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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

Nordic Consulting Group

Evaluation of the project «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus»

Final Report

Evaluation of the project «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus»

**Final Report
May 2019**

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Criteria
ET	Evaluation team
EQ	Evaluation question
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IL	Intervention logic
IRUP	Institute for Regional and Urban planning
KI	Key Informant
NCA	National Cadastre Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEK	Swedish Krona
SIDA	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TOC	Theory of Change

1. Introduction

This document represents the Final Evaluation Report of the Project “Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus using Contemporary Methods and Technologies” (hereinafter: Swedish Cadastre Project). The evaluation was conducted in the period October-November 2019.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The land administration system in the Republic of Belarus has seen some improvements in recent years but is still in need for modernisation. There is political pressure on the institutions in the sector to further modernize and simplify their business processes and procedures, not the least to improve the investment climate also for international investors. Belarus has a property market of sufficient size and potential already exists. The Belarusian Government and Parliament however still seem to be hesitant regarding a broader privatisation of land ownership, especially within the agricultural and forest sector. Agricultural and forestland is not possible to sell according to the Belarusian Constitution. In January 2010 the “Law on Local Government and Self-Government in the Republic of Belarus” was adopted by the Parliament. This law has not yet led to concrete changes, as it still is up to the President to decide if any power should be distributed to local levels.

Significant progress in land administration has been made since the last Belarus Country Profile in 2008. Most of the recommendations were followed up and have led to much more effective land administration. The policy framework has been improved, as has the quality of registers and registries of the State land cadastre. The progress towards sustainable land administration is demonstrated by the World Bank’s “Doing Business” 101 rating for 2018: rank 38. The indicator ‘registration of property’ is especially important, with Belarus in fifth place in the world, as well as the ‘quality index of the land administration system’.

Characteristics of the land policy in the Republic of Belarus are the principles of compulsory State registration of land, rights to land, and land transactions. Also subject to State registration are mortgages of immovable property objects, including land plots. Ninety-two per cent of land is publicly owned by either the State or regional and communal authorities. Currently there is no strategy for privatization of publicly owned land. Land management is controlled by the State, unless there is a legal warrant to the contrary.

Belarus rated high on registration of property, at the same time, the Republic of Belarus is one of the countries in the European-Central-Asian Region which are having the least coverage. The Coverage factor is the ratio of registered land plots area compared to the whole territory. In the Republic of Belarus, it is slightly above 20 %, while in almost 35 % of European countries, this ratio equals 100 %. For the most part, land resources and property in the Republic of Belarus have not been

considered as assets, they are absent from the formal real estate market, and the land tax as well as the real estate tax is limited by a number of factors. The problem can be solved via accelerated extension of land administration data completeness by means of mass registration of real estate, right up to the coverage ratio equalling 100 %, and the improving of mass valuation and taxation based on it. The tax control system within this sector also requires improvement.

Taxation

When it comes to taxation of property in the Republic of Belarus, there are two periodic taxes related to real property, the land tax and the tax on immovable property. In the first case, the object of taxation is the land plot without immovable improvements. The tax is based on the cadastral value (market value) of the land plot in question. In cases where tax is paid by individuals, the object for taxation is a privately-owned improvement (dwelling, apartment, summerhouse, garage) based on the costs of its construction. In case when tax is paid by entities, the object of taxation is a permanent construction (building and facilities) based on its book value. The taxation of all real property objects based on a mass valuation system is a more progressive and more effective solution than the practice currently used in the Republic of Belarus. To be able to change to a real property tax system based on the market value the Republic of Belarus need two basic components, an inventory of real property objects for taxation and a system for calculation of compound values of the objects that were recorded, based on mass valuation. A good way to make an inventory (fill up the real property register) is systematic mass registration of real property. The Republic of Belarus has never practiced mass registration of real property (except through a pilot project that was implemented in 2015-2016).

Property valuation

The existing valuation system in the Republic of Belarus does not consider a land plot and the buildings on it as one compound real property object of valuation (compound real property objects are the usual practice in Western Europe). To change to the concept of “compound real property objects” it is necessary to optimize the country’s system of cadastral valuation by means of changing to the practice of assessing the value of a land plot plus buildings on it as a whole. Institutional, methodological and informational aspects of the cadastral valuation system need to be optimized. Despite the varied experience in the area of land valuation, the Republic of Belarus is lacking in the methodology to assess the cadastral values of real property, the regulatory framework and the protocol for liaison between the parties involved in property valuation and taxation. Belarus is in the process of implementing mass registration and mass cadastral valuation of real property objects for the first time in this project period. The tax control system currently used in the Republic of Belarus functions fairly effectively and fulfils its mission. At the same time, the tax system is developing in a dynamic way and is getting optimized on a regular basis. Therefore, the tax control system is in need of optimizing and improving of its effectiveness within the real property sector.

CSO and public engagement in land management

An effective and democratic territorial planning is possible only when representatives of civil society and business community participate in it, contributing to the determination of its goals, strategies and development priorities as well as in their realisation. In the Republic of Belarus, citizens are not informed about their rights and opportunities concerning the process of territorial planning. The level of the understanding of the rights of access to information is low. The role of representatives of private business in the process of territorial planning is also weak.

In June 2011 the enactment “Regulation on standards for holding public debates in the sphere of architecture, city planning and construction” by the Ministry of Architecture and Construction was approved by the resolution No 687 of the Council of Ministers¹. In this document, the rights of citizens and their opportunities to participate in city planning and construction were introduced. Quite an active role of the local population in the process of territorial planning is awaited. The level of responsibility of the local public authorities for implementation of the document at the local level is rising. Unfortunately, the local authorities are not well enough prepared for adjustments that need to be made in response to conflict situations in the cases when the city construction activities interfere with the interests/concerns of population and business community. There are no, clearly defined and prepared methods and ways for providing an interactive partnership of citizens, businesses and local public authorities in the issues of city construction in the Republic of Belarus. Local authorities, non-governmental organisations and representatives of private business need information support and additional education in order to initiate cooperation among various participants in a process that can become mutually beneficial and effective in the context of sustainable development of inhabited localities.

The document of UNECE Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets - Principles and guidance for the development, (ECE/HBP/147, 2010) defined 10 principles of sound development of real estate markets. The principle 4, Prerequisites for Development of Sound Real Estate Markets, appoints measures for improvement of urban planning and development of corresponding infrastructure. In order to ensure that urban plans and documents regulating urban development are effective and harmonic, they should be accepted at the local level with participation of citizens.

In Belarus there is no available organ which could provide information on national and international projects on urban development and sound development of built-up areas. There is also a significant difficulty in involving citizens at the local level in the activity of territorial forms of planning and the establishment of a requisite infrastructure for this. Effective tools, which could provide interactive partnership of local inhabitants and local government in the field of municipal engineering activities, are underdeveloped and the role of local self-government in the provision of incentives for

¹ The Cadastre Project Annual Report 2016

the citizens to participate in making administrative decisions on development of built-up areas is very low.

Gender implications to Land management

Belarusian legislation does not discriminate against married or unmarried women in relation to rights of ownership, decision-making power, or collateral of land and non-land assets (Civil Code, Article 210; Marriage and Family Code, Articles 20 and 23). The default marital property regime is partial community of property (Civil Code, Article 259; Marriage and Family Code, Articles 23 and 26) and both couples must agree on the administration of property (Civil Code, Article 256; Marriage and Family Code, Articles 23). All property bought before a marriage remains the sole property of the partner who purchased it, while property that is bought by either party during a marriage is considered to be joint property and cannot be sold without the permission of both spouses (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 2016a, p.31).

A report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) notes that women's equal right to own and manage property is generally respected in Belarus (FAO, 2016). The CEDAW committee has, however, noted the persistent wage gap prevailing in the agricultural sector, in particular, (and the labour force more generally), and women's low participation in decision-making in collective/state-owned farms (CEDAW, 2016c, p.9).

Even if there is no legal discrimination against married or unmarried women in regard to access to formal financial services, including opening a bank account and obtaining credit (no restrictions were found). There are, however, no laws that prohibit discrimination by creditors on the basis of gender or marital status in obtaining access to credit. The difficulty for women to access steady employment, access loans for development of their businesses and the fact that women rarely own property that can be used as security for accessing finances, makes the access to the financial market or property different (and more difficult) than is the case for men. The demographics in Belarus has the widest life expectancy gap between women and men in the entire region. The majority of pensioners in Belarus today are women, and many live on very low pensions. There are several aspects of gender implications to consider also within the field of land management, urbanization and spatial planning.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECT

The evaluation object is the project Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus, using Contemporary Methods and Technologies. The project is a continuation of the engagement in Belarus of the Swedish Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authority (hereinafter: Lantmäteriet) from spring 1998 and five projects financed by Sida were implemented in the land sector of the Republic of Belarus between 1998 and 2014. This new phase focusing on Land management issues in Belarus has been implemented from April 2016 until 31 December 2019 and is funded by Sida as the sole donor with 9 million SEK.

The project is implemented by two partners, the Lantmäteriet and the Belarusian NGO «Land Reform». Beneficiary organisations of the project are: NGO «Land Reform»; State Property Committee of Republic of Belarus; Republic Unitary Enterprise «National Cadastral Agency» (NCA); Ministry of Taxes and Levies of Republic of Belarus; Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Republic of Belarus; and Institute for Urban and Regional Planning «BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA».

The current project contributes to the improvement of Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus and focusses on three main components;

1. To strengthen the capacity and the role of civil society organisations in the process of land administration and urban development,
2. To democratise the process of spatial planning, and
3. To support enhancement of the cadastral valuation system for the purposes of real property taxation and tax control within the real property sector.

The project contributes to the Results' Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020 and its Result Area 1: Enhanced economic integration with the EU and development of market economy, and Result Area 2: Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights, and a more fully developed state under the rule of law.

