Annex 9B

GUIDANCE FOR CASE STUDIES

SPA partners are expected to produce three high-quality case studies per year, mapped onto domains of change, and produced according to a standard template. This document provides some brief guidance notes covering the case study template. Case studies may be very different from one another according to the subject and context, so these guidelines should be seen as inclusive rather than exclusive, and advisory only. However, the headings for the case studies are mandatory. Part one of the document provides some general guidelines. Part two provides advice on the kind of information required for case studies focusing on different domains of change.

Part One: General Guidance

Basic Information

Information should be filled in as follows.

Headline: A short, snappy headline for the case study.

Domains of Change: An indication of the domain(s) of change covered by the case study. At least one box should be ticked, and as many as appropriate. The case study should cover sufficient detail on the relevant domains of change, and a box should only be ticked if there is reported change, not if change is only expected in the future.

Name of Danish CSO: The name of the SPA partner developing the case study.

Name of Southern partner(s): The name of the Southern partner, or main Southern partner(s), involved in the case study. This is particularly important given the Danish focus on local leadership, and the desire to give Southern partners due credit for their contributions to change. Acronyms should be spelled out where possible.

Year of submission: The year in which the case study was submitted. For the first year of the SPA period 2022-2025, this will be 2022, for the second year 2023, etc. Cases can be based on long-term changes that only come to light over several years. However, it is important that cases reflect up-to-date knowledge and do not merely refer to changes that have been known for several years and do not reflect an update to on-going interventions related to the year of submission. If the case study is an update of a previous one, then the year of submission should reflect the updated case study, not the original.

Name of the project / programme / approach: If the case study covers a project or programme then the name should be included here. If the case study covers a broader approach, or cuts across multiple programmes, then a suitable name for the approach should be entered, e.g. Work with refugee-led organisations in multiple Sub-Saharan African countries.

Project/programme period: The relevant project or programme period, specifying month and year (e.g. Jan 2022 – May 2024). If the project or programme preceded the current SPA period then the start date should be no earlier than the first month/year of the current SPA period. However, the text within the case study could reference work carried out earlier. If the project or programme is ongoing at time of writing then please write 'ongoing', e.g. 'May 2022 – ongoing'.

Country: The country or countries covered by the case study. If the case study is based on work at a regional level, then the relevant region can be inserted instead.

Constituency: The primary target group(s) covered by the case study.

Summary: A summary of less than 1000 characters, outlining the main features of the case, but with particular emphasis on the changes described. This summary will be the main entry-point for the case study, and will eventually appear on the OpenAid website. The limit of 1000 characters, including spaces, is because of the limitations of the OpenAid website.

Context

This section should comprise a short description of the context of the intervention (project, programme or approach) that forms the basis of the case study. It should describe the original situation before the work started, and explain why the intervention was needed. If appropriate, it could be based on an initial baseline or situational analysis.

Objectives

This section should detail the main goals, purpose or objectives of the project, programme or approach. Where relevant, it may be drawn from a Theory of Change, strategy or plan. The following information might be included.

The main purpose or objectives: What the intervention is (or was) trying to achieve, and why it is important.

The main targets of the intervention: The people, communities, organisations, policies or situations that were affected (or might be affected) by the intervention.

The main actions taken to achieve the objectives or purpose: This should not be a long list of activities, but should instead outline the main approaches, strategies, tactics or activities designed to achieve the objectives of the intervention.

Change

This section should outline the main change(s) brought about through the intervention. Some of the main elements that might be covered are as follows.[1]

The main changes that have been realised: This section will be heavily dependent on the relevant domain of change. For example, a case study focusing on the policy domain may focus primarily on changes in discourse, policy change or policy implementation, whereas a case study focusing on the partnership domain may focus on a new kind of partnership or changes within an existing partnership. Further guidance is provided in part two of this document.

The evidence that demonstrates the changes: This may be the most important part of the case study. There is a big difference between describing the findings of a large study, and findings based on ad-hoc conversations. Describing the evidence allows readers to assess its value. The evidence needs to provide a plausible linkage between the described change and the intervention set out in the theory-of-change. "Plausible" refer to a strong likelihood that the intervention contributed to the change, while "linkage" refers to showing a relationship between activities and the change. In its simplest form, this can be done by reassessing the theory-of-change after the change has taken place: "After we did X, then Y occurred, because Z."

Claim management: It is important to evaluate the claims presented in case studies. Some changes are a matter of record (e.g. the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding or a new policy being passed in a Parliament). But others may rely on a combination of experience and verifiable evidence. For example, it is important to differentiate believes – such as *'project staff believe that there has been a significant increase'* – from statements based on evidence such as *'a survey shows 30% have gained formal employment'* or *'outcome harvesting shows that there have been unintended consequences'.* The difference between such claims should thus be clearly labelled (see underlined examples).

