

# EVALUATION



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## Finnish Development Policy Influencing Activities in Multilateral Organisations

Volume 1 • Main report



Evaluation on Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation

2020/3A



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# EVALUATION OF FINNISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY INFLUENCING ACTIVITIES IN MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS

## Volume 1 – Main report

Markus Palenberg (Team Leader)  
Marko Katila (Deputy Team Leader)  
Vibecke Dixon  
Tony Tyrrell  
Petra Mikkolainen  
Saara Frestadius

Consortium composed of:



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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>\$</b>	US Dollar
<b>€</b>	Euro
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>ASAP</b>	Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CFS</b>	Committee on World Food Security
<b>CGIAR</b>	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<b>CPL</b>	Concessional Partner Loan
<b>CSA</b>	Climate Smart Agriculture
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>DPP</b>	Development Policy Programme
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>ED</b>	Executive Director
<b>EIF</b>	European Investment Fund
<b>ESMAP</b>	Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
<b>FFF</b>	Forest and Farm Facility
<b>GDA</b>	Global Disability Advisor
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HRDTF</b>	Human Rights and Development Trust Fund
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IBRD</b>	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>ICAI</b>	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IEG</b>	World Bank Independent Evaluation Group
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institution
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>ISDR</b>	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre
<b>JPO</b>	Junior Professional Officer
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries



<b>LGBTQI+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex + other sexual identities
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
<b>MICCA</b>	Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture Programme
<b>MOPAN</b>	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NTF</b>	Nordic Trust Fund
<b>OCHA</b>	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>QCPR</b>	UN Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
<b>RBM</b>	Results-Based Management
<b>SARC</b>	Special Assistant to the Resident Coordinator
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TTS</b>	Operation and Budget Planning System
<b>UFGE</b>	Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN Women</b>	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	UN Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNFPA</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	UN Children's Fund
<b>UNOPS</b>	UN Office for Project Services
<b>UNRWA</b>	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
<b>UNV</b>	UN Volunteers
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WBG</b>	World Bank Group
<b>WDR</b>	World Development Report
<b>WEOG</b>	Western European and Others Group
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHS</b>	World Humanitarian Summit
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation



# Tiivistelmä

Arviointi tarkasteli, miten Suomi vaikuttaa kehitysyhteistyön monenkeskisten kumppaneidensa toimintaan. Siinä arvioitiin ulkoministeriön käyttämien erityyppisten vaikuttamistoimien tarkoituksenmukaisuutta ja tuloksellisuutta, ja esitetään suosituksia, joilla näitä voidaan edelleen vahvistaa.

Arvioinnin perustana käytettiin sille laadittua viitekehystä jäsentämään monenkeskisiä vaikuttamistoimia ja niiden tuloksia. Lähestymistapa perustui laajaan dokumenttianalyysiin sekä haastatteluihin (yhteensä 174 kappaletta). Arviointitiimi vieraili seitsemän valikoidun järjestön pääkonttoreissa New Yorkissa, Roomassa ja Washington D.C.:ssä sekä toteutti kenttämatskat Nepaliin ja Keniaan.

Arviointi osoitti, että Suomen ja ulkoministeriön tekemä vaikuttamistyö on erittäin tuloksellista. Tulosten perustana on Suomen maine vahvana ja tavoitteisiin pyrkivänä kumppanina sekä usean aihealueen uskottavana puolestapuhujana. Ulkoministeriön monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen liittyvät hyvät käytännöt todettiin toimiviksi. Vaikuttamistyön saavutukset eivät olleet yksittäisten toimien vaan useiden toisiinsa liittyvien toimien (*”arc of influence”*) tulosta. Vaikuttamistyö sisältää monia virallisia ja epävirallisia toimintoja, joita Suomi toteuttaa yhdessä kumppaniensa kanssa pitkäjänteisesti ja koordinoitusti. Analyysissä tarkasteltiin neljän vaikuttamiskanavan tuloksellisuutta. Näitä olivat hallinto, rahoitus, ulkoministeriön kustantamien henkilöiden sijoittaminen monenkeskisiin järjestöihin sekä muu yhteistyö.

Monenkeskinen vaikuttaminen on kehittynyt oikeaan suuntaan. Vaikuttamissuunnitelmat ovat edistäneet läpinäkyvyyttä, oppimista ja raportointia. Suunnitelmat eivät kuitenkaan näytä ohjanneen sitä, kuinka vaikuttamista toteutettiin käytännössä.

Arvioinnin suosituksena on, että ulkoministeriö jatkaa ja vahvistaa monenkeskistä vaikuttamistyötä edelleen, selkeyttää ja laajentaa monenkeskistä vaikuttamista, vahvistaa priorisointia ja lisää vaikuttamiseen tarvittavia henkilöresursseja, sijoittaa asiantuntijoita organisaatioihin harjittummin sekä ottaa käyttöön strategisemmän, mukautuvaan ohjaukseen (*adaptive management*) perustuvan lähestymistavan.

**Avainsanat:** *monenkeskinen kehitysyhteistyö, monenkeskiset organisaatiot, kehityspolitiikan painopisteet, vaikuttamissuunnitelmat, vaikutuskanavat, vaikuttamistoiminta, vaikutukset.*



# Referat

Denna utvärdering granskar vilken påverkan Finland har på multilaterala utvecklingsorganisationer. Den bedömer hur relevanta och effektiva utrikesministeriets olika typer av påverkansåtgärder har varit, och ger vägledning om hur dessa ytterligare kan förbättras.

Utvärderingen är baserad på ett ramverk som beskriver de olika påverkansåtgärderna och resultaten. Den förlitar sig på en omfattande analys av material och på intervjuer. Totalt intervjuades 174 personer, och utvärderingsteamet besökte sju organisationers huvudkontor i New York, Rom och Washington. Det gjorde också fältbesök i Nepal och Kenya.

I utvärderingen konstateras att Finland och utrikesministeriet har haft ett mycket stort inflytande, vilket förklaras av att Finland uppfattas som en viktig och tillförlitlig samarbetspartner och en trovärdig pådrivare inom flera nyckelområden. Analysen av god praxis inom utrikesministeriet visar att inflytandet inte var resultatet av enskilda åtgärder utan kunde härröras till många olika formella och informella påverkansåtgärder som genomförts under en lång tid tillsammans med Finlands samarbetspartners på ett samordnat sätt. Utvärderingen undersökte fyra olika påverkanskanaler och hur effektiva dessa har varit: styrelsearbete, finansiering, personalplaceringar samt annat samarbete. Utrikesministeriets sätt att hantera multilateralt påverkansarbete med hjälp av påverkansplaner bedömdes ha utvecklats i positiv riktning och ledde till fördelar när det gäller transparens, lärande och rapportering, men har ännu inte haft någon effekt på hur påverkansarbetet har bedrivits i praktiken.

I utvärderingen rekommenderas att utrikesministeriet fortsätter och ytterligare stärker sitt multilaterala påverkansarbete, förtydligar och breddar sitt påverkansarbete, prioriterar tydligare, ökar personalresurserna för påverkansarbetet och placerar personalen mer strategiskt i organisationerna samt inför en mer strategisk och anpassningsbar styrning av påverkansarbetet.

**Nyckelord:** *multilateralt utvecklingssamarbete, multilaterala utvecklingsorganisationer, utvecklingspolitiska prioriteringar, påverkansplaner, påverkanskanaler, påverkansarbete, effekter.*





# Abstract

This evaluation investigates the influence Finland has on its multilateral development partners. It assesses the relevance and effectiveness of different types of multilateral influencing activities implemented by the MFA and provides guidance on how to further strengthen them.

The evaluation used a framework to describe multilateral influencing activities and their results and relied on extensive document review and interviews. Overall, 174 people were interviewed, the evaluation team visited the headquarters of seven organisations in New York, Rome and Washington DC, and conducted country visits to Nepal and Kenya.

The evaluation found evidence of highly-effective influencing by Finland and the MFA, reflecting a strong and conducive perception of Finland as a development partner and credible advocate in several key areas. In validating established good practices at the MFA, influencing effects were found not to be related to single activities but to “arcs of influence”, representing many different formal and informal influencing activities implemented together with Finland’s partners in a coordinated way over extended periods of time. The evaluation analysed implementation effectiveness across four influencing channels: governance, financing, staff placements, and other interactions, leading to more detailed findings.

The MFA’s approach to managing multilateral influencing based on influencing plans was found to have evolved in the right direction and led to benefits in terms of transparency, learning and reporting, but it had not impacted on how multilateral influencing was implemented in practice.

Based on its findings and conclusions, the evaluation recommends: the continuation and further strengthening of the MFA’s multilateral influencing; strengthening and supporting human resources for influencing; using staff placements strategically for influencing; broaden and clarify the MFA’s approach; strengthen strategic prioritisation; and moving towards a more strategic and adaptive management approach.

**Key words:** *multilateral development cooperation, multilateral organisations, development policy priorities, influencing plans, influencing channels, influencing activities, influencing effects.*



# Yhteenvedo

**Johdanto.** Arvioinnissa tarkasteltiin, miten Suomi vaikuttaa kehitysyhteistyön monenkeskisten kumppaneidensa toimintaan. Rahoituksen lisäksi muita vaikuttamisen keinoja ovat osallistuminen hallintoon, rahoitusneuvottelut, järjestöjen tukeminen rahoittamalla suomalaisia asiantuntijoita niiden palvelukseen sekä monet muut viralliset ja epäviralliset vaikuttamisen muodot.

Toimeksiannon tarkoituksena oli arvioida Suomen ulkoministeriön (UM) käyttämien erityyppisten vaikuttamistoimien tarkoituksenmukaisuutta ja tuloksellisuutta ja esittää toimenpiteitä, joilla näitä voidaan edelleen vahvistaa. Arviointi on tulevaisuuteen suuntautuva, ja sen tarkoituksena on auttaa ulkoministeriötä oppimaan aikaisemmista kokemuksista ja ottamaan opitut asiat käyttöön.

Arvioinnissa käsiteltiin neljää pääkysymystä:

1. Kuinka tuloksellisia ulkoministeriön toimet ovat olleet, kun on pyritty vaikuttamaan monenkeskisten järjestöjen henkilöihin, linjauksiin sekä toimintamalleihin Suomelle tärkeisiin kehityspoliittisiin teemoihin liittyen?
2. Kuinka todennäköistä on, että ulkoministeriön vaikuttamistoimet ovat edistäneet monenkeskisten järjestöjen työn tarkoituksenmukaisuutta ja tuloksellisuutta, ja näin ollen myös kestäväen kehityksen saavuttamista?
3. Kuinka tehokkaasti ulkoministeriön tulosohjausjärjestelmä (ml. vaikuttamissuunnitelmat sekä niihin liittyvä ohjaus ja raportointi) on tukenut monenkeskisiä vaikuttamistoimia?
4. Millä tekijöillä on ollut suurin positiivinen ja negatiivinen vaikutus ulkoministeriön monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen, ja mitä ulkoministeriö voi realistisesti tehdä tuloksellisuuden lisäämiseksi kun otetaan huomioon käytettävissä olevat resurssit ja kapasiteetti?

Toimeksianto heijastaa monenkeskisen kanavan tärkeyttä Suomen kehityspolitiikassa ja -yhteistyössä. Vuonna 2019 Suomen virallisesta kehitysavusta 47 % kanavoitiin näiden järjestöjen kautta, mukaan lukien humanitaarinen apu ja EU:n kehitysrahoitusinstrumentit. Kyseessä on ensimmäinen evaluointi, jossa monenkeskistä vaikuttamista ja sen tuloksia arvioidaan kattavasti. Aiempi sukupuolten väliseen tasa-arvoon liittynyt vaikuttamisen arviointi keskittyi vain kahteen monenkeskiseen järjestöön.

**Arvioinnin laajuus:** Tarkastelujakso kattoi vuodet 2012–2018. Arvioinnissa otettiin huomioon myös tämän ajanjakson ulkopuolinen aineisto silloin kun tietoa oli saatavilla ja kun se oli hyödyllistä analyysin kannalta. Kaiken kaikkiaan tarkasteluun kuului 23 ulkoministeriön monenkeskistä kumppania, joista kahdeksaa käsiteltiin perusteellisesti: Maailmanpankkiryhmä (WBG), YK:n väestörahoitusrahasto (UNFPA), Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien lastenrahasto (UNICEF), Maailman ruokaohjelma (WFP), Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien tasa-arvojärjestö (UN Women), Kansainvälinen maatalousrahasto (IFAD), YK:n elintarvike- ja maatalousjärjestö (FAO) ja Kansainvälinen kauppakeskus (ITC). Näille kahdeksalle instituutiolle osoitetut avustukset edustavat 83 %:a sekä korvamerkitystä että korvamerkitsemättömästä rahoituksesta, jota ulkoministeriö myönsi näille 23 monenkeskisille järjestöille tarkastelujakson aikana.

**Lähestymistapa.** Arvioinnin perustana käytettiin teorialähtöistä viitekehystä. Sen avulla voitiin analysoida systemaattisesti myös heikkoja ja monisyisiä suhteita eri vaikuttamistoimien, vaikutusten ja monenkeskisissä järjestöissä tapahtuneiden muutosten välillä. Teorialähtöisessä arvioinnissa tarkastellaan, miten tiettyihin syy-seuraussuhteisiin on pystytty myötävaikuttamaan



monien muiden tekijöiden rinnalla (*causal contributions*). Toisin sanoen arvioinnissa ei pyritty osoittamaan, että havaitut muutokset olisivat yksinomaan tiettyjen toimenpiteiden ansiota (*counterfactual causal attribution analysis*).

Arvioinnin aluksi tehtiin vaikuttamista koskeva kirjallisuuskatsaus ja perusteellinen analyysi ulkoministeriön monenkeskiseen vaikuttamistyöhön liittyvistä suunnitelmista, raporteista ja lähestymistavasta. Tämän perusteella laadittiin arviointia koskeva viitekehys, joka ohjasi aineiston keruuta ja analysointia.

**Metodit ja arvioinnissa käytetyt työkalut.** Arviointi perustui suurimmaksi osaksi haastatteluihin ja dokumenttianalyysiin. Yhteensä haastatteluja tehtiin 174, joista 37 ulkoministeriössä Helsingissä, 27 New Yorkissa, 25 Roomassa, 34 Washington D.C.:ssä, 21 Keniassa, 20 Nepalissa ja lisäksi 10 muuta (puhelimella tai videoyhteydellä). Haastattelujen kattavalla määrällä kartoitettiin laajasti ulkopuolisten toimijoiden näkemys Suomen toiminnasta monenkeskisissä organisaatioissa. Arvioinnissa käytettiin järjestelmällistä haastattelutekniikkaa, jonka avulla voitiin poissulkea tulosten mahdollinen vinouma. Tämä oli tärkeää varsinkin ajatellen Suomen vaikuttamiskyvystä saatua erittäin positiivista palautetta.

Lisäksi tarkasteltiin vaikuttamista koskevaa kirjallisuutta; ulkoministeriön ja muiden avunantajamaiden toteuttamia arviointeja; Suomen tukemien monenkeskisten järjestöjen strategioita ja raportteja; Suomen ulko- ja kehityspolitiikkaa; ulkoministeriön sisäisiä suunnittelua ja raportointia koskevia dokumentteja niin ministeriön kuin pysyvien edustustojen ja lähetystöjen osalta; ja erityisiin vaikuttamistoimiin liittyviä kokousten esityslistoja ja pöytäkirjoja. Monenkeskistä rahoitusta analysoitiin sekä ulkoministeriön että monenkeskisten järjestöjen näkökulmasta.

Ulkoministeriön vuosina 2014–2017 tuottamien yli 200:n vaikuttamissuunnitelman, raportin ja johdonvastineen analysoimiseen käytettiin systemaattista laadullista menetelmää, joka toteutettiin tekstianalyysiohjelmaa käyttäen.

Arviointiin sisältyi vierailu yhtä lukuunottamatta kaikissa perusteellisen tarkastelun kohteena olleista kahdeksasta monenkeskisestä järjestöstä. Vierailujen aikana haastateltiin järjestöjen henkilöstöä, muiden avunantajamaiden työntekijöitä, suomalaisia työntekijöitä ja ulkoministeriöstä lähetettyä henkilöstöä.

Lisäksi toteutettiin arviointikäynnit Nepaliin ja Keniaan, jotta voitiin havainnoida maatasolla tapahtuvaa monenkeskistä vaikuttamista, erityisesti koskien multi-bilateraalihankkeita.

**Löydökset.** Arvioinnin 25 tärkeintä löydöstä olivat:

**Vaikuttamisen tulokset.** Suomi on pystynyt vaikuttamaan merkittävästi monenkeskisiin järjestöihin. Tulokset on saavutettu yleensä yhdessä samanmielisten kumppaneiden kanssa. Suomen vaikuttamista pidetään järjestään merkittävämpänä kuin sen suhteellinen rahallinen osuus tai äänivalta antaisivat odottaa. Vaikuttamisen tuloksia ovat muutokset monenkeskisten järjestöjen linjauksissa, strategioissa, prioriteeteissa, menettelytavoissa ja käytännöissä. Lisäksi järjestöjen tietoisuus Suomelle tärkeistä teemoista lisääntyi ja organisaatioiden toimintatavoissa havaittiin muutoksia. Monet vaikuttamisen tulokset kattoivat useita edellä mainittuja osa-alueita samanaikaisesti.

Löydösten perusteella vaikuttamisen tulokset syntyvät eri toimien kerrannaisvaikutusten ja useiden toimijoiden yhteisten ponnistelujen ansiosta. Näihin kuuluu myös epävirallinen vuorovaihtus, jota tapahtui kaikkien vaikutuskanavien kautta pitkän ajan kuluessa. Useimmiten Suomi myötävaikuttii tähän pitkäjänteiseen ja monitahoiseen työhön (*”arcs of influence”*) osana laajempaa ryhmää. Lisäksi Suomen vaikuttamisen viestit ovat pysyneet huomattavan johdonmukaisina aikojen saatossa.



Havainnoituja vaikuttamisen tuloksia analysoitiin yksityiskohtaisesti, ja ulkoministeriön monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen liittyvät hyvät käytännöt todettiin toimiviksi. Arviointi ei löytänyt mitään tiettyä mallia tai ”reseptiä”, jota seuraamalla vaikuttamistyötä tulisi toteuttaa. Havainto kuvastaa sitä, että vaikuttaminen monenkeskisiin järjestöihin riippuu useista eri tekijöistä, kuten järjestöjen sisäisistä olosuhteista ja menettelytavoista, muuttuvasta toimintaympäristöstä sekä muiden toimijoiden prioriteeteista ja toimista.

Arviointi havaitsi myös globaalin tason vaikuttamistyön tuottaneen tuloksia liittyen mm. YK-reformiin, sukupuolten välisen tasa-arvon edistämiseen tai vammaisten henkilöiden oikeuksien sisällyttämiseen humanitaarisen avun periaatteisiin. Maatason saavutukset liittyivät monenkeskisten kumppaneiden paikallistoimistojen toimintaan. Näillä tuloksilla ei tosin yleensä ollut yhteyttä järjestön pääkonttorin työhön. Lähetystöjen keräämä tieto oli silti joissain tapauksissa hyödyllistä ja tuki ulkoministeriön vaikuttamistyötä.

Löydösten perusteella Suomella ja suomalaisilla kehitysyhteistyön ammattilaisilla on erittäin hyvä maine monenkeskisten järjestöjen ja kumppaneiden parissa. Suomea pidetään ihmisoikeuksien puolustajana ja vahvana multilateralismin kannattajana, jolla on kokemusta, asiantuntemusta ja luotettavuutta erityisesti sukupuolten välisen tasa-arvon, vammaisten oikeuksien, koulutuksen sekä teknologian ja innovaatioiden saralla. Suomalaisia kehitysyhteistyön ammattilaisia pidetään rehellisinä, puolueettomina, valistuneina, helposti lähestyttävinä, käytännöllisinä, luotettavina, ahkerina ja epähierarkkisinä. Tämä vahva ja johdonmukainen näkemys Suomesta ja suomalaisista on äärimmäisen tärkeä tuloksellisen vaikuttamisen kannalta.

**Vaikuttamistoimet ja -kanavat.** Löydösten perusteella UM:n valitsemat vaikuttamistoimet ja -kanavat ovat yleisesti ottaen tarkoituksenmukaisia ja tuloksellisia, mikä heijastaa käytössä olevia monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen hyviä käytäntöjä. Näistä poikkeaa ulkoministeriön kustantamien henkilöresurssien sijoittaminen monenkeskisiin järjestöihin (ks. kohta 3 alla). Suomi vaikutti aktiivisesti ja yleensä kokonaisvaltaisesti kaikkia neljää vaikuttamiskanavaa käyttäen yhdessä kumppanien kanssa.

1. Suomen työtä monenkeskisten järjestöjen hallintoelimissä arvostettiin. Niissä tehtävä työ antoi mahdollisuuden tukea järjestöjä toteuttamaan mandaattiaan tuloksellisesti ja tehokkaasti. Lisäksi hallintoelimissä toimiminen on kanava, jonka kautta voidaan vaikuttaa johonkin tiettyyn asiaan tai teemaan.
2. Suomi on asemoinut itsensä monenkeskisen järjestelmän tukijana (vs. vain organisaatioiden käyttäjänä), ja on jakanut suurimman osan monenkeskisestä rahoituksestaan korvamerkitsemättömänä tukena. Monenkeskiset kumppanit arvostavat tätä lähestymistapaa, mikä on vahvistanut Suomen mainetta ja ääntä. Suomi myös käytti korvamerkittyä rahoitusta tuloksellisesti edistääkseen tiettyjä teemoja niin pääkonttori- kuin maatasolla. Samoin Suomi hyödynsi hyvin kansainvälisten rahoituslaitosten (*International Financial Institutions IFIs*) rahoitusneuvotteluita temaattiseen ja operationaaliseen vaikuttamiseen. Suomi pyrki pääasiallisesti kannustamaan monenkeskisiä järjestöjä palkkaamaan suomalaista henkilöstöä ja vaikuttamaan asiassa. Ulkoministeriöllä on toimiva rakenne ja ohjelmat, mutta sen kustantamien henkilöresurssien määrä monenkeskisissä järjestöissä on rajallinen johtuen vuosien 2015 ja 2016 budjettileikkauksista.
3. Suomalaisten pysyminen monenkeskisten järjestöjen palveluksessa on keskiarvon alapuolella, johtuen yleisestä haluttomuudesta oman osaamisen markkinointiin ja koska paluuta Suomeen pidettiin houkuttelevampana vaihtoehtona. Löydösten perusteella henkilöstön kustantaminen järjestöihin vaikuttamisen välineenä ei yleisesti ottaen ollut tuloksellista, paitsi silloin kun se oli strategisesti kohdennettua.





4. Lisäksi Suomi on hyödyntänyt useita erityyppisiä toimia osana vaikuttamistoimiaan. Suomi on ollut erityisen tuloksellinen koordinoidessaan ja hallinnoidessaan kanssakäymistä monenkeskisten järjestöjen kanssa eri tasoilla, ja korkean tason erityisteemojen edistämisessä.

**Vaikuttamisen resurssit.** Ulkoministeriössä on joukko päteviä, motivoituneita ja tuloksia aikaansaavia vaikuttajia, jotka ovat kaikkein tärkein tuloksellisen vaikuttamisen voimavara. Henkilöstön laatu perustuu vaikuttamista suosiviin rekrytointikriteereihin ja ulkoministeriön henkilöstön korkeaan motivaatioon. Tätä vaikuttamistyön kannalta olennaista henkilöstökapasiteettia ei kuitenkaan pystytty aina hyödyntämään täysimääräisesti tulosten saavuttamiseksi, mikä johtui asiantuntijoiden rajallisesta määrästä ja henkilökunnan urakierrosta.

Vuosina 2015 ja 2016 toteutetut ankarat budjettileikkaukset ovat johtaneet vähentyneeseen kanssakäymiseen ja menetettyihin vaikuttamismahdollisuuksiin, osaltaan myös vähentyneen henkilöstön myötä. Vähentyneet resurssit eivät kuitenkaan ole merkittävästi tahraneet Suomen mainetta luotettavana kumppanina ja multilateralismin tukijana. Leikkausten haitalliset vaikutukset ovat jääneet maltillisiksi.

**Tulevien muutosten tukeminen.** Löydösten perusteella Suomi on myötävaikuttanut tärkeisiin muutoksiin monenkeskisissä järjestöissä johdonmukaisen, peräänantamattoman ja pitkäaikaisen vaikuttamisen myötä yhdessä muiden kanssa. Tämä koskee erityisesti aihealueita, joissa Suomea pidetään temaattisena keulakuvana. Havaittuja muutoksia on kuvattu 11:n esimerkkitaupauksen avulla (*“outcome stories”*).

Tähän mennessä saavutetut vaikuttamistyön tulokset monenkeskisissä järjestöissä voivat myötävaikuttaa tulosten aikaansaamiseen myös tulevaisuudessa, vaikka tulevia tapahtumia ei voikaan täysin ennustaa. Tämä havainto perustuu kartoitukseen mahdollisista tulevaisuuden skenaarioista ja niiden luotettavuuden arviointiin.

**Monenkeskisen vaikuttamistyön ohjaus.** Ulkoministeriö on käyttänyt tulosohjauksen menetelmiä monenkeskisessä vaikuttamistyössä vuodesta 2012 alkaen. Tämä on tukenut oppimista, ohjausmenetelmien kehittämistä ja raportointia eduskunnalle, mutta ei ole kuitenkaan muokannut merkittävästi sitä tapaa, jolla vaikuttamistyötä toteutetaan käytännössä.

**Muutosteoria ja monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen avaintekijät.** Arvioinnin viitekehystä käytettiin ja päivitettiin koko prosessin ajan ja lopulta siitä laadittiin kokonaisvaltainen ulkoministeriön vaikuttamistyön muutosteoria. Kaavio sisältää sekä ulkoministeriön kehittämiä hyviä käytäntöjä että evaluointianalyysistä ammennettuja oivalluksia. Oletuksia tärkeimmistä vaikuttamistyötä edistävästä ja rajoittavista tekijöistä mukautettiin ja vahvistettiin evaluointiprosessin aikana.

**Johtopäätökset.** Löydösten perusteella tehtiin kahdeksan johtopäätöstä. Strategisia johtopäätöksiä on viisi. Ne vahvistavat Suomen monenkeskisten vaikuttamistoimien tärkeyden ja tuloksellisuuden, osoittavat henkilöstön rajallisen kapasiteetin ja henkilöstön sijoittamisen eri työtehtäviin muin kuin strategisilla perusteilla sekä havainnollistavat alueita, joilla ulkoministeriön lähestymistapaa monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen voidaan selkiyttää.

Johtopäätös 1: Suomen vaikuttaminen monenkeskisiin kumppaneihinsa on erittäin tuloksellista.

Johtopäätös 2: Ulkoministeriön etu on varmistaa riittävät monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen resurssit.

Johtopäätös 3: Ulkoministeriön kustantamia henkilöresursseja monenkeskisiin järjestöihin voidaan käyttää strategisemmin ja tuloksellisemmin monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen.



Johtopäätös 4: Suomen monenkeskinen vaikuttaminen koostuu niin asia(teema)pohjaisesta vaikuttamisesta kuin yleisestä vuorovaikutuksesta järjestöjen kanssa. Ajoittain on epäselvää, kumpi on etusijalla.

Johtopäätös 5: Ei ole vahvoja perusteita koordinoita tai yhdenmukaistaa maatasoa ja pääkonttoritasoa vaikuttamistoimia ja päämääriä monenkeskisessä vaikuttamisessa.

Kaksi operatiivista johtopäätöstä käsittelee henkilöstön urakiertoa ja maatasoa tiedon saatavuuden tärkeyttä.

Johtopäätös 6: Henkilökunnan urakierto vähentää vaikuttamisen tuloksellisuutta.

Johtopäätös 7: Maatasolla tuotettu tieto ja kokemukset voivat olla hyödyllisiä vaikuttamiseen pääkonttoritasolla, mutta tämä tieto ei ole aina saatavilla.

Viimeinen johtopäätös koskee monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen ohjausta.

Johtopäätös 8: Monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen ohjaus vaikuttamissuunnitelmien ja siihen liittyvien prosessien avulla on ollut tuloksellista organisaation oppimisen ja eduskunnalle raportoinnin kannalta. Se ei ole kuitenkaan merkittävästi vaikuttanut monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen toteutumiseen käytännössä.

**Suosituksien** Johtopäätöksiin perustuen ulkoministeriölle tehtiin kahdeksan suositusta, jotka perustuvat monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen muutosteoriaan ja tuloksellisen vaikuttamisen avaintekijöihin. Neljä strategista suositusta käsittelee tuloksellisen monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen jatkamista, henkilöstökapasiteetin lisäämistä, strategisempaa henkilöstön sijoittelua sekä yleisen lähestymistavan kirkastamista ja avartamista. Suositellaan, että:

Suositus 1: Monenkeskistä vaikuttamista jatketaan paljolti samalla tavalla kuin aikaisemminkin noudattaen käytössä olevia hyviä käytäntöjä. Samalla vahvistetaan vaikuttamiseen kohdistuvaa poliittista ja rahallista tukea. *Ulkoministeriön kehitysyhteistyökäytäntöjen uudistuksen yhteydessä käyttöön otettuja prosesseja ja viitekehyksiä olisi käytettävä sen varmistamiseksi, että poliittinen ja taloudellinen tuki on vahvaa, selkeää, johdonmukaista, ennustettavaa ja luotettavaa. Ulkoministeriön tulisi harkita poliittisen tuen ja rahoituksen lisäämistä monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen.*

Suositus 2: Monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen suunnataan enemmän henkilöresursseja. *Ulkoministeriön tulisi arvioida henkilöstön riittävyys ja lisätä resursseja ratkaisevan tärkeillä toiminta-alueilla, jotta edustustot, lähetystöt ja yksiköt – erityisesti ne, jotka ovat suorassa yhteydessä kumppaniorganisaatioihin (constituency offices) – eivät enää menetä arvokkaita vaikuttamismahdollisuuksia monenkeskisessä yhteistyössä.*

Suositus 3: Ulkoministeriön kustantamia henkilöresursseja monenkeskisiin järjestöihin käytetään strategisemmin, ja hyödynnetään paremmin sitä tietoa, jota järjestöissä toimivat suomalaiset voivat tarjota. *Ulkoministeriön tulisi selkeyttää niitä päämääriä, joiden perusteella henkilöstö sijoitetaan monenkeskisiin järjestöihin. Tätä väylää tulisi käyttää strategisemmin vaikuttamisen välineenä. Henkilöstösijoitusten strategisen kohdentamisen mahdollisuudet tulisi tunnistaa vuoropuhelussa monenkeskisten kumppaneiden ja niissä jo työskentelevien suomalaisten kanssa.*



Suositus 4: Laajennetaan monenkeskisen työn lähestymistapaa yhdensuuntaisesta vaikuttamisesta (influencing) vastavuoroiseen yhteistyöhön (engagement) ja kuvataan selkeästi, mihin näkemykseen eri yhteistyön muodot perustuvat. *Vastavuoroinen yhteistyö sisältää myös vähemmän näkyviä vaikuttamisen kanavia. Suunnitelmien tulisi selkiyttää myös niitä valintoja (trade-offs), jotka liittyvät rahoitukseen, henkilöstön sijoittamiseen ja Suomen hallinnollisiin velvollisuuksiin monenkeskisissä järjestöissä.*

Kaksi operatiivista suositusta liittyy niihin henkilöstön kierrosta ja tiedonsaannin vaikeuksista johtuviin ongelmiin, jotka ovat vähentäneet vaikuttamistyön tuloksellisuutta. Suositellaan, että:

Suositus 5: Tehdään toimenpiteitä, jotka tukevat paremmin monenkeskisestä vaikuttamisesta vastuussa olevan henkilökunnan pysymistä työtehtävässään. Lisäksi varmistetaan, että henkilökunnan vaihtuessa tieto kulkee tehokkaasti seuraajalle ja että tarjolla on täsmävalmennusta ja -koulutusta. *Ulkoministeriön tulisi täsmentää tapoja, joilla monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen osallistuvat avainhenkilöt voisivat pysyä pidempään työtehtävässään. Lähtevän ja saapuvan henkilön kesken tulisi ottaa käyttöön perehdytyskäytäntöjä, joihin sisältyy olennaisten asiakirjojen luovuttaminen uudelle vastuuhenkilölle, valmennus ja mentorointi.*

Suositus 6: Varmistetaan että monenkeskistä vaikuttamista tekevällä henkilöstöllä on saatavilla tarvittavat tiedot ja että heillä on riittävästi työn edellyttämää kokemusta. Monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen osallistuvalla avainhenkilöstölle olisi annettava apua tiedon keräämisessä lähestytöistä ja muista lähteistä, sekä tuettava heitä hyödyllisten katsausten ja analyysien laatimisessa. Ulkoministeriön tulisi myös edistää eri näkökulmien huomioonottamista ja tiedonvaihtoa eri osapuolten välillä multi-bilateraalihankkeisiin liittyen.

Kahden viimeisen suosituksen tavoitteena on parantaa sitä, miten ulkoministeriö ohjaa monenkeskistä vaikuttamista vahvistamalla strategista priorisointia ja joustavuutta. Suositellaan, että:

Suositus 7: Jatketaan vaikuttamissuunnitelmien, raporttien ja vaikuttamiseen liittyvien prosessien kehittämistä entistä strategisempaan ja joustavampaan suuntaan koskien monenkeskisten järjestöjen kanssa tapahtuvan yhteistyön (engagement) ohjausta. *Tulevaisuudessa ulkoministeriön tulisi asettaa etusijalle pitkän aikavälin järjestelmätason tavoitteet monenkeskisissä järjestöissä vuoden 2020 vaikuttamissuunnitelmiin perustuen. Jokaiselle tavoitteelle luodaan työryhmä, ja lisätään entisestään suunnittelun, toteutuksen ja raportoinnin joustavuutta.*

Suositus 8. Toteutetaan käytännönläheinen selvitys koskien Suomen monenkeskisiä kumppaneita. Tulosten perustella priorisoidaan strategiset, pitkän aikavälin mahdollisuudet koskien monenkeskistä yhteistyötä. *Selvitykseen sisällytetään monenkeskisen yhteistyön järjestöt, rahastot ja ohjelmat. Tavoitteet määritellään ottaen huomioon Suomen rajalliset resurssit ja toisaalta ne vahvuudet, joita on kuvattu tässä raportissa.*



Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suositukset
<b>Strateginen taso</b>		
<p>1. Suomi on pystynyt vaikuttamaan merkittävästi monenkeskisiin järjestöihin, kuten arvioinnin kahdeksan muutoksia kuvaavaa esimerkkitapausta osoittavat.</p> <p>2. Löydösten perusteella vaikuttamisen tulokset syntyvät eri aktiviteettien kerrannaisvaikutusten ja useiden toimijoiden yhteisten ponnistelujen ansiosta. Näihin kuuluu myös epävirallinen vuorovaikutus, jota tapahtui kaikkien vaikutuskanavien kautta pitkän ajan kuluessa. Useimmiten Suomi myötävaikutti tähän pitkäjänteiseen ja monitahoiseen työhön ("arcs of influence") osana laajempaa ryhmää. Lisäksi Suomen vaikuttamisen viestit ovat pysyneet huomattavan johdonmukaisina aikojen saatossa.</p> <p>3. Suomella ja suomalaisilla kehitysyhteistyön ammattilaisilla on erittäin hyvä maine monenkeskisten järjestöjen ja kumppaneiden parissa. Tämä edesauttaa huomattavasti monenkeskistä vaikuttamista ja on Suomen keskeinen etu.</p> <p>19. Suomi on myötävaikuttanut tärkeisiin muutoksiin monenkeskisissä järjestöissä johdonmukaisen, peräänantamattoman ja pitkäaikaisen vaikuttamisen myötä. Tämä koskee erityisesti aihealueita, joissa Suomea pidetään temaattisena keulakuvana.</p> <p>20. Tähän asti saavutetut vaikuttamistyön tulokset monenkeskisissä järjestöissä voivat myötävaikuttaa tulosten aikaansaamiseen myös tulevaisuudessa, vaikka tulevia tapahtumia ei voikaan täysin ennustaa.</p>	<p>1. Suomen vaikuttaminen monenkeskisiin kumppaneihinsa on erittäin tuloksellista.</p> <p>(Myös löydökset 4–6 ja 8–16 vaikuttivat tähän johtopäätökseen).</p>	<p>1. Monenkeskistä vaikuttamista jatketaan paljolti samalla tavalla kuin aikaisemminkin noudattaen käytössä olevia hyviä käytäntöjä. Samalla vahvistetaan vaikuttamiseen kohdistuvaa poliittista ja rahallista tukea.</p>
<p>17. Ulkoministeriössä on joukko päteviä, motivoituneita and tuloksia aikaansaavia vaikuttajia, jotka ovat kaikkein tärkein tuloksellisen vaikuttamisen voimavara. Henkilöstön laatu perustuu vaikuttamista suosiviin rekrytointikriteereihin ja ulkoministeriön henkilöstön korkeaan motivaatioon. Tätä vaikuttamistyön kannalta olennaista henkilöstökapasiteettia ei kuitenkaan pystytty hyödyntämään täysmääräisesti tulosten saavuttamiseksi, mikä johtui asiantuntijoiden rajallisesta määrästä ja henkilökunnan urakierrosta.</p> <p>18. Vuosina 2015 ja 2016 toteutetut ankarat budjettileikkaukset ovat johtaneet vähentyneeseen kanssakäymiseen ja menetettyihin vaikuttamismahdollisuuksiin, osaltaan myös vähentyneen henkilöstön myötä. Vähentyneet resurssit eivät kuitenkaan ole merkittävästi tahraneet Suomen mainetta luotettavana kumppanina ja multilateralismin tukijana. Leikkausten haitalliset vaikutukset ovat jääneet maltillisiksi.</p>	<p>2. Ulkoministeriön etu on varmistaa riittävät monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen resurssit.</p>	<p>2. Monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen suunnataan enemmän henkilöresursseja.</p>





Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suosituks
<p>2. Vaikuttamisen tulokset syntyvät eri aktiviteettien kerrannaisvaikutusten ja useiden toimijoiden yhteisten ponnistelujen ansiosta. Näihin kuuluu myös epävirallinen vuorovaikutus, jota tapahtui kaikkien vaikutuskanavien kautta pitkän ajan kuluessa. Useimmiten Suomi myötävaikutti tähän pitkäjänteiseen ja monitahoiseen työhön ("arcs of influence") osana laajempaa ryhmää. Lisäksi Suomen vaikuttamisen viestit ovat pysyneet huomattavan johdonmukaisina aikojen saatossa.</p> <p>14. Ulkoministeriöllä on asianmukaiset ohjelmat ja prosessit suomalaisten rekrytoimiseksi monenkeskisiin järjestöihin, mutta paikkoja on rajoitetusti johtuen rajallisista rahallisista resursseista, vaikeuksista löytää hakijoita ja edistää heidän valintaansa ja keskiarvoa heikompaa asiantuntijoiden pysyvyyttä järjestöjen palveluksessa.</p> <p>15. Henkilöstösijoitukset ovat tuloksellisia monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen kannalta vain tietyissä tilanteissa; eli vain jos ne tarjoavat asiantuntijuutta teemoissa, jotka ovat aliresursoituja järjestön sisällä. Henkilöstösijoituksia hyödynnetään tällä hetkellä vajavaisesti vaikuttamistyön näkökulmasta.</p>	<p>3. Ulkoministeriön kustantamia henkilöresursseja monenkeskisiin järjestöihin voidaan käyttää strategisemmin ja tuloksellisemmin monenkeskiseen vaikuttamiseen.</p>	<p>3. Ulkoministeriön kustantamia henkilöresursseja monenkeskisiin järjestöihin käytetään strategisemmin, ja hyödynnetään paremmin sitä tietoa, jota järjestöissä toimivat suomalaiset voivat tarjota.</p>
<p>9. Suomen vastuualueet monenkeskisten järjestöjen hallintoelimissä ovat laajempia kuin varsinaiset vaikuttamisen toimet. Niiden tarkoituksena on lähinnä tukea järjestöjä toteuttamaan mandaattiaan tuloksellisesti ja tehokkaasti. Suomi kantaa vastuunsa vuorovaikutteisesti, rakentavasti ja puolueettomasti.</p> <p>11. Suomi on asemoinut itsensä monenkeskisen järjestelmän tukijana (vs. vain käyttäjänä) sekä kehityspoliittisesti että käytännön näkökulmasta. Tämä on vahvistanut Suomen suhteita sen monenkeskisiin kumppanijärjestöihin.</p> <p>12. Vaikka Suomi on selkeästi yleisrahoituksen kannattaja, se on kuitenkin käyttänyt korvamerkittyä tukea strategisesti. Tämä on osoitus Suomen kyvystä käyttää tämän tyyppistä rahoitusta taktisena vaikuttamisen välineenä.</p> <p>15. Henkilöstösijoitukset ovat tuloksellisia monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen kannalta vain tietyissä tilanteissa; eli vain jos ne tarjoavat asiantuntijuutta teemoissa, jotka ovat aliresursoituja järjestön sisällä. Henkilöstösijoituksia hyödynnetään tällä hetkellä vajavaisesti vaikuttamistyön näkökulmasta.</p> <p>18. Vuosina 2015 ja 2016 toteutetut ankarat budjettileikkaukset ovat johtaneet vähentyneeseen kanssakäymiseen ja menetettyihin vaikuttamismahdollisuuksiin, osaltaan myös vähentyneen henkilöstön myötä. Vähentyneet resurssit eivät kuitenkaan ole merkittävästi tahranneet Suomen mainetta luotettavana kumppanina ja multilateralismin tukijana. Leikkausten haitalliset vaikutukset ovat jääneet maltillisiksi.</p>	<p>4. Suomen monenkeskinen vaikuttaminen koostuu niin asia(teema)pohjaisesta vaikuttamisesta kuin yleisestä vuorovaikutuksesta järjestöjen kanssa. Ajoittain on epäselvää, kumpi on etusijalla.</p> <p>(Myös löydökset 10, 13 ja 14 vaikuttivat tähän johtopäätökseen).</p>	<p>4. Laajennetaan monenkeskisen työn lähestymistapaa yhdensuuntaisesta vaikuttamisesta (influencing) vastavuoroiseen yhteistyöhön (engagement) ja kuvataan selkeästi, mihin näkemykseen eri yhteistyön muodot perustuvat.</p>
<p>7. Maatasolla tapahtuvalla monenkeskisiin järjestöihin vaikuttamisella ei yleensä ole merkitystä pääkonttorin tasolla, mutta maista hankitut kokemukset ja tieto voivat silti tukea järjestötason vaikuttamista.</p> <p>23. Vaikuttamissuunnitelmat eivät ole vielä olleet avainasemassa maataason työssä; monenkeskinen vaikuttaminen on siellä osa laajempaa politiikkavuoropuhelua ja vaikuttamista, joka on kohdistettu kumppanimaan hallitukselle ja muille kehitysyhteistyön toimijoille.</p>	<p>5. Ei ole vahvoja perusteita koordinoita tai yhdenmukaisesti maataason ja pääkonttoritason vaikuttamistoimia ja päämääriä monenkeskisessä vaikuttamisessa.</p>	



Löydökset	Johtopäätökset	Suositukset
<b>Toimeenpaneva taso</b>		
<p>17. Ulkoministeriössä on joukko päteviä, motivoituneita ja tuloksia aikaansaavia vaikuttajia, jotka ovat kaikkein tärkein tuloksellisen vaikuttamisen voimavara. Henkilöstön laatu perustuu vaikuttamista suosivista rekrytointikriteereihin ja ulkoministeriön henkilöstön korkeaan motivaatioon. Tätä vaikuttamistyön kannalta olennaista henkilöstökapasiteettia ei kuitenkaan pystytty hyödyntämään täysmääräisesti tulosten saavuttamiseksi, mikä johtui asiantuntijoiden rajallisesta määrästä ja henkilökunnan urakierrosta.</p>	<p>6. Henkilökunnan urakierto vähentää vaikuttamisen tuloksellisuutta.</p>	<p>5. Tehdään toimenpiteitä, jotka tukevat paremmin monenkeskisestä vaikuttamisesta vastuussa olevan henkilökunnan pysymistä työtehtävässään. Lisäksi varmistetaan, että henkilökunnan vaihtuessa tieto kulkee tehokkaasti seuraajalle ja että tarjolla on täsmävalmennusta ja -koulutusta.</p>
<p>7. Maatasolla tapahtuvalla monenkeskisiin järjestöihin vaikuttamisella ei yleensä ole merkitystä pääkonttorin tasolla, mutta maista hankitut kokemukset ja tieto voivat silti tukea järjestötason vaikuttamista.</p>	<p>7. Maatasolla tuotettu tieto ja kokemukset voivat olla hyödyllisiä vaikuttamiseen pääkonttoritasolla, mutta tämä tieto ei ole aina saatavilla.</p>	<p>6. Varmistetaan, että monenkeskistä vaikuttamista tekevällä henkilöstöllä on saatavilla tarvittavat tiedot ja että heillä on riittävästi työn edellyttämää kokemusta.</p>
<b>Vaikuttamistyön hallinto</b>		
<p>21. Ulkoministeriö on käyttänyt vaikuttamisraportteja hyvin organisaatiossa tapahtuvassa oppimisessa. Tämä on johtanut hyviin käytäntöihin ja opastanut ulkoministeriötä monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen kehittämisessä.</p> <p>22. Vaikuttamissuunnitelmat ja -raportit vuosilta 2014–2017 heijastavat niitä haasteita, joita ulkoministeriö on kohdannut määrittäessään tavoitteita sekä raportoidessaan tuloksia. Suunnitelmat ja raportit eivät ole merkittävästi vaikuttaneet siihen, miten vaikuttamistyö tapahtuu käytännössä.</p> <p>23. Vaikuttamissuunnitelmat eivät ole vielä olleet avainasemassa maataso työssä; monenkeskinen vaikuttaminen on siellä osa laajempaa politiikkavuoropuhelua ja vaikuttamista, joka on kohdistettu kumppanimaan hallitukselle ja muille kehitysyhteistyön toimijoille.</p> <p>24. Vaikuttamissuunnitelmat ja -raportit palvelivat hyvin ulkoista vastuuvollisuutta, mutta sisäinen vastuuvollisuus nojasi enemmän muihin suunnittelu- ja raportointiprosesseihin.</p> <p>25. Vuonna 2020 päivitettyt vaikuttamissuunnitelmat osoittavat parannusta aikaisempiin suunnitelmiin verrattuna; niissä esitetään rajallinen määrä olennaisia temaattisia tavoitteita, asianmukaisia organisaatiotason seurantamittareita, sekä joustavammat raportointikäytännöt (ml. julkaistava tiivistelmä).</p>	<p>8. Monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen ohjaus vaikuttamissuunnitelmien ja siihen liittyvien prosessien avulla on ollut tuloksellista organisaation oppimisen ja eduskunnalle raportoinnin kannalta. Se ei ole kuitenkaan merkittävästi vaikuttanut monenkeskisen vaikuttamisen toteutumiseen käytännössä.</p>	<p>7. Jatketään vaikuttamissuunnitelmien, raporttien ja vaikuttamiseen liittyvien prosessien kehittämistä entistä strategisempaan ja joustavampaan suuntaan koskien monenkeskisten järjestöjen kanssa tapahtuvan yhteistyön (engagement) ohjausta.</p> <p>8. Toteutetaan käytännönläheinen selvitys koskien Suomen monenkeskisiä kumppaneita. Tulosten perustella priorisoidaan strategiset, pitkántähtäimen mahdollisuudet koskien monenkeskistä yhteistyötä.</p>



# Sammanfattning

**Inledning:** Denna utvärdering undersöker vilket inflytande Finland har i multilaterala utvecklingsorganisationer. Den fokuserar på Finlands förmåga att utöva inflytande utöver det ekonomiska bidraget till organisationerna – till exempel genom att delta i styrelsearbete, genom förhandlingar om bidragets storlek, genom det stöd som förmedlas av finska experter, och en rad andra formella och informella påverkansåtgärder.

Utvärderingens syfte är att bedöma hur relevanta och effektiva de olika åtgärder som Finlands utrikesministerium använder är. Avsikten är också att ge vägledning om hur åtgärderna ytterligare kan förbättras. Utvärderingen är framåtblickande och avsedd att hjälpa utrikesministeriet att dra lärdomar från tidigare erfarenheter och tillämpa dessa lärdomar i framtiden.

Utvärderingens målsättning är att svara på fyra utvärderingsfrågor:

1. Hur effektiva har utrikesministeriets påverkansåtgärder varit när man har haft för avsikt att påverka multilaterala organisationers anställda, riktlinjer och verksamhet i fråga om de utvecklingspolitiska teman som är viktiga för Finland?
2. Hur troligt är det att utrikesministeriets påverkansåtgärder har bidragit till att de multilaterala organisationernas verksamhet blivit mer relevant och effektiv, och på så vis även bidragit till en hållbar utveckling?
3. Hur effektivt har utrikesministeriets system för resultatstyrning (inklusive påverkansplaner och styrningen, rapporteringen och lärandeprocesserna i anslutning till dem) varit som stöd för de multilaterala påverkansåtgärderna?
4. Vilka faktorer har haft den största positiva respektive negativa inverkan på utrikesministeriets multilaterala påverkansarbete och vad kan utrikesministeriet realistiskt sett göra för att förbättra genomslagskraften, med beaktande av de tillgängliga resurserna och kapaciteten?

Utvärderingen speglar hur viktigt den multilaterala verksamheten är för Finlands utvecklingspolitik och utvecklingssamarbete. 2019 kanaliserades 47 procent av Finlands officiella utvecklingsbistånd genom multilaterala organisationer, inklusive det humanitära samarbetet och EU:s instrument för utvecklingsfinansiering. Detta är första gången som utrikesministeriet på ett genomgripande sätt utvärderar sitt multilaterala påverkansarbete och dess resultat. Utvärderingen av påverkansarbetet i jämställdhetsfrågor fokuserade enbart på två multilaterala organisationer.

**Omfattning:** Utvärderingen omfattar perioden 2012–2018. Information från tidigare och senare år inkluderades när sådan information var tillgänglig och bedömdes ha betydelse. Totalt omfattades 23 av utrikesministeriets multilaterala partnerorganisationer av utvärderingen, varav åtta behandlades mer ingående: Världsbanksgruppen, FN:s befolkningsfond (UNFPA), FN:s barnfond (UNICEF), FN:s livsmedelsprogram (WFP), FN:s jämställdhetsorganisation UN Women, Internationella jordbruksutvecklingsfonden (IFAD), FN:s livsmedels- och jordbruksorganisation (FAO), och FN:s internationella handelscenter (ITC). Dessa åtta organisationer mottog tillsammans 83 procent av utrikesministeriets såväl öronmärkta bidrag som allmänna verksamhetsstöd till de 23 multilaterala partnerorganisationerna under den period som utvärderingen gäller.



**Tillvägagångssätt:** En teoretisk referensram användes som bas för utvärderingen. Detta gjorde det möjligt att på ett systematiskt sätt analysera även svaga och flerdimensionella orsakssamband mellan påverkansåtgärder, effekter och förändringar inom organisationerna. Men hjälp av det teoretiska tillvägagångssättet kan man granska hur vissa orsakssamband kunnat främjas vid sidan om flera andra faktorer (*causal contributions*). Med andra ord försöker man inte visa att förändringarna skulle bero enbart på vissa åtgärder (*counterfactual causal attribution analysis*).

Utvärderingen inleddes med en genomgång av studier om påverkansarbete och en grundlig analys av utrikesministeriets planer, rapporter och tillvägagångssätt i fråga om multilateralt påverkansarbete. Med detta som grund utarbetades en referensram som styrde utvärderingsteamets datainsamling och analys.

