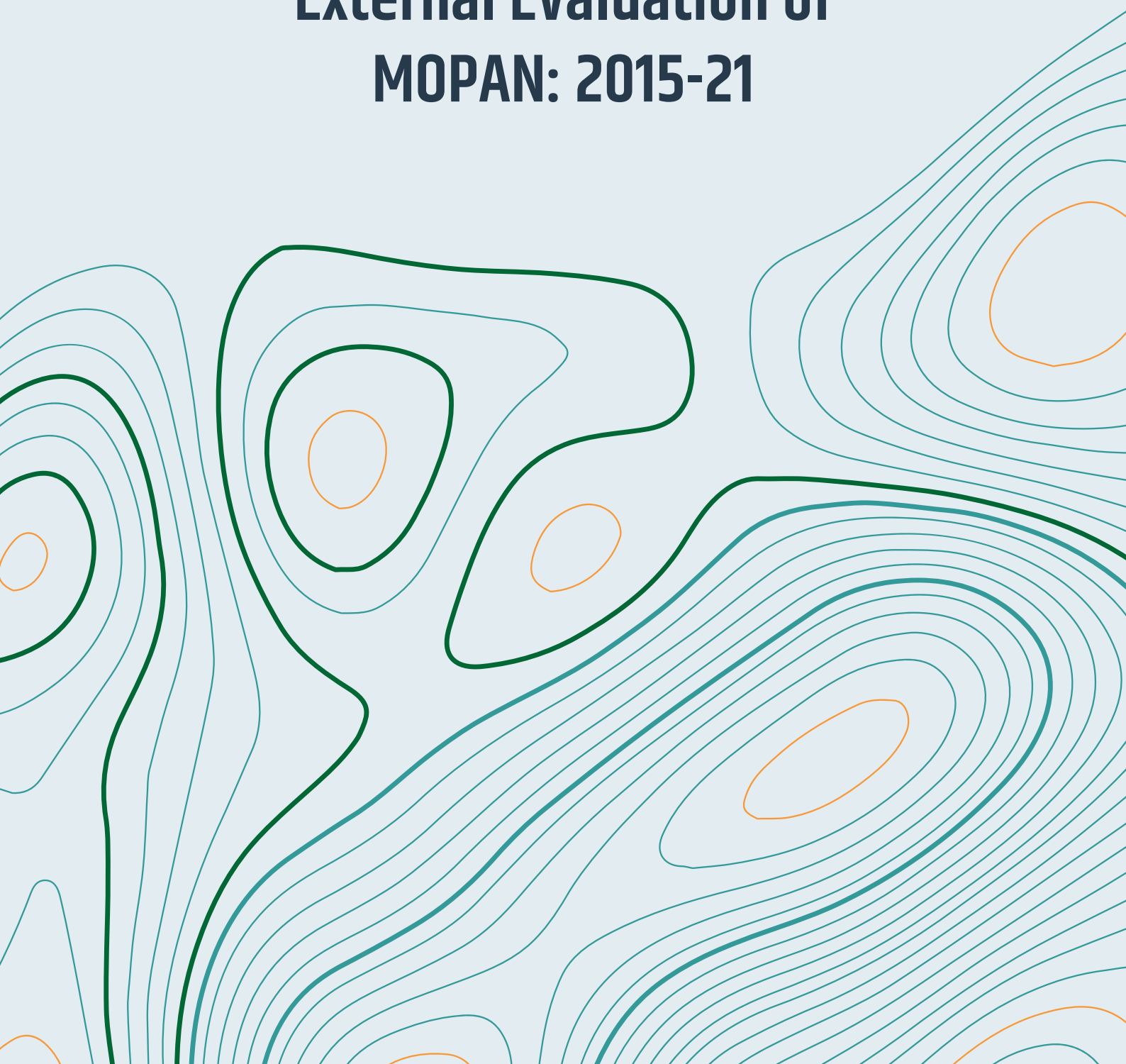


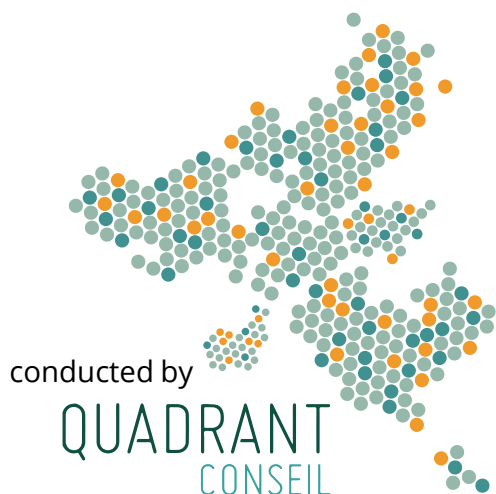


# **External Evaluation of MOPAN: 2015-21**





# External Evaluation of MOPAN: 2015-21



commissioned by



This evaluation has been commissioned by MOPAN and undertaken by an independent consultancy, *Quadrant Conseil*. MOPAN is an independent body that is governed by a Steering Committee composed of representatives of all of its member countries and served by a permanent Secretariat. The Secretariat is hosted at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and bound by its administrative rules and procedures. It is independent in terms of financing and the content and implementation of its work programme. *Quadrant Conseil* is a participative and co-operative consulting company specialised in public policy evaluation.

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# About this Evaluation

The external evaluation of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) was conducted by and prepared under the responsibility of *Quadrant Conseil*.

This document presents detailed information about the evaluation findings and lessons, approach, conclusions and recommendations as well as suggested actions for addressing the recommendations. It is accompanied by an evaluation brief which contains conclusions and recommendations from the external evaluation of MOPAN (2015-21), including overarching answers to the main evaluation questions.

The evaluation report is accompanied by a response to the evaluation on behalf of the Network, which details how MOPAN will address each of the evaluation recommendations. The full Network response is available at: <https://www.mopanonline.org/aboutus/evaluations/>

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# Acronyms & Abbreviations

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank Group
<b>AM</b>	Assessment Manager (MOPAN)
<b>CA</b>	Contribution Analysis
<b>CAA</b>	Central Assurance Assessments
<b>CC</b>	Contribution Claim
<b>CGIAR</b>	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<b>CIFOR</b>	Centre for International Forestry Research
<b>CIRAD</b>	French agricultural research and international co-operation organisation for the sustainable development of tropical and Mediterranean regions
<b>COP26</b>	UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DCD</b>	Development Co-operation Directorate
<b>DCO</b>	Development Co-ordination Office
<b>ECOSOC</b>	ECONomic and SOCIAL Council (UN)
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FATF</b>	Financial Action Task Force
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time Equivalent
<b>FWC</b>	Framework Contract
<b>GPEDC</b>	Global Deal partnership and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
<b>GSF</b>	Global Science Forum
<b>HoS</b>	Head of Secretariat (MOPAN)
<b>IATI</b>	International Aid Transparency Initiative
<b>IEA</b>	International Energy Agency
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>IL</b>	Institutional Lead
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migrations
<b>ITF</b>	International Transport Forum
<b>JIU</b>	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>MAR</b>	Market Abuse Regulation
<b>MDBs</b>	Multilateral Development Banks
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MOFP</b>	Multilateral Organisation Focal Point
<b>MOs</b>	Multilateral Organisations

<b>MOPAN</b>	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>NPM</b>	New Public Management
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OIOS</b>	Office of Internal Oversight Services
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>PMO</b>	Project Management Office
<b>PoC</b>	Proof of Concept
<b>PSEAH</b>	Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
<b>PWB</b>	Programme of Work and Budget
<b>QuODA</b>	Quality of Official Development Assistance
<b>RBM</b>	Results Based Management
<b>RC</b>	Resident Co-ordinator
<b>RG</b>	Reference Group
<b>SC</b>	Steering Committee
<b>SDD</b>	Statistics and Data Directorate
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SA</b>	Sexual abuse
<b>SH</b>	Sexual harassment
<b>SEAH</b>	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
<b>SWAC</b>	Sahel and West Africa Club
<b>SWG</b>	Secretariat Working Group
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
<b>UNSG</b>	Secretary-General of the United Nations
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WBG</b>	World Bank Group
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# **Executive Summary**

## Overview

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is a network of 21 countries (19 members, two observers) that assesses the performance of multilateral organisations (MOs) and provides a range of insights to promote a more effective multilateral system.

In 2020, MOPAN commissioned an independent external evaluation for the 2015-21 period to inform its members' decisions about their future support to MOPAN and about the negotiation of a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the OECD in 2023.

The evaluation addresses three main questions related to MOPAN's efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach which included:

- interviews with 41 MOPAN member representatives, 13 MOPAN Secretariat staff and 20 multilateral stakeholders and OECD officials;
- 12 case studies of the use of MOPAN assessments and analytical studies for which 140 individuals were interviewed; and
- a survey conducted with MOPAN members, past Institutional leads (ILs) and organisational focal points (137 respondents).

Periodic workshops were conducted to consult MOPAN members and MOPAN Secretariat staff on the evaluation approach, the Theory of Change (ToC) and emerging findings. Contribution analysis was used to assess MOPAN's effectiveness and impact and to provide a rigorous appraisal of the use of MOPAN products, especially by MOs.

The evaluation report is accompanied by a response to the evaluation on behalf of the Network, which details how MOPAN will address each of the evaluation recommendations. The full Network response is available at: <https://www.mopanonline.org/aboutus/evaluations/>

## To what extent is MOPAN organised and working efficiently?

Over the past six years, the MOPAN Secretariat has grown and expanded the range of skills among its staff. It has largely delivered on its agenda for reform, centred on reinforcing the credibility and coverage of MOPAN assessments, promoting learning and uptake of theme. These activities have led to a rise in the number of assessments delivered annually and better coverage among MOs, and have also improved stakeholders' perceptions of the assessments' credibility.

The changes have also challenged the efficiency and fitness for purpose of the Secretariat's current structure. The gains in assessment quality, credibility, and coverage have come at a cost; Secretariat staff must now devote significantly more time to assessments. Furthermore, the current governance and hosting arrangements require further attention to support the implementation of MOPAN's mission in the most optimal manner.

In 2013, a permanent MOPAN Secretariat was established and hosted within the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD). This arrangement has been beneficial in many regards. The network has enjoyed substantive independence and the Secretariat operates with autonomy. However, this situation depends overly on informal rules and tacit codes of behaviour rather than codified procedures or safeguards.

In the mid-2010s, the MOPAN Secretariat was entrusted with an agenda for reform. It focused on reinforcing MOPAN's credibility and coverage on the one hand, and on learning and improving uptake of MOPAN products on the other. The Secretariat has largely delivered on this agenda. In the last six years, the number of assessments produced annually has doubled and new MOs have come under MOPAN's remit. At the same time, the delivery process has been largely professionalised and includes new forms of engagement with MOs and members. The timeliness of assessments has come into focus as has improving the presentation and dissemination of results.

These efforts, together with an ongoing investment in the assessment methodology, have clearly increased the quality of MOPAN's products and their credibility in the eyes of stakeholders across the multilateral system. MOs give more mixed feedback; however, this feedback is no longer about the overall credibility of the approach, but rather about issues such as the time burden of the assessment process, the relevance to their context of some assessment elements and other technical aspects.

These gains in quality, credibility, and coverage have come at a cost. The planned budget increased by 59% between 2015 and 2020, a rise covering the higher number and greater diversity of MOs being assessed and the methodology that has expanded progressively to cover new areas while being adapted to different MOs. This rise also includes the development of new products.

In ramping up to deliver on its agenda, and Programme of Work as agreed with members, MOPAN's budget is no longer commensurate with the scope of activities the Secretariat is delivering. This poses a risk to future delivery and quality. In particular, the impact on staff time of the efforts to increase assessment credibility and utility has been underestimated these last few years.

Finally, MOPAN has found it difficult in recent years to achieve the appropriate balance between its governance and operations. There have been many efforts to identify processes that are fit for their intended purpose. New governance arrangements were issued in 2019 to formalise some key processes and roles. Notwithstanding these changes, the current situation remains less than satisfactory from the perspectives of both MOPAN members and the Secretariat. Generally speaking, a professional Secretariat dedicated exclusively to MOPAN contrasts with member country representatives for whom MOPAN is but one of many areas of responsibility.

## To what extent is MOPAN fulfilling members' needs for accountability information and supporting the performance of the multilateral system?

Members and MOs use MOPAN assessments in different ways. Most members use MOPAN assessments in their accountability processes for multilateral aid; some rely heavily on MOPAN reports rather than on bilateral review processes for factual information about MOs' organisational performance arrangements. However, assessments are not used systematically for monitoring or dialogue with MOs. In most cases, in most countries, their use depends largely on individuals and contexts. Finally, MOPAN assessments are rarely used in budgetary allocation processes or to inform multilateral policy.

Some MOs do use MOPAN assessments, even though they are not geared to their needs. Generally, the assessments are used in conjunction with other lines of evidence to address specific organisational and management issues of which management is already aware. Some MOs are eager to use MOPAN assessments to open a dialogue, but MOPAN members have rarely reacted to such an opportunity. MOPAN's new analytical products have proven that it can produce credible learning products using an approach that is often more collaborative which are then used by both members and MOs.

Most members use MOPAN assessments as part of their accountability processes for multilateral aid, typically as part of due diligence processes or for reporting to governments or parliaments. The assessments, which would be otherwise unaffordable or impossible to obtain for some countries, provide a unique source of factual information on MOs' organisational performance arrangements. Even larger countries, such as the UK, have put

their own bilateral review processes on hold in recent years and have relied instead on MOPAN assessments. This has reduced transaction costs for MOs, but only on performance arrangements, whereas the majority of the reporting burden is now linked to earmarking and thematic issues.

MOPAN assessments are rarely used in budgetary allocation processes. The role of evidence-based assessments is usually marginal with respect to providing voluntary core funding, which is a strategic process and a political statement in which MOPAN serves as a safeguard. However, a few member countries use MOPAN assessments when allocating earmarked funding to compare MO performance. This use raises validity issues as assessment ratings are not intended to be comparable across MOs.

MOPAN assessments are also used to steer and monitor the relationship between a country and an MO. This use is established in countries that have systematic processes to engage with MOs and a strong culture of performance. Elsewhere, this kind of use is contingent on individuals, the context, and/or the availability of other sources of information. Only a few member countries use the MOPAN assessment process and the opportunity provided by serving as an institutional lead (IL) to actively support their partnerships with MOs. In general, it is the rare multilateral desk officer who is familiar with MOPAN. More often, desk officers are likely to prioritise substantive or thematic issues over organisational performance in their analysis of and engagement with MOs. Finally, in most countries, MOPAN is usually perceived as responding to operational concerns and is not used for strategic decision-making.

At the beginning of the evaluation, the possibility that MOs could use MOPAN assessments was considered questionable. It was generally assumed that most MOs either do not use MOPAN assessments at all or use them only in very limited ways. But in fact, some MOs use MOPAN assessments along with other studies to support ongoing reforms that address very specific operational and management issues, especially those related to evaluation and results frameworks. That MOPAN assessments are external makes them useful for bringing issues to the attention of MO executive boards and governing bodies. Organisations “under pressure” – that are losing members or have issues around reputation or growth – use MOPAN assessments even more intensively. First and second assessments are also more likely than subsequent ones to generate useful information.

A few MOs also use MOPAN assessments to support their fundraising activities pointing to reforms that have already been implemented and to demonstrate that they are responsive to demands. However, MOPAN members do not take advantage of these opportunities sufficiently to support the reforms or to help MOs address fundraising challenges, which results in missed opportunities for supporting MO performance and reduced impact.

Finally, MOPAN’s recent analytical products on climate change, the UNDS reform, and sexual exploitation and harassment (SEAH) offer an alternative pathway for supporting the performance of the multilateral system. These products are proof that MOPAN can produce credible learning products that members and MOs use. The studies have addressed critical issues in a timely manner and have been well received by members and MOs. MOPAN’s work on SEAH is particularly noteworthy. Thanks to a collaborative process, the work was broadly taken up on the multilateral scene. However, MOPAN is not currently organised to deliver such products. (See MOPAN’s continued relevance.)



## To what extent is MOPAN's work relevant in an evolving multilateral context and for supporting efforts to improve the multilateral system?

MOPAN's current methodology does not reflect some contemporary challenges faced by MOs since the assessment framework was not designed to meet their needs, but rather those of members. More broadly, MOPAN's methodology is rooted in a view of multilateral effectiveness focused on policies, frameworks, and guidelines to support the direct delivery of aid, whereas MOs increasingly face more intangible issues, including working in partnership, co-ordination, and catalysing complex development outcomes.

MOPAN's new analytical products could bridge this divide and support the evolution of its framework in a transparent way. However, MOPAN would need to address emerging challenges when delivering these studies, including adapting ways of working that emphasise knowledge-brokering and allow for responding to opportunities to promote their use when they arise.

MOPAN assessments are designed to meet the needs of MOPAN members rather than those of MOs. To expect MOs to use them assumes that the information that MOPAN provides to members is also relevant to the MOs, whereas this is largely unlikely: MOPAN uses non-specific indicators speaking to aspects of accountability and management processes for which the assessed organisations are likely to already be aware of existing challenges. What is less obvious is how to develop and systematically implement processes and ways of working in very complex, decentralised environments, and how to gain traction internally and externally to promote the needed behaviour changes. However, MOPAN assessments do not currently speak to these issues directly.

Furthermore, MOPAN's methodology reflects the fact that MOs deliver interventions directly and assumes that effective organisational performance systems begin with policies, frameworks, and guidelines. Yet the work and effectiveness of MOs are linked increasingly to more intangible activities involving partnerships, co-ordination, and catalysing complex development outcomes. Consequently, MOPAN's criteria and indicators no longer adequately reflect the current challenges or performance standards of MOs.

MOPAN's new analytical products offer an avenue for addressing these challenges – by providing a basis for adapting the methodology and helping actors in the multilateral system deal with intractable problems. But they carry their own challenges. In particular, providing policy insights cannot be dissociated from adopting a policy perspective whereas MOPAN members may not agree on the way forward for certain multilateral issues. Moreover, MOPAN is not organised to deliver learning products. “Pushing” information towards decision makers means developing processes to broker the knowledge, and being reactive and opportunistic. This requires a degree of organisational flexibility that neither the MOPAN Secretariat nor member representatives today possess.



## Recommendations

The evaluation recommendations reflect the following assumptions:

- Member and multilateral organisations (MOs) use will continue to be an important criterion for judging MOPAN's success.
- MOPAN will remain an instrument for accountability and learning.
- MOPAN will remain dedicated to issues of organisational performance.
- Some changes will be acceptable, especially in the Secretariat's role and methodology.

Recommendations R1 to R4 relate to the governance of and rationale for MOPAN; R5 and R6 to the assessment methodology and process, and R7 to R9 to strategies to promoting the use of MOPAN products.

**R1: MOPAN should clarify how its activities are expected to support the organisational performance of MOs in addition to addressing members' accountability needs.**

**Context** — Today's MOPAN prioritises the accountability needs of donors and expects that the information produced will be useful to MOs. But this arrangement is only one of many possibilities. Another approach would be to identify ways to help MOs improve their organisational effectiveness more directly and thereby contribute to the effectiveness of the multilateral system, while still satisfying members' accountability needs.

**Action** — Clarify MOPAN's mission and strategic priorities, especially how MOPAN activities are expected to support organisational performance in MOs and the nature of the performance relationship that MOPAN wants with MOs - one of counter/accountee, or one of partnership.

## R2: MOPAN members should adopt a medium-term strategic vision and specific accountability processes to support it.

**Context** — MOPAN governance has remained a concern, despite several attempts to strike an appropriate balance between operational and strategic issues. New arrangements were adopted in 2019 but; still face implementation challenges that may have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the inability to hold in-person meetings and dialogue. The capacity of MOPAN members to provide strategic direction and define the Secretariat's room for manoeuvre to implement it is one of the major issues.

**Action** — Members should agree on a medium-term mandate reflecting a shared strategic vision (e.g. MOPAN 2030) and request that the Head of Secretariat (HoS) present a programme and budget in support of it. Accountability arrangements should be established to support steering by the members, in addition to reviewing the programme of work and budget. The HoS would be accountable for realising his/her programme and strategic priorities and thus free to decide on how to implement it.

## R3: MOPAN members should more clearly define their non-financial contributions and make a clear commitment to provide them.

**Context** — The equilibrium has shifted between members and the Secretariat over recent years about their respective share of MOPAN work. Even members who want to play a more active role in MOPAN's work face time and resource constraints.

**Action** — A commitment to spend a defined amount of time on MOPAN on specific tasks would help increase members' involvement and use. In particular, the role of MOPAN members in some aspects of the assessments and other products, particularly in promoting their dissemination and uptake, should be clarified.

## R4: MOPAN should establish its Secretariat as a stand-alone entity within the OECD and secure greater certainty of funding.

**Context** — Hosting MOPAN and its secretariat at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) has helped put the network on a solid footing and supported the establishment of a fully-fledged Secretariat. However, steps are now needed to consolidate these gains and support their ongoing relevance and longevity.

**Action** — The MOPAN Secretariat should become a stand-alone entity within the OECD with a set of rules to guide its relationship with the organisation and clarify the respective roles and functions of the Steering Committee (SC) and the Secretariat (e.g. for the appointment/retention of the HoS). This arrangement should seek to ensure MOPAN's independence and alignment to other priorities that will emerge from the upcoming MoU and mid-term vision.

**R5: MOPAN members should decide on the basic set of indicators they need for their reporting purposes to help identify possible opportunities for change.**

**Context** — The methodology has become more complex and burdensome in recent years, with more indicators to cover issues deemed important by members. This has implications in terms of complexity, workload for MOs, and assessment costs. Reducing the scope of MOPAN assessments is one possible pathway to more modular approaches, and especially for supporting organisational performance (R1). However, several members have integrated MOPAN into their own accountability systems and now depend on the publication of MOPAN assessments, which could block any change in the methodology in particular areas.

**Action** — MOPAN members should agree on a smaller set of indicators that they need for their own processes. These indicators will ensure continuity of accountability systems.

**R6: MOPAN should review its methodology with a view to increasing the use-to-cost ratio.**

**Context** — Most recently, MOPAN's goal has been first and foremost to ensure the reliability of the methodology, and then to improve its relevance. If the current methodology were to be kept as such, the financial envelope needed for each assessment might need to be reconsidered to reflect the current costs of adaptation and engagement (probably +20%). If the assessments are to provide insights that are useful for both members and MOs, the budget allocated to service provision will probably need to be increased as well. In particular, it will be necessary to ensure that the cost of retrieving information from MOs does not prevent the consultants from spending adequate resources on analysing the observed situation and providing expert insights.

**Action** — The MOPAN methodology should be reconsidered with a view to increasing the extent to which members and MOs alike use assessments without increasing the cost. To do so, the methodology should undergo a cycle of iterative improvement to develop relevant, useful standards for both members and MOs.

**R7: The Secretariat should help members use the assessments more, and more effectively.**

**Context** — The impact of MOPAN depends largely on what its members do with the assessments and products. In recent years, MOPAN's engagement function has been active in helping members make the best use of MOPAN and its products (e.g. with learning events and the recent IL guidelines).

**Action** — The Secretariat should help those member countries willing to make better use of assessments. We suggest as a general rule that content and initiatives led by members be the primary means of addressing this recommendation (R3), and that the Secretariat act more as a facilitator, taking the lead only when members cannot provide the needed time and resources.

**R8: MOPAN should explore new strategies to trigger sought after changes in MOs.**

**Context** — The narrow and specific nature of MOs' use today primarily reflects the design of MOPAN assessments. Alternatives to the current methodology are provided above (R6). Different mechanisms to trigger uptake and use by MOs to improve performance could also be developed, but only if members expect this (R1).

**Action** — Opportunities to engage with MO representatives and staff more systematically before, during, and after assessments should be explored. In particular, a follow-up to assessments should be organised through a meeting of MOPAN members, especially those who have expressed a specific interest in an MO, including ILs.

**R9: MOPAN should use learning products in support of clearly stated policy goals.**

**Context** — MOPAN has the potential to produce relevant knowledge for both current and future multilateral debates. Its value added from the members' perspective is to provide access to and a good understanding of a large share of the current MOs. However, it is important that this knowledge be channelled into policy debates. Learning products need to have an opportunity to be used. Members have an important role here to "read the room" and identify situations in which additional knowledge can be used and by whom.

**Action** — Any learning products should contain clearly-stated policy goals consistent with those of sponsoring members and relevant MOs.

-1-

# Overview

## About this evaluation

Following its 2013 independent evaluation, MOPAN is conducting a second independent evaluation covering the period 2015-20. [...] This evaluation will provide MOPAN members with an independent assessment of the impact of MOPAN's recent work to inform their decisions about their future support and the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), set to begin in 2023 (Terms of Reference, p.3).

The evaluation addresses three main questions:<sup>1</sup>

- **Efficiency:** To what extent is MOPAN organised and working efficiently?
- **Effectiveness, sustainability, impact:** To what extent is MOPAN fulfilling its members' need for accountability information and supporting the performance of the multilateral system?
- **Relevance, coherence:** To what extent is MOPAN's work relevant for an evolving multilateral context and for increasing the coherence of efforts to improve the multilateral system?

The evaluation applied a mixed methods approach to answer the questions. Contribution Analysis (CA) was used to assess MOPAN's effectiveness and impact.<sup>2</sup>

## The evaluation approach

CA is a theory-based approach to impact evaluation. It examines the potential contribution of an evaluated intervention to targeted outcomes in complex settings, understanding that it is likely to be one among many factors leading to the expected changes. In MOPAN's case, notwithstanding its stated impact of "contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" a direct contribution to this goal is unlikely – but specific contributions are possible among a range of other drivers (causal package) and may be significant.

The CA process seeks to:

1. frame "contribution claims" (CCs), or plausible statements based on initial data collection about the difference an intervention can make (how, why, under what conditions) among a package of causes;
2. devise a way to verify these contributions with sufficient certainty, and then
3. test them empirically and update them subsequently as more information is obtained. In the MOPAN evaluation, the contribution of products (mostly assessments) was tested following each of these steps.

<sup>1</sup> The evaluation matrix is available on p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> A methodological appendix is available on p.107.

## Implementation

The evaluation was carried out in four phases: 1) initial data collection and design of the evaluation approach; 2) design of the Theory of Change (ToC) and Contribution Claims (CCs); 3) organisational case studies, and 4) additional external interviews and cross-analysis. These phases allowed for an iterative, systematic approach to identify, refine, test empirically and update cases of use.

During the first stage of the evaluation, 41 MOPAN member representatives, 13 Secretariat staff and 10 OECD officials and ambassadors were interviewed. Furthermore, a survey was conducted with MOPAN members, past ILs, and organisational focal points (137 respondents). These data were used to prioritise and frame the evaluation issues and identify potential uses of MOPAN products by members and MOs to inform the selection of case study organisations and examine the possible cases of use.

The goal of the second stage of the evaluation was to establish a ToC for MOPAN based on the initial data collection and a review of academic and practitioner literature, and to frame CCs to be tested through case studies. A sceptical approach was adopted to avoid any general claims of “usefulness.” The websites and public documentation for each case study organisation were reviewed to identify CCs that were specific, verifiable to a degree of certainty, and that could be tested empirically.

### Box 1 : Contribution claims about “use”

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a method explaining how one or several interventions are expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. The ToC developed for this evaluation (see p.107) frames MOPAN's contributions by the different types of use made by members and MOs, i.e. the stakeholders who ultimately take up and use MOPAN findings together with other evidence and drivers to inform decisions and other behaviour changes. Through the CCs, the evaluation produces a typology of possible uses by different stakeholders that was updated throughout the process.

At the outset of the evaluation, verifying that MOPAN assessments were used especially by MOs, was a key concern. Because use was initially deemed unlikely, the approach focused on rigorously testing “reputed uses”. When the available case study evidence did not support a specific type of use, this type of use was concluded to be unlikely.

However, this evaluation does not catalogue all instances of use by members and MOs systematically nor does it provide a representative picture of use, which is beyond its scope and feasibility. Other uses that have not been investigated remain plausible.

In the third phase of the evaluation, the team implemented 12 case studies of selected MOPAN assessments and analytical studies for which reputed uses had been identified, taking a systematic and iterative approach.<sup>3</sup> For each case study, specific claims of use were identified for members and MOs aligned to areas identified for improvement by a MOPAN assessment that can be verified through multiple lines of evidence (e.g. interviews

<sup>3</sup> Case studies include MOPAN assessments of FAO, Global Fund, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNRWA. Two additional case studies were undertaken for MOPAN's analytical studies, including UNDS Reform and Climate Change.



and documents produced by the organisation). Key interlocutors in the case study organisation (e.g. MO focal points) and among MOPAN member representatives (e.g. ILs) were interviewed to test and refine the CCs. A total of 140 individuals were interviewed as part of these case studies.

In the fourth and final phase of the evaluation, ten additional interviews were conducted with multilateral stakeholders and OECD officials to provide some perspective on the results obtained and inform the evaluation's relevance and efficiency questions. In this phase, the CCs were refined one last time by triangulating all lines of evidence.

The evaluation processes emphasised the participation of the Network's main stakeholders: 41 MOPAN member representatives (at least one for each member) were interviewed. These included MOPAN members, heads of the unit hosting MOPAN and case managers who have used MOPAN products, and 13 Secretariat staff. These interactions were used to identify issues of interest that could be addressed in the evaluation. Workshops were conducted periodically to consult members of the MOPAN Steering Committee (SC) (two workshops) and Secretariat staff (four workshops) on the evaluation approach, the ToC and emerging findings. These workshops also served to inform these stakeholders about key issues and themes emerging from the evaluation and to solicit their feedback for further data collection and analysis.

