LEARNING FROM THE MOPAN ASSESSMENTS 2015-16

2015-16

Emerging Findings

MOPAN

Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network

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Learning from the 2015-16 MOPAN Assessments: Emerging Findings

This document presents an updated version of the detailed MOPAN cross assessment analysis presented at the October 2017 Steering Committee. It has been updated following a request at that meeting for the Secretariat to produce a streamlined, publicly available, version.

Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
IDA	International Development Association (World Bank Group)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MI	Micro-Indicator
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar

INTRODUCTION

MOPAN, the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network, has been assessing the performance of almost 30 multilateral organisations since 2003. In early 2017 it released the assessments of 12 organisations: AfDB, Gavi, Global Fund, IDB, ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, OCHA and the World Bank. While these assessments primarily serve an accountability function, they also offer valuable learning opportunities.

Indeed, as MOPAN sharpens its methodology and messages, and expands its reach to an increasing number of organisations, its potential to offer information on, and analysis of, the multilateral system grows. MOPAN looks forward to being able to offer information that is pertinent primarily for those who govern and invest in the multilateral system, but also for the organisations themselves and those who manage them on a day-to-day basis.

This paper represents a first attempt to learn from MOPAN reports.[1] It is the result of a pilot analysis across multiple assessments, whereby the 12 assessments conducted between 2015 and 2017 were analysed looking at challenges and mitigating practices in four areas chosen by MOPAN members:

- **Financing:** whether the financial framework of an organisation is fit for the implementation of its mandate and whether the organisation aligns its resources to key functions;

- **Learning from evaluations:** whether organisations properly evaluate their programmes and policies, and ensure that the lessons they yield have a real bearing on operations.

- **Cross-cutting issues** such as gender equality and environment: whether they are not merely identified in policies and strategies, but also translated into implementation; and

- **Crisis response:** whether organisations are putting in place the conditions that make them agile in the face of crises of various kinds, which have increased in scale and number over the past decades.

This paper does not endeavour to present 'best' or even 'good practice', or to rank or compare organisations. Rather, it simply highlights select challenges facing multilateral organisations and illustrations of practice from these organisations in these four areas. While such an analysis does not offer conclusions about the multilateral system as a whole, it may provide an indication of common challenges and practices found elsewhere in the multilateral system.

Each section begins with an overview of the issue area which highlights some macro-level trends, emerging challenges, and interesting practice. This is accompanied by a table which systematically lays out a challenge, generalised approach, and illustrations taken from the analysed assessments.

This piece of work is intended to be a proof of concept of what a MOPAN learning product could look like. The final section of this publication provides some further thoughts on what MOPAN's next steps could be in fostering a learning agenda.

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1. This analysis was originally presented at the 2017 October Steering Committee meeting, whereby the Secretariat was asked to produce a streamlined version. See October Steering Committee meeting summary [MOPAN/SC(2018)1].

FINANCING

MOPAN assessments consider whether the financial framework of an organisation is fit for the implementation of its mandate, and whether the organisation aligns its resources to key functions (see select KPIs and MIs in Table 1).

Though ODA provided through multilateral organisations grew by nearly 10% in 2016 and reached the same levels as bilateral development assistance, this masks several challenges multilateral organisations face in financing their operations.

Among those challenges, the MOPAN assessments in particular noted the **increasing ratio of non-core to core finance** in the UN system. For example, OCHA's core funding has shrunk from over 60% to 17% between 2012 and 2015, and UN-Habitat's from over 20% in 2012 to 3% in the same period.[1] Among other issues, increasingly fragmented and earmarked funding can make it difficult to allocate resources strategically, aligned to priority activities and timeframes. Organisations tackle this challenge in different ways: by diversifying their funding base, introducing integrated budgets, and using full cost recovery models.

Another key challenge was the **growing need for emergency funding.** Demand on funding has been unprecedented, with six Level 3 emergencies in a period of two years. UN Global Humanitarian Appeals are reaching record highs – USD 22.2 billion in 2017 – and are being matched by record gaps – 41% in 2016.[2] Organisations have responded by raising the ceiling of flexible financing mechanisms, soliciting more voluntary and private contributions. Gavi and the World Bank created new, innovative emergency funding models to transform long-term commitments into strategically timed finance (see Box 1).

Box 1. INNOVATIVE EMERGENCY FUNDING
Gavi's vaccine bonds and the World Bank's cat bonds

Gavi's International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) creates bonds in the capital markets on the back of long-term pledges from donor governments. This allows the funds to be used when and where Gavi determines it to be strategically most effective, and allows shifting predictable donor funding through time. This type of mechanism is critically important for public health as the timing and location of interventions make or break their overall impact.