**Metoder och utvärderingsverktyg:** Utvärderingen förlitade sig huvudsakligen på intervjuer och materialstudier. Totalt intervjuades 174 personer, varav 37 på utrikesministeriet i Helsingfors, 27 i New York, 34 i Washington DC, 25 i Rom, 21 i Kenya, 20 i Nepal och 10 på andra platser (per telefon eller videokonferens). Genom detta stora antal intervjuer kartlades utomstående aktörers syn på Finlands verksamhet i organisationerna. En systematisk intervjuteknik användes för att undvika en snedvridning av resultatet. Detta var särskilt viktigt med tanke på den mycket positiva feedback som gavs på Finlands förmåga att påverka.

I utvärderingen granskades också litteratur om påverkan, utvärderingar som beställts av utrikesministeriet och andra givare, strategidokument och rapporter från de multilaterala organisationerna, Finlands utrikes- och utvecklingspolitik, dokument om utrikesministeriets interna planerings- och rapporteringsprocesser både av de ständiga representationerna och av ambassader, samt föredragningslistor och protokoll om särskilda påverkansåtgärder. Den multilaterala finansieringen analyserades både ut utrikesministeriets perspektiv och ut organisationernas perspektiv.

För att kunna hantera och analysera informationen i mer än 200 påverkansplaner, rapporter och ledningssvar från perioden 2014–2017 användes en systematisk kvalitativ metod med hjälp av en särskild programvara för textanalys.

Av de ovan nämnda åtta multilaterala organisationerna som undersöktes mer ingående, besökte utvärderingsteamet sju. Under besöken intervjuades organisationernas personal, anställda från andra givarländer, finländska anställda och personal utsänd av utrikesministeriet.

Utvärderingsteamet besökte också Nepal och Kenya för att på landnivå granska det multilaterala påverkansarbetet, särskilt i multi-bilaterala projekt.

**Resultat:** Utvärderingen kom fram till 25 huvudsakliga resultat.

**Resultat av påverkansarbetet:** Finland har lyckats utöva ett stort inflytande i multilaterala organisationer. Resultaten har oftast uppnåtts tillsammans med likasinnade partner. Finland anses ha ett större inflytande än vad dess relativa ekonomiska bidrag och rösträtt medger. Resultaten av påverkansarbetet inbegriper förändringar i de multilaterala organisationernas riktlinjer, strategier, prioriteringar, metoder och förfaranden. Därtill ökade organisationernas kunskap om de teman som är viktiga för Finland och det skedde förändringar i organisationernas arbetssätt. Flera av resultaten omfattade flera av de ovannämnda delområdena samtidigt.

Resultaten uppstod tack vare de samlade resultaten av flera olika påverkansåtgärder och gemensamma insatser av flera aktörer. Här ingår också informell interaktion, som pågick i alla kanaler över en längre tidsperiod. I de flesta fall bidrog Finland till detta långsiktiga och mångfasetterade arbete som en del av en större grupp. Finlands budskap har därtill varit påfallande konsekvent över tid.



De observerade resultaten analyserades ingående och utrikesministeriets goda praxis för multilateral påverkan visade sig vara fungerande. Utvärderingsteamet kunde inte hitta någon särskild mall eller recept för påverkansarbete. Det återspeglar hur det multilaterala påverkansarbetet är beroende av flera olika faktorer, till exempel interna förhållanden och processer, förändringar i omvärlden och andra aktörers prioriteringar och aktiviteter.

Utvärderingen påträffade och bekräftade även resultat på global nivå, till exempel i anslutning till FN:s reformprocess, globalt påverkansarbete för jämställdhet, eller integrering av rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning i principerna för humanitärt bistånd. Resultaten på nationell nivå hade att göra med de multilaterala organisationernas lokalkontors verksamhet. Resultaten på lokal nivå hade emellertid sällan en koppling till organisationernas huvudkontor. Den information som samlades in av Finlands ambassader visade sig i vissa fall vara mycket användbar som underlag för utrikesministeriets påverkansarbete.

Enligt utvärderingen har Finland och finländska biståndsexperter ett väldigt gott anseende bland de multilaterala organisationerna och sina samarbetspartners. Finland anses vara en försvarare av mänskliga rättigheter och en stark anhängare av multilateralism, med erfarenhet, expertis och trovärdighet, särskilt i fråga om jämställdhet, personer med funktionsnedsättning och deras rättigheter, utbildning, teknologi och innovation. Finländska experter ses som ärliga, opartiska, insatta, tillgängliga, pragmatiska, pålitliga, hårt arbetande och inte styrda av hierarkier. Denna starka, konsekventa och påfallande positiva uppfattning om Finland och finländare har en stor betydelse för effektivt påverkansarbete

**Påverkansåtgärder och kanaler:** Utvärderingen visade att utrikesministeriets val av påverkansåtgärder och kanaler generellt sett är ändamålsenliga och effektiva, vilket avspeglar att praxisen för multilateral påverkan är fungerande. Det enda återkommande undantaget var personalplaceringar (se punkt 3 nedan). Finland var aktivt inom samtliga fyra påverkanskanaler, vanligtvis på ett integrerat vis och i samarbete med partner.

1. Finlands närvaro i multilaterala organisationers styrelser är uppskattad. Arbetet i styrelserna bidrog till att organisationerna kunde uppnå sina mandat på ett effektivt och ändamålsenligt sätt. Styrelsearbetet är också en kanal för påverkan inom ett visst ärende eller tema.
2. Finland har positionerat sig som en bidragande medlem av det multilaterala systemet snarare än bara en användare av organisationerna. Finland avsätter den största delen av sin multilaterala finansiering till icke-öronmärkta verksamhetsbidrag. Detta uppskattas av de multilaterala partnererna och stärker Finlands anseende och röst. Finland använde även öronmärkt finansiering för att driva särskilda teman, såväl på huvudkontorsnivå som på landnivå. Inom de internationella utvecklingsbankerna tog Finland vara på de möjligheter som gavs för tematisk och operativ påverkan.
3. Vad gäller finländska experter har Finland framförallt fokuserat på att underlätta för multilaterala organisationer att rekrytera finländsk personal. Utrikesministeriet har fungerande strukturer och program på plats, men mängden personal som kunde finansieras var begränsad på grund av nedskärningarna i anslagen 2015 och 2016. Finländares tjänstgöringstid inom multilaterala organisationer har varit under genomsnittet, till följd av en generell ovilja att framhålla sina meriter och på grund av att det har ansetts vara mer lockande att återvända till Finland. Utvärderingen visar att personalplaceringar som en kanal för multilateral påverkan vanligtvis inte är effektivt, förutom i de fall där det fanns en strategisk målsättning.
4. Därtill drog Finland nytta av en rad olika åtgärder i sitt påverkansarbete och var särskilt effektivt i fråga om samordning och hantering av relationer med multilaterala organisationer på olika nivåer, och vad gäller synligt påverkansarbete på hög nivå och med fokus på särskilda frågor.





**Resurser för påverkansarbete:** Utrikesministeriet har kvalificerade, motiverade och effektiva påverkare bland sina anställda, som utgör den viktigaste tillgången för effektivt påverkansarbete. De anställdas kvalifikationer kan härröras till utrikesministeriets rekryteringskriterier (som tar påverkansarbete i särskilt beaktande) och en allmänt hög motivation bland personalen. Detta viktiga humankapital för påverkansarbete har inte alltid kunnat utnyttjas till fullo, vilket beror på det begränsade antalet experter och på personalens rotation inom utrikesförvaltningen.

Den omfattande nedskärningen av utrikesministeriets budget 2015 och 2016 har lett till färre kontakter och till förlorade möjligheter, delvis på grund av personalnedskärningar. De minskande resurserna har dock inte ännu på ett betydande sätt förstört Finlands anseende som pålitlig partner och anhängare av multilateralismen. De negativa effekterna av nedskärningarna har förblivit måttliga.

**Främja fortsatt förändring:** Enligt utvärderingen har Finland bidragit till viktiga förändringsprocesser inom multilaterala organisationer genom konsekvent och ihållande påverkansarbete under längre tidsperioder tillsammans med andra. Detta gäller i synnerhet områden där Finland anses vara en föregångare. Förändringarna har dokumenterats i 11 exempelfall.

Genom att kartlägga möjliga scenarier och bedöma deras sannolikhet kom utvärderingen fram till att de påverkans effekter som observerats kan bidra till relevanta framtida förändringar inom multilaterala organisationer, även om framtiden självklart inte kan förutspås med säkerhet.

**Styrningen av det multilaterala påverkansarbetet:** Sedan 2012 har utrikesministeriet använt sig av metoder för resultatstyrning i det multilaterala påverkansarbetet. Detta har stött lärandet, utvecklingen av styrningsmetoderna och underlättat utrikesministeriets rapportering till riksdagen. Styrningen har dock ännu inte haft någon effekt på hur påverkansarbetet genomförs i praktiken.

**Förändringsteori och nyckelfaktorer för multilateral påverkan:** Utvärderingens referensram användes och uppdaterades under processens gång och blev slutligen bearbetad till en övergripande förändringsteori för allt utrikesministeriets påverkansarbete. I ramverket ingår både god praxis vid utrikesministeriet och de insikter som utvärderingen resulterat i. Antagandena om nyckelfaktorerna som bidrar till eller begränsar effekterna av utrikesministeriets multilaterala påverkansarbete anpassades och bekräftades under arbetets gång.

**Slutsatser:** Baserat på dessa resultat utarbetades åtta slutsatser. Fem slutsatser är av strategisk natur. De bekräftar hur viktiga och effektiva Finlands multilaterala påverkansåtgärder har varit, framhåller personalens begränsade kapacitet och vikten av strategiska personalplaceringar och lyfter fram områden där utrikesministeriets tillvägagångssätt ytterligare kan förtydligas.

1. Finlands påverkan på sina multilaterala partner är mycket effektiv.
2. Det ligger i utrikesministeriets intresse att säkerställa tillräckliga personalresurser för det multilaterala påverkansarbetet.
3. De personalplaceringar som finansieras av utrikesministeriet kan användas mer strategiskt och effektivt för multilateral påverkan.
4. Finlands multilaterala påverkan omfattar såväl påverkan med fokus på vissa teman som mer allmän samverkan med de multilaterala organisationerna. Det är tidvis oklart vilkendera som prioriteras.
5. Det finns inga starka grunder för att samordna och likrikta påverkansåtgärderna och målsättningarna på landnivå och på huvudkontorsnivå.

Två operativa slutsatser gäller personalens rotation och vikten av tillgång till information från på landnivå.



6. Personalens rotation minskar påverkansarbetets effektivitet.
7. Information och erfarenhet på landnivå kan vara användbar för påverkansarbetet på huvudkontorsnivå, men denna typ av information är inte alltid tillgänglig.

Den sista slutsatsen gäller styrningen av den multilaterala påverkan:

8. Utrikesministeriets styrning av den multilaterala påverkan genom påverkansplaner och olika processer har varit effektiv med tanke på organisationens lärande och utrikesministeriets rapportering till riksdagen. Styrningen har emellertid inte på väsentligt sätt förändrat det multilaterala påverkansarbetet i praktiken.

**Rekommendationer:** På basis av dessa slutsatser, förändringsteorin för multilateral påverkan och de grundläggande faktorer som påverkar effektiviteten, har åtta rekommendationer tagits fram. Fyra strategiska rekommendationer fokuserar på vikten av att fortsätta de effektiva multilaterala påverkansåtgärderna, på behovet av att öka personalresurserna, på en mer strategisk placering av personalen och på ett allmänt förtydligande och breddande av det allmänna tillvägagångssättet.

Strategiska rekommendationer:

1. Det multilaterala påverkansarbetet fortsätter i stort sett på samma sätt som tidigare, i linje med god praxis. Samtidigt förstärks det politiska och ekonomiska stödet till de multilaterala påverkansåtgärderna. *De processer och ramverk som införts som en del av utrikesministeriets reform av utvecklingssamarbetets förfaranden ska användas för att tillförsäkra att det politiska och ekonomiska stödet är starkt, tydligt, konsekvent, förutsägbart och tillförlitligt. Utrikesministeriet bör överväga att stärka det direkta politiska och ekonomiska stödet till det multilaterala påverkansarbetet.*
2. Mer personalresurser riktas till det multilaterala påverkansarbetet. *Utrikesministeriet bör uppskatta behovet av personal och utöka sina resurser på särskilt viktiga områden för att tillförsäkra att utrikesministeriets enheter, ständiga representationer och ambassader, i synnerhet de som är i direkt kontakt med partnerorganisationerna, inte längre går miste om värdefulla möjligheter till multilateral påverkan.*
3. Personal som placeras av utrikesministeriet vid multilaterala organisationer används mer strategiskt och utrikesministeriet utnyttjar i större uträkning den information som förmedlas av finländare som redan arbetar för multilaterala organisationer. *Utrikesministeriet bör förtydliga de mål som eftersträvas med placeringen av personal i multilaterala organisationer. Denna kanal ska användas på ett mer strategiskt sätt som metod för påverkan. Möjligheterna till strategiskt inriktade personalplaceringar bör identifieras i dialog med de multilaterala parterna och med finländare som arbetar för dessa organisationer.*
4. Förhållningssättet till den multilaterala verksamheten breddas från ensidig påverkan till ömsesidig interaktion och det görs tydliga beskrivningar av vad olika samarbetsformer baserar sig på. *Ömsesidigt samarbete innehåller ett mindre antal synliga påverkanskanaler. Planerna bör klargöra olika val och kompromisser relaterade till finansieringen, personalplaceringar och Finlands styrelseuppdrag i multilaterala organisationer.*

Två operativa rekommendationer har att göra med de problem som uppstår på grund av personalens rotation och den bristande tillgången till relevant information, som minskar påverkansarbetets effektivitet.



5. Åtgärder vidtas för att bättre stödja personal som har ansvar för multilateral påverkan, så att de inte lämnar sina uppdrag. Samtidigt tillförsäkras effektivt överlämnande av arbetsuppgifter och information vid personalbyte och det erbjuds skraddarsydd coaching och utbildning. *Utrikesministeriet bör ta fram olika sätt att se till att anställda vid multilaterala organisationer stannar kvar på sina positioner en längre tid. För anställda som lämnar ett uppdrag och de som tar över ska det tas fram förfaranden för introduktion som inkluderar överlåtelse av relevanta handlingar, handledning och mentorskap.*
6. Personal som arbetar med multilateral påverkan har tillgång till den information de behöver och de erfarenheter som arbetet kräver. *Nyckelpersoner i det multilaterala arbetet ska få hjälp med att samla in information från ambassader och andra källor och stöd för att utarbeta relevanta översikter och analyser. Utrikesministeriet ska också uppmuntra mer diskussion och kunskapsutbyte inom ramen för multi-bilaterala projekt.*

Den två sista rekommendationerna syftar till att ytterligare förbättra utrikesministeriets styrning av multilateral påverkan genom strategiska prioriteringar och ökad flexibilitet.

7. Utrikesministeriets påverkansplaner, rapporter och processer utvecklas vidare i riktning mot en mer strategiskt och anpassningsbart tillvägagångssätt att hantera multilaterala relationer. *Utrikesministeriets framtida tillvägagångssätt för multilateral påverkan bör, på basis av påverkansplanerna för 2020, ge prioritet till långsiktiga målsättningar på systemnivå, involvera påverkansteam i åtgärder kopplade till var och en av målsättningarna, och ytterligare öka flexibiliteten i planeringen, genomförandet och rapporteringen.*
8. Det utförs en pragmatisk utvärdering av Finlands multilaterala samarbetspartners som används för att prioritera strategiska, långsiktiga möjligheter till multilateralt samarbete. *I utvärdering inkluderas Finlands multilaterala partner, fonder och program. Målen fastställs med beaktande av Finlands begränsade resurser, men också de styrkor som beskrivits i denna rapport.*

Resultat	Slutsatser	Rekommendationer
<b>Strategisk nivå</b>		
<p>1. Finland har bidragit på ett betydande sätt till påverkans-effekter i de åtta multilaterala organisationerna som valdes ut för fallstudier.</p> <p>2. Resultaten uppstod tack vare en samordnad blandning av olika påverkansåtgärder och kanaler under en längre tidsperiod, genom informellt samröre och förbindelser. Dessa åtgärder genomfördes vanligtvis tillsammans med andra aktörer. Finlands budskap har därtill varit påfallande konsekventa över tid.</p> <p>3. Finlands anseende som aktör inom utvecklingssamarbetet – inklusive individers anseende – bidrar väsentligt till en effektiv multilateral påverkan och är en klar fördel.</p> <p>19. Finland har redan bidragit till viktiga förändringsprocesser i de multilaterala organisationerna genom konsekvent och ihållande påverkan över en längre tidsperiod, och på områden där Finland anses vara en föregångare.</p> <p>20. Flera av de påverkans-effekter som har identifierats kan rimligtvis bidra till ytterligare förändringar hos de multilaterala organisationerna, men dessa förändringar kan inte förutses.</p>	<p>1. Finlands inflytande på sina multilaterala partner är mycket effektivt.</p> <p>(Resultat 4–6 och 8–16 bidrog även till denna slutsats)</p>	<p>1. Fortsätt med multilateral påverkan på samma sätt som tidigare, i linje med god praxis, och överväg att utöka det politiska och ekonomiska stödet till multilaterala påverkansåtgärder.</p>



Resultat	Slutsatser	Rekommendationer
<p>17. Vid utrikesministeriet finns personal som är kvalificerad, motiverad och effektiva påverkare. Den kvalificerade personalen beror på rekryteringskriterier som gynnar påverkanskapacitet och en allmänt hög motivation. Begränsade personalresurser gör det dock svårt att ta tillvara alla påverkansmöjligheter. Personalens rotation inverkar också negativt på effektiviteten.</p> <p>18. Budgetnedskränningarna 2015 och 2016 inverkade på Finlands relationer till de multilaterala organisationerna, ledde till förlorade möjligheter, men har ännu inte haft något negativt effekt på Finlands anseende och status.</p>	<p>2. Det ligger i utrikesministeriets intresse att tillförsäkra fullgoda personalresurser för multilateral påverkan.</p>	<p>2. Tillför mer personalresurser för multilateral påverkan.</p>
<p>2. Resultaten uppstod tack vare en samordnad blandning av olika påverkansåtgärder och kanaler under en längre tidsperiod, genom informellt samröre och förbindelser. Dessa åtgärder genomfördes vanligtvis tillsammans med andra aktörer. Finlands budskap har därtill varit påfallande konsekventa över tid.</p> <p>14. utrikesministeriet har gedigna program och processer för att underlätta rekryteringen av finländare till multilaterala organisationer, men personalplaceringarna begränsas av nedskränningar i anslagen, svårigheter att finna och framhäva sökanden, samt finländarnas relativt korta anställningar i multilaterala organisationer.</p> <p>15. Personalplaceringar bidrar endast till multilateral påverkan under vissa omständigheter, det vill säga när det rör sig om kapacitet och expertis som inte finns hos de multilaterala organisationerna. Personalplacering utnyttjas för lite i påverkansarbetet.</p>	<p>3. Personalplaceringar kan användas mer strategiskt och effektivt för multilateral påverkan.</p>	<p>3. Använd personalplaceringar mer strategiskt och utnyttja i högre uträkning den information som förmedlas av finländare som arbetar för multilaterala organisationer.</p>
<p>9. Finlands roll i multilaterala organisationers styrelser går utöver särskilda påverkansåtgärder och bidrar framför allt till att dessa organisationer uppnår sina mandat på ett effektivt sätt. Finland uppfyller denna roll på ett proaktivt, professionellt, konstruktivt och opartiskt sätt.</p> <p>11. Finland har profilerat sig i det multilaterala systemet som en aktiv bidragare (inte bara användare) både när det gäller utvecklingspolitiken och i praktiken. Detta har stärkt Finlands relation till sina multilaterala partner.</p> <p>12. Finland är en aktiv förespråkare av allmänt verksamhetsbidrag till multilaterala organisationer och har också riktat sina öronmärkta bidrag på ett strategiskt sätt, vilket visar att olika påverkansstrategier kan kopplas till finansieringen.</p> <p>15. Personalplaceringar bidrar endast till multilateral påverkan under vissa omständigheter, det vill säga när det rör sig om kapacitet och expertis som inte finns hos de multilaterala organisationerna.</p> <p>18. Budgetnedskränningarna 2015 och 2016 inverkade på Finlands relationer till de multilaterala organisationerna, ledde till förlorade möjligheter, men har ännu inte haft något negativt effekt på Finlands anseende och status.</p>	<p>4. Finlands tillvägagångssätt för multilateral påverkan omfattar både påverkan med fokus på specifika frågor och mer allmän samverkan med de multilaterala organisationerna. Tidvis är prioriteringen oklar.</p> <p>(Resultat 10, 13 och 14 bidrar även till denna slutsats)</p>	<p>4. Bredda förhållningssättet till den multilaterala verksamheten från ensidig påverkan till ömsesidig interaktion och utarbeta tydliga beskrivningar av vad olika samarbetsformer baserar sig på.</p>



Resultat	Slutsatser	Rekommendationer
<p>7. Multilateral påverkan på landnivå har oftast ingen effekt på global nivå, men erfarenheter och information som samlas in på landnivå kan användas för multilateral påverkan på central nivå.</p> <p>23. Påverkansplaner har ännu inte haft en betydande roll på landnivå och multilateral påverkan är en del av en bredare policy-dialog och påverkansåtgärder som riktas mot samarbetsregeringar och utvecklingsaktörer.</p>	<p>5. Det finns inga starka grunder för att samordna och likrikta påverkansåtgärderna och målsättningarna på landnivå och på huvudkontorsnivå.</p>	
<b>Operativ nivå</b>		
<p>17. Vid utrikesministeriet finns personal som är kvalificerad, motiverad och effektiva påverkare. Den kvalificerade personalen beror på rekryteringskriterier som gynnar påverkanskapacitet och en allmänt hög motivation. Begränsade personalresurser gör det dock svårt att ta tillvara alla påverkansmöjligheter. Personalens rotation inverkar också negativt på effektiviteten.</p>	<p>6. Personalens rotation minskar påverkansarbetets effektivitet.</p>	<p>5. Vidta åtgärder för att personal med ansvar för multilateral påverkan stannar på sin position längre, tillförsäkra effektivt överlämnande av arbetsuppgifter vid personalbyte och erbjud skräddarsydd coaching och utbildning.</p>
<p>7. Multilateral påverkan på landnivå har oftast ingen effekt på global nivå, men erfarenheter och information som samlas in på landnivå kan användas för multilateral påverkan på central nivå.</p>	<p>7. Information och erfarenheter från länder kan vara användbara för centralt påverkansarbete men är inte alltid tillgänglig.</p>	<p>6. Tillförsäkra att personal som arbetar med multilateral påverkan har tillgång till den information de behöver och den arbetserfarenhet som krävs.</p>
<b>Hantering av multilateral påverkan</b>		
<p>21. Utrikesministeriet har använt påverkansrapporter på ett effektivt sätt för organisatoriskt lärande. Detta har resulterat i god praxis och präglat utrikesministeriets sätt att utveckla styrningen av det multilaterala påverkansarbetet.</p> <p>22. Påverkansplanerna och rapporterna 2014–2017 visar på utmaningar vad gäller målsättningar och resultatrapportering om multilateral påverkan. Dessa har inte märkbart bidragit till hur det multilaterala påverkansarbetet genomförs i praktiken.</p> <p>23. Påverkansplanerna har ännu inte haft en betydande roll på landnivå. Multilateral påverkan är en del av en bredare policydialog och av påverkansåtgärder som riktas mot regeringarna i partnerländer och andra aktörer i utvecklingssamarbetet.</p> <p>24. Påverkansplanerna och rapporterna har främjat extern ansvarighet. Internt ansvarighet för multilateral påverkan beror mer på andra planerings- och rapporteringsprocesser.</p> <p>25. De uppdaterade påverkansplanerna för 2020 visar på en förbättring i jämförelse med tidigare år. De innehåller väl avgränsade och relevanta tematiska målsättningar, relevanta mätare för uppföljning på central nivå och flexibilitet i rapportering, bland annat en sammanfattning som publiceras.</p>	<p>8. Utrikesministeriets styrning av den multilaterala påverkan genom påverkansplaner och olika processer har varit effektiv med tanke på organisationens lärande och utrikesministeriets rapportering till riksdagen. Styrningen har emellertid inte på väsentligt sätt förändrat det multilaterala påverkansarbetet i praktiken.</p>	<p>7. Fortsätt att utveckla utrikesministeriets påverkansplaner, rapporter och processer i riktning mot en mer strategiskt och anpassningsbart tillvägagångssätt för att hantera multilaterala relationer.</p> <p>8. Gör en pragmatisk utvärdering av Finlands multilaterala samarbetspartners och använd denna för att prioritera strategiska, långsiktiga möjligheter för multilateral påverkan.</p>





# Summary

**Introduction.** This evaluation investigates the influence Finland has on its multilateral development partners. It focuses on Finland's ability to affect these multilateral organisations beyond its financial contributions to them – for example, through participating in their governance, during financial negotiations, by supporting them through Finnish experts, and by a range of other formal and informal influencing activities.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of different types of multilateral influencing activities implemented by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA), and to provide guidance on how to further strengthen them. It is forward-looking and intended to help the MFA to learn from experience and to apply lessons learned.

The evaluation aims at answering four evaluation questions:

1. How effective have the MFA's influencing activities been overall in influencing people, policies and operations of Multilaterals in policy areas important to Finland?
2. How plausible is it that the MFA's influencing activities contribute to increased relevance and operational effectiveness of targeted Multilaterals and, ultimately, to sustainable development?
3. How effective is the results-based management approach (influencing plans and related steering, reporting and learning processes) in supporting MFA influencing activities towards Multilaterals?
4. What factors have the greatest positive or negative effect on MFA multilateral influencing and what action can the MFA take – realistically, and in view of available resources and capacity – to further enhance its effectiveness?

The evaluation reflects the importance of the multilateral aid channel in Finland's development policy and cooperation, noting that 47 percent of Finland's Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2019 was channelled through multilateral organisations. Apart from an earlier evaluation focused on gender-related influence in two multilateral organisations, it represents the first time that the MFA has comprehensively evaluated its multilateral influencing activities and results.

**Scope.** The evaluation covered the period from 2012 to 2018. Information before and after this period was included where available and relevant. Overall, 23 multilateral partner institutions of the MFA were covered, and eight of those were studied in more depth: the World Bank Group (WBG), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Trade Centre (ITC). The sum of funding provided to those eight institutions represents 83 percent of the MFA's total core and earmarked expenditures to the 23 multilateral organisations in the period covered by the evaluation.

**Approach.** A theory-based approach was used. This allowed for systematic analysis of even weak and multi-causal relationships between influencing activities, effects, and further changes in Multilaterals. A theory-based approach accomplishes this by avoiding counterfactual causal *attribution* analysis and instead relies on the analysis of causal *contributions*.



The evaluation began with a review of literature on influencing, and an in-depth analysis of the MFA's influencing plans, reports and overall approach to multilateral influencing. Based on this, an evaluation framework was developed and used to guide the principal collection of information and analysis of evidence by the evaluation team.

**Methods and evaluation tools.** The evaluation mostly relied on interviews and desk review. Overall, 174 people were interviewed, 37 in at the MFA in Helsinki, 27 in New York, 34 in Washington DC, 25 in Rome, 21 in Kenya, 20 in Nepal and 10 in other places (via phone or Skype), reflecting the wide coverage and the focus on outside-in assessment of influencing effects. A rigorous interviewing technique was applied to avoid bias, and this was important in view of the very positive feedback on Finland's influencing abilities.

A general desk review covered influencing literature, relevant evaluations conducted by the MFA and by other donors, strategies and reports of multilateral organisations, Finland's foreign and development policies, documents reflecting MFA-internal planning and reporting processes at headquarter level, in permanent missions and embassies, and meeting agendas, memos and notes related to specific influencing activities. Financial multilateral contributions were analysed from the perspective of the MFA and of multilateral organisations.

To adequately address the information contained in more than 200 influencing plans, reports and management responses produced between 2014 and 2017, these documents were also subject to a systematic qualitative assessment, using professional text analysis software.

Of the above-mentioned eight multilateral organisations studied in more depth, seven were visited by the evaluation team for interviews with their staff, other donor representatives, Finnish employees, and MFA staff posted there. To cover multilateral influencing at the country-level in the context of multi-bilateral (multi-bi) projects and beyond, Nepal and Kenya were visited by the evaluation team.

**Findings.** The evaluation produced 25 key findings that covered all evaluation questions.

**Influencing effects.** The evaluation team found that Finland had contributed to significant influencing effects in multilateral organisations, often jointly with like-minded partners. Finland was consistently perceived to be “punching above its weight” – that is, being more influential than its relative share of financial contributions or voting power would suggest. Influencing effects included changes to multilateral policies, strategies, priorities, procedures and practices, as well as raised awareness and behaviour change of their staff. Most influencing effects reflected important changes in several of these dimensions.

Influencing effects were found to represent the cumulative and collective result of many different influencing activities – including informal and off-the-record interactions – that were implemented across different influencing channels and over extended periods of time. Over time and between different activities, Finland's “influencing messages” were found to have remained remarkably consistent. In most cases, Finland contributed to such “arcs of influence” as one actor in a group.

Observed influencing effects were analysed in detail, and the MFA's good practices for multilateral influencing could be validated. Beyond this, no rules or recipes for influencing were found, reflecting the strong dependence on multilateral influencing on internal conditions and processes in multilateral organisations, the evolving context in which they operate, and the priorities and activities of other actors.

The evaluation also identified and validated multilateral influencing effects at the global level – for example, around the UN reform process, global gender advocacy, or the integration of



the rights of persons with disabilities into humanitarian assistance principles – and at the level of countries, related to the local offices and the activities of multilateral development partners. Country-level effects in Multilaterals remained usually without upward linkages into those organisation’s headquarters, but the information collected by MFA embassies at the country level was found in some cases to be very useful for supporting corporate-level influencing by the MFA.

The evaluation team found that Finland – and Finnish development professionals – enjoyed a very good reputation in Multilaterals and among partners. Finland was considered a defender of human rights and strong supporter of multilateralism, and to possess experience, expertise and credibility especially related to gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, education, technology and innovation. Finnish development professionals were perceived to be honest, unbiased, well-informed, accessible, pragmatic, reliable, hard-working and non-hierarchical. This strong, consistent and remarkably positive perception of Finland and Finns was found to be of critical importance for effective influencing.

**Influencing activities and channels.** The evaluation found that the MFA’s choice of influencing activities and channels was generally relevant and effective, reflecting the MFA’s established good practices for multilateral influencing. The only systematic exception was staff placements (point 3 below). Finland was active across all four influencing channels, usually in an integrated way and in collaboration with partners:

1. Finland’s presence in the governance bodies of multilateral organisations was appreciated by them and the effects were twofold: general governance duties helped ensure that the organisations achieved their mandates effectively and efficiently, but corporate governance processes also represent a channel for issue-driven influencing.
2. Finland has positioned itself as a supporter of the multilateral system – rather than only a user of its organisations – and has allocated most of its multilateral funding as non-earmarked core funding. This was appreciated by multilateral partners and strengthened Finland’s reputation and voice. Finland also used earmarked funding on the corporate and country levels to effectively spearhead specific themes. In International Financial Institutions (IFIs), Finland made effective use of replenishment processes for thematic and operational influencing.
3. Regarding Finnish professionals, Finland primarily aimed at influencing and supporting multilateral organisations to hire Finnish staff. The MFA was found to have sound structures and programmes in place, but the number of staff placements was limited because of waning financial support during the 2015/16 budget cuts. Retention of Finns in multilateral organisations has been below average, related to a general disinclination towards self-promotion and because returning to Finland was considered an attractive alternative. However, the evaluation found that staff placements, as a channel for influencing multilateral organisations, was usually not effective, apart from when it was strategically targeted.
4. In addition, Finland made use of a wide range of different types of activities in its influencing efforts and was particularly effective in coordinating and managing relationships with Multilaterals at different levels, and in visible high-level advocacy for specific thematic issues.

**Resources for influencing.** The MFA employs a cadre of qualified, motivated and effective “influencers”, who represent its most important asset for effective influencing. The quality of the staff can be traced back to MFA recruitment criteria that are favourable for influencing, and to an overall high level of staff motivation at the MFA. This important human capacity for influencing was found to be limited in terms of its influencing effectiveness because of capacity constraints and staff rotations.



The severe reductions in the MFA's funding to many of Finland's multilateral partners between 2015 and 2016 have resulted in reduced access and led – also through related reductions in staff – to lost opportunities for influencing. The diminished available resources have, however, not yet significantly tainted Finland's reputation as a reliable partner and supporter of multilateralism, and overall adverse effects on Finland's multilateral influence have been moderate.

**Supporting further change.** The evaluation found that Finland had contributed to important change processes in multilateral organisations through consistent and persistent influencing over long periods of time, in concert with others, and in areas where it is considered a thematic leader. These changes were documented in 11 “Outcome Stories”.

By mapping out possible scenarios and assessing their plausibility, the evaluation found that observed influencing effects could plausibly contribute to relevant future changes in multilateral organisations – although, of course, such development cannot be predicted.

**Management of multilateral influencing.** In 2012, the MFA has introduced results-oriented management into multilateral influencing. This has led to institutional learning, the continuing development of the management approach, and has supported the MFA's reporting to parliament. However, the approach has not impacted in a significant way on how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice.

**Theory of change and key factors for multilateral influencing.** The evaluation framework was used and updated throughout the evaluation process, and ultimately was developed into a theory of change for multilateral influencing, representing existing good practices developed by the MFA and the additional insights gained during this evaluation. During that process, assumptions made about the most important factors contributing to or limiting the effectiveness of the MFA's multilateral influencing efforts were adapted and validated.

**Conclusions.** From these findings, eight conclusions were drawn. Five conclusions were on a strategic level and served to confirm the importance and effectiveness of Finland's multilateral influencing activities, highlight limited staff capacity and the non-strategic use of staff placements, and to point out areas in which the MFA's approach can be further clarified.

1. Finland is effective in influencing its multilateral partners.
2. It is in the MFA's interest to secure adequate levels of human resources for multilateral influencing.
3. Staff placements can be used more strategically and more effectively for multilateral influencing.
4. Finland's approach to multilateral influencing covers both issue-driven influencing and general engagement of multilateral organisations, with at times unclear relative priorities.
5. For multilateral influencing, there is no strong rationale for coordinating or aligning country-level and corporate-level influencing activities and objectives.

Two operational conclusions concerned staff rotations and the importance of access to country-level information.

6. Staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness.
7. Country-level information and experience can represent useful inputs for corporate-level influencing, but is not always accessible.

The final conclusion concerned the management of multilateral influencing.

8. The MFA's approach to managing multilateral influencing with influencing plans and related processes has been effective for organisational learning and the MFA's reporting to parliament, but has not significantly impacted on how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice.



**Recommendations.** Based on these conclusions, the theory of change for multilateral influencing and observed key factors affecting influencing effectiveness, eight recommendations were developed. Four strategic recommendations focused on the continuation of multilateral influencing activities in light of their proven effectiveness, on their further strengthening through increasing staff capacity and using staff placements more strategically for influencing, and by slightly broadening and clarifying the overall approach.

1. Continue multilateral influencing largely in a similar manner as in the past, reflecting established good practices, and consider increasing political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing activities. *The processes and frameworks introduced with the MFA's reform of development cooperation practices should be used to ensure that political and financial support is strong, explicit, consistent, predictable and reliable. Within the multilateral development policy channel, the MFA should consider increasing political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing.*
2. Allocate more staff capacity to multilateral influencing. *The MFA should estimate capacity needs and moderately increase staff levels in critical areas to allow the MFA units, missions and embassies, representations and constituency offices to not anymore miss high-value opportunities for multilateral influencing.*
3. Use staff placements more strategically, and make better use of the information Finns working in multilateral organisations can provide. *The MFA should clarify priorities for staff placement programmes between simply placing Finns into multilateral organisations and using this channel strategically for influencing. Occasions for strategic targeting of staff placements should be identified in dialogue with multilateral partners and with Finns already working there.*
4. Broaden the approach from multilateral influencing to multilateral engagement by developing a structured rationale for each envisaged engagement. *The MFA's approach to multilateral influencing should be described in a concise public policy note that reflects established good practices and the findings of this evaluation. Multilateral influencing should be replaced by the broader concept of multilateral engagement that also covers less visible influence, and the note should clarify choices and trade-offs related to funding modalities, staff placements and Finland's governance duties in Multilaterals.*

Two operational recommendations served to reduce loss of influencing effectiveness due to staff rotations and difficulties in accessing relevant information.

5. Take measures to enhance continuity of staff in charge of multilateral influencing, ensure effective handovers during staff changes, and offer targeted coaching and training. *The MFA should identify ways to allow key staff involved in multilateral influencing to stay in their positions for longer times, and good handover practices between outgoing and incoming staff should be applied that include a job dossier, coaching and mentorship.*
6. Ensure that staff involved in multilateral influencing have access to the information and experience they need. *Key staff involved in multilateral influencing should be assisted with collecting information from MFA embassies and other sources, and with relevant review and analysis. The MFA should also encourage more consultation and knowledge exchange in the context of multi-bi projects.*

The final two recommendations are aimed at further improving how the MFA manages multilateral influencing by strengthening strategic prioritisation and flexibility.

7. Continue to develop the MFA's influencing plans, reports and related processes towards a more strategic and adaptive approach for managing multilateral engagement. *Building on the 2020 influencing plans, the MFA's future approach to multilateral influencing should strategically prioritise long-term, system level goals, involve influencing teams for each goal, and further increase flexibility of planning, implementation and reporting.*





8. Conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland’s multilateral partners, and use this to prioritise strategic long-term opportunities for multilateral engagement. *To support strategic prioritisation of scarce influencing resources, the MFA should conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland’s portfolio of multilateral partners, trust funds and programmes along the most important factors contributing to Finland’s multilateral influencing effectiveness, as identified in this report.*

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<b>Strategic level</b>		
<p>1. Finland has contributed to significant influencing effects in the eight Multilaterals that were selected for Agency Cases.</p> <p>2. Influencing effects are related to “arcs of influence”: a coordinated mix of different influencing activities and channels over time, enabled by informal interactions and relationships, and usually implemented collectively by Finland and other actors.</p> <p>3. Finland’s reputation as development actor – including the reputation of its people – is a strong enabler of effective multilateral influencing and represents a comparative advantage.</p> <p>19. Finland has already contributed to important change processes in Multilaterals through consistent and persistent influencing over long period of times, and in areas where it is considered a thematic leader.</p> <p>20. Several observed influencing effects can plausibly contribute to further changes in Multilaterals, but these developments cannot be predicted.</p>	<p>1. Finland is effective in influencing its multilateral partners.</p> <p>(Findings 4-6 and 8-16 also contributed to this conclusion)</p>	<p>1. Continue multilateral influencing largely in a similar manner as in the past, reflecting established good practices, and consider increasing political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing activities.</p>
<p>17. The MFA possesses a cadre of qualified, motivated and effective “influencers”, reflecting favourable general recruitment criteria and an overall high level of staff motivation. Limited staff numbers however restrict the follow up of available influencing opportunities, and staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness.</p> <p>18. The 2015/16 budget cuts affected Finland’s access to Multilaterals, led to lost influencing opportunities but did not (yet) impact Finland’s reputation and standing with its multilateral partners.</p>	<p>2. It is in the MFA’s interest to secure adequate levels of human resources for multilateral influencing.</p>	<p>2. Allocate more staff capacity to multilateral influencing.</p>



Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>2. Influencing effects are related to “arcs of influence”: a coordinated mix of different influencing activities and channels over time, enabled by informal interactions and relationships, and usually implemented collectively by Finland and other actors.</p> <p>14. The MFA operates sound programmes and processes for supporting the recruitment of Finns into Multilaterals, but staff placements are limited by budget constraints, difficulties in finding and promoting applicants, and below-average retention of Finns in multilateral organisations.</p> <p>15. Staff placements are only effective for multilateral influencing in specific situations, i.e. if they provide otherwise unavailable capacity and expertise to Multilaterals. General staff placements are currently underutilised for facilitating access and providing information for other influencing activities.</p>	<p>3. Staff placements can be used more strategically and more effectively for multilateral influencing.</p>	<p>3. Use staff placements more strategically and make better use of the information Finns working in multilateral organisations can provide.</p>
<p>9. Finland’s responsibilities in the governing bodies of Multilaterals go beyond specific influencing activities and are primarily related to ensuring that these organisations achieve their mandates effectively and efficiently. Finland fulfills these responsibilities proactively, professionally, constructively and in a non-partisan manner.</p> <p>11. In policy and practice, Finland supports and invests into the multilateral system rather than focusing on “using” it. This has strengthened Finland’s relationships with its multilateral partners.</p> <p>12. As outspoken promoter of core funding to Multilaterals, Finland has nevertheless made strategic use of earmarked funding, reflecting different influencing tactics associated with these types of funding.</p> <p>15. Staff placements are only effective for multilateral influencing in specific situations, i.e. if they provide otherwise unavailable capacity and expertise to Multilaterals. General staff placements are currently underutilised for facilitating access and providing information for other influencing activities.</p> <p>18. The 2015/16 budget cuts affected Finland’s access to Multilaterals, led to lost influencing opportunities but did not (yet) impact Finland’s reputation and standing with its multilateral partners.</p>	<p>4. Finland’s approach to multilateral influencing covers both issue-driven influencing and general engagement of multilateral organisations, with at times unclear relative priorities.</p> <p>(Findings 10, 13 and 14 also contributed to this conclusion)</p>	<p>4. Broaden the approach from multilateral influencing to multilateral engagement by developing a structured rationale for each envisaged engagement.</p>
<p>7. Country-level multilateral influencing does not usually affect these organisations globally, but experience gained and information collected at the country level can represent important inputs for corporate-level multilateral influence.</p> <p>23. At the country level, influencing plans have not yet played a significant role and multilateral influencing is one part of a broader range of policy dialogue and influencing activities targeted at the partner government and development actors.</p>	<p>5. For multilateral influencing, there is no strong rationale for coordinating or aligning country-level and corporate-level influencing activities and objectives.</p>	



Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<b>Operational level</b>		
<p>17. The MFA possesses a cadre of qualified, motivated and effective “influencers”, reflecting favourable general recruitment criteria and an overall high level of staff motivation. Limited staff numbers however restrict the follow up of available influencing opportunities, and staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness.</p>	<p>6. Staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness.</p>	<p>5. Take measures to enhance continuity of staff in charge of multilateral influencing, ensure effective handovers during staff changes and offer targeted coaching and training.</p>
<p>7. Country-level multilateral influencing does not usually affect these organisations globally, but experience gained and information collected at the country level can represent important inputs for corporate-level multilateral influence.</p>	<p>7. Country-level information and experience can represent useful input for corporate level influencing but is not always accessible.</p>	<p>6. Ensure that staff involved in multilateral influencing have access to the information and experience they need.</p>
<b>Management of multilateral influencing</b>		
<p>21. The MFA has effectively used influencing reports for organisational learning. This has resulted in good practices and has informed how the MFA’s approach to managing multilateral influencing was developed.</p> <p>22. Influencing plans and reports between 2014 and 2017 reflect challenges with target setting and results reporting for multilateral influencing and have not significantly impacted how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice.</p> <p>23. At the country level, influencing plans have not yet played a significant role and multilateral influencing is one part of a broader range of policy dialogue and influencing activities targeted at the partner government and development actors.</p> <p>24. External accountability was well served by influencing plans and related reports, but internal management accountability for multilateral influencing relies more on other planning and reporting processes.</p> <p>25. The updated 2020 influencing plans represent an improvement over earlier plans by offering focused and relevant thematic objectives, relevant corporate performance tracking, more flexibility in reporting and a public summary.</p>	<p>8. The MFA’s approach to managing multilateral influencing with influencing plans and related processes has been effective for organisational learning and the MFA’s reporting to parliament, but has not significantly impacted how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice.</p>	<p>7. Continue to develop the MFA’s influencing plans, reports and related processes towards a more strategic and adaptive approach for managing multilateral engagement.</p> <p>8. Conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland’s multilateral partners and use this to prioritise strategic long-term opportunities for multilateral engagement.</p>



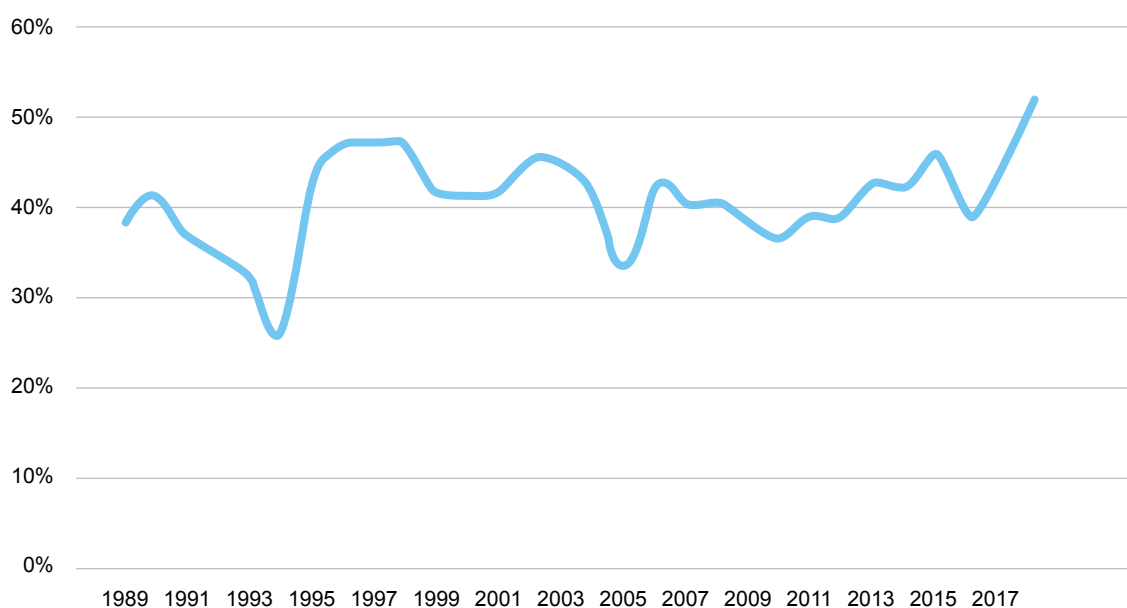
# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 This evaluation

This evaluation investigates the influence Finland had in the past – and can have in future – on its multilateral development partners.

Traditionally, the multilateral aid channel has been at the heart of Finnish development policy and cooperation as demonstrated by Figure 1. Finland considers the international multilateral system as an integral part of its foreign and development policies and has entrusted multilateral organisations with a large share of its Official Development Assistance (ODA). In 2019, Finland provided €473.5 million of core support – including EU development cooperation instruments and humanitarian support – to multilateral organisations. This represented 47 percent of the total ODA of €1,006 million in 2019.

**Figure 1:** Share of Finnish total MFA multilateral disbursements of total ODA in 1989–2018.



Source: MFA Statistical Data 2020.

Apart from supporting its multilateral partners financially, the MFA – and Finland – seek to influence how these organisations use funds and prioritise and implement their work. This evaluation aims at better understanding and assessing how the MFA does this, and what influencing effects it has contributed to.

The **purpose** of this evaluation is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of different types of multilateral influencing activities implemented by the MFA and to provide guidance on how to further strengthen them. The evaluation is forward-looking and intended to help the MFA to learn from experience and to apply lessons learned to improve how it manages its multilateral influencing activities and their results.



The evaluation reflects the overall importance of the multilateral aid channel within the Finnish development policy and cooperation and that the MFA's multilateral influencing activities have not yet been broadly evaluated.<sup>1</sup>

Another reason for this evaluation is the growing maturity of Results-Based Management (RBM) at the MFA. A result-based approach and accountability have been key issues in Finnish development cooperation since the Paris Declaration in 2005, and, in 2012, RBM was made an integral part of the new government Development Policy Programme (DPP). Since then, the MFA has systematically developed its RBM approaches and tools to enhance the performance of development cooperation based on a sequence of Action Plans and recommendations of three RBM-related evaluations (MFA 2011, Palenberg et al. 2015 and 2019).

Country strategies for long-term partner countries and influencing plans for multilateral cooperation with results frameworks, indicators, guidance and procedures for annual and synthesis reports were introduced and developed over time. At present, influencing plans and country strategy results reporting are not only tools for managing bilateral and multilateral development cooperation but they also feed into the corporate results reporting system, including the 2018 MFA Development Policy Results Report (MFA 2018a).

In the multilateral channel, influencing plans were introduced from 2013 onwards and have since been used to guide, learn and report influencing activities and their results. At the same time, the MFA is working to strengthen results orientation across all policy channels through the latest RBM Action Plans, a comprehensive reform of its development cooperation practices (KeTTU). In this context, a systematic assessment of the way multilateral influencing has been managed at the MFA is considered useful.

The evaluation **objectives** are to assess influencing resources, influencing activities and influencing channels, influencing effects, their management and coordination, the usefulness and feasibility of influencing plans, and the degree to which Finland could promote its development policy objectives in multilateral partner organisations. Based on these findings, the evaluation should provide insight into how the MFA can improve its multilateral influencing approach, including the coordination of influencing activities and the identification of opportunities for influencing at different levels.

The main intended **users** of the evaluation are the MFA headquarters, Finnish embassies and permanent missions. Other important users are other Finnish ministries having cooperation with multilateral organisations, Finland's parliament (especially the Foreign Affairs Committee), Finland's Development Policy Committee, and Finnish civil society organisations. In addition, the evaluation is expected to be of interest also to other donors in the context of their own multilateral influencing activities.

## 1.2 Evaluation questions

The evaluation aims at answering four questions:

1. How effective have the MFA's influencing activities been overall in influencing people, policies and operations of Multilaterals in policy areas important to Finland?
2. How plausible is it that the MFA's influencing activities contribute to increased relevance and operational effectiveness of targeted Multilaterals and – ultimately – to sustainable development?

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<sup>1</sup> In 2012, the MFA published a largely desk-based evaluation that explored how the Nordic countries had influenced the promotion of gender equality (GE) policies in the African countries through the World Bank and the African Development Bank between 2006 to 2011, focusing on the joint-Nordic positions from a Finnish point of view.





3. How effective is the results-based management approach (influencing plans and related steering, reporting and learning processes) in supporting MFA influencing activities towards Multilaterals?
4. What factors have the greatest positive or negative effect on MFA multilateral influencing and what action can the MFA take – realistically and in view of available resources and capacity – to further enhance its effectiveness?

The first question is the broadest of the four evaluation questions. Answering it also requires the evaluation to answer two sub-questions:

- 1a. Has the MFA – through its resources and institutional support – effectively supported influencing activities?
- 1b. Have the MFA’s influencing activities been implemented effectively?

The second question investigates possible linkages between the influencing effects evaluated in the first question and further intended thematic and operational changes in Multilaterals that affect the relevance and the effectiveness and efficiency of their work. The second question only asks for an assessment of plausibility because of the difficulties related to establishing cause and effect for changes at that level. In line with the Terms of Reference (ToR, Annex 1), the evaluation does not attempt to assess the results, effectiveness and impact of the multilateral organisations.

The third question focuses on how the MFA manages multilateral influencing. It looks at all aspects of RBM, i.e. how the MFA has learned from results information in the context of multilateral information, how the MFA steers influencing activities, and how the reported results are used to render account.

The fourth question serves to summarise and prioritise the issues, factors and conditions identified in the first three questions. It was added as an evaluation question to demonstrate the focus of this evaluation on understanding the “why” and “how” of multilateral influencing, in addition to the “what” and to emphasise the importance of realistic and practical conclusions and recommendations.

### 1.3 Scope

The evaluation covers influencing activities and results for the period 2012 to 2018. Later activities and results are considered to the extent information about them could be obtained. Earlier activities are included when relevant, for example when observed influencing effects have taken a long time to materialize and cannot be explained without them.

The evaluation focuses on influencing activities planned and implemented by MFA staff – often-times also involving non-MFA partners – as well as on associated influencing effects. Contributions of people and institutions beyond the MFA and beyond Finland are acknowledged but are not evaluated.

In line with the ToR,<sup>2</sup> 23 multilateral organisations are within the principal scope of the evaluation and, for example, reflected in the agency-specific financial analyses in this report. It should be noted that the development banks<sup>3</sup> in fact represent several institutions but are – for simplicity – collectively referred to as one “Multilateral” in each case.