A process was established to ensure the technical quality, rigour, and accuracy of the evaluation. The MOPAN Secretariat helped ensure that evaluators had access to the full scope of relevant evidence to support the evaluation and fact-checked its presentation and use in the report. A reference group (RG) consisting of three external experts in evaluation and three MOPAN member representatives was established to assess the technical rigour and quality of the evaluation approach and key reports. The RG reviewed and provided feedback on all key evaluation deliverables. The evaluation team's response to this feedback was then reported to the RG and the MOPAN bureau.

## Report Structure

This report presents the main findings in response to the evaluation questions, and the evidence supporting them.

The evaluation report is accompanied by a response to the evaluation on behalf of the Network, which details how MOPAN will address each of the evaluation recommendations. The full Network response is available at: <https://www.mopanonline.org/aboutus/evaluations/>

**The first section** describes the evaluation's main lessons and conclusions. It emphasises MOPAN's contribution to its stated goals, and the reasons why they were or were not achieved. The lessons and conclusions are followed by recommendations.

**The second section** provides an overview of MOPAN.

**In the third, fourth and fifth sections**, each evaluation question is answered systematically.

The approach and triangulation of evidence sources for each evaluation question are described in detail in the Methodology Appendix, available on page 100.



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## **Evaluation lessons and recommendations**

There have been many changes since MOPAN's last evaluation in 2013. A permanent Secretariat was established in 2013, hosted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development within its Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD). In the mid-2010s, the MOPAN Secretariat was entrusted with an agenda for reform that focused on reinforcing MOPAN's credibility and coverage on the one hand, and on learning and use on the other. An important shift came with the recognition that, beyond the quality of assessments themselves, the lack of any concrete impact or use of products would threaten MOPAN's credibility and legitimacy. Since then, MOPAN's agenda has remained largely constant throughout the evaluation period.

## How did MOPAN do in implementing these changes since 2013?

**Over the last six years, the MOPAN Secretariat has largely delivered on the mid-2010s reform agenda.**

A new methodology – MOPAN 3.0 – was deployed in 2015 and refined further in 2019 and 2021. The number of annual assessments nearly doubled compared to pre-2015 numbers, and MOPAN's remit extended to new organisations, including Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and normative organisations. From 2017 onwards, the professionalisation of the Secretariat became a focus, and important efforts were made around engagement and learning to increase MOPAN's reach and use. MOPAN has also developed and implemented new analytical products to provide insights into the multilateral system and to inform multilateral debates such as those on climate change, sexual exploitation abuse and harassment (SEAH), and the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform.

**The initiatives that MOPAN has implemented have clearly increased the quality of assessments and the perception of their credibility in the eyes of various stakeholders across the multilateral system. An investment in the quality of the new learning products has yielded similar results.**

Members acknowledge that the MOPAN methodology is credible. The MOs give more mixed feedback; however, their criticisms have evolved over time, focusing less on overall credibility. Rather, they focus on four things:

1. the time demanded by the process;
2. the relevance of some elements to their context;
3. what they see as an opaque rating system, and
4. the scope and design of the partner survey, one of the assessment's three lines of evidence.

Greater credibility reflects a series of improvements to the assessment methodology, which remains central to MOPAN. The MOPAN Secretariat has also sought to strengthen the assessment process to improve quality and responsiveness (e.g., in-housing the survey), better adapting it to the context of each multilateral organisation (MO), and providing guidance to the service providers conducting the assessments. More attention has been

given to ensuring that assessments are done in a timely way (with reference to members' internal accountability processes and to the MOs institutional agenda), and to better presenting results (new briefs, data visualisation) and disseminating them (learning events). MOPAN members appreciate these changes.

## What has changed in terms of use by MOPAN members?

**MOPAN assessments provide a unique, comprehensive source of information about MOs' organisational performance arrangements. Most members now use the assessments in their accountability processes for multilateral aid.**

MOPAN assessments were designed to provide information which some countries cannot otherwise obtain or afford about how MOs manage themselves. They are used in due diligence processes or for reporting to governments or parliaments. In recent years, some MOPAN members, such as the UK, have put their own bilateral review processes on hold and relied instead on MOPAN assessments. Other members that previously relied on these bilateral reviews by proxy have also turned to MOPAN as an alternative. Countries that have included MOPAN in their internal due diligence processes are even more attentive to the selection of MOs to be assessed and when they are to be assessed because they very much depend on MOPAN for this information. Countries may still collect specific information on MOs (e.g. the number of nationals working in an MO) or make their own assessments of MOs that MOPAN does not cover, especially global Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs).

**MOPAN assessments are rarely used in budgetary allocation processes, save in a few cases for allocating earmarked funding.**

The use of MOPAN assessments to inform budgetary allocation is limited. Providing voluntary core funding is a strategic process and a political statement in which the role of MOPAN assessments is usually marginal. However, a positive MOPAN assessment may help justify maintaining funding to MOs that are coming under close scrutiny by the international community. A few member countries, however, use MOPAN assessments when allocating earmarked funding to compare the performance of MOs, which raises issues about validity as assessment ratings are not always comparable.

**MOPAN assessments are best used for monitoring by member countries that have systematic processes in place to engage with MOs and a strong culture of performance. However, even in these cases, there has only been limited use for strategic purposes.**

Some MOPAN member countries have an established practice (sometimes governed by guidelines) of using MOPAN assessments to support their monitoring of MOs. In other countries, the use depends on individuals, the context, or other information sources that are available. Desk officers, who are rarely familiar with MOPAN, are likely to prioritise substantive or thematic issues (e.g., gender issues with UN WOMEN) over organisational performance in their analysis and engagement with MOs. In most countries, MOPAN is usually seen as responding to operational concerns and is not used for strategic decision-making.

MOPAN representatives play a key role in brokering the information presented in the assessment reports. Some actively identify the information that matters to their colleagues, and translate it linguistically and to better reflect their policy framework, often with limited time and resources. Depending on their position in the administration, their experience or their seniority, these representatives may have limited access to senior management or to colleagues responsible for liaising with MOs or for multilateral policy development to convince them of the relevance of MOPAN assessments.

**Only a few member countries make active use of the MOPAN assessment process and the opportunity of being an IL to support their partnerships with MOs.**

These MOPAN members have developed strategies for co-operation or influence with specific MOs, including on organisational performance issues. Here, MOPAN products, or the possibility of being an Institutional Lead (IL), become a resource to support engagement with partner MOs, to identify areas where progress has been made, and monitor changes systematically. Use in support of partnerships was also observed by other member countries who do not have these influence strategies, particularly with respect to MOs that are part of their strategic priorities. This use is context-specific rather than systematic.

## How do MOs use MOPAN assessments?

**MOPAN assessments are designed to meet the needs of MOPAN members rather than those of MOs. This is one of the main reasons that MOs use assessments on a more limited basis .**

This evaluation addressed a major question, which is the possibility that MOs could use MOPAN assessments. It is noteworthy that MOPAN is designed to answer the accountability information needs of its members. Expecting MOs to use evaluations would assume that the information that MOPAN provides to its members is also relevant to the MOs themselves, whereas this is mostly unlikely: MOPAN uses non-specific indicators about aspects of accountability and management processes that are generally known to the organisation. Furthermore, the indicators are judged against standards that, in the eyes of MOs, do not always reflect the specificity of their respective organisational contexts. MOPAN has reduced the burden and transaction costs linked to different bilateral assessments on MOs, but only with respect to organisational performance. The bulk of the bilateral assessments for MOs, which is growing with earmarking, relates to thematic and substantive subjects.

**Some MOs are using MOPAN assessments in combination with other studies and as part of ongoing reforms, usually to address specific organisational issues.**

The fact that some MOs are using assessments despite the barriers previously mentioned reflects their credibility and potential contribution to learning. MOs that are examined use MOPAN assessments to address very specific operational and management issues, particularly those related to evaluation and results frameworks. When they do use the assessments, it is in combination with other knowledge products, and as part of ongoing discussions and reforms within the organisation. That MOPAN assessments are external makes them useful for bringing issues to the attention of MO executive boards and governing bodies, but this is a double-edged sword: MOPAN is a 'club' of donor countries, which

may make other members of the MO governance system hostile to relying on them (which is also why MOs always use several sources of evidence in combination).

Organisations “under pressure,” — that are losing members or facing reputational or growth issues — use MOPAN assessments more intensively. First and second assessments are also more likely to generate useful information, whereas the returns are likely to diminish when MOs are assessed five or six times against similar criteria.

**MOPAN members do not seize the opportunity of assessments sufficiently to support MO reform processes or help them address fundraising challenges.**

A few MOs also use assessments to support their fundraising activities by highlighting the reforms they have made and showing their responsiveness to demands. MOPAN assessments sometimes highlight the consequences of poor core funding on organisational performance, and relevant MOs can draw on this observation when looking for longer-term partnerships. However, MOPAN member countries rarely participate in follow-up engagement to assessments, and therefore limit the opportunities for dialogue on performance challenges and related financial challenges.

**The new analytical products offer proof of concept that MOPAN can produce credible learning products that members and MOs use.**

MOPAN's recent analytical products on climate change, the UNDS reform and SEAH are very different in terms of context and contributions to learning. They all answer critical issues in a timely manner and were well received by members and MOs. MOPAN's work on SEAH is particularly noteworthy. MOs and subject matter experts contributed collectively to this product, which led to broad uptake on the multilateral scene as a new monitoring framework and in support of the adoption or revision of SEAH strategies and the creation of a community of practice. To some extent, the adoption of such strategies is more limited in member countries at this stage. Nonetheless, these products demonstrate that MOPAN can impact the organisational performance of MOs through means other than assessments. .

## What are key future considerations for MOPAN?

Overall, MOPAN is now more professional than it was six years ago. Key stakeholders increasingly see MOPAN products as credible. Members use MOPAN products to a very large extent. The evaluation shows that MOs use assessments to a more limited extent, even though they are not geared to their needs. The current situation is therefore a clear improvement over the one presented in the 2013 evaluation.

A major question at this stage may be therefore how members can make better use of MOPAN products to support their multilateral policy and relationship with MOs. And if this remains an important criterion by which to judge MOPAN, how can MOPAN promote increased use of assessments by MOs. These questions are answered in the evaluation recommendations. However, prior to embarking on these changes, important operational concerns will need to be addressed.

**In ramping up to deliver on its agenda and Programme of Work, as agreed with members, MOPAN's budget is no longer commensurate with the scope of activities the Secretariat is delivering. This creates a risk for delivery and quality in the future .**

Over the last years, the Secretariat has used every opportunity to deliver on MOPAN's agenda of improving coverage and credibility and fostering use and learning. This was possible thanks to the commitment of the team, a heavier workloads, and the use of financial carry-overs from an initial endowment. But resources are now stretched. Similar outputs cannot be expected within the current budget.

In particular, the increase in credibility and utility has come at a cost that has been underestimated. Adaptation work, especially with new MOs, and the brokering role between the MO and the service provider for finalisation are time intensive, especially as the numbers of MOPAN indicators rises. After a single contract was changed into a framework contract, MOPAN's permanent secretariat took on many methodological tasks that had been done internally by IOD Parc (independent, external Service Provider for MOPAN), including giving practical guidance to new contractors and ensuring consistency. The process of delivering analytical products continues to be calibrated based on experience. These products take more time than expected, if only because of the lesson-learning process (finding the right tone, the right depth, identifying the right opportunities for outreach and engagement). Although there is no evidence at this stage that this challenge has affected overall delivery, the gap between the Secretariat's current workload and the available human resources is a short-term risk that MOPAN needs to manage.

**In the changing equilibrium between the Secretariat and MOPAN members, MOPAN has had difficulties finding the right balance in its governance and operations.**

When the 2013 evaluation was published, MOPAN had no permanent Secretariat and members were responsible on a voluntary, rotating basis for collecting data and delivering assessments. Today, some members still see MOPAN as a member-driven network in which they want to play an active part. Others see MOPAN more as a service for which they pay a fee to receive reports produced by the Secretariat. However, even those members who want to be more active have limited resources and find it difficult to contribute substantially to MOPAN's activities. In this context, the Secretariat takes responsibility for many aspects of MOPAN's work.

MOPAN's governance also reflects this situation. Many attempts have been made to identify processes that are fit for purpose; new governance arrangements were issued in 2019. However, the current situation remains unsatisfactory from the perspectives of both MOPAN members and the Secretariat. Until now, MOPAN members have had difficulties agreeing to and providing a long-term vision that the Secretariat can implement and report against. This has resulted in an ongoing imbalance between a professional Secretariat dedicated to MOPAN and representatives who must address many other tasks in parallel.



**The current hosting arrangement for MOPAN within the OECD has been beneficial in many regards, but it remains dependent on informal rules and tacit codes of behaviour.**

The move from a rotating to a permanent secretariat hosted by the OECD has been instrumental in facilitating the MOPAN Secretariat's professionalisation. It has also produced many advantages that come with being part of a large, well-respected international organisation (e.g. greater purchasing power; institutional support in HR and legal services; ready access to highly qualified recruits, and credibility and reputational spill-overs).

The arrangement has been in line with the MOPAN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for ensuring the network's substantive independence. The Secretariat's operational autonomy that this implies has been largely respected. However, it is the qualities of the DCD and MOPAN senior management currently in post that are broadly responsible for this rather than any codified procedures and safeguards. Furthermore, in the current MoU and funding set-up within the OECD's Part I Budget, MOPAN can only operate on a short-term planning horizon, and its role and status as a hosted independent entity are insufficiently prominent.<sup>4</sup>

**MOPAN's methodology no longer reflects either the current state of MOs' organisational performance or its own ambitions of being used by MOs and contributing to multilateral effectiveness.**

MOPAN's approach establishes a basic set of criteria for building effective organisational performance systems within MOs rooted in institutional policies, frameworks, and guidelines. This approach is less relevant to the current context in which MOs have achieved high standards of performance for many of these criteria, as demonstrated by MOPAN assessments themselves, and the need that arose in 2019 to revise the alignment between individual scores and ratings. MOs assessed for the first or second time are likely to find assessments more useful but members' accountability agenda often demands that the MOs getting the bigger proportion funds be assessed more frequently. This produces diminishing returns from a learning perspective and for utility. Adding new indicators (e.g., on SEAH) can be useful, but can also add to the overall assessment burden by lengthening assessments, increasing the demands on MOs, and making the assessment process ever more resource intensive.

MOPAN's methodology is also anchored in a view that MOs directly deliver interventions. However, their work and effectiveness are increasingly linked to more intangible activities involving partnerships, co-ordination, and catalysing complex development outcomes. How to best translate this phenomenon into performance metrics, standards and monitoring is a global challenge.

Furthermore, MOs are often already quite aware of their shortcomings in organisational performance. What is less obvious is how to develop and systematically implement processes and ways of working that function in very complex, decentralised environments – and how to gain traction internally and externally to foster the needed behaviour changes. Donors, public and private, are facing these same issues, on which MOPAN assessments are not providing guidance systematically. The example of SEAH, however, demonstrates another way forward on these aspects.

<sup>4</sup> Part I of the OECD budget is funded through a system of formula-based assessed contributions from all OECD Member Countries supplemented by voluntary contributions from OECD Members, the EU and non-OECD Members, finances substantive work conducted largely under the auspices of the Organisation's policy committees. Part II of the OECD budget is funded by OECD Members and non-members that affiliate to specific programmes. These Part II programmes provide a means for the OECD to address issues that are not of interest to all its members and allow non-members to participate in the work on an equal footing to members.

**MOPAN has shown that it can provide credible, singular insights into global problems, but its current organisation does not facilitate the delivery of learning products.**

The reception of the new analytical products has been promising. It shows that MOPAN could play an additional role in informing the strategic processes of members and of MOs to address contemporary challenges. With SEAH, MOPAN has helped bring around all parties to provide a measurement framework and a blueprint for future strategies to address an emergent challenge.

The climate change and UNDS studies, by contrast, attempted to provide policy insights into intractable challenges. In these areas, policy makers are using information aligned to their positions. They need to know its source and the policy standpoint being defended. In a sense, the UNDS study is successful because it is an external, evidence-based contribution that clearly supports the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UNSG)'s own agenda.

In both cases, however, it is complicated for the MOPAN network to make this sort of policy statement, if only because members may not agree on the way forward. The difficulty in coming to an agreement limits the use of these MOPAN products and the opportunity to engage in disputed questions.

This latter point related to the delivery of learning. An organisation that wants to “push” new knowledge towards decision makers (against their general inclination to use products with which they are familiar) must develop formal and informal knowledge-brokering processes so that decision makers take this knowledge into account in their thinking; they must seize opportunities to expose decision-makers to knowledge. There is a need to be reactive and opportunistic, which requires a level of organisational flexibility that is clearly missing in the MOPAN Secretariat and among member representatives today.



## Recommendations

This evaluation reflects network members' various expectations of MOPAN. This diversity is an important asset. However, it may lead to divergent priorities for improvements and to a compromise that does not adequately reflect different members' needs and perspectives, or the operational reality.

The recommendations that follow have been developed with this context in mind. They are guided by several assumptions:

1. MOPAN members' and MOs' use of assessments will remain an important criterion for judging MOPAN's success;
2. members will continue to expect MOPAN to be an instrument of both accountability and learning;
3. MOPAN will remain dedicated to organisational performance; and 4) some changes, especially in the secretariat's role and methodology, will be acceptable.

Recommendations R1 to R4 relate to the governance of and rationale for MOPAN; R5 and R6 to the assessment methodology and process, and R7 to R9 to strategies to promote the use of MOPAN products.

### **R1: MOPAN should clarify how its activities are expected to support MOs' organisational performance in addition to addressing members' accountability needs.**

**Context** — Today's MOPAN gives priority to the accountability needs of donors and expects that the information produced will be useful to MOs. But this arrangement is only one of many possibilities. Another approach would be to identify more directly ways to help MOs improve their organisational effectiveness and to contribute thereby to the effectiveness of the multilateral system while still meeting MOPAN members' needs for accountability.

**Action** — Clarify MOPAN's mission and strategic priorities, how its activities are expected to support MO organisational performance, and the nature of the performance relationship that MOPAN wants with MOs (holding or being held to account, or partnership?).

**Additional comments and suggestions** — An additional focus on organisational performance would have cascading consequences for methodology (see R4, R5, R8), but also:

- In the MO selection process, MOPAN could include as a criterion the potential for improvement, which is highest when MOs (including NGOs) are growing fast, are known to face organisational issues, etc.
- Provided this is an agreed objective for MOPAN, such a change could help turn the current network into a broader alliance of countries (including those that are not major donors or from the Global South) or even private donors, so long as they agree on a common agenda of performance.

## R2: MOPAN members should adopt a medium-term strategic vision and specific accountability processes to support it.

**Context** — MOPAN's governance has continued to be a subject of concern, despite several attempts to strike an appropriate balance between operational and strategic issues. New arrangements were adopted in 2019, but they still face implementation challenges that may have been exacerbated by COVID-19. Among the major issues identified is the capacity of MOPAN members to provide strategic direction and define the Secretariat's room for manoeuvre to implement it.

**Action** — Members should agree on a medium-term mandate reflecting a shared strategic vision (e.g. MOPAN 2030) and ask the Head of the Secretariat (HoS) to present a programme and budget in support of it. Accountability arrangements should be established to support steering by the members, in addition to reviewing the programme of work and budget (PWB). The HoS would be accountable for carrying out the programme and strategic priorities and free to decide on how to implement it.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — The mandate drafting process could involve members and support a process of consensus-building about MOPAN's future. High-level meetings that could be linked to Development Assistance Committee (DAC) senior-level meetings, for instance, would provide a setting for discussing MOPAN's strategic vision.

A light "accountability evaluation" could be done on behalf of members at mid-term to agree on the level of achievement reached. "Learning evaluations", including members, the Secretariat, and other stakeholders (e.g., the MOs) could be implemented every eight years or so. The Secretariat should also develop a Monitoring and Evaluation system. We suggest that it focus on collecting narratives of use among member countries and MOs.<sup>5</sup> This function would need to be adequately reflected in the resource package provided to MOPAN.

Also, a light review of the current governance arrangements should be done no later than 2023, especially of members' knowledge, understanding and adhesion to them.

5 The storytelling approach used by 3ie could be used as a source of inspiration. See <https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/evidence-impact-summaries>

### R3: MOPAN members should define their non-financial contributions more clearly and make a clear commitment to provide them.

**Context** — The equilibrium between members and the secretariat has shifted over recent years in terms of the share of MOPAN work that members do. Even members who want to play a more active role in MOPAN's work face time and resource constraints.

**Action** — A commitment to spend a defined amount of time on MOPAN on specific tasks would help increase members' involvement and use. In particular, the role of MOPAN members in some aspects of assessments and other products, particularly in promoting their dissemination and uptake, should be clarified.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — Negotiations on the next MoU could include discussions of members' voluntary allocation of time to MOPAN and the level of seniority of MOPAN representatives. Based on the needs for competence or technical expertise identified by the Secretariat, members could provide specific expertise to support MOPAN's work – for instance within the reference groups of future analytical studies.

It could also be agreed that those acting as ILs be senior officers as much as possible with a deep knowledge of and ongoing relationship with the concerned MO (including members of the governing bodies). This would likely increase the potential use by MOPAN members and by MOs. Also, whether assessment follow up is considered the responsibility of member should be clearly specified and organised to ensure that it is done.

### R4: MOPAN should establish its Secretariat as a stand-alone entity within the OECD and secure more certainty of funding

**Context** — Hosting MOPAN at the OECD and positioning its secretariat within DCD has helped put the network on a solid footing and has supported the establishment of a full-fledged Secretariat. However, the gains now must be consolidated to support their relevance and longevity into the future.

**Action** — The MOPAN Secretariat should become a stand-alone entity within the OECD. A set of rules should be drawn up to guide its relationship with the OECD and clarify the distinct roles and functions of the MOPAN Steering CommitteeSC and the Secretariat (e.g. for appointing/retaining the HoS). This arrangement should seek to ensure MOPAN's independence and align with other priorities from the next MoU and mid-term vision.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — We suggest analysing a possible move to Part II of the OECD budget both for the financial implications for MOPAN members, taking into account the recently revised financial regulations, and the institutional and functional changes it could bring (e.g., an OECD Council-agreed mandate, funding and planning horizons, budget presentation, non-OECD member participation, etc.), as well as implications for possible strategic directions (e.g. becoming a broader coalition of donors and the Global South (R1)). The recent experience of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) could provide useful insights into transitioning from being integrated in an OECD directorate to being a stand-alone entity.

**R5: MOPAN members should decide on the basic set of indicators they need for their reporting purposes to help identify possible opportunities for change.**

**Context** — The MOPAN methodology has become more complex and burdensome in recent years with more indicators to cover issues deemed important by members. This has implications for complexity, for MO workloads, and for assessment costs. Reducing the scope of MOPAN assessments is a possible pathway towards more modular approaches, and in particular supporting organisational performance (R1). However, several members have integrated MOPAN into their accountability systems and now rely on the publication of MOPAN assessments. This could block any change to the methodology.

**Action** — MOPAN members should agree on a smaller set of indicators that they need for their own processes. These indicators will ensure continuity of accountability systems.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — This approach would allow for experimentation with more modular approaches to assessments, and an added focus on MO use (R1), as described in R6.

MOs could provide at least some of these indicators directly, in a process negotiated with and guided by the MOPAN Secretariat:

- MOs could supply MOPAN with the information, which would be made available in an evidence hub. Access to APIs to directly inform national reporting systems could be exclusive to members and represent an efficient added value of membership.<sup>6</sup>
- Supply through open standards is an alternative solution. This would dramatically reduce transaction costs for all organisations and still let members use independent evidence, endorsed by MOPAN, to inform their reporting system.

We also suggest that, in the future, the cost implications of systematically collecting new sets of indicators be assessed ahead of time and made clear to the members.

<sup>6</sup> Application programming interfaces allow to retrieve data automatically from a database, for instance to feed reports.

**R6: MOPAN should review its methodology seeking to increase the use-to-cost ratio**

**Context** — In the latest period, MOPAN sought first and foremost to ensure the reliability of the methodology and then to increase its relevance. If the current methodology were to be kept as is, the financial envelope needed for each assessment might need to be reconsidered to reflect the current costs of adaptation and engagement (probably +20%). If the assessments are to provide insights that are useful for members and for MOs, it is likely that a budgetary increase would be necessary in service provision, especially to ensure that the cost of retrieving information from MOs does not prevent the consultants from spending adequate resources on analysing the observed situation and providing expert insights.

**Action** — The MOPAN methodology should be reconsidered with a view to increasing the possibility that members and MOs alike use assessments, without increasing costs. To do so, the methodology should go through a cycle of iterative improvement to develop standards that MOs deem relevant and useful.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — MOPAN should explore different options to make assessments more relevant to the needs of members and MOs alike without adding to their current cost. Two potential directions would be to:

- Adopt a more modular approach to assessments. For instance, a two-part assessment methodology could focus on 1) collecting information related to the basic set of indicators needed to support the accountability processes of MOPAN members (see R5) and, 2) identifying areas of interest for deeper review.
- Leverage the analytical studies to examine how the MOPAN framework could reflect other contemporary accountability challenges. The process could focus on:
  - agreeing on relevant criteria, indicators and standards for performance measurement;
  - providing best practices in implementation and use, and
  - giving insights into the study's strategic and methodological implications.

## R7: The Secretariat should help members use the assessments more, and more effectively

**Context** — MOPAN's impact depends largely on what its members do with assessments and products. In recent years, MOPAN's engagement function has been active in helping members make the best use of MOPAN and its products (e.g. with learning events and the recent IL guidelines).

**Action** — The Secretariat should help those member countries willing to make better use of assessment. As a general rule, we suggest that content and initiatives led by members be the primary source in support of this recommendation (R3), and that the Secretariat act more as a facilitator, taking the lead only when members cannot provide the needed time and resources.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — A series of actions can be identified in support of increased use by members:

- Translating the briefs into more languages is probably the most straightforward way to gain more readers. Members may be able to provide these translations at a much lower cost than if the task were centralised by the Secretariat.
- A peer-to-peer mentoring process facilitated by the Secretariat would allow member focal points to learn from one other and to develop an institutional memory. If no mentor is available, the Secretariat could provide an introductory course for those new to the post.
- The MOPAN Secretariat could facilitate cross-learning events and toolkits to share and promote “best practices” for members to use MOPAN products. Members could be asked to present their own use of MOPAN assessments and explain, when possible, how their experience could apply to other situations. The Secretariat could help capture these best practices as part of its M&E system (R2).
- Direct access to easily retrievable data from a “knowledge hub” could reduce the workload related to the reporting requirements of MOPAN members <sup>7</sup>.

On a wider level, when use depends so much on the processes and cultures of national administrations, the MOPAN Secretariat could explore ways to accumulate knowledge on each member country to better respond to their needs.

<sup>7</sup> MOPAN is currently working on this. We suggest it be called an “evidence hub” (as the 3ie portal) if it is to include insights and expert advice. A set of APIs and instructions for use could be provided to let national administrations automatically retrieve data and download it to their own systems.

## R8: MOPAN should explore new strategies to trigger sought after changes within MOs

**Context** — The narrow, specific use by MOs today primarily reflects the very design of MOPAN assessments. Alternatives to the current methodology are provided above (R6). Different mechanisms to trigger more changes in MOs could also be developed, but only if members expect this (R1).

**Action** — Opportunities to engage with MO representatives and staff before, during, and after assessments should be explored more systematically. A follow-up to assessments, in particular, should be systematically organised through a meeting of MOPAN members, especially for those who have expressed a specific interest in an MO.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — Such a meeting of MOPAN members could consider whether the MO has implemented improvements and whether the assessments could have implications for financial support or even mutual accountability. Other opportunities for engagement include:

- Surveying MO staff alongside other external stakeholders or experts to identify the areas that could be further examined. This may be enough to trigger additional interest in the results.
- Efforts to increase the actual participation of MOs' member states in the launch of the study and the initial presentation of the assessment results (both are already open to all the MOs' member states). The representatives of IL countries would be given the possibility of playing a key role in promoting the work done.

We also suggest that MOs be offered the possibility of benchmarking their systems against best practices as opposed to being rated against generic indicators. This is the type of information that MOs are really seeking and they would appreciate having access to it. The learning products could be used to identify these best practices and performance standards to which MOs would adhere.

MOPAN's engagement function could also help MO staff better understand how to use a MOPAN assessment. As part of its M&E system (R2), the secretariat could showcase examples of use and develop guidelines with the MO focal points who were especially well engaged in previous MOPAN assessments. These guidelines could then be made available to new MO focal points.

From a broader perspective, the accountability relationship between MOPAN and MOs is key for use. Engaging in a more partnership-oriented relationship, including a consultative approach to identifying areas for further examination, would allow MOPAN to have the legitimacy to make recommendations rather than just identify areas for improvement. Recommendations would have the advantage of being clearer and more directive, making them easier to respond to and to follow up on their implementation.

**R9: MOPAN should use learning products to support clearly-stated policy goals**

**Context** — MOPAN has the potential to produce relevant knowledge for both current and future multilateral debates. For members, its value added is access to and a good understanding of a large share of the existing MOs. However, it is important that this knowledge be channelled into policy debates. Learning products need to have a chance to be used. Members have an important role here to “read the room” and identify situations in which additional knowledge can be used and by whom.

**Action** — Any learning products should contain clearly stated policy goals, which should be consistent with those of sponsoring members and the relevant MOs.

**Additional comments and suggestions** — The UNDS study provides an example of a way forward. When faced with intractable problems, MOPAN could find like-minded actors (think tanks or organisations in the multilateral system) to support its data collection processes and promote its results.

When problems are emergent and there is a good chance of reaching a consensus, the SEAH approach of convening stakeholders and reaching a consensus is another alternative.