A similar mechanism, designed to address emergency finance, is the World Bank's Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF). It was established in reaction to the Ebola crisis to finance rapid and effective response to a large-scale outbreak of a disease. It uses catastrophe ("cat") bonds, a model in which investors are paid a premium for assuming the reinsurance risk in a bond, and can potentially earn attractive yields. This is the first time such a financing system is introduced for severe infectious diseases and pandemic outbreaks.

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1. Source: OECD/DAC statistics.

2. Source: OCHA website, **http://www.unocha.org/cerf/about-us/cerf-at-a-glance** , as of 4 September 2017

Table 1. Micro-indicators on financing chosen for this section

The following MOPAN indicators provided information for this overview[3]:

Performance Area	Micro-Indicator[1]
Strategic Management	1.4 Financial framework (division between core and non-core resources) supports mandate implementation
Operational Management	3.1 Organisational structures and staffing ensure that human and financial resources are continuously aligned and adjusted to key functions
	3.2 Resource mobilization efforts are consistent with the core mandate and strategic priorities
Partnership Management	5.7 Institutional procedures positively support speed of implementation
	6.4 Strategies or designs identify synergies to encourage leverage/ catalytic use of resources and avoid fragmentation

3. Full detail available in the MOPAN Methodology at **http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/ourapproachmopan30/**.

Table 2- Financing: Challenges and Mitigating Practices

Challenges	Mitigating Practices	Illustrations
● Alignment between resource allocation and strategic/long-term priorities (in the face of increasing non-core finance)	● Special instruments to channel non-core funds into strategic areas	● Gavi has created a diverse set of mechanisms for non-core funds to be channelled strategically into particular areas or specific countries. These help ensure that funding in addition to its core replenishment is well-aligned with strategic priorities.
● Non-core funding often doesn't cover related administrative costs, obscuring true cost of programmes and leeching from core finance	● Full cost recovery models	● Following the UN's new central administrative system, UN-Habitat, UNDP, and UNICEF have all introduced full-cost recovery models to ensure non-core funding covers all costs related to programming. These transparent models are also helping change donor attitudes and understanding of costs to be more realistic.
● Fragmentation of funding increases transaction and administrative costs	● Joint programming and pooled finance ● Integrated budgets	● ILO has supplemented stagnating core finance through joint-programming initiatives under the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as well as through multi-partner trust funds. ● UN agencies increasingly use integrated budgets which combine programme and institutional budgets. These have streamlined reporting for UNDP and UNICEF, who first adopted the approach for 2014-17.
● Finance not agile enough for rapid deployment in emergencies	● Increasing the ceilings of emergency finance mechanisms ● Special emergency financing mechanisms and policies	● UNICEF raised the ceiling of its Emergency Programme Fund to address the need for non-earmarked funding to humanitarian crises. ● The UN General Assembly more than doubled the annual funding target for the non-earmarked Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), managed by OCHA for the whole UN system (to USD 1 billion by 2018). ● In addition to an emergency programme fund, UNICEF's Director is allowed discretionary spending up to 7% of regular resources for urgent needs.

LEARNING FROM EVALUATIONS

Multilateral organisations are expected to measure their own performance and learn from their own experience. Managing knowledge well, deploying it effectively, and learning from evaluations matters greatly in this process. MOPAN assessments stress the importance of properly evaluating programmes and policies, as well as ensuring that those evaluations yield lessons that have real bearing on operations (see select KPIs and MIs in Table 2).

The 12 assessments emphasize that conducting **evaluations** of high quality, credibility, appropriate frequency, and with shared ownership, is a necessary but not sufficient condition to learning from evaluations. Organisations must also address the challenge of ensuring that there is dissemination and uptake of the findings so that they have an impact on programming.

As reflected in MOPAN's methodology, there are broadly speaking three main stages in this chain: evaluation, response, and action. Organisations address the challenge of an effective response with management responses that set out a detailed, clear action plan that determines time-bound commitments, responsible parties, and specific targets. They disseminate their own commitments by managing information (ideally in a public database) around evaluation recommendations, the management response and commitments, and actions taken to meet those commitments.

Box 2. SPECIAL CASE – UNDP's Learning Platform

UNDP maximises the value of its evaluations and lessons not only through robust internal dissemination mechanisms but also by repackaging and sharing information with a range of partners. They hope not only to inform their own policies and programmes, but to also ensure that the whole development sector benefits from their gathered knowledge. The World Bank takes a similarly collaborative and open approach.