The target groups are:

- The NGO Land Reform,
- Lantmäteriet,
- Belarus State Institute for Regional and Urban Planning, BelNIIPgradostroitelstva,
- The Ministry of Architecture and Construction,
- Local public authorities
- Business community

² <https://www.regeringen.se/land--och-regionsstrategier/2014/03/ud-14013/>

- Social groups, leaders and active participants of civil initiatives and NGOs active in the field of land resources management (valuators, surveyors, geodesists, architects etc.) and other interested initiative groups and citizens' associations
- Undergraduate and graduate students at the Belarusian University and sectorial training centers.
- Specialists from the Lantmäteriet;
- Agencies affiliated with State Property Committee, engaged in cadastral valuation activities.
- Specialists of agencies controlled by the Tax Ministry of Belarus
- Architects, city planners,
- The State Property Committee,
- The Ministry of taxes and Levies,
- The Brest office for State Registration of Property and Land Cadastre
- Kobrin District Administration, tax bodies, NGOs, business community in Brest Oblast,
- Sovietsky District Administration, tax bodies, NGOs, business community of Minsk,
- Taxpayers

The project planned to carry out the following activities:

- Administrative and technical support of NGO "Land Reform"
- Organising of training courses to raise the level of knowledge and practical skills concerning founding, management and development of NGO's.
- International contacts
- Publishing a book aimed at Universities
- Creation of an Information and Education Center (IEC)
- Elaboration of educational programmes for local authority specialists, civil society and private businesses
- Consultations for stakeholders (local authorities, citizenry and business community) in spatial planning and urban development
- Develop methods for mass registration of real property
- Develop methods for mass valuation of real property (cadastral valuation)
- Elaboration of real property taxation procedures
- Improvement of system for tax control within the real property sector

1.2.1 Reconstructed Intervention logic

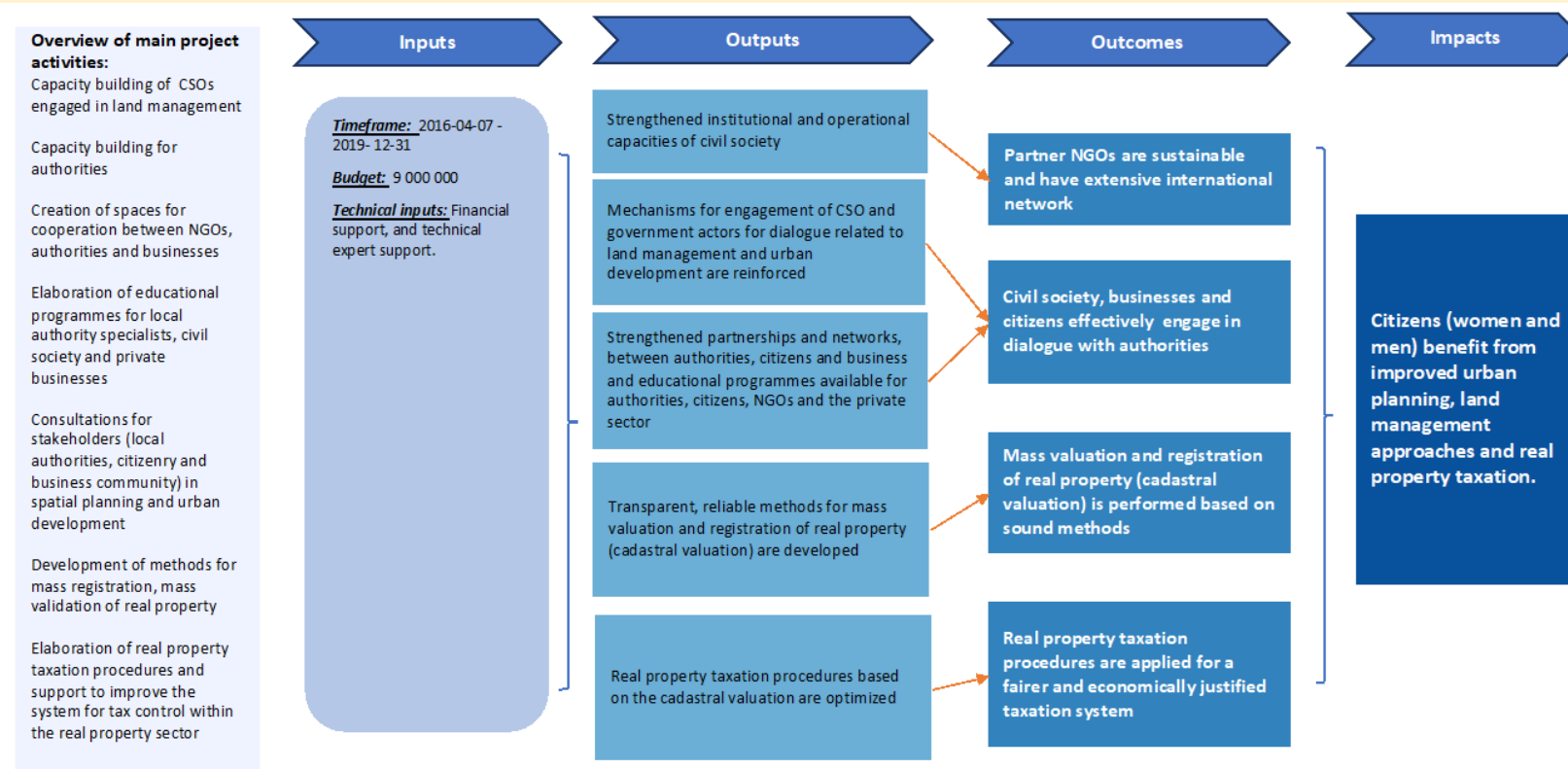
The Intervention Logic (IL) model is a means to visualise and understand how the activities of an intervention are expected to lead to desired results by showing the causal pathways of results at different levels (e.g. short- vs. long-term results) and the conditions under which the causal pathways are expected to work (links from inputs, outputs and outcomes to impact). The Evaluation Team reconstructed the overarching IL for the Project as a tool to better understand the Lantmäteriet's and its local partner's contribution to the sector. It is also envisaged as a tool which could support the planning of the next cycle of the Project. The IL is presented in Diagram 1 below.

1 INTRODUCTION

Diagram 1. Project intervention logic

Project title: Improving Land Management and Urban Development in Belarus using Contemporary Methods and Technologies

Rationale for Project engagement: To contribute to the improved Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus by supporting the development of improved Methods and Technologies through the support of the Lantmäteriet



Assumptions:

- Organisational structures in place and staff have capacity to implement the project.
- Systems are in place to monitor and report on results.
- Interventions is based on dialogue with project partner and stakeholders
- Policies are met and the intervention mainstreamed (gender, environment, etc.)

Assumptions:

- Procedures allow for timely delivery. Funds are used as intended.
- Willingness from the parliament to pass the laws necessary for a new legal framework.
- The political situation provides the necessary stability for project implementation
- The project succeed in taking the specific needs of both women and men into account for a successfully gender mainstreamed intervention.

1.3 EVALUATION RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The Evaluation rationale as stipulated in the ToR was the following: to evaluate project performance and capacity built at OO «Land Reform», the Republic Unitary Enterprise «National Cadastre Agency», the Ministry of Taxes and Levies of the Republic of Belarus, and the Institute for Urban and Regional Planning «BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA», and to determine future needs and opportunities for possible Swedish support, by the time project ends in December 2019.

The overall objective of this evaluation was to assess the results achieved by the project, focusing on the following:

- to frame and summarise lessons learned;
- to evaluate the outcomes of the project on strengthening the influence of civil society in the area of land administration and urban development, improving the system of mass formation and mass valuation by application of new methods for mass valuation, improving the procedures for real property taxation, and improving urban spatial planning by involving civil society and using new approaches;
- to evaluate the extent, to which the project has improved the cooperation among the beneficiaries of the project;
- to look ahead and provide recommendations for a possible new project phase.

The purpose or intended use of the Evaluation, as outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR), was to:

- support Sida, Lantmäteriet and beneficiaries to assess progress made in the on-going project, in order to learn, what has worked well and what challenges remain; the aim of the Evaluation is to provide information, on which decisions can be based to further improve project implementation;
- provide Sida and beneficiaries with inputs and recommendations on up-coming discussions, concerning possible preparation of a new project phase;

The evaluation was designed to be forward looking, providing a set of recommendations and priorities for further investment by SIDA, the Lantmäteriet and their Belarusian partners towards improvement of land management and urban development in the Republic of Belarus.

2 Methodology and Approach of the evaluation process

2.1 OVERALL APPROACH

The evaluation methodology conformed to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and was guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) with application of qualitative data collection methods. The evaluation focuses on assessing the strategies applied in the current Project to identify its relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, also assessing through the gender lens. Furthermore, the evaluation will gather lessons learnt throughout this implementation to strategically plan for the next cycle(s) of implementation of a potential new project.

The evaluation involved key stakeholders from Lantmäteriet and Sida in the process of evaluation design, validation of findings and development of recommendations for the continued Project implementation.

The evaluation utilised methods such as: stakeholder mapping; context mapping; in-depth and structured documentary review of the Project design, implementation approaches, results and processes; structured desk analysis of policy documents and legislative frameworks in Belarus with regards to urban planning and land management; analysis and testing of the Intervention logic; analysis of results from M&E systems and data at national and subnational levels; aggregation and analysis of data collected; contribution analysis to determine factors which promoted or impeded the progress against intended results and attribution analysis to the extent possible. Analysis of sustainability strategies and systemic barriers to sustainability was also conducted.

The evaluation team carried out in-depth interviews and group discussions; site observation during site visits to collect data from various sources. A mix of data gathering tools ensured a wealth of data for triangulation to yield the most reliable and valid answers to the EQs.

The data collected from different sources was triangulated in order to ensure **validity and reliability** of analysis. The extent to which the project managed to integrate gender in its design and implementation, as well as project's contribution to achievement of changes taking into account gender dimension, was also assessed.

2.2 EVALUATION PHASES

The evaluation was performed in three phases:

1. Inception phase
2. Field phase
3. Synthesis and submission of the Evaluation report

2.2.1 Phase I – Inception

Inception phase was conducted in October 2019 in order to create foundations for the evaluation by familiarisation with the Project, designing the evaluation framework and approach. The Evaluation team conducted a comprehensive review of documents received from the Swedish Cadastre Project as well as additional ones downloaded from internet (e.g. Studies dealing with land management, etc.).

2.2.2 Field work phase

Field work included:

- **Individual and group interviews** (face-to face, Skype and/or phone) with key informants (KIs). Desk phase provided insight into the extent to which the Swedish Cadastre Project and its partners engaged with different partners from government, NGO Land reform office as well as clients. During the field work phase, the Evaluation team engaged with and interviewed a range of stakeholders including government partners at national and subnational levels; representatives of civil society sector; and other types of related institutions and service providers; as well as other development partners. The Evaluation team interviewed a total of 40 representatives of various institutions (*See Annex 2 with the List of interviewees*)
- **Group Discussions** were organized in order to allow participants to share opinions and ideas in the course of a discussion on a specified theme of relevance for the project. For example, group discussions with professionals that benefited from capacity building support activities will be conducted. The evaluation team had 6 group discussions.
- **Field site visit.** The Evaluation team visited Brest and conducted interviews and group discussions. One interview and two group discussions were held with the Chief Architect, Local authorities and NGOs in Brest.

2.2.3 The Reporting phase

The review and analysis of the information, and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations was based on collected documentation and its review, group discussions and interviews with a broad range of stakeholders. The evaluation matrix served as foundation and framework for the analysis.

2.3 LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Table 1 Overview of limitations and mitigation strategies

Limitation	Mitigation strategy
Interviewees not available for face to face meetings	In addition to face-to-face interviews, telephone or skype calls were conducted.
Sample of communities to be interviewed is limited to Minsk and one (other) locality	Based on the desk review and mapping of activities, the evaluation team selected one community outside the capital that fulfilled the requirement to visit a community that is largely representative of the of the rest of the country. Most examples and key informant accounts with regards to participatory urban planning processes were collected from the sampled community.
Concerns related to validity and reliability of interview data	The team applied the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity for all interviewees.