<sup>2</sup> The Terms of Reference exclude: EU institutions and financial instruments; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Multilateral organisations to which funds are primarily channelled through other ministries than the MFA; and other multilateral programmes, funds and other initiatives not representing international institutions.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the World Bank Group (WBG) consists of five institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Insurance Guarantee Association (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Three of these institutions (IBRD, IDA and IFC) are considered in this report but collectively referred to as one Multilateral: the WBG.



All Multilaterals covered by the evaluation are presented in Table 1; the Multilaterals covered in more depth by means of Agency Cases are marked in bold.

**Table 1:** Multilaterals covered by the evaluation (Agency Cases are marked in bold)

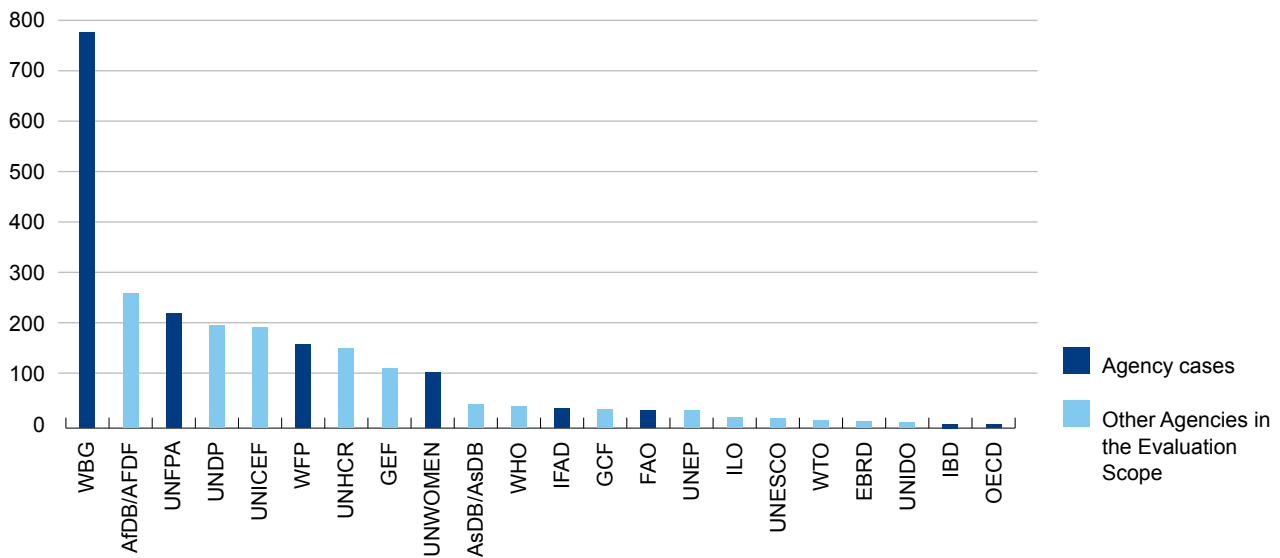
African Development Bank (AfDB)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
<b>Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	<b>United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</b>
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	<b>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)</b>
<b>International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)</b>	<b>World Bank Group (WBG)</b>
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	<b>World Food Programme (WFP)</b>
<b>International Trade Centre (ITC)</b>	World Health Organisation (WHO)
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC)	World Trade Organisation (WTO)
<b>United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)</b>	

In its desk review of influencing plans and reports, the evaluation had a slightly different coverage (28 Multilaterals), reflecting difficulties with locating influencing plans and reports for some Multilaterals, and the inclusion of some pertinent information relating to plans and reports of Multilaterals beyond the principal scope. The same holds for the desk review of influencing synthesis reports that also consider 28 Multilaterals in 2014–2015, and 21 in 2015–2017 (MFA 2015, 2016d, 2017, 2018b).

Eight Multilaterals – WBG, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, IFAD, FAO and ITC – were selected and studied in greater depth, including visits to the headquarters in all but one case. These agencies were chosen to cover different types of Multilaterals and the range in the relative importance of MFA as a donor. Overall, in 2018 the case study organisations represented 83 percent of the MFA’s total core (including humanitarian) and earmarked expenditures (including multi-bi) for all 23 Multilaterals (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Total multilateral disbursements 2012–2018, €million.<sup>4</sup>**



Source: MFA Statistical Data 2019 (Note: ITC support included in the WTO figures)

Within the MFA, the focus was on units that manage multilateral influencing activities within the Department of Development Policy:

- The Unit for Development Finance and Private Sector Cooperation (KEO-50);
- The Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy (KEO-70); and
- The Unit for Sustainable Development and Climate Policy (KEO-90).

Together with the Trade Policy Unit (TUO-10) that is responsible for ITC, these units managed 99.7 percent of the MFA’s support to the Multilaterals covered in this evaluation. Other units were covered as part of field visits to Nepal (Unit for South Asia, ASA-40) and to Kenya (Unit for the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa, ALI-20).

## 1.4 This report

This report has six chapters. After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 explains how the evaluation was conducted. It introduces concepts and defines the terms used, and describes the evaluation approach, the tools and methods used, and associated limitations.

Chapter 3 then describes the policy and financial context of this evaluation and introduces the reader to how the MFA has managed multilateral influencing to date.

Chapter 4 presents all substantive findings. It begins with observed influencing effects, then analyses influencing activities and how these are supported institutionally by the MFA. It then addresses possible further developments in Multilaterals beyond initial influencing effects, followed by the analysis of the MFA’s approach to managing multilateral influencing. The final section of that chapter presents a “theory of change for multilateral influencing” that serves to summarise earlier findings and explains how the process of influencing can be conceptualised in simple, yet precise terms.

Chapters 5 and 6 then present conclusions and recommendations, respectively, and Chapter 6 also provides summary answers to the four evaluation questions.

<sup>4</sup> Total refers to core and earmarked disbursements. WTO disbursements include ITC.



# 2 Approach, methodology and limitations

## 2.1 Terms and concepts

Several terms and concepts are introduced in this section. They are based on the review of expert literature and initial interviews and analysis by the evaluation team and are described in more detail in Annex 8.

The **MFA** is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. It covers the ministry in Helsinki, its embassies, its permanent missions, and the staff employed by the MFA in these locations. The term **Finland** is used to refer to the country's membership in multilateral organisations, and to the Finnish government and its institutions, including the MFA. **Multilateral organisations** in the scope of this evaluation are also referred to as **Multilaterals**. They are referred to as **multilateral partners** when Finland's engagement with them – as member, or funder – is emphasised. The more general term **multilateral institutions** includes Multilaterals but also the United Nations and other multilateral actors and entities.

Influence is the power to have an effect on people or things

**Influence** is defined as the power or the capacity to have an effect on people or things. **Multilateral influence** refers to the influence on Multilaterals and not to the influence Multilaterals have on others.

**Influencing activities** are things people do to contribute to influence. One special case is advocacy which is defined as the public support for an idea. As there are many different types of influencing activities and reflecting the assumption that influencing effects are the product of many different influencing activities over time, types of influencing activities are grouped into four **influencing channels** (Box 1).

**Box 1:** Four channels of multilateral influence.

**Influencing through corporate governance processes** represents participation in meetings of boards, committees and other corporate governance bodies but also includes preparatory activities, for example coordination of positions with partners, consultations and knowledge sharing.

**Influencing through fund allocation processes** refers to Finland's funding decisions related to replenishments, core and earmarked budget allocations and multi-bi funding. In addition, as above, this type of influencing activity also covers formal and informal interactions and activities taking place in preparation of those funding decisions.



*This channel only concerns Finland's funding to Multilaterals and not how Multilaterals allocate their financial resources internally (which is decided by their governing bodies and therefore covered by the first channel).*

**Influencing through staff placements** stands for international recruitment, secondments and junior- and volunteer programmes that place Finnish professionals into multilateral organisations.

**Influencing through other formal or informal channels** stands for influencing activities not covered in the other categories, for example: bilateral consultations between Finland and Multilaterals, meetings with senior leadership of Multilaterals, consultations of groups of donors, high-level meetings, events, visits and study tours (in Finland or abroad), informal consultations and meetings of like-minded groups, donor coordination meetings, side events during meetings on global issues, advocacy by high-level people and celebrities, and campaigns on specific issues.

Source: Team analysis

If influencing activities lead to actual changes in Multilaterals, these are referred to as **influencing effects**. Influencing effects represent changes in Multilaterals that can be reasonably associated with Finland's influence. More routine outputs, such as mentioning an issue in a board meeting, are not called influencing effects because they do not (yet) describe any actual changes (although they can contribute to such effects).

Influencing effects are understood to occur in the **people, policies, and practices** of Multilaterals. Policies are understood to include actual policies but also strategies, guidelines, and knowledge products.

**Influencing effects occur in people, policies and practices**

The **significance** of influencing effects is described by a three-point scale: from **minor** to **important** and **fundamental** effects. The nature and significance of influencing effects on people, policies and practices are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Significance of influencing effects by influence target.

	Minor	Important	Fundamental
<b>Effects on people</b>	People became aware of an issue	People changed behaviour regarding an issue	People became advocates for an issue
<b>Effects on policies (including policies, strategies, guidelines and knowledge products)</b>	Details of existing policies adjusted	Existing policies significantly adapted	New policies introduced
<b>Effects on operations (including procedures and practices)</b>	Minor or pilot changes in priorities or practices	Priorities or practices significantly adapted	Priorities or practices absorbed into and monitored as part of all operations

Source: Team analysis.

Influencing effects may contribute to further changes in Multilaterals that can be farther-reaching and more difficult to associate with Finland's influence because they strongly depend on factors within Multilaterals, the evolving context in which they operate, and the priorities and activities of other actors.





## 2.2 Evaluation approach

This evaluation was implemented as a theory-based evaluation. It closely followed an evaluation framework that described the evaluation team's understanding of multilateral influencing.

The framework (Figure 3)<sup>5</sup> introduced and defined key concepts required to characterise different aspects related to multilateral influencing. It broke down the chain of events leading from the MFA's institutional support to multilateral influencing effects and the ultimate goals the MFA pursues into smaller steps that could be evaluated more easily. It also described how these steps were related to each other, and what factors and conditions were considered necessary for effective influencing at each level.

**Figure 3:** The four levels of the evaluation framework.



Source: Team analysis.

<sup>5</sup> On level 2, the original version of the framework only focused on intermediaries. This was adapted once the central role of collective influencing became apparent. All changes made with respect to the original framework are described in Annex 8.



The advantage of a theory-based approach lies in the fact that it uses a causal model that allows for the breakdown of complex and difficult to understand overall relationships into several smaller and analytically more accessible elements.

While good practices for multilateral influencing already existed at the MFA, there was no established model for multilateral influencing and the evaluation team therefore developed the evaluation framework during the first phase of the evaluation.

Desk review findings that informed the framework are summarised in several annexes to this report: the systematic review of influencing plans and reports (Annex 4), expert literature on influencing (Annex 5), and earlier evaluations and studies (Annex 6). In addition, the development of the evaluation framework was informed by a series of interviews with MFA staff involved in multilateral influencing.

To some extent, the development of such a framework represented moving into uncharted territory and the framework contained a range of assumptions with the understanding that these would need to be adapted during the evaluation. Annex 8 details these assumptions and the degree to which they were validated or adapted through the findings of this evaluation.

The development of the evaluation framework represented moving into uncharted territory

Ultimately, the evaluation framework was developed into a simple conceptual theory of change for multilateral influencing described in Section 4.6 of this report, representing an evaluation product in its own right and intended to be of practical use for the MFA going forward.

Based on this analysis and the findings of this report, the most important factors that contribute (or hinder) Finland's multilateral influencing effectiveness are summarised in Section 4.6.1 of this report.

## 2.3 Evaluation methods and tools used

Evaluation findings were derived from interviews, desk review and further analysis. These methods and tools are described in detail in Annex 8 and are briefly summarised below.

**Interviews.** Overall, 174 people were interviewed (Table 3). Together with desk review and financial analysis, interviews represented the most important way to obtain and verify information. Interviews primarily covered staff of Multilaterals and the MFA. A significant number of representatives from other donors were interviewed to add an outside perspective and triangulate between the perspectives of these groups.

**Table 3:** Interviewed people along organisational affiliations and locations.

	Helsinki	New York	Rome	Washington DC	Kenya	Nepal	Other	Total
<b>Multilateral staff</b>	1	19	13	27	16	12	1	<b>89</b>
<b>MFA staff</b>	37	3	5	1	4	6	1	<b>57</b>
<b>Other donor's representatives</b>	–	5	7	6	1	1	5	<b>25</b>
<b>Others</b>	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>174</b>

Source: Annex 2.



Interviews were mostly conducted face-to-face and typically involved two evaluation team members. Some interviews were conducted remotely. In addition, several group meetings were held.

Interviews were semi-structured and guided by a detailed evaluation protocol (Annex 8). Additionally, towards the end of the main phase, interviews with MFA staff were increasingly used to validate emerging findings. Interviews in New York, Rome and Washington DC were conducted as part of Agency Cases, and interviews in Kenya and Nepal as part of country missions, as explained below.

All interviews were private and confidential. In several instances, the interviewees offered to be cited, or the evaluation team obtained such agreement from the interviewee after the interview. All citations that can be linked to people that were interviewed by the team were subject to such approval and are marked by “approved citation” in the main report.

**Detecting and managing positive (or negative) bias in interviews.** During interviews at Multilaterals and with donor partners, very positive feedback was received about how Finland and MFA staff were perceived, and about the effectiveness of Finland’s multilateral influence.

As many interviewees had long-standing and trust-based working relationships with MFA staff, the evaluation team took additional measures to detect and account for the possibility of pleasing or otherwise positively biased feedback of the information collected in these interviews. These approaches and techniques were extensive and involved several standard and some more advanced techniques that are described in detail in Annex 8.

**Desk review.** To inform the evaluation framework, general literature about influencing at the individual and organisational level was collected and reviewed by the team during the inception phase. This desk review served to provide an overview and identify useful concepts for the evaluation framework. It was not intended – and does not represent – a comprehensive analysis of all relevant approaches in this broad and multi-disciplinary field. The results of this literature review are summarised in Annex 5. During the inception phase, several relevant evaluations and audits – related to the MFA but also to other donors – were reviewed and summarised (Annex 6). Numerous additional documents were reviewed by the evaluation team, including material published after the inception phase. All documents used in this evaluation are either listed under References when they are directly referenced in the report, or otherwise in Annex 3.

The desk review covered all influencing plans and reports, and related management responses as well as synthesis reports and related guidance memos. Also, other relevant MFA planning documents and reports and related guidance were reviewed. Internal MFA and embassy/Permanent Mission memos and email correspondence (when available) on influencing activities were reviewed, including for example instructions for executive board meetings and other important meetings, and negotiation mandates and related replenishment negotiation memos. In case of some organisations, official governance body meeting resolutions/minutes were reviewed to help identify Finnish influencing efforts and if possible, effects.

**Systematic analysis of influencing reports.** Influencing reports and management responses were reviewed, covering all Multilaterals in the scope of this evaluation (and a few more for which influencing plans and reports were available), using a text analysis software (MAXQDA). For this desk review, the focus was on the last two full reporting years, 2016 and 2017, but other years were also covered.

In this analysis, sections of text were extracted and stored under different keywords chosen by the evaluators based on the ToR for this evaluation and on the documents that were analysed (such as thematic fields, partner countries and geographical locations). The software allowed –



on the one hand – to efficiently obtain detailed and systematised information from the influencing reports with reference to the evaluation questions and emerging themes. The software also allowed for cross-analysis of data against the chosen parameters while always maintaining the links to the original piece of evidence (e.g. which thematic areas were discussed under different Multilaterals).

The findings from this desk review are summarised in a comprehensive report (Annex 4) and used throughout the present evaluation report. For example, the review identified “outcome leads” for potential influencing effects for a large group of Multilaterals that were used in Agency Cases and to inform evaluation findings on thematic coverage.

**Agency Cases.** To obtain in-depth and contextual evidence, eight Multilaterals were selected for more intense review of associated influencing activities and effects. This selection was guided by the criteria related to the absolute and relative size of the Finnish contribution, the coverage of multi-bi and humanitarian activities, the organisation type, regional balance and logistical accessibility.

In declining order of Finnish funding, the selected Multilaterals were: WBG, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UN Women, IFAD, FAO and ITC. The last two Multilaterals were added to extend coverage but were studied in less detail. Annex 8 summarises the rationale for the selection of these eight Multilaterals.

In all but one case (ITC), the headquarters of the respective organisations were visited during the evaluation team’s missions to New York, Rome and Washington DC. The team also conducted interviews with Finland’s permanent missions and embassies (New York and Rome), as well as with representatives from other donors.

**Country visits.** Two partner countries were visited to understand multilateral influencing at the country level (in the context of multi-bi projects but also beyond), and to learn about country/corporate linkages both within the MFA and within Multilaterals. The countries were selected to cover relevant multi-bi and humanitarian projects and to offer regional balance. From the resulting ranked list, the team excluded countries that were visited by another parallel evaluation to not overly burden the respective embassies (Betts et al. 2020). Among the remaining candidates, Nepal and Kenya were considered the most useful countries for country visits because they exhibited significant multi-bi and humanitarian activity at the country level by some of the Multilaterals covered in Agency Cases.

## 2.4 Limitations

Apart from final evaluation meetings conducted online rather than in person because of the Covid-19 outbreak), the evaluation was implemented as planned. Therefore, limitations reflect consequences and implications associated with the chosen scope, approach and methodology.

**Limitations because of the Covid-19 outbreak.** The evaluation team’s visits to Helsinki, New York, Rome, Washington DC as well as to Nepal and Kenya took place before travel restrictions were imposed, and as such, the outbreak did not interfere with the collection of evidence during the main phase of the evaluation. Interactions during the synthesis phase that involved travel, such as a planned team-internal analysis workshop and consultations with the evaluation reference group and senior MFA leadership, were implemented online and satisfactorily completed. Planned evaluation launch and dissemination events will be delayed or also moved online.



**Limitations related to the evaluation scope.** The present evaluation focused on multilateral influencing while most other evaluations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019, Norad 2019, ICAI 2015) that covered this question looked at the multilateral policy channels as a whole, including how multilateral partners were selected, how their funding was managed, and what consequences this had in terms of their relevance and effectiveness. The present evaluation only covers how the MFA manages its multilateral portfolio as far as this is relevant with respect to multilateral influencing. This limitation must be kept in mind when interpreting and applying its conclusions and recommendations.

Another limitation is related to the resources for this evaluation in relation to the size and complexity of multilateral organisations. The evaluation team's capacity in terms of workdays was substantial and in line with other comprehensive evaluation commissioned by the MFA's Development Evaluation Unit in the past. The evaluand, however, was enormous. Apart from the MFA itself, the Multilaterals represent large and complex institutions. For example, compared to about 1,400 employees<sup>6</sup> of the MFA across all foreign office functions, the World Bank Group employs more than 10,000 staff in 120 offices worldwide.<sup>7</sup> This means that, even for those Multilaterals covered in Agency Cases, the identification of influencing effects is opportunistic and not comprehensive, and the understanding of further changes in Multilaterals, including of their internal country-corporate linkages, is largely based on interview feedback and the evaluation team's experience and judgement. This reflects how the evaluation was planned and conducted. As before, this limitation should be kept in mind when interpreting evaluation findings.

A third limitation related to scope is the relatively low coverage of Finnish institutions, organisations and actors beyond the MFA that have co-contributed to observed influencing effects. With its strong focus on influencing activities planned and implemented by MFA staff, the evaluation did not evaluate influence of these institutions on the level of influencing activities implemented by their staff. The evaluation did cover these contributions however from the "receiving" end, for example when people interviewed, documents reviewed, or the corporate governance setup of Multilaterals described such contributions.

Influencing activities represent only one causal factor among many

**Limitation regarding access especially to informal influencing documentation and internal MFA communication on influencing.** Access to MFA internal documentation on influencing activities was not consistent across the multilateral organisations because of varying practices in documenting activities such as meetings, informal influencing work, or email communication related to the preparation of joint statements with like-minded countries or speaking notes on policy priorities during high level visits. The MFA document archiving system posed also some challenges in systematically identifying relevant documentation using the key word approach. These challenges are similar to those experienced during the evaluation on Nordic Influence in Multilateral Organisations (Aarva et al. 2012). Extensive interviews of MFA staff and donor partners were used to mitigate the document access problem. In the case of Rome-based agencies, for example, the evaluation had good access to email correspondence and minutes of informal meetings, which enhanced the team's understanding of the scale and intensity of MFA influencing.

**Limitations regarding causal inference.** When explaining the occurrence of influencing effects, influencing activities represent only one causal factor among many others. Influencing effects typically involve several subsequent and mutually interacting cause-effect relationships.

<sup>6</sup> These staff cover development policy and cooperation but also all other functions of the MFA. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry\\_for\\_Foreign\\_Affairs\\_\(Finland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_for_Foreign_Affairs_(Finland)), visited on April 12, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do>, visited on April 12, 2020.



Evaluating influencing effectiveness is therefore subject to important challenges. The evaluation addressed these challenges through its theory-based approach, reflected in the evaluation framework and in the interview and analysis techniques that were applied.

While the evaluation team considers this the best available methodological choice, it needs to be understood that the evaluation cannot assess *causal attribution* in the sense of “how much of that effect is due to the MFA’s influence?”. Instead, it investigates *causal contribution* in the sense of “was the MFA’s influence a significant contributing factor to the influencing effect?”.<sup>8</sup>

In practical terms, this meant that the evaluation team broke down cause-effect relationships into smaller elements whenever they were too difficult to assess in a single step. For example, during interviews, the contribution of Finland to an observed effect could not be established despite the interviewee being adamant that Finland’s influence had – somehow – contributed. In these cases, interviewees felt that direct causal association would overstretch or misrepresent what had really happened, or the evaluation realised that the contribution story described in the interview did not hold up when probed and challenged with the interview techniques used by the team. A way to mitigate this challenge was to explain causality using two steps (rather than a single step), i.e. by assessing two separate contribution arguments: first, the degree to which an observed effect could be related to the collective contribution of a group and second, how important Finland’s influence in that group was.

Annex 8 describes the evaluation methodology in more detail, including how the evaluation was organised and managed, how it was coordinated with respect to other evaluations, and the evaluation timeline.

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<sup>8</sup> Causal contribution can easily be confused with causal attribution. For example, “how much did the MFA’s influence contribute to the influencing effect” is an attribution question even if using contribution terminology. Contribution statements focus on the causes, attribution statements on the effects.





# 3 Context

## 3.1 Multilateral influencing in Finland's development policy

Multilateral development cooperation has been an important aid channel in Finnish development policy and cooperation for many decades. The first multilateral contributions to UN agencies started shortly after Finland joined the United Nations in 1955. From 1970 onwards, a significant share of Finnish ODA was disbursed to Multilaterals. This means that the MFA, and previously FINNIDA, have a long tradition of working with multilateral partner organisations as shareholders, members, funders and partners.

In what follows, references and priorities related to multilateral influencing in Finland's development policies are reviewed.

**Government Programmes.** Each Finnish government issues its own government programme. Government programmes describe the government's overall priorities across all areas in which the government is active, and they contain high-level guidance for Finland's development policy and cooperation. Between 2012 and 2019, Finland had five such Government Programmes (Prime Minister's Office Finland 2011, 2014, 2015, 2019a, 2019b).

**Box 2:** Finnish Government Programmes between 2012 and 2019.

The 2011–2015 Government Programme;

The 2014–2015 Government Programme (a very brief document because the previous programme remained valid until 2015);

The 2015–2019 Government Programme;

The 2019–2023 Government Programme; and

The subsequent 2019–2023 Government Programme (identical to the previous programme because only the Prime Minister changed).

**Most Government Programmes reflected a firm commitment to multilateral cooperation**

With the exception of the 2015–2019 programme that does not mention the term “multilateral” and that announced the 2015/2016 budget cuts to the MFA's development and operational budgets, the listed Government Programmes reflected a firm commitment to multilateral cooperation, the multilateral system, and the UN (and its reform) as “the cornerstone of the global multilateral system and cooperation” (Prime Minister's Office Finland 2011).

The last two (identical) Government Programmes aim at a “globally influential Finland” and, as with earlier programmes, consider multilateral cooperation as a central element of Finland's foreign and security policy. Apart from the promotion of recruitment of Finnish specialists to international positions in the UN and other multilateral organisations, no explicit reference is made to multilateral influencing (Prime Minister's Office Finland 2019a, 2019b).



**Development Policy Programmes.** Development Policy Programmes (DPPs) (typically covering a four-year period) represented the highest-level guidance specifically dedicated to Finland’s development policy and cooperation. The two DPPs in the timeframe covered by the evaluation are (MFA 2012, 2016c):

- Finland’s Development Policy Programme (2012); and
- Finland’s Development Policy: One world, common future – towards sustainable development (2016).

The last DPP covering the period 2016–2020 was also endorsed by the present government and, at the time of writing, remains current. In addition, the MFA has developed “Theories of Change” that represent a more functional description of the “4+1” development policy priorities Finland pursues and how it intends to contribute to them (Box 3)

**Box 3:** The “4+1” policy priority areas.

1. Rights of women and girls (under which the rights of persons with disabilities are subsumed);
  2. Sustainable economies and decent work;
  3. Education and peaceful democratic societies;
  4. Climate and natural resources (also covering energy and food and nutrition security);
- + Lives and dignity in crises (humanitarian assistance).

Source: MFA 2020a.

While reflecting reordering and reformulation, these general priorities have in principle remained stable since 2012. DPPs and statements in the 2020 Theories of Change also reflect other traditional characteristics of Finland as a development actor, including the overarching goal of poverty eradication, Finland’s human rights-based approach, the rule of law, the adherence to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable (and previously: Millennium) Development Goals, and Finland’s support to multilateralism and the multilateral system as an integral part of its foreign and security policy, as well as to the UN reform.

DPPs also contain specific guidance related to multilateral influencing. An earlier DPP stated that “The most important ways in which Finland’s multilateral cooperation can influence development are through its involvement in policy guidance of partner organisations, funding development programmes, and thematic cooperation. [...] Thematic cooperation with development financing institutions highlights issues relating to the environment, natural resources and the climate, and to good governance and human rights” (MFA 2007). That DPP also makes explicit reference to supporting the UN reform through work “in the executive boards of operative [UN] agencies”. The 2012 DPP is outspoken regarding several aspects with relevance to multilateral influencing (Box 4).



**Box 4:** Citations from the 2012 Development Policy Programme.

“Finland’s development policy objectives are promoted both through development funding and by effective policy dialogue bilaterally, regionally, multilaterally as well as through civil society organisations and the EU.”

“In the European Union, Finland works in a strategic and active manner. Working through the EU allows Finland to have influence in areas which would otherwise be beyond the scope of its resources. The United Nations (UN) is the cornerstone of the multilateral system and has an important role in advancing human rights and human security. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the UN, its values and working methods must be strengthened, its development sector reformed, and its overall effectiveness enhanced. Finland will strive for the reinforcement of the UN’s legitimacy and performance and to promote the implementation of the UN Delivering as One policy by supporting the UN and its agencies mainly through core funding.”

“International development financing institutions have a key role in combating the effects of the international economic crisis. At the country level they are major development financiers, to which Finland channels funds mainly as core funding. The use of funding is determined by financing institutions’ mandates and by priorities agreed in replenishment negotiations.”

“Finland supports the enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the UN and other key multilateral actors – such as the World Bank, regional development financing institutions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) – and the strengthening of their mutual cooperation.”

“In the World Bank and the WTO, Finland consistently strives for improving the voice and representation of the poorest developing countries. Equal global governance, which is essential to countries’ own development efforts, will be promoted through international cooperation. As well as specifically in relation to humanitarian assistance: Finland strengthens the international humanitarian architecture through proactive work in the governing bodies of the humanitarian agencies and in the EU. Finland promotes the principles of good humanitarian donorship and harmonisation of donor practices.”

“Finland promotes the implementation of the LRRD [Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development] also by influencing the policy of multilateral organisations and developing flexible response mechanisms.”

Source: MFA 2012.

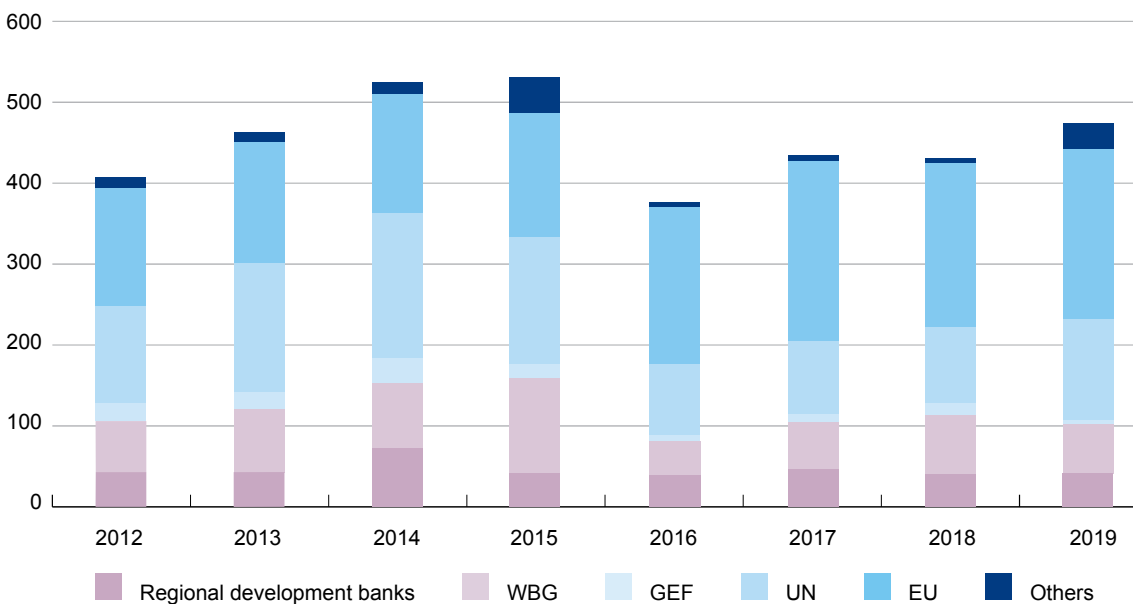
The MFA’s 2020 Theories of Change integrated multilateral influencing in all 4+1 priority areas on different levels, as activities and means, as outputs, as outcomes and in assumptions. Usually, the broader term “policy influencing” is used, which also covers influencing vis-a-vis partner countries, other donors and bilateral development partners. These and other relevant policy and guidance documents such as the MFA’s 2013 UN Strategy (MFA 2013b), the 2018 Development Policy Results Report (MFA 2018a) and the MFA’s updated 2020 influencing plans (MFA 2020b) – are further analysed in Chapter 4 of this report, in context with related findings.

## 3.2 Financial analysis

In this section, some key financial information is provided to demonstrate financing trends concerning Finnish support to multilateral organisations, including humanitarian support.

Support to the World Bank Group, UN organisations and EU development cooperation instruments (the latter not part of this evaluation) dominate Finnish multilateral development cooperation (Figure 4). Figure 4 also demonstrates how MFA support was cut across various multilateral organisation groups in 2016 after a change in government in 2015.

**Figure 4:** Finnish multilateral core funding to multilateral organisations 2012–2019, €million.



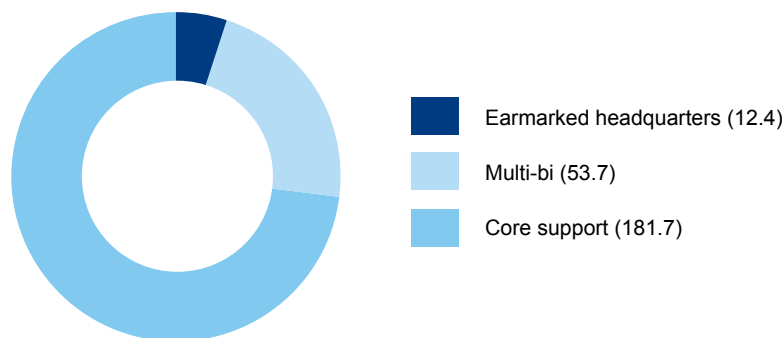
Source: MFA Statistical Data 2020 (includes humanitarian support).

The OECD and MFA statistics do not provide disaggregation relating to earmarked funding to multilateral organisations. In fact, in MFA statistics all non-core support is treated as bilateral cooperation. Since earmarked, thematic funding to organisation headquarters is considered as one potential influencing means, the evaluation team used highly disaggregated statistics provided by the MFA to estimate its share. At the same time, the volume of multi-bi support was estimated.

It is important to recognise the large share of multi-bi support – in 2018, about 22 percent of total support, including humanitarian assistance – went to these 23 multilateral organisations (Figure 5).



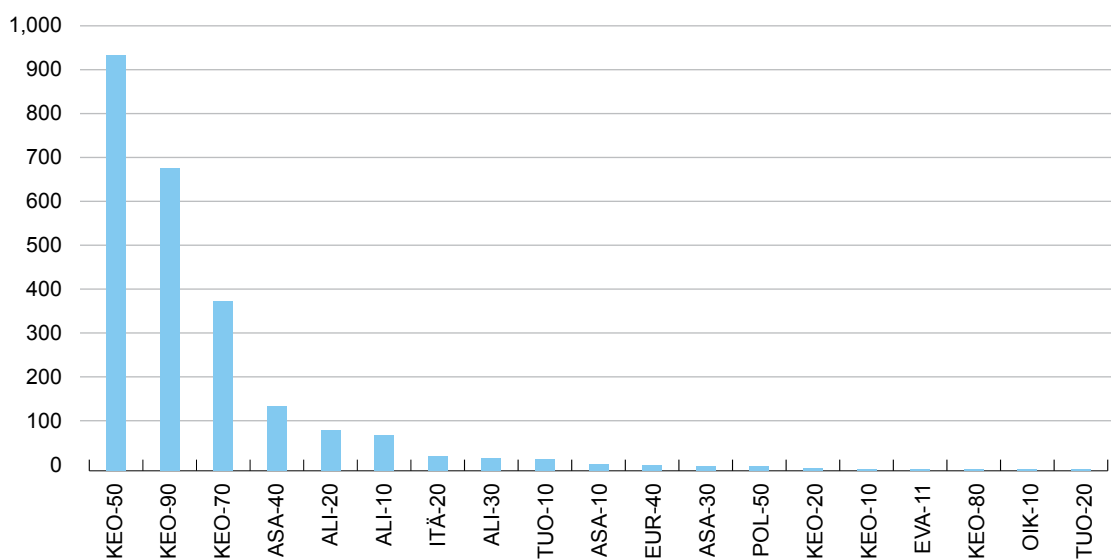
**Figure 5:** Breakdown of Finland's multilateral disbursements to the Multilaterals in the scope of the evaluation in 2018, €million.



Source: MFA Statistical Data 2019 (includes humanitarian support).

There are many MFA units and many agencies involved with multilateral development cooperation. Three units in the MFA's Department for Development Policy (KEO-50, KEO-70 and KEO-90) manage the majority of multilateral core funding, including humanitarian core funding, but many of these same agencies receive support from other units at the MFA (Figure 6). For example, UNICEF was supported during the evaluation period by 8 different units, WBG by 12, and FAO by 7.

**Figure 6:** Cumulated total multilateral disbursement in 2012–2018 by unit, €million.



Source: MFA Statistical Data 2019.



### 3.3 The MFA's approach to managing multilateral influencing

Multilateral development cooperation has been an important aid channel in Finnish development policy and cooperation for many decades. First minor multilateral contributions to UN agencies started shortly after Finland joined the United Nations in 1955. Since it was tracked from 1970 onwards, a significant share of Finnish ODA was disbursed to multilateral recipients. This means that Finland and the MFA have a long tradition of working with multilateral partner organisations.

Multilateral development cooperation has been an important aid channel for decades

Over the last decade, the MFA gradually strengthened RBM throughout its development policy and cooperation. The focus of RBM in the multilateral policy channel was on multilateral influencing rather than on managing the portfolio of multilateral partner organisations, in contrast to the approach taken by other countries such as Sweden or the United Kingdom (UK).

Most prominently, agency specific influencing plans were developed and used. In what follows, this and several other planning and reporting processes with relevance for multilateral influencing are described.

#### 3.3.1 Influencing plans, reports and related processes

The MFA's efforts to apply RBM to multilateral influence first translated into a series of influencing plans and related reports for each Multilateral that received funding of €1 (one = million or more).

The MFA developed three generations of influencing plans

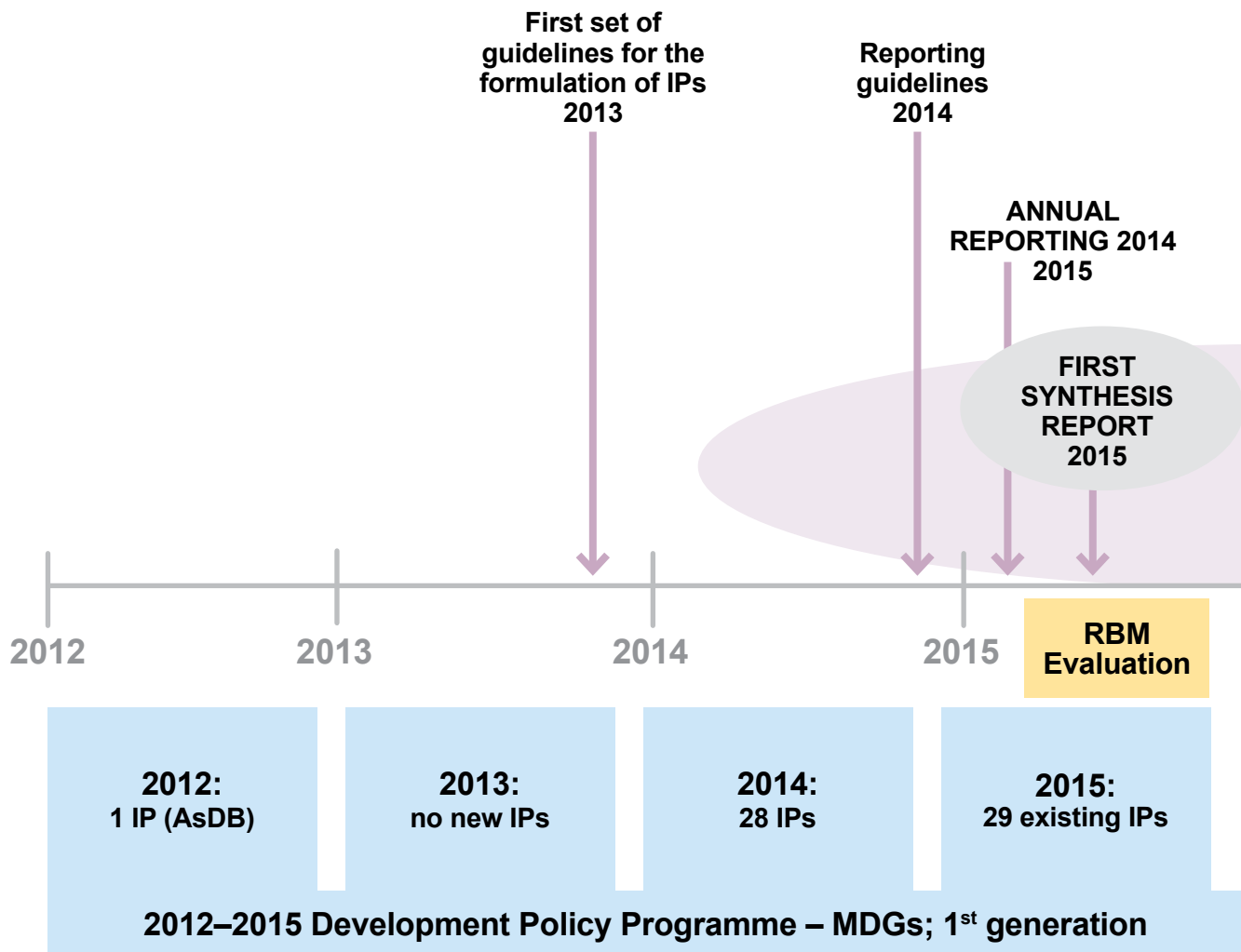
Apart from coverage of multilateral influencing in the 2018 results report (MFA 2018a), influencing plans and reports were internal documents in Finnish language.

Influencing plans and reports were prepared by the three units managing core contributions to Multilaterals in the Department of Development Policy (KEO-50, KEO-70, and KEO-90) and by the Department for External Economic Relations (TUO-10) as well as the Political Department (POL-50).





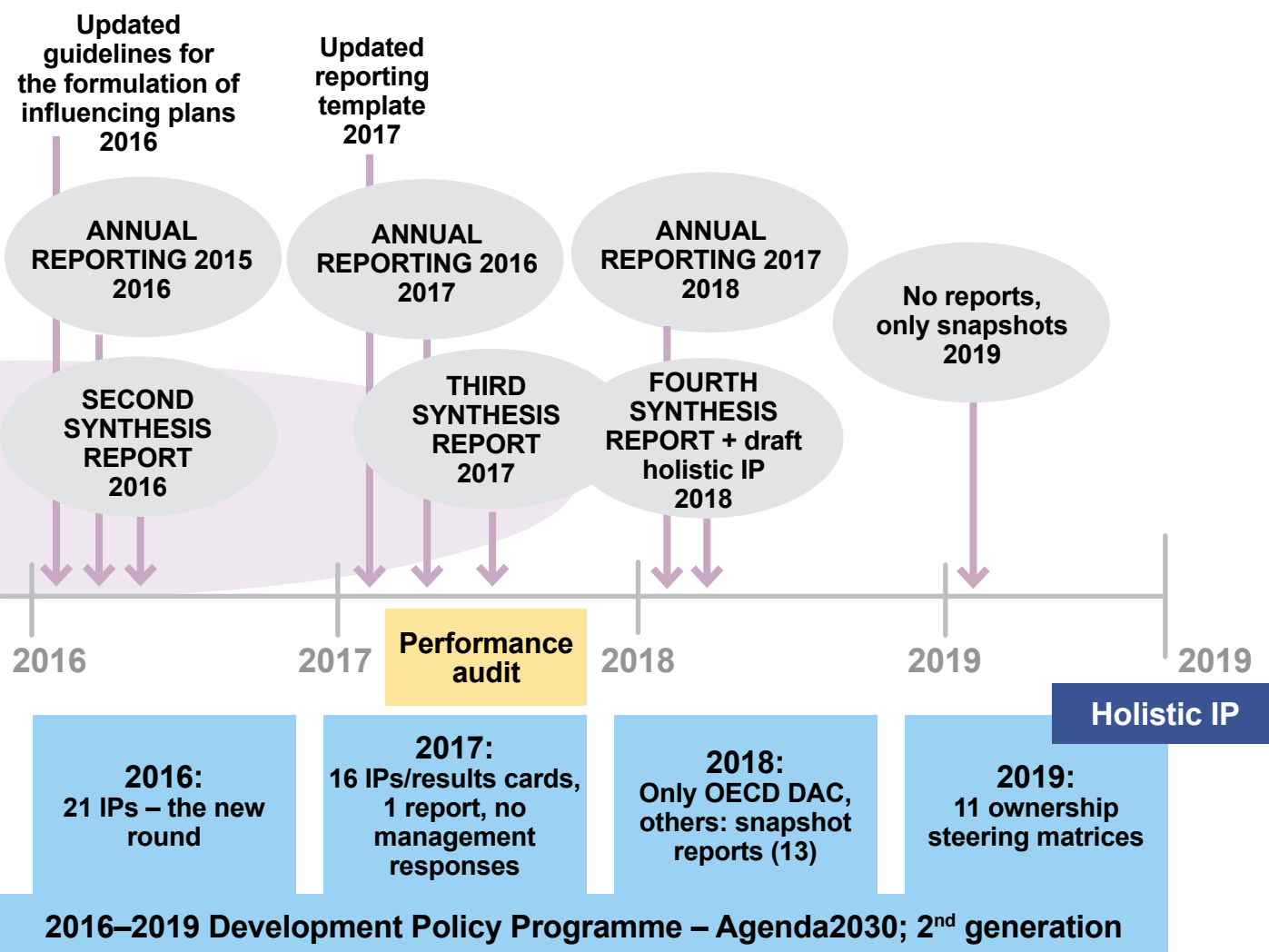
**Figure 7:** Influencing plans and reports since 2012 to 2019.



Source: Team analysis.

The structures and formats of influencing plans were adapted over time and can be grouped into three “generations”.

**First generation. Influencing plans** were first piloted for the ADB in 2012 and then prepared for 27 additional Multilaterals in 2014 (MFA 2015, 2016d). They covered – with somewhat varying formats – thematic and organisational efficiency targets, description of influencing channels, recruitment of Finnish experts, available human resources, and in some cases a monitoring matrix. In 2014 and 2015, progress reports and management responses by organisation were prepared, as well as synthesis reports.



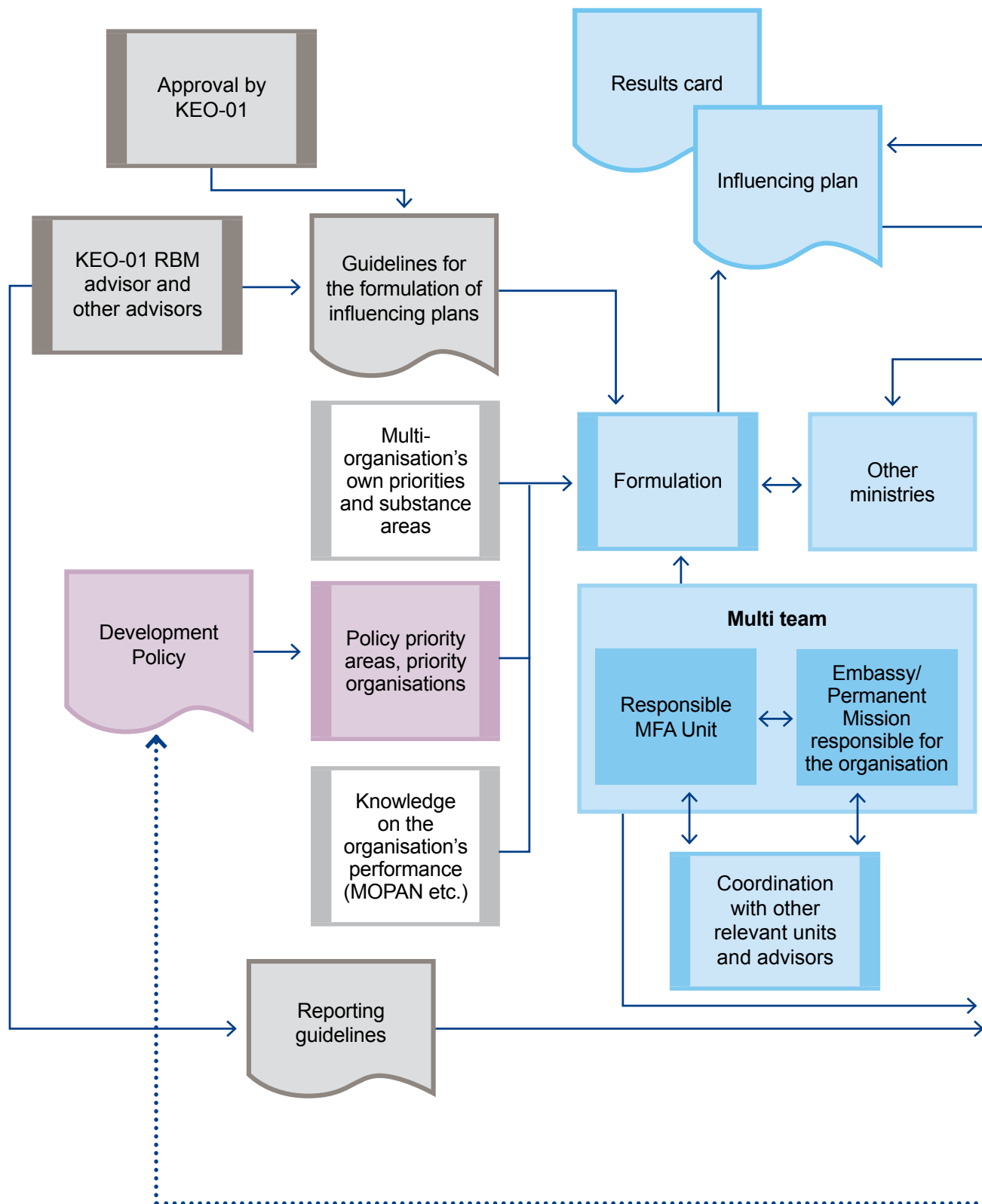
**Second generation.** In 2016, 21 new influencing plans were developed (MFA 2017, 2018b). These plans had a more harmonised structure and were intended to apply during the entire four-year government period. Because of the budget reductions, fewer organisations passed the threshold of €1 (one) million (the requirement threshold for influencing plans).

Second generation plans defined short-term targets, short term goals and long-term goals with a results chain logic for two different purposes: a) thematic influence; and, b) influencing the multilateral organisation’s effectiveness and efficiency.

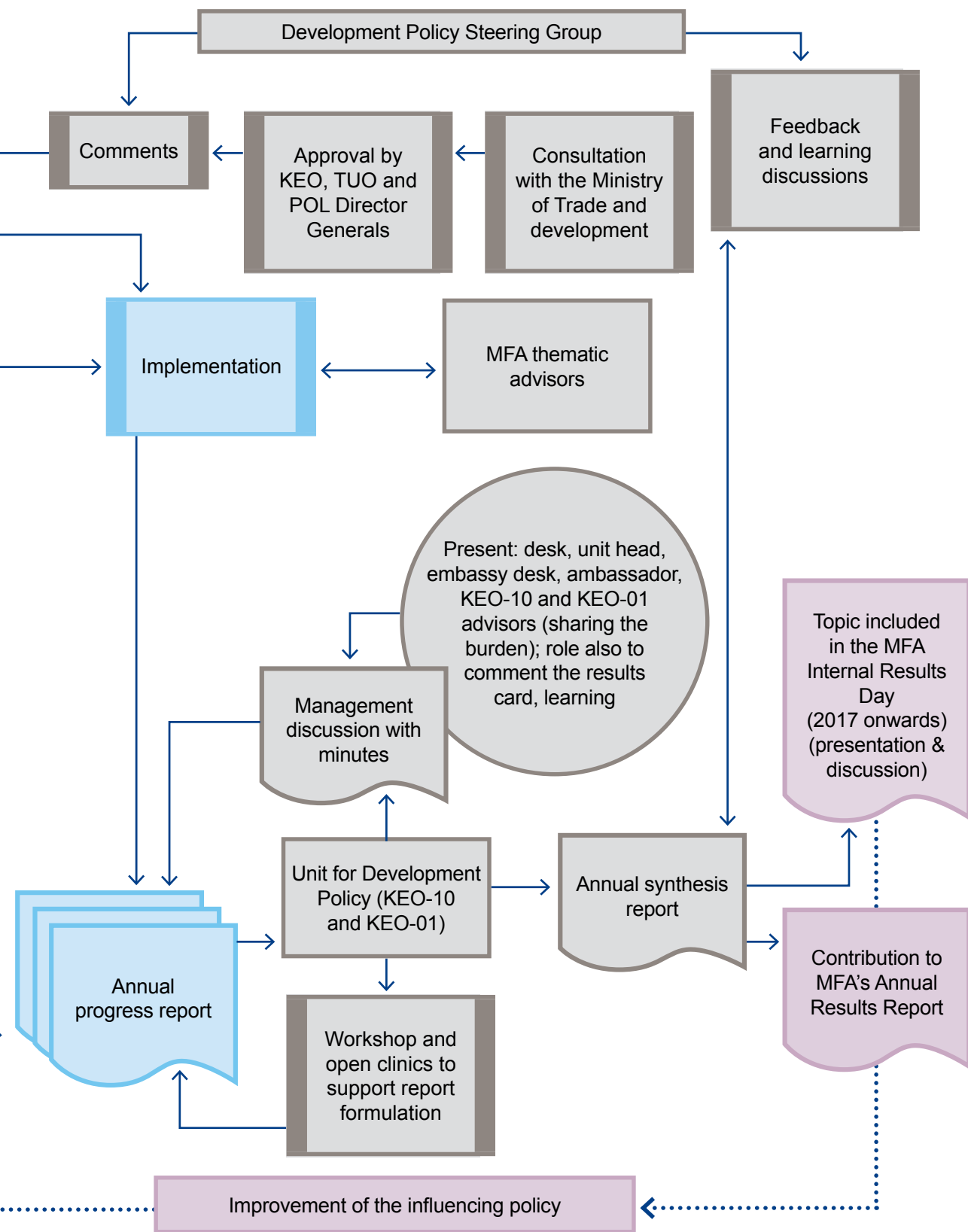
The process of preparation and use of second-generation plans and reports was elaborate and is summarised in Figure 8.