Credibility of evidence for change

When reporting change it is important to consider the credibility of any evidence. In general, the greater the significance of the change claimed, the more credible the evidence needs to be. For example, widespread changes in the lives of target populations may require robust evidence from surveys or large, qualitative research studies. By contrast, a change related to the development of a new partnership or collaboration may be based interviews with stakeholders. If evidence is not credible, it does not necessarily mean it is inaccurate. It may simply mean that further data collection and analysis needs to take place until the evidence is considered sufficient for the change that is being claimed.

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[1] If more guidance is needed, INTRAC has produced a short brief on reporting change. This can be found in INTRAC's M&E Universe at https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Reporting-change.pdf

> It is not always easy to generalise as each case may be different. However, changes relating to external stakeholders will usually need more credible evidence than changes within partners or alliances. For example, policy changes (including changes in discourse, agenda setting, policy implementation and systemic change) are likely to require a high threshold of evidence if the claims are to be credible. And this would be similar for changes in the capacity of external bodies, such as government ministries, or changes in relationships between different groups based on networking or convening.
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> By contrast, the threshold of evidence required may be lower when considering changes in the capacity of partners, the extent of participation of marginalised groups, or the extent of local leadership. In these cases, evidence may be a mixture of formal and informal M&E. When assessing the credibility of evidence in these situations, a lot of weight needs to be given to the views of local stakeholders, such as Southern partners or representatives of marginalised groups. This is consistent with the Danish focus on local leadership and ownership, and with principles of participatory M&E.

The significance of the change: Some changes are relatively minor, whilst others are major and life-changing. Sometimes this is obvious, especially when changes concern tangible changes in peoples' lives. However, at other times you will need to emphasise the importance of a change. For example, the fact that two formerly opposed groups have met may not mean much unless it is accompanied by an explanation of why their meeting is important.

The potential long-term implications of the change: If reporting on a long-term sustainable change in the lives of individuals it is usually clear what the benefits are. However, case studies will often focus on outcomes – the immediate changes resulting from an intervention. In these cases it may not be clear what the eventual, hoped-for changes are. For example, a case study might state that a partner has higher capacity; a new policy has been developed; or there has been increased collaboration between different stakeholders. For an external audience it may be important to clarify why these are considered important changes, and what is the desired ultimate long-term result. In some cases this might mean working along an intervention's Theory of Change to clarify what is the desired end-state of the intervention.[2]

An indication of how sustainable the changes are likely to be: Some changes are long-lasting, whilst others are relatively short-lived. In some circumstances, it might be useful to provide an estimate of how sustainable any reported change is likely to be, and to indicate any risks or challenges that might influence that sustainability.

Other information: There are many other possible elements to reporting on change, which may or may not be needed in different case studies. Where relevant you could also describe:
- whether the change was intended or not;
- how many organisations, groups or people were affected by the change;
- how the change affected different sub-groups, such as women and men;
- how the change compares to the original situation or baseline;
- how changes compare to what was hoped for, or considered realistic at the start; or
- how certain is the change (e.g. certain, probable, likely, possible).

Contribution

This section should outline how the SPA partner and local partners contributed to the change or changes listed in the previous section. In some circumstances this will just mean considering the contribution of the intervention. However, in many cases the contribution will be two-dimensional: the contribution of Southern partners to the change, and the contribution of the Danish SPA partner. Further guidance is given in section two.

The contribution of the intervention to any changes: In some case studies a project, programme or approach might be solely responsible for a change or set of changes. In other cases it may have played a specific role. The nature of the role should always be described.

The significance of the contribution: It is important to clarify the significance of any contribution. For example, when working as part of a group or network of organisations, it would be important to explain what role Danish SPA partners and/or Southern partners have had in bringing about the described change. Co-leading a CSO network would signify a high level of significance in

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[2] It should also be possible to follow up this kind of case study at a future date

contributing to a change through the network, while participating in a few meetings amongst a large group of organisations would signify a less significant contribution to a change brought about collectively by the network.

The evidence that demonstrates contribution to change: Sometimes it is important to state the evidence that indicates contribution to change, especially if the change is external such as changes in government policy or changes in livelihoods for targeted communities. As with providing evidence for change, a simple statement of evidence will often suffice in a case study on change, provided it can be backed up by more detailed information if requested.

Credibility of evidence for contribution

As with reporting on change, the greater the contribution to change claimed, the more credible the evidence needs to be. For example, if change relates to a new form of partnership initiated by a CSO then the evidence for contribution may rest mostly on interviews with different elements of the partnership (e.g. Danish CSO, Southern partners, external partners). However, if a CSO is claiming to have contributed to a significant policy change then the threshold of evidence may be much higher. This may involve using established methodologies to identify contribution (see part two of this document under domain 2).

