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EVALUATION OF FINNISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY INFLUENCING ACTIVITIES IN MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Management Services

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki

FOUR QUESTIONS

- 1. Influencing effects.** How effective have the MFA's influencing activities been overall in influencing people, policies and operations of Multilaterals in policy areas important to Finland?
- 2. Longer-term changes.** How plausible is it that the MFA's influencing activities contribute to increased relevance and operational effectiveness of targeted Multilaterals and – ultimately – to sustainable development?
- 3. Management of influencing.** How effective is the results-based management approach (influencing plans and related steering, reporting and learning processes) in supporting MFA influencing activities towards Multilaterals?
- 4. Factors and conditions.** What factors have the greatest positive or negative effect on MFA multilateral influencing and what action can the MFA take – realistically and in view of available resources and capacity – to further enhance its effectiveness?

Effective!
Some improvement potential

Mixed!
Some improvement potential

Good practices validated &
new insights

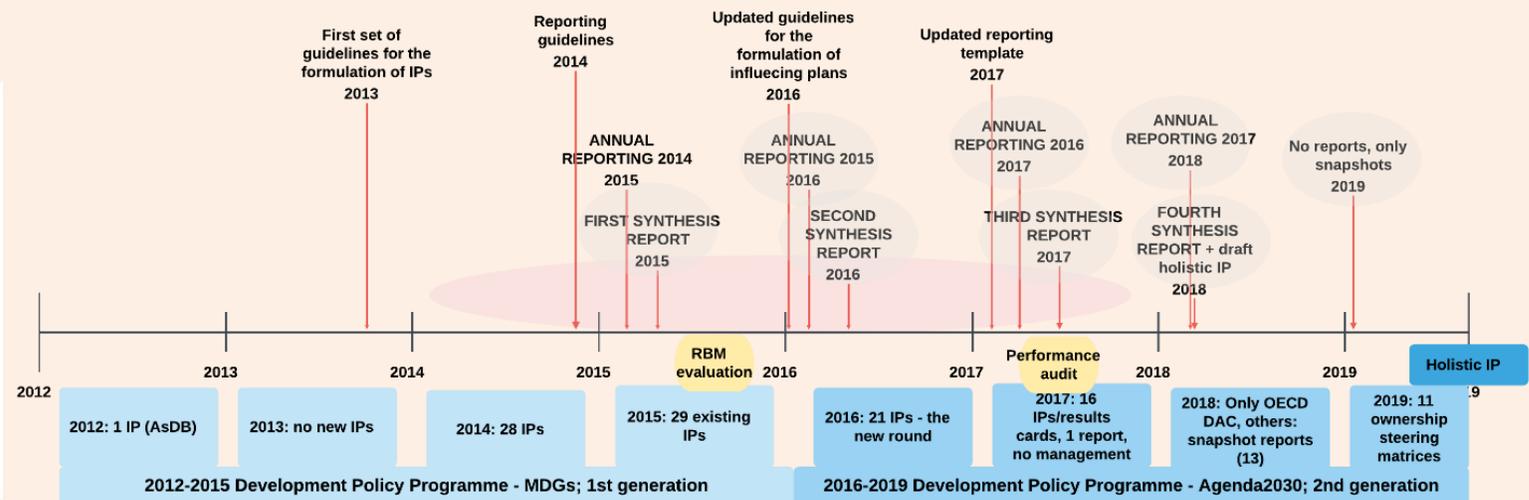
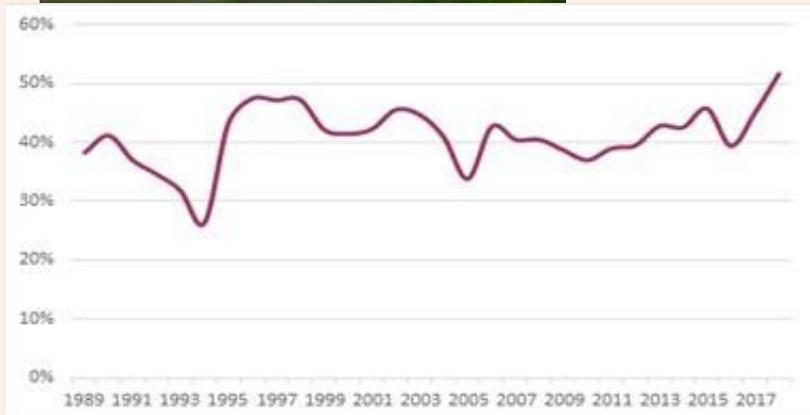
MULTILATERAL INFLUENCING – WHAT IS IT?