Finally, the learning products would, as much as possible, be used to help maintain the relevance of the methodology and support its gradual evolution (R6).



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# **The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network**

## A network to assess and improve the multilateral system

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is **a network of 21 countries** (19 members and two observers as of April 2022) that assesses the performance of multilateral organisations and provides a range of insights to promote a more effective multilateral system.<sup>8</sup>

Created in 2002 by eight countries, the Network's membership and scope of activities have grown quickly. In 2012, MOPAN's rotating hosting arrangement with its members was replaced by a permanent **Secretariat** hosted at the OECD in the Development Co-operation Directorate (**DCD**, governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

A Secretariat runs MOPAN's day-to-day activities and is responsible for managing the implementation of assessments by external contractors on behalf of MOPAN members. It also supports network governance and the engagement of members in MOPAN activities.

All MOPAN members are part of the MOPAN **Steering Committee** (SC), which selects organisations for assessment cycles and approves the programme of work. For each calendar year, the SC elects a **chair** who represents the network externally and is particularly responsible for the coherence between the SC's strategic vision and the secretariat's daily work. A MOPAN **Bureau** assists the chair. It is composed of the current, past, and incoming chairs, alongside the **Head of the Secretariat** (HoS) and the chairs of two thematic working groups: the **technical working group** (TWG, open to all interested members and responsible for developing the assessment methodology) and the **strategic working group** (SWG), which last met in 2017.

### In 2014, the members agreed on a mission statement:

*"The mission of MOPAN is to support its members in assessing the effectiveness of the multilateral organisations that receive development and humanitarian funding. Aiming to strengthen the organisations' contribution to overall greater development and humanitarian results, the network generates, collects, analyses and presents relevant and credible information on the organisational and development effectiveness of multilateral organisations. This knowledge base is intended to contribute to organisational learning within and among multilateral organisations, their direct clients/partners, and other stakeholders."*

The many changes that have occurred in how and what MOPAN delivers are described in further detail in the efficiency section. MOPAN's main products and activities are described briefly below.

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<sup>8</sup> More on MOPAN can be found at: <https://www.mopanonline.org>

## MOPAN assessments

First and foremost, MOPAN carries out assessments of multilateral organisations (MOs) selected by its members on a multi-annual basis. The objective of these assessments is to provide a “snapshot” (in MOPAN’s terminology) of the management and accountability processes of selected MOs, contributing to their organisational effectiveness and performance.

Since 2003, the network’s methodological approach has evolved from “perception surveys” as a core tool (submitted to development actors in key countries where the assessed MOs are active) to a more comprehensive assessment methodology. In 2008, MOPAN adopted its “Common Approach”, including documentary analysis as a data collection tool and providing a streamlined MO assessment framework with potentially comparable key performance indicators (KPIs)<sup>9</sup>.

In 2015, MOPAN adopted a new “3.0” methodology that sought to better reflect agreed principles and good practices underlying the delivery and management of aid and to get a better grasp of MOs’ performance in this regard. The rationale of MOPAN 3.0 is clearly stated:

*If a multilateral organisation has effective systems, practices and behaviours in place, then its interventions / activities will be more ‘effectively delivered’, and hence delivery will achieve relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to humanitarian and development results in an efficient way.*<sup>10</sup>

MOPAN’s ambition is to contribute to “organisational performance” and the effectiveness of the multilateral system more generally. The indicator framework identifies five performance areas – four are related to areas underlying an MOs’ “organisational effectiveness” (strategic, operational, relationship and performance management) and the fifth concerns the results of their interventions. These five performance areas cover 12 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The assessment is based on three lines of evidence: a documentary analysis; a survey of MO partners (external stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the MO), and interviews with MO staff and other relevant stakeholders. The approach was updated in 2019 to include key strategic goals from the 2030 Agenda and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), and culminated in the MOPAN “3.1” methodology.

The Secretariat establishes and manages contracts with external providers to implement assessments and ensures an appropriate level of consistency and quality across MOPAN’s portfolio. Institutional Leads (ILs) are officials from the administrations of MOPAN member countries who facilitate assessments alongside the MO focal points and champion their use. In addition, MO focal points and ILs both help to contextualise each assessment and ensure that it captures the context of the MO and the important issues that it must address.

9 MOPAN does not formally compare MOs based on the assessment’s results, though the opportunity of a formal benchmarking is a recurring question in the networks’ strategic and methodological discussions (e.g. see the 2013 evaluation). However, as Stern and Andersen (2018) noted, the refinement of a common methodology could anyways generate a process of commensuration on the user’s side. Some Members acknowledged that practice in the interviews.

10 MOPAN 3.0 Methodology Digest, July 2019, p. 2. <http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/ourapproachmopan30/Mopan%20Methodology%20Digest%202019.pdf>.

## Other MOPAN products and activities

Since 2016-17, MOPAN has commissioned six thematic, cross-cutting studies (“analytical studies”). A first study on “emerging results” from MOPAN 2015-16 assessments was published in 2017, followed by five more that focus on contemporary thematic challenges such as climate change mitigation policies, the reform of the United Nations Development System (UNDS), or the best practices in measuring the implementation of actions against SEAH.

MOPAN is also engaged in disseminating its assessment results to its members through launch events, learning events, and briefs. In addition, MOPAN hosts learning events across the multilateral system, and the Secretariat and members participate in various events and fora. The number of engagement and learning activities has increased recently to better understand member needs and priorities, solicit member feedback, and promote the use of MOPAN products.

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## **MOPAN's efficiency**

The inception report reframed the question of efficiency to describe the operational and financial implications of change initiatives implemented by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN) since 2015.

The answer to this question has implications for the effectiveness and use of MOPAN reports and is therefore addressed before the others.

## How has MOPAN changed over the evaluation period?

This section presents MOPAN's main evolution between 2015 and 2021, and the extent to which these changes responded to the strategic orientations after the 2013 external evaluation and previous internal reviews. It is based on a range of sources, including the 2013 evaluation, internal reviews of MOPAN's methodology, strategic direction and governance, a review of internal documents, and financial information and interviews with MOPAN staff and representatives of MOPAN member countries.<sup>11</sup>

A large majority of MOPAN stakeholders (in member countries and in the Secretariat) are only somewhat aware of MOPAN's operational changes over the last six years.

The main areas for reform over the last six years were already on the table in 2015.

After the 2013 evaluation and members' reflections on it, the mid-2010s marked a turning point for MOPAN. Subsequent debates informing MOPAN's strategic direction and activities have revolved around a narrative of "reaching MOPAN's full potential while sticking to its core assessment business".

**On the one hand**, new ambitions arose, especially 1) turning MOPAN into a learning instrument "within and among multilateral organisations (MOs), their direct clients/partners and other partners and 2) better exploiting MOPAN's potential to influence MOs and assert itself as a global reference".<sup>12,13</sup>

In 2016, it was agreed that producing high quality assessments was not enough: "a lack of concrete impact and use of products is a threat to the credibility and legitimacy of MOPAN."<sup>14</sup> Two years later, the 2018 strategic review asked whether the network should move from "multilateral assessment" to "multilateral improvement" and proposed new business models to do so.

**On the other hand**, MOPAN members have tended to prioritise assessments and to meet accountability requirements. For example, in 2017, "While members agreed the Secretariat should pursue a learning agenda, they also stressed the importance of not diverting necessary resources from the organisational assessments themselves".<sup>15</sup> The need for methodologically credible assessments, and for broadening the coverage of priority MOs are two cornerstones of the debate among MOPAN members.

11 SC summaries and agendas 2015-2021, relevant attachments and concept notes, TWG summaries 2015-2021, SWG summaries 2015-2017. A few additional elements were extracted from Bureau meetings. It should be noted the summaries are not minutes: they synthesise the debates among Members and may not reflect the oppositions among them.

12 MOPAN Mission statement, 2014.

13 See e.g. Bjorn Gillsater's (former head of MOPAN Secretariat) Departure Address, MOPAN/SC(2016)1

14 Strategic Working Group: Workshop on MOPAN's medium-term Strategy 12 October 2016, Paris.

15 MOPAN/SC(2017) 10.

It is worth noting that MOPAN members have not substantially challenged the learning/use agenda, at least officially (i.e., there is no reference to this in meeting minutes). When considering the changes of the last six years, it appears that learning/use narrative has been sufficiently flexible to allow for changes while continuing to deliver more and more assessments.

At a more operational level, five main areas for reform emerged and were discussed in 2015-16 to meet the expectations expressed above:

1. the professionalisation of the secretariat;
2. MOPAN's reach and a focus on use by MOs beyond accountability use by member countries, including;
3. the introduction of new products;
4. the permanent adaptation of the methodology to better reflect the management and accountability performance of MOs and address new concerns; and
5. a better definition of the role of various MOPAN stakeholders, especially in the governance of MOPAN.

As of 2017, the focus has been on delivering the expected changes.

### **MOPAN has delivered on the reform agenda**

MOPAN has, for the most part, addressed the challenges identified in 2015-16 (Table 1 and appendix, p.114).

**Table 1: Main areas of reform**

Areas of reform	Main changes observed
<b>Professionalisation</b>	The Secretariat has shifted from ad hoc practices to more standardised, strictly defined processes for delivering assessments, and for its general operations. Also, at the request of the OECD, a multi-provider framework contract was tendered in 2018 and awarded to six consortia, replacing the previous contract with a single provider.
<b>MOPAN's reach and use</b>	There has been more effort to increase the use of MOPAN products, with a focus on increasing the number of assessments conducted to better address members' needs, on credibility and relevance of products to the MOs assessed and to the multilateral context in general, and on outreach and the ease of use of assessments. <sup>16</sup>
<b>New products</b>	New products have been delivered on a variety of topics (see p.35). The reference groups set up to oversee these studies provide a new setting in which to discuss matters of importance to the multilateral system.
<b>Methodology</b>	The methodology has been constantly refined to address technical challenges (scalability vs. organisational context; criteria setting; aggregation of data; measurement...) and to reflect current concerns on the multilateral scene (e.g., sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) indicators and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
<b>Better definition of roles</b>	Governance has been reformed several times to better define its operational and strategic aspects, culminating in a set of governance arrangements. Ongoing efforts have been undertaken to better define the roles of the chair, bureau and Steering Committee (SC). Suppression of the Secretariat Working Group (SWG).

<sup>16</sup> From 4.3 per year between 2009 and 2014 to 7 between 2015 and 2020.



These changes are considered to have supported the overall ambitions stated above to strengthen the quality and use of MOPAN's products and prepare for the future. They have been delivered in three ways:

- Through an iterative process of consolidating the methodology and ensuring consistency and quality in assessment delivery (particularly improvements in methodological framework and adopting standard operating procedures).
- By engaging in structural reforms over a period of several years to:
  1. better anticipate and respond to the needs of member countries (developing new functions such as outreach and engagement), and
  2. pave the way to further changes as needed (budget, communication functions), which have only recently begun.
- Through a series of smaller-scale initiatives flowing from or preceding these structural changes. These innovations seek to use different opportunities that come up, thus relying on context and the capacity of the MOPAN staff. They include some aspects of assessment delivery such as the Secretariat writing briefs, introducing analytical studies, and implementing learning events and high-level discussions, etc.

These changes were accompanied by significant increases in MOPAN's budget (from EUR 2.2 million in 2015 to EUR 3.5 million in 2020 – planned) and in staffing (from five full-time equivalent in 2015 to 12 in 2019, including temporary staff positions, see p.43).

Reaching a better definition of the roles of MOPAN stakeholders is probably the least advanced area of reform, despite several attempts over the years. Though the strategic directions of use by MOs were already articulated in 2015-16, some members are still unsure that this is part of what MOPAN should do. This uncertainty is probably the result of the high turnover of member representatives as they are often unaware of the previous debates and discussions around this question in the SWG and SC.

The roles of the SC, bureau and chair have been clarified on paper, but questions remain as to how they should be work in practice, especially when it comes to the network's leadership and role in supporting strategic discussions.<sup>17</sup> Interviews with member representatives and Secretariat staff indicate that the lack of a clear strategic venue in MOPAN remains a shared concern.

In 2019, members agreed that there was a need for a clearer separation between strategic and operational roles, "with MOPAN Members setting policy, strategy and objectives and the Secretariat [to implement these]".<sup>18</sup> However, in practice:

- The SC is still dealing with very operational concerns and has not articulated a strategic vision for the future of MOPAN in recent years.
- Despite the publication of new governance arrangements, members are still unclear about the role they can and should play in this regard (i.e., as owners of MOPAN, as drivers of change and/or as customers?).

<sup>17</sup> This is despite the governance arrangements that were developed in 2019 following the MOPAN Strategic Workshop on governance.

<sup>18</sup> Webinar on MOPAN Governance, 2019, moderated by R. Manning. (MOPAN 2019/42)

- The Secretariat is effectively filling this gap and has had to take the initiative in providing short and medium-term directions for MOPAN whereas its mandate to do so remains unclear. Lack of in-person meetings in the last two years may have contributed to this situation.

Finally, the accountability relationship between the MOPAN Secretariat and members is unclear. The discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is the main event where accountability is addressed, yet

1. it is typically focused on budget and “value for money” more than on MOPAN’s achievements, and
2. there are no actual commitments on outcomes by the Secretariat and by members against which to compare the network’s achievements.<sup>19</sup>

### Main findings

- An agenda for reform, focusing on learning and use on the one hand and on re-inforcing the credibility and coverage of MOPAN on the other, was established in the mid-2010s and has gone largely unchallenged since then.
- The secretariat has delivered on this agenda, in four of the five major areas of reform: professionalisation; MOPAN’s reach and use; new products, and methodology.
- In general, interviewed stakeholders recognised these reforms as satisfactory.
- New governance arrangements were adopted in 2019 to clarify roles and responsibilities. In practice, the process continues. Moreover, wider problems identified in 2015-16 (lack of a strategic venue and strategic vision; an accountability relationship with sufficiently clear roles for the secretariat and members) still need to be addressed.

<sup>19</sup> The annual programme of work and budget which is made available to Members focuses on outputs and is not much discussed.

## Important efforts in improving the quality of MOPAN assessments

This evaluation included no meta-evaluation of MOPAN products, making it impossible to assess systematically how the changes have contributed to quality.

To discuss quality, including its definition and how it is perceived, the evaluation therefore drew on many sources, including the 2013 evaluation, previous internal reviews, interviews and a workshop with MOPAN staff.

In the 2015-21 period, MOPAN shifted markedly in its conceptualisation and definition of assessment quality and credibility. Until 2015, quality was considered mostly in terms of reliability, with an insistence on the validity and robustness of findings (and therefore the underlying methodology). Subsequently, two other components of quality have been better addressed:

1. robustness in practice, which considers whether the assessment design is sufficiently adapted to the assessment context, and
2. utility, or how the assessments take opportunities for use into consideration.<sup>20</sup> Table 2 synthesises the observed changes.

**Table 2: Efforts to ensure quality**

Criteria	Observed changes
Credibility	<p>The 3.0 methodology set out in 2015 culminated the work that began with the 2009 common approach. MOPAN stakeholders have continually reflected on the methodology, which was thoroughly reviewed in 2018 and updated in 2019 and 2021. Overall, interviewed MOPAN representatives find it satisfactory.</p> <p>External stakeholders, and MOs in particular, tend to consider that MOPAN's current methodology is acceptable, but they criticise certain aspects of it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the burden that it imposes;</li> <li>2. the relevance of certain indicators to their case;</li> <li>3. technical operations such as the use of averaging to derive ratings (already mentioned in the 2013 evaluation), and</li> <li>4. survey respondents (and their capacity to provide an informed opinion on the work of MOs).<sup>21</sup></li> </ol>

<sup>20</sup> These criteria are based on Delahais, T., & Lacouette-Fougère, C. (2019). Try again. Fail again. Fail better. Analysis of the contribution of 65 evaluations to the modernisation of public action in France. *Evaluation*, 1(3), 1-18. (p.7).

<sup>21</sup> Rating is seen as an opaque operation, subject to bargaining. MOs that are assessed several times point at the facts that standards are raised from one assessment to the following, which they see as unfair.

<b>Relevance</b>	<p>MOPAN has increased its efforts over the years to adapt to each new MO it assesses. Including new MOs further removed from the classical “UN agency” model has reinforced this pattern.</p> <p>The shift from a single provider to a multi-provider framework contract was made primarily to comply with OECD internal regulations, but it was used as an opportunity to enlarge the pool of potential consultants to assess MOs – the rationale was that specific expertise was needed to assess the new MOs and better reflect their operating context. The shift was also used to develop processes to guide the implementation of assessments.</p> <p>In addition, the cost of accessing the right MO counterparts and gathering data is known to be very high, especially for new service providers. The secretariat has stepped in to facilitate the initial contacts and reduce related transaction costs.</p> <p>In 2019, the stakeholder survey, one of MOPAN's assessment lines of evidence, was in-housed, to better target respondents, ask more relevant questions of the right people, and ensure a higher response rate.</p>
<b>Utility</b>	<p>The MOPAN Secretariat has moved from considering that MOPAN assessments should be useful only to members to considering that they should also be useful to MOs.</p> <p>Efforts have been made both upstream and downstream to increase the likelihood that members and MOs use assessments. Upstream changes involve how MOs are selected from a list of member requests adapted to members' reporting or replenishment needs to a list that also considers timeliness for MOs — strategic review, upcoming replenishment process — and the engagement and adaptation process mentioned above. Downstream changes involve organising events to launch assessments and discussing preliminary findings with members and MOs, as well as learning events.</p>

Initially, the MOPAN secretariat and members focussed on reliability. This focus is apparent in MOPAN's organisation, with the Technical Working Group (TWG) specifically dedicated to enhancing the methodological framework. However, the primary shift concerns utility. The underlying rationale of many observed changes is that MOPAN processes and products can only be truly useful if they are more relevant to the multilateral organisations (their specificities, their agenda, etc.). Hence, MOPAN has sought increasingly to adapt the assessment framework and process to better reflect the realities of the MOs they assess while continuing to abide by the core framework principles. This has significant consequences for MOPAN activities, especially as it conflicts with some members' desire for framework consistency to serve their domestic accountability agendas.

There have always been questions about the assessment process (especially about the costs for gathering data in MOs), but this issue came to the fore after a new service provider framework contract was created. The MOPAN framework is silent on its own implementation. Between 2015 and 2019, the service provider established processes for undertaking MOPAN assessments in context, especially about the following: 1) how to collect the required data in a reasonable length of time and at a reasonable cost, and 2) how to ensure consistency in the use and interpretation of data across assessments. As of 2020, the secretariat faced the necessity of developing its own guidance on how to implement assessments, which has required time to stabilise, implement, and then guide new service providers.

These efforts have paid off in terms of credibility, especially when compared to the comments made in the 2013 evaluation. While MOPAN Secretariat staff and multilateral stakeholders do criticise the methodology, there is also evidence that the assessments are accepted as valid evidence of performance:

- Interviews with staff responsible for Results Based Management or MO performance indicate that their view of what RBM is or should be, and of its usefulness is similar to MOPAN's view. They discuss methodological aspects, but the discussion of methodology is part of the usual interactions of this "community".
- Examples of MOPAN indicators that different stakeholders use outside MOPAN assessments include:
  1. MOs in their own systems<sup>22</sup>
  2. multilateral services or groups such as the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) or the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG); and
  3. by external stakeholders such as the Quality of Official Development Assistance (QuODA).
- The JIU considers whether an UN agency has been recently subjected to a MOPAN assessment or other exercises and may decide to postpone an assessment to avoid adding any unnecessary burden.
- Some MOs have suggested that MOPAN could be an "agreed-to common tool" to assess performance across the multilateral system – or at least could form its basis.<sup>23</sup>

### Main findings

Between 2015 and 2021, the definition of a quality product at MOPAN changed focus from reliability (and therefore, on methodology) to utility.

Practical and process-related issues have always been discussed, but until 2019, they were internalised by a single service provider. After the supplier framework began, the secretariat had to provide more guidance on practical issues and take direct responsibility for some of them.

MOPAN's methodology appears quite credible in the eyes of multilateral organisations, although they may still criticise the relevance or validity of some aspects of the approach.

22 For example, UNICEF's corporate results framework of 2018-2021 included a MOPAN indicator (E2.a.1) which is the following: "Score of at least "satisfactory" in Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) key performance indicator ratings for UNICEF". UNICEF scored 83% in 2020.

23 Joint Inspection Unit (2017). Donor-led Assessments of the United Nations System Organizations. <https://www.unjiu.org/news/donor-led-assessments-united-nations-system-organizations-jiurep20172>. P. 41.

## Evolution in the cost of product delivery

This section provides estimates of assessment cost and how they have been affected by the change initiatives in recent years.

It is mainly based on internal financial information, an internal time-tracking exercise collectively conducted by MOPAN staff, and on staff interviews.

Staff costs remain relatively stable in MOPAN's budget despite the addition of many services

MOPAN's planned budget increased steadily between 2015 and 2018 and rose steeply as of 2019, reflecting the additional investment agreed upon by members in the new MoU (Table 3).

**Table 3 : Evolution of MOPAN budget**

Costs	Planned (2015-20)	Actual (2015-19) <sup>24</sup>
MOPAN budget	+59% (EUR 2.2 mn » 3.5 mn) <sup>25</sup>	+62% (EUR 1.8 mn » 3 mn)
Staff	+78% <sup>26</sup>	+146%
Consultancy services	+53% <sup>27</sup>	+29%

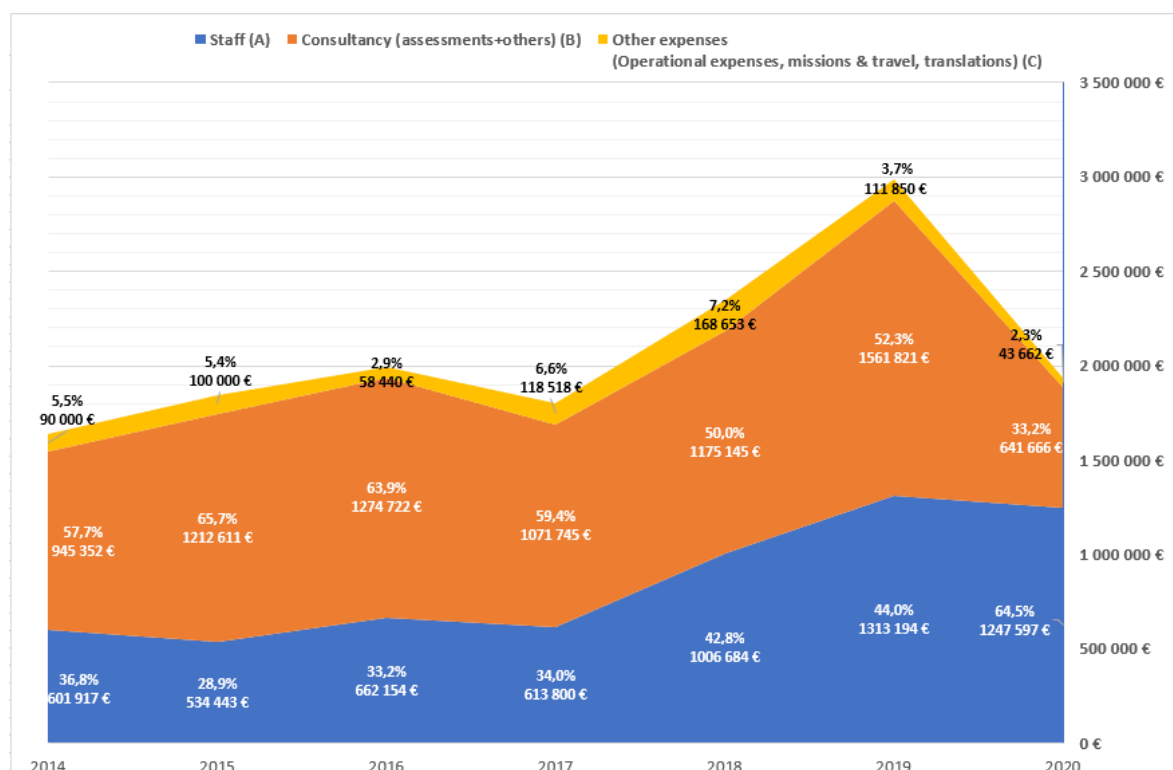
In real terms, expenses remained stable between 2015 and 2017 before starting to grow in 2018 when the chronic underspending on staff observed in the previous years was addressed (Figure 1).

<sup>24</sup> The level of activity in 2020 was largely impacted by COVID-19. For this reason, the 2019 figures were used here.

<sup>25</sup> These amounts exclude the OECD charge of 6.3% on voluntary contributions.

<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that, given OECD's compensation rules, salaries increase every year if the level of performance of the staff is adequate. In this estimate, the share of "other expenses" is very low, with operational expenses estimated at K€ 65 in 2020. The cost of being hosted at the OECD is integrated in the staff costs.

<sup>27</sup> Respectively +52%, +70% and +46% in constant euros - as per a 4.8% cumulated inflation between 2015 and 2020.

**Figure 1: MOPAN budget 2014-20**

For assessments, the growth roughly reflects changes in the process and the inclusion of new, more diverse MOs and, as of 2019, a greater sophistication of MOPAN methodology (additional indicators, adaptation process). It also covers the development of new products.

The respective proportion of planned costs associated with the following:

1. MOPAN staff;
2. consultancy (assessments and other products, including for internal uses), and
3. other expenses are relatively stable over time, especially if the cost of in-housing the survey is neutralised.<sup>28</sup>

In this case, the increase is +1.2% when compared to 2015 (instead of +4% ), leading to the conclusion that until now, the expectation has been that the share of staff in planned costs should be broadly proportional to the increase in the consultancy costs and actual delivery. This raises questions about the adequacy of this steady state given the additional services provided by the Secretariat. We assume that many of these costs have been absorbed by steadily increasing the workload of MOPAN staff.

28 We calculate that if staff costs had remained proportional to consultancy costs, they would have reached EUR 1 162 000 by 2020 instead of actual staff costs of EUR 1 353 000. The cost of repatriation is estimated at 80% the cost of the data analyst. The additional cost of staff is therefore calculated at EUR 90 000.

## Different approaches to identifying assessment costs

A set of assumptions is needed to identify the full cost of an assessment, which is not straightforward. Rather than choosing a single procedure, we opted for different approaches (Table 4).<sup>29</sup> We examine different calculation methods to gain insights into how costs at MOPAN have evolved over time.

**Table 4: Approaches used to calculate assessment cost**

Type of approach	Main features
Real time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach based on a collective measurement of the average time spent by MOPAN staff members (done at the initiative of the Secretariat).</li> <li>• Main assumptions: MOPAN analysts have a good command of the time they spend on assessment-related tasks (2021 data).</li> <li>• Result: the total estimated cost per assessment is 114.5 staff days, including 79.5 days for analysts.</li> </ul>
Global headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach based on MOPAN's global expense headings (actual spending) in 2019, to which ratios are applied.</li> <li>• Main assumptions: in 2015-16, 12 assessments delivered over two years represented 100% of MOPAN's activity. In 2019, 5.41 assessments were done. The delivery of assessments is estimated to represent 80% of MOPAN's output.<sup>30</sup></li> <li>• Result: the total estimated cost of an assessment in 2019 is approx. EUR 495 000, of which service provision represents 55% and other costs (staff, administration...) represent 45%. For 20 members, the cost is EUR 25 000 per assessment and per member, a 54% increase compared to 2015-16 (EUR 320 000 of which service provision represented 66% and other costs 34%). For 18 members, the cost is EUR 18 000 per assessment and per member.</li> </ul>
Budgeted time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach based on a theoretical disaggregation of MOPAN staff member worktime as planned in 2020 (provisional budget).</li> <li>• Main assumptions: Distinction between staff costs directly and indirectly related to assessments. Indirect costs account for 80% of the amount. Costs related to governance and learning are not included. Non-staff costs include a standard assessment (EUR 212 000) and other costs (mission fees, quality insurance, methodological services).</li> <li>• Result: the total direct cost is estimated at EUR 348 000, of which 66% are external/consultancy costs and 34% are staff costs. With indirect costs (e.g. general administration, not directly related to the assessment), the total cost is EUR 418 000 (56% external /44% staff), or EUR 21 000 per member.</li> </ul>

**The first approach** is the most straightforward. The all-included cost of a MOPAN assessment in 2019 is EUR 495 000, of which EUR 212 000 is the service provision cost.<sup>31</sup> This cost was EUR 320 000 in 2015-16.<sup>32</sup> This evolution reflects important changes in the MOPAN framework and assessment process over this period, including the number of indicators, level of evidence required for scoring, not to mention the process of adaptation and brokering (third approach).

<sup>29</sup> The methodological assumptions behind each approach are presented in the appendix p.102.

<sup>30</sup> Different assumptions are used for 2015-16 and 2019 due to a change in MOPAN's activity, in the assessment cycle frequency and in the production of the assessments.

<sup>31</sup> Except member-related costs related to the choice of MOs, engagement and being an IL.

<sup>32</sup> The 2013 evaluation provides a cost estimate of K€ 210, but the costing assumptions are not provided.



**The second approach** is more fine-grained. It looks explicitly at budgeted costs. In this case, the direct cost of an assessment (staff + non staff) is EUR 360 000. Under this model, the cost of engagement, which is an important new feature of the evaluation period, is estimated at EUR 13 000 per assessment (4%). However, including indirect costs for tasks that are still required for the satisfactory delivery of assessments (e.g., administration, communication, oversight) increases the cost to EUR 418 000.

**The third approach** is based on tracked times. It shows that different Secretariat staff members spend a total of 114.5 days on each assessment. A large part of this time is spent on an initial engagement/adaptation phase that includes preliminary discussions with all parties, paving the way for the relationship between the MO and the service provider, and ensuring that substantive questions about the specificity of each MO are addressed. It is also spent on a delivery phase that includes connecting with the MO and the provider to ensure that stakeholders' comments are fully considered, and that the final product meets internal standards of quality. These "brokering costs" are directly related to the utility ambition of MOPAN and represent approximately half the days spent by the concerned Secretariat staff members and one-third of the total number of days spent by MOPAN staff overall.

