RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT
INTERNATIONAL POLICY SUPPORT DOCUMENT

Managing for Results in SOS Children's Villages programmes

July 2019 – Version 3.0

© Vincent Tremeau

A loving home for every child

KEY USERS

Recommended for	- Programme directors and programme advisors - Monitoring and evaluation staff - Key implementation partners - National management team, particularly national/managing directors - Decision-makers and programme staff in general secretariat and promoting and supporting associations

RELATED DOCUMENTS, TOOLS, AND SYSTEMS

Strategy 2030	Guiding framework for SOS Children's Villages until 2030
Care Promise	Umbrella policy that explains the commitments we make to beneficiaries, the common direction in all our programmes, and the quality we deliver universally
PRAG: Institutional Funding Practical Guide and Toolkit	Processes and tools applicable when seeking institutional funding and managing an institutionally funded project
Federation planning and steering	Policy, handbook, and templates to support the translation of Strategy 2030 into planning and steering practice
Programme planning process description	Policy to manage planning and ensure the realisation of programme investment projects according to agreed standards

RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT

Department	Monitoring and Evaluation, Programme and Strategy, International Office

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Contributors	- Monitoring and Evaluation - Programme and Strategy in International Office - Programme Departments in WCAF, ESAF, LAAM, and EUCB - SOS Norway - Institutional Partnership Development, COO office, International Office - Programme Planning and Construction, COO office, International Office - Information and Reporting, COO office, International Office
Feedback received from:	15 general secretariat colleagues (9 IOR and 6 IO) 4 promoting and supporting association colleagues 5 national association colleagues
Approved by:	Management team in November 2017
Endorsed by:	Management Council in November 2017

CHANGE HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	CHANGES
3.0	July 2019	Alignment with SOS Care Promise and inclusion of feedback from experiences during the first year of implementation
2.0	November 2017	Inclusion of feedback from stakeholders
1.0	April 2017	First draft

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

> "A global welfare network like SOS Children's Villages can only remain alive and dynamic if **a continuous effort** is made to respond to changing conditions in the society involved and to accept new challenges in the interest of the welfare of the children. With this **ongoing process of adaptation** to the various social realities of the world, the work of SOS Children's Villages will continue to lead to targeted developments in the facilities and services offered."
> *-- Hermann Gmeiner*

SOS Children's Villages exists to bring about positive change in the lives of children in our target group. With 70 years of experience in childcare, we are recognised for our high quality and child-centred approach, working holistically with families, and strengthening communities. Our SOS Care Promise reinforces the strong emphasis we put on quality service delivery. It states the:
- Principles and values that are the foundation of our work
- Care solutions through which we implement our vision
- Commitments we make to children, young people, and families in all our programmes

However, how do we know we know if our strong quality focus leads to the results we intend to achieve? What evidence do we have of the difference our work has made in the lives of children, families, and communities? To what extent can we prove that our support is sustainable? Living up to our reputation and pushing ourselves to become better requires a high degree of professionalism in managing our work and continuously challenging ourselves to offer tailored responses that address locally identified needs. It also requires us to plan with a focus on what we want to achieve and to monitor and evaluate our work so we can correct if needed, learn, and collect evidence on how our programmes contribute to sustainable results, in line with our strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Result-based management will help us to answer these questions.

Results-based management [RBM] is not new to us; we have a strong foundation upon which to implement a structured and streamlined approach that will lead to more effective, efficient, relevant, and sustainable programmes. Investment in RBM will give us reliable evidence to show that we contribute to sustainable positive changes for children, families, and communities.

The RBM approach outlined in this document supports the SOS Care Promise, particularly the value of accountability. We are accountable to beneficiaries, to partners, to governments, to donors, and to ourselves. RBM ensures we use evidence to guide our actions and act transparently in the best interests of children.

This document arises out of a collaborative process of internal consultations and analysis of external sources. We held extensive stakeholder meetings to align existing internal processes with the core principles of RBM. We revised or replaced certain existing processes and tools to meet the standards necessary for a results-based focus.

We thank all contributors and look forward to **continuing the RBM journey together**!

USER GUIDE

WHAT IS THE **PURPOSE AND ADDED VALUE**?
The results-based management international policy support document is a set of **practical, step-by-step processes for using** RBM in existing and new programmes. The RBM approach explained in this document is designed specifically for the programme level and therefore does not include any national or beneficiary level processes, such as the child rights situation analysis or beneficiary case management.

The content of this document reflects international standards in development cooperation, while taking into account the unique reality of SOS Children's Villages. Working towards results is not new for us; however, a structured RBM approach requires a shift in the way we think about and conduct our work at all levels of the organisation. While it takes time and energy to implement RBM, it can simplify and standardise programme management and reduce time spent on inefficient processes.

The RBM international policy support document:
- Presents a set of systematic and practical management processes for programmes
- Increases knowledge and competence of SOS staff to use to better measure results, use evidence to improve programmes, and demonstrate accountability to the target group and donors alike
- Encourages evidence-based answers to the fundamental question: *are we intervening correctly with the right resources and best possible outcomes?*

WHO IS IT MEANT FOR?
Colleagues that are managing or implementing programmes – in particular, programme directors and monitoring and evaluation co-workers at the programme and national level – should read this document. It is also useful for national directors and decision-makers in member associations [MA] and the general secretariat [GSC]. In addition, it is relevant for key implementation partners and programme staff in the GSC and promoting and supporting associations [PSA].

HOW TO USE IT
This document is divided into five sections (See Table 1). The **modules** introduce RBM processes for programmes, always explaining **what** the process is, **why** it is beneficial, and a link to a tool in the RBM toolkit that explains **how** to do the process. We made efforts to embed and align existing global processes; programme staff should further analyse and align regional, national, and programme processes.

Section	Purpose
Results-based management in a nutshell	Introduces what RBM is, why SOS needs it, and where to apply it. Also covers core components of RBM – the results chain and programme cycle – and outlines how to sustain RBM over time
Module 1: Plan for results	Details the steps and analyses necessary to successfully set up a relevant programme with clear and measurable results.
Module 2: Monitor and report on results	Explains how to establish a baseline and track changes in indicators throughout implementation. Presents the progress report template and shows how results are analysed and shared.
Module 3: Evaluate results	Outlines the difference between monitoring and evaluation, the different types of evaluations, and the relation to the SOS social impact assessment methodology
Module 4: Use results to manage	Shows how to use results to identify lessons learned and feed these into continuous learning and improvement of future programmes. Also explains how to prepare and execute a strong exit strategy.

Table 1. Structure of the RBM international policy support document

Note on terminology: different organisations may use different terms to describe the same things. In this document, we use one set of terms consistently; we show comparisons between these and related terms in Annex 2 and present a full glossary in Annex 1.

Levels of RBM
RBM is a journey, not an event; it is a learning process where you build understanding and competence over time. Currently, knowledge and use of RBM is variable across the federation. To recognise these differences, and make RBM implementation easier for those who are not familiar with it, we divided the RBM approach into three levels (see Table 2). You should master one level before proceeding to the next because **it is better to do a few things well than to do many things poorly**.

Overview of levels of RBM		
Level	**B** Basic	**S** Standard	**A** Advanced
Details	Some unstandardised or isolated RBM processes; focus on activities and outputs Not enough for comprehensive RBM	Standardised RBM processes; focus on outcomes and contribution to impact **Expected minimum for all MAs**	Standardised RBM processes; able to use various methods and meet donor requirements; high commitment to learning and improvement
Tools	T2. Programme idea *(optional)* T3. Concept note T4. Result framework T8. Monitoring plan T10. SOS Care Promise self-assessment T11. Progress report T13. Lessons learned log T14. Review and planning meetings	T1. Needs assessment T5. Activity schedule T6. RBM system T7. Baseline study T9. Data quality assessment T12. Evaluation T15. Exit strategy	PRAG T19. Participatory planning methods PRAG T23. Do No Harm analysis PRAG T25. Resource and cost scheduling PRAG T38. Final project report template PRAG T44, Gender mainstreaming in SOS programmes
Source	RBM international policy support document and toolkit	RBM international policy support document and toolkit	Institutional Funding Practical Guide [PRAG]; external sources

Table 2. Overview of RBM overview

This document contains all processes needed for **basic** and **standard** RBM levels. **Advanced** tools are found in the Institutional Funding Practical Guide [PRAG] and external sources. The PRAG describes project cycle management for projects with institutional funding. We endeavoured to align this document with the PRAG and view them as complementary. The PRAG offers guidance on how to successfully obtain institutional funding and implement a strong project that meets donor requirements (available via this link).

Explanation of symbols
Throughout the modules, you will see the following symbols.

Orange text	Signifies **a key term** followed by its definition; **Error! Not a valid result for table.** contains a complete list of key terms and definitions
B **S**	Denotes the **level of RBM** that the process and/or tool applies to B = basic S = standard
🔧	Indicates the **RBM tool** that supports the implementation of the process step
🔗	Provides a hyperlink to **relevant internal documents** that should be understood and consulted to complete the process step

FEEDBACK

The quality and usefulness of this document depends on the provision of feedback and lessons learned from users. You can send questions and/or suggestions to the International Office Monitoring and Evaluation unit: monitoring-evaluation@sos-kd.org. We will conduct periodic reviews to keep it relevant and up to date.

EXTERNAL SOURCES

International Committee for the Red Cross (2008). *Programme/project management: The results-based approach*
Kusek, Jody Zall & Rist, Ray C; World Bank. (2004). *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring & Evaluation System*
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (2008). *Results Management in Norwegian Development Cooperation: A practical guide*
OECD/DAC (2002). *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management*
PLAN:NET LIMITED (2009). *Managing for Change: Introducing the Art of Results-Based Management*
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (no date). *Results-based Project Cycle Management*
United Nations Development Group (2010). *Results-Based Management Handbook: Strengthening RBM harmonisation for improved development results*
United Nations Development Group (2009). *Handbook on planning, monitoring and evaluating for development results*

