# FROM MAPS TO DECISIONS

Shared geospatial capabilities for a more effective multilateral system

**Input to Project Vendepunkt: Norway's White Paper on Development Policy, 2027**

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**A central proposition for Norway**
Predictable support to a proven shared capability can improve decisions across humanitarian action, development, climate resilience and recovery, while reducing duplication and attracting additional partners and financing.

# Purpose

UNITAR welcomes Norway’s decision through Project Vendepunkt to develop a new roadmap for development policy, culminating in a White Paper to be presented to the Norwegian Parliament in its 2027 spring session. This submission is intended as a contribution to that process. At a time of a more difficult geopolitical, humanitarian and financial environment, the question is not only how to preserve aid volumes. It is how Norway can get more value from every krone by acting earlier, sharing specialist capabilities, reducing duplication and giving national and international decision-makers better evidence.

The experience of the United Nations Satellite Centre suggests a practical direction. Some capabilities are most useful when they are maintained as shared public infrastructure rather than rebuilt project by project. Earth observation, geospatial analysis and responsible use of artificial intelligence are good examples. They can support many organisations, countries and policy objectives from a common technical backbone.

# How this supports priorities Norway has already set

The proposition in this paper is closely aligned with priorities Norway has already set through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad. Norway's Humanitarian Strategy 2024-2029 calls for a stronger and more efficient humanitarian sector, a smaller gap between needs and available resources, greater use of anticipatory action, stronger links between humanitarian response and longer-term development, and continued investment in innovation and locally led capacity. It also specifically highlights the value of better data, early warning, artificial intelligence and machine learning for preparedness and preventive action, while stressing that the risks of these technologies must be managed.

Norway's current United Nations priorities reinforce the same direction. The Government has made successful UN80 reform, avoidance of duplication, more predictable and flexible financing of the United Nations, results-oriented management, prevention and early action, and stronger coordination between humanitarian action, development and peacebuilding explicit priorities. These are not peripheral issues for the United Nations Satellite Centre. They describe the operating problem the Centre is trying to solve: how to maintain a trusted common capability, use it across institutions, act earlier, and obtain more value from scarce public resources.

The relationship with Norway already reflects this approach. Norad has supported both the Centre's global emergency mapping service and national geospatial capacity development, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides the wider humanitarian, multilateral and development-policy framework within which that programming sits. Annual reviews and strategic dialogue with Norad and MFA counterparts have gone beyond reporting on outputs. They have addressed financial sustainability, donor diversification, cost recovery, anticipatory action, innovation, the role of common services in a reformed humanitarian system, and how Norway's support can be used to mobilise other financing. The next phase should build on that joint programming experience rather than start again with a new project logic.

# 1. Finance shared capability where fragmentation adds cost

Earth observation is now used across humanitarian response, climate adaptation, food security, infrastructure, environmental monitoring, recovery, protection and development planning. Yet the underlying capacity remains dispersed across institutions and projects. Different organisations procure imagery, maintain processing environments, develop tools and build analytical teams to answer related questions.

Some specialisation is essential. FAO, WMO, UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA, UNEP and others need sector expertise that should remain with them. But this does not mean that every organisation needs to recreate the same underlying satellite-data access, geospatial processing, AI validation, secure infrastructure and rapid-mapping capacity.

A shared backbone can support specialised applications. This is where consolidation can improve quality and efficiency without weakening mandates.

## 2. UNITAR has already shown that it is prepared to deliver UN reform

UNITAR comes to this discussion with a recent record of structural reform. On 3 September 2026, the General Assembly endorsed the merger of the United Nations System Staff College into UNITAR and the establishment of the United Nations Institute for Capability and Learning Innovation, UNICLI, from 1 January 2027. The President of the General Assembly subsequently referred to it as the first merger under the UN80 reform effort.

The significance goes beyond the institutions concerned. The merger shows that reform can preserve useful expertise while bringing complementary capabilities together and reducing fragmentation. It is not simply a budget-cutting exercise. It is an effort to organise the system around what it needs to deliver.