**The work done** is calculated at 85% of a MOPAN analysts' theoretical worktime rather than 65-70% as planned in 2020. The Head of Secretariat (HoS) also appears to be spending 20% of their time, rather than the supposed 5%, on the assessments, especially on co-ordination/clearance.

### Main findings

- Depending on the approach to costing, an assessment costs between EUR 420 000-495 000 or EUR 21 000-25 000 per member.
- Theoretically, the cost of engagement for each assessment would be limited were it considered as a separate budget. However, the time spent by MOPAN staff to improve the utility of assessments, including the cost of engaging with MOs, adapting, connecting MOs and service providers and ensuring smooth delivery, represents an important share of staff costs.
- Analysts spend 20% to 30% more time on assessments than they are supposed to do theoretically.

## Five trends that affect delivery capacity

This section blends some of the previous findings to consider whether the current situation puts MOPAN's ability to deliver assessments on time at risk. It is based primarily on internal information, interviews, and a workshop with MOPAN staff.

Given the above, the new emphasis on the quality of MOPAN products, centring on utility and practice, in addition to reliability (p.40), creates additional work that does not balance with the available resources. Five trends reinforce this imbalance:

**First,** ramping up the MOPAN Secretariat has come at a cost, including the on-boarding of new team members and the integration of new organisational arrangements. This cost could have been higher but turnover has been minimal in recent years (newcomers have not left and staff members tend to stay for quite a long time). Recruitment through the OECD means that the Secretariat can attract high-level staff, some of whom already know the OECD and its working practices.

**Second,** establishing and professionalising a permanent Secretariat have contributed to a new equilibrium between it and MOPAN members with respect to the degree of engagement. One factor in this shift is that the recruitment of Institutional Leads (ILs) is very often complicated and it has been observed that a majority of members do not consider themselves to play an important role alongside the Secretariat in delivering assessments. This is especially true for anything related to fostering use through outreach activities targeting potential users: almost all MOPAN members mention that it is difficult to dedicate more time to this type of initiative.

**Third,** the new “use orientation” has consequences beyond developing new procedures. “Use orientation” means that MOPAN staff tend to follow-up on any opportunity for use (be it a request from a member or MO, an invitation to a meeting, etc.). Importantly, this is not just the result of a strategic orientation or a managerial objective. It echoes the staff's willingness to enhance the usefulness of MOPAN even though it adds to their work, because they think it is the right thing to do.

**Fourth,** there is an ongoing process of “repatriating the MOPAN methodology”. Two processes have had important implications: the focus on outreach to foster use has led to returning previously outsourced work back in-house (e.g. the survey), and investing more in aspects such as quality assurance. Above all, the new 2018 framework contract has proved to be a turning point. IOD Parc had internalised many aspects of the assessment management work (including refining the methodology, ensuring consistency, assuring quality, etc.). With the new arrangement, this is no longer possible and MOPAN staff have had to take over these aspects of delivery, which requires significant work, most of which is not visible from the outside.

**Fifth,** the development of new products has been an iterative process. This makes it difficult to establish clear expectations for service providers to deliver products that are very different in nature and tone from assessments. This results in an iterative process to find the right angle, depth and language. Every learning product has a unique context, making it harder to learn from one to prepare the next one. The MOPAN Secretariat produced several against tight deadlines. Moreover, because MOPAN is largely geared towards delivering assessments, new products tend to be additional to the core workload, making it more difficult to ensure that delivery takes place as planned.

Some of these trends are non-recurring (e.g., repatriating the methodology and probably the experimental nature of products). Others will be ongoing or recurrent. In particular, the “use orientation”, and the change in the balance between MOPAN members and the secretariat seems to be here to stay. These trends were difficult to foresee and were therefore not budgeted for in the 2020-22 MoU.<sup>33</sup> In previous years, such mismatches were covered by carry-overs from one budgetary period to another that the members agreed to invest

33 This is a recurring issue. The discussions preceding the negotiation of the 2020-22 MoU pointed that many costs had not been budgeted in the previous MoU, including quality control, methodological development, engagement, and strategic development. A carry-over was used to fund them partly (SC 2018(20)).

in MOPAN work.<sup>34</sup> Though there is no evidence that this mismatch has affected MOPAN's core mission, the situation may be a short/medium term risk to delivery.

These trends also have implications for skills and competencies: technical competency in repatriating the methodology; substantial knowledge of different sectors (UN, humanitarian, MDBs...) in which MOPAN operates, and that inter alia is probably needed to facilitate the adaptation process and identify the potential for use, and outreach and engagement with stakeholders. While MOPAN's recruitment policy and the new multi-provider framework contract are important in providing such competencies, it will face challenges doing so under its current resource envelope. It remains to be seen whether MOPAN members are prepared to respond fully to these implications in their financial and non-financial involvement in the network.

### Main findings

- In an already resource-tight environment, several trends are affecting MOPAN's delivery capacity. Some are non-recurrent, such as the repatriation of the methodology, while others are probably longer lasting (the new balance between MOPAN members and staff in the allocation of work).
- At the time of this evaluation, these trends are generating a heavy workload for the MOPAN secretariat, but this does not yet appear to have affected its core mission. There is a risk however of this in the future.
- These trends have also affected the need for competencies, which has been partially addressed in recent years.

## Hosting and budget arrangements

This section examines the arrangement made to host MOPAN at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which provides corporate facilities and services to support the functioning of:

- MOPAN is a network of member countries that is substantively independent from the OECD.<sup>35</sup>
- The MOPAN Secretariat, which is administratively integrated into the OECD and charged with servicing the needs of MOPAN and advancing its substantive work.<sup>36</sup>

The nature of the hosting arrangement is important. The extent to which it is satisfactory has implications for MOPAN's credibility for independently assessing multilateral organisations and its efficiency, particularly in promoting uptake and use.

It is mainly based on internal OECD information and on interviews with OECD staff.

34 Carry-over from the pre-2015 period, which was affected to the 2016-19 period (corresponding to K€ 30 per member per year. And carry-over following COVID-19 which was affected to 2021.

35 The MoU on the hosting by the OECD of the MOPAN Secretariat notes that MOPAN is an independent network in terms of the financing and content of its work and that the MOPAN Secretariat functions under the substantive guidance of the MOPAN Steering Committee.

36 The MoU indicates that being administratively integrated into the OECD, the MOPAN Secretariat reports for that purpose to the Director of the Development Co-operation Directorate and that it functions in accordance with the rules and practices of the OECD, in particular those regarding staff and financial administration.

## Box 2: Main concepts related to OECD hosting

MOPAN is but one of several external entities hosted by the OECD. The rationale for such arrangements is that they are mutually beneficial to both parties.

Like MOPAN, some of these entities are substantively independent of the OECD: the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) and the International Transport Forum (ITF). For other types of entities, being hosted at the OECD enables them to draw on its knowledge and expertise and collaborate closely to support their work and achieve their aims. Two such examples are the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), whose secretariat is situated in the Statistics and Data Directorate (SDD), and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) whose secretariat, like that of MOPAN, is situated within Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD).

**In all hosting arrangements, secretariats are administratively integrated into the OECD.** The exceptions are FATF, SWAC and ITF, whose secretariats are stand-alone functions that are not situated in any directorate.

External entities can be hosted through either Part I or Part II of the OECD budget:

**Part I** is funded through a system of formula-based assessed contributions from all OECD member countries supplemented by voluntary contributions from OECD members, the European Union (EU), and non-OECD members. Part I finances substantive work conducted largely under the auspices of the organisation's policy committees, such as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), as well as funding OECD corporate functions.

**Part II** of the budget is funded by OECD members and non-members that affiliate to specific programmes, which provide a means for the OECD to address issues that are not of interest to all of its members and to allow non-OECD members to participate in this work on an equal footing to OECD members. These programmes are created by a formal mandate approved by the OECD Council, which are generally five years long, on line with those of OECD policy committees, and may be longer or open-ended. Part II programmes, on the agreement of their members, are funded according to a scale of contributions that are voluntary or a combination of voluntary and assessed contributions, are part of the OECD's biennial programme of work and Budget (PWB) process in which they figure individually. By convention, a period of notice is required when a member of a programme decides to withdraw. Part II programmes comprise independent, hosted entities (e.g. the FATF, SWAC and ITF), autonomous or semi-autonomous OECD bodies (e.g. the International Energy Agency and the Development Centre) and a variety of specialist bodies that can be freestanding or more or less linked to OECD policy committees and whose secretariat is integrated into a policy directorate (e.g. the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the OECD Global Science Forum and the Chemicals Management programmes)

## MOPAN's substantive independence has been assured

Until 2013, the MOPAN Secretariat rotated among its members' administrations on a voluntary basis. Since 2013, the OECD has hosted the MOPAN Secretariat. In 2014, MOPAN established its own set of governance arrangements.<sup>37</sup> Its primary decision-making body is its SC, which is supported by two working groups.

All indications are that the implementation of the hosting arrangement has been fully in line with the stipulations of the MOPAN MoU in terms of ensuring its substantive independence.

Hosting by the OECD has provided several overall benefits.

The many benefits of a permanent MOPAN Secretariat within the OECD include:

- It avoids having to set up MOPAN as a standalone international organisation, which would require its constituent members to negotiate and agree on an international treaty.
- It secures worldwide privileges and immunities that a stand-alone organisation under national law and its secretariat would not otherwise have.
- It provides more buying power, for example, when purchasing travel and accommodation for staff missions and significant institutional support in human resource management and legal services.
- It provides access for the MOPAN Secretariat to a readily available pool of highly qualified staff during recruitment, and a reputation for robustness and seriousness on which it can draw when needed.
- Furthermore, establishing a permanent MOPAN Secretariat within the OECD has been instrumental in facilitating professionalisation and in bringing back in-house certain functions that had previously been contracted out.
- There are evolving benefits and risks of locating the MOPAN Secretariat in DCD

Since becoming a permanent unit at the OECD, the MOPAN Secretariat has been part of DCD. The HoS is required to report to the DCD Director on administrative matters, and is part of the DCD management team, the primary avenue for interacting with OECD corporate services and for being involved in corporate processes. He or she must participate in management meetings with other DCD managers.

This arrangement was beneficial at the outset. It facilitated the establishment ex nihilo of the Secretariat. In its early years, limited staff resources and a focus primarily on efforts to build capacity and revise the MOPAN methodology had created challenges. Vesting the DCD director with overall responsibility for MOPAN's administrative matters, including accountability for financial aspects, made sense from a risk management perspective.

Since the first MoU renewal in 2016, the MOPAN Secretariat has become considerably stronger quantitatively and qualitatively. It is now a full-fledged unit with 15 staff members, which gives it greater scope for staff specialisation, including the capacity to deal directly with OECD corporate directorates and to streamline interactions with them.

Under the current arrangement, the DCD director is responsible for approving all MOPAN

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37 C(2019)22

financial decisions over EUR 15 000, but has only limited visibility of the actions needing to be resourced. Initially, this was considered helpful for providing the necessary assurances on financial matters, particularly when a single contractor was doing the vast bulk of MOPAN's work. But it requires the DCD director to carry out due diligence on funding decisions that he or she may not be necessarily well informed to judge, or that may have to be undertaken in a way that could be perceived as impinging on MOPAN's independence. More recently, a multi-consultant framework contract was created to reduce the risks inherent in contracting out MOPAN work by establishing and bringing some previously outsourced activities in-house.

Some procedures, while ostensibly administrative in nature, may have risks, perceived or otherwise, for MOPAN's independence. This is particularly the case for the recruitment and retention of the MOPAN HoS, who is appointed by the OECD Secretary-General on the advice of the MOPAN members. Once in post, the HoS is subject to the standard OECD performance appraisal, conducted by the DCD director, and subsequently subject to a process of arbitration to calibrate and finalise appraisals, under the authority of the OECD Secretary-General. The performance appraisal results can then provide the basis for decisions on the HoS's contract renewal or termination. Such an arrangement may be perceived as a way to pressure the MOPAN secretariat, particularly if the HoS is new to the OECD or has fewer than five years' service and would thus be employed on a time-limited contract.<sup>38</sup>

There is no indication that situating the secretariat within DCD has in any way undermined MOPAN's operational autonomy despite the "grey zones" inherent in the notion of administrative integration and the absence of guidance and rules on how to navigate them. Indeed, while the arrangement is reported to have given rise to some minor inefficiencies, it has worked well in maintaining both the perception and the reality of MOPAN's independence, which is due to a large extent to the quality of the individuals currently in post, and much less to any codified procedures or safeguards.

## Funding and budgeting

MOPAN is funded uniquely through voluntary contributions from its member countries. All make the same contribution and commit to financing MOPAN through the full period of the MoU in vigour. The funding is inscribed in the OECD's Part I PWB, which is primarily financed by OECD members' assessed contributions to which voluntary contributions may be added.

The MOPAN PWB is prepared separately alongside the DCD/DAC PWB process and agreed by the SC before being transmitted to the DAC for inclusion in its PWB submission. The MOPAN PWB is then inscribed in the OECD Part I Budget and transmitted to the OECD Council. Its approval is a formality in both the DAC and the OECD Council. The PWB documentation presents MOPAN as an output result (i.e., a one or more programmed products) in the area of Development Co-operation (PWB Output Area 5.1.1) for which the DAC is the "parent" committee. Furthermore, it presents MOPAN as part of the policy environment of the PWB output area, without reference to the MOPAN SC or to MOPAN's role and independent status.

38 OECD staff at A5 grade and below can only be employed on an open-ended contract following "conversion", which can take place at the earliest after five years of employment on fixed-term contracts. Should an employee not have their contracted converted, their employment is terminated. A6 and A7 grade staff are employed uniquely on renewable short-term contracts.



Presenting the MOPAN PWB this way could create misunderstandings. It could be read as MOPAN being one of the DAC networks operating under its guidance and according to its mandate, and for which the DCD director is identified as responsible on the Secretariat side. However, beyond this, the current arrangements that tie funding commitments to the duration of the MoU makes even medium-term planning by the MOPAN Secretariat uncertain because the agreement must be renegotiated every two or three years.

### Main Findings

- The hosting arrangements have been implemented in line with the MOPAN MoU in ensuring the network's substantive independence.
- The switch from a rotating to a permanent MOPAN Secretariat hosted at the OECD has provided many organisational benefits, and been instrumental in facilitating the process of professionalisation and taking certain functions previously contracted out in house.
- Situating the MOPAN Secretariat within DCD was essential in the early years given the challenges of establishing the function, developing internal capacity, and revising the MOPAN methodology.
- This arrangement does, however, place responsibility for due diligence on the DCD director especially for financial matters, which is difficult to carry out without being perceived as impinging on the independence of MOPAN.
- The operational autonomy of the MOPAN Secretariat within DCD has been largely respected, notwithstanding the "grey zones" around administrative integration. This results less, however, from codified procedures and safeguards and more from the qualities of the individuals currently in post.
- The current funding arrangement, negotiated within the framework of a two or three-year MoU, gives MOPAN only a short-term planning horizon, while presenting the budget within Part I of the PWB lends itself to confusion about MOPAN's role and status.

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## **MOPAN's effectiveness**



Interviews with member representatives during the theory-building phase of this evaluation highlighted the use of MOPAN assessments as the focus of the exercise. A first round of interviews suggested that **use by MOPAN members** in support of (broadly defined) accountability processes was probably widespread, but that other uses (“uses for dialogue and learning”) were rarer or limited to a small set of countries. An important assumption that arose at the end of this phase was that national organisational processes and administrative culture played an important role in explaining use. This evaluation therefore focused on clarifying the various kinds of use in these national contexts, on understanding who does and does not use MOPAN assessments, in support of which tasks or needs, and how and why they use them.

**MOs’** use of MOPAN assessments was far more uncertain. Officially, multilateral organisation (MO) representatives stated that MOPAN assessments “are useful” but gave no concrete examples to illustrate their claims. Most MOPAN member representatives and staff members stated that they were hopeful that the assessments were used but did not know with certainty if this was the case; they could give examples only in very few cases. Others were more pessimistic and thought that it was unlikely that the assessments were used. We therefore focused on identifying cases in which use was more plausible, and where the use claims could be verified. From the sample of MOs that were examined closely, elements are provided about who, how, and why MOPAN assessments were used.

## Members’ use of MOPAN assessments

This examination of members’ use of MOPAN assessments is based primarily on interviews with MOPAN representatives, other national representatives (managers, analysts, thematic officers), a survey of MOPAN stakeholders (including former representatives, Institutional Leads (ILs) and other users), systematic research of MOPAN-related information on the websites of ministries of foreign affairs and parliament.<sup>39</sup>

The objective of this evaluation was neither to depict the national administrative systems of each member country nor to systematically track all uses by all potential users in all countries. It was to identify the extent to which use is plausible and to provide a robust evidence base for certain uses when they occur. It cannot be proven that a certain use does not exist in any given country – only that it is probably not widespread.

***MOPAN can act as a general safeguard for countries that value trust in the multilateral system.***

This evaluation focuses on use in practical examples. It should be noted, however, that some countries do not use MOPAN assessments this way, but value them nonetheless as a “safeguard” given how they are produced. They consider that MOs are more likely to act

<sup>39</sup> The outputs of this research depend very much on the extent to which each country makes information available to the public.

in an accountable manner if external accountability mechanisms exist; they do not see the need for additional actions on their side.<sup>40</sup> Belgium for instance has a “full-core funding” policy based on trust-based relationships with the MOs they support. Belgium decided to become a MOPAN member when this policy was adopted. It saw MOPAN as important to legitimise its trust in the multilateral system.

### Main findings

- Some countries see the existence of and participation to MOPAN as a safeguard to ensure that MOs act in an accountable manner.

### **MOPAN members use MOPAN assessments widely for accountability purposes.**

Table 5 presents different uses members make of MOPAN assessments to support accountability processes or requirements that have been observed at least once. It also presents the necessary conditions for use.

**Table 5 : MOPAN assessments used for accountability purposes**

Use...	Necessary Condition
<i>For due diligence during contracting or replenishment, or for earmarked funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational performance is scrutinised in the national due diligence process</li> </ul>
<i>To provide accountability information to parliament or government (formalised process)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of accountability to parliament in the country/ requirement to report to parliament</li> <li>• When such arrangements exist, they concern accountability and management performance</li> </ul>
<i>To answer specific accountability requests by members of parliament or of government</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MO funding/use of taxpayers' money is a topic on the public agenda</li> <li>• Scandals involving MOs assessed by MOPAN</li> </ul>
<i>To inform, act as, or replace non-recurrent or regular national MO assessment or evaluation processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member country has a standardised reporting process or evaluates support to MOs</li> </ul>
<i>To design or redesign a national MO assessment process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member country has recently (re)designed its assessment process</li> </ul>

These types of use are the most widespread among MOPAN members who all employ MOPAN assessments in at least one of the ways presented in Table 5. The most likely significant uses are that:

- Countries (e.g. UK) doing their own assessments requiring direct interactions with MOs have stopped doing them, at least for now, and have replaced them with reviews mostly based on secondary sources (including MOPAN) and feedback from their dip-

40 This position exemplifies the debate between two views of accountability, “as a virtue” and “as a mechanism”. The latter sees accountability as a relational process, in which a MOPAN assessment can be used to influence the practices of an organisation. See Bovens, M. (2010). Two Concepts of Accountability: Accountability as a Virtue and as a Mechanism. *West European Politics*, 33(5), 946-967.

lomatic personnel.<sup>41</sup> This has cascading consequences, as many countries used these assessments, particularly the UK Multilateral Aid Reviews for their own desk reviews,<sup>42</sup>

- Countries conducting assessments based mostly on desk reviews and feedback from their diplomatic personnel either:
  1. totally replaced them with MOPAN assessments (e.g. Canada, Norway);
  2. replaced their own assessments at least for the MOs covered by MOPAN (but kept their own reviews for others) or use MOPAN information for accountability and management-related indicators in their assessments or evaluations (e.g. Denmark,<sup>43</sup> France, Germany,<sup>44</sup> Japan, the Netherlands, Qatar, Sweden,<sup>45</sup> Switzerland, UK, USA). Several countries (e.g. Denmark, Qatar, Sweden, UK) clearly mentioned in their internal guidelines for such processes that MOPAN information should be used to inform some sections of their reports.
- Some countries that previously had no assessments are now using MOPAN (e.g. Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg). In most countries, except France, evaluations focus on bilateral aid (including earmarked funding) and projects, not on contributions to MOs. MOPAN fills this gap and is mentioned in several national evaluation policies as such – even among non-member countries such as Austria.<sup>46</sup>

These types of use are found among three of four MOPAN members. The likelihood and importance of being used for accountability however, fluctuates considerably, depending on two major conditions:

**First**, the degree of importance that national accountability processes give to organisational accountability and management performance:

- The Nordic countries, Australia, Switzerland, the USA and the UK, for example, emphasise organisational performance in due diligence processes and draw on MOPAN assessments for the required information.<sup>47</sup> Others may concentrate on purely financial criteria, on governance, or other questions that are not (or only lightly) examined by MOPAN.
- Several countries report to parliament on multilateral engagement. Some but not all include aspects of accountability and management (e.g. The Netherlands, Norway,

41 UK's Multilateral Aid Review is on hold since 2016. UK still have Central Assurance Assessments (CAA), which however deal with different questions. Australia's Multilateral Performance Assessments were replaced by annual Multilateral Performance Reports (MPRs) in 2019 and most recently centered around Australia's development policy "Partnership for Recovery : Australia's COVID-19 Development Response." Norway did assess 9 organisations of interest using MOPAN methodology in 2016. The cost was important and it seems that a new batch is unlikely. It should be noted that the USA were supposed to launch their own MAR. They were voted by the Parliament, but apparently not implemented. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/congress/senate/bills/3626/text>

42 UK MAR's focus was not so much performance but value for money from a British perspective. Using it for other purposes was probably inadequate and represented a liability for donors and for MOs (especially those which received a bad rating).

43 The use of MOPAN assessments in Denmark has been recently documented in Boesen, N. (2019). Evaluation study: use of organisation strategies and results reporting. Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs / DANIDA. [https://um.dk/en/danida/en/results/eval/eval\\_reports/publicationdisplaypage/?publicationID=31E584BA-0FC2-4A41-AB6C-09F7E95AD1D2](https://um.dk/en/danida/en/results/eval/eval_reports/publicationdisplaypage/?publicationID=31E584BA-0FC2-4A41-AB6C-09F7E95AD1D2)

44 See for instance the BMZ Mapping of Multilateral Organisations engaged in Development (2016). [https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/23748/afffa66c3eafb1b536980582a319aa46/Strategiepapier365\\_BMZ%20Mapping%20of%20C2%A0%20Multilateral%20Organisations%20engaged%20in%20Development%20\(BMAP\)](https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/23748/afffa66c3eafb1b536980582a319aa46/Strategiepapier365_BMZ%20Mapping%20of%20C2%A0%20Multilateral%20Organisations%20engaged%20in%20Development%20(BMAP))

45 The section on "internal effectiveness" are based on MOPAN's KPIs 1-8 and the section on "external effectiveness on KPIs 9-12.

46 See the Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Co-operation. P. 8 [https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web\\_Evaluierungspolicy\\_EN.pdf](https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web_Evaluierungspolicy_EN.pdf)

47 See DFID Due Diligence Framework. UK developed a tool to match required information in the due diligence report template and information available in a MOPAN assessment. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/365186/Due-Diligence-framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365186/Due-Diligence-framework.pdf).

Sweden).<sup>48</sup> In France, for instance, the administration reports to the parliament on substantive indicators that have been defined by law. None of these indicators address organisational performance.<sup>49</sup>

- Reporting can also focus on very different issues other than performance arrangements. In its evaluations, France evaluates the extent to which MOs align with its national objectives. In its scorecards, Japan focuses on specific benefits, such as the number of nationals working in MOs.

**Second**, how much budget a country can allocate to these processes. Larger countries' administrations (e.g. France, Germany, USA, UK) have large workforces and conduct their own reviews and evaluations. Smaller or mid-size countries cannot afford to carry out their own assessments, making MOPAN a valuable addition.

It is noteworthy that those countries that have included MOPAN in their own processes, coverage of disbursements, timeliness of their reporting/due diligence agenda, and choice of indicators examined by MOPAN are considered very important. For instance, the Netherlands has its own deadline to report to parliament and depends on the publication of MOPAN reports to respect it.

### Main findings

- Countries that produced their own assessments that require direct interactions with MOs have stopped and now use MOPAN products instead.
- Three-quarters of members are using MOPAN products to support or replace desk-based reviews of MOs.
- The significance of use depends largely on 1) the importance of organisational accountability and management in accountability processes, and 2) whether countries have available sources other than MOPAN, or if MOPAN is the only source.

**MOPAN assessments seem to have a limited role in budgetary allocation processes.**

Table 6 presents the use of MOPAN assessments observed at least once in support of budgetary allocation processes.

**Table 6 : Uses of MOPAN assessments for budgetary allocation**

Use...	Depends on
<i>In modifying contribution levels during replenishment or contract</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very specific situation, e.g. poor reputation of MO</li> </ul>
<i>To decide which organisations should be funded</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New multilateral policy</li> <li>• Earmarked funding</li> </ul>

48 MOPAN can also be used to answer questions of MPs related to multilaterals, for instance in Ireland at the Dáil: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2018-11-13/38/>

49 Loi n° 3699 de programmation relative au développement solidaire et à la lutte contre les inégalités mondiales ; para. 167 [https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/textes/l15b3699\\_projet-loi](https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/textes/l15b3699_projet-loi)

Over the last years, several countries have claimed that MOPAN should be used more often during replenishments or contracting.<sup>50</sup> There is little evidence that this actually occurs. Allocating resources to MOs, especially voluntary core funding, is a highly political process. Budgetary allocations to individual MOs are part of larger funding policies driven by a country's attitude towards aid and the multilateral system, and by substantive concerns. Also, most donors consider relationships in a longer-term perspective.

It is still probable that in those countries that rely on MOPAN assessments for their accountability processes or to support monitoring (see p.61 and 65), the evidence they provide is part of the background information but this use cannot be tracked.

***For this type of decision, performance plays a limited role:***<sup>51</sup>

- None of the interviewees mentioned a case where a MOPAN assessment was used to cut voluntary core funding. Indeed, except for the UK Multilateral Aid Reviews, no examples were found of performance reviews affecting funding negatively in a substantial manner.
- Positive MOPAN assessments may have reduced the chances that the funding of some MOs would be lowered (e.g. International Organisation for Migrations (IOM),<sup>52</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)).<sup>53</sup> Positive assessments can also be used to trigger funding by a previously decided amount. For instance, Norway announced a steep increase in its contribution to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) just after the UNESCO assessment was published, but that decision was the culmination of a much longer process.<sup>54</sup> In these cases, MOPAN acts as a “credibility enhancer” because it is external and independent.
- MOs can use MOPAN assessments for fundraising. See p. 91 for discussion.

Some countries, however, use MOPAN assessments when allocating earmarked funding among MOs. The United Arab Emirates, for instance, which launched a new foreign assistance policy in 2016, relies heavily on earmarked contributions and was seeking ways to prioritise funding among MOs. A team was created to examine available MOPAN reports, consider which indicators were relevant to the national strategy, and then compare MOs performance against them. This led to a list of priority organisations to be funded.<sup>55</sup>

50 Norway is a good example: “[...] the reports should increasingly be taken into consideration when allocating funding.”. Norway's MoFA (2019). Norway's Role and Interests in Multilateral Co-operation. <https://www.effective-co-operation.org/system/files/2020-06/stm201820190027000engpdfs.pdf>

51 For analytical purposes, we make a strict distinction in this evaluation between the budgetary decision process discussed here and the due diligence processes that aims at assessing the level of risk associated with the budget allocation.

52 The IOM assessment was not so positive, but the organisation had been the object of a highly critical MAR. For Nordic countries in general and for Denmark in particular, having MOPAN assess IOM was important to secure funding.

53 After the USA dropped out of UNRWA, several donor countries maintained or reinforced their funding. The positive MOPAN assessment helped justify and consolidate their decision, which was sometimes under pressure.

54 Sweden also encourage UNESCO's Members to support its regular budget in the light of the positive MOPAN assessment, during the 40th General Conference of UNESCO. Its own increase in funding, the year before, was not related to the MOPAN assessment.

55 WFP, UNICEF and WHO are the top three recipients of UAE's multilateral aid according to the OECD Development Co-operation Profiles. All three have been assessed by MOPAN.

Other countries are using MOPAN assessments of their partner organisations, among other information sources, to select MOs for earmarked funding: Luxembourg, Qatar and South Korea have all increased the share of their earmarked development assistance in recent years.<sup>56</sup> This use raises questions of validity because the ratings are not always comparable, especially when an organisation is rated against its own objectives in the area under scrutiny. Other countries using earmarked funding have used MOPAN assessments as an additional argument to support funding choices (e.g. USA).

### Main findings

- The allocation of budgetary resources is a highly political process in which accountability and management information (including that of MOPAN) plays a generally limited role.
- Positive MOPAN assessments may have reduced the possibility of reduced funding for some MOs.
- Some countries use MOPAN to choose among MOs when allocating earmarked funding.

**MOPAN products are widely used to support monitoring work but less so for strategic purposes.**

Table 7 presents the different purposes for which MOPAN products have been used that were observed at least once to support monitoring and strategic uses.

