

Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise:

NORWAY

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Work stream 1 - Transparency

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Information and data about Norwegian aid are widely available:

- All humanitarian funding is reported to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS).
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs grants portal provides an overview of all grants from the Ministry and Norad (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) for which agreements have been entered into, and for which disbursements are planned for this year and for up to the next four years. The overview shows the countries in which the grants are to be used, the grant recipients, and the sectors that are to receive funding. This system also produces statistics (including some gender-disaggregated data) for international use. In addition, Norwegian Aid Statistics gives easy access to all official statistics about Norwegian development cooperation, including all humanitarian aid.
<https://www.norad.no/en/front/toolspublications/norwegian-aid-statistics/?tab=geo>
- The Act relating to public access to documents in the public administration (Freedom of Information Act) sets out that, as a main rule, all documents should be available for the public.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

The new templates for all grant agreements with the Ministry have a clause (article 14 of the General Conditions) on transparency concerning contracts, partners and reporting.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

- The new agreement templates will be assessed and amended where necessary, to better reflect the challenges of operating in humanitarian settings, aiming for flexibility without violating Norwegian regulations and grant management requirements.
- OCHA/FTS has been invited to Oslo this spring to enhance knowledge and educate staff about FTS reporting.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Openness about partners and agreements, and easy access to information on Norwegian cooperation with humanitarian partners creates a more predictable environment for all humanitarian stakeholders.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Work stream 2 - Localization

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

- The Ministry has supported capacity strengthening of local and national actors through various instruments and funding channels, on both the humanitarian and development side. This includes support to the humanitarian country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, including the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).
- Through Norad's Civil Society Department, Norway aims to strengthen civil society actors in developing countries as agents of change for reaching national and international development goals, with focus on democracy, human rights and poverty reduction.
- We encourage all our humanitarian partners to work in a way that reinforces rather than replaces local and national capacities whenever possible.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- In 2016, Norway increased its contribution to the CBPFs, a mechanism that we consider important with a view to increasing and improving assistance by local and national responders. With a total contribution of NOK 246 million (approx. USD 30 million), Norway is one of the largest donors to the CBPFs. In 2016, we supported seven CBPFs (Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey/cross border, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, and the occupied Palestinian territories). In 2017, Norway announced support for the newly established Nigeria CBPF.
- We are also engaged in discussions on how to improve local actor engagement in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including through access to pooled funding mechanisms. This is an issue that we raise with our humanitarian partners, for example in annual meetings with Norwegian NGOs and in country-based pooled fund meetings.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

- The Ministry will initiate further discussions with Norad and interested Norwegian NGOs on localisation, incl. to increase knowledge about the development of a localisation marker to measure direct and indirect funding to local and national responders.
- Norad is currently revising its principles for support to civil society. The need for transfer of influence from actors in OECD countries to actors in low- and middle-income countries is expected to be reflected in the revised principles. Norad will also strengthen its analysis of the proportion of grants that is transferred to local partners, and the proportion required for capacity-building and support from international partners. Norad will consider opportunities for supporting local organisations through civil society funds in target countries.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

It is too early to assess potential efficiency gains.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

This commitment is complex and requires further unpacking, for example who should be considered a national/local actor, how do we understand 'as directly as possible' when it comes to funding flows, and how will this be tracked? More attention should also be paid to the quality of partnerships, not just the global, quantitative target of transferring 25 % of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible by 2020. The importance of a context-specific approach also requires further reflection. Different humanitarian crises require different approaches, with international humanitarian actors playing a vital role in many crisis situations.