Wherever possible, evidence needs to provide a plausible linkage between a described change and CSO interventions. If available, this might refer to an existing Theory of Change. The best explanations of contribution are simple statements that show what was done (the activity or approach), what changed as a result, and why it changed.

A description of any other major potential contributions to change: SPA partners and their Southern partners will rarely be the sole contributors to change. Where relevant you should also describe other factors or organisations that may have contributed to the change(s), and explain how.

The contribution (added-value) of the SPA partner to the intervention: In many cases it will be useful to outline the unique role that SPA partners played in supporting the change(s), especially focusing on support to Southern partners. Some possible elements of added-value are:
- providing formal or informal capacity development;
- facilitating synergies and cross learning within and between programmes, partners or sectors;
- supporting networking between Southern partners and/or other organisations at local, national and/or international levels;
- linking advocacy work between local, national and international levels, or across programmes;
- strengthening Southern partners' presence at national or international events, or supporting them to access national and international spaces;
- producing, disseminating, or supporting research;
- developing, supporting, testing and scaling pilot projects or innovation studies;
- developing and testing tools, methodologies and new practices;
- incorporating global best practice into Southern partners' ways of working;
- helping Southern partners identify new sources of funding or leverage funding streams; and
- providing protection from threats or intimidation, or helping to minimise risks in difficult situations

Any evidence that demonstrates the contribution of Danish CSOs to the changes: Where SPA partners believe they have played a specific role in supporting change, it will often be useful to triangulation their opinions with the views of Southern partners.

Lessons

This section should contain lessons or recommendations that are interesting, or that may be useful for others. In general you should avoid repeating obvious lessons (e.g. that *'participation and ownership are important for development'*). Some of the elements that might be covered are as follows.

Challenges: Key challenges that were faced by the intervention, and how (if at all) they were overcome. If they were not overcome, why not?

Adaptations: Changes that were made (or might be made) to improve the intervention(s). This could include tactical adaptations (making adjustments to working practices) or strategic adaptations (significant shifts in strategies and approaches). If relevant, you could describe the results of any adaptations made.

Lessons for other organisations: Any key lessons that might be useful for other organisations working in similar areas or sectors of work.

Errors and failures: Key failures in the intervention, or things that didn't work out as planned. Where relevant, you could also specify what actions were taken to remedy the errors or failures.

Learning questions: As part of the new SPA strategy, SPA partners will be asked to contribute to agreed learning questions on a regular basis. If there are clear links between a learning question and a case study then it would be useful to describe any lessons in a way which will contribute to overall learning.

Recommendations: Any overall recommendations for MFA, Danish CSOs, Southern partners (in general) or other stakeholders, based on the changes observed and lessons learned.

Evidence

This section should expand claims from the change section by presenting a plausible linkage between the described change and the intervention. Whereas the change section should be written for a general audience, the evidence section should provide in-depth justifications for the underlying evidence behind the claims made. This can be done by reassessing the theory-of-change structure, e.g. "After we did X, then Y occurred, because Z." It should also provide references to further materials where evidence has been drawn from through references or website links to such materials.

Please provide references to external source where possible. It could cover links to reviews and reports or to pictures or photographs that could help show activities carried out or changes realised; links to reports or audio-visual materials showing further information on interventions, or links to secondary sources. Photographs may also be embedded within the case study itself.

The MFA's will review the claims and evidence provided for submitted case studies to assess plausible linkages and may also assess underlying materials to verify that the claims are supported by the references provided.

Confidential information

There is a limit to how open SPA partners can be in describing information in a publicly accessible case study. However, sometimes supplementary information would be extremely useful for anyone wishing to conduct cross-case analysis. Therefore, the confidential information can be forwarded directly to the MFA desk officer, but should not appear in the case document through the IATI registry. This information will not be published on OpenAid,and will only be accessible to MFA representatives.

Do's and Don'ts of writing case studies

Do

- Spell out an abbreviations or acronyms the first time you use them

- Explain any terminology you use if it is not in common usage in the world outside

- Think about how the case study might affect your partners if information is placed in the public domain

Don't

- Assume people will read your case study straight after you have written it – it may be read much later on

- Try and predict the future – it is ok to say you hope evidenced changes will lead to further change, but not to imply that it is certain

- Be tempted to engage in a beauty contest – the best NGOs are often the most thoughtful and realistic about what has changed and what their contribution has been

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IATI – Submission and tagging

Case studies are published online and submitted by inclusion of document-link(s) in the IATI file, following the agreed deadline for annual progress reports. They should be listed under relevant SPA activities. Partners are also expected to re-submit the case studies as part of their annual narrative reports to MFA.

