique	Capacity building Mozambican Revenue Authority	2014	12.8
Mozambique	Institutional Capacity Development in the Ministry of Energy	2007 - 2011	30
Mozambique	Institutional support to Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos (ENH)	2011 - 2015	9
Mozambique	Assistance to the Fisheries Sector of Mozambique	2009 - 2012	152
Moldova	Institutional Co-operation in Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building between Statistics Norway and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of the Republic of Moldova	2009 - 2012	8.3
Nepal and Bhutan	Grant Funding from Save the Children Norway (SCN) and/or Norad	2014	57
Nepal	Strengthening the Treasury System, Financial Reporting, and Public Financial Management (PFM) Capacity Building	October 2011 - December 2014	4.3
Nepal	National Integrated Pest Management: Integrated Pest Management II	2008 - 2013	27
Nepal	Capacity Building Project (CBP)	2010 - 2012	28
Nicaragua	Grant funding to Save the Children Nicaragua	2014	19
Nicaragua	Strengthening of institutional capacities for environmental management and spatial planning, of local governments in the sub-Basin III of Lake Managua	2008 - 2012	41
Tanzania	Enhancing Pro-poor Innovation in Natural Resources and Agricultural Value Chains (EPINAV)	2012 - 2014	3

Country	Name of Intervention	Intervention period under review	Million NOK
Tanzania	Institutional Co-operation for Capacity Building in TANESCO	2009 - 2013	16
Tanzania	Programme on Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation in Tanzania research and capacity building project	2009 - 2014	94
Uganda	Norwegian Support to Makerere University: A Strategic Approach to the Institutional Development Programme Implementation– Phase 2	2006 - 2009	22
Uganda	Strengthening the Management of the Oil and Gas Sector in Uganda	2009 - 2013	14
Uganda	The Second Financial Management and Accountability Programme (FINMAP II)	2011/12 - 2013/14	15
Vietnam	Building Advanced Research, Education and Extension Capacity for RIA1 Phase III: Capacity Building in Marine Fish Farming of Vietnam	2009 - 2012	17
Zambia	Zambia Revenue Authority Institutional Cooperation	2011 - 2014	42
Zambia	Proposed Project Document and Budget 2010 – 014 in Partnership with the Royal Embassies of Norway and the Netherlands	2010 - 2014	68
South Africa	Tertiary Education Development Programme (SANTED II)	2006 - 2010	66
Global	Project support to The Health Information Systems Programme (HISP)	2011 - 2015	45

Annex 3: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
One over-arching question is to be applied to all sub-questions , as relevant: Is there any evidence that the consideration or lack of consideration of such factors had either a positive or negative impact on the effectiveness of achievement of outcomes?			
Relevance, design, and 'best' fit			
1. What is the relevance of the strategies and initiatives for support to CD? (ToR Question 2)	1A. How relevant to the recipient's development needs were the CD interventions?	Extent to which CD intervention: • Addresses a stated national priority in the recipient country (priority sector and/or the needs of a priority population) • Addresses a well-defined need • Addresses a clearly identified capacity constraint that the country did not have the capacity to address itself • Addresses a priority for Norway	<i>Country studies</i> Desk reviews Review of design documents, evaluations, reviews Interviews
2. How have strategies and interventions been designed to fit with context-specific factors, such as specific institutional dynamics or the social, cultural, political and legal environment, and to contribute to influencing factors external to the institution(s), such as demand and accountability mechanisms? To what degree are strategies based on evidence on how support to CD has worked elsewhere? (ToR question 4)	2A. Were the interventions designed and implemented to be responsive to context-specific factors, such as institutional dynamics, capacity constraints and the social, cultural, political, administrative and legal environment?	• Context-specific factors (such as national and institutional culture, drivers of behaviour, HR, budget and expenditure systems) were: a) identified and considered in the pre-design phase; b) taken account of in the final design and/or implementation • The choice of partners, modalities and timeframes were responsive to recipients' needs and informed by a clear understanding of the implementation context • The design and implementation strategies were informed by clear rationales to address the priority capacity issues identified	<i>Country studies</i> Desk reviews Review of design documents Interviews
	2B. Were the interventions designed and implemented to take into account demand and accountability mechanisms as an important facet of CD?	• Key factors related to demand and accountability were: a) identified and considered in the pre-design phase; and b) addressed in the design and/or implementation?	<i>Country studies</i> Desk reviews Review of design documents Interviews