**Figure 8:** Project cycle of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation influencing plans.



Source: Team analysis.





In 2017, reports were prepared against the second-generation influencing plans but there was a growing realisation that the approach should be improved and, consequently, a new holistic format was developed. In summer of 2018, the Development Policy Steering Group (KEPO) decided to move forward with the new holistic approach to multilateral influencing which had been presented in an annex of the 2017 Synthesis Report (MFA 2018b).

In this situation, it was considered that fully-fledged influencing reports would not be needed. Consequently, short one-page “snapshot reports” were prepared, reflecting discussions held with management for some agencies. The evaluation team was able to identify and review 12 such reports.

Between mid-2018 and mid-2019, MFA continued developing the holistic influencing plan. In spite of the revisions, the basic logic has not changed from the initial proposal. The narrative includes more information on the roles of different actors, and it also reflects the four Policy Priority Areas in the results cards, as well as the objectives for each organisation at output level.

Since mid-2018, other priorities slowed the further development of the system. For example, a lot of effort was invested in the 2018 Results Report (MFA 2018a). Internal meetings continued to be held about how to develop influencing plans and reports further, but at a lower frequency.

**Third generation.** The updated 2020 influencing plans were finalised in February 2020. They take a more holistic and flexible approach than previous plans.

Thematic planning is now structured along four policy priority areas from which up to two apply for each Multilateral. Up to two additional influencing objectives related to the effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals can be pursued and planning and reporting includes the work of Multilateral corporate governance bodies more systematically. The corresponding formats and templates are presented in detail in Annex 7.

The updated 2020 influencing plans take a more holistic and flexible approach

### 3.3.2 Other planning and reporting processes with relevance for multilateral influencing

**Operation and budget planning.** Since 2017, the MFA’s annual operation and budget planning system (TTS) started to pay more systematic attention to influencing priorities and related indicators for multilateral organisations in a results-oriented manner.

The 2017 instructions for preparing the TTS explicitly identified areas for influencing based on the four broad development policy priority areas of the 2016 DPP. Overall, the guidance was still broad and did not explicitly link budget allocation to policy objectives, reflecting earlier observations (Palenberg et al. 2015).

The updated 2019 TTS preparation instructions introduced a major change and explicitly linked budget allocation and policy priority targets. This translated into targets that also covered multilateral influencing for units directly liaising with Multilaterals. Priority areas were also specified in a somewhat more concrete manner, based on the new government programme. At the same time, the TTS process shifted to a 4-year cycle, in line with the 4-year government (programme) period.

**Strategies, work plans and reports of permanent missions and embassies.** Incoming permanent representatives commonly prepare a strategic work/operational plan, including the influencing plan, that provides an overall assessment of the operational context, steering princi-

Operation and budget plans also cover influencing targets



ples of which the government development policy is only one part, planned action and available resources. Planned action includes one section that deals with development issues and identifies broad priorities linked both to the ongoing processes and, for example, reforms of UN agencies and Finnish policy priorities concerning e.g. gender equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), environmental sustainability. In general, no clear objectives/targets are set.

In the case of the Permanent Representation of Finland to the Rome based UN Agencies, the Permanent Representative has prepared (in 2012, 2015, and 2019) a 4-year strategic plan that has organisation specific context analysis, influencing objectives and priorities, influencing means and resources for influencing. These are comprehensive and quite detailed and, in the past, contained the same information as influencing plans. When his or her term was over, the Permanent Representative in Rome has prepared an end-of-mission report which has included a summary of influencing achievements and overview of conducted key influencing activities. The latest such report was more analytical and comprehensive than the earlier annual influencing reports; the same applies to the current strategic plan.

**Mandates / instructions** for the various replenishment negotiations of respective concessional funding windows / funds of development banks identify key objectives for the MFA representatives in each of those negotiations. These objectives are broader than development policy priorities and include objectives related to the organisation's strategic vision and plans, financing framework, work plan, possible new financing instruments. They also include references to influencing, e.g. Finland emphasising the importance of empowerment of women and girls, but no clear objectives. In terms of coverage, they do not include reference to all the objectives identified in the corresponding influencing plan for the same period, but otherwise they are consistent. Informal memos prepared by the negotiators report how well Finland achieved the objectives set in the negotiation mandate.

**Country strategies and reports.** Over the last decade, the MFA has progressively introduced RBM into its management of bilateral development cooperation. Country strategies have been prepared for all partner countries, and annual reports feature aggregate reporting on progress and results. Country strategies are currently being further developed to encompass all of Finland's work in each country.

While policy dialogue features prominently in country strategies and reports – and while interviewed embassy staff describe their work as being very much about influencing in general – the specific issue of *multilateral* influencing does not feature formally or explicitly and is considered one of many means to an end.

### 3.3.3 Existing good practices for multilateral influencing at the MFA

The MFA has documented its experience with multilateral influencing in influencing plans and related (synthesis) reports and in an earlier evaluation of influencing at the MFA and the MFA UN policy. Also, the 2018 Development Policy Results Report of the MFA to the Finnish parliament (MFA 2018a) documents such experience, and it is reflected in the MFA's approach to the updated 2020 influencing plans.

From the review of these documents, the following good practices were synthesised by the evaluation team (Box 5).

The MFA already documented good practices for multilateral influencing





**Box 5:** Existing good practices for multilateral influencing at the MFA.

1. Working consistently and over long periods of time towards strategic influencing goals, including “campaigns” over extended periods of time to achieve specific objectives;
2. Working through different channels and different fora at the same time, in a coordinated fashion;
3. The importance of informal interactions;
4. The importance of building and maintaining personal relationships;
5. Working together with like-minded partners (especially the Nordic Group), and forging new alliances;
6. The need to build a long-time profile and reputation;
7. The necessity of a deep understanding of the Multilateral, its operations, and the global context it operates in; and
8. The need for effective information exchange and communication among MFA staff in Helsinki and abroad, including effective information about and learning from relevant projects Finland funds at Multilaterals.

Source: Synthesised from MFA 2013b, 2015a, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2020a, 2020b.



# 4 Findings

This chapter presents the detailed evaluation findings. Overall, Finland’s multilateral influencing represents a success story. Finland has been able, in cooperation with other actors, to influence its multilateral partners in policy areas important to Finland even though Finland is – in most cases – a relatively small donor.

This overall finding was reflected in credible and overwhelmingly positive feedback received during the evaluation team visits to the headquarters of seven multilaterals in New York, Rome and Washington DC, interviews of donor partners, and visits to two partner countries, Nepal and Kenya.

While, naturally, not all findings are positive and some potential for improvement was still identified, this evaluation ranks among the most positive among the 85 high level programme or institutional evaluations that members of the team have conducted, including several MFA evaluations (two of which were led by the same team leader).

This relative positivity is perhaps best summed up by a phrase frequently used among respondents: “Finland punches above its weight”, meaning Finland exerts greater influence on most of the Multilaterals than its size (financial contribution) would suggest. As one high level respondent noted, “it’s not about the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog”. In that regard, Finland appears to be well able to “fight” for its development priorities.

## 4.1 Observed influencing effects

This section presents evidence about the effectiveness with which the MFA’s influencing activities have contributed to intended and unintended effects in multilateral organisations. It provides the basis for answering the first evaluation question:

*How effective have the MFA’s influencing activities been overall in influencing people, policies and operations of Multilaterals in policy areas important to Finland?*

The evaluation team focused on influencing effects that represented actual changes in people, policies or operations of Multilaterals that were observed and validated by the evaluation team as explained in Annex 8. Outputs that simply meant that very specific influencing activities had been implemented – such as having made an intervention during a board meeting or having participated in an event – were not considered because they do not represent actual changes.

### **Finding 1. Finland has contributed to significant influencing effects in the eight Multilaterals that were selected for Agency Cases.**

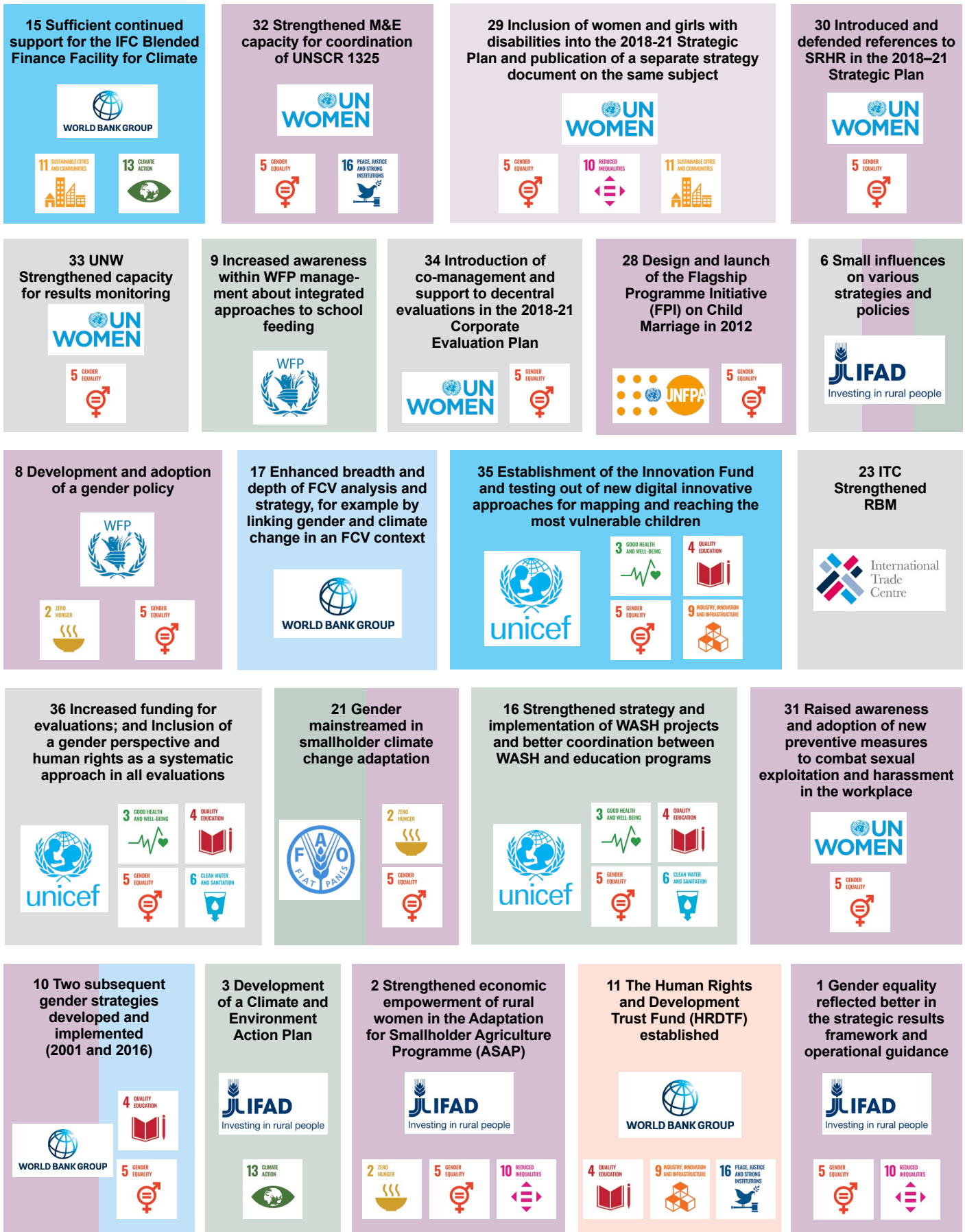
The evaluation team investigated influencing effects in eight Multilaterals in detail: WBG, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, IFAD, WFP, FAO and ITC.

Based on desk review and in-depth interviews with staff of those Multilaterals, other donors, constituency groups, and Finnish embassies and permanent missions at multilateral headquarters locations, numerous influencing effects were observed and validated by the evaluation team.

































The most prominent effects in terms of their significance and the strength of supporting evidence are summarised in Figure 9.












**Figure 9:** Overview of influencing effects to which Finland contributed (jointly or alone).





<p><b>13</b> Several aspects of Finland's approach to education reflected in the 2018 World Development Report</p>  	<p><b>7</b> Development and implementation of disability guidelines</p>   	<p><b>4</b> IFAD Transparent selection process of the President of IFAD</p> 	<p><b>12</b> Development and adoption of a disability framework</p>  	<p><b>5</b> Adoption of a new financial instrument Concessional Partnership Loan</p> 
<p><b>25</b> Awareness raised on women and girls with disabilities and inclusion of PwD into the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan</p>    	<p><b>26</b> UNFPA Innovation Fund established</p>  	<p><b>19</b> Launching the International Year of Plant Health</p>  	<p><b>20</b> Multipurpose National Forest Monitoring System enhanced to address carbon monitoring</p>   	<p><b>18</b> Reference to human rights principles in the new Environmental and Social Framework</p> 
<p><b>24</b> SRHR remained in the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan</p>  	<p><b>27</b> Revised policy for independent evaluation</p>  	<p><b>14</b> IDA19 was successfully negotiated with a high level of consensus on the special themes (that largely reflect Finnish priorities) with a record level of financial commitment</p>     	<p><b>22</b> Enhanced women's entrepreneurship and participation in trade in ITC operations</p>  	

 Human rights	 Natural resources	 Sustainable economies and decent work
 Rights of women and girls	 Climate change	 Responsible business practices and innovation
 Rights of persons with disabilities	 Education	 Organisational effectiveness and efficiency







Source. Team analysis, MFA influencing plans and reports.

To provide the necessary context for explaining how multilateral influencing worked in practice and to describe the aspects listed above in more detail, 11 “Outcome Stories” were developed.






Each outcome story focuses on one observed influencing effect in one of the Multilaterals selected for Agency Cases. It then characterises that effect, explains how Finland’s influence contributed to it, and outlines possible future developments in the Multilateral. The outcome stories are summarised in Table 4 and included in narrative form in Annex 10 to this report. They were selected by the evaluation team to i) illustrate a variety of influencing effects and channels in different organisations, and ii) represent effects that had been assessed and understood in considerable depth by the team.



**Table 4:** Overview of outcome stories.

Story title	Observed influencing effect	Significance of the effect	Finland's contribution	Plausible future developments
<b>1. Closing the Gender Gap in WBG Strategy and Operations</b> 	The WBG Gender Strategy was published 2016 and is being implemented, currently at Mid-Term Review stage.	Fundamental	Finland and Nordic partners have been at the core of advocating for a gender informed approach to development since the 1980s and have been consistent in their advocacy and support since then.	Increasingly strengthened, visible and substantiated inclusion of a gender perspective in relevant WBG projects, investments and advisory offerings.
<b>2. Human Rights and Development Trust Fund established</b> 	The Human Rights and Development Trust Fund (HRDTF) was set up at the World Bank.	Fundamental	Finland is a core donor and was insistent on the renaming and reorientation of the Trust Fund, formerly known as The Nordic Trust Fund.	Stronger inclusion of a human-rights perspective in relevant WBG projects, investments and advisory offerings.
<b>3. World Bank disability framework</b> 	The World Bank developed a disability framework.	Important	Fundamental contribution through a strategic staff secondment, enabled by Finland's reputation as leading advocate and expert on the subject.	Stronger inclusion of disability-related aspects into relevant World Bank projects.
<b>4. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Assistance</b> 	Awareness about the issue of inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD) has increased at WFP and the disability theme has been mainstreamed at the corporate level including disability guidelines to be possibly integrated into the updated Protection Policy, adopting of related indicators in the results framework, and guiding Country Strategic Planning Frameworks.	Important	Finland influenced very actively through the executive board and informally through the Nordic Group and other like-minded countries, building on global influencing work Finland had done earlier, profiling Finland as one of the lead actors in the PwD theme.	Stronger inclusion of disability-related aspects into WFP's humanitarian assistance work where these issues were not previously dealt with in an explicit manner at policy and operational level.
<b>5. Gender in the MICCA Programme</b> 	Finland influenced FAO on how to integrate gender in smallholder climate change mitigation.	Minor	Finland provided significant financial thematic support to a FAO flagship programme, complemented by a Finnish JPO who supported gender aspects of smallholder mitigation.	The particular needs, priorities, and realities of women and men would be recognised and adequately addressed in the design and application of climate-smart agriculture so that both men and women can equally benefit.
<b>6. Influencing organisational effectiveness</b> 	Gender equality reflected better in the strategic results framework, operational guidance and field operations.	Important	Finland has contributed, as part of a broader donor group, to improving the quality of IFAD's gender-related work.	More equal opportunities for women provided systematically across the entire IFAD project portfolio, including improved access by women to decision-making and land resources.



Story title	Observed influencing effect	Significance of the effect	Finland's contribution	Plausible future developments
<b>7. Gender mainstreaming at IFAD</b> 	Gender equality reflected better in the strategic results framework, operational guidance and field operations.	Important	Finland has contributed, as part of a broader donor group, to improving the quality of IFAD's gender-related work.	More equal opportunities for women provided systematically across the entire IFAD project portfolio, including improved access by women to decision-making and land resources.
<b>8. Women and Girls with Disabilities</b> 	Awareness of the rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities has increased at UN Women. The rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities has been included in the new Strategic Plan for 2018–2021, and a separate UN Women's strategy document "The Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities: Towards Full and Effective Participation and Gender Equality", was formulated and published in 2018.	Important	Finland (together with Australia and the UK and backed by the Nordic group) has very actively influenced UN Women informally and formally through behind the scenes-work, Board work, high level meetings and side events.	Stronger inclusion of disability-related aspects into UN Women's work. Stronger institutionalisation of the disability work within the organisation.
<b>9. Innovation at UNICEF</b> 	UNICEF's Innovation Fund is up and running. Several innovation programmes are being piloted and positive results already yielded in some areas.	Important	Finland, together with Denmark, supported UNICEF with softly earmarked funding for UNICEF's innovation work.	UNICEF's innovation work may continue to keep yield new and innovative approaches to reach vulnerable children and youth with social and educational services.
<b>10. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)</b> 	Finnish influence contributed to maintaining a focus on SRHR despite opposition, and UNFPA's new Strategic Plan (2018–2021) has at least 15 references to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (UNFPA 2018).	Important	Finland (together with the Nordics and other like-minded countries) has very actively supported UNFPA's SRHR work, including providing political support and highlighting the importance of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights in high-level political fora, informally and formally through behind the scenes-work, Board work, high level meetings and side events.	A focus on SRHR in UNFPA's strategic documents and work may be maintained if there is a continued focus on SRHR by Finland and likeminded countries to counter balance the conservative trend led by other countries.
<b>11. Organisational strengthening</b> 	Finland, together with other member states, has contributed to improving UN Women's ability to deliver on its mandate by strengthening the capacity of the organisation.	Important	Finland has provided significant core contributions to UN Women's budget in a consistent manner over time. In addition, Finland has provided visible and high-level political support to UN Women's core areas of work. Finland has also, together with other member states, provided constructive inputs in formal and informal work to strengthen UN Women as an organisation, in bilateral meetings and on the Board.	A strengthened organisation has the potential to better deliver its mandate and produce positive results.

Source: Interviews, desk review and analysis conducted during Agency Cases.





Overall, the effects observed in Agency Cases demonstrate the significance of Finland’s influence on these eight multilateral organisations and their work.

For a more nuanced assessment, the evaluation team rated the significance of influencing effects on people, policies and operations as explained in the methodology section of this report (Section 2):

- In 8 cases, influencing effects were considered “minor”, i.e. reflecting raised awareness and small changes to policies or practices.
- In most cases (26 or 72 percent), changes were considered “important”, reflecting behaviour change and significant adaptation of existing policies or practices.
- Two influencing effects<sup>9</sup> were considered “fundamental”, i.e. introducing new policies or practices or providing the opportunity for some multilateral staff to act as advocates for an issue.

Across agencies, the significance of observed influencing effects is summarised in Table 5.

**Most influencing effects reflected important behaviour change and significant adaptation of policies or practices**

**Table 5:** Significance of influencing effect by Multilateral.

Multilateral	Significance of influencing effect			Total
	Minor	Important	Fundamental	
FAO	1	2	–	3
IFAD	1	5	–	6
ITC	1	1	–	2
UNFPA	–	5	–	5
UNICEF	1	2	–	3
UNW	1	5	–	6
WBG	1	5	2	8
WFP	2	1	–	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>36</b>

Source: Annex 9, team analysis.

This information is provided as an overview but, as analysed and explained in the next finding, does not reflect systematic differences between agencies.

Based on the sample of observed influencing effects and confirmed by interviews at the MFA and in Multilaterals, the team concludes that Finland has contributed to important and in some cases even fundamental influencing effects in the eight Multilaterals chosen for Agency Cases. These effects have led to behaviour change among staff and important changes in their policies and practices of relevant multilateral organisation. Especially when keeping the limited amount of human capacity and other resources available for multilateral influencing at the MFA in mind, the evaluation team finds these effects, and the validated Finnish contributions to them, very positive. The overall importance of Finnish contributions was also widely recognised by interviewed donor partners and organisation representatives.

<sup>9</sup> Effects numbered 10 and 11 in Figure 9.



**Finding 2. Influencing effects are related to “arcs of influence”: a coordinated mix of different influencing activities and channels over time, enabled by informal interactions and relationships, and usually implemented collectively by Finland and other actors.**

The evaluation team analysed the 36 observed influencing effects in detail. This analysis was based on the characterisation of each effect along a range of attributes but also on additional qualitative information obtained through interviews and desk review in the eight Agency Cases. The latter is important because the statistical analysis of the (limited) sample of effects alone only has limited validity. Annex 9 to this report summarises the characterisation of the 36 observed influencing effects along the following attributes:

- The theme and the policy priority area of the effect;
- The significance of the effect;
- Whether Finland mostly contributed to the effect alone or in collaboration with others;
- Whether the effect was primarily realised in people, policies and/or operations;
- What influencing channels were used;
- Whether or not informal interactions had been important for realising the effect; and
- The Multilateral in which the effect was realised.

From the statistical analysis of these effects and their attributes and additional qualitative evidence from Agency Cases, the following observations are made.

**Arc of influence.** None of the 36 effects were considered to be related to a single one-off influencing activity. Instead, with variations, all observed influencing effects were considered to result from a steady, consistent and persistent stream of influencing activities over time, or an “arc of influence”, as the evaluation team began to refer to it. In the case of gender at the WBG (effect 10 and Outcome Story 1, see Annex 10), the arc of influence spanned several decades. For other effects, influencing activities over years were required to fully understand observed effects.

Effects were related to a steady, consistent and persistent stream of influencing activities over time

This was even true when specific influencing activities had triggered decisions, for example just before it was decided to go ahead with the “Year for Plant Health” at FAO (effect 19), or when the Finnish expert was tasked by the World Bank’s Global Disability Advisor to start drafting a disability framework (Outcome Story 3). Also, in these cases, earlier influencing activities had been critical to bring the situation to such a tipping point and evidence showed that without them, the effect would not have materialised.

This observation validated the good practice already identified by the MFA *of working consistently and over long periods of time towards strategic influencing goals, including “campaigns” over extended periods of time to achieve specific objectives* (Box 5).

A remarkable finding across many interviews conducted with staff in multilateral organisations and donor partners was that – over time and between different activities – Finland’s “influencing message” would remain consistent. For example at the WBG, interviewees described that whether they had spoken to the Finnish Executive Director, MFA staff in Helsinki or listened to the Finnish president visiting the Bank or to Finland’s Minister of Finance speaking at the Board of Governors, messages about the importance of gender equality, education and the rights of persons with disabilities had been very similar and constant over time, even when the people holding political or civil servant positions or Finland’s government had changed. One interviewed staff member summarised this as “whoever I speak to from Finland, I hear the same message”. Interviewees



considered this consistent and persistent pursuit of policy and influencing priorities by Finland an important ingredient for effective multilateral influencing and contrasted it with examples of representatives of some other countries where messages differed depending on whom they spoke to or when the person holding a position changed.

The integrated nature of multilateral influencing was further evidenced by the fact that effects on people, policies or operations seldom occur in isolation of each other (Table 6). Overall, most (81 percent) influencing effects were reflected in changes in two or all three dimensions for influencing effects (people, policies and operations).

**Table 6:** Frequency of influencing effects on people, policies and operations.

Influencing effect on:	Frequency (number of effects)	Frequency (percent)
Only people	1	3
Only policies	3	8
Only operations	3	8
People & policies	6	17
People & operations	7	19
Policies & operations	5	14
People & policies & operations	11	31

Source: Annex 9 (N=36), team analysis.

**Multi-channel influence.** Closely related to this, the evaluation team also investigated the degree to which different influencing channels had been used to contribute to each effect (Table 7).

**Table 7:** Contribution of influencing channels.

Channel	Share of effects where this channel was used (percent)
Influencing through corporate governance processes	81
Influencing through fund allocation processes	47
Influencing through staff placements	19
Influencing through other formal or informal channels	83

Source: Annex 9 (N=36), team analysis.

Each of these four influencing channels is studied in more detail later in this report (Section 4.3). Here, observations regarding the frequency of their usage are summarised.

- Influencing through governance represents one of the main channels used by the MFA for this sample. Based on interview feedback and desk review, including the detailed assessment of influencing plans and reports (Annex 4), this observation also applies more generally. This channel was most prominent for the two IFIs included in the sample: for IFAD and the WBG, all 14 observed influencing effects included this channel, versus 73 percent of the other organisations. This may, however, be an artefact of the sampling: in interviews, the governance channel was considered important for all types of organisations, without marked difference between IFIs and other organisations, noting the review of influencing plans and reports also found governance to be more generally applicable (Annex 4). Influencing through governance



was found to be used for all influencing effects related to improving the operational effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals. While not conclusive due to the limited sample, this can be related to the mandates of these governing bodies that focus on ensuring effective and efficient operations, making the governance channel ideally suited for contributing to these types of effects.

- Influencing through fund allocation processes was part of the influencing mix for about half of all effects. Because of the way IDA and IFAD replenish their core funds, the team expected this channel to be somewhat more important for IFIs, and this is reflected in the sampled effects (for IFAD and the WBG, 64 percent of all effects involved this channel, compared to 36 percent for all other organisations). As explained later in this report, for both types of organisations, influencing associated with softly earmarked and multi-bi funding are also important and included in these figures.
- Staff placements represent the least frequently used influencing channel for the sample of 36 effects analysed here. This stands in contrast to the frequent mention of staff placements for Multilaterals in influencing plans and reports (Annex 4). These seemingly contradictory observations reflect the two uses of staff placements by the MFA that are explained in more detail later in this report. In most cases, staff placements simply aim at placing Finns into multilateral organisations (which is described in influencing reports), while the evaluation team focused on staff placements as a means to influence Multilaterals, which is used considerably less frequently.
- As the fourth influencing channel, “influencing through other formal or informal channels”, contained a range of different influencing activities and was found to be very prominent for the sampled effects, it was further broken down, using three sub-categories derived later in this report:
  - High-level meetings and consultations between Finland and the Multilateral contributed to 75 percent of all effects;
  - Advocacy and political support for specific issues, including campaigns, contributed to 56 percent of all effects; and
  - Activities related to generating and exchanging knowledge were used in 36 percent of all effects.

**Governance and high-level meetings were used frequently for influencing**

The importance of the first two sub-categories beyond the limited sample of effects was confirmed by the team’s desk review of influencing plans and reports, while the third category was not separately analysed in that systematic review (Annex 4). Keeping the caveats associated with the limited sample size in mind, the team found that all three sub-categories of influencing effects were less frequently used – in the sample of 36 effects – in IFIs than in other (mostly UN) organisations.

Another meaningful correlation exists regarding the use of these activities in the context of thematic effects versus effects related to operational effectiveness and efficiency: while high-level meetings and consultations were equally frequent, thematic advocacy and political support was significantly more frequently related to thematic effects, reflecting the fact that that type of advocacy and political support had been mobilised more frequently for thematic issues, as described later in this report (Section 4.3.4).

The evaluation team also found that, usually, several influencing channels contributed to an influencing effect. Only in four instances (11 percent), a single channel (twice “governance” and twice “other”) was used and three of those effects had minor significance. In all other cases (89 percent), influencing activities in two or more channels contributed to observed effects. The last figure should be considered a lower boundary because the team was conservative when assigning



influencing channels to effects, and additional influencing activities not covered in interviews and desk review may have contributed to observed effects as well.

The observation of an integrated use of different channels also reflected a good practice that had already been identified by the MFA: *working through different channels and different fora at the same time, in a coordinated fashion* (Box 5).

Informal interactions were considered more important than formal ones

**The importance of informal interactions and relationships.** The importance of informal, off-the-record interactions was consistently stressed across almost all interviews held for this evaluation. Feedback also indicated that informal interactions was most often even considered to be more important for successful influencing than formal ones, and that informal and formal influencing are closely interconnected. In other words, most of the “arc of influence” exists in this informal space and remains largely invisible in formal reports and documents. An earlier evaluation reported issues with properly identifying these important but difficult to observe types of interactions and activities (Aarva et al. 2012). In several cases, the evaluation team was however able to access informal like-minded group meeting memos and email exchanges which demonstrated the intensity of these informal interactions.

Informal interactions, including networking outside of the office and in semi-private settings, were considered necessary to establish trust-based and effective working relationships and carry out preparatory work such as drafting joint statements which, in turn, were considered indispensable for effective influencing through the formal governance system.

In the sample of 36 influencing effects, informal interactions and activities were judged to have made important contributions to 32 effects (89 percent).

In another evaluation, staff of Finland’s permanent mission in New York estimated that as much as 80 percent of their influencing work vis-à-vis the UN was carried out through a range of less formal channels such as participation in support groups, evidence-based seminars, and informal lobbying (Rassmann et al. 2018). A Swedish study (SADEV 2012) which was conducted jointly with Finland on “Nordic influences on Gender Policies and Practices at the World Bank and the African Development Bank” found out that personal contacts, informal working groups and venues outside the ordinary Bank meetings are all efficient ways of influencing policies and decisions.

The observed importance of informal interactions and relationships has also been described by the MFA as good practices in terms of *the importance of informal interactions and the importance of building and maintaining personal relationships* (Box 5).

**Group influence.** A further observation relates to whether observed influencing effects were linked mainly to Finland alone or to a group of actors of which Finland was a part. In interviews and from the team’s desk review of influencing plans and reports, a collective group approach emerged as the predominant approach. Interviewees at the MFA, Multilaterals and at donor partners explained this as an effective way to increase influence as a relatively small donor.

83 percent of influencing was done by groups

Across the 36 effects listed in Figure 9, only six (17 percent) were mostly related to Finland’s influence alone. All remaining effects (83 percent) were considered the product of genuine group efforts. In other words, the “arc of influence” involved the entire group rather than Finland alone.

The most frequent groupings were the Nordic and Nordic + groups, where the “+” stands for one or more extra countries. Frequently, the groups were described as “like-minded groups”, reflecting alignment between the priorities of individual group members and – in formal settings – the group’s position. At the WBG, the formal Nordic constituency was important.



At IFAD, Finland was part of the List A donors. In other cases, Finland also entered into informal ad-hoc alliances involving Finland and one or two other countries.

This observation is in line with the collaborative approach reflected in influencing plans and reports, in which different groupings feature prominently and strategically (Annex 4).

The evaluation team hence finds that a “group influencing approach” was the predominant way in which Finland has contributed to multilateral influencing. This is consistent with the earlier MFA evaluation of Nordic Influence in Multilateral Organisations (Aarva et al. 2012) that emphasised the importance of a common, coherent policy stance, strategic convergence, and effective coordination amongst the Nordic countries as a critical factor to enhance gender equality. It is important to note this study and the related Swedish case study both identify a significant limitation in capturing and singling out the results of policy influence that can be specifically attributed to specific donors or influencing actors; an aspect discussed earlier in this section.

This observation is also reflected in good practices the MFA had already identified: *working together with like-minded partners (especially the Nordic Group) and forging new alliances* (Box 5).

**No recipes or rules for multilateral influencing.** In addition to the observations made above related to the frequency of different characteristics of influencing, the evaluation team also reviewed other correlations between different attributes associated with influencing effects and assessed whether these might reveal systematic drivers or inhibitors for influencing effectiveness, or affect what worked and what did not for specific themes or organisations.

Overall, while the team found some variations between different attributes, these did not point to any underlying mechanisms. For example, the two “fundamental” influencing effects identified by the evaluation team were both realised in the WBG (Table 4). When reviewing this more closely, these effects were however explained by the fact that the Agency Case had reviewed the MFA’s largest multilateral partner in more detail and also looked at two effects with a longer history (beyond the evaluation period). While it is likely that the MFA has devoted more attention to the WBG than to some other agencies, there was no evidence from interviews or in reviewed reports that would point to systematically higher or lower influencing effectiveness at that Multilateral.

The same applied to the relative effectiveness of different influencing channels, the relative effectiveness of influencing people, policies or operations, or the relative influencing effectiveness across different themes or organisations. For all of these considerations, the sample of effects did not point to systematic dependencies with external validity, which would point to underlying systematic rules or mechanisms.

Based on its review of influencing literature and interviews with MFA and other staff involved in influencing, the evaluation team had not expected to find simple rules or “recipes” for multilateral influencing beyond what can be reflected in good practices and similar guidance. Based on these other sources, multilateral influencing is strongly dependent on processes within Multilaterals, the priorities and activities of other actors, and the evolving context in which Multilaterals operate. As such, the choice of influencing activity and channel is likely to depend more on external factors than on the attributes associated with the observed influencing effects.

Moreover, it should be noted that the 36 influencing effects analysed here do not provide a representative picture of all influencing effects the MFA may have contributed to. They only covered effects in eight Multilaterals and, within that sample of organisations, represent only those that interviewed staff most clearly associated with Finnish influence during interviews. Even for the eight Multilaterals chosen for this exercise, additional influencing effects are likely to exist that were not brought to the attention of the evaluation team.





**Finding 3. Finland’s reputation as development actor – including the reputation of its people – is a strong enabler of effective multilateral influencing and represents a comparative advantage.**

**A specific set of values and characteristics is attributed to Finland**

In interviews in Multilaterals and during field visits, the overall feedback about Finnish influencing was very positive. Interviewees clearly, strongly and very consistently attributed a specific set of positive values and characteristics to Finland, with particular reference to Finnish representatives. Interviewees brought these attributes up – often spontaneously – to explain how Finland had contributed to influencing effects and considered them of great importance for effectively and productively working together.

As a country and development actor, Finland was very consistently associated with the perceived attributes summarised in Table 8. These institutional perceptions were mirrored on the individual level – by how Finns were perceived as persons and as development professionals (Table 9).

**Table 8:** Perceived attributes associated with Finland as development actor.

<b>Perceived Finnish values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral, unbiased, non-political, non-ideological, non-partisan</li> <li>• Defender of human rights and multilateralism</li> <li>• A rule-based and accountable democracy</li> <li>• Expertise- and evidence-based</li> <li>• A hard working, modest people</li> </ul>
<b>Perceptions of Finland as development partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honest, credible and “walking the talk”</li> <li>• An available, accessible, interested, helpful, “present” partner</li> <li>• A reliable and steady partner over long periods of time</li> <li>• Pragmatic and genuinely interested in results on the ground</li> <li>• On the same level with partners, collaborative, understanding, non-threatening, non-sanctioning</li> </ul>
<b>Perceived areas of experience and expertise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights (specifically gender equality and rights of persons with disabilities)</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Digital/technology, innovation</li> </ul>

Source: Interviews and team analysis.

**Table 9:** Perceived attributes associated with Finns working in development cooperation.

<b>Perceived values of Finns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honest, credible and “walking the talk”</li> <li>• Neutral, unbiased, non-political, non-ideological, non-partisan</li> <li>• Humble and not self-promoting</li> </ul>
<b>Perceptions of Finns as development professionals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available, accessible, interested, helpful</li> <li>• Pragmatic and genuinely interested in results on the ground</li> <li>• Reliable</li> <li>• Hard-working</li> <li>• Non-hierarchical</li> <li>• Well-informed and knowledgeable</li> <li>• Good at working informally and “behind the scenes”</li> </ul>

Source: Interviews and team analysis-

This very positive finding was surprising at first. Initial interviews at the MFA, the review of literature on influencing and the systematic review of the MFA’s policies, influencing plans and reports had not pointed to Finland’s reputation playing such a central role.



The central role of reputation in the context of influencing has not been highlighted before

Reputational aspects were either unexplored or simply not of particular importance in similar evaluations conducted by other donors. For example, a recent evaluation of multilateral influencing in the context of Danish development cooperation that otherwise closely mirrors several aspects of the present evaluation, simply remarked that the “quality of dialogue with the multilateral partners appears good” and that “Denmark has a reputation for insight, perseverance and flexibility” but did not explore the role of reputation further (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019). A relevant evaluation conducted in the UK only mentioned reputational issues briefly and did not relate them to influencing effectiveness (ICAI 2015). Another evaluation conducted by Norad only refers to reputation in the context of the management of risks (Norad 2019).

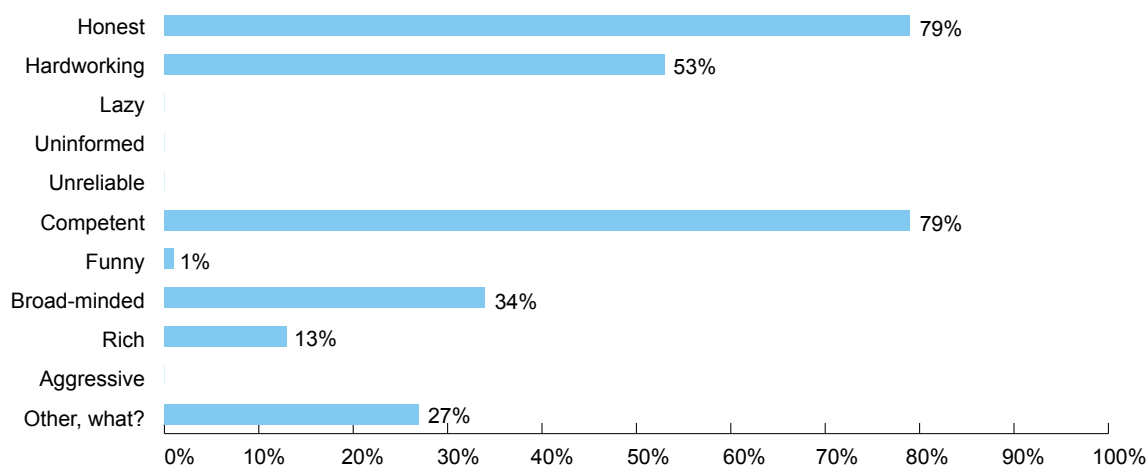
Regarding Finland, the National Audit Office’s assessment of effectiveness of Finnish multilateral cooperation (VTV 2017) found that Finland was perceived as a knowledgeable, active and collaborative agency and partner (which confirms some of the above) but did not link reputational aspects to influencing effectiveness.

The only significant reference to the importance of reputation in the context of multilateral influence the evaluation team was able to identify was found in an earlier evaluation conducted by the MFA on Nordic influence on gender policies of the WBG and the African Development Bank (Aarva et al. 2012). That evaluation introduced reputational influence as part of informal influence and contrasted it with formal influence related to position. It found that the “Nordic countries seem to have exercised considerable reputational influence in decision-making by producing analyses, formulating ideas, and providing proposals”. This concept of reputational influence corresponds to the expertise- and knowledge-related elements in Finland’s reputation that were identified above. That evaluation did, however, not explore the other reputational elements listed in Table 8 and Table 9.

Interviewees compared Finland – and Finnish development professionals – with other donors and their representatives. In several cases, significant differences were described. Some donors were considered to display strong hierarchies, “threaten” sanctions and behave in unresponsive, unrealistic and political- or accountability-driven ways. Respondents from the interviewed Multilateral’s staff indicated that such behaviour ultimately resulted in much reduced influencing effectiveness for those donors.

The MFA regularly reviews how Finland is perceived in the world. This analysis covers and corroborates some of the perceived attributes observed by the evaluation team (Figure 10).

**Figure 10:** Finland in the World Media in 2019.



Source: MFA (2019). Finland in the World Media 2018.



Interviewees consistently referred to these positive perceptions when explaining why they considered multilateral influencing to be so successful or, as many interviewees put it, why “Finland was punching above its weight”.

In the evaluation team’s understanding, the relation of these perceptions to Finland’s multilateral influencing effectiveness is two-fold. First, they facilitate the establishment of effective personal relationships and institutional partnerships through the expectation and the belief that that person (or institution) can be trusted, will be honest and easy to work with, and will deliver their share of work. Second, they create a willingness to accept a Finnish development worker (or a Finnish institution) as a credible and experienced subject-matter specialist for gender, disability, and other issues.

Moreover, interviewees saw these perceptions usually becoming reality in their interactions with MFA staff, or had formed their initial perceptions based on their work experience with Finns. In both cases, this indicates that MFA staff usually live up to these high expectations, as described later in this report.

**Finding 4. In its own reporting, the MFA has described a large number of influencing activities and emerging effects, reflecting overall satisfactory to good progress towards influencing objectives. This finding applies to all Multilaterals in the scope of this evaluation.**

The earlier finding is corroborated by the MFA’s self-reported influencing effects, both in terms of describing effects that had been achieved and assessing the effectiveness in reaching influencing objectives.

**Influencing effects described in MFA reports.** Since the last comprehensive influencing reports were produced for the year 2017, this finding is limited to influencing effects realised in 2017 or before. On the other hand, and in contrast to Finding 1, the MFA’s self-reported effects cover all Multilaterals for which influencing plans and reports were produced. Until 2015, these were 29, and from 2016 onwards 21 Multilaterals, with the reduction reflecting the MFA-wide budget cuts introduced in 2015 and implemented in 2016.

Each year between 2014 and 2017, synthesis reports highlighted the most important trends in influencing across all Multilaterals for which influencing plans had been produced (MFA 2015, 2016d, 2017, 2018b). These reports gave an overall positive assessment of what had been achieved in terms of influencing, all the while highlighting constraints in terms of human resources and related to how multilateral influencing activities were being managed. They also provided an aggregate picture of the most successful areas of Finnish influence developed over time (areas of success and constraints described in synthesis reports are addressed in subsequent findings).

In 2018, Finland’s Development Policy Results Report indicated that Finland had achieved many of the desired results and highlighted the promotion of gender equality as one successful general example: “Finland has been able to influence the strategies of its multilateral partners. Improving the rights and status of women and girls with disabilities is now a more visible part of the strategic plan of UN Women. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has also updated its gender equality guidelines. In the World Food Programme (WFP), the implementation of gender equality guidelines has prompted the agency to allocate more funds to gender equality work and made the theme a more visible part of its country-specific strategies” (MFA 2018a).

**Reported progress towards influencing objectives.** For 2016 and 2017, the MFA’s synthesis reports also provided an aggregate assessment of progress towards influencing objectives – separately for reaching thematic objectives and objectives related to the effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals.<sup>10</sup> These objectives were first set in the 2016 influencing plans and – at that time – intended to remain valid for the entire government period 2016–2020.

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<sup>10</sup> Influencing objectives for 2016-2020 were updated in 2016, and some were adjusted in 2017.

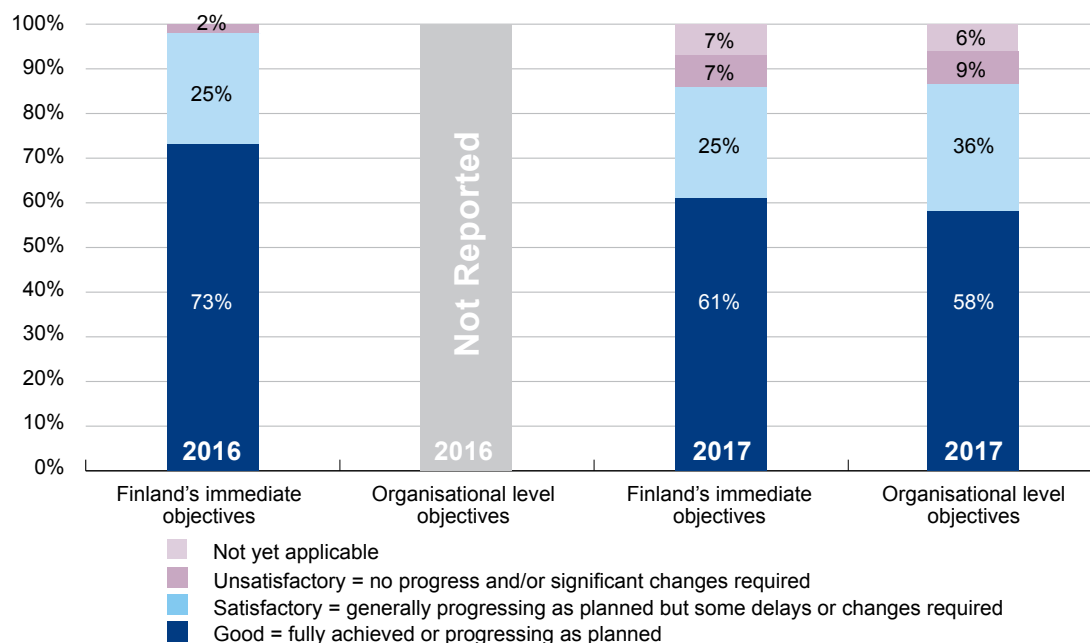


In both cases, progress was assessed to be mostly on track (Figure 11 and Figure 12)<sup>11</sup>, with somewhat better progress towards thematic than organisational effectiveness and efficiency objectives.

**Progress towards influencing targets is on track**

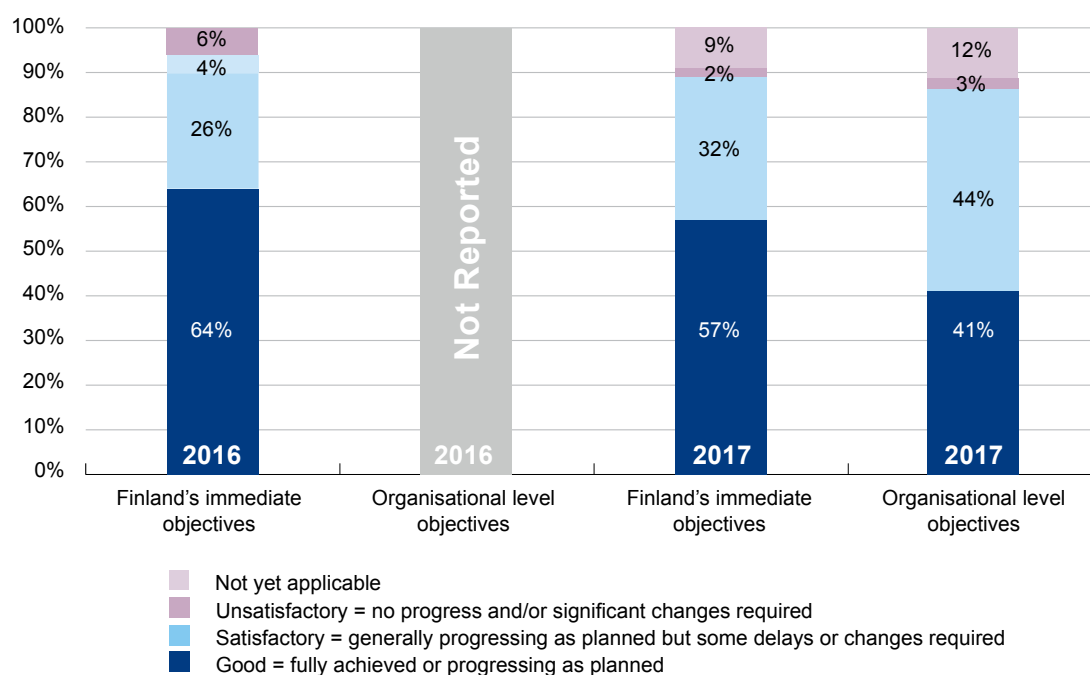
In 2017, progress towards organisation-level change objectives – to which immediate influencing effects were intended to contribute – was also tracked. At this level, progress especially towards organisational effectiveness and efficiency objectives was more modest.

**Figure 11:** Self-reported progress towards thematic influencing objectives.



Source: MFA 2017, 2018b.

**Figure 12:** Self-reported progress towards influencing objectives related to the effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals.



Source: MFA 2017, 2018b.

<sup>11</sup> In 2016, only progress against Finland's immediate objectives was reported in the synthesis report.



At the same time, influencing synthesis reports remarked that objectives varied in terms of ambition (for example, some simply reflected activities) and that different reports interpreted progress ratings differently. These qualifications are considered in more detail later in this report and are mentioned here to avoid interpreting too much into Figure 11 and Figure 12.

Progress assessments against predefined targets in the influencing reports (and the related synthesis reports) fail to cover important cases of “positively opportunistic” and other instances of influencing when influencing objectives were pursued that had not previously been defined in influencing plans. Examples are school feeding at the WFP, innovation in UNICEF, and organisational change in UNFPA. However, such achievements cannot be reflected in those parts of the reports and in “traffic light” assessments and figures, they could be described in narrative sections.

Also for later reference, while overall progress was considered to be very good (progress towards 85 percent or more of all objectives was generally or fully on track), a fairly large number of targets (27 to 59 percent) experienced delays, required changes, showed no progress at all or were not (yet) applicable. The evaluation team considers this to reflect the limited degree to which multilateral influencing can be predicted and planned.

**Finding 5. In several instances, Finland has also been effective in influencing aspects of the global multilateral system, beyond single Multilaterals.**

Apart from influencing activities aimed at specific Multilaterals, Finland has been an active influencer in global and regional fora such as the UN General Assembly and the EU. These activities and their associated effects are important because of the global and systemic effects they have on the multilateral system as a whole, which are beyond the scope of the present evaluation. They are however also important because of the effects they have on Multilaterals. In what follows, three examples are provided for how such system-level influencing effects could lead to downstream effects in Multilaterals and their operations, strengthen their coordinative or normative capacities, enable Finland’s organisation-level influence, and increase the general awareness of multilateral staff on specific issues.

**Example 1: Reform of the UN development system.** One prominent example is Finland’s influence on the recent reform process of the UN development system (referred to as “UN reform” in what follows). Driven by “calls of Member States in the 2016 QCPR [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review] for a more strategic, accountable, effective and efficient UN development system”, the UN Secretary-General led the elaboration of a reform proposal that was deliberated, adapted and finally adopted in a “historic resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system” that is now implemented (United Nations 2018).

A recent MFA evaluation (Rassmann et al. 2018) found that Finland was a strong supporter of UN reform processes and had supported the recommendations of the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (United Nations 2016), as well as additional interim measures to show how greater coordination can work. The evaluation found that Finland was also active in other general forums in the UN and the EU to promote the UN reform. The central role of Finland’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York in this context was described as follows:

*Through a relatively small and very busy Permanent Mission to the UN and the MFA in Helsinki, Finland employs various approaches to influencing the UN system, and support their UN partners in their mandates in the wider UN system. For example, there are high level meetings on an annual basis, participation as board members, participation in wider UN bodies such as the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> committees of the UN General Assembly (GA), and a range of less formal channels such as participation in support groups, evidence based seminars, and informal lobbying.*

The MFA’s Permanent Mission in New York influenced the UN reform process





*Finland has influenced aspects of the multilateral system as a whole.*

Interviews at the MFA confirmed that Finland, through staff in Helsinki and in the Permanent Mission, had actively contributed to shaping the QCPR and the reform itself, with specific attention to a strong mandate for the newly defined role of UN Resident Coordinators and for funding the reformed cross-agency coordination structures. Finland worked and influenced through multiple fora. The EU position was considered of critical importance and interviewed staff considered that Finland had been influential – in alliance with like-minded EU partners – in formal and informal fora in New York and elsewhere, in separating the Resident Coordinator position from UNDP (where it was located before) and to provide Resident Coordinators with sufficient authority and tools to effectively fulfil their mandates. While interviewed staff expressed overall satisfaction with integrating Finnish positions into the UN reform process, the funding for the Resident Coordinator system was considered the most difficult and contentious issue and was negotiated until the very end. The voluntary funding that is now part of the reform package remained below Finnish expectations because of financing risks associated with the largely voluntary financing of the Resident Coordinator system.