2.4 ETHICS AND PARTICIPATION

During data collection, attention was paid to ensuring that the evaluation process was **ethical** and that participants in the process could openly express their opinions, protecting the confidentiality of their answers. Overall, the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (March, 2008) was strictly respected, notably independence of judgement, impartiality, honesty and integrity, accountability, respect and protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects and communities, confidentiality, avoidance of risks, harm to and burdens on those participating in the evaluation, accuracy, completeness and reliability of report, as well as transparency. The Evaluation team was sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and acted with integrity and honesty in their relationships with all stakeholders, ensuring that their contacts with individuals were characterized by respect, protected the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information obtained. The Evaluation team paid attention to gender and other aspects (age, education, disability) that might affect equal access to, and participation in, the evaluation.

3 Key Findings

The Cadastre Project includes a comprehensive set of interventions contributing to the improvement of Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus by way of engaging with the Government and CSO partners across the spectrum of themes and sectoral issues within land management and urban planning reforms. This Chapter examines the Cadastre Project's performance and analyses its work in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability prospects, as well as gender. The consideration of these criteria is based on a set of evaluation questions and related evaluation criteria and indicators as detailed in the Terms of Reference and the Evaluation matrix, provided in Annexes 1 and 2.

3.1 RELEVANCE

The following is the analysis of the Project's relevance from the perspective of the demands for improvement of Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus and response to the needs and priorities of government partners and CSOs.

EQ 1. To what extent the objectives of the project are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements needs?

***Finding 1.** The Project design and its objectives are aligned and respond to needs and priorities of its Belarussian partners and to the demands for reforms of systems for land management and urban planning. The project adds value through continuous engagement and long-term partnership between the Swedish and Belarussian partners, and support to incremental changes in the area of property valuation and citizen participation. Relevance is increased through demand driven nature of the project which also increases effectiveness and ownership.*

Belarus has been progressive in reforming its land management and urban planning sector, introducing a number of reforms that enables modernisation and simplification of business processes and procedures aiming also at improving the investment climate. Nevertheless, challenges persist in terms of ensuring adequate representation of interests and inclusive urban planning, as well as property valuation. The Belarus government adopted the "Regulation on standards for holding public meetings/debates in the sphere of architecture, city planning and construction" in 2011, enabling citizens to participate in city planning and construction. However, available documentation suggests that there is still often limited information to citizens on such processes, due to a lack of clearly defined and prepared methods and

ways for providing for an interactive partnership of citizens, business and local public authorities in the issues of city construction.

With regards to property valuation, the methodology of assessing cadastral values of real property, the regulatory framework and the protocol for liaison between the parties involved in property valuation and taxation are challenged by inefficiencies and insufficient scoping of types of property and their value. The Swedish Sida has, through continuous engagement, tackled the issues of urban planning and land management, particularly its valuation dimension. A continuous long-term partnership between the Swedish and Belarussian partners was initiated in 1998, focusing on incremental changes in the area of property valuation and citizen participation, particularly from the perspective of sharing experiences and offering technical assistance to the Belarussian partners in their reforms. The main partner of the Lantmäteriet has been the NGO «Land Reform», and a total of five projects, financed by Sida, were implemented in the land sector of the Republic of Belarus between 1998 and 2014. The projects contributed to development of the real property development market, the privatisation process, and implementation of the land reform programme in the Republic of Belarus. Specifically, support was provided to prepare the NCA to run a pilot project as a basis for developing a system for the mass valuation of real property. Preparations had been made to run pilot projects on mass valuation of real property in the Minsk district, later on extending efforts to also include the Brest region.

The reference project for this evaluation has aimed at contributing to further improvement of land management and urban development in the Republic of Belarus, and in particular focusing on strengthening the influence of civil society in the area of land administration and urban development, as well as supporting an improvement of the system of mass formation and mass valuation of real property for the purpose of real property taxation. The project starts from the premise that the mass valuation of property will directly input into an improvement of the procedures for real property taxation and the system for tax control and improvement of urban spatial planning, also by involving civil society in the process. The Project philosophy is to implement activities in full cooperation and support on transferring and sharing experience, as well as good practice between experienced Swedish organisations and their peers in the Republic of Belarus.

The long-term engagement of Sida and Lantmäteriet in the sector has ensured strong alignment of interventions with Belarussian government strategies and priorities in the sector. Interviews with government partners reveal that continuous support has resulted in better understanding of the needs and improved strategic framework to enable working on the issues of mass valuation and citizen participation, which provided sound grounds for the current project implementation. Government and NGO stakeholders alike look up to Sweden as an important peer, from the perspective of certain similarities in terms of positioning and country size, which are relevant for

Belarus from a learning and reform perspective. Continuous support was also praised as a reason for improved prioritisation of steps needed to be taken in the reform process. There is a strong interest from the local authorities to learn how to engage in citizens and NGO dialogue and they look to Sweden for best practise examples.

While reviewed documentation does not offer an insight into the actual priorities and needs of professionals and institutions in terms of their needs to enhance mechanisms for democratisation of the spatial planning processes as well as cadastral valuation, stakeholder interviews confirm that the project is strongly based on the needs and priorities of local partners. The involvement in project planning was stronger in Minsk than in the regions. The Evaluation found that the Project partners took all necessary steps towards alignment of strategies and roles implemented by the Project. The Project addresses needs for improving capacities of beneficiary professionals and institutions to apply cadastral valuation system for the purposes of real property taxation and tax control within the real property sector. The Lantmäteriet and the NGO «Land Reform» worked in close collaboration with beneficiary institutions, primarily the NCA, to identify needs and priorities for reform, and to select a distinctive set of interventions in order to support the beneficiary institutions in these areas, as confirmed by interviews. Stakeholders reveal a strong sense of ownership over the project and confirm that the topics, and the areas of support and direction the project has taken have been agreed upon among partners and implemented accordingly.

The project also envisaged a number of activities to enhance mechanisms for the democratisation of the spatial planning processes, including expert missions and exchanges. The Evaluation found sufficient level of flexibility to respond to arising needs for the training and capacity building of partners. For example, the project's component on urban planning has had strong orientation towards local authorities, who confirmed that they were able to receive relevant trainings when needed. Stakeholders from Brest shared the opinion that their demand to focus on the topic of “symbiocity” and their interest to explore such city models was accepted and they had received training and experience sharing on this topic. In another community, Krichev, the Project tackled issues of environmental protection in industrial areas to respond to the need to explore solutions for changing the use of abandoned industrial sites. In both cases, Project's relevance was enhanced by engaging with civil society and the government together to jointly explore and discuss concepts and terminology, and to come up with shared understanding, as confirmed in stakeholder interviews.

The evaluation also confirmed the alignment of the project with the *strategies of Swedish aid to Belarus and the EU Partnership Agenda for Eastern Europe. In particular, the project aligns with the Results strategy for Sweden's reform strategy cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014 – 2012*”, Table 1, 1) Enhanced economic integration with the EU and development of market economy, and 2) Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights and a

more fully developed state under the rule of law. The project is important for both Swedish and Belorussian partners and helps build bridges between the two countries based on shared knowledge and practices.

The gender perspective was integrated, albeit to very limited extent, in the project design. During the project implementation phase, based on recognized need to invest in building the gender perspective into land management and urban planning, the project has strengthened the focus on gender, as explained in detail in EQ 4 below.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness is a criterion that measures the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Effectiveness is a qualitative measure of immediate and observable change as a direct result of project activities and the delivery of outputs. This section is organised in such a manner to provide responses to EQs relating to the OECD DAC Effectiveness criterion.

EQ 2. To what extent the project's outcomes have been achieved so far, and what the likelihood is that they be fully achieved, and why?

***Finding 2.** Contribution to envisaged results is positive, overall, albeit with important variations. The project achieved its envisaged outputs and made contributions to planned outcomes to varying level of effectiveness. Main driver of effectiveness has been the specific position and strong expertise of the NGO Land reform, paired with the long-term support from Lantmäteriet. The NGO Land reform is viewed as a broker and neutral partner, which helps achievement of results across sectors.*

Across the three project components, a variety of trainings, expert visits, study tours and support to participation in international events have been organized with the aim to raise awareness and strengthen capacity of local government institutions, NGOs and experts across the sector. The Evaluation found that these activities were very relevant, and demand driven, which in this project and within the Belarus context, contributed to their effectiveness. There is evidence that the exposure to Swedish and international best practice has been useful to expand the knowledge and understanding of new methods and approaches, and in particular to mass valuation and community participation. Stakeholder interviews and document review reveal a number of positive practices that have been undertaken, such as more systematic engagement of wider groups from the community in urban planning. For example, the process of developing the city planning, as well as the *simbiocity* initiatives in Brest, were supported through the experts attached to the project. The expert meetings and joint workshops between NGOs and authorities, together with the new ways of obtaining citizens' opinions, resulted in that 600 citizens were able to provide their input into the city planning process in Brest. The City plan for Brest that has now

been approved by the state parliament is the first example of engaging citizens and NGOs in the planning process of this magnitude in Belarus. The methods of bringing different actors together at the local level and developing scenarios, role plays and workshop methodologies not only provided the participants with knowledge, but they also grew into understanding the topic from the position of the other stakeholders and, through this process, built networks on an individual basis between stakeholders, which are important factors for the increased dialogue within urban planning. The authorities were able to invite experts from the project to act as mentors, supporting and coaching them when they arranged meetings by themselves with citizens, using the methods they learned during the project. This coaching approach has given the authorities more experience and know-how to plan for dialogue processes in the future. There have already been several consultations and meeting with citizens and NGO actors outside of the scope for this project. The project also supported piloting the mass valuation in the districts of Minsk and Kobryn town and district in the Brest region. Through this, the project succeeded in achieving its outputs in an effective way.

However, the level of achievement of desired outcomes, as laid out in the Project's intervention logic (see Diagram 1 above) is limited. The Evaluation found that civil society, businesses and citizens have more opportunity to engage in dialogue with authorities in Project target regions (Outcome 2 in the IL diagram). Examples raised by stakeholders include increased understanding as to how to take into account the perspectives of other stakeholders, a better understanding among the NGOs of their role and mandate, stronger personal connections and better understanding of what NGOs, for example, can offer authorities in terms of knowledge and engagement. The training in Land management provided NGOs with the knowledge and understanding of the processes which have helped them understand when and how they can engage more concretely. Authorities now have a better understanding why a dialogue with NGOs might be important, and in most meetings, there was a clear reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and citizens dialogue also from this perspective.

With regards to envisaged result to ensure sustainability of the NGO Partner Land Reform, the evaluation found that the partner NGO "Land reform" is still not fully sustainable and is dependent on external funding (Outcome 1 in the IL diagram). At the same time, there is evidence that the partner NGO has built strong national and international networks, and is strongly positioned in the sector, is seen as partner of both government, civil society and other development actors (Outcome 1 in the IL diagram). This puts it in a unique position for serving as a bridge between these different sectors.