Case studies should be included as document-links under relevant SPA activities and the same document-link may thus repeat across multiple activities, if the case study pertains to more than one activity. Partners should ensure that the Headline is contained in the <title> tag, the Summary of up to 1,000 characters is contained in the <description> tag and a link to the published document file is contained in the <document link> tag.

Activities are tagged with a few mandatory elements in IATI, which allow MFA to apply the same dimensions to the available case-stories:

- Country (Country - iatistandard.org)
- Region (Region - iatistandard.org)
- DAC 3 Digit Sector (DAC 3 Digit Sector - iatistandard.org)
- DAC 5 Digit Sector (DAC 5 Digit Sector - iatistandard.org)
- Humanitarian Scope Type (humanitarian interventions only, Humanitarian Scope Type - iatistandard.org)

Sector codes follow the agreed purpose codes by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). They consist of a three-digit sector category (DAC 3 Digit Sector) and a detailed five-digit purpose (DAC 5 Digit Sector). Case studies should be tagged against both appropriate categories and detailed purposes to allow mapping of contributions against MFA strategic pillars.

To select purpose codes, it is often useful to review three-digit sector categories first, selecting the two or three most relevant categories from DAC 3 Digit Sector, and then review the underlying codes from DAC 5 Digit Sector to selected purposes. This will align purpose codes with selected categories and avoid having to review all five-digit purpose codes for each activity. If more than one activity refers to the same document-link, the case study will be seen as pertaining to all DAC purpose codes cover jointly across each activity.

Please note that the case format includes additional custom tags related to the MFA strategy pillars.

Part Two: Guidance for Different Domains of Change

Part two of this document provides some additional advice for case studies focusing on the different domains of change. It is accepted that many case studies will demonstrate change at multiple levels, covering some or all of the different domains. Nonetheless, a case study will often map onto one primary domain. The sections below provide information for case studies aimed at the relevant primary domain. For example:

- A case study largely aimed at the 'policy' domain should focus mostly on identifying and describing the relevant policy change(s). The case study may also wish to identify changes resulting from policy implementation (e.g. changes in peoples' lives) or contributory factors to bringing about a policy change (e.g. enhanced capacity of partners, better participation of different groups, new forms of partnership, etc.). However the case study would not be expected to go into so much detail in these areas.
- A case study largely aimed at the 'capacity' domain will focus mostly on describing the capacity change(s). It might also want to explain how the capacity change(s) might result in further changes, or even provide evidence for further changes that are already beginning to happen. Or it may want to explain changes in local leadership or participation of different stakeholders that helped bring about the capacity change. But, again, these would not be described in so much detail.

Domain One: Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability, and/or the realisation of their rights

Change: Changes in people's lives, or realisation of their rights, may result from direct humanitarian work, or the work of Southern partners with supported communities. However, they might also result from changes reported against other domains, such as policy change, capacity change or enhanced participation.

Evidence: A case study focused on people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability – whether at individual, family or community level – should be able to demonstrate credible and reliable evidence of those changes. Wherever possible, the evidence should show:
- the type of change (e.g. changes in health, education, livelihoods, safety, psychosocial wellbeing);
- the scale of change (e.g. how many people, families or communities have been affected); and
- the depth of change.

Where possible, information could also be disaggregated to show how specific groups or sub-groups have been affected, such as girls, boys, people living with HIV&AIDS, or people with disabilities. If information is available, then change should be reported with reference to the original situation or baseline (although this is not always possible).

It is perfectly ok in this kind of case study to focus on specific individuals, families or communities in order to illustrate some of the changes in their lives, using quotes and testimonials if appropriate. However, they should not be the primary focus of the case study, and any evidence of individual change needs to be properly located in the wider context. (This is in contrast to case studies or stories of change developed for publicity or marketing purposes which often begin with individual change and then broaden out to the wider context. Such cases can often be perceived as anecdotal).

When dealing with widespread change, the evidence on which it is based should always be sourced. Evidence could include quantitative methods such as surveys, quasi-experimental approaches and statistical studies, or qualitative methods such as focus-group discussions, most significant change or outcome harvesting. However, evidence should never rest purely on assumptions (e.g. if we provide health support then peoples' health will have improved).

Contribution: Identifying the contribution to change for this domain will usually involve a description of the activities and approaches used to help bring about the change. This may mean going into a bit more detail than usual on activities. This is fine provided the changes are clearly described, the evidence is credible, and the activities are clearly linked to the change.

Domain Two: Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights

Objectives: In advocacy (or policy influencing) work, change processes are often long and drawn out. There may be many steps between initial advocacy work and ultimate changes in peoples' lives. And there is often a cumulative effect of advocacy work

over time. This can make it hard to assess progress within the timeframe of a typical strategic period. In addition, the objectives of advocacy interventions frequently change over time, in response to evolving contexts. If so, it might be useful to elaborate on these changes.