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT
IN A NUTSHELL
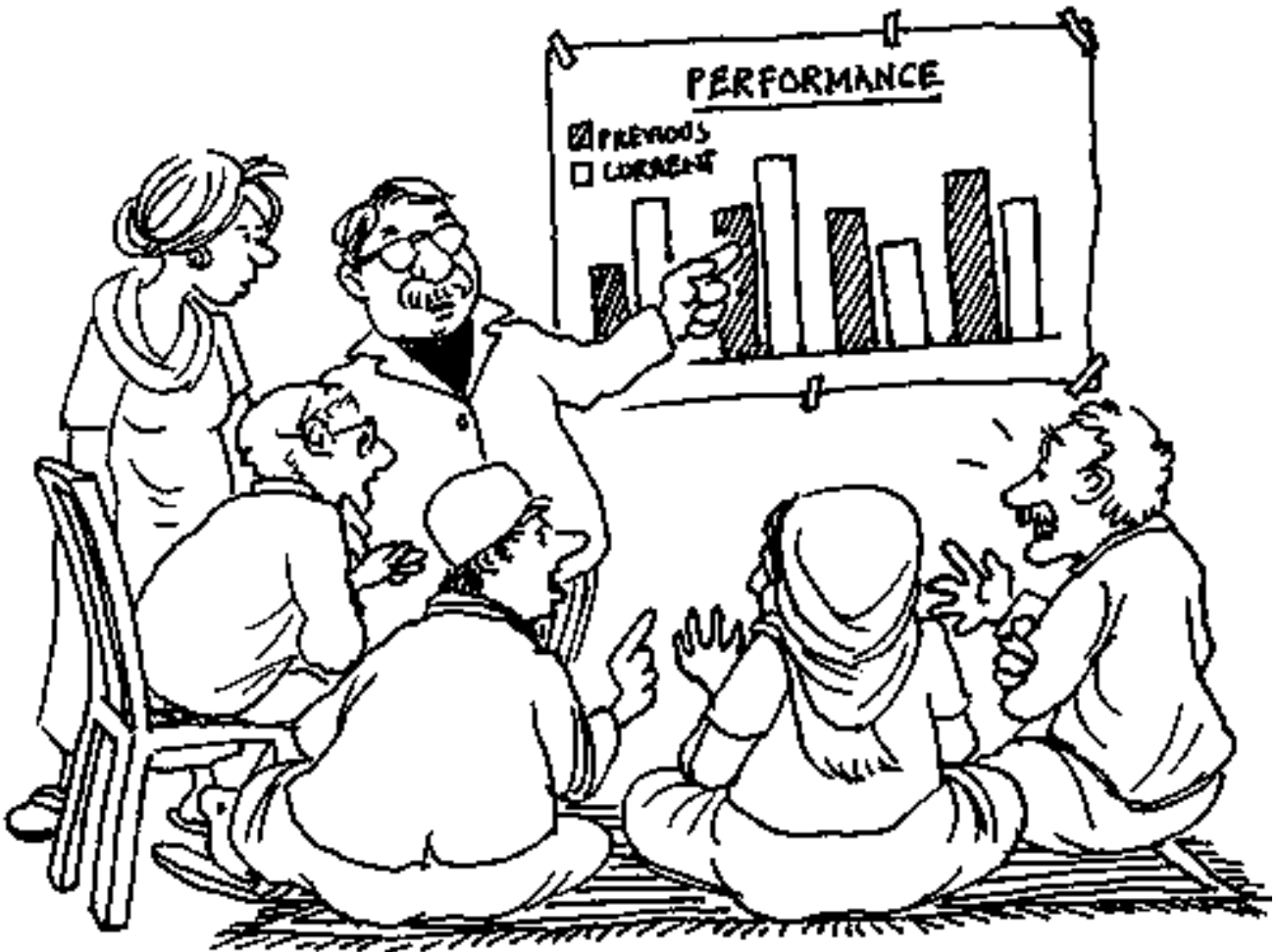
What is results-based management?

Results based-management is a way to organise our plans and activities to focus on the changes we want to achieve.

To use an analogy, consider the first picture below (see Figure 1). Where will the boat be after one hour of paddling? You can imagine that they will be exhausted, but they will not have moved much because they are not working together. An organisation can be like this boat: we can work tirelessly on our own tasks, but without a commonly understood direction and joint commitment, we will not achieve desired results.
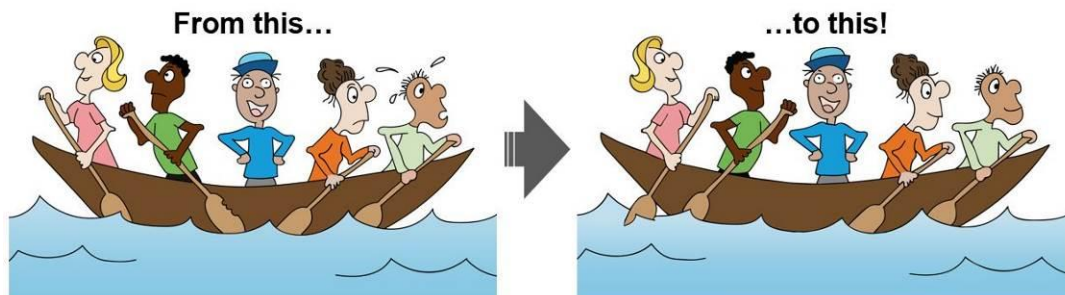
Figure 1. RBM boat

Results-based management [RBM] aims to overcome this issue, but how can it do this? First, we need to make a **plan**. We decide jointly where we want to go, for example, the other side of the lake, and how we will get there. Will we go directly across the lake or stick close to the edges in case of bad weather? Will we stop anywhere along the way? How will we track our progress? After deciding the route, we can start paddling together towards our agreed destination.

The journey does not stop there. We need to **monitor and report** our progress against the plan throughout. Are we on-track? Do we need to make any corrections because of wind or fatigue? What should we tell others about the progress? Once we reach our destination, we would **evaluate** the trip. Could we have done it differently? Was it the most efficient and effective route? Was our plan well prepared? In addition, we must **use results** and share what we learned so others can benefit from our experience. By applying RBM, we can transform into the boat on the right, working together to achieve results.

So, what do we need to do if we want to **manage our programmes based on results**?

First, we need to know what results and RBM are more specifically: Results are the changes that occur because of our activities; they can be positive or negative, planned or unplanned. Results-based management [RBM] is a management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of results (OECD, 2002). Its primary purpose is to increase accountability through results-oriented and evidence-based planning, decision-making, and learning.

Therefore, to manage a programme based on results, we need to **plan** for desired results, **monitor** and **report** throughout implementation, objectively **evaluate** our programmes, and, most critically, **use results** to learn and improve. RBM is a systematic and holistic approach to do this.

RBM represents a change in organisational culture, shifting from a focus on activities and inputs to a focus on processes that lead to the achievement of results. With this, attention goes beyond what we do and how we do it to an emphasis on the changes that we bring about and the effects on the target group (see *Figure 2*).

What we do (activities)

- Integrated SOS families in a community setting
- Provided parental skills trainings for caregivers
- Carried out advocacy campaigns

What we achieve (results)

- Children from SOS families participate in community social life
- Caregivers who participated in the training used new knowledge to improve the care of their children
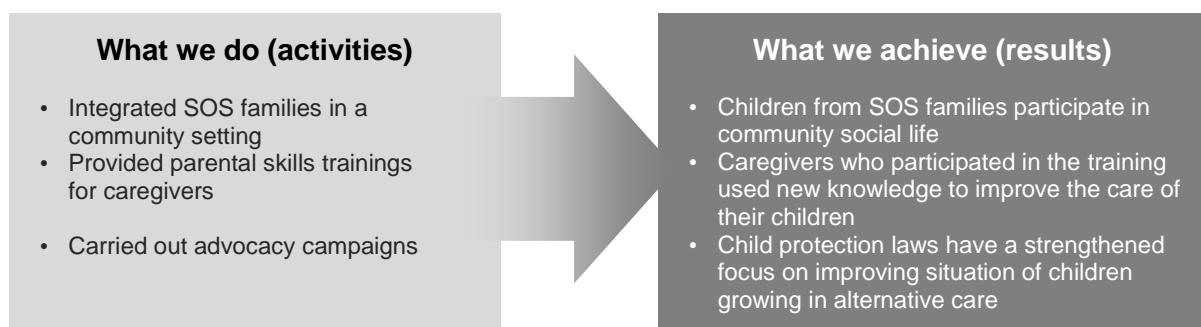- Child protection laws have a strengthened focus on improving situation of children growing in alternative care

Figure 2. Shifting focus from activities to results

Why do we need results-based management?

As an organisation, we want to know, share, and learn from the results of our work so we can plan for and resource programmes that are effective, efficient, and sustainable. In recent years, SOS Children's Villages explored various initiatives to improve monitoring and evaluation. However, a global system that streamlines these pieces into a comprehensive programme management approach is missing thus far. RBM has been an industry standard for non-governmental organisations for more than 20 years and it is time that we use it to improve our work for our target group.

This document aims to systemise and improve what we are already doing, so that we will have evidence-based and timely answers to the following questions and in turn be accountable to ourselves:
1. Are we doing what we planned? (Accountability to donors & governments)
2. Are we making a difference? (Accountability to beneficiaries & partners)
3. Are we doing the right things? (Use and share learning to improve)

For RBM to work, management at all levels need to understand the value of implementing an RBM system, own it, and benefit from it. Staff capacity and experience in this respect are very diverse. Some MAs collect too much information, mostly on outputs, whereas others focus on activities instead of results. MAs with institutional funding tend to have more knowledge and skills of RBM as it is often required by donors. We need to follow a common approach that harnesses existing experience and brings results to the centre of everything we do. To achieve this, SOS Children's Villages strategically introduced RBM in 2017 as the standard management approach for our programmes.

RBM has the potential to bring many benefits to SOS Children's Villages, such as:
- Learning and improvement
  - Culture of using results to learn about and improve programme quality
  - Evidence-based planning, decision-making, and advocacy
- Transparency and accountability to stakeholders
  - More comprehensive, reliable, and results-focused reports based on monitoring data
  - Evaluation and performance management
- Good governance and fund development
  - Compliance with international programme management standards
  - Increased efficiency and effectiveness of programme management
  - Improved access to funds (especially institutional & government funds)

Some of you may know of project cycle management [PCM]. RBM is a modern version of PCM that tries to overcome some of the issues encountered with PCM. PCM surfaced in the 1970s and enabled organisations to structure identification, planning, and monitoring of projects. RBM, coined in the mid-1990s, is in full congruence with PCM (and the related logical framework approach), but places a stronger emphasis on improving institutional and management accountability and effectiveness through measuring and learning from results. The two methods have their differences; however, both are management methodologies that aim to increase systematic management of interventions and both focus on results – what we want to achieve, not what we will do. As a result, PCM and RBM have similar processes and tools. In SOS, institutionally funded projects often use PCM, as outlined in the [Institutional Funding Practical Guide](#) [PRAG]. Where relevant, we used similar processes in the RBM approach to align the two documents.

Where to apply RBM in SOS?

We expect that all our programmes are managed according to a clear results-focused methodology. In SOS Children's Villages, the following complementary, but unique options are available. Staff should select the most appropriate option for their needs and please keep in mind that this document does not explain institutional funding or emergency response methodologies.
- **Institutional funding:** use the [PRAG](#) and submit [minimum information](#) internally
- **Emergency response:** use the Emergency Response Manual[1]
- **All others:** use this RBM policy support document and related RBM toolkit

In SOS, a **programme** is a set of interrelated services managed by an SOS Children's Villages member association in a specific location (village, community or area with several communities) with a clearly defined target group and shared overall goal. Where possible, we recommend that you apply RBM to the programme level by including all units in that location in one results framework. This enables simpler management of our

---

[1] While the Emergency Response Manual is being finalised, we kindly ask you to approach IOR Emergency Response colleagues for guidance and clarification.

work and is in line with holistic thinking of Care Commitment 2: we position the SOS Children's village as a programme for child care and protection[2]. RBM is applicable both to new and existing programmes.

