Extract from Sida’s Guidance for Results Based Management in Sida’s Contribution Management as per 14 May 2020

It is primarily the task of Sida's cooperation partners, responsible for the implementation of programmes, to apply RBM. The task of a Sida desk officer is not to formulate objectives or identify indicators, but to assess the cooperation partner's application of RBM. Sida uses dialogue, and, if necessary capacity development to encourage a partner to apply RBM in a satisfactory manner.

Sida's Requirements on RBM in project/programme documents

Sida’s rule for contribution management requires that the development intervention has objectives that enable monitoring and reporting of results.

Sida does not require interventions to be presented in a specific format or terminology, since Sida welcomes its partners to use the methods for results-based management that they find adequate for the intervention in question.

Irrespective of method and format a project/programme document must comprise information that provides answers to the following questions:

What is to be achieved? (objectives at different levels)

Are there objectives at different levels? It is common that these are presented as:

- Outputs (the immediate result of an activity)
- Outcome (short- and medium term effects of the outputs)
- Impact (long term effects that go beyond the intervention, often a bigger picture of societal or country change).

The terminology used for the different levels or the number of levels does not matter. What matters is that it seems plausible that one level of objectives will lead to the next level. It is important that it is clear what objectives will be achieved by the end of the programme.

What is the causality, or the thinking, behind the envisaged change? How will the cooperation partners' inputs and activities contribute to the expected changes, and what will they, in turn, lead to? This is, in other words, the theory of change or intervention logic.

This relationship can be described by the objectives in a matrix or by a narrative text. The format does not matter. It is important, however, that the assumptions and risks behind the causality are clarified.

How will the objectives be achieved, i.e. what are the causal relationships and assumptions regarding how the objectives are to be achieved? (intervention logic or theory of change)

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How will the intervention be monitored and/or evaluated, i.e. how will your cooperation partner and you know if the intervention is leading to the objectives? (monitoring method, which often involves indicators)

This information is often presented in a matrix but it can also be presented in another format.

Indicators, targets and baseline data are often used when monitoring interventions although they are not mandatory. What matters is that your partner is able to monitor progress and that your partner has chosen a monitoring method that is appropriate for the intervention.

Sida's Requirements on RBM in reports

A report should provide information that:

- **Enables Sida to assess the achievement of results**

We need to know what the partner has achieved, that is, what the performed activities have led to. But remember that development takes time; at an early stage of an intervention the results may be reported more in the form of what has been carried out in regards to activities.

However, you should also encourage partners to give examples of individuals who have started changing their behaviour, attitudes, or relations in as much as this can be seen.

- **Shows that your cooperation partner applies RBM, i.e. that the partner monitors the intervention and analyses and acts on results information.**

This means showing that your partner monitors the intervention, analyses results information, and acts on it.

The partner's ability to assess what performed activities have led to is an indication that the partner applies RBM. It is also important that the partner seeks to answer the questions:

  - What are the reasons behind the results or lack of results?
  - What can be done in order to increase chances of achieving results?

And by doing so, strives to adapt the intervention accordingly.

- **Reflects the programme document and the latest annual work plan.**

The report should be in line with what was agreed on in the programme document and in the work plan.

However, as development cannot be fully predicted, plans and objectives may be adjusted. Requests for Sida's approval of such adjustments can sometimes be a healthy sign of the partner's application of RBM.

- **Accounts for activities and outputs at a sufficient level in order for you to assess whether the expenditures stated in the financial report are reasonable.**

The report must account for activities and outputs at a sufficient level for you to assess whether the expenditures stated in the financial report are reasonable

Practical Advice on Assessments and Dialogue about Programme Documents

Experience shows that it is easier for our cooperation partners to understand our requirements when we avoid results terminology and instead express ourselves using ordinary language.

The questions below can be used as guidance when assessing the programme document and reports. In case you do not find the answer to the questions in the document, you should raise them with your partner.

- What is supposed to be different by the end of the intervention?
- Which individuals or groups are going to change their attitudes, relations, or behaviour and in what way?
- What is the target group not capable of, that they will be capable of by the end of the intervention?
- How will the objectives be achieved? How will the cooperation partner's inputs and activities contribute to the expected changes, and what will they, in turn, lead to? How will this lead to the partner achieving objectives by the end of the intervention?
- What are the preconditions for x to lead to y, for y to lead to z, and so on?
- How will the cooperation partner know if the intervention is leading to the objectives?
- What will be the signs that changes are happening?
- Will the indicators or monitoring method reveal meaningfulness, progress, and need for adaptation?
- What data will be collected and what for? Who will collect and who will use the data, and when?

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The questions below can be used as guidance when assessing programme document and reports. In case you do not find the answer to the questions in the document, you just raise them in the dialogue with your partner.

- What has been achieved?
- Whose knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, or relations have changed and in what way?
- If the activities have not led to the expected results, what are the reasons for this?
- Are there indications that your partner is interested in addressing the reasons for the lack of results?