Change: Changes in policy and practice can happen at many different levels, as illustrated in the diagram below. A case study focused on policy and practice change may focus on any one of these levels, and may focus on more than one.
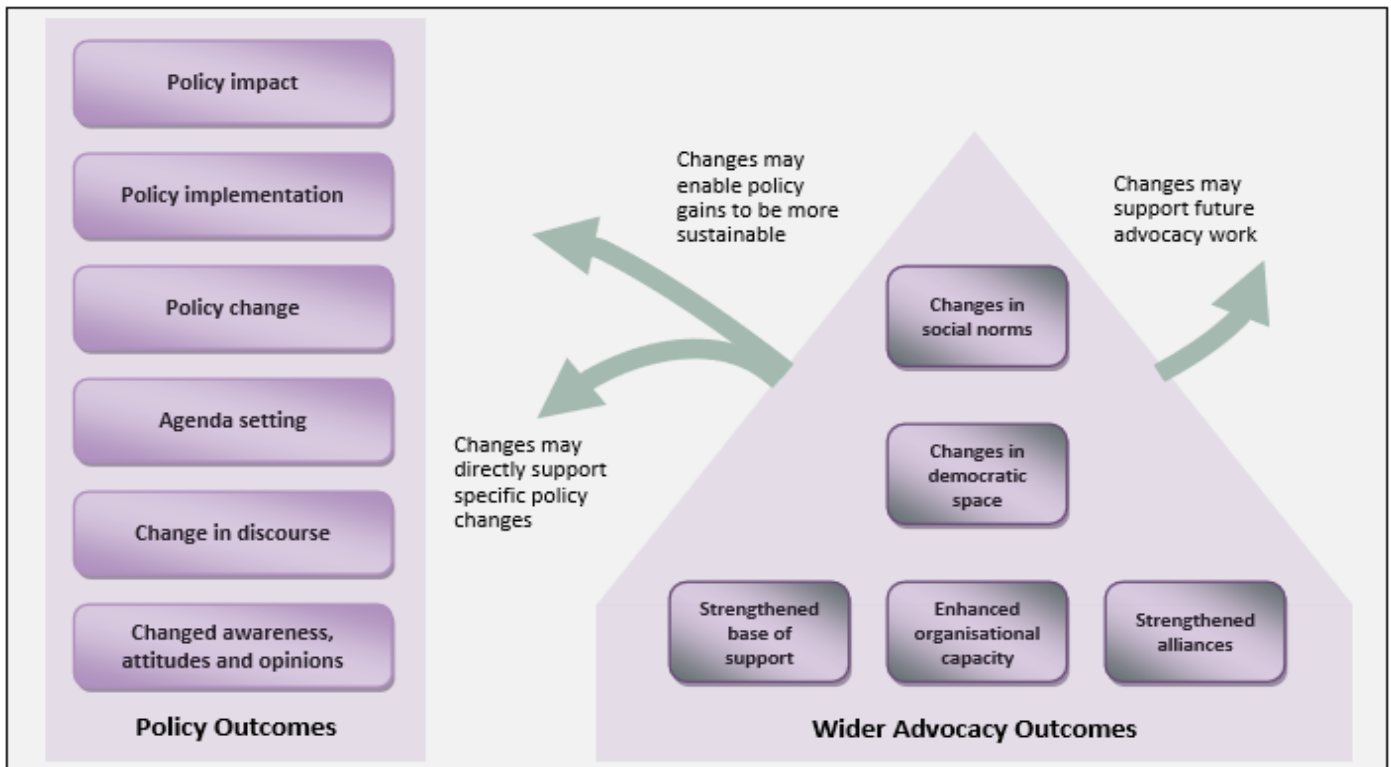
Source: "M&E of advocacy", INTRAC M&E Universe, Nigel Simister and Jenny Ross, 2020

Policy Outcomes
- *Changed awareness, attitudes and opinions:* Changed minds, attitudes or opinions amongst the public or other stakeholders, such as duty-bearers.
- *Change in discourse:* Changes in the way people discuss issues, or use language.
- *Agenda setting:* This may involve an institution agreeing to develop a new proposal, or sponsor a new policy. It might also mean ensuring that issues are discussed publicly.
- *Policy change:* The introduction of a new policy, the amendment of an existing policy or, in some circumstances, opposition to a new, proposed policy.
- *Policy implementation:* The funding, implementation and sometimes enforcement of policies. They may be new policies that have just been introduced, or existing policies. Outcomes may also cover how policies are represented in strategies, programmes and plans.
- *Policy impact:* The impact that policies, when implemented, have on peoples' lives – particularly the people and communities an advocacy intervention is designed to help. Policy impact might also focus on changes to the economy or the environment.