**Table 7 : Use of MOPAN assessments for monitoring and strategic use**

Use...	Depends on
<i>To inform monitoring work and provide background knowledge of MO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case managers know MOPAN products</li> <li>• Culture of performance / evaluation</li> </ul>
<i>In changing perspective on thematic questions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic officers know MOPAN products</li> <li>• MOPAN seen as legitimate source on such topics</li> </ul>
<i>In providing insights to decision makers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior decision-makers know MOPAN products</li> </ul>

### Monitoring use

It is estimated that case managers in two-thirds of MOPAN's member countries are observed to make some use of MOPAN assessments. The uses differ widely across and within countries, however:

- Use is most important and consistent in countries with the following: 1) systematised processes to deal with MOs and 2) a strong culture of performance or evaluation. Guidelines can encourage the use of MOPAN reports, as in Denmark or Sweden, or they can be among the usual sources to which case managers turn (Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Switzerland). They know MOPAN because they use MOPAN assessments to write their annual reports or scorecards. Smaller and mid-size countries with no internal reporting resources are among the most consistent users of MOPAN in this way: MOPAN is the starting point or at least a major source for monitoring.

56 Source: OECD Development Co-operation profiles.



- In other countries, case managers use MOPAN assessments for very different reasons. A head of department, for instance, may have previous experience with MOPAN, which triggers additional use, as in Canada. Lighter uses have been reported, such as getting background information on an MO, especially when a desk officer is taking charge of monitoring it, to triangulate information from it with other internal or external sources. The largest countries can always resort to their own intelligence from diplomatic sources. In these instances, MOPAN is part of the dossier but not always the most important source of information.
- Finally, in some countries, it seems unlikely that case managers would use MOPAN products at all. They may tend not to rely on evaluative information or have a very heavy workload and lack enough time to use more sources (e.g. Japan).

For countries with no systematic use, lack of awareness of MOPAN is a major obstacle. Case managers are unlikely to retrieve the reports themselves. Those interviewed have tended to see the reports as too long and too difficult to use. In addition, case managers sometimes tend to prioritise thematic/substantive information over accountability and management issues. Moreover, they very often remain in their position for a limited period (e.g. three years), meaning that the work of informing them about MOPAN needs to be repeated endlessly. MOPAN representatives therefore have a major role to play in supporting use. All MOPAN representatives disseminate the reports at a minimum; some go further and serve as information brokers between MOPAN and their colleagues (see e.g. Finland, Germany, Norway):

- They will:
  1. translate all or parts of the brief;<sup>57</sup>
  2. extract pieces of information that they believe will be of particular interest to their colleagues;
  3. occasionally reframe the information to fit their administration's architecture, perspectives, or current debates, and
  4. target specific colleagues with relevant information.
- The MOPAN Secretariat could not do this work on its own because it requires a deep knowledge of members' administrations well. This obviously requires time (many do not have the time<sup>58</sup>) and, knowing colleagues and what is happening in an administration well enough to provide the right information. However, this is not always easy for MOPAN representatives who may not have direct links to case managers and might be junior officers themselves. The situation of MOPAN representatives in their administrations and the extent to which they are well linked to policy and decision-makers are therefore extremely important. MOPAN representatives are usually in ministries of foreign affairs (MoFA), either in an evaluation unit or a multilateral policy unit.<sup>59</sup> Case managers can be located in MoFA headquarters or in embassies,<sup>60</sup> in a dedicated

57 The language barrier is often mentioned as a reason not to use MOPAN reports.

58 In those countries for which we asked this information, MOPAN representatives estimate that this mission represent 10% to 20% of a Full-time equivalent (excluding ILs). In the higher range, countries such as Finland or Canada (as the 2021 chair) may dedicate more than 50% FTE.

59 In the USA, MOPAN moved in 2020 from the Department of State to USAID, where the assessments are used especially in support of earmarked funding. In the case of Germany, the MOPAN representative is located in the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development.

60 Denmark or Switzerland, for instance, have adopted a very decentralised model.

agency (e.g. USAID), in a ministry of finance or in other line-ministries (e.g. health deals with the World Health Organization (WHO)).

- Therefore, the ability of each national administration to circulate information is extremely important to ensure that MOPAN assessments are used. For instance, in some countries, an evaluation unit has limited contacts with a multilateral desk, whereas co-operation is closer in others. In Germany, MOPAN sits in a multilateral policy unit in the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is the role of this unit to disseminate data and provide broader perspectives to the other units. Analysts in charge of cross-cutting issues (thematic officers)<sup>61</sup> appear to make more limited use as far as can be observed. No cases were found where thematic officers looked at assessments for information about their specific domain. When analysts are not case managers, they are unlikely to know MOPAN at all. Again, the role of MOPAN representatives in brokering content is therefore crucial.

A 2020 Swedish working paper offers a striking counter example where MOPAN information is used significantly to assess the “alignment of Sweden’s multilateral aid to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change”.<sup>62</sup>

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61 In some countries, case managers are also in charge of one or several cross-cutting issues. There are also units in charge of specific issues, especially in larger countries.

62 Hårsmar M., Hjelm L. (2020). <https://eba.se/en/reports/ar-sveriges-multilaterala-bistand-i-linje-med-klimatavtalet-fran-paris/12426/>



## Strategic use

This evaluation identified only very few cases of use for strategic thinking and decision making both because of the nature of the content and because senior officials lack access to it.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, MOPAN representatives in country administrations usually consider that MOPAN assessments answer operational rather than strategic concerns. Regarding access, in most countries for which we obtained this information, a head of department is the highest-ranking official in the administration to deal with MOPAN.<sup>64</sup> Those countries where high-level officials have shown an interest these last years (e.g. Canada, Germany), see an opportunity they are eager to address – which is evidence that use by high-level officials is not common.

Still, relevant MOPAN information may be used, depending on how information is disseminated in each country. In larger countries, a unit is responsible for providing an evidence base or arguments to answer the needs of decision makers, and MOPAN products are among the sources that can be used (e.g. France or Germany). In smaller countries, a single officer may be doing this job (as in Luxembourg).

The new analytical studies may offer new types of use, but they are not the only products supporting strategic reflection on the multilateral system, and they are still being developed:

- Interviewees mention the climate change study as an interesting product for its comparative view, but also note that many other studies on the topic are available from other organisations. The recent climate change event was also a good example of a member (Luxembourg) tapping the study's potential and exposing more high-level officials to its contents.
- On SEAH, interviewees in country administrations refer primarily to the DAC recommendations. They emphasise however the synthesis made in the MOPAN note for practitioners and recognise its relevance on such a specific and sensitive subject. They are also looking for the first batch of SEAH assessments in 2021 to see the actual results and have a chance to compare efforts across MOs (including outside the UN).<sup>65</sup>
- In addition, the preliminary findings of the United Nations Development study were available for this year's UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting and found their way to the senior level in several countries (e.g. Korea, Netherlands, USA). The focus of the MOPAN product on the resident-co-ordinator mechanism was a useful addition to the existing set of studies produced on the topic.

63 For the purpose of this evaluation, we strictly limit « strategic use » here as use of knowledge to inform wider debates about the multilateral system and a country strategy at this level. Uses for dialogue or in support of strategies of influence are discussed in the next section.

64 Administrations are difficult to compare across countries and this information was not collected systematically.

65 In the interviews with member representatives, many respondents were not aware of the participatory nature of the MOPAN-led quantification process, which contributed to its wide adoption among MOs (see p. 63). This may explain why they incorrectly saw it as a “digest” and minimise its value added.

### Main findings

- Monitoring use is most important and consistent in countries with systematic processes to deal with MOs and with a strong culture of performance.
- In other countries, use varies widely depending on specific contextual factors, including who is in charge, context, and available information, etc.
- MOPAN representatives have a key role to play in brokering knowledge in those countries having no systematised processes to deal with MOs, but they are limited by time and resources.
- Members make more limited use of thematic information, probably because, inter alia, users lack knowledge of MOPAN.
- Use for strategic purposes is limited at this stage. This use may depend partly on linkages and internal mechanisms for briefing senior-level decision makers.
- New analytical products may be used by higher-level officials in strategic thinking, but they have only been released recently and have competition. The extent of their use is still unfolding.

***MOPAN supports performance dialogue and strategies of influence when they exist.***

Table 8 presents the uses of MOPAN assessments that have been observed at least once in support of dialogue on performance and strategies of influence.

**Table 8 : Uses of MOPAN for dialogue and influence**

Use...	Depends on
<i>In setting or informing the agenda for bilateral dialogue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of bilateral dialogue, including on organisational performance arrangements</li> <li>• Areas of improvements to be discussed</li> <li>• Understanding the possible uses of MOPAN assessments</li> </ul>
<i>In setting or informing the agenda of governance bodies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members' access to governance bodies and the role of performance in discussions</li> </ul>
<i>In supporting strategies of influence or organisational partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of such strategies</li> </ul>
<i>In strengthening relationships by being an IL</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A country's ability to seize the opportunity of being an IL</li> <li>• Existing history of relationship and its importance to member</li> </ul>

### Use in dialogue

Less than half of MOPAN members cite concrete examples of MOPAN assessments supporting a specific dialogue or partnership between members and MOs. There are two primary reasons for this. First, not all members have structured bilateral dialogues with the MOs they fund to discuss specific issues and, when it happens, organisational performance may not be among the most prominent topics. Second, case managers or representatives to the MO may not know about the MOPAN assessment.

A second group of countries have used MOPAN assessments in dialogue with MOs (e.g. France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, UK, USA), albeit not systematically, in two ways:

1. As a substantive input into existing bilateral or more collective discussions (e.g. Germany with UNRWA on the environment).
2. To sound an alarm about unsatisfactory ratings either during “normal dialogue” or as a means to pressure for changes (one country uses its high level of earmarked funding to ensure that its priorities are taken into account).

But MOPAN assessments can be more actively and broadly used in specific situations. For example, when a member particularly values a partnership with an MO that is assessed, or when the report is delivered in time to revise an MO strategic framework that is important to the member. In this case, the report will become part of the dossier constituted to help prepare the upcoming board meeting (e.g. France, Germany, USA). It is only at this stage that questions are factored in about the relevance of a MOPAN report to a country's chief concerns about an institution or its quality. Being an IL can help increase the relevance of MOPAN reports to members' needs (see below).

Some countries go much further, however, and make systematic, strategic use of MOPAN assessments in their relationships with MOs:

- Switzerland notes the areas that MOPAN assessments identify as needing improvement in its dialogue agenda and keeps them on the agenda until they have been addressed. They can be discussed by operational or high-level dialogue.
- Denmark and Sweden have organisational performance partnership strategies with MOs. Case managers are asked to use MOPAN assessments to review the areas of cooperation and then to assess progress. These partnerships then form the basis of dialogue.
- Finland has a comprehensive strategy of influence that is implemented through plans and reports written for each partner MO and form the basis of the partnership. These documents look at 17 performance areas, including the five areas covered by MOPAN. More than 60% of these documents quote MOPAN assessments. A recent evaluation judged this strategy of influence to be effective.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, on at least some occasions, members have discussed MOPAN products in specific arenas and to support collective strategies. For instance, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report was discussed in the Rubens Group and SEAH was discussed in the Geneva Group and others.<sup>67,68</sup> Switzerland discussed the UNRWA assessment with other countries that are sensitive to the question of protection.

### *Institutional Leads as an opportunity for additional dialogue*

In theory, being an IL is an excellent way to reinforce dialogue and to influence MOs, as we saw in some MOPAN member countries—France, Norway, Sweden, and the USA. Active ILs can ensure that their specific concerns are taken into account but they need to know a country's history with an MO quite well or be able to consult colleagues on these matters to do so.

66 Finnish Development Policy Influencing Activities in Multilateral Organisations (2020). [https://um.fi/publications/-/asset\\_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/evaluoaintiraportti-ulkoministeri-c3-b6-vaikuttaa-monenkeskisten-j-c3-a4rjest-c3-b6jen-toimintaan-1/384998](https://um.fi/publications/-/asset_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/evaluoaintiraportti-ulkoministeri-c3-b6-vaikuttaa-monenkeskisten-j-c3-a4rjest-c3-b6jen-toimintaan-1/384998)

67 The Rubens Group consists of Norway, UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

68 The constituency of the Geneva Group partly covers that of MOPAN, but also includes Mexico, Russia, and Turkey. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Geneva\\_Group\\_\(United\\_Nations\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Geneva_Group_(United_Nations)). The other groups are the CHS Alliance Webinar and a DAC High-Level Meeting.

ILs sometimes play an important role. Norway is a typical example. The Norwegian IL for the UNESCO assessment managed to create momentum by proposing to the UNESCO secretariat that all UNESCO permanent delegations be informed and invited to a presentation of the assessment when it started. They were all subsequently convened at a presentation of the findings. United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) are other examples of the Norwegian IL's commitment to actively use the position.

The interest in being an IL can vary widely, however. For many countries, and especially for small to medium-sized countries, finding persons to act as ILs can be difficult. Those ministries or agencies that are asked to provide an IL can see this more as one more task to be done rather than as an opportunity. MOPAN representatives can have a hard time convincing them to participate, which is why members widely appreciated the recent learning event on being an IL.

But some MOs can also be high on the priority list of several members that may actually begin to compete to be an IL. This results in frustrating situations where even when they want to these countries might not become an IL (e.g. Italy for International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)).

In a somewhat different manner, being part of the reference group of an analytical study can also be leveraged in support of use, as was the case with the UNDS study: Finland, Italy, Germany, the three interviewed reference group members, all relied on the study to draft their national position during the intergovernmental negotiations on the review of the Resident-Coordinator system, a major aspect discussed by the study.

### Main findings

- A few countries use MOPAN systematically in their relationship with MOs.
- Some countries use MOPAN assessments non-recurrently in their dialogue with MOs, either as a substantial input to existing discussions or where there are accountability and management issues to address. There is a greater probability that an assessment will be used when a high-priority partnership exists with an MO.
- Some countries do use the opportunity of being an IL to influence MOs, but this is quite rare, especially some countries can find it difficult to nominate an IL.

### *Use of MOPAN as a network is limited and was impacted by COVID-19.*

Table 9 presents the use of MOPAN as a network observed at least once.

**Table 9 : Uses of MOPAN as a network**

Use...	Depends on
<i>In discussing strategic questions about the multilateral system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venue for strategic question</li> <li>• COVID-19 context</li> </ul>
<i>In discussing and improving methodology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [no identified condition to use]</li> </ul>

MOPAN is primarily a network of members that can provide a setting for dialogue and shared learning on questions such as how different countries deal with specific emerging issues on the multilateral scene. Longstanding MOPAN members indicate that this kind of dialogue was largely informal before and after Steering Committees (SCs) that were held face-to-face, which has been impossible since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the virtual learning events of the last two years.

TWG meetings provide a setting where MOPAN members can discuss methodological questions. For some, these meeting are a place to learn; for others, participation in these groups is mostly an obligation rather than an opportunity. In contrast, those members who participated in the reference groups convened for the analytical studies on climate change and SEAH are generally quite enthusiastic and appreciative of the opportunities their participation provided to discuss questions that were quite important to them. This was less true for the UNDS study, due to the limited involvement of some members and the many opportunities to discuss this subject in other venues.

#### **Main findings**

- SCs do not currently provide an informal venue for members' dialogue and learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some of the RGs for the analytical studies gave participants the opportunity to learn about specific emerging issues.

## Uses of MOPAN assessments by MOs

This section examines how MOs use MOPAN assessments. It is mainly based on 12 case studies drawing data from documentary analysis, surveys of ILs, Multilateral Organisation Focal Point (MOFP) and members, and interviews with MO staff, MOPAN member representatives and other nationals, MOPAN staff members and consultants in charge of the assessments.

The Contribution Analysis (CA) approach aims to ensure that any claim of use is robust. Unknown use is still possible. Demonstrating that some MOs use MOPAN assessments cannot be generalised to others.

### *Limiting the burden of assessment on MOs*

One of the original justifications for MOPAN was to limit the MO assessment burden on MOs by reducing duplication. In 2017, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) considered the MOPAN assessment process to be among the heaviest MOs must face.<sup>69</sup> However, MOPAN has limited the number of member-led, performance-oriented assessments in recent years (p.56). Member countries may still have other types of assessments or evaluations that MOPAN does not replace, particularly for thematic issues. Moreover, MOPAN assessments are considered particularly intensive whereas most donor countries cannot afford any kind of in-depth assessment because of the significant transaction costs implied by collecting information about an MO.

The goal of limiting the assessment burden is not likely to be fully realised given current inflationary trend towards more assessments than ever.<sup>70</sup> MOPAN's focus on organisational accountability and management performance is only one aspect of the accountability processes to which MOs must respond.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, the rise of earmarked funding mechanically inflates the number of accountability requirements for MOs, which, the 2017 JIU report shows, account for a much larger share of the assessments of MOs than those centred on organisational performance.<sup>72</sup>

#### **Main findings**

- MOPAN has reduced the assessment burden on MOs, but only for organisational accountability and management questions. Other, more thematic topics, comprise the bulk of the burden.

### *It is unlikely that the majority of MOs use MOPAN assessments.*

The following sections describe how assessed MOs used a selection of MOPAN assessments. These cases are particularly interesting. The Secretariat's efforts to increase engagement in recent years notwithstanding (see above), the assessments are not specifically designed to be used by MOs but are rather based on an implicit assumption that responding to members' needs for accountability information can also be useful for them. This assumption is increasingly questionable (see relevance section p.81).

Most stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation assumed that MOs probably did not use MOPAN assessments at all. This evaluation carefully selected cases to demonstrate the possibility of use, and this selection process excluded several MO assessments because an initial examination showed that use was implausible. This is especially pertinent for the MDBs. In some organisations, some board members, especially those not represented in MOPAN, challenged the relevance of a "donor-driven" assessment from the outset; in

69 JIU (2017). Op. cit. The JIU does not provide any figure but cites in the same category the DfID MAR, which load was estimated at 2 FTEs during the assessment process. Some MOs recruit a junior FTE for co-ordination only. The burden has increased in proportion of the number of indicator and evidence requirements.

70 JIU (2017). Op.cit. OECD (2018) op.cit. Chapter 5.3.

71 Other facets include 1) Budgetary control; 2) The choice of priorities and the programmes implemented, the balance between recipient countries, the targeted publics, etc. (and whether they fit with the priorities of donor countries); 3) The consequences of the interventions on the field or for the recipient country's economy, especially through evaluations (e.g. bilateral evaluations) and, 4) other less acknowledged aspects such as the number of national staff members or amount of contracting to national companies (e.g. service providers).

72 EC pillar assessments are very intensive and only overlap partially with MOPAN assessments).

others, the assessment management was outsourced to a contractor for a fixed period, limiting the possibility of a longer-term follow-up process in the organisation. Even among the MOs that were chosen for study, some show more limited use (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)), which consisted of using MOPAN to support reforms that were already put in motion by other internal review exercises. Given MOPAN's current design, this behaviour could be considered normal.

***The following cases show use by MOs despite low expectations and barriers: use is indeed possible and MOPAN assessments can, under certain circumstances, be relevant to MOs' needs. There are two addenda to this statement:***

- The intensified efforts to adapt MOPAN assessments in the last two years, which have led to more initial dialogue and more engagement in general, may translate into greater use in the future. The sample of MOs favoured older assessments to allow time for any use to unfold. Interviewees involved in recent assessments (2020-21) acknowledged the efforts, but it is not yet possible to determine how helpful the assessments were in increasing use (see e.g. the 2020 OCHA assessment).
- This evaluation tested an important assumption—that in practice, service providers charged with conducting assessments can address very specific concerns and make the assessments more useful by providing expert advice and examples of good practices ("process use"). However, although the assumption is not rejected formally, we could find no specific cases during the studies. Service providers report that they mostly lack the capacity to have informal exchanges with the MOs and that the bulk of each assessment's budget is dedicated to gathering the information needed to inform the key performance indicators (KPIs) and micro-indicators (MIs). This is even truer for newer assessors, who must still find the best way to streamline assessments to minimise costs.

### **Main findings**

- MOs are likely to make limited use of MOPAN assessments given that they are not specifically designed to answer their needs.
- The cases studied in this evaluation probably do not capture the most recent efforts to adapt assessments.
- "Process use" (through informal expert advice offered by service providers) appears limited due to the very intensive nature of MOPAN assessments, which limits the circumstances in which assessors can provide such useful information to address specific MO concerns.



### MOs use MOPAN assessments to support reform in specific contexts.

Table 10 presents MOs' instrumental use of MOPAN assessments observed at least once.

**Table 10 : MOs' instrumental uses of MOPAN assessments**

Use...	Depends on MO characteristics
<i>Identifying areas for improvement or providing further information on known challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor ratings in certain areas relevant to the MO's current strategy or reform initiatives and converge with other findings</li> <li>MO need to secure additional funding</li> <li>Uptake by president/director-general or a coalitions of stakeholders within MO</li> <li>High-level focal point with direct access to president/director-general</li> </ul>
<i>In better meeting the expectations of donor countries, especially in documenting processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to justify recent changes or to improve MO's reputation</li> </ul>
<i>In discussions with the board to support or reject suggestions on organisational performance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOPAN assessment is brought to the board and is not rejected outright by some MO members</li> </ul>
<i>To improve own performance frameworks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing reflections related to unsatisfactory accountability and management framework</li> </ul>

Of the 10 case studies, eight show at least one use (Table 11).

**Table 11 : Examples of instrumental use**

Assessed MO	Date	Examples of use
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	(2017-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The board used the assessment to give more importance to the FAO's normative work in the 2022-31 strategic framework. FAO's Office of Strategy Programme and Budget used the assessment to better reflect this in their results framework.</li> <li>The outgoing director-general used the assessment during the election phase to take stock of the progress at the FAO to the board, and it was reported that the candidates also discussed the findings.</li> </ul>
The Global Fund	(2015-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Global Fund revised the ToR of the technical evaluation reference group to clearly state its independence, in reaction to the assessment, during the assessment.</li> <li>Senior management used the assessment as part of a dossier including several reports (mostly internal) to highlight to the board the need to focus on building "resilient and sustainable systems for health".</li> </ul>

Assessed MO	Date	Examples of use
International Labour Organization (ILO)	(2015-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment was used in support of the environmental sustainability policy launched by the director-general. It helped to identify and then implement concrete actions seeking to send a signal to donor countries that ILO was committed to this subject.</li> <li>The ILO Management &amp; Reform Department used it in their business process review. Problems related to project implementation were known. The assessment helped better frame the issues to be examined (administration, recruitment).</li> </ul>
International Office of Migrations (IOM)	(2017-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment gave an opportunity for dialogue between ILOs and the new director-general, whose views converged. The director-general subsequently used the assessment to help promote his agenda for the future of IOM.</li> <li>The evaluation unit engaged in a meta-evaluation and a peer-review of the evaluation function following a "highly unsatisfactory" rating in this area. It helped (re)launch a debate on the position of the evaluation function within IOM.</li> <li>A new position on PSEA was created on the basis of the 2017-18 assessment, with the influence of some IOM member states.</li> </ul>
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	(2017-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A team was assembled to identify actions to take in response to the assessment. The results were presented in a management response.</li> <li>The cabinet used the assessment to adjust its strategic transformation plan and used it with the board to successfully defend a move towards four rather than nine strategic objectives, (new medium-term strategy 2021-29).</li> <li>The director-general presented the report to UNESCO's permanent delegations to support her claims that significant reforms were ongoing.</li> <li>Many UNESCO members (including non-MOPAN) discussed the assessment in support of the ongoing reforms.</li> <li>The evaluation unit used it in discussions with senior management, together with the UNEG peer review, to support the need for a more decentralised evaluation function.</li> </ul>
United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)	(2015-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation unit used the assessment as part of a dossier comprising multiple sources when discussing the new evaluation policy with the board.</li> </ul>

Assessed MO	Date	Examples of use
United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA)	(2017-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment fed the mid-term evaluation of the 2016-20 strategy, and the evaluation unit justified the launch of an evaluation of the protection audit mechanism with it.</li> <li>UNRWA had started work on reducing environmental impact in 2019 from a construction angle. The assessment pointed to a lack of organisation-wide strategy. The environmental team used this to accelerate the drafting of such a strategy (expected in 2022).</li> </ul>
UN Women	(2017-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment informed the evaluation of the strategic plan 2018-21's flagship programme initiatives and thematic priorities, along with other internal and external assessments.</li> </ul>

OCHA and UNDP make an additional, very specific use by presenting to donor countries the reforms under way for each identified area for improvement.<sup>73</sup>

*An analysis of these uses reveals the following:*

- In most cases, use is very specific and concerns one or two topics, whereas MOPAN assessments usually present many more areas for improvement. In several cases, a contribution to a new strategic framework was tested, based for example on the declarations of the director-general or presented in a management response, but the results in these cases were usually inconclusive. UNESCO was the exception: the assessment was effectively endorsed by the director-general and taken very seriously as an instrument of reform and as a means of showing that reform was ongoing.
- An assessment is almost always used with other knowledge products for reliability purposes and because MOs may anticipate possible negative reactions from their members if they use only MOPAN evidence.
- Assessments are also used in a series of ongoing changes or debates that affect and are triggered by persons or groups in an MO who use the assessment for existing reforms. Typical use is when a known issue has been side-lined for a variety of reasons. The MOPAN assessment helps revive it and lend it more importance, potentially leading to resolution. Some interviewees mentioned their uncertainty about how to use a MOPAN assessment the first time their organisation was assessed but that they were better prepared the second time around.

*Uptake by MO stakeholders is therefore extremely important. The analysis shows several things.*

- Use related to the evaluation function and to the results framework is very prevalent (FAO, The Global Fund, IOM, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNRWA) and incommensurate with the scope of the assessment's observations. This may be related to the fact that evaluation units are often MO focal points; that service providers are often evaluators, and that evaluation specialists tend to agree with the assessment indicators and standards.

<sup>73</sup> OCHA also appreciated the report as clear and pointing at the right things, but noted that they had published an all-encompassing review one year before. At UNDP, those involved in the 2020 assessment considered that it was useful on SEAH and suggested that actions may be engaged in that regard.

- Use by the director-general or internal units in conjunction with the MO governing body is also frequent (FAO, The Global Fund, UNESCO, UNICEF). A MOPAN assessment is seen internally as a good additional argument to support claims or calls for reform, precisely because it is external.

***MOPAN member countries have played a more limited role in promoting these kinds of uses.***

- The IOM and UNESCO assessment ILs played an important role supporting the assessment uptake by engaging in dialogue with the director-general and by ensuring that the board recognised the MOPAN assessment as legitimate evidence (IOM). On The Global Fund, the IL supported the uptake of the issues raised in the areas for improvement for a short time after the assessment was completed.
- Despite evidence that members discuss the assessments' areas for improvement in their dialogue with MOs, few linkages were found between these national, isolated initiatives and the uses presented above. IOM and UNESCO are two counterexamples to this<sup>74</sup>.
- Some members sometimes support the reforms presented below using the MOPAN assessment—the UK with FAO for instance, insisting that the results framework should be reviewed in detail and then challenging the organisation to verify that the issue had been properly addressed. This remains an isolated case, however, and is not systematic in any way.

**Main findings**

- Most of the cases examined show instrumental use of MOPAN, for example, in supporting reforms, usually involving a very specific issue or challenge. The exception was UNESCO, where the issue was broader.
- MOPAN assessments are often used together with other knowledge products in an ongoing change process. Their uptake depends on MO stakeholders.
- MOPAN assessments are sometimes used in MO board discussions or by specific board members, especially because they are external and therefore considered credible. But the nature of MOPAN as a club of donor countries can also be a handicap in this context.
- The role of MOPAN member countries in making these changes happen is often limited; in most cases, it is difficult to link with the observed changes.

74 It is possible however that such linkage is done informally or in committees which proceedings are not public.

### MOs use MOPAN assessments to support their partnerships with donor countries.

Table 12 presents MOs use of MOPAN assessments for partnerships that has been observed at least once.

**Table 12: Partnership uses of MOPAN assessments by MOs**

Use...	Depends on
<i>In strengthening links with an IL's country or with MOPAN member countries at large</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ILs committed to the assessment, with prior interest in strengthening links or expectations related to the MO</li> </ul>
<i>For fundraising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MO has a fundraising strategy, based on inspiring trust</li> </ul>

Five of the ten case studies showed they used MOPAN assessments in at least one of these ways (Table 13).

**Table 13 : Examples of partnership use**

Assessed MO	Examples of use
The Global Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Global Fund used the report in fundraising to highlight its specific advantages compared to other MOs and show its donors that the organisation is responsive to their demands.</li> </ul>
ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ILO's Department of Partnerships and Field Support took the initiative of organising a meeting with members two years after the assessment to underscore the changes made or in progress. However, none of the MOPAN members had requested a follow up on the assessment and the meeting does not seem to have triggered additional interest.</li> </ul>
IOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment was an opportunity for dialogue between ILs and the new director-general around a convergence of views.</li> <li>The director-general and the donor relation division echoed the strategic vision of some of the IOMs donors (Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden), supported by the assessment, that they needed more mid- or long-term funding to reinforce their support functions (especially evaluation).</li> </ul>
UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The director-general used the assessment to argue for UNESCO's fundraising activities, especially in the identified "areas of improvement".</li> </ul>
UNRWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNRWA's External Relations and Communications Department used the assessment to support its strategy to diversify the UNRWA donor base (including private donors) and to seek specific funding in the "areas of improvement" with donors supportive of these questions (protection, environment).</li> </ul>

The major use of MOPAN assessments is to define a fundraising strategy, especially to get longer-term funding or transform earmarked funding into voluntary core funding. MOPAN assessments sometimes highlight the consequences of limited core funding on organisational performance, a welcome argument for the concerned MOs. The Global Fund is exceptional for its proactive comparison of itself with others, which may show that it is in a very competitive funding environment. Evidence of member uptake and response to these initiatives is often missing, however.