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
	2C. Were the interventions designed and implemented to take into account evidence on how support to CD has worked elsewhere?	The design and/or implementation strategies drew on experience elsewhere through: • Choice of partners, consultants, etc. with relevant experience • Identification of specific relevant experiences/evidence that informed the design/implementation • Support for awareness activities such as study tours and seminars to learn about approaches to CD elsewhere	<i>Desk reviews</i> <i>Portfolio reviews</i> Review of design documents and project implementation reports Interviews
	2D. Were the interventions designed and implemented in a way that supported local ownership?	• Evidence of buy-in to the objectives and modalities of the intervention at: a) political level; and b) institutional leadership level • Internal and external champions for the CD identified • Incentives and disincentives to achieving the planned capacity change identified? • Intervention designed with involvement of: a) the target institutions(s); and b) other local stakeholders in i) formulating the request; ii) design of the CD intervention; and iii) its implementation • Target institutions and local stakeholders sense of ownership of the intervention	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk reviews</i> <i>Portfolio reviews</i> Review of design documents and project implementation reports Interviews
	2E. Were the interventions aligned with and informed by capacity needs assessment appropriate to the scale of the intervention and/or built on previous experience in working with the targeted institution(s)?	• Existence of capacity needs assessment • Capacity needs assessment appropriate to the scale and nature of the intervention and factored in other available info, e.g. from earlier phases • Capacity needs assessment undertaken with the participation of the partner institution	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk reviews</i> <i>Portfolio reviews</i> Review of capacity needs assessment Interviews

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
	2F. Were the interventions designed and implemented with a good 'donor fit', taking into account the donor's comparative strengths and historical relationships with the countries/institutions concerned?	• Extent to which interventions in a sector or thematic area where the donor has perceived strengths • Extent of donor history of involvement with the country • Extent of implementing partner's history of involvement with the country • Extent to which donor and/or the implementing partner know the target institution well	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk reviews</i> Review of design documents Interviews
3. How do representatives of the partner institutions and/or other stakeholders in partner countries perceive the donors' role in CD, and what do they think is the appropriate role of donors in future CD? (ToR Question 5)	3A. How do representatives of the partner institutions and/or other stakeholders in partner countries perceive the donors' role in CD, and what do they see as the appropriate role of donors in future CD?	• Perception of partner institutions and other stakeholders including central government in partner countries of the donors' role in CD, e.g. strengths, weaknesses, areas in need of change • Perception of stakeholders, at different levels, of what was the appropriate role(s) for donors and implementing partners in addressing capacity issues in recipient countries moving ahead	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk reviews</i> Review of M&E framework Interviews
Results focus and adaptive management			
4. How have results-orientation and results-based management approaches been applied in CD support, and how have they contributed to learning and improved effectiveness? (ToR Question 6)	4A. How have results-orientation and results-based management approaches been applied in the CD interventions, and how have they contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation, as well as learning and accountability?	• Existence of an appropriate M&E framework • Extent of application of results-based management in CD • Evidence of contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation and overall learning and accountability	
	4B. During implementation were CD interventions adjusted to contribute to outcomes, drawing on ongoing experience and learning?	• Evidence of significant change in the intervention during implementation based on evidence • Examples of change during implementation that were not made and if there were, what were the reasons the changes were not made?	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk reviews</i> Review of implementation reports, reviews and evaluations Interviews