After the 2018 resolution, implementation of the UN reform began. One tangible downstream influencing effect to which Finland also contributed directly was observed in an earlier evaluation and in the Agency Cases on UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF. That influencing effect was the decision of UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF to include a “Common Chapter” on “Working together to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda” into their respective strategic plans. The common chapter was found to be donor-driven (three agencies initially opposed it) and of high significance, representing a practice test of whether and how the UN reform can overcome agency competition and institutional individualism among UN agencies. Finland supported the implementation of the UN reform through staff placements in the form of financing Special Assistant to the Resident Coordinator (SARC) positions. The MFA also conducted an internal survey with 30 Finnish embassies to obtain information on progress and issues related to implementing the reform on the country level; this information was considered relevant and important for further global and agency-specific influencing efforts.





Other examples of global and system level influencing efforts concern Finland's advocacy for gender rights in general and SRHR in specific. A recent evaluation (Rassmann et al. 2018) found that Finland had successfully contributed to:

- A signed joint statement of 74 north and south members to the UN on SRHR, stressing that gender equality needed to be a strong part of the SDG;
- The adoption of the stand-alone SDG 5 on gender that included an indicator on SRHR;<sup>12</sup> and
- A proposal by the UN General Assembly 5<sup>th</sup> Committee to include funding for five UN Women normative positions from the General Budget (that were previously covered through voluntary donations).

The MFA's influence reports remarked in 2017 that the coordinating work of UN Women was hampered by the "*attitudes of other organisations and UNW's [UN Women's] scarce resources and capacity on the ground*" but expressed hope that the UN reform might have a positive effect in this regard (MFA 2018b).

In 2017, further influencing effects intended to contribute to strengthening the normative and coordinative capacities of Multilaterals were reported but were not further analysed by the evaluation team (MFA 2018b):

- A new mandate clarifying the role of Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) was adopted; and
- Reforms to strengthen and clarify the role of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) were launched by the new leadership.

**Example 2: The rights of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in humanitarian aid.**

An important example of Finland's global, system-level advocacy is the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities into global principles for humanitarian aid that was studied from within the WFP Agency Case and reported in influencing reports (Box 6).

Finland played a key role in the development of the "Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action"

Before successfully influencing the WFP towards stronger inclusion of persons with disabilities into its humanitarian work (see Annex 10, Outcome Story 4 on the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Assistance at WFP), Finland first identified this issue as an important area globally and profiled itself as one of the "champion" agencies for persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts. At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, Finland played a key role in the development of the "Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action". The Charter was prepared by over 70 stakeholders including countries, UN agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs) and global, regional and national organisations of persons with disabilities, including for example "Kynnys" and "Abilis" from Finland.

Finland had highest-level political representation at that meeting: the Finnish Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, and the Minister of Social Affairs and Health. Later, the new Finnish Minister for Foreign Trade and International Development was visible in "promoting/advertising" the Charter and related guidelines and Finnish support.

In 2017, the MFA's Unit for Humanitarian Assistance (KEO-70) provided support to UNICEF to develop guidelines on supporting persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises. At the same time as this Charter became open to UN and civil society organisations, the WFP joined and endorsed it. After endorsing it WFP needed to start implementing the charter including preparation of guidelines following the principled developed by UNICEF. At the same time KEO-70 was identifying ways to support implementation, which brought the WFP and Finland together around this thematic area, as described in the related WFP Outcome Story.

<sup>12</sup> SDG 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"; SDG Indicator 5.6: "Ensure universal access to SRHR as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences" (Rassmann et al. 2018)



**Box 6:** Reported successes in global influencing regarding the rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian aid.

“Finland has been a key factor in making greater provision for people with disabilities in humanitarian aid. In all of Finland’s advocacy plans for humanitarian organisations, the aim is to make humanitarian organisations commit to implementing the World Summit on Humanitarian Affairs (WHS 2016) Declaration on Disability.” (MFA 2017)

“Finland has succeeded in this.” (MFA 2017)

“In line with Finland’s immediate objective of advocacy, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) decided to prepare guidelines for people with disabilities. This will have a wide-ranging impact on the practices of humanitarian actors in mainstreaming disability. Finland was a key player in promoting this, through its position in the preparation of the WHS Declaration on Disability, vis-à-vis a number of humanitarian organisations, in particular the UNHCR. Finland’s advocacy activities have been diverse (bilateral, friendship, Nordic and EU cooperation) and the experience and lessons learned from the UNHCR-funded disability project funded by Finland have also been able to be influenced.” (MFA 2017)

“Taking people with disabilities into consideration in humanitarian crises continues to be a success story for Finland.” (MFA 2018b)

“In particular, the Finnish-led group of friends and some Finnish-funded regional consultations have contributed to the development of the IASC guidelines. Finland is among others. organised events with a high profile and sponsored by Signmark (WFP, OCHA, ISDR).” (MFA 2018b)

“In the fall of 2017, the issue of disability gained prominence, especially in the so-called. thematic discussions on the Global Compact for Refugees. In addition, Finland made a decisive contribution to the European Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Conference (EFDRR), March 2017, which explicitly addresses the situation of people with disabilities.” (MFA 2018b)

Also in 2017, other examples for influencing effects intended to contribute to strengthen the normative and coordinative capacities of Multilaterals were reported but were not further analysed by the evaluation team (MFA 2018b), for example:

- A new mandate clarifying the role of DAC was adopted; and
- Reforms to strengthen and clarify the role of OCHA were launched by the new leadership.

**Example 3: 2018 World Development Report “Learning to Realise Education’s Promise”.** One of the influencing effects studied by the evaluation team as part of the WBG Agency Case was Finland’s influence on the 2018 WDR and on the WBG’s Education Global Practice. Without being studied in detail, contributing effects related to other WDRs have been noted, for example in case of the 2012 report “Gender Equality and Development” in Outcome Story 1 and the 2017 WDR “Governance and Law” for promoting good governance and the rule of law (World Bank 2017).

This example is included as a “global” influencing effect because the WDR potentially impacts not only the WBG but other Multilaterals as well.



**The 2018 World Development Report heavily referenced the Finnish education model**

The observed influencing effect was that the 2018 WDR (World Bank 2018c) “Learning to Realise Education’s Promise” heavily references the Finnish education model with a particular emphasis on learning outcomes and a core contributor to those outcomes, teaching quality: “*Finland’s system gives considerable autonomy to its well-educated teachers, who can tailor their teaching to the needs of their students*” (World Bank 2018c, p.13).

Analysis of the 2009 OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results found that “the best performing school systems [in Canada; Finland; Hong Kong, Japan; the Republic of Korea; and Shanghai, China] manage to provide high-quality education to all students” rather than only to students from privileged groups (World Bank 2018c, p.78).

The WBG Education Global Practice embraced the criticality of the “learning crisis” identified in the WDR as part of its strategic prioritisation and noted the potential for the Finnish education model, and in particular the Finnish approach to teacher training, to address the learning crisis.

Consequent on the above, Finland is currently negotiating engagement in a Trust Fund (COACH) that will support teacher training. The COACH programme reflects a new effort to strengthen how the World Bank supports teachers to be effective and successful. The programme underpins the efforts of the second pillar of the Education Global Practice’s approach and the second component of the Literacy Policy Package. The COACH programme will focus on supporting teachers to improve the delivery of content, rather than the assessment and/or revision of the content itself. The global COACH team will work closely with other teams such as the Teachers Thematic Group, the Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Thematic Group and as part of the Learning Poverty team to develop Global Public Goods and guidance on content and curricula.

The MFA will support these aspects of COACH (KEO-50) and related country-based work in Mozambique (ALI-30). At the time this evaluation report was written, Finland had yet to reach an administrative agreement with the Bank due to delays associated with: resource mobilisation freeze in 2019 due to the IDA-19 replenishment (WBG policy) and issues with regard to operationalisation of the cooperation, especially linking the global component and country-level component with respect to aligned budgeting, management and reporting within the MFA.

Based on desk review and a series of interviews at the MFA and the WBG, the WBG Agency Case found that Finland was very influential in the production and content of this WDR. The report shone a light on the Finnish education system/model and opened the door for Finland to exert influence in this hugely important area of development.

The production of the report was supported by the “Knowledge for Change Program”, a Trust Fund of which Finland is a member. Background and related research, along with dissemination, was (among others) supported by the Nordic Trust Fund – the predecessor of the HRDTF described in Outcome Story 2. Consultation events attended by government officials, researchers, and civil society organisations were held in 21 countries, including Finland. Finland was also involved in bilateral engagement with the WDR team although there were no Finns on the team itself.

The project (task team) leaders of the 2018 WDR said that Finnish support had been crucial for the report. The entire core team for the WDR visited Helsinki to engage on substantive issues such as learning for all and the quality of teacher training. Finland’s support was particularly important in terms of allowing the team to test its messages through face to face engagement with governments around the world. Finland’s support also allowed for enhanced dissemination that enabled, for example, the production of background papers and holding of events and the broader promotion and dissemination of the WDR. Overall, at the time the interviews were conducted in Washington DC (January 2020), the 2018 WDR had been downloaded 900,000 times.





*A Kenyan woman reading. Finland has been a global advocate for education sector development.*

The team leaders for the WDR noted that this report was the most-downloaded World Bank report of any type ever in terms of final report downloads. Currently, the report continued to be downloaded around 10,000 times per month, which was unprecedented for a WDR more than 2 ½ years after its launch. The team leaders noted that this was in large part thanks to the dissemination that Finland had made possible. This was perceived to have made a huge difference and allowed for continued active dissemination of the report for nearly two years, which most teams are not able to do. In this way it could be ensured that it wasn't just a report "sitting on a shelf" (approved citations).

The WDR was considered to have influenced strategies subsequently released by, for example, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Within the World Bank, there is ongoing interaction between the task team leaders of the 2018 WDR and the Education Global Practice Director, as the report continues to influence the Bank's education approach.

Thinking further ahead, the ongoing engagement between Finland and the WBG's Education Global Practice has significant potential in cracking what has been a very hard development nut i.e., ensuring quality education outcomes rather than simply having children enrolled and attending school. The literature (e.g. World Bank 2019b) suggests that quality education outcomes are critically predicated on teacher quality. It follows that, if teacher training can be improved in the developing world, education outcomes will likely be enhanced.

The new Trust Fund (COACH) supported by Finland may generate evidence to inform larger scale World Bank operations (as well as operations of other involved development partners). However, much as Finland's system – and that of other top performers – is admired, the WBG recognises that lower-performing systems that simply import Finland's teacher autonomy into their own contexts are likely to be disappointed. If teachers are poorly prepared, unmotivated, and loosely managed, then giving them greater autonomy will likely compound rather than solve the problem (World Bank 2018c, p.175). As such, in line with Finland's engagement with other

**The 2018 World Development Report may have influenced strategies of DFID and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**



issues – e.g. gender, human rights – it is likely the realisation of real progress on teacher training / enhancing education outcomes, will require long term commitment.

**Finding 6. Within its bilateral development cooperation in Nepal and Kenya, Finland has also been effective in influencing Multilaterals at the country level.**

Finland has worked with the IFIs and UN agencies in both Nepal and Kenya. Based on its observations during those visits, the evaluation team identified influence along three influencing channels (the fourth channel relates to headquarter-level governance of Multilaterals and is not relevant at the country level).

**Influencing through fund allocation processes.** One case the evaluation team could study in detail was UN Women. Reflecting Finland’s strong core support to UN Women on the global level, over the study period, Finland has also provided country-level multi-bi support to UN Women that is indicative of its determined and sustained support for the agency, with a view to enhancing its capacity to better represent gender issues in the development arena.

In Nepal this has taken the form of €4 million (2015–2017) for a project in support of women’s economic empowerment targeted at marginalised women; and €4 million in support of UN Women’s country strategy 2018–2021 under the heading ‘Leaving no-one Behind’ and in pursuit of women’s equal access to justice and inclusive governance.

In Kenya, Finland supported UN Women with €2.2 million in 2013 to help implement its country strategy as part of a pooled funding effort. In 2019 Finland provided €4.9 million to support UN Women’s country strategy in Kenya 2020–2023. In addition, Finland provided specific €5 million support to UN Women in 2018 under the UNDP administered “Consolidating gains and deepening devolution in Kenya” with a total intervention value of almost €40 million.

The evaluation team finds this support indicative of Finland’s moving away from a project-based model to the provision of support for the country strategies of the agencies in question and Finland’s broader commitment to a multilateral approach to development.

The latter support for UN Women under the UNDP administered programme in Kenya seems, on the face of it, to contradict the more general advocacy for programmatic support; however, what it demonstrates is the level of Finland’s commitment to gender i.e., even within the UN system, Finland is conscious of the need to support leverage and power for women.

From interviews with UN Women staff and other agency and donor staff it was clear that Finland’s intention was to support and strengthen UN Women as an agency (on the country level) in addition to “using” the organisation to implement critical aspects of Finland’s country strategy.

In Nepal, Finland supported UN Women in experimenting with a ‘storytelling’ approach – where beneficiaries journal about small changes in their everyday lives – to harvesting data on outcomes of interventions over time. This was identified as a “risk” for Finland in that it departs from a more standard activity counting approach. On the other hand, it represents an acknowledgement by Finland of the challenges involved in identifying distance travelled in terms of capacity and leadership development among disadvantaged and marginalised women. UN Women noted that Finland had the courage to acknowledge that certain things were not known and to support innovation towards finding development solutions.

**Influencing through staff placements.** Placement of JPOs and secondees provides another contact route.

UN Women (Kenya) acknowledged Finnish support in enhancing monitoring and reporting capacity through a Finnish secondee that was highly appreciated and had already led to significantly improved reporting that had been noted by the other agencies. Interviewees considered



it likely that, in turn, the enhanced reporting capability would result in new donors supporting their programme, noting the programme had lost Sweden as a donor due to poor reporting.

UNICEF in Kenya also acknowledged the extended contribution of the work of the Finnish secondee to UN Women – her work helps improve reporting in other UN agencies as her work was at the RBM country systems level.

Staff placements were also considered to add value in terms of facilitating communication and establishing relationships, as illustrated by several citations. The Ambassador to Nepal, a former JPO himself, described this as follows (approved citation):

*[Finns] have been quite successful in getting JPOs into multilateral organisations in Nepal. For example, we are funding a JPO as part of the UNICEF WASH [Water, sanitation and hygiene] team and the position of adviser to the UN resident coordinator. All Finnish embassies would like to welcome JPOs in the multilateral organisations. In most of those organisations, however, Finns are significantly under-represented on senior/managerial level posts.*

*With Finnish JPOs in the multilaterals, we can ask ‘in Finnish’ – so what is really happening. We can get informal information on what is really happening – and that helps us a lot. We also hope that some of them will stay in the system and become P3s and P4s. You need people who have this experience to work outside Helsinki and outside HQ [headquarters] – it is important that they have the field experience.*

“With Finnish JPOs we can ask ‘in Finnish’ – that helps us a lot”

The Deputy Ambassador to Kenya said that Finnish influence could possibly be best served by “secondment and placement of Finnish expertise...well placed, really good people can add real value – more than “just a programme management” in that it can bring Finnish ways into priority areas” (approved citation).

A senior MFA official who had previously worked with UNICEF Country Office in Asia for a period of time said that if a MFA secondment programme would be established it would be particularly valuable as secondments are undertaken with the understanding that the secondees would return to the MFA, which also means that the secondees are not in competition for promotions with permanent staff of the multilateral organisation in which they are placed (approved citation).

One interviewee however felt underutilised while working at a Multilateral before returning to the MFA. It was as if “s/he had never worked with the MFA” and also after return to MFA her/his insights were underutilised. S/he also noted that when s/he took his job (s/he had been working at the MFA and secured the position independently through open recruitment) a planned JPO for the same office was cancelled on the basis that the person would not get ‘international experience’ because the JPO’s manager would be also Finnish (approved citation).

**Influencing through other formal and informal channels.** Finland is also providing other types of non-financial support. Such contacts between Finland and the Multilaterals are frequent and take place at various levels and in various fora.

**Box 7:** Levels and fora of Finnish influencing.

- Government led donor meetings (Heads of Mission);
- Donor coordination groups – overall and at sector level e.g., in Nepal, Finland has chaired the Gender and Social Inclusion Group for a period of time and is now moving on to Co-Chair the Education group; in Kenya Finland is currently chairing the Joint Donor Group on Elections and also Chairs the Education Group.





- Bilateral meetings to discuss programming and progress;
- Monitoring field missions;
- Day to day contact with some Multilaterals (e.g., UN Women in both Nepal and Kenya seeking opinions or requesting review of studies)

Source: Country visits to Kenya and Nepal, team analysis.

“Finland has been pivotal in bringing stakeholders together”

For example, in its capacity as Chair of the Gender Group in Kenya, Finland has taken a coordinating role on gender in Kenya. UN Women in Kenya noted that “things used to be siloed, but Finland has been pivotal in bringing stakeholders together and in highlighting the importance of gender across sectors.”

As Chair of the Election Donor Group in Kenya, Finland also paved the way for UN Women and other UN Agencies to present, opening the door to down the line engagement and ensuring a broad based, multi-dimensional approach to this key area.

Networking among Finns was variable between the two countries. In Kathmandu, perhaps because of the relative size of the city and the relatively small number of ex-pats, the Embassy was a more visible and accessible place for Finns e.g., social events, sauna. In Nairobi, a much larger city where there was a larger Finnish community, including a number of Finnish businesses, the connectivity to the embassy was less apparent although the embassy does host important events, e.g., breakfast meetings, to facilitate networking.

Overall, in addition to financial input, Finland has actively engaged with Multilaterals at the country level – bilaterally and multilaterally. In both countries, the UN agencies were appreciative of Finland’s support for the normative agenda and for the rights-based approach.

In the case of UN Women, this engagement was particularly robust and energetic. All UN Women interviewees described Finland as a “very present partner”, and a “development partner in the true sense of the word” with whom UN Women co-creates solutions. One UN Women representative described the interaction with Finland like working as a team where Finland “added value compared to the other donors”.

The UNDP Resident Representative in Kenya spoke of the manner in which Finland has been influential without having to invest funding. For example, as Co-Chair of the Election Donor Group Finland facilitated space for UN agencies (e.g., UNDP, UN Women, and OHCHR) to present the joint deepening democracy programme, including support to elections, opening the door to down the line engagement and ensuring a broad based, multi-dimensional approach to this key area (approved citation).

Across these three influencing channels, the evaluation team considers the following influencing effects plausible, using UN Women as a case:

- In both countries, UN Women will be likely to emerge as a more confident agency that is better able to report and communicate its strategic achievements rather than, simply, activities;
- In both countries, UN Women will likely have greater capacity and credibility, making is better positioned to both retain and attract support from other donors in support of women’s rights;
- As a stronger agency, UN Women in both countries will likely be better placed to support the gender agenda, which is, in turn, fundamental to Finland’s development objectives;

- In Nepal, should the ‘storytelling’ approach prove successful, it may result in a model of reporting on what are critical developments that are less amenable to standard measurement; and
- In Kenya, Finland’s support has enhanced the ‘political’ positioning of UN Women and gender issues in both the UN family in the Nairobi hub (given the influence of the M&E work carried out by the Finnish secondee) and within the broader development frame in Kenya e.g., through the introduction of UN Women and enhanced gender consciousness into the election dynamic.

**Finding 7. Country-level multilateral influencing does not usually affect these organisations globally, but experience gained and information collected at the country level can represent important inputs for corporate-level multilateral influence.**

Finland’s country-level multilateral partners in Nepal and Kenya were, in general, very operationally focused on the country in question and there were no apparent mechanisms or practices to suggest that good practice or lessons associated with engagement with Finland (or other donors) were fed back to the regional or headquarter levels of those organisations.

Finland’s financial support and influence was considered to affect Multilaterals, but only at that local level. The evaluation team found no instance when interviewees, when asked, indicated that country-level influencing effects would make a difference at headquarters. Instead, the country programmes of Multilaterals were described as largely independent from the overall organisation. This finding was also reflected in an earlier MFA evaluation covering Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia and Syria/Iraq. That evaluation found that, at the country level, there was “limited scope to influence the multilateral agency beyond the specific initiative e.g. to implement the content of Finland’s multilateral influencing plans” (Betts et al. 2020). One possible exception might be corporate-led country pilots intended to inform later global rollout, for example a UNFPA flagship programme “Women and Girls First” in Myanmar.



*Finland’s country-level multilateral partners have a more local focus.*



The degree to which Finland had influenced that programme and the programme had – or could – contribute to change at headquarters remained unclear, but this may represent a special case of when country-level multilateral influencing can support headquarter-level change processes.

Overall, interviewed MFA staff – including from Helsinki – felt that the question of whether or not country-level influence on Multilaterals could lead to significant global-level changes in these organisations was important: if there were such upward influence within Multilaterals, there would be a case for including global multilateral influencing targets into country strategies. If such linkages within were unlikely – as the above findings indicate – there would be little sense in doing so.

Country-level information can be very useful for corporate-level influencing

At the MFA, there was growing insight into these matters. While influencing synthesis reports had called for global-country alignment and synergies until 2017, interviewees explained that during the preparation processes for the updated 2020 influencing plans it had become clear that such synergies would probably not exist and the focus therefore shifted to improve the exchange of information and knowledge between the two levels, as explained below. In contrast to the limited opportunity for upward linkages for multilateral influence, the evaluation team observed that information collected at the country level can be very useful for the MFA's corporate level influencing work. This observation was based on the expressed demand for such information from several MFA staff in direct contact with Multilaterals that were interviewed during Agency Cases, and from MFA staff dealing with Multilaterals in Helsinki.

Regarding the type of information, most interviewees mentioned field experience with “what works and what doesn't”. In the context of Finland's global influence on the UN reform process, the interest was more specifically about the degree to which the changed mandate and strengthened role of UN Resident Coordinators was being realised in the field. In that context, the responsible desk successfully collected such information from Finnish embassies in and beyond Finland's partner countries, to have a solid fact-base for the next round of global-level interactions.

Interviewees widely agreed that the flow of this type of information was not yet optimal, reflecting limited staff capacity given other demands, barriers due to the MFA's organisational structure, and ineffective knowledge management systems that were assessed in detail in a recent MFA evaluation (Palenberg et al. 2019). In addition, some interviewees mentioned that the experiences and relationships of MFA staff who had earlier worked at country offices of Multilaterals could be better utilised for the MFA's corporate-level multilateral influencing. MFA interviewees in Helsinki and in embassies also mentioned that there was not much information exchange in the other direction, for example about the level of core funding to specific Multilaterals and the corporate level influencing targets the MFA pursued with them. Such information was considered interesting background information rather than vital information for the work of MFA staff interviewed at the country level.

The evaluation team finds the rationale for more effective MFA-internal information flow between the country level and Helsinki convincing, especially in this direction. There is a clear need for country-level information and experience as input into corporate-and global-level influencing activities. Such linkages effectively connect two otherwise very different worlds: that of development practitioners that witness the success or the failures of their attempts to combat poverty on the ground, with that of multilateral and corporate governance that may at times be somewhat distant from these realities.



**Finding 8. In terms of thematic coverage, all policy priority areas are addressed, including humanitarian assistance and issues related to the operational effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals. The degree to which specific priorities are covered by actual influencing effects cannot be established across all agencies, but gender clearly represents the single most important issue.**

This finding assesses thematic coverage of multilateral influencing, which is not straightforward. On the level of activities, important informal activities are difficult to cover. On the level of effects, the coverage of this evaluation is limited and influencing reports are unreliable, and on the level of contributions to Finland’s development priorities, an assessment is impossible. The team has therefore chosen to present thematic coverage in three different (imperfect) ways based on i) effects identified in Agency Cases, ii) effects highlighted in influencing plan synthesis reports, and iii) the topics mentioned in influencing reports themselves.

**Observed influencing effects.** The 36 influencing effects drawn from the eight Agency cases (Figure 9) can be sorted along the MFA’s current policy priority areas as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10:** Areas covered by Agency Case influencing effects.

Priority areas <sup>13</sup>	Specific issue	Number of effects
<b>1. Rights of women and girls</b>	Rights of women and girls	12
	Persons with disabilities	4
	Human rights (general)	2
<b>2. Sustainable economies and decent work</b>	Responsible business practices and innovation	3
	All other	3
<b>3. Education and peaceful democratic societies</b>	Education	3
	All other	–
<b>4. Climate and natural resources</b>	Climate change	5
	All other	3
<b>Effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals</b>		9

Source: Team analysis.

Influencing effects identified in Agency Cases strongly focus on gender, somewhat on climate change (and natural resources), and on sustainable economies and recent work which includes innovation. Least covered is priority area 3, with three influencing effects in the field of education. As mentioned earlier, this overview is not representative, and it should be noted that some influencing effects contributed to more than one area.

**Effects highlighted in influencing synthesis reports 2015–2017.** The influencing synthesis reports from 2015–2017 summarise thematic coverage as follows (MFA 2016d, 2017, 2018b).

<sup>13</sup> MFA 2020a. These priorities are very similar to the priorities defined in earlier Development Policy Programmes.





As a theme, gender equality stands out across almost all organisations

- In 2015, gender equality was reported to clearly stand out across almost all organisations. Additional thematic influence was reported related to the rights of persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups, climate and environmental sustainability, strengthening of trade conditions, promoting opportunities for education, and the promotion of human rights (in development banks). Finnish influence was reported to have also contributed to strengthening organisational effectiveness of Multilaterals and their ability to contribute to development results, especially in the fields of evaluation, performance management, transparency and inter-agency cooperation.
- In 2016, influencing effects were reported in the context of ensuring better attention to persons with disabilities, avoiding deterioration and further advancing gender equality, supporting innovation, supporting UN environmental organisations, and strengthening the evaluation function in others.
- In 2017, reported highlights were: continued influencing successes regarding inclusion of disability in human rights, progress in the promotion of gender equality, education to support youth employment in IFIs, cooperation with Finnish companies and innovation, climate financing, some progress in strengthening the focus of Multilaterals on LDCs, clarification of the mandate and role of some Multilaterals in the overall multilateral architecture, and gradual progress in strengthening the organisational effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals.

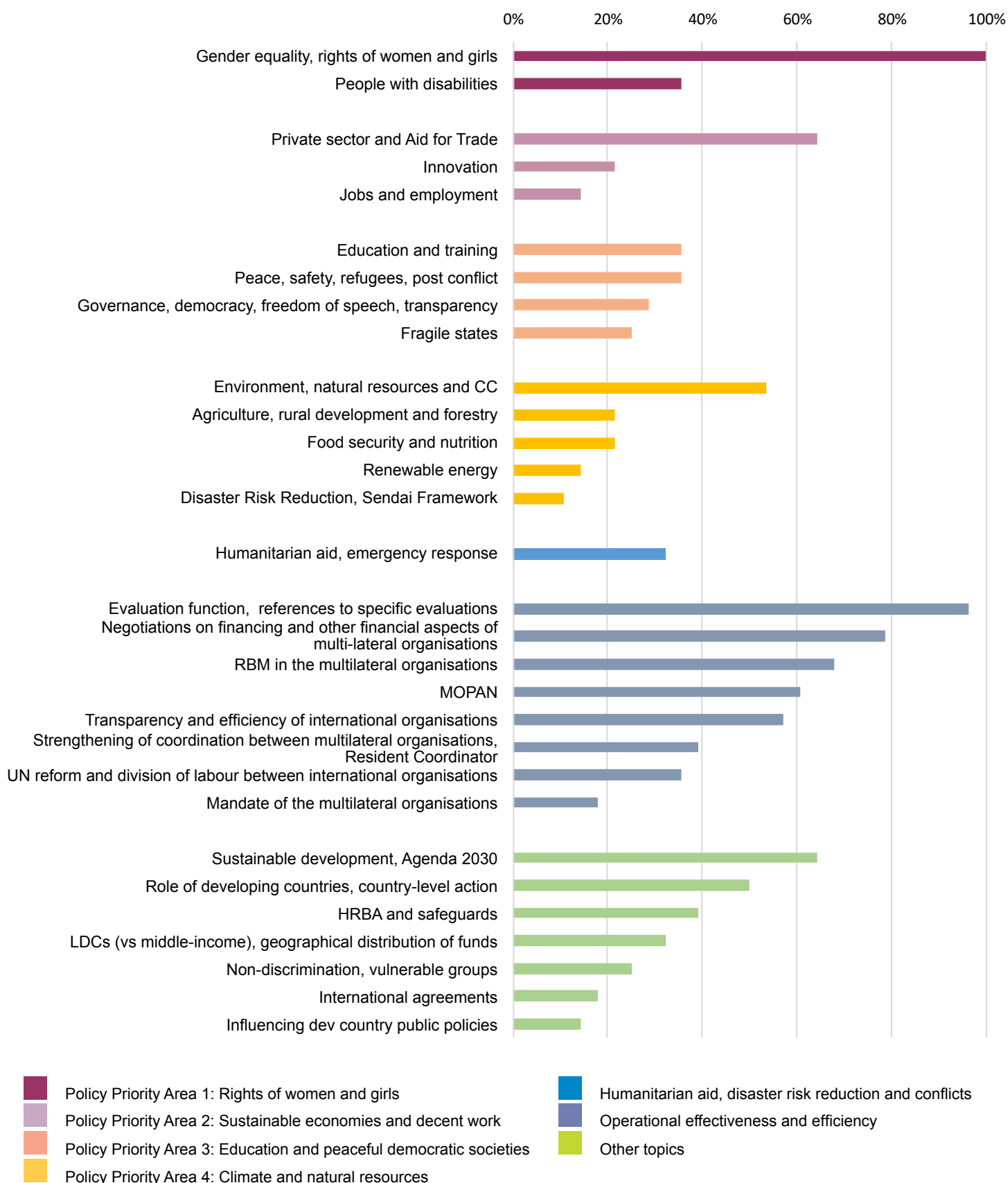
Gender stands out but the rights of persons with disabilities also take a very prominent position, reflecting their integration into humanitarian assistance on a global level. Education is positioned as a topic in all development banks, reflecting a similar focus in influencing plans. In addition, cooperation with Finnish companies is mentioned (but as an activity rather than results, also mentioning issues), and attempts to focus Multilaterals on LDCs. Supporting evaluation features most strongly within operational effectiveness and efficiency themes. Importantly, the work towards strengthening the mandates of Multilaterals within the overall multilateral architecture is mentioned, reflecting the Finnish policy objectives of supporting multilateralism, and the UN reform process in particular.

The findings are consistent with the effectiveness audit of Finnish multilateral cooperation that, based in interviews, identified Finland as visible especially in areas related to gender quality, rights of persons with disabilities, and human rights-based approach. (VTV 2017)

**Topics mentioned in influencing plans, reports and management responses 2014–2017.** Based on the evaluation team’s systematic review of influencing reports (Annex 4), a more fine-grained analysis of the coverage of thematic and operational issues was conducted and is presented below (Figure 13). Reflecting the approach taken in that analysis, the issues were not defined based on policy priority areas (or the objectives of influencing plans) but issues were defined and categorised bottom up, based on what the reports actually described. While this makes a comparison with development priorities less straightforward, the team leader grouped the identified categories according to these priorities.

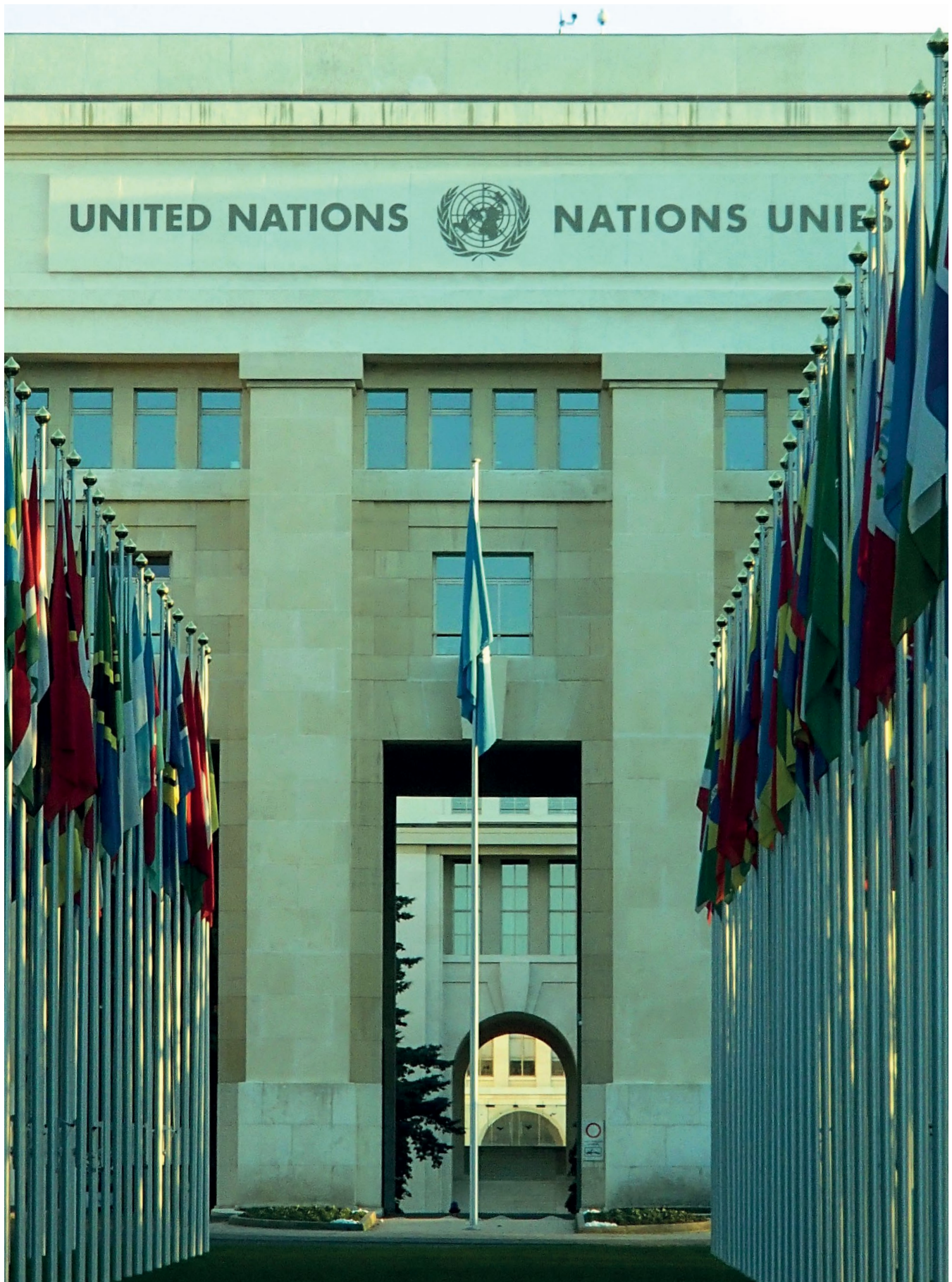


**Figure 13:** Topics and issues mentioned in influencing reports.



Source: Annex 4.







This analysis, while providing the highest resolution, should however also be treated with care as it does not focus only on effects but also counts mentions of these topics even if they are unrelated to effects (or possibly describe unsuccessful attempts).

With this in mind, and filtering for what the team considers to possibly represent influencing effects (rather than simple mentions of issues such as, for example, financial negotiations or MOPAN), some careful observations are made:

- All four of Finland's policy priority areas, and humanitarian assistance, are frequently mentioned;
- Gender is mentioned for all agencies;
- The disability theme is somewhat less prominent than its importance in synthesis reports and Agency Cases;
- The frequent mention of issues with relevance for the effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals is striking (M&E, RBM and transparency);
- Private sector also features frequently, but synthesis reports mention usually activities and no actual effects (and sometimes lack of success in terms of procurement drives for Finnish companies); and
- Environment and climate change are mentioned for more than half of all agencies, reflecting remarks in synthesis reports that this was a theme often covered even without being part of the targets.

Overall, across all three sources and with all the caveats in mind, the evaluation team concludes that gender equality clearly represents the single most important and visible area of Finnish multilateral influence.

Regarding operational effectiveness and efficiency, results-based management and evaluation clearly stand out, which was also confirmed in the Agency Cases. The rights of persons with disabilities may be somewhat of a rising area, reflecting the success story described earlier in this report. Education has become a focus area in development banks and was also mentioned for other agencies (while dropped in others, e.g. UNICEF). Cooperation with and promotion of procurement through Finnish companies are very frequently mentioned, but comparatively few results are reported, and issues are mentioned in several reports.

## 4.2 Analysis of influencing activities by channel

This section presents evidence about the effectiveness with which the MFA's influencing activities have been implemented. It provides the basis for answering the evaluation sub-question "*Have the MFA's influencing activities been implemented effectively?*".

Table 11 provides a summary and also covers informal and collaborative cross-cutting activities related to multilateral influencing. Detailed findings are presented in separate sections for each influencing channel.



**Table 11:** Overview of influencing channels and types of influencing activities.

Influencing channel	Influencing activity (type)	Relevance and effectiveness for influencing	Influence is targeted at:			How does this activity contribute to influencing effects?
			People	Policies	Operations	
All channels	Relationship building, relationship management, networking (frequent communication, interaction, collaboration)	High	X			Trust-based personal relationships are the basis for effective influencing; Networking allows early identification of influencing opportunities
	Active participation in existing like-minded groups and establishing new collaboration with like-minded countries	High	X			Aligned groups can amplify share of voice and financial weight
Corporate governance	Direct or indirect participation in governance (including preparatory work and alignment of priorities if working through a group)	High	X	X	X	Ensures that the governing bodies fulfil their general duties, which ensures the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the Multilateral
						Raise awareness about thematic issues/Finnish policy priorities, put specific issues on the board agenda and to decision-making
						Aligned groups can amplify Finland's share of voice and weight which is especially useful for a comparatively small donor
Fund allocation processes	Allocation of core funding	High	X	X	X	Funding "buys" entry, influence, sometimes direct voting power and better access to influencing Flexible funding allows the Multilaterals to freely allocate their funding to best fulfil their mandate Strengthens Finland's reputation as supporter (not just user) of the multilateral system, which strengthens Finland's general influence Replenishment processes represent useful occasions for influencing
	Allocation of earmarked funding (corporate level)	High	X	X	X	Earmarked funding allows supporting Finnish thematic priorities directly with potential for influence
	Allocation of multi-bi funding (country level)	Medium	X	X	X	Multi-bi funding strengthens the country operations of Multilaterals and offers a platform for influencing Multilaterals locally
	Influencing Multilaterals by using funding as reward or sanction	Low	X	X	X	Pressure Multilaterals towards adopting specific priorities or approaches
Staff placements	Support the recruitment of Finns into corporate leadership positions in Multilaterals	Low	X	X	X	Increases Finnish presence in selected Multilaterals Strengthens Finland's reputation as supporter of the multilateral system, which strengthens Finland's general influence
	Junior and mid-level staff placement programmes (headquarter and country level)	Low to high	X	X	X	Increases Finnish presence in Multilaterals in Finland's policy priority areas when used strategically Strengthens Finland's reputation as supporter of the multilateral system, which strengthens Finland's general influence
Other formal and informal channels	High-level visits and consultations	High	X			Supports coordination and alignment of priorities between Finland and a Multilateral Establishes and maintains senior-level relationships
	Thematic advocacy and political support	High	X			Provides political support for Multilaterals in specific areas Strengthens Finland's reputation as thematic leader in specific areas
	Sharing of knowledge and experience	High	X			Raises awareness and informs organisational learning in Multilaterals

Source. Team analysis.

Strengths and opportunities	Weaknesses and risks	When is this influencing activity used?
MFA staff is usually very effective at this (related to staff quality/motivation and Finland's reputation)	This requires commitment and resources, which puts pressure on scarce staff, i.e. not everything can be covered Changes and rotations of key MFA staff disrupt existing relationships	Always as part of influencing
Finland is usually very effective at this (related to staff quality/motivation and Finland's reputation)	Direct representation is limited to "windows" when Finland is directly represented on governance bodies	Always (for general governance duties)
Finland, usually together with partners, has been effective in bringing priority issues onto the board agenda and to decision-making	Access and voice are limited by a low relative funding share in several agencies, especially after 2015/16 funding cuts	Selectively for pushing specific Finnish policy priorities
Finland is usually an effective partner in constituencies/voting groups (related to staff quality/motivation and Finland's reputation)	This requires commitment and resources, which puts pressure on scarce staff, i.e. not everything can be covered	Always as part of influencing
Opportunity to strategically identify Multilaterals where funding can make a difference Finland has traditionally prioritised core over earmarked funding This has also strengthened Finland's reputation as supporter of the multilateral system Finland (with others) is usually effective in influencing Multilaterals during replenishment processes	Funding cuts have led to reductions in core (and thematic) funding Reductions in core funding have also limited access and influence Negative effects on Finland's reputation have not (yet) been significant but the cuts have been noticed	Core funding is Finland's primary multilateral funding modality
Finland is effective in using earmarked funding to spearhead specific issues	Earmarked funding can send mixed signals regarding Finland's priority for core funding Staff capacity for managing earmarked funding is limited and reduces Finland's influence	Selectively (for pushing specific issues if they are not sufficiently effective based on core funding)
Finland is effective in influencing Multilaterals in the context of Multi-bi projects Country-level information (not only about influencing) can be useful for the MFA's corporate-level influencing efforts	Country-level influencing effects in Multilaterals are unlikely to lead to agency-wide effects MFA-internal exchange of information and experience between the country and the corporate level is not effective	Multi-bi funding is not decided with multilateral influencing in mind (but by how to best reach bilateral development cooperation objectives for the respective country)
This approach is not used by Finland	Using funding as pressure tactic does not match (and can therefore damage) Finland's reputation as supporter of the multilateral system Small funding share of Finland in many Multilaterals would limit the effectiveness of this approach	This approach is not used by Finland
Potential to place more Finns into leadership positions in Multilaterals Finland operates sound staff placement programmes that focus on development policy priority areas Potential to maintain closer contact with Finns working in Multilaterals for information and access Staff placements can be highly influential in a non-competitive scenario, i.e. when they provide Multilaterals with staff capacity and expertise, they would otherwise not have	When staff placements are competitive, there is usually no significant difference – and hence no net influencing effect – between a specific position being filled by a Finn or another equally qualified person Staff placement levels have been significantly reduced because of the budget cuts Finland is relatively hands-off in terms of maintaining contact with and using information that can be gained from access to Finns working in multilateral organisations can provide	Broadly (if the objective is placing Finns into multilateral organisations) Selectively for providing Multilaterals with critical and otherwise unavailable expertise and capacity (if the objective is multilateral influencing)
Finland was active and effective regarding high-level visits and consultations	Meeting agendas should not be overcharged	When coordination is required and with some minimum frequency (to maintain relations)
Finland was effective in mobilising prominent, high-level individuals Finland has built a strong reputation as thematic leader in several areas	Establishing thematic leadership is a slow and work-intensive process and hence limited by resources (staff, expertise, research) Thematic leadership is probably limited to areas in which Finland is considered to possess relevant domestic experience ("walk the talk")	Selectively, as part of longer-term global influencing campaigns
Finland was effective in informing knowledge generation, synthesis, and dissemination of relevant knowledge	Limited to areas in which Finland possesses relevant domestic experience	Selectively (choice of theme and opportunity)



#### 4.2.1 Influencing through corporate governance processes

Influencing through corporate governance processes covers participation in meetings of boards, committees and other corporate governance bodies but also includes preparatory activities, for example coordination of positions with partners, consultations and knowledge sharing.

As member and shareholder of multilateral organisations, Finland has general governance-related duties towards these organisations that are described and analysed in Finding 9. In addition, Finland also uses this channel for more issue-driven influencing, which is described in Finding 10.

**Finding 9. Finland’s responsibilities in the governing bodies of Multilaterals go beyond specific influencing activities and are primarily related to ensuring that that these organisations achieve their mandates effectively and efficiently. Finland fulfils these responsibilities proactively, professionally, constructively and in a non-partisan manner.**

Corporate governance aims at improving institutional performance

Corporate governance in the context of development institutions can be generally described as “the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives” (United Kingdom Audit Commission 2003, p. 4) and it is adding “value by improving the performance of the [institution] through more efficient management, more strategic and equitable resource allocation and service provision, and other such efficiency improvements that lend themselves to improved development outcomes and impacts. It also ensures the ethical and effective implementation of its core functions” (World Bank 2007).

Typical functions of multilateral corporate governance bodies are to (World Bank 2007):

- Provide strategic direction to the organisation;
- Oversee management;
- Ensure stakeholder participation;
- Manage risks;
- Manage conflicts; and
- Oversee audits and evaluations.

One concrete example of such functions – for the UN Women Executive Board – is listed in Box 8.

**Box 8:** Responsibilities of the UN Women Executive Board

The executive board of UN-Women is subject to the authority of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has the following functions:

- a. To implement the policies formulated by the General Assembly and the coordination and guidance received from the ECOSOC;
- b. To receive information from and give guidance to the Under-Secretary-General/ Executive Director on the work of UN-Women;
- c. To ensure that the activities and operational strategies of UN-Women are consistent with the overall policy guidance set forth by the General Assembly and the ECOSOC, in accordance with their respective responsibility as set out in the Charter;



- d. To monitor the performance of UN-Women;
- e. To decide on administrative and financial plans and budgets;
- f. To recommend new initiatives to the ECOSOC and, through the council, to the General Assembly, as necessary;
- g. To encourage and examine new programme initiatives;
- h. To submit annual reports to the ECOSOC at its substantive session; these could include recommendations, where appropriate, for improvement of field-level coordination.

Source: UN Women 2015.

These typical functions of governing bodies imply that Finland has important governance-related responsibilities that are primarily geared towards ensuring that multilateral organisations are run in such a way that they fulfil their mandates and achieve their objectives in an effective, efficient, transparent and ethical manner.

These responsibilities go beyond multilateral influencing activities as defined in this report. They represent general responsibilities Finland has vis-a-vis Multilaterals as member and – in the case of IFIs – also as also shareholder.

Based on interviews with other donors and multilateral staff in the context of Agency Cases, the evaluation team found that Finland was widely considered to fulfil these responsibilities well, as illustrated by several examples drawn from the Agency Cases:

- At IFAD, Finnish staff and experts who participated in board and other work were considered professional, consistent, focused, active, committed, well-prepared, and neutral. They demonstrated leadership, volunteered for responsibilities and used coalitions effectively. Within the IFAD governance system and management, Finland was regarded therefore as influential. “When Finns talk, people listen” was a common statement made by IFAD stakeholders.
- At UN Women and UNFPA, Finland was regarded as a very active participant on the executive board and was described by representatives of other member states as being professional, constructive, well prepared, open minded, ready to support others and as a good and inclusive team player. Finland was considered a strong and fundamental partner who believed in the agency’s mandate and had established collegial relationships with the agency’s management.
- While board work and influencing at FAO was often a group effort, Finland sometimes took on additional responsibilities. For example, in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Finland volunteered to serve as the chair of the Drafting Committee in 2019 during the EU Presidency. In 2016, the Permanent Representative volunteered to chair the CFS working group responsible for the Connecting smallholders to markets group. In 2017, the Deputy Permanent Representative served as the EU Focal Point during the negotiations regarding policy recommendations on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition.





**Finding 10. Corporate governance processes represent an important influencing channel for Finland. Its representatives used them effectively through consistent and persistent messaging, by complementing formal board work with formal and informal preparatory activities, by being a team player, and by adapting to the diverse governance arrangements of the multilateral partners.**

**Influencing through governance is a central and essential channel**

While influencing effects are almost never realised through a single influencing channel alone, influencing through corporate governance was found to be a central and essential channel for multilateral influence across the eight Agency Cases. Naturally, influencing through this channel does not apply at the country level (and country-level participation in donor coordination groups or steering committees are covered in the other influencing channels).

Multilateral corporate governance arrangements were found to considerably reflect the different nature and type of multilateral organisations, and their different mandates. To evidence and illustrate the variety of arrangements, Annex 11 provides summaries of the arrangements of all eight Agency Case organisations, including an assessment of the degree and the specific instances of Finland's representation and participation in the governing bodies of these Multilaterals. Some common characteristics and typical variations observed by the evaluation team are summarised below:

- The highest-level governance bodies meet relatively infrequently and, as such, day-to-day governance responsibilities are typically delegated to executive boards or similar bodies that meet more frequently, between every few days to every few months.
- In executive boards and similar governance bodies, Finland is often not represented as a country but as one member of voting or constituency groups and lists. In this setup, one country is chosen to represent the entire group, and this representation normally rotates between group members every couple of years. Examples are the Nordic and the Nordic Plus groups, and “Western European and Others Groups” (WEOGs). As part of these groupings, Finland only participates directly in corporate governance when it represents the whole group. Most of the time, Finland and all other group members are represented by another country in charge of speaking for the group.
- Executive boards often delegate some of their work to lower-level governance or administrative bodies. The WBG, for example, has five permanent subcommittees and UN Women has both a “Bureau” – representing somewhat of an “executive board of the executive board” – as well as a proper Secretariat of the executive board for administratively supporting these executive bodies.
- Some Multilaterals do not have a formal board, for example when directly attached to global governance arrangements like the United Nations General Assembly or executive bodies like the United Nations Secretariat. Drawing on the systematic review of influencing plans and reports (Annex 4), influencing through corporate governance means working through other bodies, for example the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Advisory Commission, or UNHCR's Executive Committee, by using political dialogue and direct relations as in the case of OCHA, or through “indirect influencing” in the case of ISDR.

The evaluation found that, with the exception of some new staff that had recently begun to work in these positions, MFA staff in charge of multilateral influencing general had a good to very good understanding of these governance arrangements and established strong and trust-based working relations with the key people involved.



Influencing effectiveness was considered highest when Finland chaired, vice-chaired or represented constituencies or voting groups on the executive boards of these agencies and when it had a prominent role in lower-level committees, bureaus or secretariats. These occasions represented windows of opportunity for effective influencing, whenever Finland rotated or was elected into one or more of these prominent positions. This said, influencing board work indirectly through such groups or other, more informal, channels also was important and effective as the following examples drawn from the more detailed analysis in Annex 4 illustrate:

- At FAO, Finland had been in a unique situation from 2017 to 2020 because it sat on the council, representing all Nordic countries, and because Finland chaired the European Regional Group as the EU coordination. This provided an opportunity to influence the agenda and helped, for example, to push the idea of the Year of Plant Health forward up to the launch of the year in late 2019 by the Director General of FAO.
- At the WBG, Finland held the Nordic Baltic chair at the Board between 2013 and 2016 and served as Chair of the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE), the most important sub-committee of the Board. This period was widely regarded a time of very strong Finnish influence at the WBG.
- At IFAD, Finland's Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy was a Vice-Chair of the council in 2016–2017, and also a Governor that represented Finland. Finland was elected to the IFAD Board of Directors for the period 2018–2020 and acted as co-convenor in 2018, and convenor in 2019 and 2020. Finland was also a member of the executive board from 2013 to 2015.

Interviews conducted for Agency Cases confirmed that during and in-between such occasions, Finland also worked effectively through like-minded and other donor groupings. For example:

- According to interviews at FAO, Finland was active in influencing FAO's governing bodies through reference groups, for example among the Nordic countries, the EU and regional European groupings. The Nordic group and related informal influencing were considered at the core of most influencing work at FAO, also when influencing positions of the EU. Before each council meeting, the Nordic group got together and agreed on the burden sharing and division of labour, and group statements were prepared collaboratively. A common Nordic paper highlighting the shared key priorities of these countries for FAO had been useful in the preparation of statements.
- At UNFPA, Finland was successful in promoting its policy priorities on the board by collaborating with other like-minded countries, sometimes with the Nordics and sometimes through the WEOG group and sometimes even across groups.