“**Influence** is the power to have an effect on people or things”

“**Influencing effects** on people, policies and operations of Multilaterals”

Target	Significance of effects		
	Minor	Important	Fundamental
People	Awareness	Behaviour change	Conviction
Policies	Details adjusted	Significant change	New policies
Operations	Small or pilot changes	Significant change	New priorities or practices



EVIDENCE AND TOOLS

1. **Interviews** (174 people)
2. **Desk review** (Influencing literature, other evaluations, strategies & reports of Multilaterals, Finland's policies, MFA-internal documents)
3. **Systematic analysis of influencing reports** (>200 between 2014-2017)
4. **Eight Agency Cases** (WBG, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UN WOMEN, IFAD, FAO, ITC)
5. **Three headquarter visits** (New York, Rome, Washington DC)
6. **Two country visits** (Kenya, Nepal)

LIMITATIONS:

- COVID-19
- Scope
- Documentation of (informal) influencing
- Causal inference

	Helsinki	New York	Rome	Washington DC	Kenya	Nepal	Other	Total
Multilateral staff	1	19	13	27	16	12	1	89
MFA staff	37	3	5	1	4	6	1	57
Other donor's representatives	-	5	7	6	1	1	5	25
Others	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
Total	39	27	25	34	21	20	8	174

Options for probing and validation techniques	Intended benefits
Causal explanations. The team asked for explanations (contribution stories) of how and why an effect/change was thought to be related to Finnish influence. This included specifying the effect/change, the influence, and their connection, as well as inviting additional arguments for aspects that appeared implausible.	A plausible contribution story (or its absence)
Breaking down into parts. If contribution stories seemed difficult or far-fetched, the team facilitated breaking them down into smaller cause-and-effect steps. For example, if Finland had contributed to an effect in collaboration with others it was usually easier to understand the groups contribution to the effect separately from Finland's contribution to the groups' influence.	A robust contribution story (or its absence)
Rival explanations and change of perspective. When contribution stories seemed robust, the team probed for alternative explanations that did not involve Finland.	A likely (or unlikely) contribution story
Counterfactuals. To understand the significance of effects, the team asked the interviewer to imagine the same situation but without Finland (or without the entire like-minded group) and to describe the difference.	A sense of the significance of the contribution

INFLUENCING EFFECTS IN MULTILATERALS

“Punching above its weight”

Effective

Significant effects observed & validated in 8 Agency Cases

MFA self-reported effectiveness

Global influence (enables)

Country influence (remains in country)

Arcs of influence

Consistency

Long periods of time

Different activities and channels

Group influence

Informal interactions & relationships

Context-dependent and opportunistic

Reputation

Very positive & consistent perception of “Finnish” attributes that enable effective influencing:

Reliable, honest, pragmatic, accessible, collaborative, hard-working, unbiased, non-ideological, credible, well-informed, fact- and evidence-based