Wider Outcomes
- *Strengthened base of support:* Changes in the extent to which the public, institutions or key decision-makers support (or oppose) particular policies.
- *Enhanced organisational capacity:* Enhanced capacity of organisations or coalitions to plan and carry out advocacy work. Capacity development may focus on many different areas of work, such as advocacy skills, leadership or strategic planning.
- *Strengthened alliances:* The extent of coordination and collaboration amongst local, regional or international groups that support (or oppose) a policy or set of policies. This might include the extent to which different groups present common messages or pursue common goals.

- *Changes in democratic space:* Enhanced participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in policy dialogues, increased political legitimacy, or the improved attitudes and behaviours of public officials towards civil society involvement.
- *Changes in social norms:* Lasting shifts in relationships, control and influence, and radical change in areas such as whose agendas are recognised, whose voices are heard, and whose are excluded.

Evidence: Assessing what has changed in advocacy or policy influencing work can range from very easy (e.g. recording a change in policy which has been publicly registered) to very difficult (e.g. evaluating deep cultural shifts in social norms and attitudes, or systemic change). Sometimes, there may be external links to identified policy changes, such as media articles, which can be referenced. In some cases, evidence can be complemented by using the knowledge and expertise of Danish CSO or Southern partner staff when making assessments of what has changed in the political sphere. However, this needs to be labelled clearly in the case study (e.g. by prefacing statements with *'in the opinion of CSO representatives …'*).

The significance of the changes: This may not always be obvious to an outsider, and may need to be spelled out very simply. This means explaining why a policy change (or change in discourse or awareness) is important, and what it means for targeted populations.

The potential long-term implications of the change: Advocacy work often involves measuring change up to a point, and then explaining clearly what might or should happen in the future. For example, if a Southern partner has been successful in contributing to getting an issue onto an agenda, then it is important to state what you hope will happen next. Or if a policy change has happened, it is important to explain how you hope it will be implemented and how it might affect people. The SPA Portfolio-level Results System (SPRS) also provides an opportunity to follow-up on case studies at a later date to identify or verify subsequent changes.

Contribution to change: Within advocacy work, assessments of contribution to change can focus on different levels. This includes the overall contribution of an advocacy intervention, the contribution of an organisation or alliance, and the distinctive contribution of different organisations such as SPA partners and/or their Southern partners. It will often be helpful to spell out contributions separately within a case study. A useful typology of the different kinds of contribution is shown in the diagram below. Note that this can be applied at more than one level, for example, explaining the role of the advocacy intervention, including the role of Southern partners, and explaining the specific role of the SPA partner.

TYPOLOGY OF POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION	DESCRIPTION
SOLE ACTOR	The sole actor calling for the change.
PRIMARY ACTOR	The actor that coordinated the approach, corralling and organizing others.
LEAD CONTRIBUTOR	An actor that made a leading contribution, was prominent throughout, stayed the course, and made a number of significant interventions.
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR	An actor that played an important role but may not have been vital to the result. There may be a case that the outcome would have happened anyway.
SEED SOWER	The actor that initiated the campaign and sowed the seeds, which then took a life of their own. This makes their fingerprints on the final result difficult to see (but in a good way because of the momentum it generated).
TEAM CONTRIBUTOR	An actor that worked as part of a team, among whom it's difficult to disentangle who achieved what. Isolating the factors may not be possible and is probably not that helpful: it's the combinational effect that is key.
OVER-THE-LINE GETTER	An actor that made a discrete or niche, but undeniably vital, contribution.
KEY ROLE PLAYER	One of a small number of main players, each fulfilling a particular role. Each actor adds value; each is vital.

Source: Coe, J and Schlangen, R (2019). No Royal Road: Finding and following the natural pathways in advocacy evaluation. Center for Evaluation Innovation, February 2019, p30.

The evidence that demonstrates contribution to change: In advocacy work, it is often difficult to isolate the impact of an individual agency's work from that of other organisations and factors, or distinguish the impacts of different advocacy activities

from each other. Evidence of contribution in advocacy work does not normally aim to prove a causal connection between an intervention and advocacy outcomes. Still, it should provide a clear plausible linkage between the intervention and the described change that illustrates the role that SPA partners and their Southern partners played in helping to bring about the change.

Different methodologies can be used to identify contribution to change. Generally, the greater the level of confidence needed in the findings, the greater the level of resources required. A simple hierarchy of evidence is shown below.