Knowledge and mechanisms how to conduct mass valuation and registration of real property using sound methods has been increased with the help of the Project, and there is evidence of direct contribution by the project to this outcome area (Outcome

3 in the IL diagram). Mass valuation has been piloted in Minsk and Kobryn and there are plans to rollout throughout the country in the upcoming period. However, while NCA and Ministry of Taxes have strengthened collaboration, inter alia thanks to the Project, as confirmed in stakeholder interviews, the real property taxation procedures are not yet applied (Outcome 4 in the IL diagram). Reforms of taxation are viewed as complex and long term, demanding stronger popular support and government buy-in, hence this area will remain under development and incremental change, as emphasized by interviewed stakeholders. Across project interventions, the measures undertaken by project partners do contribute to building mechanisms and systems that will enable citizens to benefit from improved urban planning and land management. However, further support to these systems is needed for ensuring full understanding, awareness and uptake of such systems (Impact level in the IL). At the moment, mass valuation in Belarus only focuses on land and not on objects on the land, while the taxes are levied on land, buildings and premises objects separately. The taxes on buildings and premises do not take into account the difference in market value, making it impossible to have the variation between territories and localities, which make it an unjust tax system. The project, through its activities contributes to reform of the land administration and taxation system to make it more equitable, through ensuring that sound methods for mass valuation are applied, to align the value with the market. It may be expected that with reforms, which are incremental, the end result would be to ensure that citizens pay taxes that are just and based on the real value of their property. The following sections present an assessment of project achievements within each individual component.

Component 1. Capacity building of civil society organizations

***Finding 3.** The project mostly achieved its envisaged outputs. However, most of desired outcomes within this component have not materialised fully, and in particular the sustainability of the NGO Partner Land Reform which is not yet achieved. There is evidence of NGO Land Reform's strong national and international networks, and strong positioning in the sector, whereby the NGO Land Reform serves as a bridge between the government, civil society and other development actors. The Project contributed to increasing opportunities for CSOs to engage in dialogue with authorities in Project target regions, though enhancing democratic practices in spatial planning remains ongoing area of attention.*

Continuous long term Sida support has been a very important driver for strengthening the positioning and profile building of NGO Land Reform, the main Belarussian partner for the project. The project saw the NGO Land Reform as a partner and as beneficiary of assistance to increase the level of knowledge and skills related to funding, management and NGO development. In addition, the project has focused on increasing the capacities of other NGOs towards stronger CSO and citizen engagement in connection with land administration issues. Project supported engaging and networking between CSO actors, to spread the knowledge of land administration and urban planning. Data collected through document review and interviews with key stakeholders provides evidence of strong positioning of the NGO

Land Reform as a government partner and go-to adviser on a number of issues relating to land management and urban planning. Stakeholder interviews confirm that the continuous support from Sida helped enhance this profile, based on strong capacity and knowledge of the NGO Land Reform team in the land management and urban planning sector.

The Project's wider engagement with Land Reform and other NGOs has been continuous, particularly in local communities with regards to urban planning processes and citizen's role and participation. NGOs engaging in the urban planning processes deal with various issues including environment, land management, as well as, in some cases, engaging in promoting new green city concepts, such as the NGO for Bicycle, NGO Urban Forester; while others engage in ensuring that there are city areas for recreation that will attract tourists, as well as citizens etc. Project support included opportunities for such NGOs, particularly in local target communities, to attend trainings, and participation in national and international events on urban planning as inputs into enhancing their capacities to engage in urban planning processes. Specifically, the project has implemented a programme of training with three basic packages – 1) NGO concept (what is the concept, mission, etc.); 2) specialist knowledge (leadership, communication, approaches to work; fundraising, strategic planning, organisational development); 3) specialist knowledge (e.g. cadastre, territorial planning, how this process is performed, citizen rights in terms of urban planning; crowdfunding, e-governance, e-services for citizens and businesses).

Evidence collected through the evaluation process suggests that while the project has managed to produce all the outputs that were envisaged in the project document, the evaluation recorded the least visible effects in this component. The Project succeeded to increase the awareness and understanding of NGOs about their position in urban planning processes, and to improve their focus on their organisation's missions and their role. At the same time, the NGOs are more ready to network and exchange information as well as to engage with local governments in urban planning. However, the project did not succeed to enhance civil society or citizen participation in urban planning processes more strongly or systematically. The main weakness has been the continuous challenge to ensure more diversified donor/funding sources for its activities, making SIDA the primary donor (See Sustainability section below).

Component 2. Spatial Planning Democratisation

***Finding 4.** The Project managed to achieve a number of important outputs within this component, including enhancement of government (particularly local authorities') capacity for more inclusive spatial planning. Evaluation found generally high levels of satisfaction of partners with the quality and utility of capacity building activities. The exposure to Swedish practices has been especially valued as a relevant and useful in this regard. The strongest achievement of the project within this component was the support to the establishment of the IEC. However, evaluation could not find sufficient*

conclusive evidence of changed practices across the system, but only in areas targeted by the project.

The project's implicit theory of change envisaged enhancing democratic practices in spatial planning through strengthening NGO capacity to participate, on one side, and enhancing government institutions' capacities and mechanisms for participation, on the other. Hence, within component 2, the project worked towards raising the level of civil responsibility over spatial planning processes and mechanisms for participation in defining the strategy of the development of a city/community in target areas. The interventions included trainings and study visits, expert missions and lectures at universities, as well as specific technical assistance to help establish the Information and Educational Center (IEC). The capacity building activities primarily targeted professionals working within Belarussian institutions to enhance their knowledge and skills³ Data collected through document review showed high level of participation, exemplified by the data from the 2018 annual report noting that "120 persons took part in the round tables and seminars, organized within the project. 52,5% of them were female and 47,5% - male. 32,5% participants were from local administrations, 21,7% - from NGOs and 15% - from private business, 21,7% - from the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning, the rest of people represented the universities and the Ministry of Architecture and Construction"⁴. As per request of the local partners, the Project also conducted two lectures at the universities gathering together about 100 students in Architecture.

The evaluation found generally high levels of satisfaction of partners with the quality and utility of capacity building activities, noting that the level of understanding of ways to enhance transparency of spatial planning processes has been raised. The exposure to Swedish practices has been especially valued as a relevant and useful in this regard. However, the evaluation could not find sufficient conclusive evidence of changed practices across the system, but only in areas targeted by the project. The targeted CSOs have increased their fundraisings skills; with a few organisations pointing out that they now have ongoing projects which they didn't have before, thanks to the new skills they gained. Also, the specific technical training on land management was valuable; the organisations now have a better understanding of the processes and have also engaged more actively in dialogue with authorities in relation to urban planning processes. The project does not collect systematic monitoring data on the level of change and integration of new practices by government institutions

³ Themes covered through capacity building activities include but are not limited to the: Enhancement of spatial planning in cities in the Republic of Belarus; Modern concepts of urban development; Sustainable cities and increase of land price in developing areas; Internet-marketing - promotion of business on the Internet; Capacity building of managers on innovative development of architectural and construction complex in the Republic of Belarus; etc.

⁴ Project Annual Report 2018. p. 24

and NGOs, and this is an important project design weakness, which is also recognized in the project reports.

The project supported a number of consultations which helped local authorities, architects, planners, representatives of civil society and business in the field of spatial planning and sustainable human settlement development to exchange and work together on urban planning solutions. Such exchanges, as confirmed by the evaluation, help raise awareness and knowledge of these parties on how the consultative process is conducted and to what benefit. Stakeholder interviews point out that increasing engagement affects the quality of regional town planning projects, the effectiveness of social discussions of these projects, the professional and legal culture in these projects and the elaboration of documentation on their planning. There is also evidence in target communities that urban planning documentation takes into account the interests of citizens and the business sector. For example, in Brest there have been consultations, and several of the NGOs participating in the project now have been more engaged in the urban planning processes than was the case previously. Another weakness has been the advertising of these events, mostly having been displayed on some physical billboard; however, the NGOs did then ensure that the information also got shared on social media to encourage more to attend. Having said that, there is a strong feeling that the way they have been meeting jointly and been able to work on tasks together in the training, has created a new openness among the authorities to the opinions of NGOs and their members.

One of the strongest achievements of the project within this component was the support to the establishment of the IEC. The Project provided relevant assistance as confirmed by stakeholders to establishment of the Centre, as a venue for involving civil society and business in the process of urban planning, but also with wider portfolio of conducting studies of public opinion, and other duties. The IEC works with communities to explore expectations and visions of citizens about development of urban planning. For example, IEC assisted with urban planning in in Slonim (greenery scheme development), Alechnovich and with community of Krichev.

However, stakeholders raised the concern regarding the sustainability of the IEC. It is still in its early stages of institutionalization, and further support is needed to enhance its practices and approaches but also to secure the budget for its operation. At the moment IEC is self-financed, through Institute for Regional and Urban planning (IRUP) budget contribution to cover costs of the staff (from its revenue) even though it is a separate centre. The Centre already takes some actions in eight cities and towns across the country which is a positive sign of their activation. There are two options for IEC's sustainability: to become separate legal entity providing services; or to be included in the Government's planning process. Another concern by interviewed stakeholders is that the Centre will not be used appropriately by authorities, as the request needs to come from them for support. Hence, there is continued need for support to promote the role of the IEC role and its sustainability.

Component 3: Support to enhancement of the cadastral valuation system for the purposes of real property taxation and tax control within the real property sector

Finding 5. *Evaluation found that main achievements of the project materialised within this component. The main result achieved by the project was the finalization of the methodology for collecting necessary cadastral valuation data based on the Swedish concept. Project's contribution to digitalization and interoperability of data for mass valuation assisted improving cadastre practices and approaches. An important unexpected result of the project is the strengthened collaboration between the NCA and the Ministry of Taxes, which contributes also to renewing and upgrading the real property classification for tax purposes. However, main obstacle to achievement of outcome level results is the fact that the Presidential Decree on mass valuation has not been adopted yet.*

Reforms of the land administration system in Belarus from the perspective of mass valuation started 20 years ago, with ongoing long-term support of Swedish partners, with particularly valued sharing of Swedish experiences. Throughout the support provided through subsequent cycles of the Project, models and experiences from Sweden have been integrated in the national system. In particular, valuable improvements have been noted in the IT system which have contributed to better data entry analysis and storing approaches. The Project partners, Lantmäteriet and the NGO Land Reform work closely with the NCA as their main partner for this component, and stakeholders on all sides confirm that the partnership has been beneficial and helped achieve better quality results. There is strong ownership over the project by NCA, and results are viewed as joint achievements and, overall, seen in a positive light. NCA confirmed that topics for expert missions, trainings, study visits and exchanges have been jointly discussed and agreed upon by partners, which has contributed to better effectiveness of these measures. Interviewed stakeholders emphasized that international conferences, meetings and exchanges helped provide an opportunity to meet, and to learn about the most suitable ways to reform some areas. For example, a study visit to Sweden and also participation at the Hanoi conference (supported by the project) were mentioned as opportunities to study experiences from developed and less developed countries, helping to understand where Belarus stands and what issues and solutions should be prioritised.