We recognise that sometimes it might not make sense to consider the programme holistically; the national and programme staff need to discuss and agree how to apply RBM in their programmes. For example, when there is an ongoing emergency response or an existing institutional grant with unique management, reporting, and budgeting requirements in the programme, then you can exclude these units from the RBM approach.

Core components of RBM

Results chain

Crucially important to RBM is a **results chain**, which clarifies the logic of the programme by showing how what you do leads to the changes you want to see (see Figure 3 for a depiction of a results chain and definitions of elements). Having a results chain will make programmes more relevant and responsive, minimise risks, and streamline monitoring, reporting, evaluating, and learning.
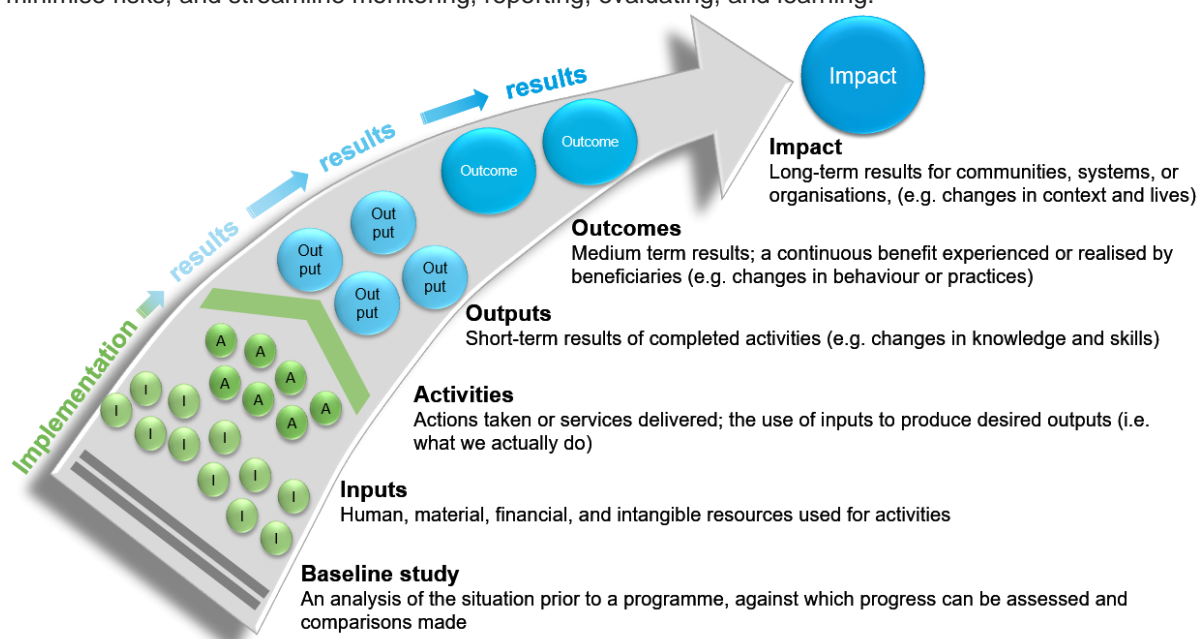
Figure 3. Results chain elements.

There are three types of results: output, outcome, and impact. **Outputs** are crucial building blocks, without which it would not be possible to achieve outcomes. We have a high level of control over outputs because they are the direct results of our activities and are achievable in a short amount of time, often less than six months. Outputs are changes in ability or access of beneficiaries, but do not include a change in behaviour.

Outcomes are changes in the behaviour of beneficiaries – are they are doing something differently because of our programme? At this level, we have some control and a relatively direct link to our activities. Outcomes are attainable within one to two years and signify a sustainable change that ideally outlasts our presence.

At the **impact** level, we contribute to broader changes in society or organisations, though we have low control and a less direct connection to our activities as environmental factors and other actors contribute to and/or hinder the achievement of the impact. Impact takes a long time to achieve, often more than five years, and is more difficult to measure, making it hard to use as a steering mechanism in programmes.

Each type of result gives important information about the programme. However, outcomes are the heart of the RBM approach. They provide information on observed changes in beneficiary behaviour within a reasonable amount of time and can be used to inform evidence-based decisions.

---

[2] See SOS Care Promise for more details

RBM programme cycle

Informed by internal and external standards, the SOS Children's Villages **RBM programme cycle** has four modules to manage a programme: **plan; monitor and report; evaluate;** and **use results** (see Figure 4). Below, we explain the main RBM processes within each one.

On paper, it is an orderly sequence, but it is often necessary to move back and forth between the processes and modules. For example, while monitoring, you notice that you are significantly off-track and need to modify the plan and activities. We try to represent this interconnectedness throughout this document; however, the programme director should have a strong understanding of the different RBM processes in order to effectively and efficiently manage his or her programme based on results.
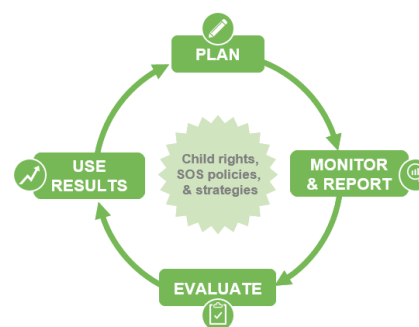

Figure 4. RBM programme cycle

Plan for results

Planning is the process of jointly defining desired results that respond to local needs and deciding how to achieve the results. It requires jointly defining results that address identified needs, formulating how to achieve these results, and selecting indicators to measure performance. The focus is to develop and resource a strong programme for the next three to five years. Careful planning ensures relevant and participatory programmes through the following steps:

1. **Identify the needs** of the target group and recommend who is best-placed to address these
2. Write a **programme idea** (optional) and **concept note** to explain the plan and preliminary budget
3. Design the **results framework** to explain desired changes and how these will be measured
4. **Prepare for implementation** by detailing the activity schedule, budget, and RBM system

Monitor and report on results

The second phase involves implementing the planned programme and tracking and sharing changes through ongoing monitoring and reporting. Structured monitoring enables immediate corrective actions to ensure the programme is on-track, while reporting establishes the link between data and evidence-based decision-making and enables others to learn from us. Both contribute to strong accuracy and transparency and can be done through the five process steps:

1. Conduct a **baseline study**, if required, to determine the initial situation in the location
2. Carry out ongoing **monitoring** to track changes in results, activities, risks, budget, and context
3. Conduct **data quality assessments** to increase quality of data
4. Assess **programme quality** and alignment with the SOS Care Promise
5. Compile annual **progress reports** and disseminate to stakeholders

Evaluate results

The focus of the third phase is objective evaluation of the programme design, delivery, and achievements to generate recommendations of how to improve future programmes. Evaluation is different from monitoring; it is done less frequently, conducted by an independent evaluator, and looks holistically at the validity of the results chain and planned and unplanned results. In this document, one process step is detailed:

1. Conduct either a **mid-term or summative external evaluation** to get objective recommendations and be able to make strategic changes as needed

Use results to manage

In the last step of the RBM programme cycle, we use results. While it is presented as the last phase in the cycle, we can learn from and use results to manage and improve performance throughout. Three process steps enable the use of results:

1. **Collect and document lessons learned** throughout implementation
2. **Conduct review and planning meetings** to analyse results and lessons learned and take evidence-based decisions
3. When appropriate, **end the programme** through a well-prepared and sustainable exit strategy

RBM programme cycle: mock timeline

Managing a programme according to RBM means moving away from annual planning and towards multi-year planning because sustainable results such as behaviour change take time to achieve and thus an annual timeline does not allow adequate understanding and use of results to manage. We recommend that you change to three-, four-, or five-year programme cycles, which will give you sufficient time to monitor and learn from results. A minimum of three years ensures you will be able to plan for and learn from outcomes, while any longer than five years and you will not be able to adequately react to changes in the context and observed results. You should select the length of the programme cycle when you develop the concept note.

The processes described above occur at different points throughout the cycle so you do not do all of them all the time. In Figure 5, you can see a mock timeline for a three-year programme. Start during a preparation year (Year Zero) to allow time to properly plan and acquire funds before implementation. Near the end of the current cycle, decide, with the support of the national office, to continue the programme with improvements based on results or end the programme. This decision should be based on a review of the needs assessment and results to see if needs still exist and if SOS is still best-placed to respond. If you plan to continue the programme, start the new programme cycle during the last year of the current cycle to avoid gaps between finishing one cycle and starting a new one. If you plan to exit, review and implement the exit strategy.

To increase efficiency and avoid duplication, align this timeline with other processes in your MA. For example, finalise the RBM planning phase before the national mid-term planning workshop to ensure that the concept notes inform the national strategy and that there is adequate budget available for the programmes. If the government requires reports by a certain date, align the internal deadline for their completion accordingly. RBM should replace and standardise our work, not complicate it. Make time early on to agree how RBM processes will replace existing templates and tools, as this will also increase efficiency.

	Y0 (preparation)				Y1				Y2				Y3				Y1 (new cycle)			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Module 1: Plan for results																				
Needs assessment		■											■							
Programme idea (optional)		■												■						
Concept note			■											■						
Results framework			■												■					
Prepare for implementation																				
Activity schedule				■												■				
Inputs					■											■				
RBM system				■					■		■									
Module 2: Monitor and report on results																				
Baseline study				■	■								■	■	■	■				
Monitoring plan					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Data quality assessment			■							■	■					■			■	
SOS care promise self-assessment								■	■							■		■		
Progress report								■	■			■				■				■
Module 3: Evaluate results																				
Evaluation (mid-term or summative)									■	■	■						■	■		
Module 4: Use results																				
Lessons learned log					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Review and planning meetings					■		■	■		■		■	■		■	■		■		■
Exit strategy (if applicable)													■	■	■	■				

Figure 5. Mock timeline of three-year RBM programme cycle
Please note: deadlines for submission of planning documents for programme investment projects may fall in Q1 or very early in Q2. See programme planning process description for details and adjust the timeline accordingly.

Sustaining RBM

RBM tools and processes will unfold their full benefits when you use them in systematically. RBM delivers **simplification through standardisation** and can be sustained by embedding processes in our day-to-day organisational culture. To achieve this, there are four key success factors, each of which is detailed below.

Balance accountability and learning

In RBM, we have three distinct purposes: accountability to donors and governments, accountability to beneficiaries and partners, and the usage and sharing of learning. Often, an RBM system fails because it puts too much focus on accountability to donors and at the expense of the other two purposes. This pushes organisations towards the accentuation of good results by using anecdotal stories to communicate achievements, which is partly understandable, as this may appeal to some donors. However, the commitment to implement relevant and effective services should encourage us invest into learning from and sharing of all results, including unexpected or undesirable results, and to share more information with beneficiaries in an accessible way. A strong RBM system must consider accountability **and** using learning to improve equally.

Integrate and align RBM

Most of our programmes have isolated elements of planning, monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and/or learning in place and all MAs follow a national mid-term planning cycle. However, in many cases, indicators and results are not well connected, or there is a missing link between activities carried out and planned outcomes, or programme planning and national planning are not aligned. A good RBM system should complement and/or replace existing practices to ensure a streamlined approach; it should not add a new burden. This is why it is important to not only understand and adopt RBM processes, but also to adapt them

to the local context and existing practices to ensure the new system is integrated and makes work simpler for our staff.

Ensure stakeholder participation

Participatory approaches build on the skills, knowledge, and culture of stakeholders who are affected by a programme and enable them to actively participate in design, implementation, and learning. In other words: those who will be affected by the programme share influence and control over the plans, related decisions, and resources. Participation empowers and mobilises people as actors in their own development and encourages the contribution of individuals in group processes; if the target group are involved in decision-making and learning, you will create ownership and encourage stakeholders to support and sustain changes.

According to the human rights principles, all people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being (for more information, please see http://www.unfpa.org/resources/human-rights-principles). Participation must overcome potential barriers relating to age, sex, social class, or educational background. Throughout the RBM programme cycle, we must facilitate, encourage, and ensure stakeholder participation.

Dedicate adequate resources

Financial resources

Sustaining RBM requires a financial investment to ensure high quality and timely information that will help us provide relevant and effective programmes, attract diverse funds, and reduce our workload. Adequate budget is needed for RBM-related costs, such as capacity building, staff hiring, external evaluators, monitoring, and review and planning meetings. Some institutional donors recommend that 5-10% of the total programme budget should be reserved for RBM costs; in SOS, we are often well below this so sustaining RBM will require a strong commitment to allocate adequate budget to RBM, based on the real needs of the programme.

Human resources

RBM empowers programme staff to manage contextualised programmes. Programme staff have particular roles and responsibilities when using RBM and it is important to take time to determine how to embed new tasks in their ongoing work and what capacity building they may need. In addition, management buy-in and leadership are crucial; the national office should provide guidance to the programme staff, while also encouraging them to take a strong role steering the programme.

In Table 3, we propose some key roles and responsibilities in relation to RBM (see Annex 4 for a more detailed proposal). The national office and programme staff should analyse existing staff capacities and resources and adapt this proposal to the specific context. Be sure to distribute responsibilities among all staff to engage them and increase their ownership of RBM.

To sustain RBM, a full-time and skilled **Monitoring and Evaluation [M&E] advisor** is needed in the MA. RBM requires evidence to ensure accountability and there will be increased demands for reliable data and analysis of results. Therefore, we strongly recommend MAs to re-train an existing staff or hire a new staff for M&E. If this is not possible, MAs must decide how to manage M&E tasks. For example, share responsibilities among existing colleagues and embed it in job descriptions over time, or approach a funding PSA to explore options to fund this position.

Role	Main responsibility
Programme director	Create a strong culture of results and learning by leading RBM in programmes and ensuring alignment between functions
Monitoring and evaluation staff	Lead the definition of results and indicators and ensure trustworthy and timely monitoring and reporting
Programme unit staff	Support the focus on results and contribute to all stages of the RBM programme cycle
Finance staff*	Develop results-based budgets and track expenditure
Human resources staff*	Ensure RBM responsibilities are incorporated into existing job descriptions and new staff have necessary RBM skills
Communications & fundraising staff*	Communicate results rather than activities with stakeholders and use results to raise funds

Table 3. Roles and responsibilities of staff
Please note: these positions – finance, human resources, and communications and fundraising – may be at the national level instead of the programme. Regardless, they have an important role and responsibilities in RBM.

MODULE 1:
PLAN FOR RESULTS

"What if we don't change at all ...
and something magical just happens?"

Module overview

Planning is the process of jointly defining desired results that respond to local needs and deciding how to achieve the results. It requires jointly defining results that address identified needs, formulating how to achieve these results, and selecting indicators to measure performance. During planning, we create a results chain to show how what we plan to do will lead to the results we want to see in the community.

The aim of planning is to develop and resource a relevant programme to implement and manage for the next three to five years. Planning is an iterative learning process rather than linear steps; therefore, you can – and indeed should – move back and forth between the steps presented in this module.

Programme and national management should align or replace current programme-level processes with RBM processes to avoid duplication of work and align the timing of the planning processes within the MA. For example, the RBM planning phase provides valuable information to make national mid-term plans more relevant to the local context and therefore you should finalise programme planning before the national mid-term planning workshop.

Remember, you need to assign clear roles and responsibilities to relevant staff. See Annex 4 for a proposal that you should adapt to your local context.

1.1. Identify needs

We work in a dynamic environment with many actors and influences that will change in the number of children in our target group, the reasons for being in the target group, and/or their situation once in the target group. A **needs assessment** is an objective analysis of the situation in a specific location in order to identify the target group, community assets and needs, and stakeholders present. It replaces the feasibility studies that SOS used to conduct and is applicable for both new and ongoing programmes. It is complementary to the child rights situation analysis [CRSA], which is done at the country-level and indicates areas with child rights concerns. The needs assessment is conducted after the CRSA and provides more details on a location identified as having child rights concerns to support a decision of whether SOS should intervene in this specific location.

A needs assessment is a form of evaluation; to ensure continuity, accuracy, and reduced bias, either SOS staff from another programme or MA, with support from the GSC, or an external consultant should conduct the needs assessment. In either case, programme staff must participate and support the independent evaluation team (see Module 3 for more details on evaluations).

A needs assessment is recommended at the start of each RBM programme cycle – every three, four, or five years – so we can identify and adapt to changing needs and environment. If necessary to reflect a rapidly changing context, conduct the needs assessment more often. It is a key input to programme planning as it answers two critical questions, which help SOS staff decide whether to develop or continue a programme in this location (see Figure 6).
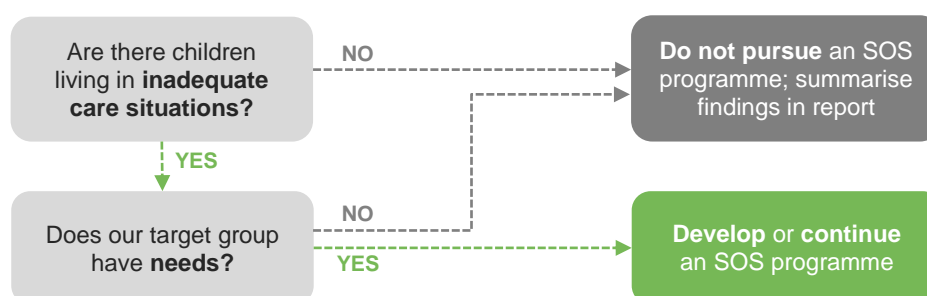
Figure 6. Key questions in needs assessment

In case existing needs assessments from other local NGOs are accessible, you can use these as a reference. However, the needs assessment is the basis for establishing if SOS should develop or continue a programme so we recommend that you conduct one specifically for our target group.

A good needs assessment ensures:
- A deep and objective understanding of the target group, community assets, needs, and stakeholders
- Needs-driven and participatory programme planning that is contextually relevant and sustainable
- Knowledge of '*who will benefit or be adversely affected by the programme and how?*'
  - Maximisation of benefits for beneficiaries while minimising potential negative results

Tool:	Links:
T1. Needs assessment (basic)	SOS gatekeeping user manual United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Human rights based approach

1.2. Develop the programme concept

Once you know that the target group has needs that you may be best-placed to respond to, write a narrative that explains how you will intervene in this location. In the RBM approach, we have two types of narratives. A **programme idea** is a short narrative of the needs identified in the location and the programme that SOS could provide to respond to these needs. A **concept note** is a concise, structured narrative that outlines the relevance, methodology, sustainability, and budget of a programme concept; it is an elaboration of the programme idea. Both should capture interest and sell the programme to stakeholders, including potential donors.

There are two ways to proceed, which gives you flexibility to select the most appropriate and efficient option for your programme (see Table 4; see the programme planning process description for more details).

Option	Applicability	Benefits
1. Prepare a **programme idea** first and a **concept note** after initial approval	New or large change programmes where you want: ▪ GSC feedback and approval and PSA interest to fund before investing in detailed planning ▪ International funds for planning or formulation investments (e.g. costs for architect, workshops, or assessments)	Provides space for GSC and PSA feedback on the programme idea, which you can incorporate in the concept note to increase the chances of funding
2. Prepare a **concept note** only	Programmes where you: ▪ Do not require international funds for formulation investments ▪ Are not making major changes to an ongoing programme and thus do not need to submit planning documents to the GSC	Enables MAs who are confident in their concept, or who do not need PSA funding, to minimise the time spent writing planning documents

Table 4. Programme planning options

If you choose option one and prepare both, remember that the concept note is an elaboration of the programme idea and thus they should be well aligned. Wherever possible, develop these documents in a participatory manner to ensure relevance and buy-in from various stakeholders.

The concept note is closely related to the results framework (the next process), so we recommend that you develop them simultaneously. You can do this by holding a formulation workshop and bringing together key stakeholders to draft both a concept note and the results framework. A key decision that you will take in this step is how long the RBM programme cycle will last. We recommend choosing between a three-, four-, or five-year cycle. A shorter timeframe enables more frequent opportunities to improve with each new cycle, but requires results achievable in a shorter amount of time. A longer timeframe enables more possibility to aim for complex changes in the community, but requires more careful planning.

Please note that SOS Children's Villages no longer requires a *programme proposal*; the RBM concept note template replaces the *programme proposal* and *programme concept* templates previously used for programme planning.

The programme idea and concept note are important because they:
- Describe the programme concept for the next three to five years
- Concisely summarise how the needs identified in the needs assessment will be addressed

- Sell the programme to stakeholders, particularly donors
- Give an indication of the expected cost of the programme

1.3. Detail a results framework

Just as a map aids a long car journey, every programme needs a clear description of the desired results and how it will achieve them. A **results framework** is a management tool that presents the desired results of the programme and the indicators used to detect change in a simple matrix. **Results** are the changes that occur because of our activities; they can be positive or negative, planned or unplanned. Desired results are specific positive changes that the programme defines in the results framework and aims to achieve. The results framework outlines the desired results for the RBM programme cycle (i.e. the next three, four, or five years).

Defining the results framework is the most challenging, but rewarding, aspect of planning; it is the centrepiece of the RBM approach as it forms the basis for all subsequent steps in the RBM programme cycle. We define our desired results during planning and use indictors to track performance during implementation. **Indicators** are variables that you can observe, measure, or validate in some way to show progress made towards desired results of a programme, or if the results have been achieved. Whenever possible and in line with defined results, indicators should be taken from existing sources, such as the programme database, to make data collection and management more efficient.

Traditional programme management involved checking what a programme did (activities) at defined points (e.g. quarterly or annually) and commissioning a final evaluation to verify that a programme was executed as planned. Results frameworks bring 'evaluative thinking' and logic into the planning phase by starting with an understanding of the needs and then determining the desired impact and working backwards to outcomes, outputs, activities, and inputs required to achieve results. A focus on results makes it easier to see what we want to achieve and thus what we need to monitor and evaluate and when. In addition, a comprehensive risk analysis is done during results framework development to identify potential risks and outline risk management strategies early on.

Using a results framework strengthens programmes by clarifying desired results, increasing accountability, and facilitating evidence-based decision-making. Wherever possible, use participatory planning approaches while developing the results framework to ensure stakeholder input is integrated into the programme design and the programme is relevant to the local community.

A results framework is important because it:
- Puts desired results at the centre of the planning process, with an emphasis on long-term changes
- Ensures robust and comprehensive multi-year plans that prepare for unexpected events
- Links planning to performance through indicators that can be tracked and used to explain how and why a programme succeeded or failed
- Communicates what you plan to achieve to stakeholders

Relation between key performance indicators and the results framework

In SOS, we have several global key performance indicators [KPIs] that every MA must report on; some of these relate directly to results achieved at the programme-level and come from the programme database:
- **2030 measure 2b:** % of families who are self-reliant when exiting family strengthening
- **2030 measure 3a:** % of young people from alternative care who are self-reliant when exiting alternative care (excluding reunification)
- **2030 measure 3b:** % of children and young people in alternative care and family strengthening with at least satisfactory educational performance
- **Programme quality KPI:** % of family strengthening caregivers fulfilling parental obligations
- **Programme quality KPI:** % of children and young people who leave alternative care due to reintegration with family of origin

Indicators in the results framework are derived from the results statements that we want to measure. If the content of a defined result allows, then you should use the above-mentioned KPI as an indicator. For

example, if one of your results is *caregivers provide improved care for their children*, then you could use the KPI *family strengthening caregivers fulfilling parental obligations (average rating)* to measure the result. If the KPIs do not fit in the results framework itself, you should still monitor them regularly as an input to the national mid-term plan and 2030 measures.

🔧	**Tool:** T4. Results framework	🔗	**Links:** Programme quality KPIs: report and booklet BOND impact builder

1.4. Prepare for implementation

To conclude the planning phase and prepare for programme implementation, conduct the following steps: create an activity schedule; plan inputs; and set up the RBM system.

Create an activity schedule

To translate the results framework into concrete activities for staff to do, it is necessary to develop an **activity schedule**, which is a multi-year chart that outlines and tracks activities, responsible persons, resources, and deadlines. The activity schedule is crucial to ensure staff know what to do and when and to enable managers to track progress and any delays. The level of detail should be such that it is useful and practical, but not burdensome. Most of the activity schedule is based on the results chain so each activity is linked to a specific output. In addition, you may have overarching programme management activities, such as administration, governance, or monitoring, that you should add to the activity schedule.

The activity schedule:
- Breaks down the results into actionable steps to take to achieve them
- Organises the sequence of activities and informs the budgeting process
- Helps staff and programme directors track implementation

Plan inputs

Once your concept note, results framework and activity schedule are clear, consider the resources you need to achieve the desired results. Remember, **inputs** are the human, material, financial, and intangible resources used for activities. Input planning can help you to reflect on the feasibility of the programme. If you realise that you do not have sufficient resources to achieve the desired results, it is necessary to revise the scope of the programme in the concept note, results framework, and activity schedule.

The scheduled activities serve as the basis for planning the necessary inputs. If time allows, it is best to estimate inputs during the formulation workshop to ensure relevant stakeholders are involved. Ask the following questions to brainstorm the resources needed:
- What **human** resources do we need to conduct the planned activities? Do we have enough staff in place to conduct the planned activities?
- What **intangible** resources do we need? Does our staff have the right knowledge and skills? Do we have a good brand and reputation in the community?
  - *Note: intangible resources are non-monetary assets that are not physical in nature, such as staff capacity and motivation, software, internal policies, brand reputation, and so on*
- What **material** resources do we need? Do we need to rent or construct something first?
- What **financial** resources do we need? When do we need it? What are the financial implications of the human, material, and intangible resource needs?
- How can we ensure **efficient** use of our resources throughout implementation?

When planning the inputs, make sure that you align with existing frameworks, such as the national association budgeting handbook, good management and accountability quality standards, and accounting, construction, and human resources policies and policy support documents. If you would like to do results-based budgeting, **PRAG T25** offers guidance on how to do this, a template for a resource and cost schedule, and a checklist for establishing a good budget.

Set up RBM system

RBM will unfold its full benefits when you use it in a systematic way that considers integration and alignment, resourcing and capacitating, accountability and learning. You should set up the programme's RBM system during the planning phase. An **RBM system** is a set of processes, tools, and practical considerations that work together as parts of an interconnected RBM approach, like components of an engine.
- The **processes** are outlined in this document

- The **tools** are explained in the RBM toolkit
- The **practical considerations** are overarching tasks that support effective RBM
  - For example, budget for RBM processes and human resources, assign clear responsibilities, and make local adaptations to align with other organisational processes

The programme director is responsible for the set-up and management of the RBM system. He/she should analyse and structure the components during planning to ensure management buy-in, staff ownership, and adequate budget for RBM. A strong RBM system delivers simplification through standardisation and can help to sustain RBM by ensuring that we embed the processes in our day-to-day organisational culture. As mentioned above, the RBM system incorporates all required processes and tools of the RBM approach. We therefore suggest that you read this document in its entirety before setting up the RBM system to ensure that you fully understand each component.

An RBM system is beneficial for SOS because it:
- Integrates and aligns RBM with existing processes
- Balances accountability and learning throughout programme implementation
- Ensures that staff know responsibilities in relation to RBM
- Helps to ensure adequate budget and skilled human resources for RBM

Please note: some organisations talk about M&E (monitoring and evaluation) or MEL (monitoring, evaluation, and learning) systems rather than RBM systems. These terms mean similar things. We use the term *RBM system* to emphasise that the four modules of RBM are interconnected and must be implemented as a whole to enable us to manage based on results.

Tool:
T5. Activity schedule
T6. RBM system

Links:
PRAG T25 Resource and cost scheduling
MA Annual Budgeting Handbook

MODULE 2: MONITOR & REPORT ON RESULTS

Module overview

After concluding the planning phase, the implementation of the programme starts. This module describes the processes that provide up-to-date information on the progress and methods to share evidence with others.

Monitoring is continuous and systematic data collection and analysis to track changes related to the programme. It enables immediate corrective actions and evidence-based decision-making. We monitor a variety of aspects, including indicators, risks, activities, resources, and the external context.

Reporting is the structured and periodic information flow from the programme to different external and internal stakeholders. Reporting should always be connected to a plan and have a clear purpose. Reporting establishes the link between data and evidence-based decision-making and enables others to learn from you. Both monitoring and reporting contribute to accountability and transparency.

Remember, you need to assign clear roles and responsibilities to relevant staff. See Annex 4 for a proposal that you should adapt to your local context.

2.1. Conduct a baseline study

A **baseline study** is an analysis of the situation prior to a programme, against which progress can be assessed and comparisons made. It is a form of evaluation and therefore, to ensure continuity, accuracy, and reduced bias, either SOS staff from another programme or MA, with support from the GSC, or an external consultant should conduct the baseline study with the participation and support of programme staff (see Module 3 for more details on evaluations).

The baseline study tests the validity, reliability, and data availability of indicators selected in the results framework (for example: do they measure what you need; are they cost-effective to gather; etc.). Ideally, it is done after the programme is designed and before implementation starts; however, it could be done at the same time as the first stages of implementation. It is important to minimise the period between baseline and implementation to ensure data is accurate and recent and that there is time to make necessary changes to the concept note and/or results framework. Findings from the baseline study are inserted into the results framework and monitoring plan and used to set realistic targets.

If you already know the baseline values from the needs assessment, previous reports, evaluations, or monitoring of a similar programme in the same location, then you do not need to conduct a baseline study.

A baseline study is essential to:
- Ensure accuracy and utility of indicators
- Set realistic targets for indicators defined in the results framework
- Show that changes occur over time

	Tool:		Links:
	T7. Baseline study		None

2.2. Monitor the programme

Monitoring is continuous and systematic data collection and analysis to track changes related to the programme. You should embed this ongoing task in daily routines of staff to enable regular improvement of the programme and ensure it remains relevant, effective, and efficient. You should monitor various aspects of the programme, including indicators, risks, activities, resources, and the external context. Information gathered through monitoring is only useful if it is used. Therefore, we should be selective with how much data we gather and put in place regular review and planning meetings to discuss, analyse, learn, and agree on necessary corrective actions.

2.2.1. Indicators

The indicators were defined in the results framework, tested in the baseline study, and must now be frequently monitored to track changes. A **monitoring plan** is a table that outlines how the programme will monitor indicators from the results framework. It includes the person responsible, the timeline, and provides space to insert the actual indicator values over time. It is a living document that supports programme staff to see the degree of results achievement throughout implementation and use monitoring data to determine corrective actions to ensure the programme is on-track to achieve targets.

The focus of the monitoring plan is outcome- and output-level indicators defined in the results framework, as we can assess these internally and with a higher frequency than the impact. Impact is excluded from the monitoring plan because it takes a long time to see changes at this level and this is often outside the programme timeframe. In addition, the complexity of measuring impact requires a more in-depth evaluation that is able to assess our contribution in comparison to the contribution of other stakeholders. However, you can include impact indicators in your monitoring plan if you feel that it makes sense.

As mentioned in 1.3, we have a set of global KPIs that every MA must report on. If the indicators are included in the results framework, then you monitor them through the above-mentioned monitoring plan. If they are not included in the results framework because they do not relate to your results statements, or because they are not result-level indicators (e.g. input or activity indicators), then you should still monitor them regularly as an input to programme and national planning processes.

2.2.2 Additional aspects

In addition to indicator monitoring, you need to monitor additional aspects, such as risks, activities, resources, and context to verify progress and reflect on whether the programme environment has changed. If the environment has altered drastically – for example very high staff turnover, political instability, or a natural disaster – a major change to the programme may be required in order to respond. You can monitor these topics through available templates and existing processes. Spread the responsibility for monitoring among staff to ensure their active participation and ownership.

Strong, structured, and comprehensive monitoring is critical for:
- Efficient data gathering and tracking
- Evidence-based learning and management of programmes through capitalising on proven results
- Improved accountability to stakeholders
- Increased data quality

Tool:	T8. Monitoring plan	**Links:**	Programme quality KPIs: report and booklet

2.2.3. Databases as sources of verification

A database maximises the effectiveness, efficiency, and usefulness of indicator monitoring. Databases enable electronic data collection and storage, and greater possibilities for automatic data analysis (see Figure 7). Due to this, databases make great sources of verification.

The indicator monitoring process with a database works as follows: staff systematically collect quantitative and qualitative data on the defined indicators through ongoing monitoring activities, such as child and family development planning, stakeholder interviews, or observations. Staff enter the data into the database. Staff and the database analyse the collected data to determine the current indicator value and whether the programme is on-track to meet targets. If not, staff can use the monitoring information to take corrective actions to bring the programme on-track.
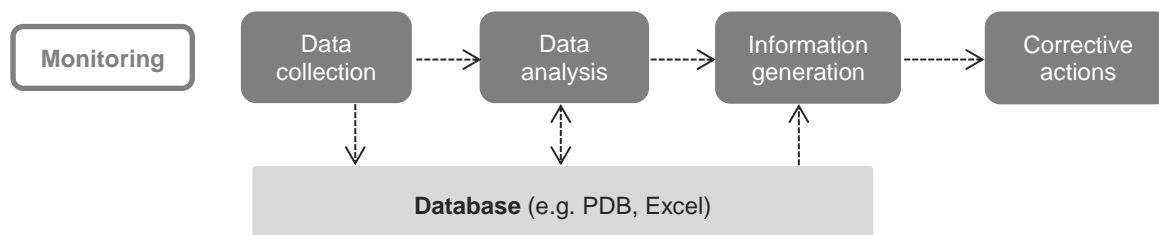

Figure 7. Monitoring supported by a database

Globally, SOS Children's Villages has the Programme Database [PDB], which is a critical tool to measure and monitor our work with individual children and families from the time they enter the programme to their exit. The PDB is therefore a good source for data on output and outcome results. The PDB enables structured storage and analysis of data that can be used at all organisational levels. It is a readily available database that can be a reliable source of verification if staff use it correctly. Below, you can see a sample of indicators that come from the PDB and that you could use in your results framework:

- % of children and young people who receive appropriate support for health issues
- % of children and young people who have good self-esteem
- % of children and young people who are in employment, education or training
- % of caregivers who are literate
- % of caregivers who are mostly with and/or aware of whereabouts of their children
- % of families who have sufficient income to meet basic needs
- % of families who have access to safe, affordable, and sufficient water

2.3. Assess data quality

Data is often used for decision-making, communication with stakeholders, fundraising, advocacy, and more. It is therefore essential that we can trust the data that we gather and ensure that it is high quality. Data quality can be defined in many ways, but generally data is considered high quality if it represents reality and can reliably serve its purpose in a specific context. Some criteria against which we can assess data quality are:

- **Validity**: the extent to which data clearly and adequately represents the intended results
- **Reliability**: the extent to which stable and consistent data collection and analysis methods are maintained over time
- **Timeliness**: the extent to which data is available at a useful frequency and in a timely manner to influence decision-making
- **Precision**: the extent to which data has a sufficient level of detail for decision-making
- **Integrity**: the extent to which data collected has safeguards to minimise the risk of transcription error or data manipulation
- **Completeness**: the extent to which data represents a fair overview of the situation in terms of coverage

A **data quality assessment**, or data quality audit, is a system or process that identifies and alleviates factors that undermine data quality. You should conduct periodic data quality assessments, for example when selecting indicators and gathering baseline information to ensure the indicators are strong and can be measured over time. This can help to eliminate weak indicators early on and strengthen the programme. We recommend that you conduct an in-depth data quality assessment at least once every two years and that you monitor and maintain the quality of the data on an ongoing basis to prevent major data quality issues.

There are PDB data quality reports for alternative care and family strengthening that can support data quality analysis and enable improvements in PDB data. The reports highlight potential errors to encourage corrections of incorrect data and accurate data input in the future.

Reviewing data quality periodically is necessary to:

- Improve quality of data
- Take evidence-based decisions and use data to advocate for our target group
- Increase trust, transparency, and accountability with stakeholders

🔧 **Tool:**	🔗 **Links:**
T9. Data quality assessment	[PDB data quality reports](#) (use chrome)

2.4. Assess programme quality

It is important to deliver programmes that exemplify our SOS Care Promise and the nine care commitments. Monitoring and assessing the quality of our services is therefore another step in the RBM journey. With the SOS Care Promise, we defined a holistic programme quality frame that serves as a benchmark for all programmes. The programme team should periodically assess whether the programme is in line with the SOS Care Promise commitments via a self-assessment.

The self-assessment is a table that enables programmes to rate their adherence to the commitments and note actions to improve where necessary. Self-assessment can only work if all the people involved can speak openly about past performance and are keen on constantly improving the quality of the programme.

Implemented in this way, the self-assessment contributes to the continuous improvement of our work and the results we achieve.

Monitoring and assessing programme quality is important to
- Encourage ongoing internal reflection on the quality of our work
- Ensure that programme work meets the globally defined minimum quality level wherever we work
- Identify areas of improvement and decide on specific actions to increase quality in these areas

Tool:	**Links:**
T10. SOS Care Promise self-assessment	SOS Care Promise

2.5.   Write progress reports

A **progress report** is a results-based narrative that summarises the changes that occurred during the reporting period. It analyses progress made towards results, shares lessons learned, and explains significant cost and scheduling deviations. The purpose of a progress report is be accountable through transparent sharing with internal and external stakeholders and to improve the quality of our programmes through reflection and analysis. In addition, progress reports are a source of lessons learned that you can use for advocacy or exchange with partners to foster learning for care quality.

At minimum, you should write a progress report once a year; it is a critical input to the national annual report and thus you should finish the progress report first so the findings can inform national reports. As with the other aspects of RBM, align progress reporting with existing programme-level reporting. With RBM, we can make a significant improvement in efficiency here as the progress report can replace other programme-level reports that you are completing now.

Progress reports enable programme staff and stakeholders to:
- Share lessons learned and progress towards results internally and externally
- Maintain and/or increase international and national funding
- Strengthen programme management through proper monitoring, evaluation, and learning
- Increase transparency and accountability

Tool:	**Links:**
T11. Progress report	None

MODULE 3:
EVALUATE RESULTS

You say your program works but why should I believe you?

Because I have evidence.

Module overview

The focus of the third module is objective evaluation of the programme design, delivery, and results to generate recommendations for strategic decision-making and programme improvement.

An **evaluation** is a deep, systematic, and objective analysis of the design, performance, and/or results of a programme. Evaluations answer specific questions to analyse what did or did not work and why, validate assumptions, and guide decision-makers in using results to learn and improve. Evaluations often focus on the causal relationship between activities, resources, and results.

Remember, you need to assign clear roles and responsibilities to relevant staff. See Annex 4 for a proposal that you should adapt to your local context.

3.1 Difference between evaluation and monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring are complementary processes that together form an aligned analysis and learning process. However, each serves a distinct purpose. Regular monitoring generates information that can be used for immediate corrective actions, whereas evaluations use and analyse monitoring information to triangulate and validate findings to inform recommendations. Other differences are explained in Table 5.

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Purpose	Track planned performance and identify issues for **immediate corrective actions** and operational decision-making	Assess results and assumptions for validity and identify **recommendations** for programmatic and strategic decision-making
Scope	Inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, risks, finances, internal and external context	The logic and validity of the results chain; especially outcomes and impact
Frequency	**Regularly** throughout implementation	**A few times** during and at the end of the RBM programme cycle
Sources	PDB data, observations, surveys, etc. (identified in results framework as 'Source of Verification')	Programme documentation, interviews, monitoring data, beneficiary surveys, database, etc.
Done by	**Programme staff**	**Independent evaluators**, in partnership with programme staff
Done for	Management and key stakeholders (e.g. implementing partners or donors)	All stakeholders

Table 5. Difference between monitoring and evaluation

As indicated above, evaluations should be independent to minimise bias and increase credibility of the findings; therefore, independent evaluators should conduct evaluations. The donor, programme team, or implementation partner may select the evaluators, depending on funding and initial agreements. The programme team or staff from other levels of the organisation can also conduct an evaluation with external support on some aspects, but this requires staff to have the necessary skills and there is a higher risk of bias.

3.2 Commission an evaluation

There are many types of evaluations that are conducted at different points in the RBM programme cycle and serve different purposes. You already read about two, needs assessment and baseline study, which are both formative evaluations. In addition, there are mid-term, summative, and impact evaluations (see Table 6). We recommend that you conduct either a mid-term or a summative evaluation in each RBM programme cycle.

Type	Timing	Purpose
Formative	Prior to programme implementation (e.g. baseline study)	Support planning, monitoring, and the development of realistic indicator targets and relevant programme concept notes

Mid-term	Halfway through the RBM programme cycle	Bring an objective view of the programme to date and recommend corrective actions if necessary
Summative	At the end of the RBM programme cycle	Assess the outcomes to inform strategic decision-making and generate recommendations to be harnessed in subsequent planning processes and/or by other programmes
Impact	After completion of the RBM programme cycle	Contribute to knowledge creation and organisational development; evaluate the long-term impact on individuals and communities

Table 6. Types of evaluations

You can evaluate the whole programme (strategic evaluation) or one component (thematic evaluation). For example, you can evaluate an entire programme location at once or evaluate only the parental skills and parent-child relationships in a family strengthening part of the programme. You can also classify evaluations according to the purpose. One evaluation can serve more than one purpose depending on the methodology; however, bear in mind that combining different purposes leads to more expensive and complex evaluations.

3.2.1. Relation between impact evaluations and the SOS social impact assessment

Impact evaluation is an assessment of the impacts produced by an intervention - positive and negative, intended and unintended, direct and indirect. Social impact assessments are a type of impact evaluation and SOS Children's Villages International has a methodology, toolkit and, e-learning tailored to the reality of SOS programmes. The assessment focuses on the highest level of results, the impact that our programmes have, and brings this into focus by measuring the changes in the situation of former programme beneficiaries, their families, and communities. In addition, it provides a cost-benefit analysis, to gauge the financial value created by the changes.

Our social impact assessment approach is an independent process that you can do, regardless of the RBM level. It is not designed to be carried out in all programmes, but rather in selected locations according to need and to provide a representative picture of results of our federation. For this reason, we do not cover it in detail in the RBM approach; however, having RBM can give baseline data and frame the analysis and interpretation of desired versus observed impact.

Impact evaluations and social impact assessments are the most challenging type of evaluation because a certain degree of uncertainty will always remain about how much the long-term changes were influenced (positively or negatively) by external factors. Nevertheless, the results chain of a programme is the 'red thread' explaining how we believe inputs and activities lead to particular outputs, outcomes and ultimately impact. Carrying out a social impact assessment tests the validity of this 'red thread' and helps put the organisation's results and those of partners into perspective.

Evaluations are important because they:
- Provide credible, actionable, and objective information on whether a programme has achieved its planned outcomes and impact and the extent to which initial assumptions were valid
- Strengthen evidence-based decision-making
- Contribute to increased accountability to stakeholders through learning and knowledge sharing

Tool:
T12. Evaluation

Links:
Social impact assessment methodology
OECD/DAC Criteria for evaluating development assistance

MODULE 4: USE RESULTS TO MANAGE

Module overview

At the end of the journey through the RBM programme cycle, we follow the last arrow from *use results* to *plan*. While it is the last phase in the cycle, you can and should identify and use results throughout the cycle to manage and improve performance.

This is done by collecting, documenting, and sharing **lessons learned**, which are experiences and knowledge from a programme that should be actively shared and taken into account in future and related programmes. Reflect on the lessons learned regularly and with stakeholder participation, and update your programme to incorporate corrective actions.

Remember, you need to assign clear roles and responsibilities to relevant staff. See Annex 4 for a proposal that you should adapt to your local context.

4.1 Collect and document lessons learned

You can use results in various ways. If something went well or results exceeded targets, identify the factors that contributed to success so you can replicate a good result. If something went wrong, find hindering factors to avoid in future. If you observe that you could do something differently, think about how to change the programme to try a new approach in future. The analysis of day-to-day practices, processes, and results reveals a continuous source of things that can be enforced, replicated, avoided, or changed.

To harness the power of lessons learned and make it accessible for a wider audience, you must collect and document them to create a knowledge base. This is the basis from where you can apply what you learned and turn results and lessons learned into action. There are three main types of lessons learned; each one offers a unique perspective on the programme and you should emphasise the importance of all three when collecting learning.

- **Good practices** that we want to replicate
- **Challenges** that we want to avoid or overcome
- **Observations** of things that could be done differently

Collecting lessons learned is an ongoing process that runs throughout the entire RBM programme cycle. You can include learning as part of the scheduled activities during programme implementation to ensure regular identification, discussion, and documentation of lessons learned (see Table 7 for ideas of learning events). Wherever possible, include stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries, in using results and discussing learning. At a minimum, we recommend that you schedule semi-annual programme review and planning meetings.

Learning events	Description
Programme review and planning meetings	Staff hold quarterly or semi-annual meetings to reflect on progress within the programme, to plan based on results and lessons learned, and to take corrective actions, if necessary
Programme visits	Staff visit comparable programme for an opportunity to learn first-hand and share experiences with each other
Experience sharing with other NGOs	Programme staff connect with other local and international NGOs to share good practices, learn from each other, and develop their local network
Peer exchange	Programme staff from different locations or MAs attend a workshop to share deeper insights and collaborate on improving focus areas; regional offices can assist in organising these meetings
Mentoring	Co-workers mentor each other within or across programmes to facilitate knowledge transfer from skilled staff
Programme audits	GSC, MA, and/or donor representatives participate in audits and share findings with stakeholders

SharePoint platform	Staff engage in online discussions to quickly and easily access and share knowledge on various focus topics
Reporting mechanisms	MA provides space for internal and external reporting on: general feedback and complaints, child safeguarding concerns, integrity, compliance, and legal allegations

Table 7. Learning opportunities

Whenever a lesson learned comes up, document it in the lessons learned log. This creates a structured knowledge base of your work that you can draw on when needed. Documenting lessons learned is a key input to progress reporting as it organises information on challenges, good practices, and observations before reports are due. It is also crucial for national mid-term reviewing and planning as it informs what worked and what did not to enable stronger national-level plans in the future. This in turn informs planning, reporting, and analyses at regional and international levels.

Collecting and documenting lessons learned enables staff to:
- Improve the programme and better interpret programme results
- Share lessons learned with stakeholders
- Preserve knowledge for reference in the same programme or when starting a new programme

Tool:	**Links:**
T13. Lessons learned log	None

4.2. Hold review and planning meetings

Programme review and planning meetings are excellent opportunities to analyse lessons learned, achieved results, expenditures to date, changes to risks/context, and so on. They enable staff to assess the status of the programme and discuss why deviations occurred. These meetings also inform decisions on planning for the next operational period. If, for example, many more beneficiaries changed their behaviour in a desired way after Activity A than after Activity B, programme staff could discuss on how to conduct a more in-depth analysis to find out why Activity A was more effective, or how to adapt the programme to carry out more activities like Activity A in future and stop or change activities like Activity B.

Taking corrective actions is one example of how you can turn results into action. Moving towards a culture of learning and results, each programme should strive to include reflection loops into regular work whenever possible and continuously analyse what went well, what was challenging, and what you could have done differently. Review and planning meetings create a space to discuss how results can be used, for example:
- Use results to **plan**
  - o *Validate logic:* verify if the results chain is accurate or justify changes to address logic gaps
  - o *Inform budgets:* evidence-based resourcing and budgeting
  - o *Evidence-based decisions:* inform and justify strategic and management decisions
- Use results to **monitor and report**
  - o *Inform improvements:* initiate corrective actions to resolve performance problems
  - o *Share good practices:* contribute to organisational knowledge
  - o *Communication:* evidence-based dialogue with stakeholders
  - o *Motivation:* celebrate successes and encourage staff to continue achieving
- Use results to **evaluate**
  - o *Generate recommendations:* identify strategic improvements
  - o *Increase accountability:* respond to demands for transparency (e.g. within reports)
  - o *Improve efficiency and effectiveness:* identify recommendations to improve the programme

Dedicated meetings are important because they:
- Bring together key stakeholders to analyse progress and plan next steps
- Provide space to discuss learning and use it to inform programme improvements and national, regional, and international discussions on how to best serve our target group
- Help to select key results and lessons learned to include in reports and communication

Tool:	**Links:**
T14. Review and planning meetings	None

4.3. End the programme

An RBM programme cycle spans three to five years after which the programme staff decide to either continue the programme with improvements based on results and lessons learned or end SOS involvement. You may decide to end for a variety of reasons, such as:

- We achieved our desired results and the community no longer needs us
- The government (or another stakeholder) is willing and able to provide necessary services
- Emergency or dangerous situations make it impossible for us to continue
- Funding for the programme has ended and new funding has not been secured
- The local needs changed and SOS is not best-placed to respond to new needs

In this sense, ending a programme can be due to positive or negative reasons; however, we must always carefully plan and execute it via an exit strategy. An **exit strategy** is a plan for closure, gradual reduction, or handover of programme activities performed by an organisation, when services are no longer needed or donor support has ended. An exit strategy, in the broader sense, is a strategy for designing, implementing, and ending external support in a manner consistent with the objective of producing sustainable development outcomes. It is a process, not an event, and as such, it is integral to the entire programme design.

The literature on the topic distinguishes between three forms of exiting and, usually, the exit will involve a combination of two approaches that are most suitable for the specific context.

- **Phase-down:** a gradual reduction of support, ideally with a simultaneous gradual increase in the beneficiary or community contribution
- **Phase-over:** a transfer of full responsibilities for programme activities to another organisation, government entity, community group, or individual
- **Phase-out:** a withdrawal of inputs after the completion of the programme or after the programme has reached its results, without making any provisions for another stakeholder to take over

Exiting is closely linked to **sustainability**, which is the extent to which the benefits delivered by a programme continue after external assistance has ended. A good exit strategy does not jeopardise the progress made during the programme and aims to ensure further progress after the end of technical and financial support. In the programme design, you should include activities that will contribute to the eventual sustainability of the benefits, for example, training community-based organisations.

A well-organised exit strategy involving all the key stakeholders brings the following benefits:

- Clarifies the specific criteria that signify it is time to exit
- Ensures continuity of programme benefits to the target group long after funding has stopped
- Develops the capacities of all actors involved and ensures the empowerment of beneficiaries
- Ensures a responsible use of SOS property/infrastructure after programme end

Tool:
T15. Exit strategy

Links:
Programme planning process
Change and termination of SOS programme units

Annex 1: Glossary

This glossary is valid for both the RBM international policy support document and the related RBM toolkit. A reference to the respective document is indicated below.

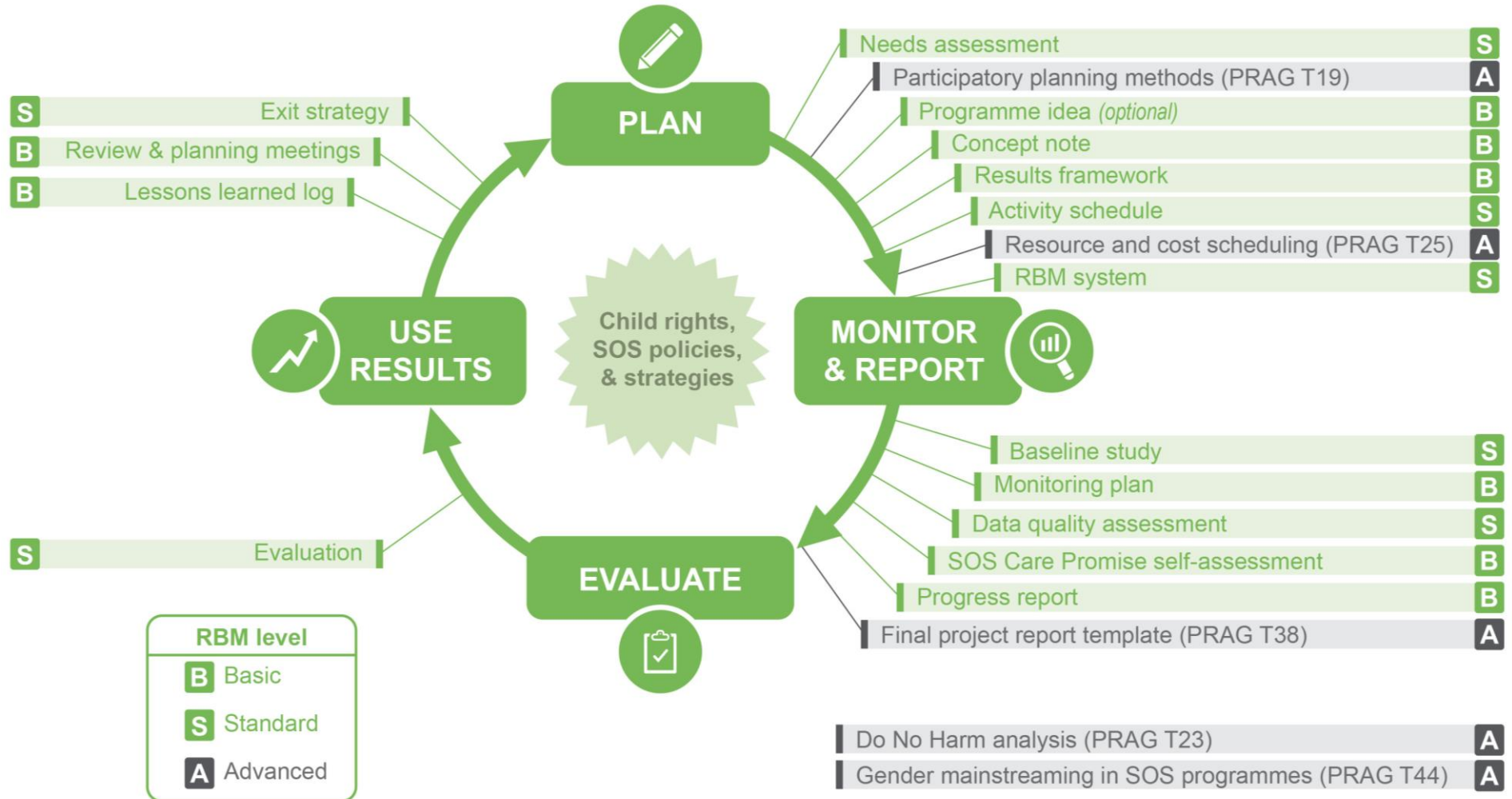| Term	Definition	Location
Activities	Actions taken or services delivered; the use of inputs to produce desired outputs (i.e. what we actually do)	Toolkit
Activity schedule	A multi-year chart that outlines and tracks activities, responsible persons, resources, and deadlines	IPSD + Toolkit
Assumptions	Low probability and low impact risks whereby it is expected that either the risk won't occur or the impact will be small if it does	Toolkit
Baseline	The starting indicator value for indicators in the results framework	Toolkit
Baseline study	An analysis of the situation prior to a programme, against which progress can be assessed and comparisons made	IPSD + Toolkit
Community assets	The positive aspects of the community that can be used to improve the quality of life	Toolkit
Concept note	A concise, structured narrative that outlines the relevance, methodology, sustainability, and budget of a programme concept	IPSD + Toolkit
Contribution	The degree to which a programme contributed to a result	Toolkit
Data quality assessment	A process that identifies and alleviates factors that undermine data quality	Toolkit
Evaluation	A deep, systematic, and objective analysis of the design, performance, and/or results of a programme	IPSD + Toolkit
Exit strategy	A plan for closure, gradual reduction, or handover of programme activities performed by an organisation, when services are no longer needed or donor support has ended	IPSD + Toolkit
Impact	Long-term results for communities, organisations, or systems; highest level result that a programme contributes to, but does not achieve alone	Toolkit
Indicator	A variable that we can observe, measure, or validate in some way to show progress made towards the desired result of a programme, or if the result has been achieved	IPSD + Toolkit
Inputs	Human, material, financial, and intangible resources used for activities	IPSD + Toolkit
Lessons learned	Experiences and knowledge from a programme that should be actively shared and taken into account in future and related programmes	IPSD + Toolkit
Mid-term evaluation	Conducted half-way through the RBM programme cycle; it brings an objective view of the programme to date and recommends corrective actions if necessary	Toolkit
Milestone	Interim goal that helps to track progress towards the target during implementation	Toolkit
Monitoring	Continuous and systematic data collection and analysis to track changes related to the programme	IPSD + Toolkit
Monitoring plan	A table that outlines how the programme will monitor indicators from the results framework	IPSD + Toolkit
Needs	The differences between what the situation is for our target group and what it should be	Toolkit
Needs assessment	An objective analysis of the situation in a specific location to identify the target group, community assets and needs, and stakeholders present	IPSD + Toolkit

Outcomes	Medium-term results; a continuous benefit experienced or realised by beneficiaries (e.g. changes in behaviour or practices)	Toolkit
Outputs	Short-term results of completed activities (e.g. changes in knowledge and skills)	Toolkit
Planning	The process of jointly defining desired results that respond to local needs and deciding how to achieve the results	IPSD
Programme	A set of interrelated services managed by an SOS Children's Villages member association in a specific location (village, community or area with several communities) with a clearly defined target group and shared overall goal	IPSD
Programme idea	A short narrative of the needs identified in the location and the programme that SOS could provide to respond to these needs	IPSD + Toolkit
Progress report	A results-based narrative that summarises changes that occurred during the reporting period	IPSD + Toolkit
Reporting	The structured and periodic information flow from the programme to different external and internal stakeholders	IPSD
Results	The changes that occur because of our activities; they can be positive or negative, planned or unplanned. There are three levels of results (see Output, Outcome, and Impact)	IPSD + Toolkit
Results-based management [RBM]	A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes, and impacts	IPSD
RBM programme cycle	The four steps of managing a programme: plan, monitor and report, evaluate, and use results	IPSD
RBM system	A set of processes, tools, and practical considerations that work together as parts of an interconnected RBM approach, like components of an engine	IPSD + Toolkit
Results chain	Clarifies the logic of the programme by showing how what you do leads to the changes you want to see	IPSD + Toolkit
Results framework	A management tool that presents the desired results of the programme and the indicators used to detect change in a simple matrix	IPSD + Toolkit
Risk	A factor which is not under the control of programme management and which, if it remains, may undermine the success of a programme or threaten its completion	Toolkit
Risk analysis	A structured approach to managing uncertainty related to potential threats through a sequence of risk identification, analysis, and management	Toolkit
SMART	An acronym used to check if results statements and indicators are phrased well: Specific; Measureable; Achievable; Relevant; Time-bound	Toolkit
Stakeholder	Any individual, group, institution, or organisation that may – positively or negatively; directly or indirectly – affect or be affected by a programme	Toolkit
Stakeholder analysis	Examines the motivation and capacity of stakeholders present in the community	Toolkit
Summative evaluation	Conducted at the end of the programme cycle and assesses the outcomes of a programme to inform strategic decision-making and generate recommendations to be harnessed in subsequent planning processes and/or by other similar programmes	Toolkit
Sustainability	The extent to which the benefits delivered by a programme continue after external assistance has ended	IPSD + Toolkit
Target	A desirable change that you want to see in an indicator value within a particular period of time	Toolkit

Annex 2: Comparing terminology

Different organisations may use different terms to describe the same things. For example, the highest level of result is sometimes called 'goal', while others use 'impact' or 'development objective'. In this document, we use one set of RBM terms consistently as the SOS Children's Villages global standard. Below, you can find other RBM terms that are used by others actors in the development sector. This table is not exhaustive; there may be more terms used by others that are not listed below.

SOS Children's Villages RBM terms	Terms used by other organisations				
Programme	Development intervention				
Results chain	Results hierarchy	Logic model			
Impact	Development objective	Overall objective	Goal	Final goal	Programme goal
Outcome	Intermediate objective	Specific objective	Objective	Project purpose	Intermediate outcome
Output	Intermediate result	Expected result	Result		
Activity	Task	Action			
Input	Resource				
Source of verification	Means of verification				

Annex 3: RBM programme cycle

PLAN
- Needs assessment — S
- Participatory planning methods (PRAG T19) — A
- Programme idea *(optional)* — B
- Concept note — B
- Results framework — B
- Activity schedule — S
- Resource and cost scheduling (PRAG T25) — A
- RBM system — S

MONITOR & REPORT
- Baseline study — S
- Monitoring plan — B
- Data quality assessment — S
- SOS Care Promise self-assessment — B
- Progress report — B
- Final project report template (PRAG T38) — A

EVALUATE
- Evaluation — S

USE RESULTS
- Exit strategy — S
- Review & planning meetings — B
- Lessons learned log — B

Centre: Child rights, SOS policies, & strategies

- Do No Harm analysis (PRAG T23) — A
- Gender mainstreaming in SOS programmes (PRAG T44) — A

RBM level
- B Basic
- S Standard
- A Advanced

Annex 4: Roles and responsibilities in RBM

Plan	Monitor & Report	Evaluate	Use Results
Programme director: Create a strong culture of results and learning by leading RBM in programmes and ensuring alignment between functions			
▪ Steer needs assessment process & share report ▪ Organise workshops with stakeholder participation ▪ Give input to & approve idea, concept note, results framework, & budget (with national PD) ▪ Detail an activity schedule and steer RBM system	▪ Initiate SOS Care Promise self-assessment ▪ Implement data quality checks ▪ Organise quarterly meetings to review progress ▪ Give input to & approve annual programme reports ▪ Share programme reports with stakeholders (esp. national management)	▪ Support evaluations ▪ Write Terms of Reference & select evaluator(s) ▪ Organise a follow-up workshop to discuss recommendations ▪ Monitor action plan ▪ Share evaluation results with stakeholders	▪ Encourage & structure learning opportunities ▪ Discuss & share programme results & learning with stakeholders (esp. national management) ▪ Use results to make strategic decisions
Monitoring & evaluation staff: Lead the definition of results and indicators and ensure trustworthy and timely monitoring and reporting			
▪ Support evaluator(s) to conduct needs assessment ▪ Write concept note, with input from stakeholders ▪ Draft results framework, focus on selecting indicators ▪ Develop a RBM system	▪ Organise SOS Care Promise self-assessment ▪ Organise baseline study, if required ▪ Oversee & conduct data collection ▪ Regularly review & analyse PDB data to improve quality ▪ Draft annual programme progress reports	▪ Organise evaluations ▪ Support evaluators & provide monitoring data ▪ Support implementation of recommendations	▪ Participate in learning opportunities ▪ Engage stakeholders in learning & sharing ▪ Document lessons learned ▪ Promote & explore ways to use results to improve programmes
Programme unit staff: Support the focus on results and contribute to all stages of the RBM programme cycle			
▪ Give input to concept note ▪ Give input to results framework, particularly indicators from child & family development plans ▪ Share currents baselines & support setting of realistic targets	▪ Participate at SOS Care Promise self-assessment ▪ Carry out assessments of beneficiaries & regularly review & analyse data ▪ Monitor development plans ▪ Enter accurate and timely data into PDB	▪ Participate in programme evaluations ▪ Encourage & promote participation of beneficiaries in a respectful & safe way	▪ Share beneficiary results from PDB to inform and promote improvements ▪ Participate in learning and collection of lessons learned ▪ Engage beneficiaries in generating learnings
Finance staff*: Develop activity-based budgets and tracking expenditure			
▪ Draft programme budget & resource needs for concept note ▪ Ensure budget for RBM activities (e.g. workshops, monitoring, evaluators, etc.) ▪ Develop detailed budget & resource needs	▪ Monitor budget and inputs in relation to plan; highlight large deviations ▪ Analyse efficiency of inputs ▪ Prepare reports on finances, human resources, inputs	▪ Provide necessary information to evaluators ▪ Support independent audit of finances	▪ Participate in learning ▪ Engage stakeholders in learning & sharing ▪ Pro-actively propose ways to improve efficiency

Human resources staff*: Ensure RBM responsibilities are incorporated into existing job descriptions and new staff have necessary RBM skills			
▪ Update job descriptions to include respective RBM tasks ▪ Hire qualified staff according to updated job descriptions	▪ Monitor the need for RBM capacity building	▪ Consider RBM tasks & responsibilities during performance appraisal procedures	▪ Establish a "culture of results", motivate staff, create incentives and celebrate successes
Communications & fundraising staff*: Communicate results rather than activities with stakeholders and use results to raise funds			
▪ Share findings from needs assessment with interested stakeholders	▪ Use results data to inform communications	▪ Share evaluation findings with interested stakeholders	▪ Prepare user-friendly communication materials for beneficiaries and partners ▪ Put a strong focus on communicating about results and lessons learned

* Please note: these positions – finance, human resources, and communications and fundraising – may be at the national level instead of the programme level, depending on the set-up of your MA. Regardless, they have an important role and responsibilities in RBM.