Work stream 3 - Cash

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Norway had already recognised the potential and value of cash-based assistance and worked to promote this. In 2015, the Ministry hosted the launch of the report of the high-level panel on humanitarian cash transfers.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- Norway has taken on the role as co-lead, together with UK, of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative's work stream on cash. A concept note has been prepared, and the first meeting was held on 13 March 2017. Follow-up action was decided on, including the organisation of a roundtable with external experts ahead of the high-level meeting of the GHD in June 2017.
- Norway is informing all its humanitarian partners that cash should be systematically considered alongside or in combination with other delivery modalities from the outset. We aim to always ask the question: 'Why not cash?' Consideration of the use of the cash should be included, when appropriate, in applications, reporting and other follow-up with partners, including UN agencies, the ICRC and Norwegian NGOs.
- In 2016, with financial support from Norway (and other donors), NORCAP (the Norwegian Refugee Council's expert deployment capacity) established CashCap, a roster of cash experts used in multi-agency humanitarian response. Though many organisations have dedicated time and resources to training their own staff in planning and implementing cash transfer programmes, there remains a lack of skills and capacity – not least in terms of people with sufficient experience and seniority to take on strategic and technical leadership of a cash-based response. In addition to providing capacity, CashCap has also had a pilot capacity-building component targeted at NORCAP members, other stand-by roster members, and the community of practice.
- NOREPS (the Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System), a network of public and private actors facilitated by Innovation Norway and funded by the Ministry, has identified the use of cash as one of its priorities in the area of humanitarian innovation. As part of the initiative, the Norwegian Refugee Council is piloting various digital payment solutions in humanitarian response.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

- Norway will remain committed to the use of cash in emergencies in all areas of our work, and will continue to engage with our partners to further scale-up multipurpose cash assistance in

all the projects we fund. Our communication on the importance of use of cash will be strengthened.

- Norway will carry out an assessment to map the use of cash-based assistance in emergency response and protracted crises by Norwegian NGOs.
- Norway aims to participate actively in the Grand Bargain work stream on cash.
- Norway will use its role as co-lead of the GHD work stream on cash to promote increased use of cash to this broader group of donors.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

It is too early to assess this. The planned assessment may give us input in this regard.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

N/A

The number and volume of Norwegian humanitarian actors using cash-based assistance has increased over the past few years. Moreover, there seems to be a shift from conditional cash and vouchers towards more unconditional, multipurpose cash assistance.

Work stream 4 – Management costs

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

The Ministry primarily supports and makes use of joint performance reviews, for example MOPAN, rather than commissioning individual donor assessments.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- Norway has participated in workshops under the Grand Bargain work stream on management costs.
- Norway consistently raises the follow-up of the Grand Bargain in meetings with our main humanitarian partners.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Work stream 5 – Needs Assessment

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

The Ministry primarily uses the Global Humanitarian Overview, the Humanitarian Response Plans and the ICRC appeals to determine needs and regional/country funding envelopes for its humanitarian assistance. The Ministry also provides funding for ACAPS and makes use of their assessments.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

The Section for Humanitarian Affairs in the Ministry has engaged in discussions on improving needs assessments as part of the Grand Bargain, including participation in the workshop in Brussels on 28 February – 1 March organised by ECHO and OCHA.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Continued engagement with a particular focus on the need for better coordinated and more collaborative analysis and assessments between humanitarian and development actors in protracted crises and a stronger global prioritisation of needs.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

It is too early to assess any efficiency gains.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Work stream 6 – Participation Revolution

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

- The Ministry provides a significant amount of flexible humanitarian funding, which enables programme adaptation in response to community feedback.
- Norway has a human rights based approach to humanitarian assistance. As stated in the white paper on human rights, Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation, our approach centres on the victims, and emphasises the key human rights principles of participation, non-discrimination and accountability.
- The Ministry also supports practical measures enabling humanitarian organisations to better meet the needs of the recipients of assistance. One of Norway's main objectives is to strengthen the position of women in society and address their needs in humanitarian crises by working for better protection, for example through mainstreaming the gender perspective, and by promoting women's involvement in all assistance efforts.
- In 2015, Norad commissioned an external study of the follow-up of Norwegian policy on accountability to affected populations (AAP). It concluded that although Norway has good intentions, there is insufficient documentation on the follow-up by our humanitarian partners.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- In the annual consultations with its partners, the Ministry highlights beneficiary participation as a crucial cross-cutting goal in humanitarian assistance.
- It is possible to include specific wording on AAP in agreements on humanitarian grants, and this is done in some cases.
- Norway strives to play a leading role in this area, and promotes the issue at board meetings and in negotiations. One concrete example was a learning event on accountability to affected populations and the right to food arranged by Norway's Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome in January 2017, with the participation of international experts as well as UN agencies based in Rome (WFP, FAO and IFAD). The event has led to an enhanced acknowledgement of the urgency of AAP both among missions to the UN and the UN agencies in Rome.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