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
	4C. Were the interventions designed and implemented with realistic ToCs to contribute to partner country priorities, and those of Norway?	• Existence of an explicit or implicit ToC • Quality of the ToC: a) Realistic (making realistic assumptions along the lines of contribution) b) Sufficiently detailed c) Unpacks link between institutional capacity and performance and performance and development effectiveness	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk reviews</i> <i>Portfolio reviews</i> Review of design documents and M&E framework
5. To what degree are the capacities to manage CD processes – e.g. change management competencies, incentives, procedures, guidance, management – effectively in place and adequate among the donor agencies and partner institutions? (ToR Question 3)	5A. To what degree were the capacities to manage CD processes – e.g. change management competencies, incentives, procedures, guidance, management – effectively in place and adequate in the: a) Donor agency; b) Donor country and international implementing partners; c) Partner countries and national partner institutions?	• Existence of guidance and policies on CD • Evidence that staff are trained in CD or have access to technical support • Presence of relevant competencies for supporting CD processes • Evidence that guidance is being put into practice	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Mini-study of Norwegian capacities for CD</i> Review of policies and guidelines, training material on CD for Norway, implementing partners and national partners Interviews
Results (efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability)			
6. To what degree have interventions achieved the planned results at outcome level, and to what degree is there a correlation between the interventions, and observed improvements in capacity of the partner institutions in more general terms? (ToR Question 9)	6A. To what degree have interventions contributed to, or are likely to, contribute to the planned results, including: a) Improvements in capacity of partner institutions? b) The achievement of outcomes by partner institutions?	• Evidence of capacity of partner institutions improving • Evidence of intervention having contributed to improvements in partner's capacity • Evidence of partner institution having achieved outcomes • Evidence of intervention having contributed to achievement of partner institutions outcomes	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk studies (dependent on availability of evaluations)</i> Project documentation, including: evaluations, reviews or final reports National documents, including those of the institution Interviews

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
	6B. To what extent have the CD outcomes continued or are likely to be continued after the CD interventions have been completed?	• Evidence of specific CD outcomes having continued or are likely to be continued • Extent to which internal conditions exist to support continuation of CD outcomes, - Stability of staffing (e.g. has the change relied on just a few individuals; and if they go, how will that affect sustainability of outcomes?) - Internal incentives/motivation to maintain and build on the change? • Extent to which external conditions exist for the outcomes to continue, e.g.: - Budget allocation (have costs of the institution gone up and can this be sustained)? - Continuation of a positive external environment, e.g. supportive policies and ongoing support from key stakeholders? • For twinning: evidence that the twinning relationship will continue beyond the end of donor funding	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk studies (dependent on availability of evaluations)</i> Project documentation, including: evaluations, reviews or final reports National documents, including those of the institution Interviews
7. What are the possible unintended effects of support to CD? (ToR Question 8)	7A. What were the unintended effects (positive and negative) of the interventions' support to CD? e.g. of potential negative effects are introducing systems which are too heavy and complex and actually reduce delivery; and diversion of staff and money from higher priority areas. Examples of potential unintended positive effects can include an overall contribution to quality of staff beyond the target institution. For a brief intro, see http://www.norad.no/no/evaluating/publikasjoner/publikasjon?key=413243		<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk studies (dependent on availability of evaluations)</i> Project documentation, including: evaluations, reviews or final reports National documents, including those of the institution Interviews

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
8. To what degree is it reasonable to assume that the interventions are effective and represent good use of resources (value for money), compared to alternative ways of supporting comparable development objectives in the same sectors or institutions(s)? (ToR Question 9)	8A. Did the interventions represent efficient use of money in contributing to CD outcomes? Note that this question has been given a more limited interpretation. A full assessment of value for money of the individual interventions is not possible with the resources available to the team. At synthesis, some qualitative judgements may be made by comparing interventions	• Evidence that there was consideration of alternative potential CD approaches/modalities • Evidence that cost efficiency considerations shaped selection of implementation modality • Possible comparison with other potential modalities	<i>Country studies</i> Review of project implementation reports, design documents and budgets Interviews
Results (efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability)			
9. What characterises those strategies and interventions for CD support which seem relatively more effective, compared to those that seem relatively less effective? (ToR question 10) 10) Part 1: Under which circumstances, for which aspects of capacity and for which specific inputs may donor support to CD be appropriate and effective? (ToR Question 11, Part 1)	9A. What characterised those CD interventions found to be relatively more relevant and effective as compared to those found to be relatively less relevant and effective?	• Specific approaches and modalities (e.g. training, twinning, infrastructure support , choice of implementation partners) • Type of capacity focused on (e.g. individual skills, leadership, organisational systems, relationships) • Characteristics of the environment (e.g. socio-political dimensions, shared vision and ownership) • Degree of complexity and capacity to address complexity	<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk studies</i> <i>Existing Norad evaluations</i>