None of the MOs could directly link a MOPAN assessment and changes in funding structure. The ILO, which actively tried to promote the MOPAN assessment, is interesting in this respect. In the last assessment cycle, one way to change this may be to organise meetings between MOPAN members and the organisations for which potential funding changes are being considered.

IOM is clearly an exception in this regard. The IL's commitment to promoting a more strategic vision for the organisation also took the form of encouraging other IOM members states to provide core funding.

### Main findings

- Assessments are used in a more limited way to support the establishment of a partnership between an MO and countries. These are mostly used to support the MO's fundraising strategy, especially to get longer term or non-earmarked funding.
- None of these uses by MOs are directly related to additional funding from members who have not used these fundraising initiatives to address strategic concerns.

### *MOs use new MOPAN products to support strategic reflections.*

As MOPAN's analytical products are unique to their specific context and cannot be compared to one other, specific findings are provided here for the two cases examined.

### Elaboration of a SEAH framework – SEAH Note for Practitioners

A SEAH framework was developed over a period of three years at the prompting of the Netherlands and UK in 2018, when a case study was also initiated involving United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank Group (WBG), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Subsequently, 40 international stakeholders (including experts and multilateral stakeholders) were consulted on what became the SEAH framework that MOPAN began using in its 2020 assessment cycle. A "Note for Practitioners" was published in January 2021. This was the first time that MOPAN engaged in such a collaborative process to develop indicators.

Most of the MO staff who were interviewed acknowledged that the note for practitioners was the best synthesis to date on SEA and SH, and that it was also thorough and informative about donors' standards and expectations. Compared to other guidelines, it is adapted to sectors outside the UN and humanitarian organisations, is in tune with the OECD DAC recommendations in this area, and draws on best practice to provide a blueprint to develop a relevant strategy in the domain.

The uptake was very broad and thorough (see Table 14):

- Action plan indicators across UN agencies were updated in 2021 to take some MOPAN indicators on SEAH into account.
- For the MOs who were restructuring their sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) unit when the note for practitioners was issued, it became a guiding framework to structure their protection from sexual exploitation abuse and harassment (PSEAH) strategy on this topic (IOM, The Global F, WFP).

- Some MOs used MOPAN's SEAH indicators to build their own monitoring framework, either choosing some (ILO) or aligning to MOPAN's 16 indicators (UNESCO) strictly.
- UNICEF intended to use the MOPAN framework to hold some recipient countries accountable on SEAH.

**Table 14: Use of MOPAN SEAH framework**

Use...	Depends on
<i>In acquiring a better understanding of international standards on requirements on SEA and SH and their operational implications across MOs (UN or non-UN, development or humanitarian organisations)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of familiarity with the issue, especially outside the UN system</li> <li>• Staff localised at organisational level of operations</li> </ul>
<i>In developing SEAH monitoring and assessment systems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-existing assessment framework</li> <li>• Perception of the legitimacy of MOPAN to represent its members' expectations</li> <li>• MO degree of participation in the joint quantification process organised by MOPAN on SEAH</li> </ul>
<i>As a guiding framework to structure strategy on PSEA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness: many MOs were (re)structuring their SEA and SH strategy when the note was issued</li> <li>• Donors influence regarding monitoring SEAH</li> <li>• Perception of MOPAN's legitimacy to represent its members expectations</li> <li>• MO degree of participation in the joint quantification process organised by MOPAN on SEAH</li> </ul>

This uptake may be reinforced in the future, as some MOPAN member countries plan to use some SEAH indicators in their own MO assessments and perhaps to undertake follow-up actions, if needed (Ireland, Netherlands, UK). The Netherlands and Finland have also backed the use of the MOPAN framework at the board of the organisations in which they are members. However, some MOPAN members are also waiting to judge its overall performance by seeing what the framework outputs will be in practice, with the assessments that should be available for the end of 2021.

### Lessons in Multilateral Effectiveness: UNDS Reform

After the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015, the UN Secretary General (UNSG) made proposals to reform the United Nations. The UNDS study was undertaken to provide "MOPAN Members with a general sense of lessons emerging from the reform". The resident coordinator (RC) system and its funding was a particular area of interest. RCs are UN representatives responsible for co-ordinating UN activities at country-level.

This study is the first example of a MOPAN product being mentioned in a UNSCG report. There are several reasons for this:

- It met a specific need. The UNSG had to report on this question to the UN General Assembly. The study was external and critical, lending support to the findings of in-



ternal studies from the development co-ordination office (DCO) and from the office of internal oversight services (OIOS).

- MOPAN also put an extra emphasis on timeliness and buy-in. One of the MOPAN study experts was also involved in the UNDG review of the RC system. This approach helped to “build bridges” between MOPAN and the UN and to disseminate the study findings in the UNSG. Furthermore, a preliminary version was sent to MOPAN members and to the UN in April 2021, before the ECOSOC meeting at which the reform was to be discussed.

DCO has been using the report in its dialogue with MOPAN member countries about maintaining or increasing their contribution to the RC system. At this stage, however, this funding is not yet secured.

**Table 15: Use of the UNDS study**

Use...	Depends on
<i>In informing the UNSG's review of the RC system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to disseminate preliminary findings in a timely manner</li> <li>• Consistency of MOPAN's findings with UN DCO and OIOS internal studies</li> <li>• Level of buy-in in the UNSG</li> </ul>
<i>In helping DCO engage in dialogue on the funding of the RC system with MOPAN member states</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOPAN's independence from the UN</li> <li>• MOPAN member states knowledge about the analytical study</li> </ul>

### Main findings

- SEAH is an example of an alternative process by which MOPAN has contributed to the development of performance indicators and standards and thus to multilateral effectiveness. MOs were involved in developing the indicators and standards, are persuaded by the framework, which addresses a pressing issue, and have been adopting it steadily.
- The UNDS study was influential on the very specific topic of reinvigorating the RC system. MOPAN emphasised a timely delivery and worked to get buy-in from key users, which led the UNSG to use the substance of the report and to convince members to secure the funding of the RC system.

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## **MOPAN's relevance**

This section addresses questions about MOPAN's past, present, and future relevance for its members and, more broadly, on the multilateral scene. It is mainly based on the literature review that provided a basis for the Theory of Change (ToC), on interviews with Multilateral Organisation (MO) personnel and MOPAN member representatives, MOPAN staff and service providers, and on a set of high-level interviews with multilateral stakeholders.

## An answer to the accountability needs of donor countries

### The need for factual information

MOPAN's relevance must be seen in the context of long-standing questions and ongoing dialogue about reforming the multilateral system and the accountability of donor countries and MOs.

MOs and the multilateral system constantly face claims about their perceived inefficiency and lack of effectiveness, and even proposed reforms inspired by new public management (NPM), which seeks to increase the efficiency of public institutions by conceptualising their activities as “business processes.”<sup>75</sup> Such reforms can encompass many different changes, including a greater focus on outcomes and impacts and the use of performance management techniques.<sup>76</sup> NPM proposes the development of organisational systems and processes to support these changes. MOPAN aligned with this perspective in considering that such transformations, which took the form of RBM in the international development realm, are needed and necessary to strengthen trust in the multilateral system.

MOPAN is part of a specific, asymmetric accountability relationship in which the largest donor countries hold MOs accountable for making such reforms.<sup>77</sup> In judging a MO's ability to reform, donors face two very practical problems.<sup>78</sup>

**Factual knowledge.** To make a judgment, “considerable information is needed about the workings of the institution and their effects”. Some MOs may not provide such information. Retrieving it is extremely costly and it is challenging to make sense of it.

**Lack of consensus on performance standards** Even with an overall shared view of good practice, different institutions are likely to disagree on how to implement these standards in practice, particularly in different contexts, and whether or not a particular MO should be seen to have done so or can and/or should be doing more.

75 Nay, O., & Petiteville, F. (2011). Éléments pour une sociologie du changement dans les organisations internationales. *Critique internationale*, n° 53(4), 9.

76 Geri, L. R. (2001). New Public Management and the Reform of International Organizations. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 67(3), 445–460.

77 This is only one among other relationships. MOs also hold states accountable for their commitment to address issues collectively defined, or through complaints and response mechanisms. MOs are also accountable to recipient countries, or to the people affected by MO activities, or to the world citizens' more generally. These relationships are all tied in a way and what these other stakeholders value may be given insufficient importance when faced with the voice of the main funders. Buchanan, A., & Keohane, R. (2006). The Legitimacy of Global Governance Institutions. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 20(4), p. 426.

78 Buchanan & Keohane, 2006, p. 425.

MOPAN is a response to both problems of assessments and methodology. The assessments can provide the required factual knowledge at a reasonable cost and give donor countries a common benchmark to agree on what constitutes good practice in performance.<sup>79</sup> MOPAN leaves to its members the responsibility of leveraging this accountability relationship in each organisation.

### Accountability: virtue or mechanism?

The accountability relationship can lead to improved performance in two ways.<sup>80</sup>

- The mere fact of assessing organisations is seen as an assurance that MOs will act in an accountable manner (“accountability as a virtue”), and a protection against unfounded hearsay about their performance.<sup>81</sup>
- The other concerns how information about performance can be used to influence an organisation’s behaviour. This usually includes the possibility of a debate, and imposing formal or informal measures if needed (“accountability as a mechanism”).

MOPAN was initially rooted in the first pathway, as indicated by the following:

- First, MOPAN works as a tacit arrangement whereby MOs agree to be assessed with very few formal requirements for follow up. The assessments include no recommendations, for instance, and there is no formalised requirement (or even follow up) on the identified “areas for improvement”.
- Second, MOPAN emphasises responding to donors’ needs and making MOs accountable to donors’ criteria and indicators, in support of their own accountability systems.

In the mid-2010s, the use of assessments shifted. Some member countries began using MOPAN assessments to support organisational changes in MOs. In parallel, the MOPAN Secretariat made significant efforts to support this new strategic direction, among other things by increasing the possibility of exchanges with MOs that were expected to increase use.

However, there was no change in MOPAN’s fundamental characteristics reflecting this shift. The tacit nature of MOPAN’s engagement with MOs remains unchanged: leaving members to endorse the results of the MO assessment and using their influence to support its use or to having MOs agree on the need for changes. This agreement often already exists through the MOs’ internal political and change dynamics, but it may be influenced by external evidence sources such as MOPAN.

MOPAN has also stayed focused on satisfying donors’ assessment needs including for a methodology or the selection of MOs to be assessed (e.g. the emphasis is put first on systematically satisfying the assessment processes of MOPAN members rather than on addressing the most significant issues in the multilateral system). It is likely that the only way to hold an MO (and its senior management in particular) accountable is through its governing bodies. This would mean involving other MO member countries in supporting that demand. However, MOPAN and its members did not try to do so at this stage.

79 It is of note that, as the 2013 evaluation pointed out, external assessments are only one way of providing factual knowledge: the possibility of helping MOs providing that knowledge themselves was explored too before being abandoned.

80 This is the “accountability as a virtue” vs. “accountability as a mechanism” (Bovens, 2010).

81 Boesen, 2019. Op. cit. p. 20.

### Main findings

- MOPAN provides factual knowledge on MO performance against a common benchmark that members need to inform their accountability processes.
- MOPAN is rooted in the view that assessing organisations will contribute to having them act in an accountable manner (i.e. “what is measured, gets done”). This is reflected by the nature of MOPAN and its tacit arrangement whereby MOs agree to be assessed albeit with clear limits about what can be required from them after the assessment.
- A shift occurred in the mid-2010s when some members focused on using assessments to influence the behaviour of organisations. MOPAN did not change fundamentally in support of that shift.

## Attempts to adapt the methodology can only partially address the needs of MOs

### An institutionalist approach focused on MO headquarters

MOPAN's approach reflects a fundamental implicit assumption that answering its members' needs for factual information can be useful to MOs. Its methodology responds to its members' needs by looking through an institutionalist lens i.e., focussing on formal procedures (rules, norms and processes) that MOs are adopting to support performance at headquarter level and judging them against standards defined by MOPAN members. Behaviour in the assessed organisations is expected to be subordinated to these institutional arrangements; appropriate arrangements will ultimately lead to better delivery.

This institutionalist approach can be useful to MOs. It can make them more aware of the standards and norms by which they should abide and help them compare themselves to one another. Ultimately, it can support organisational transformation. This is especially true when an MO is in the early stages of developing its own systems and promoting consistent staff behaviour, when criteria and standards are new or changing or their enforcement is challenging, and when these criteria and standards are relevant to the assessed MO.

A MOPAN assessment does not meet these conditions entirely. To a large extent, MOPAN indicators do not reflect an organisation's specific context but rather assess a set of minimum expected requirements among a series of MOs that may or may not reflect their individual operating contexts, comparative advantages, or maturity.<sup>82</sup> Most of the indicators can be applied to any large public or private company, including those related to actual delivery in the field or to the outcomes of interventions. Furthermore, MOPAN's selection of most indicators involved only light consultation of the MOs themselves. The shared belief was that all organisations should achieve some “gold standard”.

82 The notion of “multilateral organisations” as a coherent category is subject to debates. Pipa, A.F., Seidel, B., Conroy C. (2018). A US multilateral aid review. Assessing the value of U.S. investments in the multilateral development system. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/US-Multilateral-Aid-Review.pdf> This is not a MOPAN-only situation. Most RBM systems work this way; See Bezes, P. (2005). Le renouveau du contrôle des bureaucraties : L'impact du New Public Management. Informations sociales, 126, 26-37. 6

MOPAN therefore risks mostly providing information that the assessed organisations already possess and using standards for judging that the MOs may not recognise as relevant to their context. Several initiatives have been taken to address this.

The 3.0 and 3.1 methodologies have introduced a set of cross-cutting issues since 2015 that are high on the multilateral agenda (climate change, gender, human rights, good governance; Agenda 2030; SEAH). They mirror the changes in the RBM systems of MOs in the 2010s and make the methodology more acceptable to MOs, especially in the UN system.<sup>83</sup> However, the new indicators are not well adapted to all organisations (e.g. Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)).

MOPAN also began to adapt its methodology significantly (and especially how achievements are assessed) to better fit the specificity of some MOs, especially as its members broadened the remit to new organisations. Although it has been emphasised over the years that MOPAN assessments are not intended to be used for comparative purposes (e.g. evolving data quality and methods and different MO contexts), some members do use them this way (over time / across MOs). An adapted framework greatly diminishes the possibility of comparability.<sup>84</sup>

Finally, some MOPAN indicators are formulated such that assessors have room for appreciation. Having the necessary insight to make good use of this depends very much on the assessors' expertise. The MOPAN secretariat considers that its new framework contract increases assessor's expertise. Although an evidence-based rationale is always provided when expert judgements are made, MOs that are assessed worry that this leeway creates a potential for inconsistency. These initiatives have contributed to MOPAN's improved credibility, which is certainly an important aspect of the possible influence of MOPAN assessments. But they only mitigate the issue partially.

### SEAH epitomises a different approach to MO use

The process of establishing a framework to monitor system-wide efforts to prevent SEAH was an exception to the general approach. Whereas MOPAN has previously consulted stakeholders to inform methodological changes, it has never done so on such an inclusive scale. The collective quantification process included MOs in defining the aspects for which they should be accountable to donors and to other stakeholders. This pathway is genuinely different: the "the right practice" is not imposed from outside but emerges from the iterative construction process.<sup>85</sup> It is worth pointing out that MOs embraced the MOPAN SEAH framework, although some MOPAN members did not see how this convening process differed from earlier processes and contributed to improving standards (see p.77).

83 Hulme, D. (2010). Lessons from the making of the MDGS: human development meets results-based management in an unfair world. IDS bulletin, 41(1), 15-25.

84 It is of note that the assessments were never fully comparable. Before 2015 and the 3.0 methodology, this was because of reliability concerns (see the 2013 Evaluation of MOPAN).

85 This reflects the opposition between the positivist and constructivist view of indicators. In the first view, indicators are supposed to measure the world "from the outside", but the way they are used affect their validity to the point where they corrupt the very phenomena they were supposed to monitor ("Campbell's Law"); while in the constructivist view, indicators are "performative", the quantification process as much as the way indicators are used are both meant to transform social processes. See Desrosières, A. (2010). La politique des grands nombres : Histoire de la raison statistique. Paris : La Découverte. Chiapello, É. & Desrosières, A. (2006). 18. La quantification de l'économie et la recherche en sciences sociales : paradoxes, contradictions et omissions. Le cas exemplaire de la positive accounting theory. Dans : François Eymard-Duvernay éd., L'économie des conventions, méthodes et résultats : Tome 1. Débats (pp. 297-310). Paris : La Découverte.

### Main findings

- An implicit, core assumption of MOPAN is that answering members' needs for factual information can be useful to MOs.
- In response, MOPAN assessments focus on formal institutional processes judged against criteria and standards set by its members.
- The indicators largely target minimum standards and are not adapted to the context of specific MOs. They can often provide information that MOs already have judged against standards that the MOs may not consider fully aligned to their context.
- MOPAN has attempted to address this by including SDG-related indicators, by adapting the methodology to each MO, and by leaving room for the judgement of expert assessors. This only partially addresses the issue of obtaining information relevant to MOs' needs.
- The process of developing a SEAH framework took an entirely different approach whereby assessment criteria and standards were co-constructed with users rather than being imposed from without. This resulted in greater uptake.

## Adapting to a changing multilateral context

The current context differs from the one that led to MOPAN's creation. This is not to say that MOPAN no longer has a role to play in the multilateral context. Rather, that its role – and opportunities for influence – have likely changed as the situation has evolved.

A first area of change concerns the dimensions of accountability. MOPAN was established prior to RBM systems, being a common expectation, when a results orientation was more a vision than a practice. This is no longer the case. Important organisational transformations occurred in the 2000s and in the 2010s that MOPAN assessments captured and recorded.<sup>86</sup> Issues remain, and the standards are being raised from one MOPAN cycle to the next, leading to more demanding requirements.<sup>87</sup> But in the end, most multilateral stakeholders insist that the problems identified by MOPAN (e.g. the evaluation function, results-based budgeting) are known. What is less apparent is how to effectively develop and implement them in practice so they continue to function in complex, decentralised environments and remain useful.

In parallel with progress in results orientation and related fields, some criticisms have also emerged about the fundamental assumptions of RBM and therefore about MOPAN:

- Institutional performance arrangements might not automatically lead to better delivery and, indeed, might even do quite the opposite.<sup>88</sup> Institutional processes such as

86 See e.g. Knill, C., & Bauer, M. W. (2007). Theorizing Management Reforms in International Organizations. In M. W. Bauer & C. Knill (Eds.), *Management Reforms in International Organizations* (p. 191-200). Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG.

87 Most recently done in 2019. MOPAN/SC(2019)6

88 There is a "need to acknowledge the inherent disconnect between an outcome ("results") orientation that governments and other public sector organizations say they want, with a focus on processes, based largely upon following prescribed and generally inflexible rules and regulations." Perrin, B., & Tyrrell, T. (2021). *Changing bureaucracies: Adapting to uncertainty, and how evaluation can help*. Routledge. P. 205.



MOPAN's can lead to situations where MOs conform to stated standards in principle but not always in practice.<sup>89</sup> MOPAN assessments address implementation to some extent, but to do so in-depth would require a different, more in-depth assessment that MOPAN is not currently positioned nor intended to deliver.

- There is a better understanding that development outcomes are produced by complex processes and that aid delivery is only one aspect of these. MOs and other development stakeholders are expected to play other roles increasingly in consensus-building, co-ordination, and catalysing outcomes. In-house co-ordination of these “intangible” roles is a challenge for the largest, largely decentralised MOs and can change the definition of delivery itself.
- Co-ordinating across MOs is also a big challenge: The COVID-19 crisis reportedly revealed the lack of co-ordination mechanisms beyond the UN system, to take one recent example.

How to translate this into guidance – not to mention into performance standards – is “a considerable challenge.”<sup>90</sup> The MOPAN study of Rome-based agencies shows that the network is no stranger to co-ordination, but that study did not lead to changes in the assessment methodology. In all cases, the focus on organisational performance arrangements taken in isolation may be increasingly irrelevant, particularly given emerging approaches that insist on systemic co-ordination (whole-of-government, whole-of-society, whole-of-policy cycle).<sup>91</sup>

The context of accountability has also changed. The financial and diplomatic power of large donors still ensures that they have the high ground. But other actors now hold MOs accountable, including recipient countries, NGOs, and private funders<sup>92</sup> Bilateral accounting to each one of these is probably not practicable. MOs also hold countries accountable, for instance on their commitments to address global challenges. They must also face public distrust of rational discourse (“post-truth context”), leading to new concerns about building trust.<sup>93</sup>

This has led to different trends over the years:

- Some MOPAN member countries are engaging in relationships with MOs that pertain more to cooperation, including in improving governance rather than mere accountability. These countries, especially the Nordic states, are relying on MOPAN to support this cooperation, and usually find MOPAN satisfactory in this context. However, the current form of assessments cannot provide all the information needed to steer this type of relationship.
- MOPAN members in particular are concerned by how to translate the formal arrangements that MOPAN assesses into delivery: how they are applied and affect practice in the field (in particular at country level). Knowing this would improve the linkage with their own assessments and evaluations at country or project level. The MOPAN

89 Institutionalization of evaluation may for instance lead to the “bureaucratic capture” of evaluation systems, and ultimately, to evaluation and RBM systems not contributing to, but impeding performance. See Raimondo, E., Leeuw, F (2021). Evaluation Systems and Bureaucratic Capture: Locked in the System and Potential Avenues for Change. In Perrin & Tyrell, op. cit. p. 143.

90 Boesen, N. (2019). Op.cit. (p. 9).

91 Radaelli, C. (2021). Sound Policy-Making in the Ecology of Sustainable Development. <http://protego-erc.eu/sound-policy-making-in-the-ecology-of-sustainable-development/>

92 In 2018, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was the second largest funder to Gavi, WHO and CGIAR, for instance. McArthur, J., Rasmussen, K. (2018). Who actually funds the UN and other multilaterals. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/09/who-actually-funds-the-un-and-other-multilaterals/>

93 Picciotto, R. (2018). Is evaluation obsolete in a post-truth world? Evaluation and program planning, 73, 88-96.

Secretariat is aware of the “delivery question,” but it is difficult to resolve. The 2013 evaluation had already remarked that extending the methodology to organisational transformation in practice would be prohibitively costly if MOPAN assessments remained in their current form. The MOPAN Secretariat’s attempt in recent years to look at country-level led to the same conclusion. For now, it seems difficult to provide information on delivery in all five MOPAN performance areas in a sizeable (and representative!) number of recipient countries. MOPAN’s TWG is currently responsible for addressing this issue and is aware of the challenges.

- Other initiatives are providing an alternate perspective on accountability at the multilateral level. Quality of Official Development Assistance (QuODA) makes all Official Development Assistance (ODA) providers accountable – MOs and donor countries. It also uses MOPAN assessment in support of some indicators. International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) helps all multilateral and bilateral stakeholders provide transparent information about aid commitments and delivery, in a manner that allows information to be reused in a variety of ways. Though neither QuODA nor IATI are really competing with MOPAN in addressing organisational effectiveness, they offer a different way of seeing accountability that involves the participation of a wider range of actors in setting standards and providing accountability information and that reflects the more recent emphasis on mutual accountability among all stakeholders.

As a whole, MOPAN members do not believe that MOPAN should be the solution to these different questions. Some members are perfectly comfortable with a MOPAN that mainly functions as an accountability instrument and are happy to draw on other sources for other needs. It also appears that the smaller member country administrations depend very much on MOPAN for such information on MOs, but that the assessments may not always provide everything they need, pertaining to thematic issues. For instance, in quite a few countries, MOPAN assessments are presented as replacing evaluations, when they are, in fact, a very different exercise.

### Main Findings

- MOs have achieved certain standards of organisational performance. The issue is less “what to do in theory”, but how to do it in practice. This raises the question of how MOPAN can provide this information in greater depth while ensuring that assessments are feasible.
- Some of MOPAN’s underlying assumptions are called into question by the current trends and state of research on the multilateral system: MOPAN focuses on the link between performance arrangements and delivery, which is not straightforward. It was designed with aid delivery in mind. MOs are increasingly engaged in more intangible activities requiring co-ordination and partnerships to address development problems.
- The accountability context has changed. There are more and more “account holders”, and donor countries also being held accountable as part of a “mutual accountability” perspective. Some donor countries adapt and engage more deeply in cooperation than others, which may be more relevant to the new context. MOPAN in its current form may be less well suited to this type of relationship.
- In particular, the question of how performance arrangements are implemented and contribute to improved delivery in practice is a major point of interest. However, the cost of addressing this in MOPAN’s current form would probably be prohibitive.
- New accountability instruments such as QuODA and IATI show different ways forward involving the participation of different actors, making information available in a transparent way to be used for different purposes.

## What Theory of Change for MOPAN?

MOPAN has a logic model. Through a sequential process, its products lead to contributions to achieving the SDGs. Some crucial assumptions have guided this evaluation:

1. MOPAN was unlikely to be the main engine behind such desirable, far-reaching goals;
2. specific contributions were nonetheless possible, among other drivers, and
3. it was worthwhile to verify whether such contributions could be identified.

To examine MOPAN's contributions required identifying the different layers of its context, which affect the maximal extent of the impact that it can reasonably have in context:

At the highest level, MOPAN should be seen in the context of the recurring criticisms of multilateral organisations and the multilateral system during their short history. Despite a repeated criticism for failing to adapt, MOs do adapt and evolve continuously.<sup>94</sup> One example is that MOs have been adopting processes designed to improve their performance through a RBM orientation. We define RBM as emphasising performance rather than compliance in budgeting, performing, and reporting on operations, using information on results provided through performance measurement and/or evaluation. It includes but is not limited to RBM frameworks.

MOPAN is seen as an instrument in the accountability relationship between donor countries and MOs that support this RBM orientation. To provide information on performance, MOPAN uses an "institutionalist" lens: it is assumed that

1. performance is a matter of institutional arrangements (policies, guidelines, frameworks...);
2. staff will broadly respect these arrangements, and
3. this will lead to better delivery. MOPAN therefore lists a set of institutional arrangements that are supposed to be found in all assessed MOs, regardless of what they do.

This list reflects what member countries see as good standards of performance, to which they hold MOs accountable.

MOPAN assessments are not binding, however. MOPAN works through a tacit arrangement between members and MOs: MOs agree to be assessed but are not bound to address or respond to MOPAN findings through any particular process beyond their internal management initiatives. Moreover, the ambition of MOPAN assessments in practice is to adapt the framework and approach to the context and needs of each MO. MOPAN 3.0 and 3.1 began to include new standards that MOs were only starting to implement. It was also assumed that the people engaged in a MOPAN assessment (assessment team, MOPAN analyst, MO focal point, ILs) have some latitude and opportunities to find how the assessment can be useful to an MO and/or to a specific country.

The consequences are as follow:

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<sup>94</sup> The references supporting the claims made in this ToC have been removed for clarity in this summary. More about these claims is presented in the Relevance section p.67.

On the members' side, MOPAN assessments were presumed to have the potential to provide knowledge about institutional arrangements about which the members are largely uninformed but can use in their own accountability processes. Alternatively, members might see the mere existence of an external assessment as a safeguard that suffices to ensure accountability.

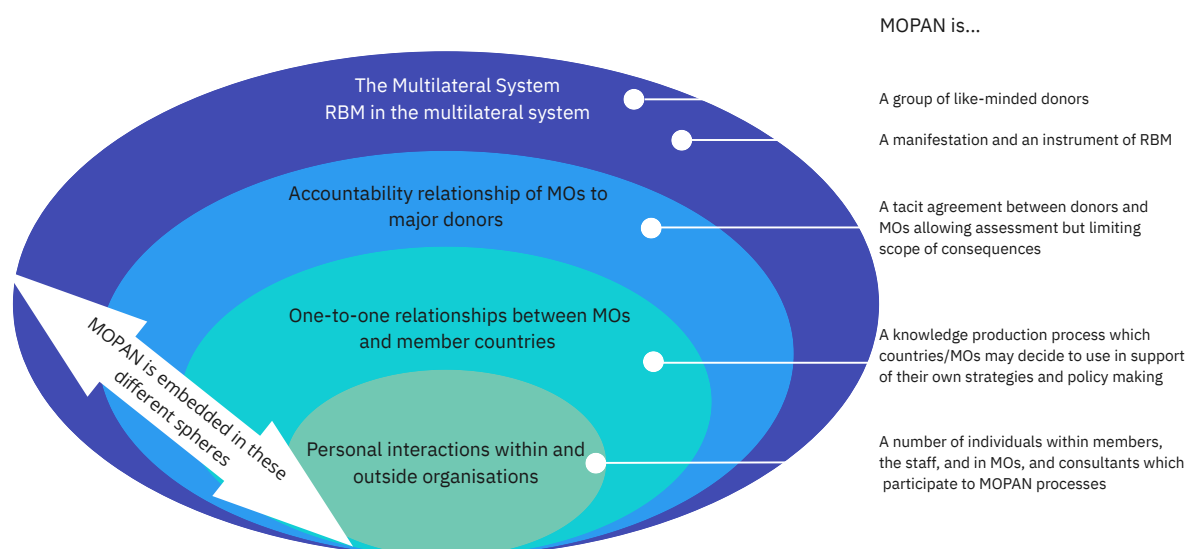
On the MO side, the most plausible assumption at the beginning of the evaluation is that the assessments are not used. But an assessment such as MOPAN could have the perverse effect whereby MOs would appear to follow the standards MOPAN promotes, which is unlikely however, given the assessment's tacit, non-binding nature. MOs see the benefit of MOPAN overwhelmingly in its potential to reduce the number of assessments they undergo. We assumed that under certain conditions (for some standards, some kinds of MOs, in certain contexts, etc.) it was still possible that MOs used the assessments, and that efforts to adapt could contribute to their use.