Influencing activities during the meetings of the governing bodies, however, only represented the “tip of the iceberg”. In most interviews, other formal and informal preparatory activities were reported to be overall more important for influence.

Such activities happened in a great many additional fora, formal and informal. Examples were informal coordinating groups, long-term alliances with like-minded countries, or ad-hoc groupings with respect to specific issues, cross- and joint-agency bodies, donor coordination groups, groups coordinating the position of the EU, task forces, and so forth. Based on what was reported in influencing reports, FAO, ISDR, UNEP and UNESCO stand out as organisations in which Finland seems to be most active in such additional fora (Annex 4). In interviews related to the Agency Cases, Finland was well recognised for leading, supporting and enabling this kind of work. For example:

**Influencing during official meetings represented only the “tip of the iceberg”**



- At the WFP, Finland organised a side event in 2017 on the rights of persons with disabilities which also included the Finnish deaf rap artist Signmark. This event was commonly deemed a success in terms of raising awareness and discussion about the theme with WFP management. Regarding school feeding, Finland had organised direct meetings with the responsible WFP director. Other examples were two side events and a brown bag lunch for addressing the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action organised in 2017 and 2019 (the 2017 side event was opened by the Finnish Under-Secretary of State, Development Policy).
- Also, for the WFP, and taking advantage of the Finnish evaluation team member in charge of that Agency Case, the team reviewed about 50 memos and emails in Finnish language from the Permanent Representation and involved desk officers and sectoral advisors in Helsinki that evidenced that these staff were very actively involved in influencing work, for example by commenting on board-level strategic draft documents, management plans, protection policies, implementation of gender policies, and country strategies, as well as carrying out preparatory work concerning high level visits, joint statements to the executive board, side meetings and side events.
- At IFAD, as a Co-Convenor and Convenor for List A countries in 2018–2020 and within the Nordic group, Finland played a coordination role in guiding IFAD’s reforms focusing on the financial architecture, enhanced decentralisation, and governance. The Finnish contributions were highly appreciated by interviewed IFAD and donor partner staff for being professional and solution-oriented to serve the needs of the organisation; some were even praised as exceptional.

Across all eight Agency Cases, the evaluation team found that Finland’s success in influencing through the corporate governance channel had depended on the consistency and persistency of Finnish messaging, as illustrated below:

- At IFAD, Finland was appreciated as a trusted, committed and consistent long-term partner that helped to address needs identified within the organisations, including its governance processes. Finland was working with these agencies and partners over a long time in a consistent and committed manner. Changes in Finland’s government were not perceived to result in any drastic changes to the core agenda of Finland and to how Finnish representatives worked.
- In the case of the WFP, the MFA was perceived as very active in influencing the executive board during the entire evaluation period, highlighting consistently Finnish policy priorities such as the needs and rights of women and girls, the rights of persons with disabilities, results-based management and risk management and oversight.
- At UN Women, interviewees stressed that Finland has been consistent (and was described as brave) in promoting Finnish priorities with regards to women’s and girls’ rights, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) rights, SRHR and related issues. Finland was described to convey the same message on the Board and even in fora where it might be uncomfortable to do so. After the gag rule and the decreasing support for SRHR and LGBTQI+ rights globally, Finland, together with the other Nordics, had stood firm in promoting these issues. In the preparatory work of UN Women’s Strategic Plan for 2018–2021, the Nordics had strongly influenced the organisation against other pressures to maintain and include SRHR and LGBTQI+ aspects.

#### **4.2.2 Influencing through fund allocation processes**

Influencing through fund allocation processes refers to Finland’s funding decisions related to replenishments, core and earmarked budget allocations and multi-bi funding. In addition, as in the case of influencing through corporate governance processes, this influencing channel also covers



formal and informal interactions and activities taking place in preparation of those funding decisions.<sup>14</sup>

Overall, this influencing channel contributed to about half of all influencing effects observed by the evaluation team, as described in Finding 2. This reflects that this channel does not always offer opportunities for influencing, but strongly depends on the financial cycles of the multilateral partners.

Finding 11 characterises Finland as multilateral donor in the context of how other donors manage their multilateral contributions. In Finding 12, the different influencing tactics and the implementation effectiveness associated with core, earmarked and multi-bi funding are analysed. Finding 13 highlights the role influencing activities had during replenishment processes at the WBG and IFAD.

**Finding 11. In policy and practice, Finland supports and invests in the multilateral system rather than focusing on “using” it. This has strengthened Finland’s relationships with its multilateral partners.**

Finland’s support to the multilateral system has a long tradition and a central place in its development and foreign policies. In terms of funding to Multilaterals, this translates into the promotion of core over earmarked funding. It also means that Finland invests into relevant multilateral organisations, even – and in some cases especially – if they experience operational issues.

Other donors, for example Sweden and the UK, follow a somewhat different approach and increase or reduce funding to their multilateral partners depending on their operational performance, as illustrated in Table 12 below and described in their respective strategies for multilateral development policy and cooperation (Government of Sweden 2017, 2007, UK 2016).

**Table 12:** Funding-related consequences for Multilaterals with respect to their operational effectiveness and their relevance vis-a-vis Sweden’s development priorities

	Multilateral is relevant	Multilateral is not relevant
<b>Higher effectiveness</b>	Increased support, non-earmarked	Reduced support, phase-out in the longer term
<b>High effectiveness</b>	Unchanged or increased support, non-earmarked	
<b>Low effectiveness</b>	Reduced support, possible phase-out in the longer term	

Source: Adapted from Government of Sweden 2017

Without having analysed the degree to which these policies have been put into practice, they reflect two notions, approaches or beliefs concerning how to maximise multilateral development effectiveness:

- On the portfolio level, by selecting – among all relevant Multilaterals – those that perform best; and
- On the level of single Multilaterals, by incentivising increased performance through financial rewards and sanctions.

Instead, Finland’s development policies focus more directly on supporting the multilateral system and its institutions. For example, the 2012 DPP (MFA 2012) states that:

<sup>14</sup> This channel only concerns Finland’s funding to Multilaterals and not how Multilaterals allocate their funding internally. The latter is decided by their governing bodies and therefore covered by the corporate governance influencing channel in the previous section.



*“The United Nations (UN) is the cornerstone of the multilateral system and has an important role in advancing human rights and human security. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the UN, its values and working methods must be strengthened, its development sector reformed, and its overall effectiveness enhanced. Finland will strive for the reinforcement of the UN’s legitimacy and performance and to promote the implementation of the UN Delivering as One policy by supporting the UN and its agencies mainly through core funding.”*

And, with regard to International Financial Institutions (IFIs):

*“International development financing institutions have a key role in combating the effects of the international economic crisis. At the country level they are major development financiers, to which Finland channels funds mainly as core funding. The use of funding is determined by financing institutions’ mandates and by priorities agreed in replenishment negotiations. [...] Finland supports the enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the UN and other key multilateral actors – such as the World Bank.”*

Both the 2012 and 2016 DPPs also suggest performance-based prioritisation of Multilaterals, reflecting the first of the two notions listed above. But it appears that this approach was never put into practice. For example, as planned in the 2012 DPP (MFA 2012) and reflected in the 2013 UN Strategy of the Finnish Foreign Service (MFA 2013b), the MFA conducted a strategic analysis of multilateral cooperation” in 2013 (MFA 2013a, 4GC 2013). This analysis was less profound but otherwise similar to Multilateral Aid Reviews (MARs) conducted by DFID (2011, 2016). The Finnish assessment however remained without consequences for the MFA’s multilateral portfolio. Interviewed staff involved in these processes stated that the idea had indeed been to introduce some elements of performance-based management, but that this idea had not gained traction and was subsequently abandoned.

A recent evaluation made the same observation and concluded more generally, also in relation to how the UK approached this question (Palenberg et al. 2019):

*“While other donors such as the UK systematically use comparative results information to inform decisions regarding their multilateral [...] aid portfolios [...], there seems to exist only limited possibility and appetite within the MFA to do so. For example, while a similar but lighter review was conducted at the MFA regarding its multilateral aid portfolio, that study remained without budgetary consequences.”*

That evaluation also reflected the perceptions of staff managing Multilaterals, that

*“past overall performance of multilateral institutions or the effectiveness of Finland’s influencing activities did not have – and should not have – much influence on which institutions to work with, or on the level of support. Instead, budgets were determined by the availability of resources, operational staff capacity in the units, alignment with Finland’s development policy priorities, exceeding funding thresholds to have “a seat at the table”, and continuity as long-term shareholders or partners. Replenishments and capital increases of development banks were negotiated on a bank-by-bank basis based on information provided by each bank.”* (Palenberg et al. 2019)

The same evaluation exemplified this by noting that humanitarian funding to WFP and UNICEF had seen above-average budget reductions despite good performance, while funding towards OCHA had been maintained despite financial management issues.

Overall, the different notions or philosophies for managing multilateral partners can be described by a primary focus on using versus strengthening supporting the multilateral system and its institutions, as illustrated in Figure 14. While these notions are not mutually exclusive and most donors cover elements of both aspects in their strategies, Finland has positioned itself considerably more towards the “supporter of the system” side of this spectrum, whereas the approaches of Sweden and the UK tend more of a “user” perspective.

**Finland has positioned itself as supporter of the multilateral system**



**Figure 14:** Different approaches for managing multilateral partnerships.

Primary perspective	“User”		“Supporter”
<b>Principal objective</b>	Implement development cooperation effectively and efficiently through the multilateral policy channel	↔	Strengthen the multilateral system and its institutions so they can fulfil their respective mandates effectively and efficiently
<b>Portfolio-level tactic</b>	Select – among all relevant Multilaterals – those that perform best	↔	Establish long-term partnerships with relevant Multilaterals
<b>Organisation-level tactic</b>	Incentivise increased performance through financial rewards and sanctions	↔	Support increased performance

Source: Team analysis.

With relevance for multilateral influencing, the evaluation team found that Finland’s approach to multilateral funding as expressed investor into the multilateral system and its institutions had strongly impacted Finland’s role, standing and reputation as donor and partner. This, in turn, had important consequences for Finland’s ability to influence its multilateral partners.

For example, drawing on the UN Women Agency Case, Finland was a founding partner to UN Women in 2010 and 2011 and made a conscious choice to become one of the organisation’s major donors. Finland decided to stand by UN Women and continued to support the organisation also after 2013 when it was ranked as one of the lower performing Multilaterals. The approach chosen was to support this young organisation to grow and improve, and consequently, Finland is now perceived as a loyal and hand-holding partner. Through core funding and softly earmarked funding, Finland invested its influence and capital in a strategic partnership with UN Women rather than earmarking funds for specific flagship projects. Finland’s consistent and significant financial support to UN Women, coupled with high-level political support, were viewed by interviewed donor partners and UN Women staff to have paved the way for a close and constructive, trusting relationship. This has brought Finland into a unique position to influence UN Women with respect to Finnish development policy priorities. This evaluation found that Finland’s investment in and relationship with UN Women at the corporate level was mirrored at the country level.

**Finding 12. As outspoken promoter of core funding to Multilaterals, Finland has nevertheless made strategic use of earmarked funding, reflecting different influencing tactics associated with these types of funding.**

**Promotion of core funding.** Finland’s strong support to multilateralism in general translates into policy goals of supporting Multilaterals primarily through core funding. Core funding means that multilateral organisations can freely allocate those funds within their mandates. Core funding is therefore understood to strengthen their institutional integrity and coherence, and to support the effectiveness and efficiency with which multilateral organisations can implement their respective mandates. Finland’s 2012 DPP reflects this regarding UN organisations and IFIs alike (MFA 2012):

*“Finland will strive for the reinforcement of the UN’s legitimacy and performance and to promote the implementation of the UN Delivering as One policy by supporting the UN and its agencies mainly through core funding. [...] International development financing institutions have a key role in combating the effects of the international economic crisis. At the country level they are major development financiers, to which Finland channels funds mainly as core funding. The use of funding is determined by financing institutions’ mandates and by priorities agreed in replenishment negotiations.”*



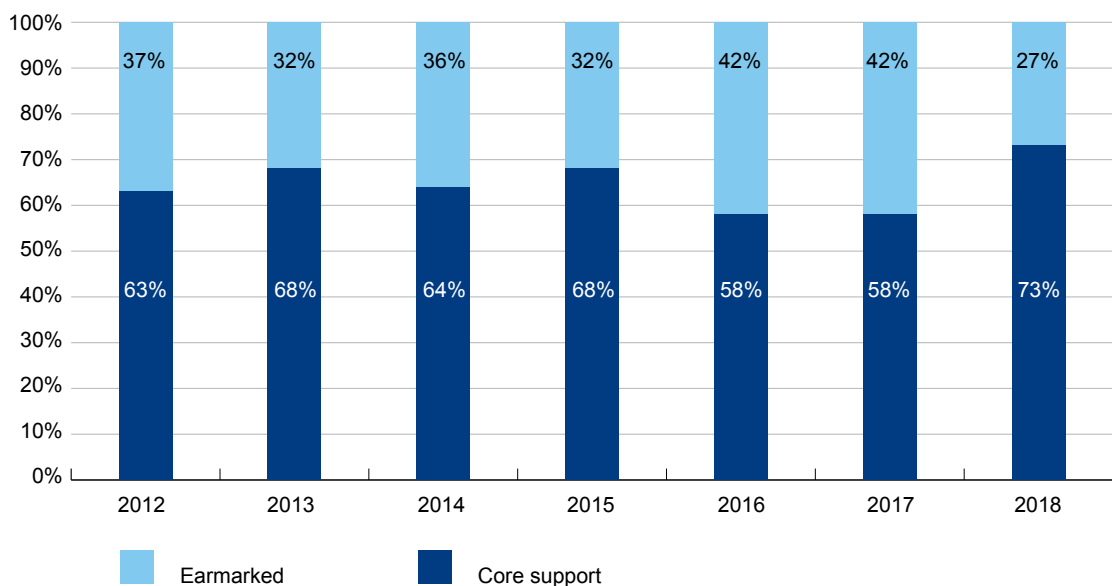


Specifically, for Finland's humanitarian assistance, the 2013 UN Strategy of the Finnish Foreign Service posits (MFA 2013b): "Finland does not have any bilateral humanitarian assistance projects. Rather, Finland channels the bulk of its assistance in a centralised manner through the UN system." The proportion of Finland's humanitarian financing provided as core funding also features as an aggregate indicator for reporting on Finland's Development Policy to Parliament (MFA 2020a).

Finland's share of core funding has been traditionally high

When comparing these priorities with the funding structure over the last years, it is visible that the share of core funding of total multilateral funding has been traditionally high and grew from 63 percent in 2012 to 73 percent in 2018, after being lower in 2016 and 2017, likely as a consequence of the overall cuts in funding and the greater flexibility in adjusting volumes in the multilateral policy channel, rather than reflecting any specific de-prioritisation of that policy channel vis-à-vis others.

Figure 15: Share of core and earmarked funding, 2012–2018.<sup>15</sup>



Source: MFA Statistical Data 2019.

**Influencing effects related to core and earmarked funding.** Drawing on a broad range of evidence (the eight Agency Cases, two country visits, influencing plans and reports, the review of approaches by other donors, and additional interviews at the MFA), the level and structure of Finland's multilateral funding had three important consequences in terms of influencing:

1. Finland's relative level of (core) funding to Multilaterals affects Finland's reputation and the quality of its relations with the Multilateral and thereby its ability to influence the organisation and its work as a whole. This was especially visible during the funding cuts, albeit loss of access and standing was overall less dramatic than interviewed MFA staff had feared.
2. Earmarked funding at the corporate level can be used effectively to spearhead specific thematic priorities, by raising awareness, strengthening capacities, and by financially supporting specific aspects in the work of Multilaterals.

<sup>15</sup> This covers all MFA multilateral disbursements, including EU development cooperation instruments and humanitarian support. Earmarked funding includes thematic funding going to multilateral organisation headquarters as well as multi-bi support (regional, project, basket/pooled funds).



3. Multi-bi funding strengthens the local operations of Multilaterals and offers a platform for influencing through other channels, but is unlikely to contribute to further changes in these organisations.

In what follows, the first two points are evidenced. The third point was covered as part of country-level influencing in Findings 6 and 7.

In the Agency Cases, consequences of both funding modalities on Finland's ability to influence were identified and some examples are illustrated here.

Earmarked funding can be used effectively to spearhead specific thematic priorities

- In the case of **UN Women**, core funding was especially important in relation to its triple mandate. The evaluation team found that Finland had contributed significantly to the growth and strengthening of UN Women through providing highly flexible core funding to the organisation. Interviewees considered this important to any UN organisation but especially for UN Women because of its triple mandate. The rationale was that operations could also be supported by earmarked funding, but the normative work and the UN wide coordination activities could (or were) not and hence relied on core contributions. For long-term results, especially within normative work, long-term core funding was considered crucial. Instead, some countries preferred to fund concrete operations that could yield results quickly. In this context, Finland's long-term support through core contributions was highly appreciated and considered crucial support for UN Women's normative and coordinating mandates. That funding behaviour was found to have created trust and contributed to building a strong mutual partnership between UN Women and Finland.
- In contrast, at **FAO**, targeted earmarked funding was considered the main means for influencing related to funding. During the evaluation period, Finland's focus had been entirely on providing thematic earmarked funding. Finland funded three major programmes (FFF, MICCA and the FAO-Finland Forest Programme) and actively participated in the steering bodies of these programmes. At the time the evaluation was conducted, only FFF was active. Two Finns were on the programme steering committee and a representative from the respective MFA unit in Helsinki (KEO-90) attended the meetings of the FFF Donor Group.
- At **UNFPA**, Finland's long term and consistent contribution to the organisation's core budget was found to have created trust and good working relationships between Finland and UNFPA. Core contributions gave UNFPA flexibility and agility to focus on its mandate rather than the preferences expressed by donors through earmarked funding. At the same time, relatively small amounts of funding, if used strategically, were considered potentially very effective in yielding results and in leveraging additional funding, for example in the context of Finland's softly earmarked funding to the UNFPA Innovation Fund (funded together Denmark) and to the EvalPartners budget (together with USAID).
- At **UNICEF**, both funding modalities were considered useful. Regarding earmarked funding, supporting UNICEF's innovation work with relatively small amounts of earmarked funding was found to be strategic and smart. In a situation with very limited funding to a large organisation with an already solid donor base there was little or no chance for Finland to become a significant donor in comparison with others, and Finland was able to carve out a niche for itself where it had been able to contribute to significant results. Finland's main financial contributions to UNICEF during the evaluation period had however been through core funding and was appreciated by UNICEF because it gave the organisation flexibility and enabled it to deliver on their mandate.
- At **IFAD**, both core and earmarked funding were associated with different types of influence. Core funding was found to provide more voting power in List A but also voice: larger funders were being listened to more and had better access to IFAD senior management, including the President. Many of the interviewed donor partners and representatives of IFAD management



stated that Finland became a more credible player with more influencing opportunities after providing a €50 million concessional loan combined with a grant. In contrast, until 2014, Finland had also provided supplementary earmarked funding (€5 million) to support gender, climate change and environment and targeted funding to IFAD's ASAP programme, which improved Finland's influencing opportunities specifically for that programme: as a member of the ASAP Steering Committee. Under five subsequent arrangements between 1989–2014, Finland provided IFAD with \$9 million supplementary funding earmarked to support the thematic priorities of pro-poor policy, gender equality, South-South cooperation, information and communication technologies, fisheries, micro-finance, climate, bio-fuel production and natural resource management, with half of the funds allocated to Africa. One of the results of Finland's supplementary funds was the development of IFAD's social environmental and climate assessment procedures – the main tool to ensure that IFAD-supported projects and programmes are sustainable. The evaluation could not find strong evidence that Finland influenced IFAD's strategies directly through these interventions, but, Finland's support to them was found to have complemented influencing through IFAD governance bodies and processes.

- At ITC, soft earmarked thematic funding was found to have been the main influencing means for Finland, and Finland's role as one of the major supporters of ITC had “bought” influencing power. Funding had been earmarked for specific ITC focus areas, but ITC decided how to use funding within that area. Finland was seen by ITC as one of the major donors which brought Finland credibility. However, ITC also appreciated that, recently, Finland had provided flexible, unearmarked funding although overall funding levels had declined. The level of funding, particularly into ITC's Trust Fund Window 1 was considered important for influencing. ITC was found to pay special attention to the requirements and priorities of its key Window 1 donors. Increasing Window 1 funding was considered an important vote of confidence for ITC.

Overall, the evaluation team found that core and earmarked funding at the corporate level reflected two different influencing “tactics”. While core funding “bought” general influence and strengthened institutional partnerships, earmarked funding could be effectively used to spearhead specific thematic priorities.

In interviews and documents, the evaluation team could not detect a systematic strategy or principles Finland applied for choosing when to select earmarked over core funding. Rather, decisions seemed to be made case-by-case and based on specific contexts and situations. As described in Finding 11, other countries reflect such principles in their multilateral policies and strategies, but the evaluation team did not verify to what degree these principles were applied in practice.

Regarding multi-bi, interviewees reported that the decision for multi-bi versus other funding modalities was not driven by influencing arguments but was also taken on a case-by-case basis. Arguments in favour of multi-bi were for example associated with the perception that Multilaterals would be better suited to coordinate development work in fragile and other difficult country contexts, and to the view that multi-bi projects and programmes required less MFA staff capacity than other modalities.

### **Finding 13. In the WBG and IFAD, Finland has made effective use of replenishment processes for advocating its policy priorities.**

Two of the Multilaterals visited by the evaluation team are International Financial Institutions (IFI) that raise their funding (among other) through multi-annual replenishment processes. These replenishments were found to represent useful occasions for influencing these institutions.

Core and earmarked funding reflect two different influencing “tactics”



**At the World Bank**, there were four replenishment processes for the International Development Association (IDA) since 2012 (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>)<sup>16</sup>. IDA represents a very particular Trust Fund of the WBG and Finland interacts with the Bank as one of its donors. IDA replenishments are characterised by special themes that are introduced by its funders. These themes often also push the span and scope of WBG concerns overall, i.e. IDA acting as vector for change. The evaluation team found IDA special themes to have been fairly consistent over time as per Table 13.

**Table 13:** Special Themes under IDA16-IDA19

IDA16 (FY12–14)	IDA17 (FY 15–17)	IDA18 (FY18–20)	IDA19 (FY21–23)
Gender mainstreaming and gender related MDGs	Gender Equality	Gender and Development	Gender and Development
Climate-resilient development	Climate Change	Climate Change	Climate Change
Fragile and Conflict States (FCS)	Fragile and Conflict States (FCS)	Fragility Conflict and Violence (FCV)	Fragility Conflict and Violence (FCV)
	Inclusive Growth		
		Jobs and Economic Transformation	Jobs and Economic Transformation
		Governance and Institutions	Governance and Institutions

Sources: World Bank 2019a, BiC 2019

Influencing reports highlighted Finland’s influence during IDA18 negotiations, for example, that Finland had demanded and achieved the inclusion of gender equality as a special topic from which it was otherwise going to be left out. Finland brought up the issue in previous mid-term review discussions in 2015 and had mentioned it in all its speeches during the discussions related to the next replenishment in 2016.

The evaluation team reviewed the most recent replenishment, IDA19, in more depth as part of its WBG Agency Case. This replenishment round had been successfully negotiated with an atypical consensus on the specific themes, which largely reflected Finnish priorities, and with a record level of financial commitment.

Through interviews at the MFA and in the WBG, and based on desk review, Finnish influence was assessed. With influencing in the context of IDA, the initial drive came from the respective capitals. In this instance, the IDA Deputy from the MFA represented Finland in negotiating financial contributions and expectations, although this was done in concert with allies and coalitions. Together with these partners, Finland contributed to joint statements and position papers. Under IDA19, Finland occupied a particularly influential position, associated with its concurrent Presidency of the EU. In that instance, Finland (represented by its IDA Deputy) served as Chair for the informal EU++ grouping, a grouping “held together by a broad understanding of values”, as one interviewee put it. Finland also hosted two coordination group meetings (June 2019, October 2019) in advance of the formal IDA negotiation meetings.

<sup>16</sup> There was also one capital increase event during the review period. On October 12, 2018 World Bank members approved a \$60.1 billion capital increase for the IBRD, raising the IBRD’s capital from \$268.9 billion to \$329 billion. This comprised \$7.5 billion paid-in capital as well as \$52.6 billion callable capital. Members also endorsed a \$5.5 billion capital increase for the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which would more than triple the IFC’s capital base from \$ 2.57 billion to \$8.2 billion. The capital increase would allow the Bank to provide an annual average of \$100 billion in development support noting over the past five years (2013-2017), total World Bank annual support averaged \$59 billion (World Bank 2018b)





The Finnish IDA Deputy explained (approved citation) that as the Chair and convener of the EU++ IDA Deputies group, he had not tried to push an agenda. However, in that position, Finland had increased visibility and an opportunity to coordinate some of the work and interventions of the group. As a result, Finland had high visibility with the World Bank IDA team, both in formal meetings and during informal dinners, side talks and other occasions Finland's IDA Deputy was supported by a negotiation mandate and by national statements that set out, among others, Finland's strategic objectives as part of the negotiation process.

When interviewed, the World Bank Vice President, Development Finance said that the "Nordic voice" had been of particular importance at the WBG and that Nordics were extremely influential in the negotiation of IDA19 where the special themes agreed were climate change, gender, jobs and innovation, fragile states, and governance, all very much in line with Finnish priorities. The Vice President said Finland was particularly strong given its chairing role:

*"When speaking with the Finns it can feel like speaking with colleagues at the World Bank given similar concerns. On this occasion, Finland vigorously pursued gender and disabilities. Finland was also particularly strong in relation to technology and its relationship to jobs and innovation."*

He also described Finland's overall role as partner:

*"Finland is a highly regarded and constructive partner of IDA and the WBG, and there is high degree of alignment between Finland's priorities and those of IDA. We have seen this consistently over the years, as Finland's focus on gender equality, fragility, jobs and economic transformation, and more recently also disability inclusion and technology has helped to shape IDA's priorities and support to the poorest countries. During the negotiations of the IDA19 package, Finland again played a very productive and influential role, both as convener of two EU++ meetings and through several bilateral engagements with their IDA deputy [...], and the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development. We continue to value this partnership and look forward to continued collaboration (this and earlier citations were approved)."*



*The UN compound in Nairobi offers one international forum at country level.*



On the outcome of IDA19, the Finnish Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade had previously said:

*“I am proud that, together with other like-minded countries, we have managed to steer the work of [IDA] in such a way that many of the development policy objectives important to Finland are emphasised. These include climate action, women’s and girls’ rights and, in particular, the status of people with disabilities.” (Finnish Government 2019)*

The IDA delegates representing Norway and Sweden confirmed a close working relationship with the Finnish delegate and commended his exceptional diplomatic skills. The Finnish delegate was described as follows (approved citations):

*“An excellent diplomat, eloquent and adept at building consensus – a fantastic Chair of EU++ group.”*

*“The Finnish voice is very strong... Having the right person in the right job matters a lot.”*

**“Having the right person in the right job matters a lot”**

The Nordic colleagues also confirmed the close, mutually supportive nature of Nordic collaboration which served as a ‘natural magnet’ for certain issues such as gender, climate, equality, and education (although education is more directly linked with Finland). One Nordic colleague noted that budget was always important in IDA, but diplomatic skills were also very important. The colleague noted that Finland was doing good work on the frontier issue of digitalisation as well as very innovative work with IFC, which was unique among the Nordics (approved citations).

Other senior WBG staff also characterised the Finnish delegate as excellent and constructive throughout the process. One example was Finland’s explicit commitment to supporting the mid-to-high case for IDA19 which was considered very important because there had been a ‘cliff-hanger’ during which the amount was increased from \$80 billion to \$82 billion.

**At IFAD**, replenishment consultations are held every three years and have been the most important forum for strategic influencing. It was during these processes that future thematic or other strategic priorities were identified, and decisions made concerning principles of allocating funding to the identified priorities<sup>17</sup>. Finland, as a member of the “List A” countries (consisting primarily of contributing developed countries), was a member of replenishment consultations and was represented by a senior staff member from the MFA in Helsinki.

Through these consultations, Finland influenced IFAD’s strategic directions since the establishment of the Fund in areas consistent with Finnish priorities. Based on the review of MFA-internal negotiation mandates and staff memos summarising replenishment consultations, these areas were: i) empowerment of women, ii) scaling-up climate change work, iii) supporting decentralisation and closer country-level cooperation amongst aid agencies, iv) working more in LDCs and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, v) supporting the implementation of Agenda 2030, vi) private sector engagement, vii) market-based financing, and viii) continuing to improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency. The review of these documents also indicated influencing priorities were not explicitly linked to Finnish development priorities, but also to organisational development needs and specific issues concerning for example financing structures.

<sup>17</sup> Finnish payments to IFAD9 (2013-2015) replenishment were USD 17.6 million (about 2%) and to IFAD10 (2016-2018) USD 17.4 million (1.74%). Due to a drastic cut in the overall Finnish aid in 2016, Finland pledged initially only EUR 6 million to IFAD11 (2019-2021) but increased in 2019 core funding to EUR 10.5 million. Combined with the grant provided as part of the concessional loan (see below), the Finnish total pledge reached USD 35.1 million, or 3.53% of the total IFAD11 pledge.





During IFAD10 consultations, Finland specifically encouraged IFAD to review and enhance its strategy of engagement with the private sector and during IFAD11, this proposal was then reflected in IFAD's commitments. Finland contributed to the strategy's development and finalisation, highlighting IFAD's comparative advantage to achieve greater impact on rural poverty reduction. In 2019, IFAD's Board approved the private sector strategy for which Finland as the list A Convener had played a lobbying role. During IFAD11 consultations, Finland also championed the development and introduction of the CPL financing mechanism which enabled maintaining IFAD's focus on low-income countries and low and lower middle-income countries.

Overall, IFAD's strategic priorities and resource mobilisation were well aligned during IFAD9, 10 and 11, and Finland was one of the many countries influencing these decisions. For example, thematic IFAD11 priorities that were discussed included climate, gender, youth, nutrition, fragility, rural transformation, resource allocation and utilisation, and results, and IFAD ultimately committed to:

- Mainstream a gender transformative approach in 25 percent of IFAD's projects and maintain that 50 percent of IFAD beneficiaries are women;
- Disaggregate project-level output indicators by gender and youth;
- Foster nutrition sensitive agriculture in 50 percent of IFAD's projects;
- Deliver \$875 million climate finance to make 24 million rural poor resilient, covering both adaptation and mitigation; and
- Direct more than half of overall commitments to Africa and 35 percent to fragile states.

At the same time, it should be recognised that IFAD's overall mandate and vision, as well as the organisation's emphasis on Agenda 2030, were already well-aligned with Finnish development priorities. This made it difficult to establish the significance of Finland's influence during these replenishment consultations beyond the concrete examples provided above.



*A Nepalese farmer. Climate and food security are among Finland's development policy priorities.*



For IFAD12, Finland and the UK acted as list A conveners and managed to negotiate a seat for all list A countries. Finland actively lobbied for Denmark and Belgium (who did not contribute but participated previously) to take part as observers, so as to make it possible for them to reconsider their position. Finland also lobbied Poland to take up an observer seat.

Finland has not been historically amongst the top core funders of IFAD. Unlike Sweden or Norway, Finland had only been in the top 30. Finland's share of accumulated core funding amounted to 1.18% of IFAD's total funding, which determined Finland's voting rights. Under the IFAD11 replenishment, Finland provided an additional grant of €18.94 million in March 2019 that means it now ranks as the 13<sup>th</sup> largest donor.

### 4.2.3 Influencing and staff placements

Staff placements are international recruitments, secondments, and junior- and volunteer programmes that place Finnish professionals into multilateral organisations.

With respect to multilateral influencing, staff placements represent a means to an end, but also an end in itself, as reflected in the two findings in this section. Finding 14 deals with staff placements as an objective in Finland's foreign and development policy and Finding 15 then assesses staff placements as a channel for influencing multilateral organisations.

**Finding 14. The MFA operates sound programmes and processes for supporting the recruitment of Finns into Multilaterals, but staff placements are limited by budget constraints, difficulties in finding and promoting applicants, and below-average retention of Finns in multilateral organisations.**

**MFA support to staff placements.** The MFA has coordinated and supported the recruitment of Finnish nationals to Multilaterals in several ways, including recruitment, financial and logistical support for secondments of MFA staff and employment of Finns at Multilaterals. Senior positions are supported on a case-by-case basis and different placement programmes exist for junior professionals. Staff placement programmes are ODA eligible and considered to be part of Finland's development policy and cooperation.

Staff placement programmes were planned and managed in the context of the MFA's development policy and cooperation by the Unit for Sustainable Development and Climate Policy (KEO-90) in the MFA's Department for Development Policy.<sup>18</sup> This included coordination with other MFA departments and units as well as with Finland's embassies, permanent missions, and representations to Multilaterals. In addition, the Unit for Security Policy and Crisis Management (POL-10) in the Political Department also financed programmes from civilian crisis management appropriations, recently covering two JPO positions at the UN Secretariat in New York and somewhat more for United Nations Volunteers (UNV) peacekeeping and crisis management tasks (seven in 2019 and six planned for 2020) (MFA 2019).

Since 2018, staff placements are supported by an Ambassador for International Recruitments in the Unit for UN and General Global Affairs (POL-50) in the MFA's Political Department, leading a multi-departmental team. That group maintains close contact with the Heads of Administration, Human Resources and Recruitment Managers in about 40 Multilaterals. The Ambassador was well-known, and the cooperation appreciated by those officers interviewed during the Agency Cases for this evaluation.

Up to and including 2019, Finland funded 980 Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) since the JPO programme started in 1965, and about 500 UNVs since 1974. Since 2015, and with high relevance regarding the ongoing UN reform process, Finland also joined the SARC Programme and has funded two SARC positions recently.

<sup>18</sup> KEO-40 until some years ago.



These programmes focused on UN agencies, but staff placements were also targeted at other Multilaterals, for example the WBG through the Donor Funded Staffing Programme (DFSP), and the CGIAR (White et al. 2011). Although much smaller than the JPO programme, the DFSP was useful to the MFA in resourcing areas of particular strategic importance such as, recently, education and prior to that, digitalisation, and disability.

The evaluation team also learned about several Finns having been recruited into high-level positions in Multilaterals over the last couple of years. In the Multilaterals chosen for Agency Cases, several Finnish holders of high-level positions were mentioned as well, having achieved their positions both through secondments or being directly hired into these organisations, with and without Finnish support.

Support shrank from  
€9.5 million in 2015 to  
€1.6 million in 2019

**Reduced financial support.** After the 2015/16 budget cuts had significantly limited support, the MFA's support to all three programmes is currently being expanded. From a level of €9.5 million in 2015, funding shrank to €1.6 million in 2019, but projected funding is planned to reach €3.6 million in 2020 and €6.4 million after that (MFA 2019).

These reductions in funding impacted the number of Finns supported by these programmes, with the number of Finns working in UNV, JPO and SARC programmes end of 2019 amounting to less than 50 (28 JPOs, 18 UNVs and 2 SARCs), with a focus on UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA.

Independently, the team also found that staff placements were the least-used channel for multilateral influencing and had only contributed to about one if five observed influencing effects. This likely reflects the overall reduced support to staff placements but also the fact that staff placements remain without significant associated influencing effects unless used strategically, as explained in Finding 15 below.

**Difficulties in finding candidates and below-average retention.** Difficulties in identifying sufficient numbers of applicants for staff placement programmes were frequently mentioned in interviews conducted in Multilaterals and the MFA. Difficulties were related to low to medium general interest of Finns to work abroad. Finnish men seemed particularly disinterested in such



*Finns have held several high-level positions in Multilaterals.*





postings, reflected in the overwhelmingly large share of female applicants and participants in these programmes. Additional reasons are explained below.

In 2011, the retention rate of Finnish JPOs in the UN system was analysed in detail and found to be “much lower than that of other donors participating in JPO funding”, which amounted to 49 percent between 2001 to 2008:

*“49% of JPOs were retained within the UN system in general during 2001–2008 [...], whereas the corresponding figure for Finnish JPOs is 24% [...]. In 2010 the retention rate was similar: out of the 31 JPOs who completed or finished their assignment, eight were retained (25.8%).” (White et al. 2011).*

Although the MFA had consequently followed up on corresponding recommendations of that evaluation, interviews with MFA staff and staff managing human resources in Multilaterals continued to mention a relatively lower retention rate of Finns compared to junior professionals from other countries. For example, at the WBG, 35 percent of Finnish JPOs and 33 percent of Finnish mid-career professionals were retained, compared to 56 percent and 41 percent, respectively, across all nationalities in those two groups.

The consistently below average retention of Finns was explained by interviewed experts in two ways:

- First, by the high living standards, good social services, and overall high perceived quality of life in Finland that made the salaries and the living conditions associated with international postings less attractive for Finns than for candidates from many other countries. A compounding factor was thought to be related to the traditionally very high share of female candidates in an age where starting a family became important. According to interviewed human resources managers in Multilaterals, these reasons led some Finnish junior professionals to decline offers to be retained.
- Second, by how Finnish professionals were – quite consistently across interviews – described as honest, reliable, modest and believing in the merits of hard work. This work ethic was considered another important reason as to why Finns were somewhat disadvantaged in terms of self-promoting and securing a continuing career in multilateral organisations. Especially for senior positions for which there can be fierce international competition, these attributes and behaviours were not considered helpful by interviewed experts. The same argument was also used to explain the relatively low degree of “political” support Finns would receive from the MFA. Most interviewees expressed the view that the MFA was very hands-off compared to other donors that very actively lobbied for their candidates. Some interviewees described instances in which Finland had been the only donor in the room that hadn’t made use of political or financial leverage to support their respective candidate.

These two explanations were also used to explain recruitment difficulties, i.e. with finding interested Finnish candidates for such postings in the first place.

**Reported satisfaction with staff placements.** In influencing plans and reports reviewed by the evaluation team, staff placements represented a cross-cutting objective that was not part of the systematic target-setting and reporting introduced for thematic and operational influencing objectives. Mostly, the intent was to simply place Finns into the respective organisations, without much additional explanation, and reporting at times covered only activities. The degree to which influencing reports considered staff placement effectiveness to have been satisfactory therefore remained a somewhat subjective assessment by the authors of the reviewed influencing reports.

With this caveat in mind, the main finding from the evaluation team’s systematic review of influencing plans and reports was that Finnish representation in the multilateral organisations had been satisfactory mainly in UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and WBG as well as ADB, to some



extent. For FAO, Finns seemed to be appreciated, at least in the forest department. In ILO, Finns were even reported to be overrepresented. Concerns over the low representation of Finns was brought up in influencing plans and reports for AfDB, UNFPA, and UN WOMEN.

**Finding 15. Staff placements are only effective for multilateral influencing in specific situations, i.e. if they provide otherwise unavailable capacity and expertise to Multilaterals. General staff placements are currently underutilised for facilitating access and providing information for other influencing activities.**

**Unclear goals for staff placements with respect to multilateral influencing.** Based on interviews and the analysis of prior evidence, staff placements organised by the MFA generally pursued two principal goals (MFA 2015b, 2019, White et al. 2011):

1. A “foreign policy goal” of increasing the number of Finnish professionals at international organisations; and
2. A “development goal” of supporting the capacity of the multilateral system through operational and expert capacity, and to develop a cadre of experienced Finnish development professionals.

Confirmed by interviews with MFA and Multilateral staff involved with staff placements, neither of these goals is explicitly related to multilateral influencing.

The first goal simply aims at increasing Finnish presence in Multilaterals, without further explanation or description, as summarised by the last evaluation of the MFA’s JPO programme (White et al. 2011):

*“The concern about the number and percentage of Finns within international organisations’ staff, particularly within the United Nations and its agencies, has been a constant preoccupation of Finns, as already in late 1980s and early 1990s it was noticed that the percentage of Finns was well below the financial contribution of Finland to the UN system. [...] Over the last decade, all the complete policy documents for the JPO and UNV programmes state as explicit objective the international recruitment of Finns in the UN and international financial institution and regional banks.”*

The second goal explicitly relates to Finland’s development policy priorities but also makes no explicit reference to multilateral influence, apart from offering general capacity support to these multilateral organisations in Finland’s development policy priority areas. For example, the current Action Plan for JPO, UNV and SARC programmes noted that the selection of candidates and positions was guided by these priorities and listed them explicitly (MFA 2019).

**Staff placements often not considered a tool for influencing**

Overall, the evaluation team observed that the degree to which staff placements were considered a tool for influencing Multilaterals – in the way understood in the present evaluation – remained unclear throughout the interviews and desk review of relevant policies and reports.

Feedback observed by the evaluation team ranged from considering staff placements as an end in itself as described earlier, considering it an important but underutilised source of information for the MFA’s influencing activities (described further below), to considering it an important influencing tool but usually without being able to describe how this was supposed to work in practice.

The evaluation team thereby found that staff placements – as a way to influence Multilaterals – had remained the least clearly defined and understood influencing channel.



**Finns working in Multilaterals do not promote Finnish interests.** A recent evaluation of Denmark's organisation strategies – corresponding to Finland's influencing plans – generally dismissed staff placements as an influencing channel by noting that “Danes working in multilateral organisations [...] do not work for Danish interests and priorities, as per their contractual obligations and by the respect for these of both Danes in the MOs [Multilateral Organisations] and Danish representatives” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019).

This relates to scattered notions identified during the background research for an earlier evaluation, that staff placements could be used “to increase Finnish influence in the activities of international organisations” or “that young Finnish nationals working in international organisations should be ‘advocates’ of Finnish development policy objectives” (White et al. 2011). Clearly, also in the Finnish case, these notions could be dismissed and were not part of the intentions and objectives associated with the MFA's staff placements programmes in the period covered by this evaluation.

Finnish professionals working at the Multilaterals visited by the evaluation team clearly acted and behaved as employees of those organisations, in line with their responsibilities. While many maintained a strong affinity to Finland and their Finnish peers, their work-related priorities and loyalties were exclusively with the Multilateral they worked for. Recruiting managers highlighted that every employee had to sign related conflict of interest policies and the deep respect Finns demonstrated for following these instructions.

This finding is consistent with an earlier evaluation of the MFA's JPO Programme (White et al. 2011): *“While it certainly is true that Finland promotes its development policy objectives through the sectoral choice of placements that Finland funds, there is a conceptual and practical jump to expecting the individual JPOs serve as advocates of Finnish policy objectives within their organisations. [...] According to the interviews with Finnish JPOs and MFA staff, this idea does not materialise, one could say fortunately, as all persons interviewed have a clear idea about the role of international civil servants as representatives of the organisation and not of their country of origin, particularly in the UN system.”*

**Conditions for effective multilateral influencing through staff placements.** Even while Finns working in Multilaterals cannot (and should not) be expected to promote Finnish interests, the evaluation team nevertheless identified several instances where staff placements had contributed to significant influencing effects, both at the headquarter and the country level of Multilaterals. One example at the headquarter level was summarised in Outcome Story 3, and several country-level examples were provided in Finding 6.

These concrete cases of staff placements contributing to significant influencing effects avoided any need to advocate specific priorities or interests outside of their job specifications. Rather, they simply provided Multilaterals with expert capacity that those organisations needed and that would otherwise not have been available to them. Such situations reflected non-competitive scenarios in which Finland played a role in creating staff positions, or where vacant positions were filled for which there was no funding or interest by other donors.

With these conditions present, staff placements were found to represent an effective channel for multilateral influencing. They led to tangible changes in Multilaterals, affecting people, policies and operations, and likely contributed to further changes and developments. If such staff placements were focused on Finnish development priority areas, including the strengthening of operational effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral organisations, they could advance Finnish development priorities in an effective way.

**Under specific conditions, staff placements are effective for influencing**





However, especially regarding staff placements at the country level, interviewees both at the MFA in Helsinki and in embassies remarked that the MFA's administrative requirements and processes for hiring Finnish experts into Multilateral organisations were too slow and burdensome. In one case (UN WOMEN), the expert therefore had to first be hired as a consultant rather than a staff member.

- Apart from these instances of effective influencing associated with staff placements, most cases of Finnish staff working for multilateral organisations did not result in such influence. Many employment scenarios for Finns reflected existing positions that had been filled competitively from a pool of applicants. Whether such positions were held by Finns or equally qualified professionals from other countries could not be expected to make a difference. While Finns were very consistently regarded as qualified, honest, reliable and hard-working professionals, they showed a lower-than-average rate of retention. In some cases, language issues were mentioned in interviews. On balance, the evaluation team could not identify any evidence of systematically higher (or lower) performance of Finns vis-a-vis professionals from other countries in terms of their performance on the job. Recruiting managers interviewed by the evaluation team pointed to the required qualifications and due recruiting processes to ensure desired levels of staff qualification and motivation irrespective of the country of origin. Overall, the evaluation team concluded that only in the above-described scenario, staff placements made an effective contribution to multilateral influencing.

**Access and information from Finns working at Multilaterals.** A final observation concerns networking and information exchange between Finns working at multilateral organisations and the MFA.

Apart from a few exceptions (mostly at the country level), these interactions had remained limited. Most interviewees involved in managing staff placements at the MFA and in Multilaterals observed that Finland was too hands-off in this regard, both because of staff capacity constraints at the MFA for managing such interactions but also because of being overly cautious regarding perceived interference with multilateral employees. Interviewed human resources managers and recruiting coordinators at Multilaterals and the MFA expressed that most other donors interacted more intensely and more frequently than did Finland with their Nationals working in multilateral organisations, for example by requiring annual reports (in staff placement programmes) or by organising more frequent informal networking events and formal meetings.

At the same time, interviewees at the MFA considered information coming from Finnish staff at Multilaterals as potentially helpful for multilateral influencing, for example for identifying upcoming opportunities for influencing or for facilitating access to relevant people and events in that organisation. At the country level, information collected, and the experiences gained by Finns working in the local or regional offices of Multilaterals, especially in the case of SARCs who work closely to UN Resident Coordinators, were also considered valuable for the MFA'S corporate-level influencing activities.

Interviewed Finns working in Multilaterals were generally interested and willing to contribute more. From its interviews at the MFA in Helsinki, the evaluation team concluded that because of the MFA's past hands-off approach regarding networking and interacting with Finns working in multilateral organisations, this channel for access and information had remained underutilised.

#### **4.2.4 Influencing through other formal or informal channels**

Influencing through other formal or informal channels covers influencing activities not covered in the other three categories.



This category was found to be very important and, together with influencing through corporate governance, reflects one of the two most-used influencing channels, contributing to 83 percent of influencing effects analysed in detail by the evaluation team (Finding 2). Because of the importance of this channel, it was further broken down and is analysed in more detail in the following finding.

**Finding 16. Finland was particularly effective in coordinating and managing relationships with Multilaterals at different levels and in visible, high-level advocacy for specific thematic issues.**

In addition to the influencing activities reviewed above, Finland engaged in a wide range of additional activities that, directly and indirectly, also contributed to multilateral influencing effects. These activities were drawn from interviews and from a systematic review of activities reported in influencing reports (Annex 4). While these activities all enabled or contributed to Finland's influence on Multilaterals, they did this in significantly different ways, namely through:

1. Coordination and relationship management;
2. Thematic advocacy and political support; and
3. Sharing of knowledge and experience.

By analysing contributing factors to observed influencing effects, the evaluation team was able to determine the frequency with which these different types of activities had contributed to influencing effects: the first group of influencing activities contributed to three quarters of all influencing effects observed in more detail by the evaluation team, the second group to more than half, and the third group to about a third.

**Coordination and relationship management.** The first group includes activities from informal day-to-day collaboration and networking of MFA staff with peers and counterparts in Multilaterals to formal high-level meetings and consultations between Finland, the Multilaterals, and possibly others. The common denominator for these activities is that they serve to communicate and coordinate mutual priorities between Finland and the Multilaterals and, over time, to establish strong and trust-based personal relationships and institutional partnerships.

In interviews, MFA staff in contact with Multilaterals consistently received very high praise. For example, at IFAD, Finnish MFA staff involved with the agency were consistently characterised by donor partners and IFAD representatives as very professional, proactive, willing to take leadership, neutral, cooperative and good in networking, hard-working, well-prepared, solution- and issue-oriented and without a hidden political agenda.

Across agencies and in the two countries visited (Nepal and Kenya), similar views were expressed and MFA staff in contact with Multilaterals were generally perceived as partners unlike certain donors who were characterised as being more remote and less amenable to active engagement. Given limited staff resources in the respective MFA units in Helsinki, the permanent missions, and the Finnish embassies, the evaluation team found this ability to be 'present' to be remarkable.

At the country level, coordination and relationship management were not exclusively focused on Multilaterals and their staff but also took in the country government and other donors and partners. Direct, targeted interactions existed in the context of consultations and meetings related to multi-bi projects, while donor coordination groups, government-led donor groups or joint field visits allowed for enhanced and less formal interactions with Multilaterals (Finding 6).



Meetings between Executive Directors of Multilaterals and MFA leadership were important and effective for influencing

Also consistent across the eight Agency Cases, meetings and visits between the Executive Directors of Multilaterals and MFA leadership were described as important and effective. Beyond the Agency Cases, such meetings were reported for almost all agencies in the scope of this evaluation (Annex 4). For example:

- In the case of UN Women, the Finnish Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy herself took part in several high-level meetings and was perceived to be a strong advocate for women's and girls' rights on UN Women's behalf. In the evaluation team's assessment, this contributed to UN Women's senior management being well aware of what the Finnish priorities were. In several instances, such

high-level interactions were considered to have contributed to a close relationship between that agency and Finland at the highest levels.

- In the case of IFAD, high-level visits in both directions were analysed in more detail. For example, the Minister of Agriculture visited Rome in 2013 and 2017, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development in 2018, the Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy several times (especially while she served as Governor and Vice-Chair of the IFAD Council), the MFA's Director General of the Department of Development Policy visited Rome three times, the MFA Ambassador for Recruitment visited in 2018 just after being appointed, and the Ambassador for Innovation visited in 2019. Both Executive Directors that served during the evaluation periods also visited Finland, one of them twice. From the review of MFA-internal speaking notes, meeting agendas, and memos summarising completed visits indicated a systematic and consistent approach for communicating and discussing Finland's development priorities and IFAD's own development needs.

On the other hand, especially for coordination events involving senior staff, there was mention of "overcharged" meetings and attempts to cover too many issues in a too short period of time. On these occasions, interviewees suggested that "less could be more" in terms of influence.

Interviewees from donor partners and in Multilaterals consistently referred to Finland's ability to work effectively in ad-hoc groups comprised of like-minded partners, often over the longer-term, both as convener and as member. These groups served, inter alia, to align and amplify the voices of individual group members. Formal groups were for example Nordic alliances, or constituency or voting groups in the context of multilateral governance bodies. Informal groups were anything from bilateral ad-hoc collaborations to large networks of like-minded people and countries.

**Thematic advocacy and political support.** The second group of influencing activities includes different types of advocacy that visibly promote specific thematic issues and demonstrate Finland's commitment and support to them. While activities in the first group usually target a Multilateral, activities in this group attempt to raise general awareness and mobilise support for issues of concern to both the Multilateral and Finland.

- During the evaluation period, Finland supported three global campaigns: "HeForShe", "She Decides" and "I Belong" (Annex 4), including membership, speeches and participation in events. Overall, a recent evaluation noted, "Finland's active role in the "HeforShe" campaign" was found to have "contributed to Finland's central position in the organisation [UN Women] and also brought visibility to Finland as promoter of gender equality" (Rassmann et al. 2018).
- Other activities involve visits of Multilaterals to events in Finland, for example for kick-off meetings, report launches, recruitment drives for UN organisations and information and matchmaking events for procurement of Multilaterals in Finland.
- As described earlier in this report (Finding 5), Finland also had an active and visible global advocacy role in the context of the UN reform, the integration of the rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian aid, and the promotion of Finland's teacher quality-based education model.