MFA know-how

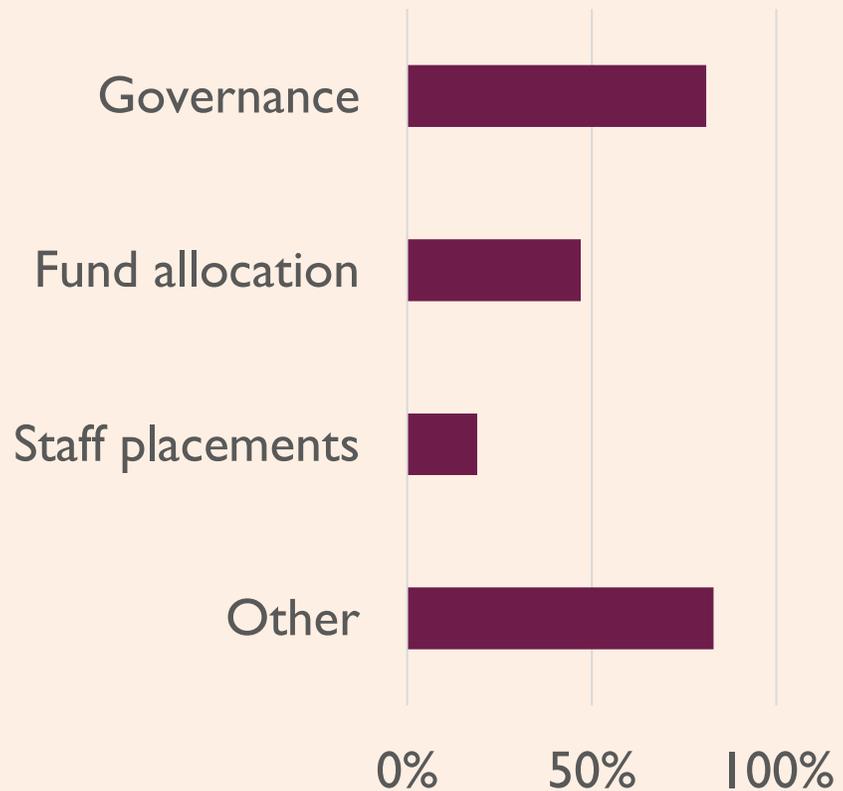
Existing good practices exist & were validated

Tacit knowledge and experience

INFLUENCING CHANNELS

No effect related to
a single influencing activity!

Only 11% related to
a single influencing channel!



Governance processes

- Effective
- Board duties *and* issue-driven influencing

Fund allocation processes

- Effective
- Different influencing tactics per funding modalities
- Positioning as multilateral “investor/supporter”

Staff placements

- Focused on placing Finns (funding limits numbers)
- Often not used primarily for influencing

Other

- Effective (and important)
- (High-level) meetings and consultations, thematic advocacy and political support, knowledge exchange

MFA HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

MFA staff

Cadre of excellent “influencers”

... but ...

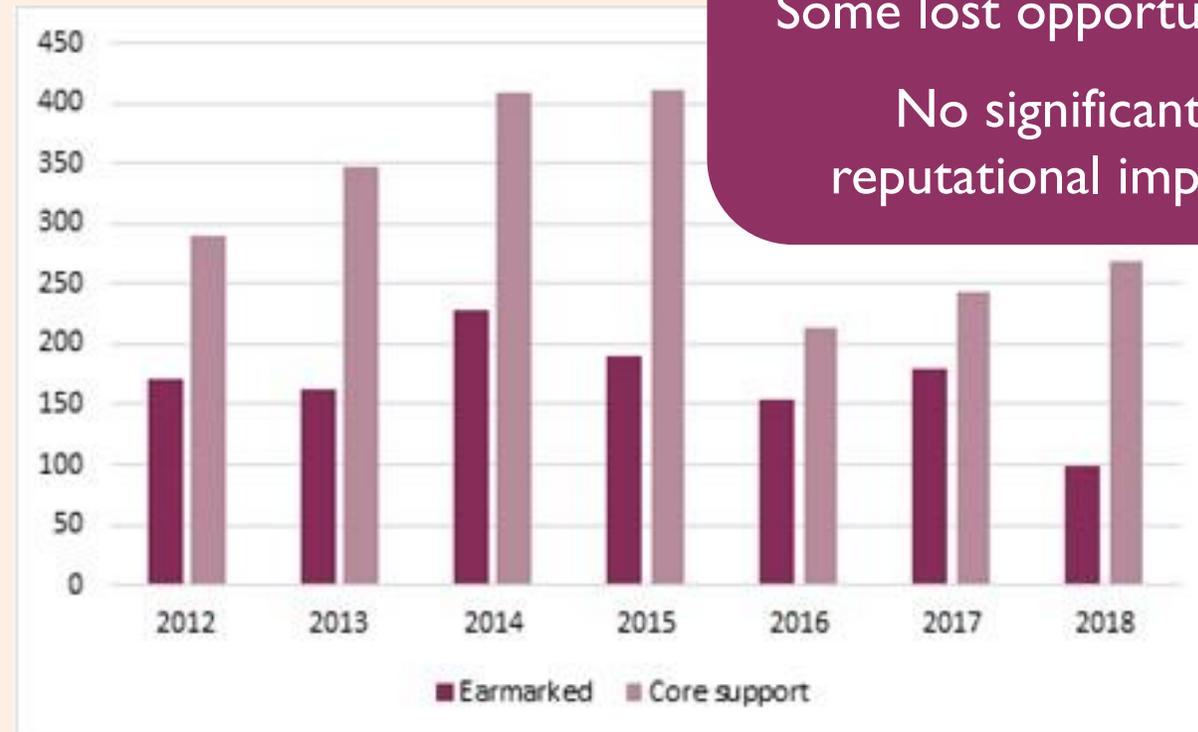
influencing effectiveness restricted
by limited staff capacity and staff
rotations