▪ *Self-reflection and analysis:* The most basic level is for agencies to make their own assessment of contribution. Self-reflection can be done very cheaply and quickly. Clearly, it relies heavily on the honesty and integrity of staff, and their ability to assess their own contribution to change. If staff understand their contribution, and are happy to discuss it openly and honestly, then this is sometimes all that is needed. But an over-reliance on self-reporting can sometimes lead to accusations of bias.
▪ *External validation:* Usually, it is better to also get an external viewpoint. External actors could be partners, allies, members of the public, or even targets of advocacy work in some circumstances.
▪ *Formal methods to establish contribution:* A variety of different methods can be used for this purpose, including contribution analysis, process tracing, general elimination methodology and contribution tracing. Findings from these methods are normally more robust than those of exercises which rely solely on internal or external stakeholder opinions. However, the time and expense required is also greater.
▪ *In-depth study:* The final option is to carry out a properly funded and conducted study of some kind. This may be called a research study, a formal review, an evaluation, an episode study, or a study classified under another name. The key point is that the study involves intensive work designed to assess what has changed in some detail, and then to work backwards to identify the different factors that contributed to the change.

Again, the important thing is to be very clear about the evidence that contributed to the assessment of contribution, and to label it consistently within the case study.

Links to external reports: For some advocacy outcomes it may be straightforward to link to external material, showing what has changed and when, such as formal evaluation reports or media reports. If these mention the SPA or Southern partners then so much the better.[3]

Domain Three: Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support people's rights

Changes: Capacity can broadly be defined as the *"ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully"*.[4] Capacity change within programmes may be internal (i.e. linked to Southern partners) or it may be external (i.e. capacity change in supported organisations ranging from Government ministries down to small community-based organisations).

Evidence: Capacity is not always an easy area to assess. When working with Southern partners, NGOs often use self-assessment, participatory systems, such as Organisational Assessment tools or scorecards, to assess change. In these cases, the evidence should be sourced, but it may not be useful to go into too much detail. For example, it is probably enough to say *"according to a participatory self-assessment …"* rather than quoting ratings and percentages that might mean little to those outside the programme, or people who are not familiar with international development.

In other cases, assessment of capacity may rely on the experience and judgement of those providing and receiving the capacity development support. Wherever possible, evidence should be based at least partly on the opinions and views of those receiving the capacity support. In some cases this may mean supplementing evidence with quotes or testimonials from supported organisations.

The potential long-term implications of the change: When assessing capacity change, the significance of the change will usually need to be spelled out. Change may be in areas of capacity that can be linked directly to people affected by poverty or marginalisation – such as changes in an organisation's capacity to provide services or engage with different marginalised groups – or it may be in areas such as finance or M&E where it may be harder to draw a link with the end users. Wherever possible, the link to improvements in the lives of people affected by poverty and marginalisation should be emphasised. Sometimes, this might mean stating what has changed because of enhanced capacity. At other times you will need to draw a plausible link between changes in capacity and potential future changes.

Contribution to change: When assessing contribution to capacity change, you are encouraged to think about capacity support in the widest terms possible, rather than focusing on training. Some common capacity building methods are contained in the box opposite.

Some capacity development methods	
Training	Communities of Practice
Coaching	Exposure / exchange visits
Mentoring	Internships
Accompaniment	Resource provision
Expert technical assistance	Facilitating knowledge access
Peer-to-peer support groups	Secondments
Brokering	Facilitated workshops
Logistical support	Seminars
Action learning sets	Funding

However, it is also important to recognise that an organisation may receive capacity support from many different places. This can make it difficult to isolate the contribution of the SPA partner, (or in some cases its Southern partners). Again, the best thing is often to explain the linkages, whilst giving due acknowledgement and consideration to other influences.

The contribution (added-value) of the SPA partner to the intervention: For case studies focusing on changes in capacity of external stakeholders it may be necessary to explain a two-stage process: first, how the intervention helped enhance the capacity of supported institutions (e.g. an education ministry or policy department); and then how SPA partners helped support the capacity of Southern partners to carry out the work and/or enhanced the effectiveness of the intervention.

Domain Four: Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights

Changes: Within the partnership domain, change will often reflect the development of new or innovative partnerships, or change within existing partnerships. Change could also cover network or convening work, where different groups are brought together within a network or an informal alliance, or come together to deliver new types of interventions.

Evidence: As with the capacity domain, evidence should reflect the views of different partners (such as members of a network or coalition, or new, supported partners) as well as the experiences and judgement of CSO staff. In all cases there should be clear plausible linkages between the interventions and the described changes.

The potential long-term implications of the change: As with the capacity domain, it may not be immediately obvious to an outsider how a change in partnership might help poor, marginalised or vulnerable people. This will often need to be explicitly reported – using plausible linkages to explain future changes if necessary. In particular, a case study dealing with new kinds of partnership ought to be able to spell out how new kinds of groups or people might be reached, or how they might be reached in different ways. Equally, the case study ought to explain why the changes in partnership are significant from the point of view of the different stakeholders involved.