Within this general framework, we assume that the variations in the use of MOPAN products depend less on the quality of each MOPAN assessment than on the following:

- specific context of each member country and MO, and their relationships
- capacity, power and commitment of the individuals involved in MOPAN processes, especially in the member countries (MOPAN representatives, ILs, case managers, board members, decision-makers...) and MOs (MOFP, staff, senior-level managers...), Secretariat staff and service providers.

Figure 2 presents the general framework for examining the uses of MOPAN products.

**Figure 2 : MOPAN is embedded in several spheres of use**



We assume that contribution occurs through an informal accountability relationship. This lack of formalism makes the assessments possible in absence of a formal mandate, but also limits their potential consequences for organisations.

## A learning instrument in search of users seeking to learn

MOPAN members have also started seeing MOPAN as a learning instrument. This is first an inward-looking movement seeking better use of the amount of information that MOPAN collects every year during and across assessments. It is also outward-looking; in recent years it has identified specific opportunities to provide a perspective that other stakeholders may not be able to give, particularly with the UNDS reform and climate change studies.

A question arises regarding the necessity of these new products and the extent to which they can be used. It is evident that that new learning products are considered to be potentially useful, particularly for MOs, especially if they provide a comparative view of how MOs are faring on certain topics of interest.

When it comes to use, the challenge is finding a place in the complex process of policy making:

- Policy making is best presented as an iterative process in which several decisions that are not always consistent, that involve different actors, and that are made over one or several periods of time.<sup>95</sup>
- Within these processes, specialists with strong positions about what to do and why tend to make the decisions. They join advocacy coalitions seeking to win political battles.<sup>96</sup>
- Knowledge is an important resource for the coalitions, which take evidence that they find useful.<sup>97</sup> When “windows of opportunity” for decisions open, the stakeholders will seek evidence for their view of the problem and of the solutions. Evidence is more likely to be used when disagreements are more intense and when the stakeholders agree that it can help solve a problem.<sup>98</sup>

In this context, the question is less about a potentially useful product and far more about recognising the context for an issue and channelling potential learning products to the “potential users” themselves. This is challenging, for several reasons:

- MOPAN has no direct access to these users. MOPAN member representatives are partly hosted in evaluation units and partly in multilateral policy units, but are rarely senior-level decision makers. A majority of MOPAN representatives believes that MOPAN fits more in operational work than on strategic thinking, at least currently.
- These specialist users tend to rely on knowledge producers they know, and share a common view of the issues at stake. Those in larger countries can rely on think tanks making clear-cut statements and recommendations based on evidence. Whether MOPAN can leverage its role to be sufficiently sharp and prescriptive in this setting to promote use is an evolving question.
- An organisation that wishes to “push” knowledge towards decision makers (against

95 Barthe, Y., & Gaiti, B. (2008). Figures de la décision. *Politix*, 2, 3-5.

96 Sabatier, P., Weible, C. (2007). The Advocacy coalition framework: innovations and clarifications, pp. 189-223. In Sabatier, P. A. (Ed.). (2007). *Theories of the policy process* (2nd ed). Westview Press.

97 Ingold, J., & Monaghan, M. (2016). Evidence translation: An exploration of policy makers' use of evidence. *Policy & Politics*, 44(2), 171-190. 8

98 Zarkin, M. (2020). Knowledge utilization in the regulatory state: An empirical examination of Schrefler's typology. *Policy Studies*, 1-18.

their inclination to use known and trusted products) needs to develop formal and informal knowledge brokering processes to identify opportunities that ensure that the knowledge is consumed and taken up at critical times. It also needs to multiply these opportunities to expose decision-makers to the knowledge it produces. To do so effectively, the MOPAN Secretariat would require the support of members to be recognised by decision makers in key forums and would also need commensurate, flexible resources to leverage these opportunities when they are identified. MOPAN is structured to deliver assessments currently with no systematically guaranteed additional support or resources.

These problems are not insurmountable. The high-level event on climate change shows that MOPAN can reach senior officials with the help of its members. But it also raises questions. First, from the policy standpoint– about the legitimacy of MOPAN having a policy standpoint without having any high-level decision-makers in its governance framework and second the resources (for advocacy and budget) that MOPAN members are willing to invest for increasing MOPAN's impact as a knowledge producer.

### Main Findings

- MOPAN can provide original new knowledge on some common challenges across the multilateral system, especially if it uses its accumulated knowledge and understanding of MOs to provide a comparative view across the multilateral scene.
- MOPAN may have difficulties getting its products before targeted users because:
  - senior-level decision makers are not directly exposed to them
  - these users do not know MOPAN or its policy perspective on important issues
  - MOPAN lacks the means to push the knowledge it produces towards its potential users systematically, absent changes in how members support the initiatives.

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## **Appendices**



## Methodological appendix

### Theory of Change

To assess MOPAN's impact, a Contribution Analysis approach (CA) was proposed. CA is a theory-based approach to impact evaluation that seeks to reduce uncertainty about the contribution of evaluated interventions in complex settings.

#### About the Theory of Change and how it is constructed

A specific ToC was developed for this evaluation, for which a summarised version is included in this report.

In the MOPAN logic model, its products lead to contributions for achieving the SDGs through a sequential process. However, a crucial assumption in CA is that the evaluated intervention is unlikely to be the main engine behind such desirable, far-reaching goals; whereas specific contributions are possible in a set of other drivers (causal package) that can be significant.

Framing these contributions is therefore crucial to the evaluation. In such a complex context, this means:

1. depicting a “system map” to which MOPAN belongs;
2. identifying specific areas of leverage or points in the system in which MOPAN could have a role;
3. identifying specific contributions that MOPAN could have made alongside contributions from other sources, and
4. considering those factors that are likely to explain why a contribution is or is not likely depending on the context, including other potential sources of influence.

This ToC blends different types of information:

1. elements from the literature on the multilateral system, accountability, and knowledge use for policy making;
2. MOPAN's own documentation;
3. interviews and workshops with MOPAN members, the Secretariat and service providers; and
4. a survey of MOPAN members, past ILs and MO focal points.

All the assumptions that are presented have been tested, at the very least in a minimal way, to ensure that they reach a certain degree of plausibility. Plausibility can be increased by identifying academic theories supporting an assumption; similar examples; cases of use, etc. All of these elements are used to contextualise the assumptions (what is expected, in which cases, why, and how).

The ToC is then used as an evaluation roadmap. Its assumptions are iteratively tested, through interviews and case studies mainly, and improved accordingly. These tests help to raise progressively the degree of confidence we have in our conclusions about the extent to which MOPAN has been influential, when, how, and why.

## Outline of the Theory of Change

**At macro-level:** we framed MOPAN as an instrument in the accountability relationship between MOs and donor countries.

- MOPAN works with a tacit arrangement between members and MOs in which MOs agree to be assessed but are not bound to address or respond to MOPAN findings through any specific process beyond their own internal management initiatives.
- The MOPAN methodology looks through an “institutionalist” lens. It is assumed that
  1. performance is a matter of institutional arrangements (policies, guidelines, frameworks...); that
  2. staff will broadly act within the provisions of these arrangements, and that this will lead to,
  3. improved delivery. As such, it lists a set of institutional arrangements ostensibly found in all assessed MOs, regardless of what they do. This list reflects what member countries see as good standards of performance, to which they hold MOs accountable.
- MOPAN assessments are embedded in practice and seek to adapt the framework and approach to each MO’s context and needs. As of MOPAN 3.0 and 3.1, the framework began to include new standards that MOs were only starting to implement. Also, the people engaged in the MOPAN assessment process (the assessment team, the MOPAN analyst, the MO focal point, the ILs) have some latitude and opportunities to find ways for the assessment to be useful to an MO and/or to a specific country.

### The consequences are as follow:

- On the members’ side, **MOPAN assessments have the potential to provide new knowledge about institutional arrangements.** Members can use this knowledge in their own accountability processes or see the mere existence of an external assessment as a safeguard sufficient to ensure accountability.
- On the MO side, **the most plausible assumption at the beginning of the evaluation was that assessments are not used.** But an assessment such as MOPAN could have a perverse effect, in which MOs would ostensibly follow the standards promoted by MOPAN. The tacit, non-binding nature of MOPAN makes this unlikely, however. It is overwhelmingly the case that MOs see MOPAN’s benefit in the potential for reducing the number of assessments they must undergo.
- Moreover, we assumed that in certain conditions (for some standards, some kinds of MOs, in certain contexts, etc.) uses by MOs were still possible, and that efforts to adapt could contribute.

Finally, we note that with its new products, MOPAN could contribute to global debates on the multilateral system and the problems that MOs address, as well as epistemic contributions to the way performance should be understood and measured. We assumed that the knowledge accumulated by MOPAN on how MOs deal with global problems has value and that its position as a donor-led organisation could affect how these contributions were received.

**At meso-level**, we considered MOPAN within the relationships between each assessed MO and member countries individually and collectively. At this level, we look how member administrations and MOs use MOPAN products for policy making.

- Member countries have formal and informal strategies of influence based on
  1. power relations,
  2. funding and
  3. “legitimacy, capacity, know-how and relationships.”<sup>99</sup>
- We argued that MOPAN is one among other sources of information that countries can use to make decisions and support their strategy. We distinguished between uses in a funding strategy (e.g. to assess risk or decide on the destination of earmarked funding) and in a cooperation strategy (e.g. to follow up on a MOPAN assessment to support changes in a MO through governing body representatives, performance agreements, or other means of engagement). Our major assumption about why some countries may use MOPAN assessments more than others is that **use depends more on the institutional context of each country than on the quality of each assessment.**
- Use by MOs is more complex. MOs do not commission the assessments and are not clearly linked to Results Based Management (RBM) internal processes or institutional feedback loops. Some MOs or their constituencies may even be hostile to an assessment they consider to be “externally imposed”. MOPAN assessments can still be used in decision making, at a political or administrative level, provided they are available when a window of opportunity opens and a group of MO stakeholders sees the content of the assessment as helpful information to support their views. The size of MOs and their permeability to external pressure are likely to influence “if” and “how” MOPAN assessments are used. Similarly, we assume that effects are unlikely beyond headquarters (the level on which MOPAN concentrates).

The accountability relationship between MOs and MOPAN members is a driver of MOs’ use of MOPAN assessments: MOs are likely to follow up on a MOPAN assessment because they believe that members care about the issues identified by them and/or are endorsing the assessment and using it to support requests for changes as part of their ongoing dialogue. Again, the culture of knowledge use and the importance of organisational issues in an MO are likely to be key drivers of use.

**At micro-level**, we emphasise the importance of organisational arrangements among MOPAN members and the personal involvement of the individuals engaged in producing MOPAN assessments in promoting their usefulness for members and MOs alike and their actual use for decision-making.

Relevant factors among MOPAN members include the job profile, seniority and connectivity to decision-makers among MOPAN representatives. Additionally, familiarity with MOPAN and with the assessment process and the time representatives can dedicate to MOPAN as part of their programme of work may play a role.

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<sup>99</sup> Tarp, M.N. Hansen, J.O.B. (2013). Size and Influence. How small states influence policy making in multilateral arenas. DIIS Working paper 2013:11.

The relevant factors for individual assessments include the process' key actors' familiarity, experience, and connections to decision makers, including the assessment managers, service providers, ILs and MO focal points. Ownership of and buy-in to the MOPAN process by assessment actors, key decision-makers and change leaders also play an important role.

Answer to the Effectiveness question

The answer to the effectiveness question is mostly concerned with the use of MOPAN products.

## Contribution claims

### Developing contribution claims

The development of contribution claims (CC) is specific to CA. CCs are plausible statements about the use of MOPAN products or use related to being a network member. "Plausible" means that there is some possibility of verifying CCs in concrete settings. Each claim is:

- **supported** by theoretical or empirical knowledge. In particular, the theory-building phase, which was closed by the inception report, involved an extensive literature review, a survey of MOPAN members, former ILs and MO focal points and interviews with MOPAN member representatives and the MOPAN Secretariat. In practice, all CCs are supported by one or several examples given by stakeholders. It is not enough to assert that MOPAN could have contributed or will contribute to a change in the future to make a CC.
- **contextualised**. In complex settings, an intervention is almost always one among several drivers that may contribute to a change and there are always different pathways for making a contribution. CCs therefore include indications about when, how, why, and to what extent a contribution might be identified with respect to what other drivers. This includes one or several impact pathways and/or underlying mechanisms (Box 3, Impact Pathways).
- **initially assessed** for the degree of confidence we can have in the contribution and its significance.

### Box 3: Definitions of impact pathways

- Impact pathways describe one of several chains of events leading from an intervention towards an expected change. Mechanisms describe why these chains of events unfold.
- For instance, an impact pathway would be that MOPAN produces an assessment and a member decides to follow up on a section of it, which reinforces a previous concern they had identified. The member uses it to open a new dialogue with an MO, which decides to improve its practice on that topic. The MO implements change, and the changes are beneficial, making the MO more efficient, etc.
- For this impact pathway to work, different mechanisms can be triggered, including the members' trust in the assessment's value; the MO's willingness to create or maintain a partnership and its capacity to turn identified areas of improvements into relevant follow-up actions, etc.

The claims must be sufficiently specific so that their probability and significance can be assessed. Probability is the likelihood of their occurrence in concrete situations. Significance refers to the importance of the contribution in context, especially in comparison with other factors. A CA aims at increasing the degree of confidence in each claim. Plausibility, probability and significance are three degrees of confidence.<sup>100</sup>

The CCs made in this evaluation and further tested are presented below using the three categories of judgement identified in the inception note. Accountability use is considered a *sine qua non*; Dialogue and learning use by members is the most desirable and will be crucial in defining MOPAN's worth in context. Use by MOs is the category about which least was known at the beginning of the evaluation. One or several impact pathways exist for each CC. Table 16 summarises the CCs that were investigated. (For a comprehensive description, including the examined impact pathways for each contribution claims, see the ToC background document.)

100 Delahais & Lacouette-Fougère, 2019. Op. Cit.

**Table 16: Contribution claims**

<b>Accountability use by MOPAN members</b>	
1	<p>MOPAN products help donor countries fulfil their accountability requirements by providing detailed information about the performance of MOs on a series of criteria (KPIs and MIs)</p> <p>Uses to inform existing national assessment processes or to replace national assessment processes; for due diligence during replenishment contract; in answer to specific accountability requests by parliament or government; to (re)design national assessments, by providing a performance monitoring standard.</p>
<b>Use for dialogue and learning by MOPAN Members</b>	
2	<p>MOPAN assessment results are used to support the budgetary allocation process of member countries</p> <p>Uses to marginally modify contribution levels; decide which organisations to fund.</p>
3	<p>MOPAN products (assessment and analytical studies) provide insightful information that members can use monitoring and strategic purposes.</p> <p>Uses to feed MO monitoring work; illumination use of specific topics; illumination use by decision makers; use in support of pre-existing decisions.</p>
4	<p>MOPAN assessment results provide an opportunity for member countries to support their strategy of influence in any given MO</p> <p>Uses in setting the agenda of bilateral dialogue; in informing the dialogue and agenda of governance bodies; in making MOs potentially accountable on cross-cutting issues that match the shared agenda of MOPAN members; in strengthening relationships by being an IL</p>
5	<p>MOPAN as a network provides a member with way to learn more about other members' multilateral policies and to improve its own multilateral policy</p> <p>Uses in discussing strategic questions about the multilateral system; in discussing and improving methodology</p>
<b>Use by MOs</b>	
6	<p>MOPAN assessments help identify organisational issues or confirm issues identified through internal assessments that the MO can then address</p> <p>Uses in better conforming to expectations of donor countries, especially on documenting processes; by senior management in discussions with the board to support or reject suggestions on organisational performance; of methodology to reflect on or improve own performance framework.</p>
7	<p>MOPAN assessments and their follow-up help create or reinforce partnerships between MOs and donor countries</p> <p>Uses in strengthening links between MOPAN members and MOs through the governing body; by MOs for fundraising.</p>
8	<p>MOPAN products are used to inform discussion on significant issues that the multilateral system aims to address</p> <p>Illumination use to reflect on global problems, including cross-cutting themes.</p>
9	<p>MOPAN methodology is used for system-wide reflection on organisational performance measurement and accountability</p> <p>Uses as an argument in ongoing discussions on RBM and the accountability burden; to inform epistemic reflection.</p>

## Case studies

### Tracking uses

The 12 case studies are the primary approach for testing the CCs. Ten of the 12 examine assessments, and the two others look at learning products — the SEAH “Note for Practitioners” and the UNDS reform study. Each individual assessment is considered as a “window” on changes and for tracking different types of use by the MOs and MOPAN members.

The usual case sampling approach in CA is theory-based, in which “the researcher samples [cases] on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs”. Here, CCs relate to observed changes as a result of use by member countries and MOs.<sup>101</sup> Claims about potential uses were identified through interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff as well as a survey of past MO focal points. Initially, they were based on anecdotal evidence and on shared assumptions that repeated assessments are more likely to be used, with two caveats, at this stage:

- We had not yet collected such claims from MOs (although we already identified some evidence related to MO use through publicly available documents);
- The consensus among interviewees was that MOs were unlikely to use assessments significantly in many cases (though they did provide some candidates for further investigation).

We therefore chose cases of reputed use (intensity sampling). Such a case-study approach means that if the evaluation:

- can identify some uses, the analysis will concentrate on the how and why (the different impact pathways, the configuration of factors leading to use, etc.), and
- cannot identify any uses even in “reputed cases”, any use is unlikely or anecdotal.

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<sup>101</sup> Patton, M. Q. (1990). Designing qualitative studies. In *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (p. 177). Use of case studies in Contribution analysis is presented in Delahais, T., & Toulemonde, J. (2012). Applying contribution analysis: Lessons from five years of practice. *Evaluation*, 18(3), 281-293.



## Selection of case studies

Table 17 presents how cases were selected for this evaluation.

**Table 17. Case selection process**

Steps	Cases
1	41 assessments performed during the 2015-21 period on 36 MOs
2	Assessments for which we have claims for use by MOPAN members, staff or consultants; 2) and/or that have been assessed twice <sup>102</sup> or should be assessed for a second time in 2021; <sup>103</sup> 3) allow some time for the uses to unfold; 4) allow for a balance among the different types of organisations assessed (UN organisations, MDBs, humanitarian organisations and normative organisations).  Considering these criteria, we suggested in the inception note picking the 10 cases from among the following: AfDB, FAO, The Global Fund, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UN HABITAT, UNICEF, UNRWA and UN WOMEN.
3	The priority among these 13 potential case study organisations was having a “paper trail” of use. An in-depth examination of publicly available documents was conducted to identify cases in which MOPAN assessments were mentioned in reports and other official documents. A substantial paper trail was identified for IOM, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, UN WOMEN and UNRWA, with claimed/observed uses that fit several CCs, and to a lesser extent for UNICEF, UNDP, UN HABITAT.
4	MOs were asked whether they would agree to be part of this evaluation. One declined (AfDB) and none agreed: FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UN WOMEN, UNDP UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA. The Global Fund was also solicited and agreed to participate.  For SEAH and UNDS, no agreement was needed.

The final sample includes no IFIs for want of a paper trail suggesting that any made use of MOPAN assessments, except for IFAD.

## Robustness of the case studies’ findings

### Robustness of findings is based on several layers of evidence:

Claims are collected through different channels (interviews with staff and member representatives, surveys of ILs, members and MO focal points). Each claim is about what has changed (or will) change, MOPAN’s role in these changes and the role of other factors in some cases.

Documentary evidence is then collected systematically to confirm whether the claimed changes occurred (e.g. the evaluation function was reformed) and whether there is some evidence that MOPAN contributed to them. This layer of evidence is even more necessary for seeing whether MOs have “adapted” to members’ requests. All our interviewees claimed (without providing any empirical evidence) that “MOPAN is useful” and that they were engaged in changes (mirroring the usual members’ demand for reform).

Systematic tests of the claims include a chronology of changes (were they observed after the MOPAN report was made available?); alignment with “recommendations” (do they correspond to the report’s areas for improvement?); detailed management response with

102 5 organisations have been assessed twice: ILO, OCHA, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF

103 6 MOs have been assessed once and should be assessed in 2021: AfDB, The Global Fund, IDB, IFAD, UNAIDS, WBG.

concrete changes proposed; the publication of a ToR or reports to follow up on MOPAN products; and the mention of MOPAN assessments in official documentation as well as in the minutes of the governing bodies<sup>104</sup>. Most of this work was done by collecting information from the websites of assessed organisations (“web scraping”). This means that the level of information obtained at this stage depends to a certain extent on the transparency of the organisations assessed. This step ends with the consolidation of “reputed uses”, which are confirmed by several lines of evidence.

Interviews are then conducted in which our claims on reputed uses are presented and discussed. In these interviews we aim to collect convincing narratives about MOPAN use. “Convincing” means that stakeholders can say who used the MOPAN assessment, for what, how, and why, and with what other knowledge products. In the process, the initial claims become increasingly specific. Vague statements, e.g. “MOPAN was used in the context of the evaluation function” are rephrased as “A finding of the MOPAN assessment triggered a study by the evaluation function which led to a change in X”.

At the end of this process, the remaining claimed uses are specific (i.e., embedded in specific examples, with specific actors, supported by a rationale for change, and lead to a specific, traceable change) and robust. When they are rejected, it is possible to conclude that that specific use did not occur. However, other uses that have not been investigated remain plausible.

To draw an analogy with statistics, the approach used here is very good at ensuring the validity of a claim of use and at rejecting Type I errors (false positive). It is less good at ensuring the validity of a non-use claim and at rejecting Type II errors (false negative), because cases of “reputed non-uses” have been voluntarily left aside. The ability to reject Type I errors improves the causal claims. Rejecting fewer Type II errors means that there could have been greater use than what was concluded. This approach leads to extremely robust cases of use.

The focus in this process is very much on use. Whether the changes brought by the assessment ultimately led to improvements in performance and whether this performance led to better delivery on the ground is outside the scope of the case studies.

## Use by Members

### Members’ identify use differently than MOs.

Here the objective was to identify types of use and patterns explaining the use or lack of use rather than to know everything about how every member country used assessments. The process is as follows:

Exploratory interviews are carried out with at least one representative in each MOPAN member country and used to identify different types of use and to feed into the ToC, especially the CCs.

A list of empirical tests was then developed to support the five contribution claims related to members’ use. Approximately 60 such tests were developed about use; the context allowing use, and conditions.

<sup>104</sup> This list is based on Delahais, T., & Lacouette-Fougère, C. (2019). Try again. Fail again. Fail better. Analysis of the contribution of 65 evaluations to the modernisation of public action in France. *Evaluation*, 1(3), 1-18. P. 10.

The lines of evidence included interviews and workshops with members and staff, surveys with MOPAN users in the national administration, ILs, and MOFPs, national documentation (the websites of each country's MoFA and parliament were examined) and the case studies.

- make it possible to specify how MOPAN members' administrations use MOPAN products. The caveat is that, in practice, the case studies focused on Contribution Claim 4 (CC4) (use in strategy of influence), leaving other uses and countries that do not have strategic uses mostly outside the scope.

### **Answering the relevance question**

Relevance issues were identified during the initial phase of the evaluation. Two methods were used to answer the question:

- Developing a ToC that clarifies and challenges the assumptions about the problems faced by members and MOs regarding their accountability relationship.
- Interviews aiming to further challenge the assumptions about problems and solutions and to better understand the evolution of the issues faced by the multilateral system and by member countries, and to look at MOPAN's role in this context.

### **Answering the efficiency question**

The answer to the efficiency question has two major components.

The first is the description of the changes at MOPAN between 2015 and 2021. This is based mainly on the internal documentation, especially the minutes of the steering committees and other governance events. Given the sheer amount of documentation involved, we followed an issue-based approach to document specific changes and trends. The issues were identified in interviews especially with staff and long-time members. The results of this analysis are presented in the appendix p.114.

The second concerns the cost of MOPAN assessments. It is always difficult to identify the full cost of an assessment. The assumptions underlying the analysis are laid out below. Rather than choosing a preferred procedure, we opted for different calculation methods to gain insights into the evolution of costs at MOPAN.

## **Assumptions**

### **Main assumptions for approach 1 (global headings)**

From the interviews, we take as a premise that the actual work on assessments and other products represents approximately 80% of MOPAN's budget.

Taking the 2019 budgetary year (the last "normal" year before the COVID-19 crisis), we apply this 80% rate to: "Staff cost", "Mission & Travel", "Operating expenses", "Other intellectual services". The output is the annual cost for work on assessments.

To get a coherent denominator (X assessments per year), we estimate that MOPAN works on "full-assessments equivalents", a synthetic figure representing the flow of assessments the network must address in a working year.

Taking 2019 as a reference year, we estimate that most of the 2017-18 cycle assessments

(n=14) were to be published in 2019, with a five-month workload from January to May. The share of this cycle treated in 2019 is then: 14 assessments\*(5/24 months). The same logic applies for the 2019 cycle (assessments span of two years): five assessments \* (12/24 months).

### The synthetic number of assessments on which MOPAN work in a year comes to 5.41

The first approach gives the cost of an individual assessment as follows:

**(Assessment consultancy/5.41) + ((0.8\*[other consultancies, travel and mission expenses, Secretariat cost] / 5.41).**

The cost is disaggregated in Table 18 below:

**Table 18. Disaggregated assessment costs**

	2019 Actual spending (EUR)	The 0,8* of which dedicated to assessment (EUR)	Per assessment (EUR)	5.41: Equivalent of assessments worked on in 2019
Assessment consultancy	1 475 583.00	N/A	272 751.02	Total/ 5.41 assessments
Missions/travel	70 470.00	56 376.00	10 420.70	80% of travel expenses / 5.41
Operating expenses	41 380.00	33 104.00	6 119.04	80% of operating expenses / 5.41
Intellectual services	86 238.00	68 990.40	12 752.38	80% of other intellectual services / 5.41
Secretariat	1 313 194.00	1 050 555.20	194 187.65	80% of Secretariat/ 5.41
<b>Total Cost</b>				<b>496 230,79</b>
coeff. Nb of assessments worked on		5.41		

2019 is the “peak year” for assessment costs.

For the 2015-216 estimate, the available information is less detailed. The full budget for both years was used and divided by the number of assessments in this cycle (12). Actual spending on staff was 20% below planned spending (EUR 307 000 in total, or EUR 25 000 per assessment).

### Main assumptions for approach 2 (budgeted time)

Staff costs: time-cost allocations as per MOPAN budgetary planning on all headings excluding “governance” and analysis-learning (considered related to analytical products).

“Direct staff costs” are totally allocated to MOPAN assessments. Indirect staff costs are accounted for 80% of their amount.

All the above are divided by 5.41, the synthetic figure of assessments worked on per year.

For “non-staff” costs, we use MOPAN assumptions on two categories of unit costs: “Standard Assessment consultancy” + “other costs”. Other costs include mission fees (including trips), quality insurance costs (layout, editing, expert) and a fraction of the cost of other consultancy services related to methodological aspects, for an estimated lump sum of EUR 20 000.

Then, following this second approach, the cost of an individual assessment is:

(Assessment-related staff costs/5.41) + standard assessment consultancy + other costs.

The cost in EUR is disaggregated in Table 19:

**Table 19. Disaggregated assessment costs**

	Per year (EUR)	Per assessment (EUR)
<b>Direct staff costs</b>		<b>127 834.75</b>
Assessment	378 854.55	70 028.57
Assessment coordination	99 530.60	18 397.52
Data and information management	151 377.35	27 981.03
Innovation and methodology improvement	61 823.50	11 427.63
<b>Indirect staff costs</b>		<b>58 390.57</b>
Communication	45 555.28	8 420.57
Administration	127 651.36	23 595.45
Oversight and coordination	70 504.20	13 032.20
Engagement	72 182.16	13 342.36
<b>Non-staff costs</b>		<b>232 000.00</b>
Standard assessment		212 000.00
Mission fees & quality & other cons		20 000.00
<b>Total cost (direct)</b>		<b>359 834.75</b>
<b>Total cost (direct + indirect)</b>		<b>418 225.32</b>
Analysis / learning	89 995.20	16 634.97
Governance	141 411.55	26 138.92

### Main assumptions for approach 3 (real time)

We rely on figures provided by the MOPAN Secretariat to estimate the number of days spent on a given assessment. Based on a time-tracking exercise, the figure is then corrected through dialogue with the staff members involved in an assessment. Table 20 shows how time was allocated.

**Table 20. Task allocation time**

Step	
Kick-off	13%
Assessment design	13%
Document review	4%
Survey	17%
Interviews	6%
Analysis and scoring	12%
Drafting and quality assurance	11%
IAR sign-off	10%
Production	9%
Closing	0%

### Other assumptions include that:

A two-year period has 440 working days. Over the 2020-21 period, 13 assessments will be delivered.

There are four assessment managers (senior advisor, policy advisor, technical advisor, junior policy analyst).

There are 220 workdays per year (estimate based on OECD rules)

Assessment managers spend on average 79.5 days per year on an assessment

### Evaluation matrix

The section is reproduced from the evaluation inception report.

**Effectiveness:** To what extent is MOPAN meeting its objectives of fulfilling members' accountability information needs and supporting the performance of the Multilateral System?

We first consider the quality of MOPAN products and the assessment process and then assess three different types of use: 1) accountability; 2) by members for dialogue and learning; 3) by MOs or in the multilateral system (p.13). For each use, we devised one or several CCs, which forms the evaluation framework for this evaluation (p.25). They are tested empirically through a series of case studies, described later in this section. Table 21 below summarises our approach to the effectiveness question.