2015/16 budget cuts

Reduced access and voice

Some lost opportunities

No significant
reputational impact



LONGER-TERM CHANGES IN MULTILATERALS

WORLD BANK GROUP
Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction,
and Inclusive Growth



2014-2023 GENDER STRATEGY



Already realised:

Contributions (together with others) to long-term change processes in Multilaterals
In areas of perceived thematic leadership

Possible future developments:

Plausible pathways for further changes
But success depends on many factors beyond the MFA

Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Final version

- 1.1. We, the signatories of this Charter¹, reaffirm our determination to make humanitarian action inclusive of persons with disabilities and to take all steps to meet their essential needs and promote the protection, safety and respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.
- 1.2. We shall strive to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to humanitarian response, both in terms of protection and assistance, without discrimination, and allowing them to fully enjoy their rights. By this Charter, we reaffirm our collective will to place persons with disabilities at the centre of humanitarian response.
- 1.3. For the purpose of this Charter, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in, and access to, humanitarian programmes.
- 1.4. This Charter refers to all persons with disabilities, applies to all situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies and at all phases of a humanitarian response, from preparedness and crisis onset through transition into recovery.

Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme/ United Nations
Population Fund

Date: General

31 July 2017

Original: English

Executive Board of the United
Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board of the United
Nations Entity for Gender
Equality and the Empowerment of
Women (UN-Women)