A number of issues have been addressed within this component. The project has supported piloting of the mass valuation system concentrating on building units within this project cycle, initially supporting valuation of land plots for houses and dachas; valuation of land for businesses (from 2017) and valuation of industry land (since 2018). Specifically, the NCA implemented a second pilot in 2019 relating to valuation models to help increase knowledge of teams and expand experiences gained in the pilot, as a result of which comparative analysis was possible towards improvement in quality control of models and algorithms based on market information and transactions, to help facilitate the work on valuation. The Project has been backstopping the process, ensuring that adequate training and support has been

provided in terms of sharing Swedish experiences with this process, and also enhancing the level of knowledge on ways to improve some of the approaches. The main result achieved by the project was the finalization of the ***methodology for collecting necessary data*** based on the Swedish concept. Within this, the project supported digitalization through which interoperability of data for mass valuation was enabled, interconnecting relevant Ministries and agencies. The Project directly supported the development of the methodology and prototype of software for data collection, based on Swedish experiences. An agreement on the exchange of data was reached with the Ministry of Taxes. In addition, the project helped renew and upgrade the real ***property classification for tax purposes***. For example, the NCA managed to classify 21 groups of properties based on lessons learned from the pilot and also on exchanges with Swedish and other international partners. The project helped make further improvements to the methodology to make sure that a fully-fledged scale up would work. Furthermore, the project supported exchange of experiences in defining transfer pricing to understand the issue and address challenges. Sharing of practices is observed as valuable for its focus on information sources to define market value and to respond to the actual value of objects, versus the values set in the former system. Discussing issues of administration of transfer price was noted by stakeholders as important to understand the ways in which allocation of roles and duties in the process are done in Sweden, and also solutions to maximise resources for “cost estimation methods”.

Thus far, the property classification has not been integrated into legislation, but the NCA has been advocating this. Closely related to this is the Project support to ***collection of characteristics of mass valuation and separation of value of whole property units and of land only***. Before project engagement in this, the approach was to value the land only and not include the property, and the approach the NCA, with support from the project, has been to assess and value the entire sites. The NCA, with support from the project, also engaged in the Feasibility study and calculations for reforms in the system of mass valuation and taxation and potential for results. The Study served as an input to government decision making on scaling up the mass valuation system. Thus far, the major outcome of this support was the drafting of ***Presidential Decree on mass valuation***, which stipulates scaling up the whole pilot across the country. Closely related to the property classification is the cost register, which has been updated to contain a map with search options. NCA is now working on a new design and improvement of the price register and registers’ interaction. The Decree itself also includes elaboration of steps to use the cost register and interoperability of databases for tax purposes, as well as basic principles of a system for appealing against the results of mass valuation. To date, the Decree has been approved by 43 departments, but has not been finally adopted.

The project did not directly engage in the property and real estate taxation but offered opportunities for joint engagement by the NCA and Ministry of Taxes in project activities and events. Property and real estate taxation are important for reform of the

tax system and would define the future directions. The Ministry regarded positively the support of the Swedish experts as helpful to conduct a comparative analysis of tax systems between Sweden and Belarus for property taxes, towards a better understanding of approaches in accounting of real estate objects, where the most significant differences were noted, as in Sweden all objects are registered and accounted for, while in Belarus this is not the case.

Overall, the project has provided relevant and effective support in a number of areas, and the value of support was confirmed by stakeholder interviews. In particular, important unexpected results, such as strengthening collaboration between the NCA and the Ministry of Taxes. The project also helped the government align with the Aarhus convention, which was not planned by the project but materialized as an unexpected result. However, the valuation system is not yet implemented across the whole country due to lack of the Presidential Decree or specific legislation on this issue. The obstacle to its implementation is the fact that the new system would cause the loss of 25% of property taxes as a result of creation of a more fair and just system, as emphasized in stakeholder interviews. Still, knowledge and experiences shared with the help of the Project are evidenced to have helped the NCA and the Ministry to be prepared for implementation of new approaches, when the Decree is adopted. All partners agree that further Swedish support will be important to support implementation.

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is usually assessed after project intervention since it measures whether the positive outcomes of the project are likely to continue after development assistance has been completed. The sustainability prospect is assessed against the Evaluation question as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation, so this evaluation question and associated evaluation indicators guide the analysis within this criterion.

EQ 3. What is the likelihood of long-term benefits (outcomes) from the project, and to what extent the benefits from the project will continue after project completion?

***Finding 6.** The evaluation found that the sustainability prospects of achieved results are mixed. Investment in capacity building of individuals, institutions, and organisations as well as IT and software have a strong sustainability potential. Training material, shared practices and guides developed by the project provide a good basis for further capacity building and enhancement of the material for wider use. However, the system uptake of mass valuation mechanisms and corresponding taxation as well as more systematic engagement of civil society is still in its embryonic stage and require further investment. In particular, the IEC's institutional sustainability is still questionable and has not been resolved. Besides, limited geographic*

and thematic scope and limited no. of partners does not allow for the creation of a critical mass or a pool of experts and NGO partners who could replicate and expand the consultation approaches at country level.

The Evaluation found that investment in capacity building of individuals, institutions, and organisations have a strong sustainability potential, as stakeholders note that the persons who have been participating in various activities have either stayed in their positions or advanced in their careers. From that perspective, at the individual level, sustainability of acquired knowledge and skills is naturally high, as the majority of participants retain their skills and incorporate learned principles and knowledge in their jobs. Also, there is a limited level of turnover within the NCA, while NGO Land Reform that has also been involved has a more-or-less stable structures, as pointed out by interviewees. The project investment in IT and software has been carried out ensuring sustainability through clear mechanisms for maintenance and use, which this Evaluation considers to be positive. Training material, shared practices and guides developed by the project provide a good basis for further capacity building and enhancement of the material for wider use. However, sustainability prospects decrease at system level. The system uptake of mass valuation mechanisms and corresponding taxation as well as more systematic engagement of civil society depends on a number of factors. First of all, the Presidential Decree has not been adopted yet, which puts the uptake of the system under question in the upcoming period. Next steps in reforms of the system depend on this. Moreover, the IEC's institutional sustainability is still questionable and has not been resolved. In addition, the project has worked only in a limited number of target areas which does not allow for the creation of a critical mass or a pool of experts and NGO partners who could replicate and expand the consultation approaches at country level. These are critical sustainability mechanisms that have not been fully enabled during this cycle of the project. At the same time, taking into account the incremental nature of reforms in the sector, the achievements thus far provide for strong foundations for further engagement and uptake.

3.4 GENDER

EQ 4. What are the project's positive effects on gender equality, and whether gender mainstreaming could have been enhanced during planning, implementation and follow-up?

***Finding 7.** The project invested efforts towards mainstreaming gender, albeit with limited outputs, mainly of formal nature. Changes at the institutional and structural level within organisations have not yet taken root, particularly with regards to engraining gender dimension in land management and urban planning.*

To meet Sida's requirements for gender mainstreaming, a local gender expert was hired and a separate operational plan for gender analysis was produced at the start of

the project. The aim for the gender operational plan would mainstream gender in the following ways according to the application from 2016: 1) increase the gender awareness among officials; 2) ensure that men and women have equal opportunities to participate in project activities; 3) ensure equal opportunities in the possibilities to acquire property and to secure property rights in land administration procedures; 4) produce gender disaggregated statistics on participation in project activities; and 5) produce gender disaggregated statistics on ownership of real property and on property values. During the first phase of the project, a questionnaire to ask about attitudes related to gender issues, was sent out to staff in the agencies. 264 individuals were polled. Questions related to project activities showed that, overall, they were gender blind. Furthermore, a self-investigative assessment was carried out by the agencies themselves, to look closer at their organisational structures. The results of the analysis will be presented in November 2019 to the participating organisations.

The project, through its interactions with partners, raises issues of gender. This perspective seems to be taking up some space in discussions, with somewhat raised levels of understanding. The project has achieved many outputs contained within its gender action plan, including but not limited to ensuring gender representation in study-visit groups, collection of gender disaggregated data throughout the project, as well as ensuring that analytical material on issues related to land tenure and land management includes assessment of the gender dimension, etc. For example, gender analysis was conducted by local stakeholders for the first time. However, changes at the institutional and structural level within organisations have not yet taken root, particularly with regards to engraining gender dimension in land management and urban planning.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The following sections of the report present sets of cross-cutting conclusions and recommendations that have derived from the findings and answers to the EQs.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 Relevance

***Conclusion 1.** The Swedish Cadastre project aligns with priorities set for land management sector and also with Swedish Sida cooperation objectives. It remains continuously relevant to the context and responsive to the needs of the government institutions, primarily the NCA, and NGO partners. The main value added of Swedish engagement is the longevity of cooperation and the fact that SIDA remains the most stable donor. EU currently funds a twinning project in the field as well and there are complementarities between projects.*

The Swedish Cadastre project has been designed and implemented in close consultation and partnership with government and public institutions and agencies that deal with land management and urban planning processes. The project offered its partners relevant thematic and technical interventions in alignment with, and positively influencing, national priorities. The project was a driving force behind the development of sector legislation and mechanisms, as well as improving the institutional set up and capacities for mass valuation and for engaging citizens in urban planning processes. The project was designed as a demand driven intervention, strongly rooted in the needs of partners, which helped increase ownership over the project's results. Importantly, the project serves as an important connecting point between the Swedish and Belarussian partners, where the long term ties have been fundamental for reaching solid results and have contributed strongly to the Swedish support to reform processes in the country. SIDA remains the most important donor in the field of land management reform, though since recently an EU Twinning project is under implementation. Contact between the EU and the Sida funded project has been established and complementarities are sought.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

***Conclusion 2.** The Project was effective in achievement of its desired outputs. It has succeeded in achieving some of its outcomes, and variations are visible.*

Many of the Cadastre Project interventions target problems that are deeply rooted and require long-term efforts before measurable incremental results can be observed. Throughout the implementation of the Project, partners delivered significant results across the sectors in which they worked. These results supported the reform goals across the sectors through development of informed legislative drafts, enhanced institutional capacity, modernization of practices of mass valuation and citizen participation. The Lantmäteriet was highly successful in increasing awareness, and in understanding and technical capacities of partners. These interventions have helped the government, public institutions and other actors dealing with land management and urban planning to better understand the existing institutional and policy gaps. As such, increased knowledge offers a direct contribution to improved planning and prioritization of mechanisms, in particular for mass valuation and taxation and the engagement of citizens in urban planning processes. Through partnership with government agencies (e.g. NCA, IEC), line ministries, and CSOs, the Project has assisted in strengthening capacities for land management and urban planning, in particular by building foundations for more just, inclusive and transparent land management and urban planning systems. Contribution to long-term results varies. In general, effectiveness is higher in the mass valuation field, and is less visible with regards to more systematic approaches to citizen participation. The project directly contributed to the establishment of the IEC. Nonetheless this institution is still very new, underdeveloped and understaffed, while its institutional structure is still not clear. There is inconclusive evidence about the extent to which the short-term results achieved to date are sufficient to secure the continuation of reforms. This is due to the fact that the draft Decree is still under consideration, while the IEC's financial and institutional framework has not been resolved. In addition, there are still uncertainties with regards to the use of mass valuation results for the reform of the property tax system, which will require further support by international development partners. These perspectives also depend on the government's absorption capacity and commitment to up-take tested models and approaches upon expiry of Project support.