- Continue to advocate for more involvement of beneficiaries in the design of response and feedback.
- Look into including standard AAP wording in agreement templates, including under reporting requirements.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Documenting qualitative changes in AAP results is a challenge, as is the case with all qualitative results. More examples of good practice and lessons learned by the UN agencies and other humanitarian organisations is needed, in order to make sure that the organisations continuously learn and revise their practices according to what works.

Work stream 7 - Multi-year planning and funding

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

- The Ministry has multi-year framework agreements with several NGOs (Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid and Save the Children Norway). In addition, the Ministry has signed a multi-year core agreement with WFP. These agreements provide for a degree of predictable and flexible funding.
- At the Supporting Syria and the Region conference in February 2016, Norway announced a four-year pledge of approx. NOK 10 billion (about USD 1.2 billion).

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- The multi-year pledge for Syria and the neighbouring countries accounts for a substantial part of the total Norwegian humanitarian budget for 2017. As a result of this multi-year commitment, the Ministry has signed multi-year letters of intent to support the work of UNHCR and UNICEF (on education in crises and emergencies) in Syria and the neighbouring countries.
- Norway has further increased its multi-year humanitarian commitments in 2017 by announcing a three-year pledge of approx. NOK 1.6 billion (USD 192 million) at the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region. The pledge includes both development and humanitarian funding.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

As part of the Grand Bargain follow-up, the Ministry will allow for greater flexibility within the scope of existing and new framework agreements, including the approval of multi-year planning and programming in protracted crises in agreement with the organisations concerned.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Increased flexibility within the framework agreements will likely lead to increased predictability and lower administrative costs, and enable more responsive programming.

5. Good practice and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

More multi-year financing will require a stronger focus on multi-year collaborative planning and response plans and stronger links between humanitarian and development actors, without undermining the commitment to principled humanitarian action. At the same time, it is important for a donor like Norway to balance the need humanitarian partners have for more predictable financing with the need for flexibility in our budgets so as to be able to respond to humanitarian crises as they arise.

Work stream 8 - Earmarking/flexibility

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

Norway provides significant amounts of flexible humanitarian funding. This includes the core support to WFP, UNHCR, OCHA, ICRC, contributions to CERF and CPBFs, as well as thematic support and softly earmarked regional humanitarian support.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- The global target of 30 % of humanitarian contributions that is non-earmarked or softly earmarked by 2020, was reached by end of budget year 2016.
- The Ministry continues to focus on the importance of flexible financing to improve humanitarian response, and recently shared its experiences as part of the survey on flexible financing initiated by Sweden and the ICRC as the co-convenor of this Grand Bargain work stream.
- In its multi-year framework agreement with the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Ministry will, as a pilot, provide unearmarked support to the country programmes (instead of project level funding).

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

Norway will explore options for further reducing the level of earmarking, for example by decreasing earmarked/tightly earmarked contributions and increasing softly earmarked contributions.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

More flexibility within framework agreements is likely to reduce administrative costs.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Work stream 9 – Reporting requirements