Table 3: Micro-indicators on results, learning and knowledge management chosen for this section

Performance Area	Micro-Indicator
Partnership Management	**KPI 6: The organisation works in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and/or ensuring relevance and catalytic use of resources**
	6.6 Key information (analysis, budgeting, management, results, etc.) are shared with strategic / implementation partners on an ongoing basis
	6.9 Deployment of knowledge base to support programming adjustments, policy dialogue, and/or advocacy
Performance Management	**KPI 7 Systems are geared to managing and accounting for […] results and the use of performance information, including evaluation and lesson learning**
	7.1 Leadership ensures application of an organisation-wide RBM approach
	7.2 Corporate strategies […] based on sound RBM focus and logic
	7.3 Results targets set based on a sound evidence base and logic
	7.4 Monitoring systems generate high quality and useful performance data
	7.5 Performance data transparently applied in planning and decision-making
	KPI 8 Planning and programming are based on evidence
	8.1 A corporate independent evaluation function exists
	8.2 Consistent, independent evaluation of results (coverage)
	8.3 Systems applied to ensure the quality of evaluations
	8.4 Mandatory demonstration of the evidence base to design new interventions
	8.5 Poorly performing interventions proactively identified, tracked and addressed.
	8.6 Clear accountability system ensures responses, follow-up to and use of evaluations
	8.7 Uptake of lessons learned and best practices from evaluations

Table 4: Learning: Challenges and mitigating practices

Challenges	Mitigating Practices	Illustrations
• Ensuring evaluation lessons are usable, build on each other, and are disseminated	• Collation of evaluation findings and recommendations • Synthesis through meta-evaluation • Internal and external publication of evaluation recommendations and follow-up • Using evaluation findings as the basis for internal training	• AfDB uses one of its many accountability tools, an audit compilation system, as a basis for internal training of staff. • In addition to sharing lessons, recommendations, and implementing responses to them, UNDP conducts robust meta-analysis of evaluations in products like lessons learned studies. It also develops public learning products with the dual benefit of promoting accountability and supporting other development actors.
• Management and organisational responses that help ensure action and accountability	• Required management responses which are detailed, clear, and contain action plan with time-bound commitments, responsibility attributed to parties, and specific targets • Publication of recommendations, responses, and implementation	• OCHA, ILO, UNEP and the World Bank all require detailed and time-bound action plans that specify who is accountable in response to evaluations. OCHA and UNEP also set specific response rate targets to maintain high ambition. • The World Bank maintains a detailed tracker of the use and implementation of evaluation recommendations which is publicly available.
• Ensuring lessons are used	• Database of recommendations, responses, and implementation/use in programming and policy • Policy requiring new programming to draw on evaluation recommendations and past knowledge • Facilitating shared ownership	• Several organisations (UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank) require new interventions to demonstrate learning from past experience. The World Bank also tracks the degree to which this is done through a systematized database. • UNEP is working to increase shared ownership of lessons emerging from evaluations. It is doing so by shifting some responsibility to follow up on recommendations from senior management to the project and programme management levels.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES: GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT

Multilateral organisations increasingly understand and integrate cross-cutting priorities into their operations. In particular, this analysis looks at approaches for integrating gender equality, and environmental sustainability and climate change.

One aspect to addressing cross-cutting issues is simply identifying them as issues and developing a policy statement toward them. All 12 organisations assessed in 2015-16 meet this bar with regards to **gender equality.** However, a common challenge is ensuring this translates into implementation. Organisations accomplish this by integrating gender into strategic outcomes, by using gender certification programmes, and by producing sex-disaggregated data.

There are more wide-ranging differences in how organisations mainstream **environmental** issues **and climate change**. The way organisations frame this issue ranges from a priority to merely looking at the organisation's own climate footprint. The implementation challenge here is met by consistently screening programmes for climate change and environmental impact and setting targets for operations related to resilience.

A challenge common to implementing both cross-cutting issues is one simply of resourcing, both human and financial. While this was a challenge frequently cited as a cause of the gap between policy and practice, it is an issue which may have deeper roots (including in the political economy of organisations) which go beyond the scope of this analysis. Effective and consistent implementation of gender, environmental or climate change policies is most likely a consequence of an adequately resourced approach with clear political backing. (For a selection of KPIs and MIs related to cross-cutting issues, see Table 3).