Working together to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda

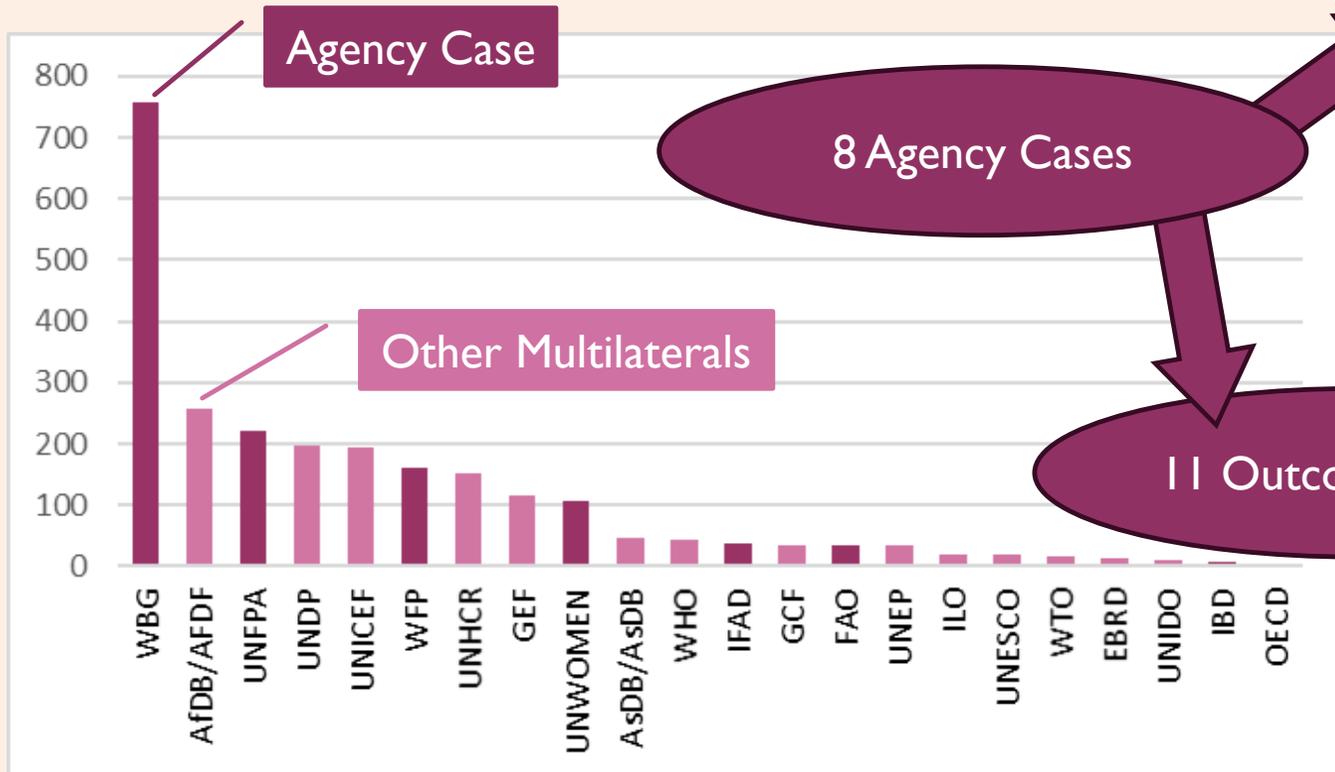
UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women

Annex to the common chapter in the respective strategic plans, 2018-2021

Summary

This paper presents an annex to the "common chapter" in the strategic plans of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of