Finland mobilised high-level personalities for thematic advocacy

- Finland also mobilised and actively involved high-level personalities and celebrities in its thematic advocacy efforts: influencing reports mention several such instances in relation to the WBG, UNDP, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNEP and ISDR (Annex 4). The participation of these high-level people was found to be more than simply symbolic. For example, in one case, the co-chairing and high level of engagement by such a person in the High-Level Task Force on ICPD was found to plot out the future for ICPD on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cairo conference. She was seen as the driver of the process and a strong networker and advocate in promoting for SRHR, and Finland's financial and political support was very important (Rassmann et al. 2018).
- At the country level, interviewees from multilateral organisations and donor partners described Finland's advocacy for gender-related issues in donor coordination groups. Several interviewees also considered Finland credible because of what they knew about domestic Finnish developments, for example the strong participation of women in Finland's government.

**Sharing of knowledge and experience.** Activities in this group aim to influence and support Multilaterals in their work based on evidence and experience. For example:

- The task team in charge of the 2018 WDR “Learning to Realise Education’s Promise” visited Finland as part of their consultations and indicated in interviews that the interactions and insights gained when closely interacting with Finnish education experts, and seeing the system in place, had left an imprint on their work.
- Indirectly, Finland also supported knowledge-related aspects of its influencing work through investing in programmes and trust funds. For example, the production of the above-mentioned WDR was supported by the “Knowledge for Change Programme”, and background research and dissemination were supported by the Nordic Trust Fund, both of which are supported by Finland.
- Other examples of influencing activities related to knowledge sharing were evidence-based seminars and report launches. For example, Finland had sponsored or co-sponsored 28 side events (panels, discussions, presentations) at sessions of the “Commission on the Status of Women” in the four years from 2015–2019 (Rassmann et al. 2018).
- At the country level, during interviews with donor partners and multilateral staff, Finland's embassy expert staff as well as visiting thematic advisors from Helsinki were usually valued as knowledgeable, accessible and willing to interact informally and, for example, to comment on draft documents.

### 4.3 MFA resources and institutional support for multilateral influencing

This section presents evidence about the degree to which the MFA's resources and institutional support have enabled effective influencing. It provides the basis for answering the evaluation sub-question: *Has the MFA – through its resources and institutional support – effectively supported influencing activities?*

This section does not cover how the MFA has supported the management of influencing activities, which is addressed in Section 4.5. Some issues related to the MFA's limited staff capacity (beyond staff directly involved in influencing) and ineffective information management systems were addressed in earlier findings and are not repeated here.



**Finding 17. The MFA possesses a cadre of qualified, motivated and effective “influencers”, reflecting favorable general recruitment criteria and an overall high level of staff motivation. Limited staff numbers however restrict the follow up of available influencing opportunities, and staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness.**

**Quality of staff.** As mentioned before, MFA staff involved in multilateral influencing activities were consistently considered qualified and effective by interviewed staff in Multilaterals (Finns and other nationalities), and from donor partners. Those directly interacting with Multilaterals were usually described as having a good to very good level of understanding of their subject matter areas such as the UN and the Bretton Woods system, the mandates, governance and management arrangements and organisational culture of the Multilaterals they interacted with, as well of specific thematic and operational issues for which the MFA’s thematic experts were often brought in. In addition, such staff were considered to possess good interpersonal and diplomatic skills. In some cases, MFA staff in such positions were described as “exceptional”, “influencing champions” or “excellent diplomats” by staff interviewed in Multilaterals and from donor partners.

Interviewed MFA staff from the MFA’s human resources units confirmed these observations and related them to how the MFA recruited people into its services. MFA diplomats were selected with a strong view to their soft skills, i.e. to work and build relationships with others, to adapt to different personality types and cultural backgrounds, and to successfully moderate conflict. At hiring, diplomats were not required to be subject-matter specialist but, rather, had to convincingly demonstrate that they were able to quickly and effectively immerse themselves into new areas of work. The soft skills and the ability to work as effective “generalists” were each considered a condition sine qua non for MFA diplomats at the MFA. While strictly applying only to the MFA’s diplomatic career path, similar criteria had been applied for the hiring into the development specialist career path from which many senior MFA staff working in the Department of Development Policy still originate, until that career path was ended some time ago. In contrast, the MFA’s thematic advisors are hired with reference to a primary focus on subject-matter expertise, and they were brought into board meetings or consultations with Multilaterals in that function and to offer that expertise.

Another observation that supports the finding that the MFA possesses a cadre of effective “influencers” is the generally high level of staff motivation the evaluation team could observe at the MFA in Helsinki and during country and agency visits. Feedback received from staff working in Multilaterals and with other donors generally confirmed this and it, apart from the exception when newly appointed staff had to get up to speed (as described below), and is reflected in how MFA staff was perceived and characterised – “available, accessible, interested and helpful”, “genuinely interested in results on the ground”, “reliable”, “knowledgeable” and “hard-working” (Table 9).

In addition to representing positive stereotypes about Finns in general, many interviewees also related them to experiences they had had with MFA staff in the past. The generally high level of motivation of MFA staff was also highlighted in another evaluation that found that many staff working in Finnish development policy and cooperation had primarily joined the MFA because of a strong commitment to “make a difference” in the world (Palenberg et al. 2019). The evaluation team considers this type of intrinsic motivation to be very important in the context of multilateral influencing work because much of the informal and off-the-record aspects of the work may remain invisible even to colleagues and superiors at the MFA.

Based on the review of course descriptions and interviews or email interactions with staff in charge of the MFA’s staff development, only general introductions into the multilateral aid channel and to multilateral organisations could be found. Capacity development that was covered in this review were:





- The MFA's general introductory courses for newly hired diplomatic, specialist and administrative staff (KAVAKU, HALKU, and PEREKU);
- General leadership development programmes (JOKO and other courses); and
- Development-specific capacity development activities organised by the Unit for General Development Policy (KEO-10) in the MFA's Department of Development Policy.

The question of the MFA offering issue-specific coaching or training was discussed with interviewees and was considered interesting and useful, especially on how to tackle challenges related to the “soft art of influencing”, i.e. related to dealing with interpersonal challenges and conflict, or to management culture and operational practices (“the way things are done”) in specific Multilaterals. In line with this idea, a recent evaluation of training at the MFA identified “soft skills” as one of the areas for which training was needed (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre 2018).

Training for “soft skills”  
is considered useful

**Limited staff capacity.** The first challenge concerns the number and capacity of staff. As mentioned as part of other findings, staff capacity for multilateral influencing has represented a scarce resource at the MFA, limiting the degree to which influencing opportunities could be taken advantage of. Limited staff resources were considered one of the key arguments for focusing on fewer influencing targets and, in another evaluation, were found to be the primary driver behind the consolidation of the MFA's trust fund portfolio (Palenberg et al. 2019).

Limited staff capacity translated into lost opportunities for influencing as, for example, in the case of the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP) summarised in Box 10. Also, embassy staff was clearly overstretched, and some of the observed effective influencing work was considered “extracurricular”, i.e. something to be done in addition to the normal work. The 2017 influencing synthesis reports summarises related challenges as follows (MFA 2018a):

Limited staff  
capacity led to some  
lost influencing  
opportunities

*“Staff shortages, turnover or re-prioritisation of time use (for TF [Trust Fund] work) have also made it difficult to make a targeted impact as planned. This is evident both for the [European Investment Fund EIF]: “Finland has not been able to take on more significant responsibilities in bilateral partner countries in terms of EIF coordination” and for all financial institutions. KEO-50 [the MFA's unit in charge of development banks] reports: “Development banks, incl. One of the challenges of the World Bank Group's 2017 advocacy plans has proven to be that they have been too extensive in relation to the resources of the development banking team. For this reason, they have been used as recordings of themes that are featured in corporate governance rather than more broadly guiding team operations.”*

**Staff rotations.** MFA staff is expected to internally “rotate” jobs every couple of years. In interviews, staff rotating into multilateral desk officer positions, embassies or permanent missions and representing Finland in Multilaterals described how they struggled to acquire all the information necessary to sufficiently understand “their” Multilateral and to identify and establish the required relationships. Reflecting common perceptions, one interviewee caricatured rotation-related issues during a four-year stay at a Multilateral as follows:

- Two years to establish yourself and build necessary relationships;
- One year of effective work, including effective multilateral influencing; and
- One year to wrap up and prepare for the next job.

Several desk officers in charge of Multilaterals in the Department of Development Policy had recently rotated or been hired into the MFA and in one unit, several former desk officers had only stayed at that position for 6–18 months. This was observed and noted by their contacts in



Multilaterals interviewed by the team, and some complained about having to constantly “retrain” Finnish desk officers. To some extent, this was also perceived in Finland’s permanent missions. While themselves subject to staff rotations, their interactions with MFA headquarters suffered also from frequent rotations there.

After staff rotations, the MFA’s influencing effectiveness can be weakened

Overall feedback indicated that rotations of MFA staff involved in multilateral influencing were usually followed by phases of “training” and “bringing up to speed” the incoming staff. During these periods, the MFA’s influencing effectiveness vis-à-vis those Multilaterals was weakened. During these periods, influencing effectiveness was perceived to be significantly lower than when MFA staff had acquired the necessary knowledge and understanding of the Multilateral, and had been able to establish solid working relationships with staff in Multilaterals and donor partners.

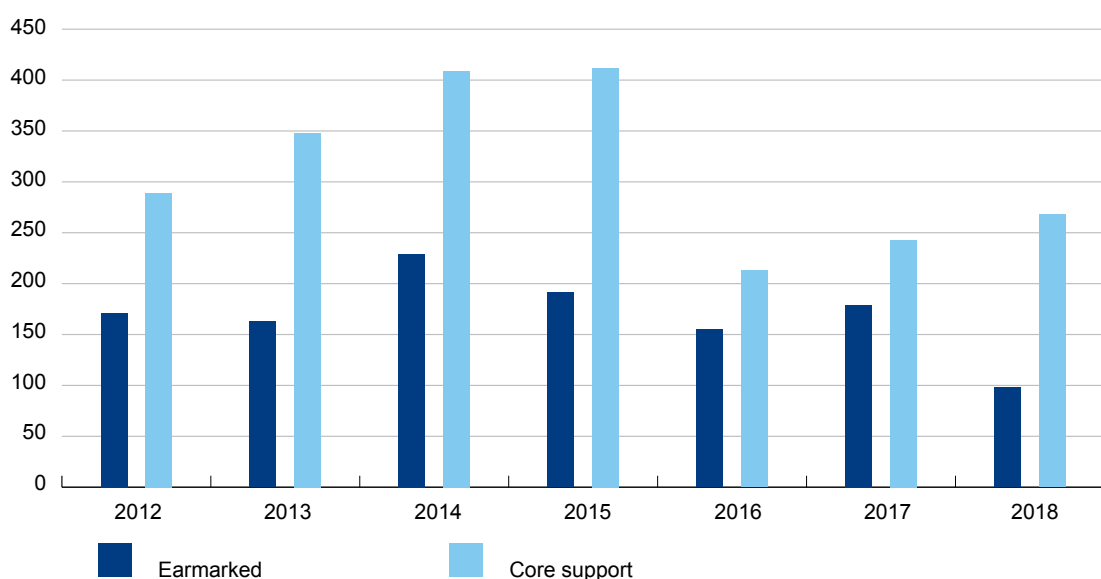
The impact of the MFA’s staff rotation principle on knowledge transfer between outgoing and incoming staff was found to be severe in a recent evaluation that described it as “a challenge to institutional memory especially for development cooperation”. The same evaluation also found that handovers were oftentimes poorly managed, lacked proper documentation of even basic information, and remained without sufficient interaction between incoming and outgoing staff (Palenberg et al. 2019). In the present evaluation, this could be confirmed also in the case of staff involved with multilateral influencing.

Overall, this means that past staff rotations – and the way they have been managed – have negatively impacted the MFA’s multilateral influencing effectiveness.

**Finding 18. The 2015/16 budget cuts affected Finland’s access to Multilaterals, led to lost influencing opportunities but did not (yet) impact Finland’s reputation and standing with its multilateral partners.**

Between 2015 and 2017, agency-specific influencing and synthesis reports expressed concerns about possible consequences of the 2015/16 funding cuts on the MFA’S ability to influence its multilateral partners. The overall degree to which funding was reduced is summarised in Figure 16.

**Figure 16:** Total MFA core and earmarked multilateral disbursements 2012–2018 in €million.



Source: MFA Statistical Data 2019.



Of the almost 30 influencing reports for the year 2015, about a third (and all concerning UN organisations) dealt with the budget cuts which had been decided and communicated at that time but would only affect budgets from 2016 onwards. Overall, the MFA assessed that the cuts did have an impact on Finland's influencing work but only to some extent, and no short-term decrease in Finland's leverage had yet been observed.

In some cases, the announced cuts further strained rather than eased up the MFA's staff resources which had already been affected by headcount reductions. Several Multilaterals now required more MFA staff time to discuss the cuts and their consequences, as in the examples provided from a few influencing reports:

**Budget cuts sometimes strained MFA staff further**

- At UNFPA, “the effective pursuit of our objectives was hampered by the amount of time that UNFPA spent for justifying why Finland should continue its support to the organisation”;
- In the case of UNDP, the “effective pursuit of Finland's own targets remained in the background due to UNDP's efforts to defend the continuation of Finland's support to the organisation”; and
- “UN Women's concerns over the financial cuts to the organisation results, among other things, to increased contact and meeting requests.”

Messages about actual impacts were mixed, likely reflecting that the actual reductions had not been executed at that stage. While it was reported that the “budget cuts destabilised Finland's reputation as a reliable donor” with UNEP, they had “not substantially reflected in the cooperation with” UNICEF. In 2015, concerns were also expressed about how the cuts could hamper Finland's access to decision-making bodies in Multilaterals in the longer run.

In 2016, concerns became more concrete and developed into warnings of loss of influence if budgets would not be increased again (MFA 2017) as shown in Box 9.

**Box 9:** Citations from the influencing synthesis report 2016.

“Finland's UNEP support fell from €6 Million in 2015 to €1 Million in 2016, but influencing work, especially through the EU, continued to be sustained. Direct UNEP influence weakened, and Finland's effectiveness was expected to weaken also in the EU if Finland's funding level remained permanently low. A number of developing countries began to consider their own co-financing after hearing from Finland's financial cuts to UNEP, a country that was known as a strong supporter of UNEP.”

“In the GEF, the cut in Finland's financial contribution was judged to materially weaken the chances of working in the management team and replenishment negotiations; Finland could become a permanently a vice-member of the group with a rotation of 50–50% within the voting group.”

“In the World Bank, when Finland's own IDA18 contribution was cut by 60%, the target for using the CPL loan failed.”

“Finland's budget cuts to WFP are a problematic signal in today's world where there are four parallel famines, and Finland sits in the board.”

Source: MFA 2017.



In 2017, the last year in which comprehensive influencing reports were prepared, a number of actual consequences of the budget cuts were reported, for example that “successful [influencing] impact has in many cases been hampered by a sharp decline (GEF, OCHA) or the end of Finland’s contribution (UNFPA-UNICEF program)” (MFA 2018b). Overall and across the years, Finland’s comparative size as a donor and the role of the level of financing in general was a common and frequently referenced subject in influencing reports.

In the Agency Cases, the evaluation team followed up on the effects the budget cuts had with respect to influencing, including observations until the end of 2019. The team also explored the degree to which, if any, perceptions about Finland as a development actor had been impacted by the cuts.

At **FAO**, the MFA’s drastically reduced funding resulted in mixed effects. Because FAO is a large membership-based organisation both in relation to the number of members and the relative size of the Finnish contribution, the team concluded that even if Finland doubled its core funding, this would have no impact in terms of gaining significant influencing power and hence, also a reduction in core funding would not result in significant loss of influence, at least as long as Finland’s Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry still paid the annual membership fee of about €2 million to provide Finland – and the MFA – with the access to the organisation associated with being a member. In spite of its small relative size as donor, interviews uniformly pointed to Finland enjoying a high profile at FAO in areas such as forest monitoring, and gender and climate in smallholder agriculture. These areas corresponded to themes supported in the past by earmarked funding, and the MFA was able to influence FAO in these areas through established steering mechanisms to which it had access. However, in contrast to the relative immunity of the MFA’s influence at FAO with respect to reductions in core funding, reductions in earmarked funding in these specific areas caused access to these influencing opportunities to decline. One example was a FAO flagship programme (MICCA) that was financed initially by Norway, Germany and Finland. Finland stopped funding MICCA as a result of overall MFA aid budget cuts and thereby lost direct influencing opportunities through MICCA’s steering body and its earlier access to the programme’s secretariat.

At **UNICEF**, prior to the funding cuts, the MFA’s influencing reports positioned the MFA’s financial support as the most important of Finland’s available resources and investments. They indicated that changes in the level and the ratio of core versus earmarked funding could have very significant steering effects. Reports also noted that the level of funding affected the frequency and length of board membership. At that time, overall funding to UNICEF, including funding for humanitarian aid that was channelled through the agency, was expected to remain stable. In contrast, Finland’s funding to UNICEF was cut by 75 percent in 2016 and, as a consequence, Finland’s foothold and potential for influencing in UNICEF changed. The MFA reported in 2016 that the decrease in core funding to UNICEF from about €20 million in 2015 to €5.5 million in 2016, which was approximately 0.5 percent of UNICEF’s annual revenue, and that this had affected Finland’s opportunities to influence the organisation. Influencing activities had then shifted to the country and project level (i.e. multi-bi operations), which were the responsibility of the MFA’s regional departments, and to earmarked funding for innovation. After the funding cuts, Finland had not been on UNICEF’s Executive Board even when chairing the WEOG in 2018 (WEOG rotation should however put Finland back on the board in 2021). Interviewees indicated that Finland had not been following UNICEF’s work as closely as before the budget cuts, apart from activities related to earmarked funding for innovation.



At **UNFPA**, prior to the cuts in Finland's development budget in 2016, the peak core contribution was about €51 million in 2014. Although reduced to €20 million in 2017, Finland was still among the top seven core donors. Due to the severe cuts in 2015/16, Finland had been forced to prioritise between different multilateral organisations. Emerging from this process was a focus on women's and girls' rights, expressed through continued support to and engagement with UNFPA (and also with UN Women).

At **WFP**, funding was considered to make a difference: influence was perceived to grow with the level of funding because "big donors" were likely to be listened to more attentively and because the level of funding affected the number of years countries could serve on the board. The Nordic Group at WFP, which included Finland as a member, was found to yield significant influencing power because they acted as a like-minded group and because, combined, the group ranked amongst the top funders of WFP. Due to reduced funding, Finland's years in the board and opportunities to support policy priorities had however become more limited. Some interviewees also indicated that Finland would be more credible if it had not cut its annual core funding by almost 60 percent. At the time this evaluation was conducted, Finland was the 30th largest overall donor to WFP, and 13th largest core funder. Finland's tendency to provide primarily core funding was appreciated by WFP management, as were the Finnish and joint Nordic efforts to influence other donors to provide more core rather than earmarked funding. Interviewed MFA staff indicated that when core funding had been reduced so drastically, thematic funding would become a more important means of influencing if it were targeted, for example at strengthening the inclusion of persons with disabilities, developing school feeding and strengthening the use of innovations at WFP.

In interviews at the WBG, the budget cuts were generally viewed as an issue of concern and the hope and expectation was that Finland would soon return to pre-2016 levels of financing. Finland's influence was at its highest when Finland held the Executive Director's Chair and when its IDA contribution was relatively high i.e., prior to the cuts imposed in 2016. The loss of the Chair through rotation and, in particular, the 60 percent decrease in IDA funding between IDA17 and IDA18 impacted Finland's influence negatively. On the other hand, the new Finnish IFC financing instrument (blended finance) somewhat shifted the focus of Finland's influence within the World Bank Group (MFA 2017).

Overall, the evaluation team found that the budget cuts had led to several lost or "not fully used" influencing opportunities, two of which were reviewed in more detail and are summarised in Box 10 and Box 11.

Budget cuts led to lost and "not fully used" influencing opportunities

**Box 10:** ESMAP – a lost opportunity to influence energy and climate change policy.

The Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP) is a partnership between the WBG and 18 partners to help low and middle-income countries reduce poverty and boost growth, through environmentally sustainable energy solutions. ESMAP's analytical and advisory services are fully integrated within the WBG's country financing and policy dialogue in the energy sector. Through the WBG, ESMAP works to accelerate the energy transition required to achieve SDG 7 to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. It helps to shape WBG strategies and programmes to achieve WBG Climate Change Action Plan targets.

Although still listed as a donor, Finland ceased to provide financial support to ESMAP consequent on the 2015/16 ODA budget cuts. However, based on a "once in always in" approach, Finland may still attend the Consultative Group (consisting of Bank and donor representatives), which was described by World Bank interviewees as an informal





“club” that discusses ESMAP’s business plan, programme shifts and so on. However, Finland does not attend these meetings and interviewees said Finland’s absence is noted and may be interpreted as a signal of a policy shift that suggests Finland is leaving sustainable energy policy to others i.e., that Finland is taking a calculated position that its energies and resources are better utilised elsewhere given significant donor commitment here.

In terms of Finland’s ability to influence, interviewees stressed that Finland’s voice would not be diluted by the size of its contribution. Even a small contribution is considered symbolically important and can ensure ongoing participation in the governance and policy direction of the trust fund (which, in any event, continues to be open to Finland as a past contributor). Interviewees suggested that Iceland was perhaps the “smartest” donor in that it contributes only \$300,000 and provides one seconded geothermal specialist. That specialist produced a report on how the multilateral development banks could do more on geothermal energy. That idea progressed further within the clean energy agenda and now ESMAP’s central Climate Fund is providing \$235 million in support of geothermal. Because the trust fund supports research, it can have a very significant influence on practice.

Interviewees stressed that ESMAP is the main vehicle for the interaction of donors and the Bank in terms of developing energy-related partner interests and has been in existence since 1983. It operates on an umbrella basis and is seen as a model for all other global practices that are attempting to cut back the number of trust funds and operate on a similar umbrella basis.

Interviewees suggested Finland should think hard about what it wants to do with reference to informing the energy policy of the Bank which is, in turn, clearly associated with the climate change agenda. ESMAP can push Bank policy in new directions noting the energy sector has the most robust and serious targets with reference to the climate change plan of the World Bank. There is also a gender dimension associated with energy that ESMAP also focuses on (e.g. ESMAP 2019).

Source. Team analysis.

**Box 11:** Maximizing leverage from WDR18 – an opportunity not fully exploited.

As described elsewhere, Finland was able to – quite successfully – influence the 2018 WDR and is now engaging with the World Bank towards setting up a trust fund for enhanced teacher training. However, interviews at the MFA in Helsinki and in the World Bank also pointed to a lost opportunity in terms of maximising the return of this successful engagement.

Until early 2020, a lack of resources had slowed the process of engagement and perhaps limited Finland’s influence potential in this critical area, i.e. in ensuring enhanced education outcomes. The Director of the World Bank’s Education Global Practice said that cooperation with the Finnish MFA was very positive but that for different reasons it had taken about two years to organise the current trust fund collaboration on teacher training. As noted above, the negotiation process was ongoing in early 2020 (approved citation).

The Director said the intensity of the relationship and the influence Finland had on the Bank in the past were much less than is possible in the field of education. He believed that Finland had a lot to offer in terms of its experience, its expertise, and funding and noted



that Finland was very much aligned with where the WBG wanted to get to with reference to education policy and the pursuit of quality outcomes. The Director added that Finland could be hugely influential in promoting a broader holistic view of education. And that a revamped engagement was very much welcomed (approved citation).

At the time of interview there was a single Finn on the Education team – there was a view that there was room for greater presence of Finnish nationals on that team given Finland’s accomplishments, experience, and values concerning education. The Director also suggested that there was space for more people in Finland to be exposed to international development challenges i.e., the challenge of translating national experience and expertise into other contexts to promote sustainable development. In addition, he also noted that the use of technology in education was important and that Finland may have lessons to share in that regard – although there may be many contextual differences across countries, there should be lessons that can be shared about the basic question of how to effectively use digital tools in education (approved citation).

The Director of the MFA unit liaising with the Bank (KEO-50) noted that: “Budget cuts have inhibited Finland’s [influencing] ability..., particularly vis-à-vis the education agenda where the WDR opened many possibilities. With slightly more resources, Finland could have invested in one or two critical themes” (approved citation). Another interviewee involved in the process mentioned that Finland should have been clearer about what it wanted from its investment (personnel, events, meetings etc.) in the WDR process and in Education more generally.

Source: Team analysis.

## 4.4 The plausibility of further changes in Multilaterals

This section presents findings about influencing effects beyond those presented in the previous section. It provides the basis for answering the evaluation question: *How plausible is it that the MFA’s influencing activities contribute to increased relevance and operational effectiveness of targeted Multilaterals and – ultimately – to sustainable development?*

**Finding 19. Finland has already contributed to important change processes in Multilaterals through consistent and persistent influencing over long period of times, and in areas where it is considered a thematic leader.**

Several of the influencing effects described earlier represent important institutional changes in Multilaterals that have already materialised. For example, since the Nordics started to influence the World Bank towards more inclusion of gender into its operations, the Bank has: developed and implemented two gender strategies, evaluated the first and is now in the process of evaluating the second; included gender as a standing special theme in several IDA replenishments; published a WDR on gender; and has increased the number of its projects that address gender at entry. These developments should be seen against how gender was considered at the Bank in the 1980s i.e., as a minor issue with relatively few supporters.

Other examples are the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities across WFP’s humanitarian work, the strengthening of innovations at UNICEF, or the improved reflection of gender in IFAD’s field operations, or the influence on the WDR on education. Not less important but related to the absence of a change (rather than its presence) is the fact that UNFPA, in spite of loss of funding and severe political pressure, could maintain an explicit and visible focus on SRHR.



**Strong influencing effectiveness relates to long-term change processes**

Rather than representing initial effects, these areas of strong influencing effectiveness relate to long-term change processes to which Finland – in concert with others – has contributed over extended periods of time. They also coincide with areas in which Finland is considered a credible advocate and has built a reputation as thematic leader: gender equality, the rights of persons with disability, education, technology and innovation. As described earlier in this report, multilateral influencing activities have likely contributed to this image. But it is also shaped more generally by how Finland – and Finns – are perceived in Multilaterals.

To this, Finland's domestic policies and events clearly contributed as well. Several interviewees mentioned the election of the last Prime Minister as one example of Finland "walking the talk" in terms of young women's participation in leadership, or the high scores of Finland's schools in PISA as a basis for credible Finnish advocacy for stronger attention to the quality of teachers in education.

The influencing effects observed and validated in Agency Cases can only be expected to cover some of the deeper institutional changes Finland has likely contributed to. This is because the evaluation period did not systematically cover any influencing activities that predated 2012. At the same time, it became clear that the institutional change processes Finland aims to support in Multilaterals involve time scales that are considerably longer than that defined by the evaluation period. For example, at the WBG, the first gender strategy was published many years after the Nordics started their influencing efforts.

**Finding 20. Several observed influencing effects can plausibly contribute to further changes in Multilaterals, but these developments cannot be predicted.**

In order to understand what may happen in the future, the evaluation team conceptualised ways in which the influencing effects found and validated in Agency Cases could possibly contribute to further changes in Multilaterals. The idea behind this exercise was to use pathways to assess in a more systematic way the likelihood that such further changes could materialise. In line with the limited scope of the evaluation at this level, the analysis was limited to interview feedback and the evaluation team's experience and judgement (Annex 8).

In most cases, the evaluation team was able to conceptualise such pathways. Exceptions were, for example, the transparent selection of IFAD's Executive Director (effect 4 in Figure 9) for which speculation about longer term effects was considered far-fetched and inappropriate.

For the influencing effects described in the eleven Outcome Stories in Annex 10 of this report, the ways in which observed influencing effects may contribute to specific further changes in Multilaterals are described and linked to possible ultimate changes in their development work. These descriptions can be found under the headings "possible future developments" in each Outcome Story.

In some cases, especially in relation to the WBG Agency Case, such further developments could be discussed during Agency Case interviews and reflect the views and considerations of relevant personnel from those institutions, in addition to those of the evaluation team. In other instances, pathways remained more generic and speculative and essentially reflected what the evaluation team thought might possibly happen.

From these attempts to conceptualise and assess the plausibility of future developments associated with observed influencing effects in Multilaterals, the team concluded the following:

**Most influencing effects can contribute to further relevant developments in Multilaterals**

- Most observed and validated influencing effects have the potential to contribute to further development in Multilaterals that were in line with Finland's development priorities. It is not possible to determine if such changes will materialise, but the possibility of such effects was considered plausible by the team and, in certain instances, by interviewed staff in Multilaterals.



- Further changes were not automatic and were not primarily driven by influencing activities or influencing effects. Rather, they represented beginning or ongoing change processes in multilateral organisations to which multilateral influence had initially contributed – and could continue to contribute. The fact that such changes are not an automatic is for example illustrated by the fact that while the WBG adopted its first gender strategy as early as 2001, it had not been substantially and meaningfully integrated into its project work when the implementation of that strategy was evaluated in 2015. This point implied a potential risk regarding multilateral influencing: to focus on setting in motion change processes up to a tangible result such as the adoption of a disability framework or a gender strategy, and then to rely on implementation to run its course without further support. Or, as an interviewee in the UN Women Agency Case paraphrased it: “to talking the talk and not walking the talk”.
- The description of possible future institutional developments sometimes contained critical junctions or “nodes” where the direction of future change will be decided. One example was a future legal opinion concerning human rights at the WBG which, if pursued, would have a decisive influence on how and to what degree rights-based approaches may be integrated into Bank operations. Other examples were whether or not non-binding frameworks would be developed into binding policies or integrated into mandatory operational procedures or safeguards.
- A common theme – and a necessary requirement for further changes reflected in the framework used for this evaluation – was the degree and the effectiveness with which Multilaterals can translate what is decided in the form of policies and strategies in their operational practices and their work on the ground.
- Finally, mirroring the previous point from an external perspective, it was clear that the external environment in which Multilaterals operate significantly impacted the effectiveness with which Multilaterals could govern and manage change, or resist external pressure as described in Outcome Story 10 in the context of the changing global support to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and its impact on UNFPA. Another example for significant changes in the operating environment of Multilaterals is the recent Covid-19 outbreak.

Evaluation team members in charge of the Agency Cases showed different degrees of ease and comfort with assessing the plausibility of further changes in Multilaterals and some considered this type of analysis too speculative or that it would attribute more impact to Finland’s influencing than there was evidence for. Two insights could be gained from this exercise. First, deep knowledge and understanding of ongoing processes and the internal dynamics of Multilaterals was necessary to develop more than a generic understanding of how influencing effects could contribute to further changes in Multilaterals. Second, mapping out possible future developments in Multilaterals related to influencing effects should not be misunderstood as an assessment of the impact Finland’s influence had on those institutions (which is not meaningful).

## 4.5 Effectiveness of the MFA’s approach to managing multilateral influence

This section provides evidence for the evaluation question: *How effective is the results-based management approach (influencing plans and related steering, reporting and learning processes) in supporting MFA influencing activities towards Multilaterals?*



**Finding 21. The MFA has effectively used influencing reports for organisational learning. This has resulted in good practices and has informed how the MFA's approach to managing multilateral influencing was developed.**

**Influencing synthesis reports are useful knowledge products**

The five influencing synthesis reports reviewed by the evaluation team represent useful knowledge products. They systematically analyse and summarise tacit experience and reported results and issues with multilateral influencing.

Already in 2014, the importance of good practices for influencing was raised. Such good practices were developed and refined over the next three years (Box 5). In 2018, the MFA results report summarised them as follows (adapted from MFA 2018a):

- Finland's influencing efforts have produced the best results when its messages were focused, objectives prioritised, activities consistent and profile clear.
- Finland can gain more influence if it assumes roles involving responsibility and actively seeks cooperation with parties with similar aims.
- Dialogue with parties holding different views also makes the work more effective.
- Behind the successes are annual discussions with the organisations, effective use of the network of diplomatic missions, high-level meetings and maintaining contacts with the administration of the multilateral actors between meetings.
- Unofficial meetings and establishing contacts with the heads and other top executives of the organisations have also played an important role.

Together with descriptions of good practices and further observations in the 2016 and 2017 influencing synthesis reports, they reveal deep insight into the “art of influencing” and reflect several of the findings in the present evaluation.

As part of the above-described reporting and self-reflection processes, a new holistic format for influencing plans was developed in 2017, reflecting insights gained and bearing strong similarities to the format currently being rolled out. These formats reflect well some of the learnings derived with the earlier approach, for example the need to focus in view of limited staff resources.

Overall, Finland seems to have done a good job in terms of organisational learning (that is understood as learning that is reflected in the way organisations operate and not only in what individual staff know) in the context of multilateral influencing. In contrast, a recent evaluation of Denmark's multilateral influencing strategies “found no codified examples of institutional learning from the engagement with multilateral organisations” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019). While a good practice example, the MFA's reporting, self-reflection and applied learning processes did not systematically cover all relevant issues in the context of multilateral influencing, even if several were already known. While influencing:

- Influencing reports had mentioned global-level influencing beyond activities targeted directly at Multilaterals (and while this was also reflected in good practices), but these global processes were not included in ideas or recommendations for how to better organise multilateral influencing at the MFA.
- While the prioritisation of influencing efforts between different Multilaterals was mentioned, it too was not included in ideas and recommendations either. These remained focused on reducing and harmonising priority areas between agencies but did not make suggestions on how to strategically prioritise the MFA's limited human and financial resources for multilateral influencing across the different institutions.





- Finally, staff placements were only treated as an influencing objective, i.e. an end in itself, and no analysis and reflection were visible on how to make more effective use of them in the context of multilateral influencing.

Based on documents and interviews, the MFA seems to have been most active in developing its approach between 2012 and 2018, but since then reporting has tapered off: no further influencing reports were produced, just a few single page “snapshots” in 2018. While the new, updated influencing plans were further developed until the beginning of 2020, they continued to bear close resemblance to the format suggested in 2017.

**Finding 22. Influencing plans and reports between 2014 and 2017 reflect challenges with target setting and results reporting for multilateral influencing and have not significantly impacted how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice.**

Since 2012, the MFA has attempted to apply the principles of RBM to multilateral influencing. It soon became clear that this was not easy.

After experimenting with how to best guide and report in 2014 and 2015, the 2016 influencing plans then settled on a few thematic and effectiveness/efficiency influencing objectives for each Multilateral receiving in excess of €1 million in annual funding, as described in Box 12. In addition, influencing plans were expected to describe how staff placements and procurement from Finnish companies should be realised in the specific context of each Multilateral.

**Box 12: Target-setting in 2016 influencing plans.**

Thematic and operational (effectiveness and efficiency) objectives followed a “chain of influence” logic, i.e. they defined objectives on three levels that successively contributed to the next:

- a. Finland’s short-term influencing targets: influence objectives within Finland’s immediate influence (e.g. Finland’s views included in position papers for board-level decision-making);
- b. Short-term organisational-level targets: goals for change in the operations of the entire organisation (e.g. changes in strategies or budgets), to which Finland’s influence contributes but is not sufficient; and
- c. Long-term change objectives at the organisational level: objectives related to the short-term organisational-level targets but require a longer period to be achieved.

Targets on the first two level were expected to be clearly defined including indicators; on the second level, indicators were not needed if the description was sufficiently clear. Quality of targets, objectives and indicators was stressed so that it could be determined whether they had been achieved or not based on later reporting.

Source: Adapted from MFA 2016e.

As part of its overall efforts to strengthen Results-Based Management (RBM) at the MFA, the Department of Development Policy invested into corporate leadership and guidance for multilateral influencing. This resulted in the three generations of influencing plans but, more importantly, in accompanying participatory processes aimed at establishing a shared view in the organisation about overall influencing objectives and discussing and agreeing on specific objectives and approaches. The evaluation team could confirm that such activities, driven by several key figures



## No verifiable effects on influencing practice

within that department, took place and primarily included staff involved in multi-lateral influencing at the headquarter level. The team could however not verify that those activities had led to more alignment and cohesion regarding the way influencing was implemented in practice or to more influencing effectiveness, as explained in more detail further below.

Regarding the practical implementation of this approach, reported issues with influencing plans and reports from 2014–2017 were significant and issues drawn from management responses (and from some reports) reviewed by the evaluation team included poor results-level reporting, levels of ambition being too high, issues with indicators, too weak focus, incomplete reporting against targets, weaknesses in the logical flow between higher and lower level targets, difficulties in detecting Finland’s contribution to activities and results and too vague descriptions. The National Audit Office (VTV 2017) concluded that although influencing plans in principle provide a planning, monitoring and reporting framework the influencing indicators too often do not really measure results and annual reporting focuses more on telling what was done rather than what results were achieved.

The evaluation team has also analysed the 2014 and 2016 influencing objectives and related reporting in detail for the six principal Agency Cases (WBG, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, WFP and IFAD) and found important issues.

In terms of target-setting:

- It remained unclear how targets and objectives within an influencing results chain were thought to be linked with each other;
- Targets and objectives changed from year to year (including from 2016 to 2017);
- Original targets were considered overly ambitious and it was unclear whether they still applied;
- Some (short-term) targets were expressed in such broad terms that contribution could not be established; and
- Some targets could be reached without any contribution from Finland.

In terms of reporting:

- Not all influencing targets and objectives (or indicators) were addressed in reports; it was unclear what targets and objectives at what level the report narrative referred to;
- Achievement of objectives was simply claimed without explanation;
- Activities were reported instead of results (reflecting, in several cases, activity rather than results targets), some reports described almost only activities, and long-term objectives were not addressed; and
- Interpretations of what the three traffic light ratings (good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory) meant varied significantly.

Overall, the evaluation team found that the results information contained in influencing reports set objectives was not particularly reliable and did not provide a clear picture of progress against targets, or progress in general.

The evaluation team also found that the earlier generations of influencing plans and reports did not manage to effectively set directions that were then implemented or “steer” influencing activities and their results. This was because of the above-mentioned issues related to the quality of target-setting, but also had more profound reasons.



As evidenced in the Agency Cases, influencing activities need to respond to and take advantage of opportunities that depend on the Multilateral rather than the MFA. Some of the developments that drive influencing opportunities can be predicted to some extent (e.g. replenishments, evaluation pipelines, strategy updates, rotating representation on executive boards) but others cannot, especially not for four years as originally planned for the 2016 influencing plans. Examples of less predictable events that offer influencing opportunities are, for example, the US withdrawing funding from UNFPA or UNRWA, the Covid-19 pandemic, leadership changes in Multilaterals, MFA staff deciding to take on secondments or such positions opening up, ad-hoc meetings, conferences and global events, requests for expert support, initiatives of Nordics and other like-minded countries, and so forth. Earlier synthesis influencing reports also noted the opportunism required in multilateral influencing (MFA 2017, 2018b):

**Influencing activities need to respond to and take advantage of opportunities**

*“It should be noted that the most critical point of impact is often when organisations draw up their strategic plans. In this case, it is important to use all the means of influencing to ensure that Finland’s main priorities are included in the strategic plans guiding the activities of the organisations. The focus of the impact work of the following years is largely influenced by the implementation of the strategy. It is important to consider this cyclicity and identify the most critical influencing potential in the impact plans. [...] Where Finland has a representative, an alternate or a counsellor in the boards of Multilaterals, these are particularly good influence periods and should be taken into consideration when designing the influence.”*

This means that setting detailed influencing objectives and targets and reporting against them over a period of several years may simply not be an effective approach to managing multilateral influencing. The MFA has shown a great deal of flexibility in readjusting and changing previously set objectives. This is clearly preferable to insisting on keeping objectives stable (which would force staff to creatively interpret their achievement or to simply report them as not achieved). But even with this flexibility, constant readjustment of specific objectives and targets makes detailed planning cumbersome and does not allow for meaningful reporting of progress against such targets, as demonstrated by the difficulties faced by the evaluation team in assessing targets and progress towards them in its analysis of the influencing plans and reports in Agency Cases. This observation does not apply to higher-level objectives, for example the long-term change objectives at the organisational level in Box 12. Such strategic objectives are required and useful for providing guidance and direction for multilateral influencing and are also likely to remain more stable over time.

Another reason is related to the fact that the MFA already possessed a high level of proficiency with multilateral influencing and had implemented and coordinated activities in reflection of established good practices, with effective results as evidence in this evaluation. This means that the “upside potential”, i.e. the degree to which multilateral influencing could become more effective and efficient based on improved management approaches was generally more limited than if the MFA would have had less prior experience and skill in this area.

**The upside potential for improving the management of influencing is limited**

Interviewed staff reflected these considerations. Senior MFA staff posted overseas considered these plans to be too detailed and inflexible and provided the same feedback also regarding the updated 2020 influencing plans. They felt they needed the flexibility to be “positively opportunistic” and provide support to Multilaterals when new and relevant occasions arose. Specifically, regarding the updated 2020 plans, they felt that they were ‘neither fish nor flesh’: not detailed enough to be used for planning and too narrow for practical application in their work with the Multilaterals.



Interviewees working directly with Multilaterals also felt that the plans did not sufficiently reflect their duties as Finland's representatives in multilateral boards which meant they needed to engage with all matters pertaining to the organisation to contribute to smooth and efficient operation of the organisation.

For example, in case of IFAD, which had been going through a reform process including decentralisation and improving its financial infrastructure, the MFA needed to influence so many issues linked to the organisation's key development needs, including sometimes to *ad hoc* priorities and change processes rather than specific Finnish development policy priorities. A lot of the Finnish influence that was highly appreciated in interviews with IFAD's senior management and donor partners was related to those contributions. They commended Finland for addressing joint areas of concerns that emerged as part of the dialogues within the executive board, List A members and the Nordic Group and other like-minded countries.

Similar concerns were expressed also in the last synthesis influencing reports (MFA 2018b): "Does it make sense to define the direct influence of Finland on the objectives of the organisation's performance and efficiency?"

Feedback from MFA headquarters in Helsinki about the usefulness of influencing plans and reports was mixed. Some considered influencing plans and related reports useful for clarity, transparency and learning and stressed that the engagement with planning targets as such would increase cohesion, focus and contribute to learning. Others were more sceptical and felt that the plans and reports represented additional work without practical value-add for the actual influencing work.

An important common view shared between headquarters, permanent missions and permanent representatives was that influencing plans had not really changed the actual influencing work that had been implemented with reference to Finland's development policy priorities before they were introduced – the work would look similar if the plans did not exist. The evaluation team considers this an important observation as it indicates overall limited value-add of influencing plans for one of their intended purpose: for guiding and managing multilateral influencing.

This is illustrated by several instances of effects that were planned and achieved by MFA staff without being part of influencing plans. For example, a WBG influencing report noted that most progress had been made in the field of education before the particular item had been even entered as an objective. Other examples concern progress with gender equality at UNDP, or "invisible" progress made on climate change in several Multilaterals which was not mentioned in influencing reports because it did not represent a target. The way influencing plans and reports were managed showed considerable flexibility in such cases and encouraged reporting such effects in the narrative sections of the annual reports. The finding remains however that the introduction of influencing plans and reports did not have a significant impact on the practice of multilateral influencing at the MFA.

In this context, it is interesting to note that a recent evaluation in Denmark made a similar observation: "The organisation strategies are mostly a reflection of other, informal and rather opaque processes that shape and guide the engagement with multilateral partners. The strategies tend to pass into oblivion well before their intended period of coverage is completed" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019).



**Finding 23. At the country level, influencing plans have not yet played a significant role and multilateral influencing is one part of a broader range of policy dialogue and influencing activities targeted at the partner government and development actors.**

The need to harmonise and use synergies between the country and the headquarter level in terms of multilateral influencing was frequently raised in interviews with MFA staff in Helsinki and had been highlighted in influencing synthesis reports until 2017. There was, however, little reflection or rationale about how such synergies would work in practice, i.e. how country-level influencing activities could contribute to corporate-level influencing objectives. Concepts such as the coherence of Finnish aid or “One Finland” approaches were referred to, however without explaining if and how actual synergies could be realised.

Interviewees involved in the formulation of the new influencing plans described a growing realisation that such headquarter-country synergies were probably minimal and that their attention had shifted to improving the exchange of information and knowledge between these two levels in support of multilateral influencing activities. The evaluation could confirm the absence of such direct and systematic linkages between country-level influencing activities targeted at the local offices of Multilaterals (and their country-level work) and subsequent and related corporate-level changes in those organisations beyond the respective country (Finding 7).

In addition, the evaluation team found that singling out the specific concept of multilateral influencing at the country level may not be very useful. Both Finnish embassies visited by the evaluation team in Nepal and Kenya understand their core overall function to be about “influencing” and the strategies for both countries made frequent reference to policy dialogue as an important means to achieving Finland’s development cooperation objectives in those countries (MFA 2014a, 2014b, 2016a, 2016d). Interviewees from regional departments at the MFA in Helsinki expressed the view that, as a comparatively small donor, Finland’s main value-add at the country level came from providing expertise and engaging in policy dialogue.

At the country level, the specific concept of *multilateral* influencing was however not prominent. Policy dialogue and influencing were considered general means to achieve bilateral cooperation objectives and help developing a partner country. If a Multilateral had a function in this – for example if it was chosen to implement a multi-bi project or drive important country processes – *multilateral* influencing was also relevant. Interviewees, however, expressed that multilateral influencing was not undertaken in these instances with the intention of somehow enhancing the global functioning of that Multilateral but that it remained a means to an end in the context of that country. Beyond such instances, the main impetus of policy dialogue and influencing was directed at the country government, donor partners, and other actors. This was also observed by the evaluation team: many influencing activities such as participation or chairing or donor coordination or other groups were not primarily targeted at Multilaterals (but anyhow could have influence on them).

In this sense, *multilateral* influencing represents a rather narrow concept at the country level, and interviewed staff did not find it particularly intuitive. While most interviewees in the MFA and in Multilaterals at the corporate level had little difficulty focusing their feedback on *multilateral* influencing, interviewees at the country level had more difficulties and easily strayed beyond multilateral influencing to Finland’s role and objectives with general with respect to policy dialogue, donor coordination, and the development work in the country.

Until now, influencing plans have remained absent in Finland’s country strategies. The country strategies of Nepal and Kenya do not refer to influencing plans and a recent MFA evaluation covering Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia and Syria/Iraq

Many country-level influencing activities are not primarily targeted at Multilaterals





confirmed the disconnect of the MFA's country programming from corporate-level planning of multilateral influencing (Betts et al. 2020). Interviewed embassy staff were largely unaware of influencing plans and considered that their work was sufficiently guided by the partner country needs and the MFA's country strategies.

Staff in Helsinki and in embassies also expressed that additional objectives or thematic priorities would be difficult to integrate into the existing country strategy planning, reporting and learning processes, remarking that country strategies were subject to ministerial approval and hence not flexible at the level of overall (outcome-level) objectives. As a reflection of this disconnect, attempts to include the MFA's regional departments into planning the new, updated 2020 influencing plans had remained largely unsuccessful, as described by interviewed MFA staff in Helsinki from the Department of Development Policy and the MFA's Regional Departments.

**Finding 24. External accountability was well served by influencing plans and related reports, but internal management accountability for multilateral influencing relies more on other planning and reporting processes.**

Accountability of the MFA towards the Finnish Parliament was well served by the 2018 results report

Finland's Development Policy Results Report 2018 (MFA 2018a) described the multilateral policy channel in detail. Multilateral influencing was described as one of two pillars in that channel and featured prominently. Reporting included the degree to which influencing objectives had been attained (based on the 2017 synthesis influencing report) and provided a detailed description of the process of multilateral influencing, including the target-setting and reporting, and the good practices that had been derived. An earlier evaluation found the results report to have been a very good example of accountable reporting to Finland's parliament, including some aspects even of accountability for learning, which was not often found in such reports (Palenberg et al. 2019). Based on how multilateral influencing features in the report, the evaluation team assumes that this also applies to this specific policy area. In this way, external accountability of the MFA towards the Finnish Parliament has been well served.

The 2018 results report – apart from the present evaluation – has however been the only public account of Finland's multilateral influencing work. All influencing plans and reports are MFA-internal documents, and in Finnish language. This means that there is no documented accountability of Finland towards its multilateral development partners about what Finland's influencing objectives are, how Finland plans to achieve them, or to what degree Finland considers them to be achieved.

In this context, it may also be worthwhile considering whether the term “influencing” appropriately describes what is really happening. Several interviewees suggested that less one-directional terms such as “dialogue”, “engagement” or “co-creation” would be better suited.

Other planning and reporting processes are usually considered more important

Regarding internal accountability, i.e. how the MFA holds its staff to account for multilateral influencing, the situation is somewhat more complex because several other planning and reporting processes exist that are usually considered more important (for accountability) than those related to influencing plans and reports. These have been briefly introduced in Section 3.2 of this report and are discussed here in relation to the MFA's internal management and reporting of multilateral influencing:

- The evaluation team reviewed the MFA's TTS results agreements of 2017 and 2019 for the three units in the Department of Development Policy that manage funding and influencing vis-a-vis most of the MFA's multilateral partners (KEO-50, KEO-70 and KEO-90). With variations between units, those agreements showed a clear trend towards becoming more concrete in terms of results. An evaluation in 2015 had still found the TTS process to be exclusively related to financial planning, with only symbolic statements about results that were not followed up in reporting (Palenberg et al. 2015). Especially the 2019 plan for the unit dealing with IFIs (KEO-50) was detailed and included concrete influencing targets for



the World Bank and for IFAD, with similarities to the latest versions (in 2017) of influencing plans for those organisations. In some interviews, the question was raised whether it would not be better to fully integrating multilateral influence planning and reporting with the TTS processes rather than operating different systems.

- Finland's Permanent Representation in Rome has its own 4-year strategic plans, two of which (2015–2018 and 2019–2023) were reviewed by the evaluation team. Staff in the Permanent Representation staff are held accountable for what is in these documents; the status of influencing plans is less clear and not formally integrated into the administrative system.
- Also, in New York, the Permanent Mission did their major planning in parallel (and separate from) the influencing plan processes, on the basis of annual and biannual plans. Also there the idea was floated that any multilateral influencing work should rather be incorporated into the current planning and reporting systems.

As before, there seem to be parallels with Denmark, and a recent evaluation noted (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2018):

*“Responding to the specific question outlined for this study, the organisation strategies do not serve as a central management tool. They have a limited, useful function as formal basis for appropriations, and for communication purposes. The Danish monitoring of the strategies is sketchy. Instead, the audit requirements; and the reporting from the multilaterals, are the formal bedrocks of Danish accountability.”*

**Finding 25. The updated 2020 influencing plans represent an improvement over earlier plans by offering focused and relevant thematic objectives, relevant corporate performance tracking, more flexibility in reporting and a public summary.**

There are no experiences yet in implementation of the updated 2020 influencing plans. Therefore, the evaluation team conducted an *ex ante* assessment based on the review of planning guidance, templates, and translated versions of the new influencing plans, drawing upon the findings from this evaluation.

The updated plans now summarise all thematic priorities in a single framework with a logical structure. Four long-term development policy objectives based on the most recent Government Programme were selected:

1. Finland's multilateral partners are promoting high-quality gender equality and the rights of people with disabilities in their work.
2. Finnish multilateral partners increase support for inclusive and high-quality school education.
3. Finnish multilateral partners support transition to low-emission and climate-resilient development.
4. Finnish Multilateral partners use and support innovation in their own activities and/or responsible business in developing countries.

These objectives largely reflect the thematic areas in which past influencing efforts and effects have taken place (Finding 8), and most relate to areas in which Finland is considered to possess relevant expertise and experience (Finding 3). In that regard, the evaluation team finds this selection of thematic areas and objectives relevant. In practice, much will depend on how strict the MFA handles the boundaries imposed by these objectives. This evaluation found that several important influencing effects were opportunistic (in a positive way) and in interviews there was clear demand from MFA staff in the units and permanent missions for flexibility. From the review of the templates for annual influencing reports (Annex 7), it appears that such flexibility is intended.