We believe the same discipline should now be brought to Earth observation and geospatial analysis across the United Nations. The question should be where common infrastructure, imagery arrangements, analytical standards, AI models, emergency readiness and generic geospatial services can be shared, while agencies retain the sector knowledge that makes the analysis useful.

The United Nations Satellite Centre is well placed to contribute to that reform. Following a recommendation of the Secretary-General, ECOSOC recognised the programme as the United Nations Satellite Centre in 2021. It already serves multiple UN entities and Member States as a neutral geospatial capability. The next step is to use that capability more systematically across the system.

## 3. Norway is building on a capability that has already delivered

Norwegian support has helped sustain an operational capability, not a promise. The partnership has combined operational readiness, methodological development, innovation and national capacity building. Norad funding has enabled the Centre to maintain a standing service while improving how it works, and the annual dialogue with Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided a forum to test the programme against Norway's wider priorities on effectiveness, reform, localisation, innovation and sustainability. Across the 2022-2025 programme period, the Centre supported 208 disaster activations against a target of 130 and 56 peace, justice, security and human-rights activations against a target of 33. It delivered 1,329 humanitarian geospatial products against a target of 700 and 624 peace, security and human-rights products against a target of 175. AI-enabled processing also expanded well beyond the original programme target, with 1,655 images processed against a target of 225.

In 2025 alone, the Centre delivered satellite-image analysis during humanitarian emergencies and crises on 63 occasions. More importantly, 90 per cent of humanitarian partners surveyed reported that the analysis contributed to more informed operational decisions.

That is the measure that matters. The value of geospatial analysis is not the number of maps produced. It is whether the evidence changes a decision about where to send a team, which road is usable, which communities are exposed, what infrastructure has been damaged, where assistance should be prioritised or how recovery resources should be directed.

The results sit on top of assets that would be expensive for individual agencies to recreate. The Centre has been based at CERN for two and a half decades and benefits from its technical and scientific environment, including GPU computing and storage used for large-scale geospatial processing and AI-assisted analysis. As imagery volumes grow, this computing capacity becomes increasingly important. The constraint is no longer simply access to a satellite image. It is the ability to process large volumes of optical, radar and other Earth observation data quickly, securely and consistently, and to turn them into information that can be used in an operational decision.

That scientific base is increasingly relevant to the Centre's next phase. The opportunity is to combine Earth observation with weather, terrain, hydrology, infrastructure, population and other contextual data and use high-performance computing to move from retrospective mapping towards probabilistic risk and impact modelling. The Centre is already developing this direction through probabilistic disaster and climate-risk assessment, predictive spatial modelling and a proposed 24/48/72-hour Rapid Impact service in which modelled estimates are progressively updated as satellite observations become available. The scientific challenge is not simply to generate a prediction, but to quantify uncertainty and distinguish clearly between what is observed, what is modelled and what remains unknown. Simulation-based approaches can test how results change as hazard intensity, asset typology, vulnerability, unit costs

and observation error vary, producing decision ranges rather than false precision. CERN's computing environment, and the wider scientific ecosystem around it, gives the Centre a distinctive base from which to deepen this work with appropriate scientific partners. The aim is not to turn a humanitarian service into a physics laboratory. It is to bring the disciplines of large-scale computation, simulation, uncertainty analysis and rigorous validation into operational geospatial decision support.

The Centre also brings together substantial in-kind data contributions. Through long-standing arrangements with satellite and government partners, very high-resolution commercial imagery can be made available for humanitarian and development purposes without each requesting organisation having to procure it separately. In 2025, the Centre's in kind imagery contributions alone provided access to approximately 516,000 square kilometres of very high-resolution imagery, with an estimated commercial value of about USD 6.3 million. These arrangements multiply the value of donor funding because public contributions pay for the analytical capability while important parts of the underlying data and infrastructure are contributed by partners.