OBSERVATIONS & EXAMPLES FROM AGENCY CASES



8 Agency Cases

36 influencing effects observed, validated and analysed

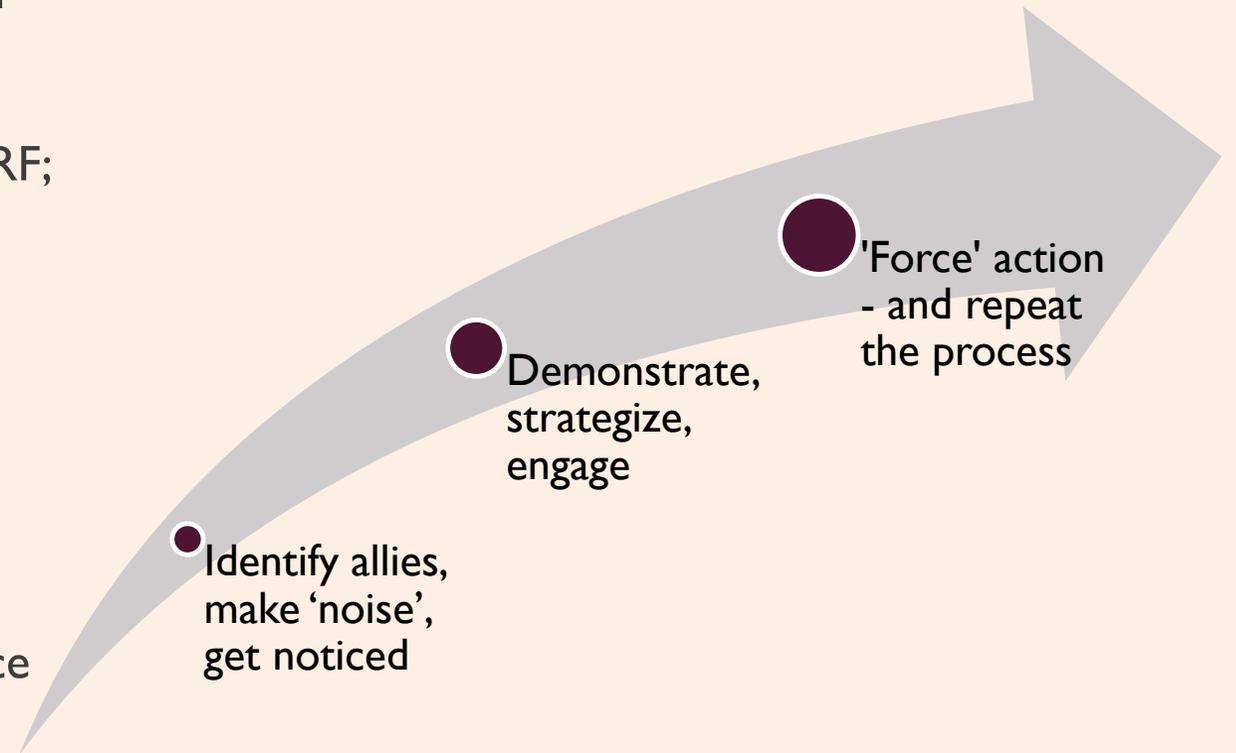
11 Outcome Stories

Story title	Observed influencing effect	Significance of the effect	Finland's contribution	Plausible future developments
1. Closing the Gender Gap in WBG Strategy and Operations 	The WBG Gender Strategy was published 2016 and is being implemented, currently at Mid-Term Review stage.	Fundamental	Finland and Nordic partners have been at the core of advocating for a gender informed approach to development since the 1980s and have been consistent in their advocacy and support since then.	Increasingly strengthened, visible and substantiated inclusion of a gender perspective in relevant WBG projects, investments and advisory offerings.
2. Human Rights and Development Trust Fund established 	The Human Rights and Development Trust Fund (HRDTF) was set up at the World Bank.	Fundamental	Finland is a core donor and was insistent on the renaming and reorientation of the Trust Fund, formerly known as The Nordic Trust Fund.	Stronger inclusion of a human-rights perspective in relevant WBG projects, investments and advisory offerings.
3. World Bank disability framework 	The World Bank developed a disability framework.	Important	Fundamental contribution through a strategic staff secondment, enabled by Finland's reputation as leading advocate and expert on the subject.	Stronger inclusion of disability-related aspects into relevant World Bank projects.

I:ARC OF INFLUENCE – GENDER AT THE WBG

Clarity of purpose, persistence, patience, time...

- Gender mainstreaming strategy (2001) made critical link between gender and poverty reduction
- Early progress –gender indicators in Corporate Scorecard – but momentum weak b/c lack of clear RF; weak accountability mechanisms; and, little incentive for clients (ref. IEG, 2015)
- Gender supported as a special theme under IDA16 replenishment (2010) & remains so for IDA19
- RGAPs & launch of GIL for Africa (2011)
- WDR, *Gender and Development* (2012) & set up of Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality
- First meeting of the Gender Equality CoP for Finance Ministers (2014)
- WBG Gender Strategy *Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth* (2016)
- MTR of Strategy 2020



2: RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) IN HUMANITARIAN AID

Example of Finland's global, system-level advocacy

- The issue of inclusion of PwD in this evaluation started as a WFP case but turned into an important example of Finland's global, system-level advocacy.
- Finland's success in influencing WFP to strengthen inclusion of PwD into its humanitarian work was made possible through Finland profiling itself as one of the "champion" agencies for PwD in humanitarian contexts.
- World Humanitarian Summit 2016: Finland played a key role in the development of the "Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action" and supported UNICEF to develop inter-agency guidelines on supporting PwD in humanitarian crises.
- Finland's advocacy work successful using bilateral, Nordic and EU cooperation, working with likeminded countries, and high-level influencing involving e.g. the PM, for Foreign Trade and Development, and the Minister of Social Affairs and Health.
- In case of WFP, Finland's influence means included: influencing at executive board and parallel meetings, and bilateral consultation to influence WFP directly and informally. Informal influencing included coalition-building with Australia, Canada and some other countries; and crucial collaboration with the Nordic Group; as well as high-level political influencing, and organising a successful side event with Signmark performing.