Contribution: Depending on the subject of the case study, the contribution section may sometimes focus on SPA partners' contribution to the partnership instead of, or as well as, contribution to the changes brought about through the partnership.

The contribution (added-value) of the SPA partner to the intervention: In some case studies it may be necessary to explain the partnership from multiple angles: what does the SPA partner bring to the partnership; what do the Southern partners bring; and what do the other stakeholders contribute. In particular, it is useful to think about what benefits the SPA partner and Southern partners derive from the partnership, to show that contribution is not just a one-way flow. Usually, this will be based on the opinions of SPA partner and Southern partner staff.

Lessons: By its nature, working with new forms of partnerships will tend to generate a lot of lessons, some of which may be useful for others. If possible, a case study should include lessons around the advantages and disadvantages of working through new forms of partnership; new challenges and/or risks that have emerged as a result of new forms of partnership; and how (if at all) those challenges been addressed. However, discretion will often need to be observed, and it might be sometimes necessary to describe lessons in the confidential information box.

Domain Five: Changes in the participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability in their own development

Changes: Within this domain, changes will primarily relate to the way in which different groups have participated in their own development. It is largely intended to cover the participation of groups of interest to MFA, such as women and girls, youth, people living with disabilities, or refugees.

Evidence: When assessing participation, the opinions of participating groups should have a lot of weight, as monitoring and evaluation is often an important aspect of participation. One option might be to generate a case study jointly with participating groups, getting them to explain in their own words what has changed, and why it is important to them.

Sometimes this can be combined with external validation. This could include focus group discussions with community representatives, data mining of document references, or scoring from participation ladders. In all cases there should be clear plausible linkages between the interventions and the described changes.

The significance of changes: As with domains three and four, the significance of changes in partnership may not be immediately obvious to external audiences, and will probably need to be spelled out. Where further changes have resulted from increased participation this should be stated, along with any accompanying evidence. If not, then the case study should spell out what changes are hoped for in the future.

The contribution (added-value) of the SPA partner to the intervention: As in other areas, there may be more than one domain here – the contribution of Southern partners to facilitating participation, and the contribution of the SPA partner, if different. Some SPA partners have a specific competence in encouraging participation, and where relevant this should be recognised in the case study.

Lessons: If relevant, the case study should include lessons around the advantages and disadvantages of facilitating enhanced participation; new challenges and/or risks that have emerged; and how (if at all) those challenges been addressed. As with the previous domain it might be sometimes necessary to describe lessons in the confidential information box.

Domain Six: Changes in local leadership and ownership of development and humanitarian work

Changes: Within this domain, changes will be likely to include some of the following (which are taken from existing Danish CSO documents):
- recognition and utilisation of complementarity between international and local partners;
- enhanced inclusive coordination structures and mechanisms;
- more flexible financing, with more power given to local partners;
- more meaningful participation of partners in the design and planning of projects and programmes;
- enhanced sharing of long-term and strategic goals;
- better recognition of the role and contribution of local partners;
- facilitation of enhanced access to donors; and
- enhanced engagement of Southern partners in international fora and debates.

Strategic capacity support is also a key aspect of local leadership, but this may be better covered under the capacity domain (domain three) unless there is a particularly strong emphasis around South-South capacity exchanges or local learning.

Changes could relate to the Southern partners of SPA partners, but could also relate to wider, supported organisations.

Evidence: The opinions of local actors should have a lot of weight in case studies classed under this domain. As with the previous domain, one option might be to generate a case study jointly with local actors, getting them to explain in their own words how they feel that local leadership and ownership has changed, and why. In all cases there should be clear plausible linkages between the interventions and the described changes.

The significance of the changes: It will be important to spell out the significance of any changes with respect to changes in the lives of people affected by poverty or marginalisation. Whilst local leadership is now considered an important issue for those involved in international development, it may appear more abstract for external audiences. It is therefore important to justify why changes in local ownership and leadership matter. Again, this could come from the opinions of Southern partners.

The contribution (added-value) of the SPA partner to the intervention: As in other areas, there may be more than one domain here – the contribution of Southern partners to facilitating local ownership, and the contribution of the SPA partner, if different.

Some SPA partners have a specific competence in encouraging local leadership and ownership, and where relevant this should be recognised in the case study.

Lessons: As with domains four and five, case studies around local leadership and ownership may be covering new areas of work that have been less well covered in development literature. This may make it easier to generate new lessons that are widely applicable. If possible, a case study should include some of these lessons. Again, however, discretion will need to be observed, and it might be sometimes necessary to describe lessons in the confidential information box.