The International Charter: Space and Major Disasters provides another measure of the Centre's contribution to the wider humanitarian system. Since 2003, the Centre has been involved in 342 Charter activations, about 34 per cent of the 1,012 activations recorded over that period. This is not occasional participation. It represents more than two and a half decades of sustained operational experience, with continuous Charter service since 2003. In the October 2024 to September 2025 reporting period alone, the Centre was involved in 29 of the Charter's 70 global activations, served as Project Manager in 26 cases and delivered 168 products across 21 countries. From September 2025 to August 2026, it supported a further 18 activations across 16 countries and produced 77 products and analyses. The Charter gives the Centre rapid access to satellite resources after major disasters; the Centre then turns those data into flood, damage, exposure and other analyses that humanitarian organisations and national authorities can use.

This operational reach is directly relevant to Norway's own accountability for development spending. For reporting to the Norwegian Parliament, UNITAR reported that the Centre delivered satellite-image analysis during humanitarian emergencies and crises on 63 occasions in 2025, and that 90 per cent of humanitarian partners surveyed said the analysis contributed to more informed operational decisions. Norwegian support therefore reaches well beyond a single institution. During the 2022 to 2025 programme period, 77 per cent of activation requests came from UN agencies, OCHA alone accounted for 42 per cent, and 80 per cent of products were shared with national or local governments. The service reached more than 40 per cent of UN Member States, including many least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries.

It also supports contexts that are central to Norwegian foreign and development policy. In Ukraine, the Centre has provided sustained geospatial analysis for humanitarian, food-security, cultural-heritage and senior UN decision-making needs. Work with FAO included 116 very high-resolution images supporting analysis of land use and agricultural disruption in Kharkiv Oblast from 2021 to 2024. The Centre has used night-time light analysis to help UN senior management understand changes in electricity and urban activity during the conflict, and its partnership with UNESCO has supported remote monitoring of cultural heritage where on-site assessment is difficult or unsafe. The same shared capability has been used in Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar, Afghanistan and other high-priority crises. This is the practical advantage of maintaining a global capability: it can move quickly to the places where Norway and the wider international community most need reliable evidence.

The breadth of demand is equally important. The Centre provides geospatial analytical services across the United Nations system and beyond. During the 2022–2025 NORAD programme, 77 per cent of activation requests came from United Nations agencies, with OCHA alone accounting for 42 per cent. A single sustained activation can serve many mandates at once. In Gaza, for example, the same underlying satellite analysis supported OCHA, FAO, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, UNCTAD, WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre. The Centre also works with UNDP, UNHCR, OHCHR, WFP, UNEP, national disaster-management authorities, the IFRC and other humanitarian partners. This is not a service built around one agency or one sector. It is a shared analytical capability used across humanitarian, development, protection, recovery and peace-related work.

That breadth of use is central to the value of Norway’s investment. Norway has helped sustain a specialised and distinctive United Nations service whose demand has grown over time. The Centre’s involvement in the International Charter increased from an average of about 10 activations a year in 2003–2014 to about 26 a year in 2020–2025. At the same time, the Centre has diversified its financing and cost-recovery base through support and service arrangements

with other governments, United Nations entities and institutional partners, complemented by substantial in-kind contributions of imagery, technology and scientific infrastructure. Predictable Norwegian funding therefore does not stand alone. It protects the readiness that allows other financing and in-kind support to be mobilised around it.

The 2025 track record also shows that this diversification is already happening in practice. Alongside Norway's support, Luxembourg became a significant contributor to operational work, while sister United Nations entities increasingly financed defined analytical requirements. OCHA directly financed major damage-assessment work in Gaza; UNHCR and UN-Habitat/UNITAC provide examples of funded operational arrangements; and the Centre's framework with UNDP creates a route for satellite analysis to be integrated into rapid crisis and recovery assessments. This is important evidence of willingness to pay for a service that users value. The emerging model is therefore not one in which Norway carries the Centre indefinitely. It is one in which predictable anchor funding protects the public-good readiness function, while tailored services are increasingly co-financed or cost-recovered from users, innovation is co-invested with technology and research partners, and imagery, compute and other infrastructure are contributed in kind where possible.

