MANAGING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION **FUNDAMENTALS**

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Results-based management (RBM) helps organisations to reach their desired development results by maximising the impact of individual and collective interventions.

Managing for **sustainable development results:**

- is a management approach providing the framework, tools and guidance for strategic planning, risk management, performance monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management

- serves four complementary purposes: decision making, learning, accountability and communication.

Decision making
Steering the development co-operation programme and allocating resources strategically to enhance effectiveness and impact

Learning
Understanding what is working and what is not, and making changes where needed

Managing for sustainable development results serves four purposes
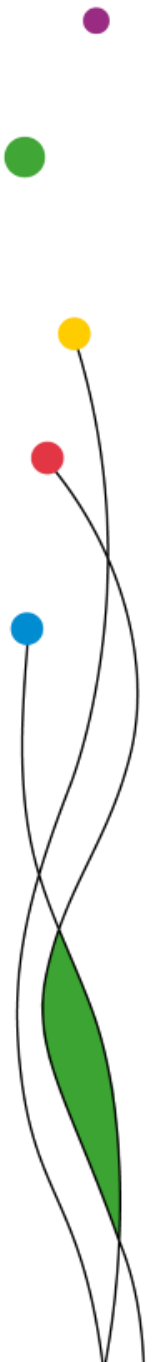
Accountability
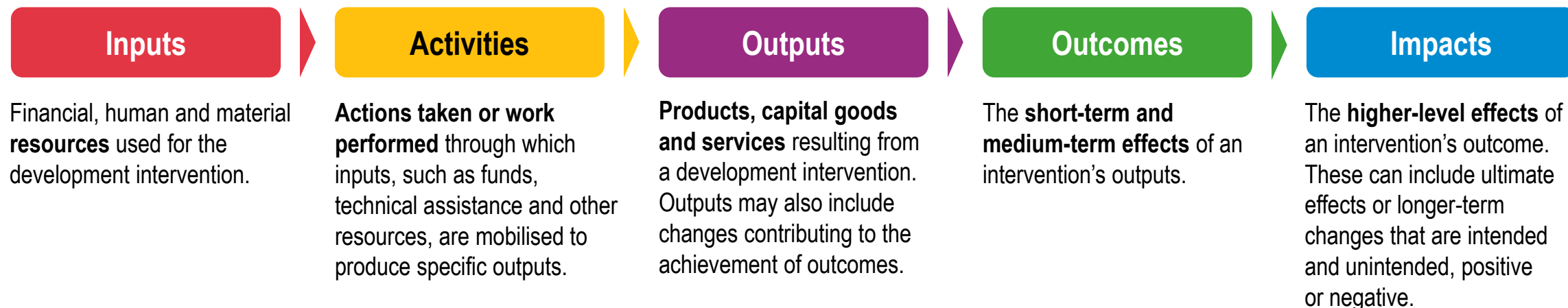Providing feedback to your domestic stakeholders and partners on achievements and challenges

Communication
Raising awareness about your contributions to global development in order to build public trust and mobilise citizens
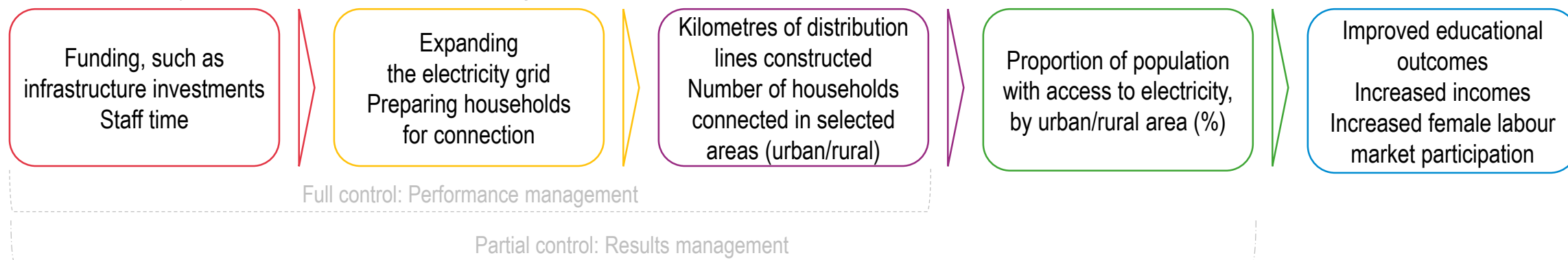
THE RESULTS CHAIN

Results are defined as the outputs, outcomes or impacts of development interventions. The links between the elements are as important as the results themselves, with each element contributing to the next:

Inputs	**Activities**	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**	**Impacts**
Financial, human and material **resources** used for the development intervention.	**Actions taken or work performed** through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other resources, are mobilised to produce specific outputs.	**Products, capital goods and services** resulting from a development intervention. Outputs may also include changes contributing to the achievement of outcomes.	The **short-term and medium-term effects** of an intervention's outputs.	The **higher-level effects** of an intervention's outcome. These can include ultimate effects or longer-term changes that are intended and unintended, positive or negative.