4.1.3 Sustainability

Conclusion 3. *The sustainability of many achieved effects and benefits remains fragile. The main hindering factor for sustainability is the fact that the Presidential Decree has yet to be adopted, while funding is not secured for IEC also the NGO Land reform. Development partners in Belarus are not very engaged in the land reform and urban planning sector, so Sida and EU are the only active donors. Sida remains the only donor that offers long term and stable support, which has been the key driver of more sustainable outcomes of assistance, in particular with NCA. Another driver of sustainability is ownership that has been manifested across all project partners.*

The Swedish Cadastre Project, with support from Sida, has invested considerable efforts in developing the national capacities to lead the reforms, and implement innovative methods, practices, methodologies and tools. Increased institutional

capacities are mostly sustainable as the sector does not see much turnover of staff. Long-term sustainability of many interventions is threatened by a number of factors, many of which are outside Project control. The IEC has just been established, and its institutional structure, and financial framework has not yet been institutionalized. There is weak system-wide uptake of systematic citizen engagement in urban planning processes. The supported Decree has not been adopted as of yet, which creates uncertainties about the future of the mass valuation and related property taxation. NGO Land Reform is also highly dependent on external funding, with no strong sustainability prospects in the absence of such funding.

4.1.4 Gender

Conclusion 4. *Gender mainstreaming is limited.*

It is positive that the project has taken in a gender expert to strengthen the project's gender focus. The gender action plan has been mostly implemented, but with stronger emphasis on generating knowledge and less on executing and adapting the project to address identified weaknesses within the programming and/or implementation of the project. At the same time, follow-up reporting on gender is also still separate from the regular planning and reporting exercise. This is a weakness.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations derive from extensive consultations with key stakeholders across the evaluation process, analysis of documentation, and the findings and conclusions of this evaluation. The ET used interviews and GDs to generate ideas for the potential next cycle of support. Evaluation recommendations were further presented and validated through interactive discussions with the Project and SIDA stakeholders during the de-briefing meeting held in November 2019.

Recommendations are divided into two categories, as follows:

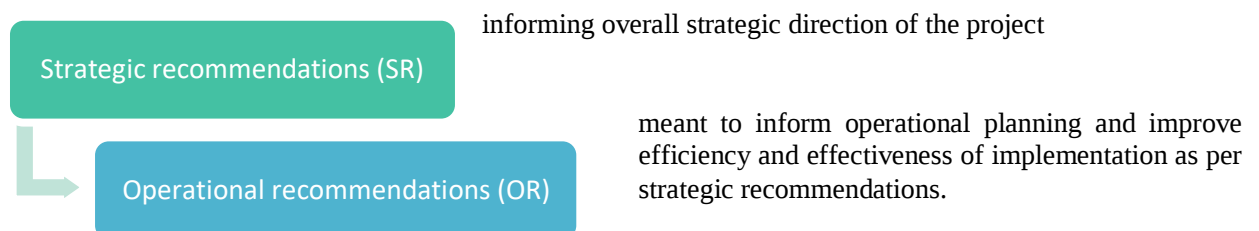


Table 2: Table of recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
Strategic recommendations		
S1: Sida and its implementing partners should consider extending the project to support the implementation of reforms, particularly following the adoption of the Decree The Project has brought significant short- and medium-term results across all its components in support to incremental reforms and changes within land management and urban planning sectors. All partners emphasise the need for further support particularly from the point that the reforms in the land reform and urban planning remain unfinished business. There is a continuing need to continue investing in sharing experiences and increasing knowledge of Belarussian partners, as well as helping build and modernize systems and mechanisms. Swedish support is seen as most relevant thanks to certain similarities between systems, as observed by Belarussian partners.	Sida and Lantmäteriet	2019-2020
S2: Engage more closely with the Ministry of Taxation to help enhance their capacities for pending property tax reform. In the current project cycle, the Lantmäteriet and its NGO partner engaged with the Ministry of Taxation by inviting them to trainings and other events. In the potential next cycle, the Project should engage more strongly with this Ministry to enhance their capacities for the reform of the property tax system that will take place once the Decree is adopted. The engagement with the Ministry should be conceptualized in such a way as to enable further deepening of relations and collaboration between the ministry and the NCA, as well as engaging other actors.	Sida Lantmäteriet NGO Land Reform	2020
S 3 Continue to support CSOs and consider widening the network also to include other CSOs that reach out to other groups of citizens. The CSOs that have been engaged in this project cycle have largely been professional NGOs and or NGOs for architects, valuers and/or others closely connected professionally in the field of Urban planning. There are several NGOs that reach out to engaged citizens in Minsk but also in the regions and smaller villages and towns. It is advisable to explore how to link and create synergies with CSOs and other initiatives that engage citizens in different ways to encourage diverse views in the debates.	Sida Lantmäteriet NGO Land Reform	2020

S 4 Engage in Communication for Development (C4D)⁵ within the project to enhance understanding of the role of citizens, NGOs and other actors in land management and urban planning processes The project, through its long-term engagement, has achieved many significant outputs and outcomes with regards to changing the perspective of the benefits that engaging citizens in decision making and planning processes can bring in the field of land management and urban planning. The project partners could consider supporting the Belarussian government stakeholders in engaging more strongly in C4D activities to raise awareness on citizen participation and what benefits the property tax reform may bring.	Sida Lantmäteriet NGO Land Reform	2020
Operational recommendations		
O1. Articulate a clear ToC for the next Project and refocus Project strategies and roles within the reform process to maximize its effectiveness and utilize resources strategically The Project has been implemented with a strong demand driven nature, ensuring that the interventions align with and contribute to the envisaged results. This practice, albeit with strong TOC should be continued, particularly with regards to the elaboration of desired outcomes in the area of enhancing citizen participation. Within the present project cycle, this area was rather general. Hence, the next phase has to be designed in such a way so as to provide a clear overview of desired outcomes in this component, with interventions to achieve these outcomes.	Sida Lantmäteriet NGO Land Reform	2020
O2. Build on the findings of the gender analysis and work in the previous cycle for stronger mainstreaming and impact. The gender focus within the project has provided a rich source of information and has generated new insights to the partners. When an intervention is fully gender mainstreamed as defined by Sida.⁶, gender aspects are an integral part of project analysis, planning and reporting. It is therefore essential that the project team seek to further	Sida Lantmäteriet NGO Land Reform	2020

⁵ Swiss Development Cooperation, 'Communication for Development: A practical guide', 2016, www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/publikationen/Diverses/Communication-for-development-Manual_EN.pdf

⁶ <https://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/gender-tool-mainstreaming.pdf>

integrate the gender related issues identified, for a stronger gender mainstreaming in future engagements.		
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5 Lessons Learned

This evaluation identified the key lessons learned that may be of benefit to future project planning processes and to other organizations seeking to design and implement projects assisting land management and urban planning reform processes. These lessons include:

1. Modelling innovative services or approaches in a context where absorption capacity is challenged by political and financial factors, require a long-term operational plan. This plan needs to be supported with careful assessment of readiness, investment requirements and commitment before implementation.
2. System level reforms require continuous engagement that combines political/policy dialogue and institutional development. Such reforms are incremental and slow; hence programming of support needs to ensure that a comprehensive theory of change is devised with realistic expectations of what the project may achieve in short to medium term.
3. Long-term investment in partnerships, cooperation and coordination contributes to achievement of results. Several of the involved national partners were involved for the whole, or at least most of the duration of the project since its start. Several of these partners, e.g. the Ministries, NCA and, most importantly, the NGO Land reform have been engaged with Lantmäteriet since the onset of the Cadastre project. The continued relationship allowed for building and deepening mutual trust and ownership, as well as a better understanding of the needs, capacities, and challenges faced by the respective partners. This long-term partnership also allowed the Lantmäteriet to achieve more with less: the partnerships were instrumental for facilitating access to local and regional levels and expanding the reach of the Project to other ministries (e.g. Ministry of Taxes) that were not initially engaged in the project

Annex 1. Evaluation Matrix

	Judgement indicators	Sources of information	Data collection methods
Relevance			
1. To what extent the objectives of the project are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements and the Republic of Belarus' needs?	Evidence of alignment of strategies implemented by the Project with recognized needs for improving capacities of a) the civil society organisations b) professionals and institutions to integrate mechanisms for democratisation of the <i>spatial planning processes</i> c) professionals and institutions to apply cadastral valuation system for the purposes of real property taxation and tax control within the real property sector	• Project documentation • Workplans, Progress and Performance reports • Research, studies and publications on context and issues pertaining land administration and urban development in Belarus • External documents analysing contextual changes and priorities of the governments' land administration and urban development system • Government and PES strategies and action plans • Key Informants (KI)	○ Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs ○ Semi-structured interviews with: ○ Lantmäteriet ○ NGO Land Reform ○ professionals ○ Representatives of development partners (TBC) ○ SIDA • Group discussions with: ○ Civil society actors
	Evidence of alignment of Project strategies with recognized needs of CSOs to be more active in land administration and urban development policies in Belarus	• Project documentation • Workplans, Progress and Performance reports • Research, studies & publications on context & issues pertaining land administration and urban development in Belarus • External documents analysing contextual changes and priorities of the	○ Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs ○ Semi-structured interviews with: ○ Lantmäteriet ○ NGO Land Reform ○ professionals

	Judgement indicators	Sources of information	Data collection methods
	Evidence of alignment of Project strategies with recognized needs of government institutions dealing with land management and urban planning	governments' land administration and urban development system • Government and PES strategies and action plans • Key Informants (KI)	○ Representatives of development partners (TBC) ○ SIDA • Group discussions with: ○ Civil society actors
Effectiveness			
2. To what extent the project's outcomes have been achieved so far, and what the likelihood is that they be fully achieved, and why?	Contribution of the Project to the progressive improvement of democratisation of spatial planning processes <i>(none/modest/significant)</i>	• Project documentation • Workplans, Progress and Performance reports • Research, studies and publications on context and issues pertaining land administration and urban development in Belarus • External documents analysing contextual changes and priorities of the governments' land administration and urban development system • Government and PES strategies and action plans • Key Informants (KI)	○ Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs ○ Semi-structured interviews with: ○ Lantmäteriet ○ NGO Land Reform ○ professionals ○ Representatives of development partners (TBC) ○ SIDA • Group discussions with: ○ Civil society actors
	Evidence of improved capacities of civil society organisations in terms of: ○ Sustainable performance • Transfer of competence and extended international network	• Project documentation • Workplans, Progress and Performance reports • Key Informants (KI)	○ Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs ○ Semi-structured interviews with: ○ Lantmäteriet ○ NGO Land Reform ○ professionals ○ Representatives of development partners (TBC) ○ SIDA