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

- In the case of funding for UN organisations and UN and ICRC appeals, the Ministry accepts the organisation's annual reports. In 2016, Norway and various UN organisations negotiated new framework agreements and templates for all funding that set out predictable and agreed reporting requirements.
- For other types of support (to NGOs), new agreement templates were introduced in March 2016. The new templates are used for all other support than funding to the UN, and provide a predictable framework and clear reporting requirements. The Ministry does not have a mandatory reporting template. The narrative reporting requirements are linked to the proposal and regulated in the agreement and are thus rather flexible.
- For humanitarian support, the Ministry generally accepts annual reports.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- With reference to the description under 'Baseline', the benefits of the new agreement templates will mostly come into effect from 2017.
- In its multi-year framework agreement with the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norway is now piloting reporting on NRC's country programmes (instead of project-level reporting).
- In a programme cooperation with Care funded by both Norway and Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), the Ministry has aligned its reporting with Sida's reporting standards and deadlines, allowing the contracting partner to report just once to both donors.
- Norway has approved use of alternative procedures for reporting on the Norwegian Refugee Council's operations in Syria. The procedures were proposed by NRC in response to the realities on the ground, and after an assessment were approved by the Ministry. The alternative procedures represent an innovative way of adjusting agreed reporting requirements.
- The Ministry participated in the harmonisation of reporting workshop organised by Germany and ICVA.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

- Norway will continue to explore different avenues to reduce the reporting burden on its partners. Reporting on country programmes within the multi-year framework agreements will be further considered.
- Joint reporting where Norway is a co-donor will also be considered.
- Participation in the pilot on harmonisation of reporting requirements will be assessed on the basis of whether it is likely to bring efficiency gains to our partners in the country cases selected.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

Reduced administrative burdens for both partners and donors.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?

Too soon to report.

Work stream 10 – Humanitarian – Development engagement

1. Baseline (only in year 1)

Where did your organisation stand on the work stream and its commitments when the Grand Bargain was signed?

- The 2030 agenda with the sustainable development goals have focused international attention on leaving no one behind. Norway has strengthened its efforts in conflict resolution and development in fragile states and regions. Important focus areas have been health and education in emergencies, as we see these sectors as important in paving the way for long-term development.
- The Ministry has provided financial support for a number of partnership initiatives aimed at strengthening the humanitarian–development–peace nexus particularly between the UN and the World Bank Group in situations of fragility, conflict and violence.

2. Progress to date

Which concrete actions have you taken (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream?

- Norway helped initiate the Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies, which was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. Globally, Norway allocates more than 8 % of its humanitarian funding to education, and at least 15 % in Syria and the neighbouring countries.
- The Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region in February 2017 demonstrated Norway’s continued commitment to a comprehensive approach that both addresses the immediate humanitarian needs and identifies durable solutions for those affected by the crisis. Norway made a three-year financial commitment.
- Norway is committed to finding durable solutions for refugees and IDPs and supports the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework process both politically and financially. Norway has also supported the engagement of the World Bank Group in this area, for example through funding for its reports and its pilot projects on improving the humanitarian–development nexus.
- A white paper on development policy will be presented to the Storting (Norwegian parliament) in early April 2017. Among the areas to be addressed are the need for closer collaboration between humanitarian and long-term development efforts to deliver on the commitment to leave no one behind.
- The Ministry is developing a strategy for engagement in fragile situations that will address the need for a more comprehensive, ‘whole of government approach’ across the humanitarian–development–peacebuilding nexus.
- A working group on the humanitarian–development nexus has been established in Norad.
- The Ministry provides financial support for the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Initiative, a joint effort by the UN and the World Bank Group to work together in new ways across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence.
- The Ministry participated in the ‘New Way of Working’ workshop in Copenhagen in March 2017 and is committed to supporting further operationalisation in the field.

3. Planned next steps

What are the specific next steps which you plan to undertake to implement the commitments (with a focus on the next 2 years)?

- Launch and follow-up of the Ministry's new strategy on engagement in fragile situations, including exploring the possibility of more flexible financing to address fragility and build resilience.
- Development of a new strategy for humanitarian assistance in the light of the changes in the humanitarian landscape, including the humanitarian-development nexus and follow-up of the Grand Bargain.

4. Efficiency gains (optional for year 1)

Please indicate, qualitatively, efficiency gains associated with implementation of GB commitments and how they have benefitted your organisation and beneficiaries.

5. Good practices and lessons learned (optional for year 1)

Which concrete action(s) have had the most success (both internally and in cooperation with other signatories) to implement the commitments of the work stream? And why?