The selection of thematic areas and objectives is relevant



In the updated 2020 influencing plans, long-term objectives are broken down into 11 concrete change targets (Annex 7). These logically relate to the long-term objectives and specify more concrete issues. These concrete change targets are relevant in that they are defined within policy priority areas and mostly relate to areas in which Finland is considered thematically strong and some flexibility will be required to not miss out on high-value influencing opportunities. The exact formulation of the concrete targets varies between focusing on influencing strategies, planning, funding, operations and targeting to entice Multilaterals to promote certain issues. For example, within the first long-term objective, one concrete target focuses on strategies for gender equality and their implementation whereas the target related to the rights and needs of persons with disabilities refers not to strategies but to have these reflected in training, skills, monitoring and budgeting. These variations may reflect current situations at relevant Multilaterals but, overall, do not appear consistent and it could be useful to standardise them, for example along the people, policies and operations framework used in this report.

Priority areas related to operational effectiveness and efficiency of Multilateral are not pre-defined and can be flexibly and optionally selected from a broader set of issues covered by the “corporate governance tables” (explained below) by the respective desks and units. Based on the templates available to the evaluation team, annual influencing reports for each Multilateral are to be continued but are lighter-touch and more flexible (in terms of which and how many objectives are addressed, allowing even objectives beyond the thematic priorities set above) which seems useful.

The updated 2020 influencing plans also offer a “corporate governance table” for tracking 17 key performance areas, to be used internally in the responsible units. That framework is a tool that identifies what issues are important for Finland to monitor and, for the MFA desk officer in charge, to keep track on progress in these issues. These include the five performance areas used by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN) 3.0 methodology. This is considered useful by the evaluation team as the results of MOPAN assessments can then simply be used without further adaptation. The remaining 12 performance areas cover different topics from the UN reform, several broad thematic areas and principles to focus on LDCs and Finnish recruitments. The evaluation team finds information about these issues generally useful as a basis for external reporting to parliament and, MFA-internally, and for identifying areas of success and concern and related influencing opportunities. It is however not entirely clear how and from what sources – apart from the five areas covered by MOPAN assessments – MFA staff will be able to extract and collect relevant information for the remaining 12 areas with reasonable effort and capacity. According to staff involved with developing these new formats at the MFA, the corporate results frameworks of the Multilaterals could provide some of this information and staff may also use qualitative judgement on the basis of other indicators and reports.

While this *ex-ante* assessment of the updated 2020 influencing plans is overall positive, the findings of this evaluation offer additional potential for further improving this new approach. This is reflected in Conclusion 8 and Recommendations 7 and 8 in the last chapters of this report.

## 4.6 Key factors determining Finland’s multilateral influence

The section summarises what this evaluation has learned about the “why” and “how” of influencing. It describes the most important factors and conditions that enable, support or stand in the way of Finland’s multilateral influencing effectiveness. This helps answering the first part of the fourth evaluation question:<sup>19</sup> *What factors have the greatest positive or negative effect on MFA multilateral influencing and what action can the MFA take – realistically and in view of available resources and capacity – to further enhance its effectiveness?*

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19 The second, forward-looking part of this evaluation question is addressed by the recommendations in Chapter 6.



This section has two parts. In the first part, an updated version of the original framework used for this evaluation is presented, which has been developed into a “theory of change for multilateral influencing”. This theory of change is a simple conceptual model that explains how multilateral influencing works in general and highlights the most important factors required for effective influencing.

In the second part, these factors are described in more detail, including the degree to which they were found to be fulfilled. Together with the theory of change, this part prepares the ground for the conclusions and recommendations that are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

Both parts reflect findings of this evaluation – rather than representing new ones – and are therefore not structured as numbered findings as the earlier sections of this chapter.

#### **4.6.1 Theory of change for multilateral influencing**

As described earlier, the evaluation framework served two purposes: to guide the evaluation and to offer a model the MFA could use for conceptualising multilateral influencing. The evaluation team therefore updated the evaluation framework to fully reflect the findings described in this report.

To increase its usability, the team made all elements visible in the framework and simplified and prioritised factors and conditions required for effective multilateral influencing.

The resulting theory of change represents a conceptual model that explains how multilateral influencing works, and what is required for it to work effectively. It incorporates the MFA’s good practices for multilateral influencing and illustrates how influencing effectiveness depends on many factors beyond the MFA’s (or Finland’s) control.

The theory of change has 13 elements that represent inputs, activities and results but also the most relevant conditions and processes in the context of multilateral influencing. The first 12 elements and their interactions are illustrated in Figure 17, the 13<sup>th</sup> element – related to learning, steering and accountability in the context of multilateral influencing – is shown in Figure 18.

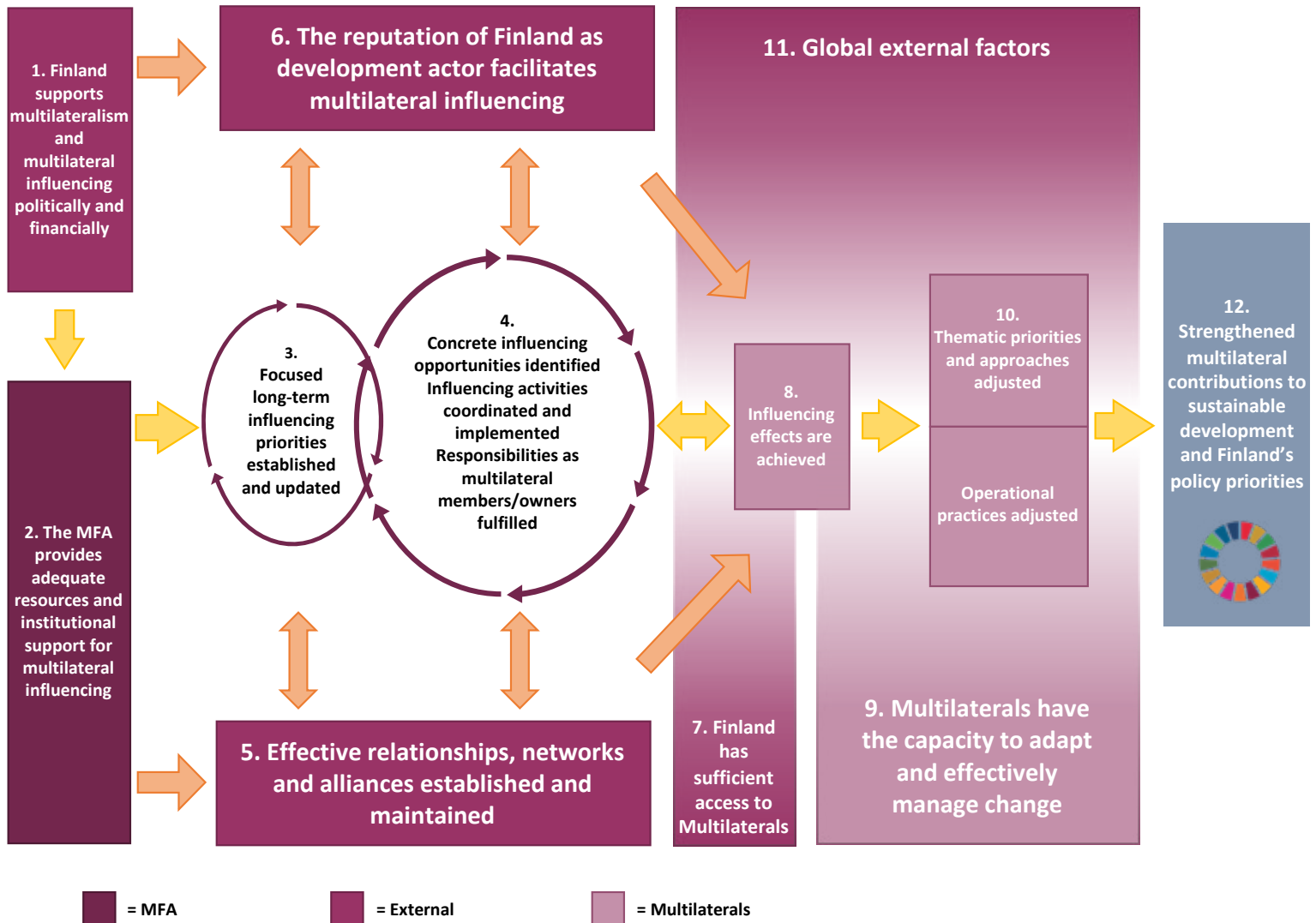
The original evaluation framework and the changes made with respect to it in the course of the evaluation are summarised in Annex 8. The most important changes that are now reflected in the theory of change were as follows:

- The central role of Finland’s reputation for multilateral influencing, which is now reflected by element 6 in Figure 17;
- The important role Finland’s financial and political support to multilateralism and to multilateral influencing plays, now represented by element 1.
- The original framework contained an intermediate step of “influence reaching Multilaterals through intermediaries” which was found to not reflect well how these processes worked in most cases. Rather than first influencing intermediaries who then influenced Multilaterals, working with other actors was found to be a more dynamic, interactive and collaborative process (Finding 2 and Outcome Stories). That step was therefore abandoned but the two assumed factors at that level (regarding access to Multilaterals and the need to establish relationships and networks were validated and reflected in the theory of change (elements 5 and 7).
- Reflecting Conclusion 8 and Recommendation 7 in the next chapters, the planning process for multilateral influencing was separated into a strategic, corporate-level prioritisation process and an operational, implementation-oriented planning process (elements 3 and 4).

Other elements and factors of the original evaluation framework were kept but several were simplified, as described in detail in Annex 8.



**Figure 17:** Theory of change for multilateral influencing.



Source. Team analysis.

The 13 elements of the theory of change and their interactions are summarised below.

**1. Finland’s political and financial support to multilateralism and multilateral influencing** is expressed in government and DPPs, communications by officials of the Finnish government and the MFA, and Finland’s membership, ownership and financial support of multilateral institutions. It affects how the MFA can support multilateral influencing (element 2 in Figure ), how multilateral organisations perceive Finland as partner and development actor (6), and their operating environment (11).

**2. MFA resources and institutional support to multilateral influencing** concern the MFA’s human and financial resources dedicated to multilateral influencing, their management and development, as well as the extent to which the MFA’s structure, management processes and systems facilitate (or hinder) multilateral influencing. They affect priority-setting and implementation of influencing activities (3 and 4) as well as the reporting of results (element 13, shown in Figure 18). They also effect the degree to which the MFA and its staff can establish effective relationships, networks and alliances for influencing (5).





**3. Long-term influencing priorities** define the general thematic and operational change objectives Finland pursues through multilateral influencing. They should guide multilateral influencing activities (point 4) and inform the allocation of human and financial resources for influencing (point 2). They should reflect Finland's development policy priorities (point 1), the areas in which Finland has established a strong reputation as credible advocate (point 6), and the analysis of opportunities and potential for influencing based on relevant information collected by the MFA (13). They should be informed by the priorities of like-minded partners and at the same time also inform the choice of relationships, networks and alliances for influencing (point 5).

**4. Planning, coordination and implementation of influencing activities** represent the operational side of multilateral influencing; concrete opportunities for influencing are identified and influencing activities are planned and implemented. Planning, coordination and implementation of influencing activities take place within long term-influencing priorities (3) and in close coordination and collaboration with partners (5). It should be informed by relevant information collected by the MFA (13). Influencing activities can be grouped into four channels:

- Influencing through corporate governance processes;
- Influencing through fund allocation processes;
- Influencing through staff placements; and
- Influencing through other formal or informal channels (high-level visits and consultations; thematic advocacy, campaigns and political support; and sharing of knowledge and experience).

Information about the effectiveness of the MFA's planning, coordination and implementation of influencing activities informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**5. Relationships, networks and alliances** cover all kinds of relations between people or institutions in the context of influencing. They range from professional relationships of MFA staff with peers from other countries or multilateral staff, informal like-minded networks and interest groups, and formal constituencies, voting groups and partnerships. They represent the collective aspects of influencing, i.e. the contributions like-minded and other groups have and hence contribute to collective, joint influencing effects (8), reflect and influence the MFA's long-term priorities (3), and enable access to multilateral organisations (7). Information about relationships, networks and alliances informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**6. The reputation of Finland as development actor** reflects the values, characteristics and areas of thematic and sectoral leadership and expertise that are attributed to Finland as development actor. Finland's reputation increases the effectiveness of influencing activities (4 and 8), facilitates the establishment of relationships, networks and alliances (5) and informs Finland's long-term influencing priorities (3). Information about Finland's reputation informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**7. Access to Multilaterals** describes Finland's linkages into corporate governance and operational processes in Multilaterals. It includes membership and representation in boards, committees, secretariats, working groups, constituencies or voting groups, Finland's role during financial negotiations, replenishments, knowledge creation and policy formulation processes, staff placements and other options for interacting with staff in Multilaterals. Access to Multilaterals allows influencing activities to be effective (4 and 8). Information about access informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).



**8. Influencing effects in Multilaterals** are changes in people, policies and operations in Multilaterals that can be associated with Finland's influence or the collective influence of a group of which Finland is a member:

- Influencing effects on people are raised awareness, interest and consideration of Multilateral staff with respect to an issue and can lead to behaviour change and further effects on people, policies or operations if new ideas are adopted.
- Influencing effects on policies stand for effects on actual policies but also for effects on strategies, guidelines, guidelines and knowledge products. They can lead to changes in operations and subsequent effects on people, policies and operations.
- Influencing effects on operations are changes in priorities and procedures that determine how Multilaterals implement their work. Multilateral operations can also be directly influenced by providing additional resources and capacity.

Finland's influencing activities (4) contribute to influencing effects. Over time, influencing activities and influencing effects contribute to "arcs of influence" that support multilateral organisations in their longer-term change processes (10). Information about influencing effects informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

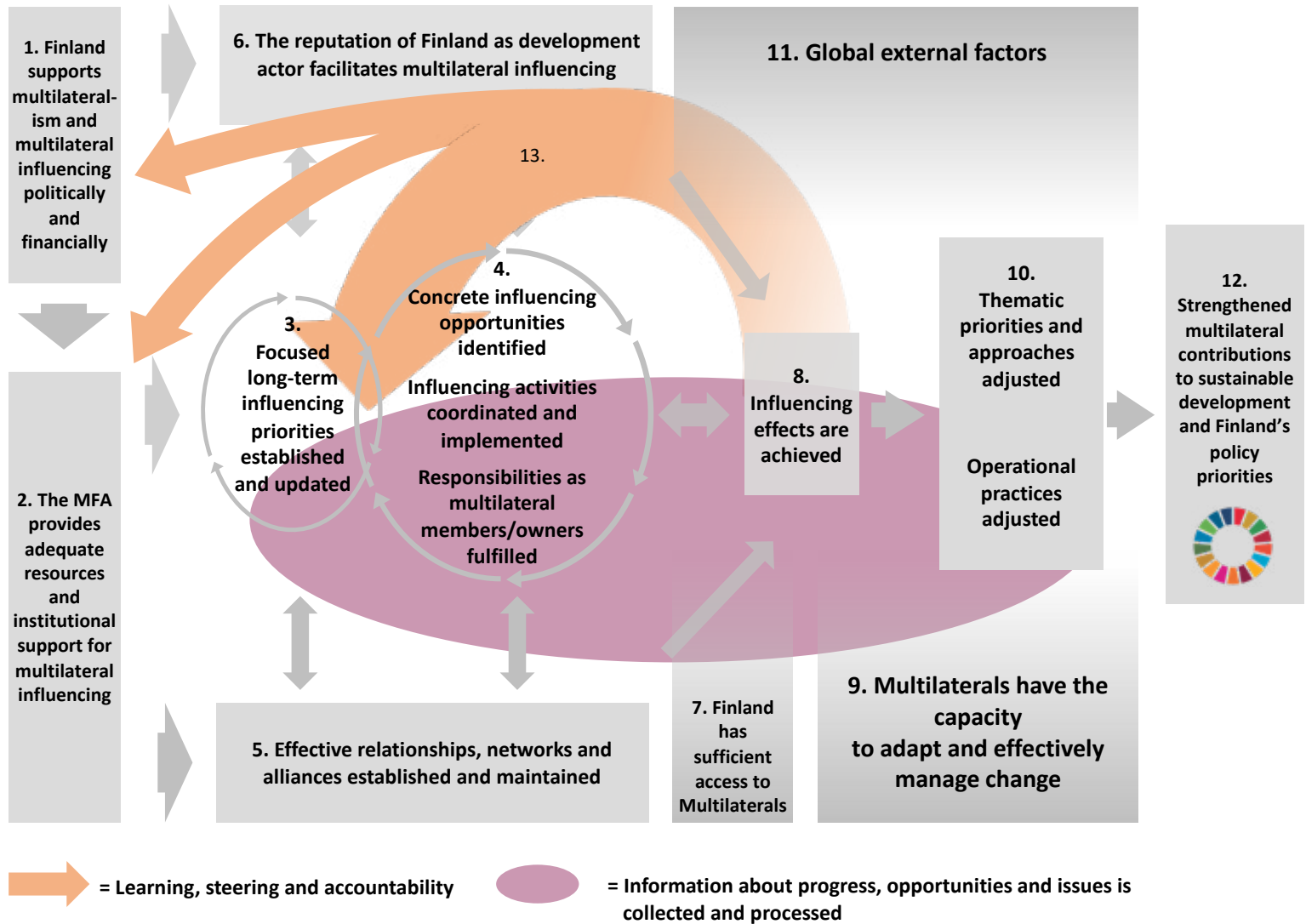
**9. The capacity of Multilaterals to adapt and change** reflects the effectiveness and efficiency with which Multilaterals can institutionalise change and ensure that new policies, priorities and procedures are ultimately reflected in their development work. This capacity affects the effectiveness with which influencing effects (4) can contribute to thematic and operational changes in multilateral organisations (10). Information about the capacity of multilateral organisations for implementing change informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**10. Thematic and operational changes in Multilaterals** are institutionalised and implemented changes in terms of thematic priorities and approaches and operational practices. They are the result of longer-term change processes that depend on the capacity of Multilaterals to adapt and change (9) and on their operating environment (11) and to which influencing effects, among many other factors, contribute. Information about these processes and their results informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**11. External global factors** describe the operating environment of multilateral organisations, i.e. the degree to which members support their mandates, changes in their relevance as new actors emerge and the world develop, i.e. all external factors that affects how they operate and perform. External global factors affect drive or hinder change processes in multilateral organisations (10) and also affect their capacity to adapt and change (9). Information about these factors informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**12. Contributions to development** are the development outcomes and impacts to which multilateral organisations contribute to by means of their normative, coordinative and operational activities. Information about the development effectiveness of multilateral organisations informs learning, steering and accountability in the context of the MFA's multilateral influencing (13).

**Figure 18:** Using results information for learning, steering and accountability.



Source: Team analysis.

**13. Using results information for learning, steering and accountability** covers the collection and use of relevant information in the context of influencing and its use for learning, steering and accountability:

- Learning with respect to how to better support, prioritise, plan and implement influencing activities (2–4), how to effectively use and strengthen relationships, networks and alliances (5) as well as Finland’s reputation (6);
- Steering with respect to resource allocation (2), long- and short-term target setting (3 and 4) and the selection and management of partnerships (5); and
- External accountability with respect to Finland’s parliament and the wider Finnish public (which affects element 1) and to the multilateral organisations about Finland’s objectives and activities in terms of multilateral influencing, and internal accountability to ensure transparency and effective management of the MFA’s multilateral influencing activities.



#### 4.6.2 Contributing and limiting factors for effective multilateral influencing

Based on the theory of change and the findings presented in this report, the evaluation team compiled a detailed assessment of the most important factors for multilateral influencing and the degree to which these were found to be fulfilled, i.e. the degree to which they contribute or limit the effectiveness of multilateral influencing. The factors are presented in the order of their importance, as perceived by the evaluation team.

**The skills, experiences and motivation of MFA staff are critically important for multilateral influencing.** The MFA possesses a cadre of qualified, motivated and effective “influencers”. These are experienced staff members that are knowledgeable about the Multilaterals they work with and about the subject matters pursued in multilateral influencing; they have established strong and effective relationships and networks, are motivated, possess good interpersonal and diplomatic skills, and master the “art of influencing” by applying established good practices for multilateral influencing.

The quality and professionalism of these people is intimately related to how Finland is perceived in Multilaterals and has contributed to the very positive reputation Finland enjoys in the multilateral arena.

**Limited staff capacity has led to lost opportunities for multilateral influencing.** The limited number of staff and the time they have available for planning, implementing and reporting on multilateral influencing activities have led to lost influencing opportunities.

**Staff rotations negatively impact multilateral influencing effectiveness.** The effectiveness of staff for multilateral influencing is impacted negatively by staff rotations and by how handovers between incoming and outgoing staff are managed. In some cases, staff involved with multilateral influencing were found to rotate with a higher-than-average frequency.

Well-managed handovers between incoming and outgoing staff can shorten these periods of low influencing effectiveness through coaching and introductions to key people but represent – in line with findings from earlier evaluations – exceptions rather than the rule.

**The MFA’s choice of influencing activities and channels is generally relevant and effective, reflecting established good practices for multilateral influencing and effective relationships, networks and alliances.** The MFA possesses a deep understanding of how to plan and implement an effective mix of different multilateral influencing activities over time. Apart from being reflected in the skill and experience of MFA staff it is also visible in documented good practices and explains that almost all influencing activities analysed by the evaluation team were found to effectively contribute to influencing effects.

MFA staff recognised the crucial role of informal interactions and invested in establishing and maintaining trust-based relationships and networks. Finland’s participation in the corporate governance of Multilaterals strengthened its reputation, supported the effective functioning of these organisations and was used effectively to bring priority issues onto the board agenda and to decision-making. Finland selectively used earmarked funding to spearhead specific issues and effectively used replenishment processes to influence Multilaterals. Finland’s focus on core funding helped position it as supporter of the multilateral system (rather than only a user of its organisations) and enabled access to multilateral governance processes. In several instances, when staff placements were targeted strategically, they contributed effectively to influencing effects. Finland also engaged in visits and consultations with Multilaterals that have strengthened relationships at all levels and helped to coordinate and align priorities. Finland has been a



visible advocate for several priority issues and campaigns at the global level, with high-level support by politicians and other prominent people. In areas of strong domestic expertise, Finland has also been effective in knowledge-based influencing.

The only systematic exception to this overall effective mix of influencing activities and channels over time was the oftentimes non-strategic use of staff placements for influencing which is the basis for one of the recommendations made in this report.

Beyond this, only isolated examples were identified where activities could be improved, for example when too many issues were addressed during leadership-level meetings and consultations between the MFA and a multilateral partner.

**Finland's reputation is a very important contributing factor that enables effective multilateral influencing.** With its multilateral and other partners, Finland enjoys a positive “general” reputation as a country, people and development partner: reliable, honest, pragmatic, accessible, collaborative, hard-working and also unbiased, non-ideological, credible, well-informed, fact- and evidence-based.

In addition, Finland has built a reputation in the multilateral arena as a leading advocate for several specific issues such as the rights of women and girls (including sexual and reproductive health and rights), the rights of persons with disabilities, education, technology and innovation. Through past political and financial core support to the multilateral system, Finland has also established itself as an advocate and supporter of multilateralism, including a commitment to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral institutions.







Both types of reputation contribute significantly to Finland's influence. Finland's general reputation as a development actor facilitates the establishment of relationships, networks and partnerships and increases their effectiveness. Because of Finland's "thematic" reputation, Multilaterals have an open ear and an above-average tendency to listen to what Finland has to say. Consequently, Finland's influencing effects in multilateral organisations were most significant in these areas and it is likely that Finland's influencing effectiveness is lower in areas in which it is not perceived as credible thematic leader.

**The existence of long-established informal and formal like-minded groups facilitates and improves effectiveness of Finnish influencing.** MFA staff has recognised the crucial role of informal interactions and have invested in establishing and maintaining trust-based relationships and networks, including working effectively worked with like-minded groups. Many of these groups – such as the Nordic Group in Rome – have been long in existence and have established ways of working, and new MFA staff can easily start influencing through them, while also benefiting from the considerable financial power of the group.

**Finland's political and financial support to multilateral funding has an important signalling effect and enables access to these organisations.** Finland's support to the multilateral system and its institutions is reflected in Finland's prevalence of unrestricted core funding over earmarked funding to Multilaterals.

Finland's relative level of (core) funding to Multilaterals affects Finland's access to Multilaterals, its reputation, and the quality of its relationship with the Multilateral and thereby its ability to influence it. The 2015/16 funding cuts had negative effects on Finland's access to and voice within Multilaterals. However, given the magnitude of the cuts with respect to most Multilaterals, these effects were less dramatic than what could have been expected, and the evaluation team found Finland's overall reputation as a supporter of multilateralism had not been significantly affected in the organisations that were visited.

Unlike some other donors, Finland does not systematically link funding to the short-term performance of its multilateral partners, which contributes to its reputation as a loyal supporter of the multilateral system – rather than only a user of its organisations.

Finland uses earmarked funding to spearhead specific thematic priorities, both on the global and on the country level, usually with convincing reasons. Naturally, Multilaterals usually prefer core over earmarked funding (for reasons of strategic cohesion and overall effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation), but the current level of earmarked funding at the corporate level and in relation to multi-bilateral funding at the country level did not appear to affect Finland's general reputation or access to Multilaterals. The level and use of earmarked funding were however closely followed by Multilaterals and represents a potential reputational risk that needs to be managed.



# 5 Conclusions

## 5.1 Strategic conclusions

### **Conclusion 1. Finland is effective in influencing its multilateral partners.**

*This conclusion is based on Findings 1–6, 8–16, 19 and 20 and contributes to Recommendation 1.*

In 2019, the incoming Finnish government envisaged a “Globally influential Finland” based on multilateral cooperation – a vision that was shared by the Finnish government at the time this report was written.

The evaluation found that this vision was already reality, at least in terms of the influence Finland had – and has – on its multilateral development partners. In most organisations engaged with this evaluation, Finland was perceived as very influential and, relative to its financial importance as donor, more influential than most other countries and consistently “punching above its weight”.

Significant and pronounced effects were found in the areas of gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, climate change, and in supporting the operational effectiveness and efficiency of Multilaterals.

Multilateral influencing is a complex process with many moving parts, as reflected by good practices developed by the MFA and the theory of change of this evaluation. The MFA clearly knows how to operate this complex machinery effectively, applying a relevant and effective mix of influencing activities and channels in a coordinated way, over extended periods of time, supported by informal interactions and relationships, and usually in collaboration with other actors. This know-how of multilateral influencing largely represents prior knowledge reflected in the tacit knowledge of senior MFA staff involved with multilateral influencing and in the MFA’s documented good practices for multilateral influencing. Because it was confirmed rather than discovered by this evaluation, those good practices are therefore not listed as a separate conclusion in this report.

Finland’s above-average effectiveness in influencing its multilateral partners relies strongly on the good general and thematic reputation it enjoys in the multilateral arena, which also enables the creation of alliances and partnerships for influencing. Finland’s general reputation reflects how Finland and the Finnish people have been perceived by the world to date. This is strongly driven by Finland’s domestic and foreign policy behaviour over the past decades. Finland’s thematic reputation reflects its past global and agency-specific influencing efforts, global advocacy and influencing, but also the degree to which Finland is “walking the talk” at home – that is, having applied and gained domestic experience with what it advocates to others. It also reflects Finland’s past political and financial support to multilateralism that has positioned it as a development actor that genuinely supports (and not only uses) multilateral organisations. These aspects of Finland’s reputation have grown over long periods of time, and they represent a very important asset when it comes to multilateral influencing.



**Conclusion 2. It is in the MFA's interest to secure adequate levels of human resources for multilateral influencing.**

*This conclusion is based on Findings 17 and 18 and contributes to Recommendation 2.*

Finland's effectiveness in engaging its multilateral partners crucially depends on the relatively small number of experienced staff directly involved in multilateral influencing activities. The quality and professionalism of these people also contributes to the positive perceptions multilateral partners have of Finland as a development actor. This cadre of qualified, motivated and effective "influencers" is a scarce resource at the MFA. Limited staff capacity for multilateral influencing has led to lost influencing opportunities.

Staff capacity limitations, especially since the government budget cuts of 2015/16, represent a general challenge at the MFA that has been noted by earlier evaluations. However, it is more pronounced in the case of multilateral influencing. In relation to the important additional effects that could be achieved with modest staff increases, current MFA staff capacity dedicated to multilateral influencing is disproportionately low.

**Conclusion 3. Staff placements can be used more strategically and more effectively for multilateral influencing.**

*This conclusion is based on Findings 2, 14 and 15 and, contributes to Recommendation 3.*

The MFA's staff placement programmes currently focus on increasing Finnish presence in multilateral organisations, on training a cadre of "multilateral-savvy" Finnish professionals, and on general capacity support for multilateral organisations in Finland's development priority areas. The notion of making strategic or tactical use of staff placements for the purpose of multilateral influencing has not been systematically entertained.

In terms of contributing to influencing effects, staff placements have been effective only when they provide expertise and capacity in situations and areas where it would otherwise not have been available. Most staff placements, however, represent situations in which an open position is being filled. Whether that position is filled by a Finn or another equally-qualified applicant does not make a difference in terms of how that part of the multilateral organisation performs, and therefore does not result in a net influencing effect.

For the MFA, this means that priorities need to be weighed. If the main objective is related to placing and retaining Finns in multilateral organisations, the current programmes do not require a change in strategy. Instead, using staff placements more strategically for influencing would require such changes in terms of targeting (i.e. finding situations in which extra expertise and capacity can make a difference), and in terms of selecting applicants.

In the sample of effects observed by the evaluation team in eight multilateral organisations, staff placements represented the least-used channel and contributed only to one-fifth of all influencing effects, which is due to the limited funding available in this channel. If more staff placements were used in a more strategic way, this channel has considerable potential for multilateral influencing.

Irrespective of the above, Finnish staff in multilateral organisations can provide useful information about relevant developments and opportunities for influencing, and can facilitate access to multilateral organisations. These are areas Finland could strengthen further.



**Conclusion 4. Finland’s approach to multilateral influencing covers both issue-driven influencing and general engagement of multilateral organisations, with at times unclear relative priorities.**

*This conclusion is based on Findings 9–15 and 18 and contributes to Recommendation 4.*

While Finland’s approach to multilateral influencing is overall very effective, it is not entirely clear about several choices and trade-offs:

- Finland has positioned itself as a supporter of the multilateral system – rather than only a user of its organisations. Nevertheless, Finland significantly reduced its overall multilateral funding in 2015/16, continues to make use of earmarked and multi-funding and bi-funding, and considered a performance-based approach to multilateral funding in 2012/13.
- The extent to which Finland uses staff placements strategically for multilateral influencing (as opposed to placing Finns into those organisations) is unclear.
- Relative priorities between issue-driven influencing and fulfilling general governance duties in multilateral organisations is also unclear, including what the latter have in the context of multilateral influencing.

Each of these points represents a trade-off between issue-driven influencing activities and general engagement and support that may or may not be considered part of multilateral influencing. Finland would probably benefit from more clarity about its choices and positioning with respect to these points.

**Conclusion 5. For multilateral influencing, there is no strong rationale for coordinating or aligning country-level and corporate-level influencing activities and objectives.**

*This conclusion is based on Findings 7 and 23 and contributes to Recommendation 4.*

At country level, the MFA has been successful in influencing its multilateral partners. However, because of how multilateral organisations are organised and operate, local influencing effects are unlikely to influence these multilateral organisations beyond the project or country context.

For the MFA this implies that – strictly for the purpose of influencing multilateral partners at corporate level – there is no need to reflect corporate-level influencing objectives in country strategies (which is currently not the case) or to ask embassies to implement them locally and this is therefore also not recommended by the evaluation team.

If alignment of priority areas for influencing at both levels is required for other reasons – for example, by the principles of harmonisations and coherence, then the MFA needs to carefully consider how influencing objectives can be aligned. At country level, influencing plans have not yet played a significant role, and it may be required to thematically adjust country strategies and programmes if corporate-level influencing objectives should also be pursued locally. It may further complicate matters if Finland works with several Multilaterals with different corporate influencing objectives.

Another challenge regarding alignment of multilateral influencing at both levels is related to the less central role multilateral influencing plays in the MFA’s bilateral development cooperation. In countries, policy dialogue and influencing are understood as general means to achieve bilateral cooperation objectives and to help develop a partner country. These means are targeted at the partner government and all relevant development actors. Because of this, singling out specifically *multilateral* influencing may not be very meaningful.



Based on interviews with MFA staff heavily involved in multilateral and bilateral work, and with connections to Multilaterals, there would be potential to strengthen MFA-internal links and eliminate disconnects mentioned in other interviews in Helsinki, Rome and New York. The rationale for this would be driven by objectives other than multilateral influencing, such as enhancing coherence and adopting a more thematic approach to development cooperation. However, improved identification of influencing opportunities could be a side benefit.

## 5.2 Operational conclusions

### **Conclusion 6. Staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness.**

*This conclusion is based on Finding 17 and contributes to Recommendations 5 and 6.*

Staff rotations have an impact on the effectiveness of staff in multilateral influencing. This issue was identified in earlier MFA evaluations for general staff, but it is more pronounced for multilateral influencing because of the great importance of effective relationships, networks and alliances and a deep understanding of the structures, processes and work culture of the multilateral organisations.

After rotation, new “influencers” are relatively ineffective for some time while they acquire all relevant information and knowledge, often from scratch, and re-establish the relationships and reputation his or her predecessor had built. For the MFA, this implies considering exceptions to the staff rotation principle and to take measures to mitigate negative effects to the extent possible.

Multilateral influencing requires a significant set of different skills and experiences not covered by the MFA’s general and development-specific capacity development programmes. Therefore, targeted, on-demand training or coaching for involved staff would be helpful.

### **Conclusion 7. Country-level information and experience can represent useful input for corporate level influencing, but is not always accessible.**

*This conclusion is based on Finding 7 and contributes to Recommendation 6.*

Finland’s embassies and partners can usefully contribute to the MFA’s corporate influencing efforts by collecting and reporting information – for example, about field experiences with new approaches or the degree to which multilateral change processes were being implemented at field level.

Such information is relevant and needed for corporate-level influencing activities, and would also help in improving coherence and maybe even making use of synergies, but this information is currently not easily accessible. Information from countries does not flow well to the MFA units responsible for multilateral organisations, and even less to Permanent Mission staff.

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19 This concerns the MFA units in the Department of Development Policy that are directly involved with Multilaterals (KEO-50, KEO-70 and KEO-90). While beyond the scope of the mandate of the present evaluation, a similar exercise is suggested for other units of the MFA in Helsinki that liaise directly with Multilaterals (e.g. TUO-10 and POL-50) and the MFA’s permanent missions and representations in Geneva, New York and Rome (or with embassies in those locations, depending on how much they are involved in multilateral influencing), as well as for MFA staff posted with Multilaterals as part of constituency offices, as in the case of the WBG.





### 5.3 Conclusions regarding the management of multilateral influencing

**Conclusion 8. The MFA's approach to managing multilateral influencing with influencing plans and related processes has been effective for organisational learning and the MFA's reporting to parliament, but has not significantly impacted on how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice.**

*This conclusion is based on Findings 21–25 and contributes to Recommendations 7 and 8.*

The MFA has effectively used influencing reports for organisational learning. This has resulted in good practices, and has informed how the MFA's approach to managing multilateral influencing was developed. It has made the MFA's approach to multilateral influencing more transparent, and was effective in informing the Finnish Parliament about multilateral influencing as part of the comprehensive 2018 results report, including demonstrating the achievement of influencing targets and what lessons had been learned.

However, the approach has not been effective in adding value to the day-to-day management of multilateral influencing activities. Influencing is a central element of the diplomatic profession, and the activities and approaches described in influencing plans and reports were already being applied before influencing plans were introduced. In addition, multilateral influencing continues to be implemented without influencing plans in the case of several Multilaterals receiving only limited funding from the MFA. Staff in charge of multilateral influencing experienced challenges in using influencing plans and reports as a management tool. At times, other planning and reporting processes were more important.

For the MFA, this implies that the new approach to managing multilateral influencing that is currently being developed must also provide incremental value for the staff who implement this work. This translates into even more flexibility in planning and reporting to fully reflect the unpredictable opportunities for multilateral influencing. In view of the important linkages to Finland's global influencing and advocacy, and the need to share knowledge and bring new staff quickly up to speed, the new approach should not follow an agency-by-agency logic but should include collaboration and teamwork across organisational boundaries.

Important elements already included in the new approach should be maintained, such as: the definition of a limited number of principal strategic priority areas; the collection, reporting, synthesis and usage of information and knowledge for learning and for reporting to Parliament; and the idea of publishing an annual influencing report summary for each multilateral partner.



# 6 Recommendations and summary answers to the evaluation questions

## 6.1 Strategic recommendations

**Recommendation 1. Continue multilateral influencing largely in a similar manner as in the past, reflecting established good practices, and consider increasing political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing activities.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 1 and includes the following actions:*

This recommendation serves to underline that multilateral influencing represents a very successful and effective way to contribute to Finland's foreign and development policy priorities, and to affirm that the MFA should continue implementing influencing activities as it has done in the past, and should further strengthen its related efforts, as described below.

The MFA should ensure as much as possible that Finland's political and financial support – in the form of foreign and development policy priorities, high-level advocacy, and the level and structure of funding to multilateral organisations – continues to be strong, explicit, consistent, predictable and reliable. The processes and frameworks introduced by the MFA's comprehensive reform of its development cooperation practices (KeTTU) may be useful platforms for this.

The MFA should also consider – within the multilateral policy channel and its priorities – further increasing the visibility and the political and financial support specifically for multilateral influencing and engagement, with a strong strategic focus. Finland's Development Policy Results Report of 2018 already represents an important step in this direction, as do the updated 2020 influencing plans that will now contain a publicly-available summary. Bringing the effectiveness and the opportunities of multilateral influencing and engagement to the attention of Finland's policy makers and development community can help to support this important policy channel.

**Recommendation 2. Allocate more staff capacity to multilateral influencing.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 2 and includes the following actions:*

The MFA should estimate capacity needs and add staff to allow the MFA units, missions and embassies, representations and constituency offices<sup>9</sup> to avoid missing high-value opportunities for multilateral influencing in the future. Staff capacity constraints should not be a reason to



abandon influential positions in the governance bodies of Multilaterals or their trust funds or programmes, or to miss following up on important and relevant developments that have been set in motion, as long as these provide opportunities to influence multilateral activities in Finland's development policy priority areas.

The evaluation team anticipates that required staff increases will remain modest – for example, between one and three additional positions for each of the three units in the Department for Development Policy. This is because the MFA is engaged with a limited number of core multilateral partners, and because “windows” or opportunities for influencing are limited and depend on their internal governance, management, strategy and financial cycles.

The evaluation team considers multilateral influencing a highly cost-effective way of contributing to Finland's development policy priorities, and adequate staffing in the respective units should therefore be considered a priority, even if the MFA overall administrative budget is not increased.

**Recommendation 3. Use staff placements more strategically and make better use of the information Finns working in multilateral organisations can provide.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 3 and includes the following actions:*

To pursue this recommendation, the MFA should initiate a dialogue among the MFA leadership, and establish priorities regarding the relative priority multilateral influencing should be given in the context of the international recruitment programmes that are financially supported by the MFA (JPO, UNV, SARC and senior secondments). This reflects balancing the currently predominant objective of simply placing Finns into those organisations with maximising the influencing effectiveness of staff placement by selecting and targeting them strategically. In that latter cases, influencing opportunities represent situations in which Multilaterals can be provided with expert capacity (not necessarily Finnish nationals) that is both relevant and would otherwise not be available.

The evaluation team suggests that staff placements should be used in a strategic way because of their demonstrated high influencing effectiveness in these situations. Strategic targeting should also include staff placements to thematically important multi-bi projects, possibly combined with an opportunity to move subsequently to multilateral organisation headquarters.

Occasions for strategic targeting can be identified in dialogue with the HR and operational managers in Multilaterals, and from interactions with Finns working in those organisations. In addition, alternative ways to supply Multilaterals with such targeted and highly-influential capacity support should be explored beyond the MFA's international recruitment efforts – for example, as part of country programmes or earmarked multilateral support.

Generally, the MFA should intensify networking and communication with Finns working in multilateral organisations, and should use these interactions to collect information with relevance for multilateral influencing.

**Recommendation 4. Broaden the approach from multilateral influencing to multilateral engagement by developing a structured rationale for each envisaged engagement.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusions 4 and 5 and includes the following actions:*



Reflecting the MFA's good practices for multilateral influencing, and building on the theory of change developed as part of this evaluation (Section 4.6.1), the MFA's approach to multilateral influencing should be set out in a concise public policy note that can be used within the MFA and also shared with partners.

Much of the descriptive content of this note can be drawn from the findings and the concepts and definitions of this evaluation report, but should be adapted as the MFA sees fit. This will add value by clarifying and internalising Finland's approach within the MFA and vis-à-vis Finland's partners. The note should also cover how the MFA strategically prioritises its multilateral influencing efforts (see next recommendation) and should clarify and clearly position Finland with regard to the following choices and priorities:

1. Describe the role and nature of Finland's reputation and how this affects Finland's influence and influencing activities, including the choice of priority areas for influencing.
2. Involving like-minded partners, describe the role of informal and formal networks and alliances, and clarify Finland's approach to supporting and managing them.
3. Clarify Finland's position as a supporter of the multilateral system (versus only a user of its organisations), differentiate Finland's position with respect to the reward and sanction schemes other donors, such as Sweden and the UK, use to manage their multilateral portfolios; and provide an outlook for Finland's political and financial support to its multilateral partners in the coming years, and in relation to the support provided until the 2015/16 budget cuts.
4. Clarify the rationale for using earmarked funding in the context of multilateral influencing, including the role it has in contributing to influencing objectives and how possible adverse effects on Multilaterals and on Finland's reputation as core funder are tracked and managed.
5. Explain the rationales and clarify the priorities related to staff placements between generally supporting Multilaterals, vis-à-vis more targeted use of staff placements specifically for multilateral influencing, including why (or why not) staff in the latter case should be Finns.
6. Clarify the relative focus, rationale and purpose between fulfilling general governance duties in Multilaterals (e.g. to support them in achieving their mandate) and using this channel for additional, issue-driven influencing activities.
7. Clarify the relation between influencing on the global, corporate and country levels, and summarise the MFA's approach to managing it.

The MFA should ensure that both visible engagement (influencing activities leading to specific influencing effects) and less visible engagement (corresponding to general support to Multilaterals, as reflected in points 3 to 6 above) with multilateral organisations are adequately reflected in its planning, reports and communications. In this context, the MFA should consider moving from the concept of multilateral influencing to the slightly broader concept of "multilateral engagement", which covers both visible and less visible influencing activities, and effects and better reflects the notion of mutual influencing between the MFA, its multilateral partners, and other actors.



## 6.2 Operational recommendations

**Recommendation 5. Take measures to enhance continuity of staff in charge of multilateral influencing, ensure effective handovers during staff changes, and offer targeted coaching and training.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 6 and includes the following actions:*

Together with the MFA's Administrative Department, find ways to allow experienced staff in key units for multilateral influencing to stay in their positions for longer periods, incentivise rotating within those units, and manage handovers between incoming and outgoing staff – as recommended by a recent evaluation of knowledge management at the MFA in terms of: good handover practices; ongoing maintenance of a “job dossier” at unit level; overlap of several weeks between incoming and outgoing staff; and continued mentorship by the former job holder afterwards (Palenberg et al. 2019).

Offer targeted coaching or training to staff in these units when useful – for example, coached role plays for internalising different influencing tactics; experience exchanges between new and former staff about specific Multilaterals and its people; introductory/advance board training for new staff representing Finland in multilateral governing bodies.

**Recommendation 6. Ensure that staff involved in multilateral influencing have access to the information and experience they need.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 7 and includes the following actions:*

Staff involved in multilateral influencing should be supported with the information they need for corporate-level influencing. In view of the findings of earlier evaluations (Palenberg et al. 2019), a pragmatic approach is recommended. For example, a consultant or an analyst help desk service could be used to systematically collect required information from MFA embassies and other sources, collect and review documents of relevance, and conduct specific analyses on behalf of MFA staff in charge of corporate-level influencing.

To facilitate knowledge exchange, the MFA should include in its internal guidelines, instructions or protocols a provision for consultations when decisions concerning multi-bi projects are made – for example, as part of country strategy and programme formulation, or when motivated by thematic global initiatives of a multilateral organisation. Possibilities for joint thematic initiatives would, by definition, enhance sharing of information and lessons learned, while providing influencing opportunities. This can be related to the influencing teams suggested in the next recommendation.





## 6.3 Recommendations for managing multilateral influencing

**Recommendation 7. Continue to develop the MFA's influencing plans, reports and related processes towards a more strategic and adaptive approach for managing multilateral engagement.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 8 and includes the following actions:*

Further develop the influencing plan formats and processes to reflect and incorporate the following principles:

1. Long-term strategic goals for multilateral influencing on the level of the multilateral system, covering thematic goals, goals related to operational effectiveness and efficiency, and the general governance responsibilities Finland has as member and shareholder.
2. Goals at a system level – that is, for the UN and for groups of multilateral organisations for which these goals are relevant.
3. Teams for each goal that collaborate, strategise, plan, report, learn, collect information, exchange experiences and knowledge, and bring new members up to speed. Members are MFA desk officers working with multilateral organisations, thematic advisers or ambassadors, and other relevant MFA staff. If feasible and relevant, teams could also include members from other involved Finnish institutions and from like-minded countries.
4. Flexible and adaptive planning and implementation of multilateral influencing activities.
5. Reporting that avoids traditional progress reporting to the extent possible and focuses on explaining, demonstrating and learning from what has been done and was achieved – including occasional independent feedback from the multilateral partners about their perspectives and views of changes to which Finland contributed.

The updated 2020 influencing plans, related documents and planned processes already demonstrate several of these principles. They also offer relevant thematic goals that reflect both Finland's development policy priorities and the areas in which Finland has the necessary thematic reputation.

The above principles serve to ensure a strategic and system-level approach that allows prioritisation between multilateral partners and is in line with how priority-setting in Finland's development cooperation has evolved.

In addition, the MFA needs to ensure that the more strategic and adaptive approach for managing multilateral influencing does not compete with other processes such as the MFA's annual operation and budget planning system (TTS), or strategies, work plans and reports of permanent missions and embassies.

**Recommendation 8. Conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland's multilateral partners and use this to prioritise strategic long-term opportunities for multilateral engagement.**

*This recommendation is based on Conclusion 8 and includes the following actions:*

Inform and support identification of the most value-adding themes and areas for multilateral influencing (to be reflected in the policy note recommended above) by conducting a pragmatic and mostly judgment-based assessment of the most important factors contributing to Finland's



multilateral influencing effectiveness across Finland's portfolio of multilateral partners, trust funds and programmes. Based on such an assessment, identify the most promising areas and themes for influencing for each institution and across the entire portfolio.

In accordance with the theory of change developed in this evaluation, criteria for such an assessment could include:

- Finland's access (representation on governing bodies and during financial negotiations and replenishments, options for staff placements, accessibility of the multilateral leadership, other linkages);
- The degree to which Finland can rely on established relationships, networks and alliances;
- Finland's reputation and weight (funding share, perceived weight of Finnish voice, strengths and level of alignment of like-minded groups, relations between the MFA and multilateral leaderships and other key staff);
- The degree to which the institution's thematic and operational issues match areas in which Finland is most influential;
- The institution's capacity for managing change processes and for complying with policies, strategies, procedures and implementing them in daily practice;
- The state of the institution's global operating environment – for example, the degree to which it is under political pressure or in the process of implementing other reform processes; and
- The size and reach of the institution, and the related potential impact associated with successful influencing.

The evaluation team assumes that, in the preparation of the updated 2020 influencing plans, some or much of this work has already been done in an informal way within respective missions and units. In contrast to that work, there should be no specific number of themes or areas required per Multilateral. Instead, Multilaterals offering high-value, long-term influencing opportunities should be prioritised over others that can remain without specific areas for influencing. Overall, this should result in a strengthened and more selective strategic prioritisation on the most value-adding, long-term opportunities for influencing across the MFA's entire multilateral portfolio that allows the MFA to adjust or assign staff and financial resources accordingly.

## 6.4 Summary answers to the evaluation questions

This section concludes the report by providing brief summary answers to the four evaluation questions this evaluation set out to answer.

### **1. How effective have the MFA's influencing activities been overall in influencing people, policies and operations of Multilaterals in policy areas important to Finland?**

Overall, the MFA's influencing activities were effective and contributed to important effects in terms of i) changed behaviour of staff working in multilateral organisations; and ii) the adaptation of existing – or the introduction of new – policies, strategies, procedures and practices.

The MFA typically applied a relevant and effective mix of different types of influencing activities across different influencing channels. Different activities that contributed towards an influencing effect were implemented in a consistent, persistent and well-coordinated manner over long periods of time, usually together with a group of like-minded partners. This comprehensive and holistic approach, which reflected the MFA's previously established good practices for multilateral influencing, was validated by this evaluation. The only systematic exception was with reference



to the placement of Finns into multilateral organisations. This influencing channel had not been used systematically or in a strategic manner to support multilateral influencing.

Multilateral influencing at the global level, for example in the context of the reform of the UN development system, played an important role for corporate-level influencing of multilateral organisations because it affected the environment these organisations operate in.

Country-level influencing effects on local staff, policies and operations of multilateral organisations contributed to bilateral development cooperation objectives but were unlikely to affect these organisations beyond the country level. In contrast, country-level information represented potentially important input for strengthening the MFA's corporate- and global-level multilateral influence.

## **2. How plausible is it that the MFA's influencing activities contribute to increased relevance and operational effectiveness of targeted Multilaterals and – ultimately – to sustainable development?**

In some cases, the MFA, together with other actors, contributed to long-term developments in multilateral agencies that reflected important changes in their thematic priorities and approaches. These changes were relevant in the context of Finland's development policy priorities and also included changes related to how multilateral organisations manage their operations which can, in turn, enhance their operational effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition, recently realised influencing effects have the potential to contribute to further changes in multilateral organisations in the future, but such changes depend on many additional factors that cannot be predicted and are beyond the direct control of the MFA.

## **3. How effective is the results-based management approach (influencing plans and related steering, reporting and learning processes) in supporting MFA influencing activities towards Multilaterals?**

The MFA has effectively used multilateral influencing plans and related processes to increase transparency about influencing objectives, activities and results; for organisational learning in terms of good practices and the continued development of influencing plans and processes; and to report results, e.g. to the Finnish parliament. However, the plans and processes have not significantly impacted how influencing is implemented in practice. Furthermore, MFA staff involved in influencing practice often regard them as too restrictive and burdensome in relation to the derived benefits.

In line with the recommendations made in this evaluation, the new approach to managing multilateral influencing that is currently being developed by the MFA offers more flexibility, usefully defines a limited set of strategic influencing priorities, and further increases transparency.

## **4. What factors have the greatest positive or negative effect on MFA multilateral influencing and what action can the MFA take – realistically and in view of available resources and capacity – to further enhance its effectiveness?**

The most important factors with respect to the multilateral influencing effectiveness of the MFA are as follows.

- The skills, experiences and the motivation of MFA staff are central factors explaining the overall high multilateral influencing effectiveness observed in this evaluation. However, limited staff capacity and staff rotations have negatively impacted influencing effectiveness.



- Apart from staff placements that can be used more strategically for multilateral influencing, the mix of influencing activities and channels and the integrated, coordinated and collaborative way they are implemented is generally relevant and effective and reflects good practices established by the MFA prior to this evaluation.
- Finland's reputation as development actor is a very important contributing factor in Finland's influencing effectiveness. Finland enjoys a positive reputation in multilateral organisations and amongst its development partners that enables effective multilateral influencing.
- The existence of likeminded groups facilitates access and amplifies Finland's voice in the multilateral arena, thereby contributing to enhanced influencing effectiveness.
- Finland's traditionally strong and steady political and financial support to the multilateral system and its institutions contributes to Finland's reputation (thereby enabling effective influencing) and improves influencing opportunities. Reduced Finnish funding 2016–2019 has been noted by Finland's multilateral and donor partners and, in some cases, has resulted in lost or diminished influencing opportunities.

Regarding the second part of this evaluation question, the actions the MFA can take to further enhance multilateral influencing effectiveness are reflected in the recommendations of this evaluation.



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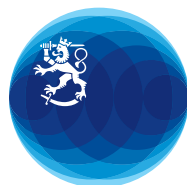
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**VOLUME 1 • MAIN REPORT**



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland