NWO ARF6 'Legitimate Stability'
11 July uptake meeting
Meeting notes

Main conceptual feedback on the Results Framework

General questions/comments

- Is the purpose of the results framework to learn or accountability (e.g. to Parliament)? Currently, it seems like the latter is prioritized. A quantitative focus limits reflection. Answering this question will aid in determining what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) wants to measure.

- Currently, assumptions are only made explicit in the Theory of Change (ToC). Do they cover all results framework assumptions? Can results framework assumptions also be made more explicit for a more robust framework? (e.g. Rule of Law [RoL] leads to more legitimate stability)

- When deciding whether to engage with Non State Actors (NSA) or not, there is a range of questions one can ask:
  - In case you do not engage, do you cut off any way to influence these organizations/groups? By engaging with these actors, you could mitigate the bad practices? What are the consequences, and what does this mean in terms of conflict sensitivity?
  - In case you do decide not to engage, what does it mean for the civilians that group interacts with? You might penalize citizens in the area where a NSA is governing. This means this choice can actually impact mostly on the poorest and most vulnerable. And, again, what are the consequences, and what does this mean in terms of conflict sensitivity?
  - It is important to not take for granted that the NSA will be willing to engage with a foreign entity. Fear of spies and anti-western sentiments can create insurmountable barriers to engagement. Or it may be just a reputational image the group seeks to build, but in reality they are more pragmatic and willing to cooperate (e.g. USAID funded projects are often publically disparaged, but tacitly accepted)
  - Perhaps most importantly, are there opportunities to put into place some level of accountability between these actors and a donor, or – better still – these actors and the civilians they engage.

Definitions

- The concept of legitimacy/ legitimate stability needs further developing/refining/defining within the MFA before the Results Framework can be improved to properly reflect that notion: what is legitimate behaviour and what should we expect to see from governments?
  - Local/national/international definitions of legitimacy may differ. A policy choice will need to be made here and made explicit.
    - Whose legitimacy are you abiding by?
    - What if local legitimacy goes against NL values?
  - This may also require more clearly defining the pillars: How do we define RoL?

- Legitimacy needs to be recognized more as a process rather than a property or end-goal (Making it more similar to 'strengthening the rule of law' than to 'free and fair elections')
  - This also gets to questions about the measurability of legitimacy. If it is treated as a process, then success or progress will be assessed by tracking sub-goals, again similar to strengthening RoL. Alternatively, to set up a 'Legitimacy barometer' or 'Legitimacy Index' can reinforce the idea of legitimacy as a property over 'legitimation' as a process. *There are a number of global indices that already measure legitimacy as part of their conceptual frameworks. E.g. the Fragile States Index measures 'State Legitimacy'.*
  - Expectations and perceptions are important for legitimacy.

- It cannot be taken for granted or assumed that local authorities enjoy broad legitimacy (proximity to citizens does not necessarily mean actors are legitimized); they are often under pressure from national authorities

- NL domestic political considerations also come into play. Even if the MFA had a solid concept of what it meant to be 'legitimate' or a 'legitimate authority', it wouldn't guarantee that they could engage with all the actors who met that standard. It is important to recognize that, as an external intervener, the NL is never neutral.
  - Interventions will <u>always</u> impact legitimacy. How do you square issues such as a rights-based approach undermining legitimacy of local actors?

- It is important that the reason for declaring one actor 'legitimate' (and supporting that actor with resources) can be explained to people who will be effected - they may not agree with or accept the decision, but at the very least they should understand the position the NL takes in supporting an actor.

Indicators

- It might be possible (and preferable) to formulate indicators that help policy officers determine whether to engage NSA, and clarify why this would or would not be advisable in a given context; Such indicators, when directly paired with development assistance may even promote or induce behaviors that the MFA considers essential for legitimate stability, e.g.:
  - likelihood that the non-state actor will become (or would want to become) part of the state in the long run;
  - the degree to which they are in competition with the state; or
  - long-term potential for more inclusive provision of security, justice, development.
  Rather than including these remarks in the already long list of indicators of the Results Framework, it could be considered to incorporate them in the language of the outcome areas. Nevertheless, it remains critical to evaluate the underlying ToC and to see whether this is based on evidence, or a proven and sensible logic for certain outputs to lead to outcomes.

- The MFA has purposively included indicators to ensure a people-centered focus of the Results Framework. Perception indicators have a number of advantages and disadvantages
- Perceptions can be overly optimistic or overly pessimistic. Perception indicators should be coupled with attempting to measure reality.
  - Perception surveys are useful to measure (relative) change within a context, but are problematic to use in absolute terms or to compare contexts.

- Perceptions are more important and indicative in specific topics (for instance in PVE perceptions are incredibly important)

- It is important to start a dialogue with partners on what they are already measuring, and what can be used.

Specific feedback on the language in the current Results Framework

- Outcome 1.1 could mention 'civilians' rather than citizens. The current wording excludes refugees and other civilians without papers.

- Outcome 3.2 singles out political parties and parliaments as the (only?) governing actors. In practice, in facilitating peace processes and political governance the MFA will have to work with a broader range of actors. The MFA could remove the reference to 'political parties and parliaments' and have the outcome read: *National and local level governance is more inclusive and accountable, by promoting democratic space and inclusive political decision-making.*
    - In output 3.3.2, civil society engagement is sought after, but that is to support working towards the outcome, which focuses on only political parties and parliament.

- Pillar 3: Political governance is separated from peace processes, while in reality they are blended.

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with the KPSRL Secretariat for more information.