EXAMPLE: A project to improve access to electricity

Funding, such as infrastructure investments Staff time	Expanding the electricity grid Preparing households for connection	Kilometres of distribution lines constructed Number of households connected in selected areas (urban/rural)	Proportion of population with access to electricity, by urban/rural area (%)	Improved educational outcomes Increased incomes Increased female labour market participation

Full control: Performance management

Partial control: Results management

BASIC STANDARDS

A focus on results is needed **at each stage of a programme cycle**:

An **indicator** is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to:
- measure achievement
- reflect the changes connected to an intervention
- or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Goals and priorities are defined. **Targets and indicators** are selected.

Funds are allocated to programmes and projects that **meet identified priorities** for planned results.

Programmes and projects are **monitored**. Managers **collect data** and **adapt implementation** to observe evolution and progress.

Data and evidence on results are used to inform future decisions.

1. Strategic planning and decision making

2. Results-based budgeting

3. Results-oriented implementation & monitoring

4. Evaluation

5. Learning & reporting results

Was the programme: Relevant? Coherent? Effective? Efficient? Impactful? Sustainable?

BASIC STANDARDS

The OECD DAC Guiding Principles on Managing for Sustainable Development Results offer **a roadmap and a checklist** for development ministries, agencies and their partners in their path **to develop a results-based management system.** The guidelines identify **6 principles for development co-operation providers,** to be interpreted in line with each organisation's reality:

1 SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND DESIRED CHANGE	**4** MAXIMISE THE USE OF RESULTS INFORMATION FOR LEARNING AND DECISION-MAKING
2 ADAPT TO CONTEXT	**5** FOSTER A CULTURE OF RESULTS AND LEARNING
3 ENHANCE COUNTRY OWNERSHIP, MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY	**6** DEVELOP A RESULTS SYSTEM THAT IS MANAGEABLE AND RELIABLE

Section II.2 and D.4 of the OECD DAC Peer Review Analytical Framework set out the expectations of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on planning and managing for lasting sustainable development results.

GOOD PRACTICES

1. Support the SDGs and desired change

Development organisations set clear expected results, measured by indicators aligned to the SDGs, to maximise the impact of efforts towards social, economic and environmentally sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

- **Switzerland's** [International Co-operation Strategy 2021-24](#) includes overarching objectives and sub-objectives aligned to the SDGs. Switzerland's results framework has a menu of standardised outcome and output indicators to choose from. They contribute both to the strategy's objectives and to SDG targets.

2. Adapt to context

The systems, methods and approaches used by development organisations should be flexible. They can then be tailored to different operational contexts, modalities of engagement and types of partnership. A number of agencies now aim to encourage more adaptive theories of change.

- **USAID** has developed guidance on 'complexity-aware theories of change', which should acknowledge uncertainty and underlying assumptions at the start, then establish a robust monitoring framework and plan to adapt.

- The **United Kingdom** has developed guidance for more adaptive theories of change that measure both attainment of a core set of benchmark results and more intermediate measures of progress. This enables assessment of whether the theory of change is proving correct or whether modifications are required.

GOOD PRACTICES

3. Enhance country ownership, mutual accountability and transparency

Synchronising planning cycles and aligning results frameworks can help to minimise costs and avoid duplications while fostering country ownership, mutual accountability and transparency.

- This is the objective of **European Union's joint programming**. Together with national authorities, EU development partners develop a joint strategy aligned to the partner country's national development plan and results framework. The timing of the joint strategy is synchronised to match the timing of the partner country's national plans.

4. Maximise use of results information

While responding to communication and accountability needs, results information should be systematically used for learning and decision making in order to improve delivery and enhance impact.

- **Japan's JICA** uses its annual evaluation report to foster a culture of learning. The 2019 report provides concrete examples of how findings from evaluations were used to adjust ongoing projects or to inform the design of future projects. The report also illustrated how JICA could learn from projects that failed or were evaluated as having issues, thereby supporting accountability and learning.

GOOD PRACTICES

5. Foster a culture of results and learning

A culture of results and learning should be promoted and sustained through consistent leadership and supported by appropriate guidance, tools and capacity building as well as proper incentives.

- **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)** has developed and implemented a comprehensive Capacity Building Strategy on Managing for Results in order to build an internal culture of results. In addition, GAC has developed a series of tools and resources to support RBM internally and retain results specialists.