**Table 21. Effectiveness summary**

Issues investigated	Information used	Lines of evidence
<p>MOPAN has worked hard to improve the quality of its assessments, to enhance their use, including its methodological approach and the assessment process.</p> <p>To what extent did these efforts pay off in terms of higher quality and use of MOPAN assessments?</p> <p>To what extent does the effort of enhancing use contribute to improving quality?</p>	<p>Collected MOPAN stakeholders' concerns about quality and relevance</p> <p>Comparison of MOPAN processes and practices with best knowledge-to-use practices</p>	<p>Survey of members and MO focal points</p> <p>Interviews with MOPAN members, Secretariat staff and consultants</p> <p>Within case studies: interviews with MOs</p> <p>Review of key documents, especially the 2018 methodological review</p>
<p>To what extent have member administrations of MOPAN used assessments in the following ways (among others) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help fulfil accountability criteria?</li> <li>• inform budget allocation?</li> <li>• monitor or gain intelligence about MOs?</li> <li>• support a strategy of influence?</li> <li>• learn about other members' multi-lateral policies?</li> </ul>	<p>Extent to which each CC is confirmed across case studies.</p> <p>Extent to which assumptions underlying each CC are found to be valid.</p> <p>Role of other drivers contributing to expected changes alongside MOPAN assessment</p>	<p>Interviews with MOPAN members, Secretariat staff, and consultants</p> <p>Survey of former ILs and MO focal points</p> <p>Case study interviews with selected MOs, member representatives, Secretariat staff and consultants and review of selected internal documents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have MOPAN assessments been used by MOs in the following ways (among others)?</li> <li>• To help identify organisational issues?</li> <li>• To reinforce partnerships among MOs?</li> </ul>	<p>Significance of MOPAN assessments relative to other sources of influence in contributing to identified uses.</p>	<p>Case studies selection criteria:</p> <p>Evidence of use from interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have MOPAN assessments been used to contribute to change across the multilateral system in the following ways (among others)?</li> <li>• Inform discussion about significant issues across the MS (including cross-cutting themes)?</li> <li>• Inform system-wide reflection about organisational performance measures and accountability?</li> </ul>	<p>Identification of other potential uses noted by case study interlocutors and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Open text comments from the survey of former ILs and MO focal points</p> <p>Review of publicly available documents from MOs</p>

**Relevance:** To what extent is MOPAN's work relevant for an evolving multilateral context and support efforts to promote coherence and improve the performance of the Multilateral System?

This question will be addressed by reconstructing MOPAN's ToC and considering its underlying assumptions. On the one hand, we will continue to clarify expectations of MOPAN along the lines expressed above. On the other, we will discuss the assumptions about the relationship between MOPAN and the MOs and how MOPAN can contribute to the overall performance of the multilateral system.



The answer to the relevance question is largely considered a way to better describe MOPAN and what it can and cannot do, and to identify potential strategic and technical changes for the future. Table 22 summarises our approach.

**Table 22. Relevance summary**

Issues or claims investigated	Information used	Lines of evidence
MOPAN members engage in accountability relationships with MOs. Effective accountability requires considering factual knowledge about MOs against clear standards of value (some standards are shared among members and some are country-specific). To what extent are MOPAN assessments addressing these needs sufficiently today?	MOPAN members' perception that their needs are being and have been satisfied.  Collection of conditions related to usefulness and their satisfaction	Survey of MOPAN members  Interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff  Review of key documents: Previous evaluations and reviews of MOPAN, SC and bureau meeting and workshop minutes, previous MOU materials, PWB documents
Standards of value are changing. Much effort has been made to adapt the MOPAN methodology in line with changes in the multilateral context (e.g. the SDGs). How did these efforts address the needs of MOPAN members?	Mapping members' expectations of accountability standards to be used  Alignment of MOPAN methodology with members' expectations of new standards	Interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff  Review of key documents, including MOPAN studies and TWG material  SEAH case study
Members develop different strategies of influence on MOs, including long-term partnership strategies and core funding vs. earmarking strategies. To what extent do MOPAN assessments address the needs of MOPAN members in steering this cooperation?	Identification of members' strategies for MOs and needs concerning partnership strategies  Alignment of MOPAN methodology and other products with these needs	Interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff  Within case studies: review documentation regarding co-operation between members and MOs  UNDS case study
MOPAN methodology is deeply rooted in RBM and a particular view of how to improve performance. To what extent is the RBM approach relevant to all the assessed MOs (e.g. centralised vs decentralised; development organisation vs. MDBs, normative organisations, etc.) How relevant is this approach to the needs of MOs?	Identification of MOPAN core assumptions about performance and clarification of their implications  Comparison with current trends in multilateral performance and expression of needs by MOs	Review of key documents  Literature review  Survey of MO focal points  Interviews with MOPAN members, Secretariat staff, consultants, external stakeholders (including within case studies)
MOs and independent organisations have worked to develop new accountability system-wide frameworks (e.g. the UN system, MDBs) while reducing the "accountability burden". To what extent is MOPAN relevant to these efforts? To what extent does MOPAN complement or overlap with other accountability mechanisms and assessments?	Identification of other efforts to develop accountability frameworks, and their rationale  Comparison with MOPAN on rationale and methodology	Literature review  Interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff  Interviews with external stakeholders engaged / or informed about these efforts (e.g. OIOS, UNEG, JIU, evaluation units...), including in case studies

**Efficiency:** To what extent is MOPAN organised and working in an efficient way?

Addressing the efficiency question is an opportunity to describe the changes in MOPAN's activities, structure, and governance during the 2015-21 period, especially with respect to: 1) the Secretariat and its activities; 2) the human and financial resources dedicated to implementing MOPAN's work programme, and 3) members and their role in delivering MOPAN's mandate. We compare these changes with the ambitions of the 2015 "Reform Agenda". Initial investigations have shown potential issues for delivery capacity, which will also be examined. This description will then be useful in addressing the strategic question of the balance between the resources allocated to MOPAN and its ambitions.

We will also consider the pros and cons of the current hosting arrangement of MOPAN by the OECD, and compare with the International Transport Forum (ITF) and the FATF. Table 23 summarises our approach to the efficiency question.

**Table 23. Efficiency summary**

Issues investigated	Information used	Lines of evidence
MOPAN has undertaken important reforms over the 2015-21 period and increased the size and budget of the secretariat. What are these changes? What are their implications on costs? To what extent do these changes address the issues and shortcomings identified in 2015?	Identification of the main changes between 2015 and 2021 and comparison with the 2015 Reform Agenda and subsequent strategic orientations  Broad estimate of costs related to these changes	Review of internal governance documentation  Interviews with MOPAN members and Secretariat staff
The assessment process, which was previously outsourced, has changed considerably. It now involves several stakeholders at different stages. What are the costs associated with an assessment in terms of financial and human resources engaged by the staff and members?	Modelling of costs associated with an assessment	Internal data on human and financial costs  Interviews with MOPAN members, Secretariat staff and consultants
The changes implemented between 2015-21 have increased the workload of the Secretariat staff. What are the consequences of these changes on delivery capacity? Are the competencies available in MOPAN aligned with the needs?	Analysis of consequences of changes on delivery capacity and identification of future challenges for MOPAN regarding delivery	Internal data related to human and financial costs  Interviews with MOPAN members, Secretariat staff and consultants
MOPAN's hosting arrangement within the OECD has consequences for processes and workload, especially for the HoS. What would be the pros and cons of becoming a Part II body?	Comparison with FATF and ITF -- two other special entities hosted by OECD  Identification of potential efficiencies, benefits and risks associated with different operating and delivery models.	Interviews with Secretariat staff and FATF and ITF staff  Review of key documents related to hosting arrangements

## List of changes at MOPAN 2015-21

Table 24 presents changes at MOPAN between 2015 and 2021 identified through interviews, internal governance documentation, and public reports. We looked for changes agreed upon in the Steering Committee (SC) but which would not have been implemented but found none at this stage.

**Table 24. Changes at MOPAN 2015-21**

<b>Change path #1:</b> <b>The Secretariat has adopted strict processes for the delivery of assessments and for its functioning more generally.</b>	
<b>Commitment</b>	Professionalisation of the Secretariat
<b>Key dates</b>	2015: ToR clarifies the purpose and tasks of the Secretariat Secretariat grows from three Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) in 2013 to 12-13 in 2021
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General emphasis on professionalisation of project management from 2015 and reinforced after 2017.</li> <li>• Clarification of tasks allocated to Secretariat (2015), followed by clarification of tasks allocated to staff members (2018).</li> <li>• Increase in number of staff<sup>1</sup> and especially of assessment managers to cope with number of assessments and other activities such as engagement and communication (see below). On boarding new staff has significant consequences on workload.</li> <li>• Specialisation of staff dedicated to non-methodological matters: setting up of internal functions (budget, outreach, communication): recruitment of new dedicated staff. Since about 2018, all tasks or projects are more clearly under the responsibility of a staff member, to whom member countries may refer if needed.</li> <li>• Progressive move from horizontal to hierarchical structure. Introduction of 2 mid-level managers for governance/communication and programme management office (PMO), leading to changes in the distribution of responsibility within Secretariat.</li> <li>• Ongoing development of a PMO to set tools and standards around project management, better monitor projects, dependencies and workload, and structure lessons learning across the Secretariat. Recent efforts include the development of a time-tracking system to measure and document the time spent on different tasks – with a view to better plan activity if needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	SC minutes (2015/10) – ToR for MOPAN Secretariat SC minutes (2018/20) – Emerging outline for a 2020-24 strategic framework MOPAN's 2016 Workshop on medium-term strategy Interviews

<sup>1</sup> 3-4 full-time equivalent in 2015; 5 in late 2017; 8 in 2019; 12-13 in 2021.

<b>Commitment</b>	Improving assessment quality and consistency
<b>Key dates</b>	2014: IOD PARC awarded MOPAN contract 2018: New framework contract with several service providers
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Note: methodology discussed in change path 3)</li> <li>• 2014-18: Quality and Consistency mostly managed by IOD PARC internally. Consistency was a shared concern especially during the 2015-2016 cycle. IOD PARC invested in consistency across assessments, e.g. through seminars with the teams in charge, lesson sharing, internal quality assurance system; they also worked closely with Technical Working Group (TWG) on the shaping and understanding of key performance indicators (KPIs) and micro-indicators (MIs) when the 3.0 methodology was introduced. It seems that a satisfying level of consistency was progressively achieved once the practical aspects of conducting the assessments (not specified in the methodology) were set. Quality, however, has become a concern for the Secretariat in the final phases of the first batch of assessments (2016).</li> <li>• From 2016, in reaction, the Secretariat starts investing in quality, through an emphasis on on-time delivery (see below); and on professional-looking outputs. The Secretariat staff quality controls the reports starting in 2016. Editors and graphic designers are hired on contract for layout, language, typos, etc. This interest is directly related to the ambition set in the previous years to look “serious” to decision makers (see also Change Path Table 2).</li> <li>• Chronic understaffing was observed until 2018 when new assessment managers were recruited. Progressive specialisation of assessment managers (AMs) (in terms of intervention domain of multilateral organisations (MOs) or specific challenges related to an assessment) made possible by specialisation of staff (see above).</li> <li>• Development of standard operating procedures for assessments, describing tasks allocated to assessment managers in detail, and in particular how to engage with the stakeholders more consistently; includes quality assurance activities.</li> <li>• Ongoing efforts to help Institutional Leads (ILs) better carry out their role, including earlier implication, association to selection stage. Recruitment of ILs is a recurring concern and continuous activity. Recently, a learning event was organised to show members what being an IL meant — role, workload, practicalities, etc.</li> <li>• Changes from 2020 related totally or partly to new Framework Contract (FWC) arrangement:</li> <li>• Choice of provider guided by specific expertise rather than consistency. Overall, shift of the workload to the Secretariat for ensuring consistency.</li> <li>• In particular, organisation of seminars by Secretariat to help new providers understand the MOPAN methodology and favour consistency, as well as to address common technical considerations (e.g. adaptation of the framework to Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)).</li> </ul> <p>Introduction of an enhanced inception phase in MOPAN 3.1. Involvement of AM in the initial adaptation of the methodology and in the dialogue with the MO. Commitment and ability of AM to ensure consistency may vary and depend on their interests and skills (substance / multilateral system / methodology).</p> <p>Quality control at reporting stage introduced in 2018 and formalised in 2020 by defining explicit criteria in the ToRs of external reviewers. Performed by AM with support of external expert. Quality used to be considered in terms of 1) use of evidence in support of ratings, 2) the ability to provide useful insights or on ease of use. Since about 2020, a shift in the validity of findings, which was entirely in the remit of the service providers, is now more and more a shared responsibility (review of summary evidence table and subsequent versions of the report).</p> <p>Systematic coding of collected information in database maintained by Secretariat.</p> <p>At methodological level, efforts made to better understand how adaptation to MOs may affect consistency, starting in 2019 (see humanitarian study, and test of the adaptation to the case of UNOPS).</p>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>SC minutes (2015/10) – ToR for MOPAN Secretariat</p> <p>SC minutes (2018/20) – Emerging outline for a 2020-24 strategic framework</p> <p>MOPAN's 2016 Workshop on medium-term strategy</p> <p>Interviews</p>

<b>Commitment</b>	Making surveys more useful for assessment process
<b>Key dates</b>	2019: In-housing of MOPAN's survey
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract initially awarded to IOD Parc in 2015, which outsourced the survey to IPSOS Mori survey service provider.</li> <li>In 2016, SC's decision to abolish MOPAN member country facilitators' survey, which is deemed unnecessary and time-consuming. Further to this, each assessment was allowed to determine its own most relevant country sample, to make the survey more relevant.</li> <li>Concern with 1) higher transaction costs related to outsourcing of survey; low response rate to survey; and MOs mixed feedback on surveys (one of MOPAN methodology lines of evidence)</li> <li>2019: Allocation of one specialised staff with a mission to increase adaptation of survey to MO specificities, better target respondents and offer technical support.</li> </ul>

## Change path #2:

### Efforts to increase use of products

<b>Commitment</b>	Increasing dissemination
<b>Key dates</b>	2015 Outreach plan 2018 Dissemination strategy
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At strategic level</li> <li>In 2015, development of an outreach plan (focusing on the impact of assessments, broader support for MOPAN, and access to external methodological capacities).</li> <li>In 2015, development of a dissemination strategy that is more comprehensive and practical than the initial plan. It details the tasks to be implemented and dissemination channels (institutional, press, social media...) to develop.</li> <li>This led to the allocation of staff time to outreach as mentioned in Table 1.</li> </ul> <p>Content-wise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experimentation of location-based series of assessments (e.g. in Rome) to increase the visibility of dissemination events (and generate synergies between assessments). The first outreach event was implemented in 2015.</li> <li>Organisation of dissemination events (at launch / landing stages). These events went virtual in 2021.</li> <li>Organisation of learning events for members to disseminate results of analytical studies, starting in 2021. An ambition is to make these studies "living documents" than can be discussed several times in different settings.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	Outreach plan on MOPAN's 3.0 methodology and products (SC (2015)/30) Dissemination strategy (SC (2018)22) SC Minutes (04/2019)

<b>Commitment</b>	Improving availability of information
<b>Key dates</b>	2017 new briefs/report overhaul
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 2017, report template overhaul. Brief written by Secretariat staff with validation by HoS (replaces previous summary), to better answer the concerns of members. Inclusion of a summarising circle-shaped infographics presenting the results of the assessment.</li> <li>Given the length of the MOPAN process, presentation of preliminary findings before publication to feed events in MOs (e.g. meeting of governing body) or in members (e.g. replenishment).</li> <li>Ongoing project of data hub. A pilot repository was created and is now being upgraded as part of the broader data platform project. Follows a pre-2015 “repository” of information, requested by members but was not used.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	Interviews Internet Wayback machine

<b>Commitment</b>	Programming for use
<b>Key dates</b>	2018 Change in programming method
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“On-time delivery” (i.e. for use) is a recurrent concern of members at least since 2013.</li> <li>Enlargement of the scope, to include more specific organisations, including normative organisations, policy organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).</li> <li>Before 2018: Selection of MOs based on survey with members, accompanied with research by IOD Parc and Secretariat. Initial criteria included members’ funding amount or domestic agenda. In 2016, introduction of a new process. Members first receive information about each MO and then are surveyed on priorities and secondary interests. The secretariat then issues a list of the most cited MOs.</li> <li>In 2018, elaboration by Secretariat of country fiches to understand members’ internal needs and processes to understand what “on-time” means for each country. Integration of this knowledge in programming.</li> <li>Following an initial survey, the Secretariat proposes a list from which to choose that includes some important factors likely to improve use: sufficient frequency of assessment (at least five years between assessments of the same MO, to give them time to implement reforms) and a timely strategic alignment between assessments and the MOs’ cycles of reform/programming (trying to introduce the assessment while the MO is negotiating/is about to renegotiate future programming).</li> <li>This approach was reaffirmed in 2020, with an emphasis on the MOs context (including political aspects) while implementing an assessment, especially any risk that the MOPAN assessment will be manipulated or entangled in MO politics.</li> <li>Adoption of new one-year cycle (instead of two years) to be more reactive to upcoming events at multilateral level and on members’ agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	MOPAN/SC(2016)27 MOPAN/SC(2018)16 (trade-off between factors) SC minutes (2018/20, 2019/04) Interim synthesis paper on the member profile exercise (cf. MOPAN/SC (2018)28) (MOPAN/SC(2020

<b>Commitment</b>	Programming for use
<b>Key dates</b>	2018 Change in programming method
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “On-time delivery” (i.e. for use) is a recurrent concern of members at least since 2013.</li> <li>• Enlargement of the scope, to include more specific organisations, including normative organisations, policy organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).</li> <li>• Before 2018: Selection of MOs based on survey with members, accompanied with research by IOD Parc and Secretariat. Initial criteria included members’ funding amount or domestic agenda. In 2016, introduction of a new process. Members first receive information about each MO and then are surveyed on priorities and secondary interests. The secretariat then issues a list of the most cited MOs.</li> <li>• In 2018, elaboration by Secretariat of country fiches to understand members’ internal needs and processes to understand what “on-time” means for each country. Integration of this knowledge in programming.</li> <li>• Following an initial survey, the Secretariat proposes a list from which to choose that includes some important factors likely to improve use: sufficient frequency of assessment (at least five years between assessments of the same MO, to give them time to implement reforms) and a timely strategic alignment between assessments and the MOs’ cycles of reform/programming (trying to introduce the assessment while the MO is negotiating/is about to renegotiate future programming).</li> <li>• This approach was reaffirmed in 2020, with an emphasis on the MOs context (including political aspects) while implementing an assessment, especially any risk that the MOPAN assessment will be manipulated or entangled in MO politics.</li> <li>• Adoption of new one-year cycle (instead of two years) to be more reactive to upcoming events at multilateral level and on members’ agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	MOPAN/SC(2016)27 MOPAN/SC(2018)16 (trade-off between factors) SC minutes (2018/20, 2019/04) Interim synthesis paper on the member profile exercise (cf. MOPAN/SC (2018)28) (MOPAN/SC(2020

<b>Commitment</b>	Improving communication
<b>Key dates</b>	2020-21 Recruitment of a communication officer
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to improve communications around MOPAN activities and products was first mentioned in 2015/2016; operational details first discussed in 2018.</li> <li>• Several improvements to report layout. Additional efforts for new products.</li> <li>• New website (and logo) developed in 2018 (previous: 2009, 2011). All MOPAN outputs have always been available online</li> <li>• Recruitment of a communication officer (2021)</li> <li>• Ongoing efforts regarding new ambition to develop communication processes</li> <li>• Ongoing new strategy to create MOPAN brand awareness on the multilateral scene, with the idea that stakeholders cannot use MOPAN products if they do not know what they are.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	(SC 10/2015) MOPAN/SC(2018)20 Interviews



**Change path #3:****Methodological refinement and fine-tuning of the assessments**

<b>Commitment</b>	Programming for use
<b>Key dates</b>	2018 Change in programming method
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “On-time delivery” (i.e. for use) is a recurrent concern of members at least since 2013.</li> <li>• Enlargement of the scope, to include more specific organisations, including normative organisations, policy organisations or NGOs.</li> <li>• Before 2018: Selection of MOs based on survey with members, accompanied with research by IOD Parc and Secretariat. Initial criteria included members’ funding amount or domestic agenda. In 2016, introduction of a new process. Members first receive information about each MO and then are surveyed on priorities and secondary interests. The secretariat then issues a list of the most cited MOs.</li> <li>• In 2018, elaboration by Secretariat of country fiches to understand members’ internal needs and processes to understand what “on-time” means for each country. Integration of this knowledge in programming.</li> <li>• Following an initial survey, the Secretariat proposes a list from which to choose that includes some important factors likely to improve use: sufficient frequency of assessment (at least five years between assessments of the same MO, to give them time to implement reforms) and a timely strategic alignment between assessments and the MOs’ cycles of reform/programming (trying to introduce the assessment while the MO is negotiating/is about to renegotiate future programming).</li> <li>• This approach was reaffirmed in 2020, with an emphasis on the MOs context (including political aspects) while implementing an assessment, especially any risk that the MOPAN assessment will be manipulated or entangled in MO politics.</li> <li>• Adoption of new one-year cycle (instead of two years) to be more reactive to upcoming events at multilateral level and on members’ agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	MOPAN/SC(2016)27 MOPAN/SC(2018)16 (trade-off between factors) SC minutes (2018/20, 2019/04) Interim synthesis paper on the member profile exercise (cf. MOPAN/SC (2018)28) (MOPAN/SC(2020

<b>Commitment</b>	Differentiation (or customisation)
<b>Key dates</b>	2019 draft concept note on differentiation
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging theme along MOPAN 3.0 implementation, emphasised by IOD Parc and the 2017 Review.</li> <li>• 2019 Concept note highlights a balance to be struck between adaptation to case and comparability.</li> <li>• 2021 Structured review of previous MOPAN assessments. As suggested by 2019 concept note and decided in TWG 2021 work programme, the note explores how indicators were previously adapted to provide a factual basis for reflection for differentiating between “core” and “customised” indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	Concept note on differentiation (MOPAN(2019)10) and report (MOPAN(2019)37 TWG Minutes (5/2021) Structured review of previous MOPAN assessments

<b>Commitment</b>	Integration of country-level investigation
<b>Key dates</b>	N/A
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing reflection on the pros and cons of country-level investigations. The outcome would be the collection of more precise information about the actual implementation of MOs policies on site.</li> <li>• Potential actions: conducting interviews at country-level (with pre-identified partners or through “snowball sampling”) and opportunities of partnership with AidData (which gathers data about MOs influence at country-level).</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	“Enhancing the assessment at country level: TWG task 2021.1 Draft concept note” (TWG 18/2/2021).

#### Change path #4:

##### Development of new products

<b>Commitment</b>	Learning from existing assessments
<b>Key dates</b>	2018 First cross-assessment report 2019 Second cross-assessment report
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to learn from existing assessment is reaffirmed in 2017.</li> <li>• In 2017, pilot cross-analysis of 12 assessments conducted in 2015-16. At the request of the SC, a streamlined version is produced and published in 2018 intended to be “a proof of concept of what a MOPAN learning product could look like”. The cross analysis was also aimed at informing the 2018 methodological review.</li> <li>• A second cross-assessment report in 2019 looks at assessment between 2015 and 2018.</li> <li>• In 2021, a one-year cycle proposed to select and implement analytical studies, to fit with needs for information when they become apparent.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	MOPAN/SC/M(2017)2/REV MOPAN/SC(2017)21 MOPAN/SC(2017)20 SC Minutes (2018-1) MOPAN/SC(2019)14 MOPAN/SC(2020)7 / Selecting topics for MOPAN analytical studies (2021) Interviews

<b>Commitment</b>	Developing new products
<b>Key dates</b>	2019 First new learning product
<b>Changes observed</b>	<p>In 2018-19, first learning case study on collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP at country level and first MOPAN product produced in collaboration with MOs (rather than through an audit-like relationship). The case study has learning implications for MOs, and for MOPAN, as a test of collecting information at country level.</p> <p>In 2020-21, Inauguration of a “Lessons in multilateral effectiveness” series. The objective is to leverage MOPAN’s unique familiarity with MOs and apply its know-how to specific topics of interests. The climate change study is published in July 2021 to inform COP26, planned for November 2021. The UNDS reform study is the second instalment of the series and “seeks to provide an independent perspective on how the UNDS reforms have progressed”. It aims to “inform strategic thinking on UNDS reform in preparation for upcoming policy discussions”. Both studies rely on original data collection and employ very different design and layout compared to standard assessments.</p> <p>These new products leverage the new framework contract for competencies and skills needed. They are also an opportunity, through their RG, to involve member representatives in substantive work and to learn.</p>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>MOPAN(2018)6) - MOPAN Bureau Summary 5 June 2018 (Rome-Based agencies)</p> <p>MOPAN (2021), Pulling together: The multilateral response to climate change</p> <p>MOPAN (2021), Is this time different? UNDS Reform: The path to 2030</p>

<b>Commitment</b>	Improving the way in which performance is measured
<b>Key dates</b>	2020 SEAH Note for practitioners
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2019-20, development of a new set of indicators on SEAH involving staff of different MOs — UN-HCR, WFP, WHO, and the WB in the process. The publication specifically targets practitioners, a departure from the usual approach at MOPAN in which indicators are developed by the members, the Secretariat, and consultants and is an example of a joint process of quantification. The indicators were introduced in the methodology as part of MOPAN 3.1 in 2020.</li> <li>In 2020, contacts made with organisations such as AidData and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) regarding indicators used to monitor some specific aspects of MO performance.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>MOPAN/SC(2018)15/REV1 (SEAH)</p> <p>MOPAN (2019)39</p> <p>MOPAN TWG work plan for 21-22 (TWG 2/2020)</p> <p>Interviews</p>

## Change path #5: Clarification of governance arrangements

<b>Commitment</b>	Clarification of governance arrangements
<b>Key dates</b>	<p>2015 First reference document issued on MOPAN governance arrangements</p> <p>2015 ToRs for country facilitator, ILs and Secretariat</p> <p>2019 Governance review by R. Manning, Strategic workshop in Copenhagen, new governance arrangements</p>
<b>Changes observed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note: the need to clarify governance arrangements is a recurrent concern at MOPAN and particularly in 2015-16. There was a process of trial-and-error between members and the Secretariat about their respective remits, especially in relation to “daily business” of the network. The Secretariat is considered not “assertive” enough (2016) by members. Secretariat staff judge that some members are “micro-managing”.</li> <li>• In 2015, policy document on governance. ToRs for the Secretariat, ILs and country facilitators drafted. It is suggested that the SC mandates the bureau “to make decisions on its behalf for conduct of daily business that has little impact on the Network”.</li> <li>• In 2016, ToRs progressively drafted for MOPAN chair; bureau; SWG and TWG.</li> <li>• At the end of 2017, reiteration of need to “[improve] working methods and decision-making processes by distinguishing more clearly between governance and management functions, including through clear procedures and enhanced communication.”</li> <li>• Additional reflections are engaged in 2018-19 to better distinguish between strategy and management. At the same time a growing Secretariat can assume more functions.</li> <li>• In 2019, a strategic workshop is organized in Copenhagen on governance issues, and a governance review process is launched in parallel, with both IOD’s strategic review and seminars facilitated by consultant Richard Manning. Members agreed on the need for a clearer separation between the strategic and operational roles, “with MOPAN Members setting policy, strategy and objectives and the Secretariat implements to these”. Between the SC as a strategic body and the Secretariat as an implementing body, both the chair and members would act as facilitators and be committed actively to engaging members in the network.</li> <li>• Discussion results in adopting new governance arrangements (SC(2019)18) for participating in the network, SC meetings, decision-making through silent procedure, document management, management of the MoU and strategic planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>SC 10/2015 ToR</p> <p>SC 10/2015 document on governance</p> <p>SC 10/2016 ToR</p> <p>SC 10/2017</p> <p>Interviews</p>

<b>Commitment</b>	Providing a venue for strategic decision making
<b>Key dates</b>	2019 External expert Richard Manning hired for a stocktaking exercise on progress made and areas for optimisation
<b>Changes observed</b>	<p>Note: a specific point is to provide a venue for strategic decision making. The 2013 evaluation recommended having high-level input into MOPAN.</p> <p>In 2015, a senior-level donor meeting is organised back-to-back with SC, hosted by the USA. No other such meetings have been organised sin.</p> <p>The SWG has been dormant since 2017 and was wound up in 2019. The expectation was that the SC would be MOPAN's main sovereign body but interviewees have mentioned that the SC has difficulties considering strategic questions given the load of other questions to be addressed.</p> <p>Events are regularly organised / consultancy services commissioned to address strategic issues.</p> <p>The analysis of SC minutes suggests that since 2017 the Secretariat is allocated "strategic" tasks (i.e. as per the minutes). It is also understood from the interviews that the Secretariat sets the agenda (based on member feedback), giving it a prominent "strategic" role.</p> <p>The 2019 governance arrangements offer a general view of the MOPAN strategic planning cycle.</p>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>MOPAN Governance Compendium – working draft (MOPAN(2019)32)</p> <p>MOPAN/SC/M(2017)2/REV</p> <p>Evaluation of MOPAN (2013)</p>

<b>Commitment</b>	Opening to new members
<b>Key dates</b>	N/A
<b>Changes observed</b>	<p>Note: there is an old debate about MOPAN's constituency and especially whether it should be a club of like-minded donors or be open to more countries, including "emergent donors" and countries of the global South.</p> <p>In 2016, Bjorn Gillsater claimed that MOPAN should open to the Global South and philanthropy to limit future reputational risks.</p> <p>Since 2018, the United Arab Emirates joined MOPAN and Qatar and the EU have become observers.</p>
<b>Sources</b>	MOPAN/SC(2016)1



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