Box 3. SPECIAL CASE – UNSWAP and GenCap

UNSWAP – A UN System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which represents executives from 31 UN agencies, affiliated bodies, and other groups. UN Women has a leading role in supporting the implementation of the plan, which uses a framework with 15 performance indicators based on intergovernmental mandates. It helps unify and formalize advancement of gender equality issues across the UN system, including through integrating gender into results based management and monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

GenCap – The Gender Standby Capacity Project is an Inter-Agency Standing Committee initiative housed in UNOCHA. It facilitates mainstreaming gender across all sectors and clusters in a humanitarian response. This is done practically by deploying gender capacity advisors to support humanitarian country teams and Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators in emergencies.

Table 5: Micro-indicators on cross-cutting issues chosen for this question

Performance Area	Micro-Indicator
Strategic Management	**KPI 2 Structures and mechanisms in place and applied support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels**
	2.1 a Gender equality
	2.1 b Environmental sustainability and climate change
	2.1 c Good governance (peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, reduced inequality, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
	2.1 d Human rights
Partnership Management	5.5 Intervention designs include the analysis of cross-cutting issues (as defined in KPI 2)
Results	9.4 Intervention assessed as having realised the expected positive benefits for target group members
	9.5 Interventions assessed as having helped improve environmental sustainability/ helped tackle the effects of climate change
	9.6 Interventions assessed as having helped improve governance (as defined in 2.1 c)

Table 6: Cross-cutting issues: Challenges and mitigating practices

Challenges	Mitigating Practices	Illustrations
● Tracking results around gender	● Developing indicators and targets disaggregated by sex ● Collecting results data disaggregated by sex	● UNDP has made substantial strides in this direction; 27 out of 28 country programmes examined by MOPAN had sex-disaggregated indicators. ● AfDB's results measurement framework for the "high fives", in place since 2016, contains sex-disaggregated indicators.
● Integrating gender equality, environment and climate change at implementing level, including by partners	● Procedures and processes requiring mainstreaming gender equality, environment and climate change into projects, programmes, and other planning documents	● The World Bank and the AfDB both have integrated safeguards systems that require that all project documents to be screened against criteria on gender equality, environment and climate change, among others. ● The AfDB's Integrated Safeguards System (ISS) requires all AfDB projects to implement, and follow-up on, mitigation measures where needed. Before financial institutions can receive loans, the AfDB checks that they have environmental and social management systems that meet the Bank's standards. Where this is not the case, the AfDB supports governments in developing the capacity to achieve compliance with its Safeguards System. ● UNEP's Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability Framework sets nine Safeguard Standards for its own and its executing partners' activities. Although they mainly reflect a "do no harm" commitment, there are plans to expand them into a more comprehensive commitment to "do good".
● Accounting for climate change and environmental factors in programming	● Incentivising and specially allocating resources/programming to climate change and environmental issues ● Mainstreaming climate resilience	● The AfDB's climate change action plan sets out performance targets for investments in different sectors. ● The World Bank has an Inspection Panel that serves as an independent mechanism to ensure compliance with the Bank's social and environmental safeguards framework for all World-Bank supported projects. ● IDB implements a lending target of 25% for projects supporting climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and sustainable energy. It also assesses climate risk and resilience and the impact on climate change of each project. Finally, it is working towards tracking and incentivizing climate change and adaptation results.

EFFECTIVE IN A CRISIS

With the growing scale and number of emergencies around the world, an increasingly important aspect of organisational performance is how organisations are set up to respond to crises, and whether their systems allow them to do so effectively and efficiently. MOPAN's assessments have no indicators explicitly dedicated to measuring an organisation's responsiveness to crises. However, they capture several aspects that speak to this issue, most significantly an organisation's agility in terms of decentralised decision-making, delegated authority, and staffing (see select KPIs and MIs in Table 4). MOPAN assessments also cover several aspects laid out in the Grand Bargain commitments, such as more collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding, and steps to improve the link between humanitarian aid and support for longer-term resilience and development.

Although only two of the 12 organisations assessed in 2015-16 had a humanitarian mandate, and five have committed to the Grand Bargain, all made efforts to address the challenge of being **more responsive in crisis** situations.