The return on that investment is consequently larger than the value of the Norwegian contribution itself. One common analytical product can inform several organisations and sectors simultaneously; commercial imagery and computing capacity can be leveraged without being charged in full to the donor; and a standing service can respond immediately without first assembling a new project. The case for continued Norwegian support is therefore not simply that the Centre performs useful work. It is that Norway has invested in a shared capability with demonstrated demand, increasing leverage and a financing model that is becoming progressively more diversified.

## 3.1 Independent evaluations confirm impact and value for money

The case for continued investment is also supported by independent evaluation. UNITAR's 2018 independent evaluation of the Rapid Mapping Service, the first external evaluation of the service since it became operational in 2003, rated its relevance at 95 per cent, efficiency at 75 per cent, effectiveness at 75 per cent and impact at 71 per cent. More than two-thirds of stakeholders rated its contribution to evidence-based decision-making as high or very high. The evaluation found that the actual cost to Norway of funding the service was low compared with the value it generated for partners.

A subsequent independent midterm evaluation of the Emergency Mapping Service reached a similar conclusion. It found the service cost-effective, performing to and beyond its milestones, and likely to be substantially less expensive per request than the Copernicus Emergency Mapping Service. It also found that the Centre serves a broad range of UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations, is highly valued within the UN emergency response system and would be difficult to replicate. Importantly, the evaluation identified demand outpacing supply as one of the principal risks to future performance, alongside funding and specialist staff retention.

The evaluations also show an important evolution in the financing model. The 2018 evaluation identified financial sustainability as a weakness and called for changes to the business model, financing and staffing. The later evaluation found that those recommendations had been adequately addressed and noted that the service was already attracting additional funding. Since then, the Centre has continued to diversify its funding and cost-recovery base, while leveraging substantial in-kind contributions of imagery, technology and scientific infrastructure. This means that predictable Norwegian support increasingly operates as anchor funding that protects readiness and attracts other resources, rather than as the sole source of financing.

Independent evaluation of Norway-supported geospatial capacity development provides further evidence of the wider development value. The 2024 endline evaluation of work across eight countries in Asia-Pacific and Africa found that the project achieved more than 80 to 95 per cent of its main targets and delivered most outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner. It specifically identified the use of in-country experts, partnerships and open-source software as contributors to cost efficiency. The project also supported climate-finance proposals that mobilised nearly USD 12 million.

Taken together, this is a strong return-on-investment proposition. Norway is not being asked to finance an untested technology or create a new institution. It has helped sustain a service whose relevance, effectiveness, impact and cost-effectiveness have been independently assessed over time. The policy question is how to protect that accumulated

investment, modernise it and use it more systematically as a shared capability for the United Nations and Member States.

## 4. Move from maps to decision support

Emergency mapping remains essential, but the next generation of the Centre should go further. The direction is a continuous chain: observe, detect, predict, assess and support decisions.

Satellite, radar, weather, terrain, infrastructure and contextual data can be combined to identify change and exposure. AI can help process very large areas quickly and flag locations for expert review. Predictive methods can be used where the science is sufficiently robust. Analysts can then translate the evidence into assessments of damage, access, infrastructure functionality, recovery and observable human-security conditions.

The Centre's current scientific work is moving in this direction. Probabilistic disaster and climate-risk assessment can quantify and locate risk before an event; predictive spatial modelling can support recovery readiness; and rapid impact models can provide an initial estimate before complete imagery is available and then be recalibrated as observations arrive. For the proposed 24/48/72-hour service, this means using prepared exposure baselines and hazard-impact relationships to indicate where serious impact is most likely in the first hours, then progressively replacing assumptions with observed satellite evidence. Where calibration permits, uncertainty can be expressed through predictive intervals or clearly defined scenarios rather than a single deterministic number. This is precisely the kind of computationally intensive, scientifically disciplined work for which the Centre's long-standing base at CERN can become even more valuable, alongside partnerships with Earth-observation, engineering, climate, hydrological and academic institutions.

The final product should be designed around the decision. Governments and UN leaders need concise answers to practical questions: What changed? Who and what may be affected? What may happen next? What is uncertain? What is the next decision window?