MANAGEMENT OF INFLUENCING

Influencing plans, reports, processes

Organizational learning

Good practices that could be validated
Experience-based development of the influencing plan approach

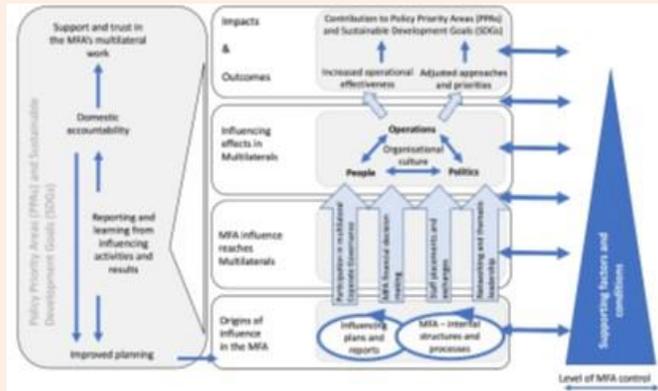
Steering of influencing

Overall limited upside potential
Challenges in target setting and results reporting
Not used (needed?) at country level
New plans represent improvement

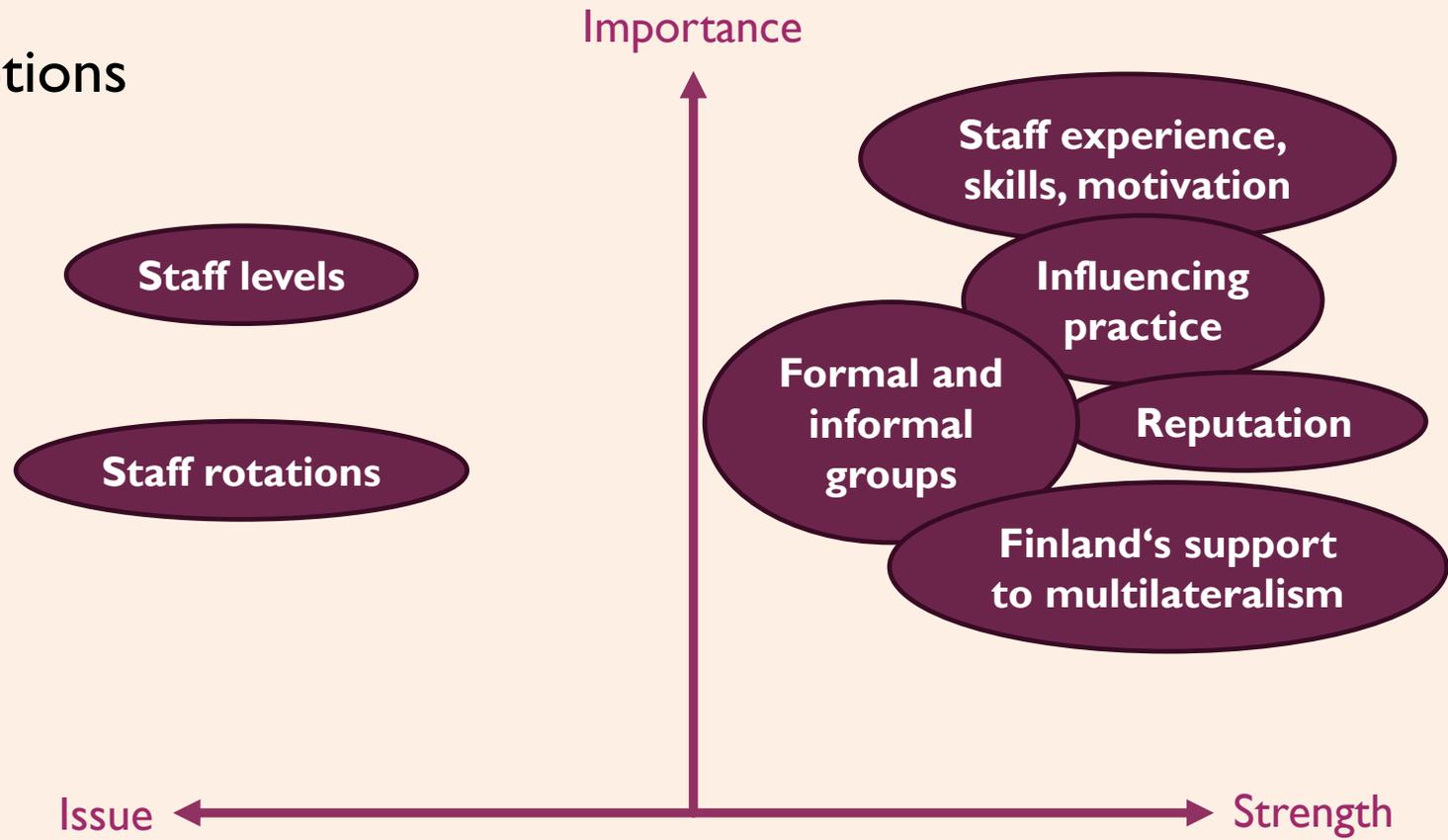
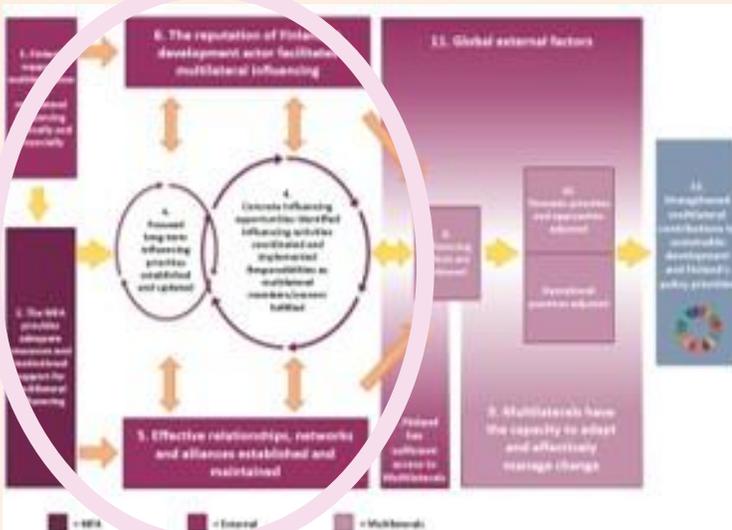
Accountability