All organisations assessed in 2015-16 had made strides to delegate more programmatic and financial decision-making power to country offices in order to better respond to evolving needs. Several strengthened their regional hubs and country staffing, or – if they lacked direct representation at country level – customized their grant procedures to better fit the specific local context. However, MOPAN found that recruitment processes in several UN organisations were lengthy and reduced their speed and agility, but were largely outside of the organisations' direct control. Indeed, more generally, the assessments noted that a common denominator in UN organisations seemed to be the tension between centralised, HQ-driven procedures and practices on the one hand, and the need to be more responsive and agile with regard to staffing and delegated programmatic and financial authority, on the other.

MOPAN assessments noted the efforts that multilateral organisations are making to strengthen the **link between humanitarian assistance, longer-term resilience and development**. Both humanitarian organisations assessed have already been working with multi-year country strategies for many years, in keeping with the Grand Bargain. They now also complement those with multi-year results frameworks in order to ensure they work with a longer-term view. An increasing number of (inter-agency) Common Humanitarian Action Plans now explicitly link to development frameworks.

At the same time, much work remains to be done to translate intentions into action. **Sustainability** is rarely addressed in country strategies, and efforts to integrate humanitarian-development linkages do not yet permeate systems, from strategies to evaluations.

Table 7: Micro-indicators on crisis response chosen for this section

Performance Area	Micro-Indicator
Strategic Management	1.2 Organisational architecture congruent with a clear long term vision and associated operating model
	1.3 Strategic Plan supports the implementation of wider normative frameworks and associated results
Operational Management	3.3 Aid reallocation / programming decisions responsive to need can be made at decentralised level
Partnership Management	6.1 planning, programming and approval procedures enable agility in partnerships when conditions change
Results	10.3 Results assessed as having been delivered as part of a coherent response to an identified problem
	12.1 Benefits assessed as continuing or likely to continue after project or program completion, or, there are effective measures to link humanitarian relief operations to recovery, resilience, and eventually to longer-term development results

Table 8: Crisis response: Challenges and mitigating practices

Challenges	Mitigating Practices	Illustrations
● Readiness and agility in handling sudden-onset crisis	● Decentralised/flexible decision-making, project approval, and resource allocation ● Introducing emergency procedures for project approval ● More responsive recruitment processes	● UNDP found that, by decentralising project approval through its local Project Appraisal Committees, which linked country-level teams and appropriate HQ-level units, it was able to more effectively response to Ebola in West Africa and the Nepal Earthquake. ● In addition to an emergency programme fund, UNICEF's Director is allowed discretionary spending up to 7% of regular resources for urgent needs (see Section 1).
● Sustainability and coherence of emergency interventions with development efforts	● Multi-year funding ● Integrated financial instruments ● Integrated organisational structure ● Inter-agency coordination and cooperation	● An increasing number of Common Humanitarian Response Plans (CHAP) – in countries such as Afghanistan, DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Myanmar and Somalia – are now explicitly linking humanitarian strategies of multiple agencies to interagency development frameworks. ● UNICEF brought the Programme Division and the Office of Emergency Programmes under one pillar, to help respond to issues that span both humanitarian and development. ● The OCHA-managed Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) and Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) mechanisms have been found to function well in forging links between recovery, resilience and development, as part of an overall suite of response mechanisms at country level.

MOPAN'S AGENDA FORWARD
More analysis for better assessments

MOPAN's main focus since 2002 has been to assess multilateral organisations' performance, individually, for accountability purposes. This focus remains and will continue to be strengthened. However, it is only by ensuring that the multilateral system improves globally, and in particular in its capacity to self-generate credible performance and results achievement information, that true accountability towards all stakeholders can be attained in the long run, and results achieved. One key goal for MOPAN therefore remains supporting its Members' quest to improve the multilateral system. MOPAN pursues this endeavour primarily by working through its members, who participate in the multilateral organisations' governing bodies; but to a lesser extent also by working with Organisations' management and staff.

As its body of work has grown over the years, MOPAN can now begin to look at practices across many different organisations. This allows MOPAN to more broadly understand common challenges that face organisations, the different practices organisations deploy to mitigate their negative effects, but also how MOPAN Members' own behaviour interacts with these phenomena. As Members agreed, improving and intensifying MOPAN's analytical work is part and parcel of delivering better assessments. However this needs to be undertaken through an iterative approach based on pilots.

The work above represents a low-cost foray into this endeavour, and illustrates the immense possibilities of a more robust approach. The question of how to effectively communicate these challenges, to ensure cross-fertilisation of effective practices, and to more broadly contribute to dialogue about multilateralism remains.

As MOPAN continues to work on its learning agenda, we are always open to hearing your views and suggestions. For any contributions and ideas, contact us at secretariat@mopanonline.org