6. Develop a manageable and reliable system

Keeping the results system manageable, reliable and adaptable requires continuous effort, with ongoing capacity building at all levels.
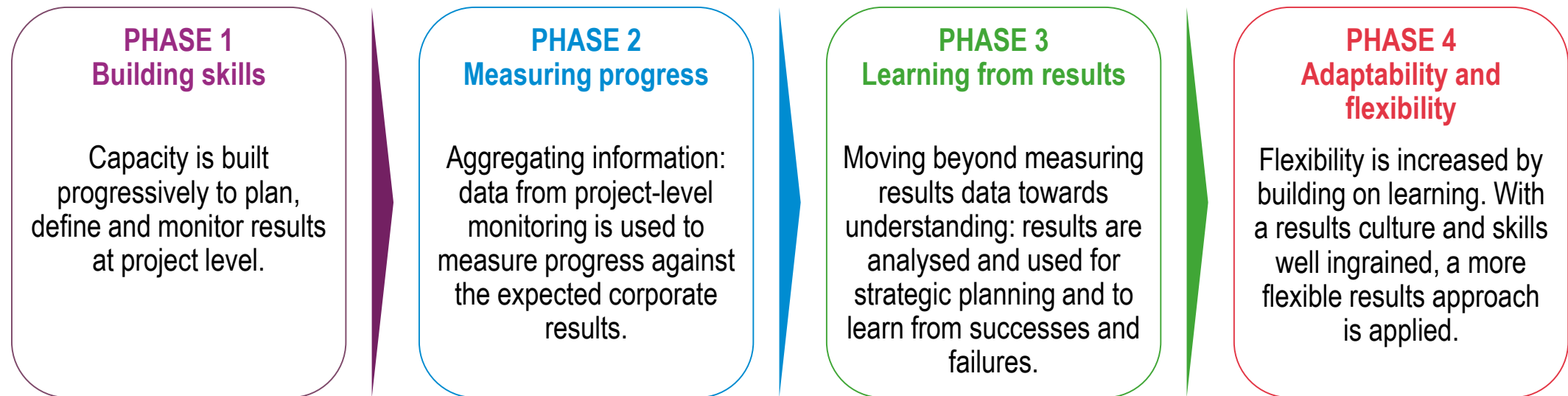
- The system and tools can be developed in an iterative way. For example, **Finland** has conducted evaluations of its results-based management system every three to four years since 2011. It uses the results of each evaluation to improve the system gradually and maintain it as fit for purpose, user-friendly and lean.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The Guiding Principles on Managing for Sustainable Development Results should be interpreted in line with the broader context and capabilities of each organisation. Organisations should seek to improve their results system gradually, adapting their approach as capabilities are built.

A functional results management system increases in sophistication with each phase:

PHASE 1
Building skills

Capacity is built progressively to plan, define and monitor results at project level.

PHASE 2
Measuring progress

Aggregating information: data from project-level monitoring is used to measure progress against the expected corporate results.

PHASE 3
Learning from results

Moving beyond measuring results data towards understanding: results are analysed and used for strategic planning and to learn from successes and failures.

PHASE 4
Adaptability and flexibility

Flexibility is increased by building on learning. With a results culture and skills well ingrained, a more flexible results approach is applied.

RESOURCES

- The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation reaffirmed the principle of focusing on development results as one of the four principles for effective development co-operation.

- Emerging from comprehensive research on results based management (RBM) approaches and tools as well as a participatory process and broad consultation, the Guiding Principles on Managing for Sustainable Development Results were approved by the DAC in July 2019.

- Learning from results-based management evaluations and reviews identifies recent trends in RBM as well as challenges faced by providers when developing their results approaches.

- A policy brief on Managing for sustainable results in development co-operation in uncertain times reflects on measures being considered in development co-operation that could ensure results during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Governments and development co-operation providers increasingly use SDG indicators to guide their policies and practices. Close examination of three large ODA recipients, Ethiopia, Kenya and Myanmar, across education, sanitation and energy sectors explores four inter-related challenges in using SDG indicators at country level.

RESOURCES

- Clear links between the 2030 Agenda and development co-operation partners' results frameworks can enhance results monitoring and strengthen policy and results dialogues between partners. Development co-operation results for the 2030 Agenda is a guide for applying the SDGs, targets and indicators in results frameworks.

- A key component of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation is to develop internationally agreed norms and standards to strengthen evaluation policy and practice. Building from learning over 25 years of applying the DAC Evaluation criteria, the global evaluation community revisited criteria in December 2019.

- Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management defines key concepts and provides common language. The glossary is currently being updated.

- Find relevant evaluations via the DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC).

Other relevant topics in this series

Risk management - one of the main principles of RBM is continuous risk analysis and management.

Evaluation [forthcoming]

Last updated: October 2021
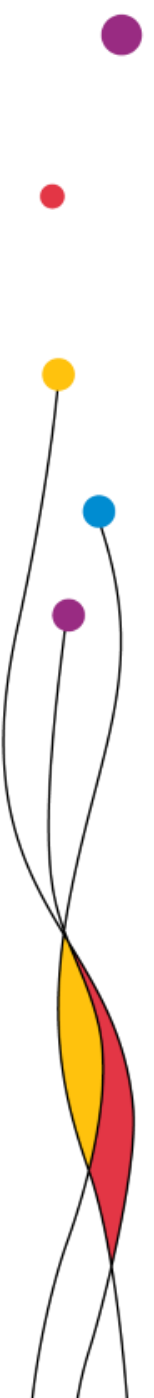
DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION
FUNDAMENTALS

This series unpacks development co-operation standards and illustrates how DAC members are applying them. Applying standards can help all actors to fulfil their ambitions and commitments.

Each *Fundamentals* document introduces a key aspect of effective co-operation, sets out *basic standards*, offers *good practice* examples, and identifies *relevant resources.*

Other topics in this series, which is being expanded and updated regularly, can be found [here](). For any comments contact [DCD.TIPs@oecd.org]().