Effective vis-à-vis parliament
Other planning and reporting processes more important internally

KEY FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE INFLUENCING



+ assumptions



STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Finland is **effective in influencing** its multilateral partners

Continue multilateral influencing in a similar manner
Consider increasing political and financial support

It is in the MFA's interest to **secure adequate levels of human resources** for multilateral influencing

Allocate more staff capacity to multilateral influencing

Staff placements can be used more strategically and more effectively for multilateral influencing

Use staff placements more strategically
Make better use of the information Finns working in multilateral organisations can provide

Issue-driven influencing and general engagement of Multilaterals have at times unclear relative priorities

For multilateral influencing, there is no strong rationale for coordinating/aligning **country- and corporate-level** influencing

Broaden the approach from multilateral *influencing* to multilateral *engagement* by developing a structured rationale for each envisaged engagement

OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT-RELATED CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff rotations reduce influencing effectiveness

Take measures to enhance continuity of staff in charge of multilateral influencing
Ensure effective handovers during staff changes,
Offer targeted coaching and training

Country-level information and experience can represent useful input for corporate level influencing, but is not always accessible

Ensure that staff involved in multilateral influencing have access to the information and experience they need

Managing multilateral influencing with influencing plans and related processes has been effective for organisational learning and the MFA's reporting to parliament, but has not significantly impacted on how multilateral influencing is implemented in practice

Continue to develop the MFA's influencing plans, reports and related processes towards a more strategic and adaptive approach for managing multilateral engagement

Conduct a pragmatic assessment of Finland's multilateral partners and use this to prioritise strategic long-term opportunities for multilateral engagement