This is also relevant to senior UN leadership. The Centre already supports the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre. A stronger common capability could provide concise, trusted decision briefs for Resident Coordinators, agency heads and senior UN leadership, rather than adding another layer of dashboards.

## 5. Build a 24/48/72-hour bridge from emergency response to recovery

The division between humanitarian response and development is often least useful immediately after a major disaster. During the first 24, 48 and 72 hours, governments and international partners need an early picture of likely impact, affected population and infrastructure, access constraints and the confidence attached to those estimates.

This can form a bridge between emergency mapping and more detailed recovery and economic assessments that follow. UNITAR and UNDP have already established a framework that combines satellite analysis and field information to accelerate crisis impact analysis and recovery planning. The ambition should be to make this kind of rapid impact intelligence a dependable shared service that feeds, rather than duplicates, subsequent assessment processes.

## 6. Invest before the crisis

The same capability that maps damage after an event can help identify risk before it. Continuous Earth observation can support analysis of exposure, environmental change, settlement growth, infrastructure vulnerability and other measurable risk factors. Combined with climate, socioeconomic and national data, it can support preparedness, scenarios and anticipatory action.

This matters for development policy because earlier decisions can avoid larger costs later. It also directly reflects Norway's Humanitarian Strategy, which promotes disaster-risk preparedness and anticipatory action before expected crises and links humanitarian action with development and recovery. Norway should therefore treat risk intelligence and anticipatory analysis as part of development effectiveness, not only as humanitarian tools.

## 7. Use AI to increase speed and scale, with human accountability

The volume of satellite imagery now available makes purely manual analysis increasingly impractical during large emergencies. AI can help identify flood extent, possible building damage and other changes across very large areas, allowing analysts to concentrate on verification and interpretation.

The Centre has already demonstrated this potential. During one major hurricane response, an AI-supported workflow processed about 3,776 square kilometres and assigned preliminary damage scores to more than 385,000 buildings in less than five days.

This is the continuation of a capability that the Centre began operationalising years before the current surge of interest in generative AI. FloodAI first became operational in July 2020, following an OCHA request during severe monsoon flooding in Bangladesh. It uses machine learning to process Sentinel-1 synthetic-aperture radar imagery, which can observe through cloud and darkness, and runs computationally intensive processing on the Centre's CERN-based infrastructure. Over the 2022-2025 Norwegian-funded programme, FloodAI was deployed 21 times across major flood events, reaching 175 per cent of the programme target. Its reliability improved through repeated operational use: the share of images requiring analyst correction fell from 38 per cent in 2021 to almost zero by 2024. OCHA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific described the Bangladesh application as instrumental for emergency response planning and decision-making. This is a useful example of what sustained investment achieves: an experimental model becomes an operational service through years of testing, analyst feedback and improvement.

The same principle has governed the Centre's work on AI-assisted building-damage assessment. For more than two years, the Centre has worked with United Nations innovation partners and Google-supported models to test whether automated damage assessment can meet humanitarian operational standards. This has not been a simple technology demonstration. The work has included model integration, licensing, repeated operational testing, accuracy assessment, documentation of limitations and analyst-controlled quality assurance. Validation against analyst results for destroyed and severely damaged structures produced an r-squared correlation of 0.92 in Gaza and 0.85 in El Fasher, Sudan, both considered suitable for operational use within the documented limits of the model. By 2026, the solution had been tested and used across multiple live crisis activations in addition to dedicated validation work. During Hurricane Melissa in 2025, the workflow processed 3,776 square kilometres of imagery and assigned preliminary damage scores to 385,195 buildings in less than five days. This accumulated experience is itself an asset. The Centre is developing not only AI-enabled tools, but a United Nations assurance function that can determine when a model is sufficiently accurate, transferable and accountable to be used in a real crisis.

For UN use, speed must be matched by trust. Human validation, confidence scoring, clear documentation of limitations, audit trails and validation against field and partner data should remain part of the operating model. This is closely aligned with Norway's Humanitarian Strategy, which recognises the potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve preparedness and preventive decision-making while also calling for the risks to be managed. Norway can help establish a practical public-interest model in which innovation is tested against real humanitarian requirements before it is scaled.

## 8. Build national capability and lasting institutional capacity

The longer-term objective should be national decision-support capability, not a succession of one-off products. A ministry or disaster-management authority should increasingly be able to see what is changing, where risk is emerging and how conditions compare over time, and to use that evidence in its own planning and decisions.

UNITAR can connect these services directly to capacity development. Training, professional courses, fellowships, national focal points and on-the-job learning should be built into country partnerships. Countries should receive both better intelligence and a stronger ability to use and eventually generate it themselves.

## 9. Strengthen trusted geospatial evidence for accountability and investigations

A further part of the Centre's value is the ability to provide dedicated specialist analyst capacity to organisations whose mandates require sustained, technically rigorous interpretation rather than a one-off map. Over time, the Centre has supported organisations and mechanisms including WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, OHCHR, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM). These arrangements allow partner organisations to draw on analysts who understand both Earth observation and the evidentiary requirements of the mandate concerned, while using the Centre's common imagery, methods, quality assurance and technical infrastructure.

This experience has also developed a less visible but strategically important capability: standards and methods for handling satellite imagery when it may become evidence in international or national investigations. Satellite-derived information used for accountability purposes must meet a higher threshold than an illustrative map. Source imagery and metadata must be preserved; provenance and processing steps must be documented; analytical judgements must be reproducible; limitations and uncertainty must be stated; access and chain-of-custody considerations must be managed; and analysts must be able to explain how a conclusion was reached. The Centre has provided satellite-derived analysis and evidentiary material in support of international accountability processes and tribunals, giving it practical experience at the intersection of Earth observation, human rights, international law and investigation.

There is a wider Member State opportunity here. As commercial satellite constellations, very high-resolution imagery and AI-assisted analysis become more widely available, national investigators, prosecutors and judicial institutions will increasingly confront questions about authenticity, admissibility, reliability, preservation, analytical standards and responsible use. A neutral United Nations capability can help develop common good-practice standards, training and technical assistance so that countries do not have to solve these questions independently and so that satellite evidence is handled consistently and credibly.

This is particularly well aligned with Norway's longstanding emphasis on international law, human rights, accountability and strong multilateral institutions. Norwegian leadership could help turn accumulated operational experience into a practical international public good: common standards for satellite imagery as evidence, training for Member States and international mechanisms, and access to trusted specialist analytical support where national capacity is limited. It would extend Norway's investment from humanitarian situational awareness into the integrity of evidence itself, while remaining anchored in the same shared technical capability.

## 10. Protect readiness through predictable multi-year financing

A global emergency capability cannot be assembled after a disaster begins. Specialist staff, imagery arrangements, technical systems, validated methods and duty arrangements must already be in place. Readiness is therefore part of the service, even when no emergency is under way.

Project funding will remain important, but it cannot reliably carry the whole backbone. A project-only model creates stop-start staffing, makes specialist retention difficult and can postpone investment in methods and technology. It can also leave an organisation seeking funds at the moment it should be responding.

For proven shared capabilities, Norway should consider predictable multi-year anchor funding tied to a clear results framework, annual strategic consultations and transparent reporting. This would also put into practice Norway's stated preference for more predictable and flexible financing of the United Nations, while preserving strong results-based management and sound stewardship of resources. This is not a case for weak accountability. It is a case for measuring the right things: readiness, timeliness, use in decisions, national capacity, efficiency gains, reduced duplication and the additional resources that anchor funding helps mobilise.

## 11. Use anchor funding to build a wider financing coalition

Predictable support from Norway should not create dependence on Norway. It should do the opposite. A stable backbone makes it possible to bring in other partners with confidence.

The sustainable model is blended, and important elements of it are already in place. By 2025, the Centre had begun to broaden its funding and cost-recovery base beyond Norway through contributions from other governments and funded arrangements with sister United Nations entities and institutional users. OCHA financed major damage-assessment work in Gaza; UNHCR and UN-Habitat/UNITAC provide examples of funded operational arrangements; and the UNDP framework places satellite analysis directly into rapid crisis and recovery assessment. Alongside this, scientific and technology partners have co-invested through models, engineering, imagery and computing. That approach is also visible in the AI work Norway helped advance: FloodAI has been operational since 2020, and subsequent damage-assessment work has involved more than two years of model testing, accuracy assessment and operational validation with external technology and United Nations innovation partners. Core readiness can therefore be supported through predictable strategic funding, while tailored services are co-financed by users, Member States enter longer-term arrangements for national decision-support, development banks and other donors finance recovery and resilience applications, and scientific and technology partners contribute research, imagery, computing and AI capabilities in cash or in kind.

Norway does not need to finance the whole system. Its distinctive role can be to make a proven common capability investable by others.

## Recommendations for Norway's future development policy

These recommendations build on choices Norway has already made in its humanitarian strategy, its UN80 and UN financing priorities, and its programme dialogue with UNITAR and the United Nations Satellite Centre. As the Government prepares the White Paper on development policy for presentation to the Norwegian Parliament in the 2027 spring session, Project Vendepunkt provides an opportunity to carry those choices into the next development-policy framework in a more systematic way.

- Recognise Earth observation, geospatial analysis and responsible AI as enabling capabilities for humanitarian action, climate resilience, development, peace and recovery.
- Use UN reform to address fragmentation in operational capabilities as well as institutional structures, including opportunities to share common Earth-observation and geospatial infrastructure.
- Provide predictable multi-year financing for proven global public goods and shared capabilities where readiness cannot be sustained transaction by transaction.
- Prioritise preparedness, risk intelligence and anticipatory action so that development cooperation acts earlier and reduces future losses.
- Link technology investment to national ownership through training, institutional capacity, national focal points and practical transfer of skills.
- Promote responsible AI with human validation, confidence assessment, transparent methods and clear accountability.
- Encourage analytical services that connect emergency response to recovery and longer-term development rather than creating separate systems for each stage.
- Support the development of common standards, training and technical assistance for the responsible handling of satellite imagery as evidence in national and international investigations, building on established UN operational experience and Norway's leadership on international law and accountability.
- Use blended financing so that anchor funding protects the backbone while other donors, UN entities, Member States, development banks, research institutions and private partners finance applications and innovation.
- Measure results by decision impact, speed, readiness, national capacity, efficiency, reduced duplication and resources leveraged, not simply by the number of products delivered.

# A proven capability worth sustaining and scaling

The pressure on international cooperation will require choices. The answer cannot be to spread fewer resources across the same fragmented architecture. The system needs to act earlier, share specialist infrastructure, use technology responsibly and organise itself around capabilities that many partners can use.

The forthcoming White Paper provides an opportunity for Norway to make a strategic choice about the capabilities through which its development financing can achieve wider and more durable impact. Investing predictably in proven shared capabilities can allow Norwegian financing to work across institutions, countries and sectors, while helping to reduce duplication and mobilise additional resources.

UNITAR has already helped deliver the first merger under the UN80 reform effort. That experience gives us confidence that reform can protect expertise while reducing fragmentation. We believe the same principle can now be applied to Earth observation and geospatial analysis across the United Nations.

Norwegian support has helped preserve a neutral operational capability that is used when information is scarce, access is difficult and decisions cannot wait. The next phase can move that capability from maps to decisions, from response to anticipation, from isolated analysis to continuing Earth intelligence, and from international delivery to stronger national capability.

The same investment also protects a distinctive accountability capability. Dedicated analysts serving human-rights, investigative, health, development and cultural-heritage mandates, together with experience in evidentiary satellite analysis, create a platform from which Norway can help advance common standards and Member State capacity for the responsible use of Earth observation in investigations and judicial processes.

With predictable anchor funding, Norway would not simply finance more United Nations Satellite Centre products. It would help demonstrate a practical model of UN reform: a shared capability that reduces duplication, improves decisions and attracts a wider coalition of public, scientific and private partners.

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