Evaluation Question in ToR	Sub-questions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Data source
10. Part 2: Are there situations where the agencies should refrain from being involved in CD, and/or modalities and approaches they should no longer apply? (ToR Question 11, Part 2)	10A. In assessing future options for provision of CD support, are there: • Situations where donor agencies should refrain from being involved • Modalities and approaches currently used by donors which require re-thinking and/or modification, or should no longer apply?		<i>Country studies</i> <i>Desk studies</i>
11. How can a generic ToC for support to CD be formulated that would enhance the effectiveness of support to CD?	11A. What lessons can be learned from the interventions that would inform a generic ToC and/or provide pointers for specific ToCs relating to different categories of institutions and relying on different approaches and modalities for CD?		<i>Country studies</i>

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Acronyms

CD	Capacity development	MDG	Millennium Development Goal	OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
CHAI	Clinton Health and Access Initiative	MIC	Middle-income country	PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
CIT	Communication and information technology	MICOA	Ministry of Environmental Coordination (Mozambique)	PVN	Petrovietnam
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation	MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway	REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
Danida	Danish International Development Agency	multi-bi	Bilateral contributions for multilateral agency programmes	RIA	Research Institute for Aquaculture
ECDPM	European Center for Development Policy and Management	NBS	National Bureau of Statistics (Moldova)	SCN	Save the Children Norway
EDM	Electricidade de Mozambique	NGO	Non-governmental organisation	Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ENH	Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos	NORHED	Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development	SINOMER II	Sino-Norwegian Cooperation Project on Mercury – Capacity Building for Reducing Mercury Pollution
EnPe	NORHED Programme for Energy and Petroleum Development	NORLAM	Norwegian Mission of Rule of Law Advisors to Moldova	SiNoPOP 2	Sino-Norwegian Cooperative Project on POPs – Capacity building for implementing the Stockholm Convention
EU	European Union	NPD	Norwegian Petroleum Directorate	SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound indicators
EVAL	Norad Evaluation Department	NSO	National Statistics Office (Malawi)	SN	Statistics Norway
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation	NTU	Nha Trang University (fisheries)	SWAP	Sector-wide approach
GNI	Gross national income	NULS	Norwegian University for Life Sciences	TA	Technical assistance
HSE	Health, Safety and Environment	NVE	Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate	TANESCO	Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited
IDP	Institutional Development Plan	ODA	Overseas Development Assistance	ToC	Theory of change
IFI	international financing institution	OECD/-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee	ToR	Terms of Reference
INGO	international non-government organisation	OfD	Oil-for-Development (Norwegian Programme)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
INP	Instituto Nacional de Petróleo (Mozambique)				
IPM	National Integrated Pest Management (Nepal)				
IT	Information technology				
HR	Human resources				
LDC	Least developed country				

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- 3.00 The Project "Training for Peace in Southern Africa"

- 2.00 Norwegian Support to the Education Sector. Overview of Policies and Trends 1988–1998

- 1.00 Review of Norwegian Health-related Development Cooperation 1988–1997

1999

- 10.99 Evaluation of AWEPA, The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, and AEI, The African European Institute
- 9.99 Evaluation of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
- 8.99 Aid Coordination and Aid Effectiveness
- 7.99 Policies and Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Norwegian Development Aid