	Judgement indicators	Sources of information	Data collection methods
	Contribution of the Project to strengthening the influence of civil society in the area of land administration and urban development, improvement of the system of mass formation and mass valuation of real property for the purpose of real property taxation, improvement of the procedures for real property taxation and the system for tax control and improvement of urban spatial planning	- Records on degree of inclusion of civil society in land administration and urban development processes - Research, studies and publications on context and issues pertaining land administration and urban development in Belarus - Key Informants (KI)	- Group discussions with: - Civil society actors - Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs - Semi-structured interviews with: - Lantmäteriet - NGO Land Reform - professionals - Representatives of development partners (TBC) - SIDA - Group discussions with: - Civil society actors
Sustainability			
3. What is the likelihood of long-term benefits (outcomes) from the project, and to what extent the benefits from the project will continue after project completion?	Project Partners can offer examples of ways in which they are sustaining programmatic activities	Key Informants (KI)	- Semi-structured interviews with: - Lantmäteriet - NGO Land Reform - professionals - Representatives of development partners (TBC) - SIDA - Group discussions with: - Civil society actors
	Evidence of: Concrete changes in national/local/institutional policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain the project results and strategies	- Project documentation - Workplans, Progress and Performance reports - Government and strategies and action plans for urban planning and land management	- Semi-structured interviews with: - Lantmäteriet - NGO Land Reform - professionals - Representatives of development partners (TBC) - SIDA

	Judgement indicators	Sources of information	Data collection methods
	• Scaling-up of pilot interventions • Adoption of lessons and good practices that lead to changes in the strategic and organisational direction of the Government institutions • Additional allocations of national budget and/or other donor resources • Institutional capacity in place to sustain levels of achievement	• Key Informants (KI) •	• Group discussions with: ○ Civil society actors
4. What is the level of project ownership, on the side of the Republic of Belarus, and the readiness to build on project achievements and carry the process further onwards>	• Ownership over the different project areas and correspondent results by national/local stakeholders	• Project documentation • Workplans, Progress and Performance reports • Key Informants (KI)	• Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs • Semi-structured interviews with: ○ Lantmäteriet ○ NGO Land Reform ○ Professionals
Gender			
5. Has the project had any positive effects on gender equality, assessing, if gender mainstreaming could have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up?	• Evidence of gender awareness in project planning and implementation and follow-up • Degree to which the project considered and integrated gender dimension in planning, implementation and monitoring?	• Project documentation • Workplans, Progress and Performance reports • Operational Plan for gender analysis • Key Informants (KI)	• Systematic documentary review applying structured tools and comparative analysis focused on strategies and activities implemented by Project and alignment with needs • Semi-structured interviews with: ○ Lantmäteriet ○ NGO Land Reform ○ Professionals

Annex 2. Terms of Reference

Reference number:

13/000462

Reference number:

13/001056

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the project «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus»

Date: 06 September 2019

1. Evaluation object and scope

The evaluation object is the project «**Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus, using Contemporary Methods and Technologies**», funded by Sida.

The project is implemented by two partners, the Swedish National Cadastre Agency (Lantmäteriverket - the Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority), and the Belarusian NGO OO «Land Reform». Beneficiary organisations of the project are: NGO «Land Reform», State Property Committee of Republic of Belarus, Republic Unitary Enterprise «National Cadastral Agency», Ministry of Taxes and Levies of Republic of Belarus, Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Republic of Belarus, and Institute for Urban and Regional Planning «BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA».

The activity period of the project is 7 April 2016 – 31 December 2019, and the total amount of Sida's contribution is SEK 9,000,000.

Sweden's cooperation with the Republic of Belarus is governed by the «Results' Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020». This project is aligned with the Strategy, and contributes to Result Area №1: «Enhanced economic integration with the EU and development of market economy», and Result Area №2: «Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights, and a more fully developed state under the rule of law».

The Swedish support to the land sector in the Republic of Belarus started already in spring 1998 through cooperation with the NGO «Land Reform». A total of five projects, financed by Sida, were implemented in the land sector of the Republic of Belarus between 1998 and 2014. The projects contributed to development of the real property development market, the privatisation process, and implementation of the land reform in the Republic of Belarus.

The current project is a continuation of the work and the results from these five projects. The current project contributes to improvement of land management and urban development in the Republic of Belarus. The project aims at strengthening the influence of civil society in the area of land administration and urban development, improvement of the system of mass formation and mass valuation of real property for the purpose of real property taxation, improvement of the procedures for real property taxation and the system for tax control and improvement of urban spatial planning, by involving civil society in it. Project implementation is based on cooperation and support on transferring and sharing experience, as well as good practice between experienced Swedish organisations and their sister organisations (beneficiaries) in the Republic of Belarus.

The project is divided into three main components. The following expected outcomes per component are set for the project:

Capacity-building of civil society organisations

- Sustainable performance of the NGO «Land Reform» - project staff secured until December 2019
- Transfer of competence and extended international network

Spatial planning democratisation

- Information and Education Centre functioning and fully self-financed
- New educational programmes elaborated and implemented
- Town planning documentation elaborated, with the aim to include the principles of sustainable development, application of international experience and community implication
- Methods and ways of effective cooperation among local public authorities, private sector and civil society organisations elaborated
- Quality of elaborated regional town planning projects improved
- Social discussions of the projects have become more effective
- The professional and legal culture improved
- Documentation on planning carried out, taking into consideration interests of citizens and private sector

Support to enhancement of the cadastral valuation system for the purposes of real property taxation and tax control within the real property sector

- Methods for mass registration of real property (*tailor-made for the Republic of Belarus*) and beta-tested
- Technologies for mass registration of real property objects and up-dating of mass property registration data (*tailor-made for the Republic of Belarus*) beta-tested
- Maximum possible quantity of real property objects are registered for tax purposes and other purposes
- Non-registered (and non-taxed) objects revealed
- Proposals for amendments to the legislation of the Republic of Belarus are developed in order to introduce mass registration of real property
- Technology for mass valuation for taxation purposes in the pilot districts is beta-tested

- Society is informed about proposed switch-over to calculating property tax on the basis of cadastral valuation based on mass valuation
- Assessment of the economic impact of mass registration of real property, cadastral valuation and taxation of real property objects, based on their cadastral (market) value, is accomplished
- Information background provided for assessing budget losses from different sorts of preferences and privileges, and for making an economic substantiation of the switch-over to a new taxation system

The project contributes to development of land administration sector in the Republic of Belarus. The project builds capacity in the Republic of Belarus, and, directly, to the OO «Land Reform», the Republican Unitary Enterprise «National Cadastre Agency», the Ministry of Taxes and Levies of Republic of Belarus, and the Institute for Urban and Regional Planning «BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA».

For further information, the project proposal is attached as Annex D.

The overall objective of this evaluation is to assess the results achieved by the project, focusing on the following:

- 1) to frame and summarise lessons learned;
- 2) to evaluate the outcomes of the project on strengthening the influence of civil society in the area of land administration and urban development, improving the system of mass formation and mass valuation by application of new methods for mass valuation, improving the procedures for real property taxation, and improving urban spatial planning by involving civil society and using new approaches;
- 3) to evaluate the extent, to which the project has improved the cooperation among the beneficiaries of the project;
- 4) to look ahead and provide recommendations for a possible new project phase.

The time frame to be covered by the Evaluation is April 2016 – August 2019.

The scope of the evaluation and the intervention logic or theory of change of the project/programme shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

2. Evaluation rationale

The Evaluation rationale is the following: to evaluate project performance and capacity built at OO «Land Reform», the Republican Unitary Enterprise «National Cadastre Agency», the Ministry of Taxes and Levies of the Republic of Belarus, and the Institute for Urban and Regional Planning «BELNIIPGRADOSTROITELSTVA», and to determine future needs and opportunities for possible Swedish support, by the time project ends in December 2019.

3. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose or intended use of the Evaluation is to:

- support Sida, Lantmäteriet and beneficiaries to assess progress made in the on-going project, in order to learn, what has worked well and what challenges remain; the aim of the Evaluation is to provide information, on which decisions can be based to further improve project implementation;
- provide Sida and beneficiaries with inputs and recommendations on up-coming discussions, concerning possible preparation of a new project phase;
- give advise on how to better achieve sustainability of results.

The primary intended users of the Evaluation are:

- Sida;
- project beneficiaries;
- Lantmäteriet.

The Evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported, in order to meet the needs of the intended users; the tenderers shall elaborate in their tenders, how this will be ensured in the course of the Evaluation process. Other stakeholders that should be informed on the Evaluation process/results will be determined by the project beneficiaries and Lantmäteriet.

During the Inception Phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on, who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed on the Evaluation process/results.

4. Evaluation criteria and questions

The objective of the Evaluation is to:

- evaluate the sustainability of the project «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus, using Contemporary Methods and Technologies», and to elaborate recommendations on how to improve and adjust implementation
- evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the project «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus, using Contemporary Methods and Technologies», and to elaborate recommendations as an input, to be used in up-coming discussions concerning the preparation of a possible new phase of the project

The Evaluation issues are:

Relevance

- To what extent the objectives of the project are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements and the Republic of Belarus' needs?

Effectiveness

- To what extent the project's outcomes have been achieved so far, and what the likelihood is that they be fully achieved, and why

Sustainability

- The likelihood that long-term benefits (outcomes) will be attained from the project, and to what extent the benefits from the project will continue after project completion
- The level of project ownership, on the side of the Republic of Belarus, and the readiness to build on project achievements and carry the process further onwards

Gender equality

- Whether the project has had any positive effects on gender equality, assessing, if gender mainstreaming could have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up

Issues are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer, and further developed during the Inception Phase of the Evaluation.

5. Evaluation approach and methods for data collection and analysis

It is expected that the evaluator will describe and justify an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection to be used in the tender documentation. It is assumed that evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection, as well as analysis approach, will be fully developed and presented in the Inception Report, and that there will be a clear distinction between evaluation approach/methodology and methods used.

Sida's approach to evaluation is utilisation-focused, implying that the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration, how measures applied will affect the implementation of the evaluation process. It is therefore expected that the evaluators in their tender will present: (i) how intended users will participate in and contribute to the evaluation process; and, (ii) how methodology and methods for data collection used will create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the Evaluation.

Evaluators should take into consideration the need to take appropriate measures with regard to collecting data in cases, where sensitive or confidential issues are addressed, and avoid presenting information that may be harmful to some stakeholder groups.

6. Organisation of evaluation management

The Evaluation is commissioned by Sida, and the intended users are Sida, the project beneficiaries of and Lantmäteriet. Furthermore, the Evaluation results will serve as an input to the decision on, whether there will be funding of a new project in the area of cadastre services in Belarus by the Commissioner (Sida). The Commissioner and Arbetsförmedlingen have contributed to the current Terms of Reference, and will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the Inception Report, as well as on the Final Report, but will not be involved in the management of the Evaluation. Hence, the Commissioner will evaluate tenders, approve the Inception Report and the Final Report of the Evaluation. The start-up meeting and the debriefing/validation workshop will be held with the Commissioner only.

7. Evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation⁷. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation⁸. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

8. Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time- and work-plan will be presented in the tender, and further detailed in the Inception Report. The Evaluation shall be carried out and presented in during the period September-November 2019. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator, in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the Inception Phase.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Deadlines for the Final Inception Report and the Final Report must be kept in the tender, but alternative deadlines for other deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the Inception Phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meeting (some participants by video conference)	Evaluation team Sida Lantmäteriverket	Tentative: 30 September 2019
2. Draft Inception Report		Tentative: 7 October 2019
3. Inception meeting (some participants by video conference)	Evaluation team Sida Lantmäteriverket	Tentative: 14 October 2019
4. Comments from intended users to evaluators		Tentative: 18 October 2019
5. Final Inception Report		Tentative: 23 October 2019
6. Debriefing/validation meeting	Evaluation team Sida Lantmäteriverket	Tentative: 29 October 2019
7. Draft Evaluation Report		15 November 2019
8. Comments from intended users to evaluators		22 November 2019
9. Final Evaluation Report		27 November 2019

⁷ DAC Quality Standards for development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

⁸ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

The Inception Report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process, and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The Inception Report should be written in English, and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology, and methods for data collection and analysis to be used, as well as the full evaluation design. A clear distinction should be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection. A specific time- and work-plan, including planned number of hours/working-days for each team member, for the remaining part of the Evaluation should be presented. The time-plan should contribute to reflection and learning between the intended users of the Evaluation.

The Final Report shall be written in English, and be professionally proof read. The Final Report should have a clear structure, and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum of three pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail, and a clear distinction between the two made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit, and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from the conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as short-term, medium-term and long-term. The Report should be no more than 35 pages, excluding Annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation⁹.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the Final Report, insert the Report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations, and submit it to «Nordic Morning» (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data-base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@nordicmorning.com, always sending a copy to the back-stopping Sida Programme Officer, as well as Sida's Chief Evaluator's Team (evaluation@sida.se). "Sida decentralised evaluations" should be indicated in the **e-mail** subject field, and include the name of the consulting company, as well as the full evaluation title. For invoicing purposes, the evaluator needs to include the invoice reference "ZZ610601S," type of allocation "sakanslag", and type of order "digital publicering/publikations-databas".

9. Evaluation team qualification

⁹ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies:

- Knowledge and experience from development of land administration sector, especially land (real property) valuation, taxation and physical planning
- Knowledge of how NGOs work and function

It is desirable that the evaluation team includes the following competencies:

- Experience from work with projects in the Republic of Belarus

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

10. Resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 400,000 SEK.

The contact person at Sida is Rolf Büchel, Programme Officer at Unit «East», Department «EuroLatin». The contact person should be consulted, should any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by Rolf Büchel, Programme Officer at Unit «East», Department «EuroLatin». Relevant documentation will be provided for before the start of the evaluation.

Contact details of intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassy, other donors, etc.) will be provided for by Arbetsförmedlingen, Department of International Affairs.

The evaluator will be required to arrange necessary logistics, incl. interpretation services, connected with preparation of the interview programme, including security arrangements.

11. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation

- «Results' Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020»
- Project document: «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in Belarus, using Contemporary Methods and Technologies»
- Inception report and progress reports for the years 2016, 2017, 2018

Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. project or programme)	
Title of the evaluation object	«Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus, using Contemporary Methods and Technologies»
ID no. in PLANIt	55030173
Dox no./Archive case no.	13/001056
Activity period (if applicable)	2016-04-07 – 2019-12-31
Agreed budget (if applicable)	SEK 9 000 000
Main sector ¹⁰	Democracy, human rights and gender equality
Name and type of implementing organisation ¹¹	Public sector institutions; NGO or civil society
Aid type ¹²	Project Type
Swedish strategy	«Results strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, The Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020»

¹⁰ Choose from Sida's twelve main sectors: education; research; democracy, human rights and gender equality; health; conflict, peace and security; humanitarian aid; sustainable infrastructure and services; market development; environment; agriculture and forestry; budget support; or other (e.g. multi-sector).

¹¹ Choose from the five OECD/DAC-categories: public sector institutions; NGO or civil society; public-private partnerships and networks; multilateral organisations; and other (e.g. universities, consultancy firms).

¹² Choose from the eight OECD/DAC-categories: budget/sector support; core contributions/pooled funds; project type; experts/technical assistance; scholarships/student costs in donor countries; debt relief; admin costs not included elsewhere; and other in-donor expenditures.]

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Swedish Embassy	Sida, Department «EuroLatin», Unit «East»
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Rolf Büchel, rolf.buchel@sida.se
Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post or other)	September-November 2019
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	

Annex C: Decentralised evaluation report template

Annex D: Project/Programme document

Annex 3. List of Interviewees

1.	Zoia Faraj	Lantmäteriet
2.	Miroslav Kobasa, Belarus Project Manager, Chairman of the Board	NGO Land Reform
3.	Alexander Sokolov, Country Project Manager Assistant	NGO Land Reform
4.	Stanislava Husakova, Country Project Manager Assistant	NGO Land Reform
5.	Oksana Yerofeeva, Gender expert	External gender expert to the project
6.	Dmitry Rytvinski, Deputy Director of the National Cadastral Agency	National Cadastral Agency
7.	Alexey Khitro, Deputy head of the cadastral valuation department	National Cadastral Agency
8.	Elena Dubovik, Head of the Real Estate Market Monitoring Analysis Sector	National Cadastral Agency
9.	Alexei Leonovic, Head of Cadastral Valuation Sector	National Cadastral Agency
10.	Olga Dedkova, Leading appraiser of the real estate market	National Cadastral Agency
11.	Irina Polyakova, Real Estate appraiser of the individual appraiser sector	National Cadastral Agency
12.	Sergei Shavrov, former NCA Director and Member of Board of NGO Land reform	Expert and Author of the Book on Land Administration published through the project
13.	Christina Johansson, Ambassador of Sweden to the Republic of Belarus	Embassy of Sweden
14.	Gunilla Davidsson, First Secretary på Swedish Embassy in Minsk	Embassy of Sweden
15.	Alena Rakova, Consultant of Foreign Economy Department	Ministry of Architecture and Construction
16.	Jesus H Ortega, resident Twinning Adviser	EU Twinning project on Land administration
17.	Ella Selitskaya, Deputy Minister of Taxes and Duties	Ministry of Taxes and Duties
18.	Irina Krivoroschenko, Deputy Head of Main Department of Administration of Individual Taxation	Ministry of Taxes and Duties
19.	Natalya Kondratenko, Deputy Head of the Main Department of Administration of Taxation Methodology	Ministry of Taxes and Duties
20.	Alla Sundukova, Head of the Department of International Cooperation	Ministry of Taxes and Duties

21.	Julia Bytko, Head of the Department of Transfer Pricing	Ministry of Taxes and Duties
22.	Svetlana Eskova, Head of the Department of Cameral Control	Ministry of Taxes and Duties
23.	Vyacheslav Abramov, Deputy Chairman of State Property Committee of the Republic of Belarus	State Property Committee
24.	Mikolai Ulasyuk, Brest Chief Architect	City Executive Committee, Brest
25.	Tatiana Panchenko, Lecturer of Brest State University	Brest State University
26.	Igor Khmelitskiy, Chief Engineer	Representative from the Waste Management Authority
27.	Svetlana Veremchuk, Chief of Individual Construction Department	City Executive Committee, Brest
28.	Alexei Andreyuk, Chairman of Brest region of Belarusian Union of Architects	Belarusian Union of Architects, Brest
29.	Elena Shtyk, Leader of the civil initiative	NGO Urban Forester, Brest
30.	Maria Chizh, Press-secretary	NGO for Bicycle, Brest
31.	Alexei Ananich, Deputy Minister of Architecture and Construction	Ministry of Architecture and Construction
32.	Aleksandr Khizhniak (Director of IRUP)	Institute for Regional and Urban planning
33.	Alena Kasyanenko, Head of Department of Sustainable Urban Development, IRUP	Institute for Regional and Urban planning
34.	Vladimir Tainikov, Lead Engineer	Institute for Regional and Urban planning
35.	Denis Kobrusev, Chair of the Presidium	NGO International Civil Union of Ecologists
36.	Alexei Yarotov, Chairman	NGO Belarusian Geographical Society
37.	Alexei Sazonov, Member	NGO Belarusian Geographical Society
38.	Anna Zhelanova, Deputy Chariman	NGO Belarusian Association Real property
39.	Olga Sterzhniova, PR-manager	NGO Belarusian Architecture Students Association
40.	Viktor Khinich, Program Coordinator	NGO Belarusian Association of Valuers
41.	Palina Vardevanian, National Expert	UNDP-GEF Green Cities project

Annex 4. List of consulted documents

Internal documents from the Lantmäteriet

Application 2016

Operational plan

Action plan on Gender Analysis

Annual report 2016, with annexes

Annual report 2017, with annexes

Annual report 2018, with annexes

Draft analysis on impact for the final report

Documents from the NGO Land reform

Gender analysis

Questionnaires to the participating agencies for the gender analysis

Other documentation:

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Annex 5. List of main findings and conclusions

List of main findings

- Finding 1. The Project design and its objectives are aligned and respond to needs and priorities of its Belarussian partners and to the demands for reforms of systems for land management and urban planning. The project adds value through continuous engagement and long-term partnership between the Swedish and Belarussian partners, and support to incremental changes in the area of property valuation and citizen participation. Relevance is increased through demand-driven nature of the project which also increases effectiveness and ownership.
- Finding 2. Contribution to envisaged results is positive, overall, albeit with important variations. The project achieved its envisaged outputs and made contributions to planned outcomes to varying level of effectiveness. Main driver of effectiveness has been the specific position and strong expertise of the NGO Land reform, paired with the long-term support from Lantmäteriet. The NGO Land reform is viewed as a broker and neutral partner, which helps achievement of results across sectors.
- Finding 3. The project mostly achieved its envisaged outputs. However, most of desired outcomes within this component have not materialised fully, and in particular the sustainability of the NGO Partner Land Reform which is not yet achieved. There is evidence of NGO Land Reform's strong national and international networks, and strong positioning in the sector, whereby the NGO Land Reform serves as a bridge between the government, civil society and other development actors. The Project contributed to increasing opportunities for CSOs to engage in dialogue with authorities in Project target regions, though enhancing democratic practices in spatial planning remains ongoing area of attention.
- Finding 4. The Project managed to achieve a number of important outputs within this component, including enhancement of government (particularly local authorities') capacity for more inclusive spatial planning. Evaluation found generally high levels of satisfaction of partners with the quality and utility of capacity building activities. The exposure to Swedish practices has been especially valued as a relevant and useful in this regard. The strongest achievement of the project within this component was the support to the establishment of the IEC. However, evaluation could not find sufficient conclusive evidence of changed practices across the system, but only in areas targeted by the project.
- Finding 5. Evaluation found that main achievements of the project materialised within this component. The main result achieved by the project was the finalization of the methodology for collecting necessary cadastral valuation data based on the Swedish concept. Project's contribution to digitalization and interoperability of data for mass valuation assisted improving cadastre practices and approaches. An important unexpected result of the project is

the strengthened collaboration between the NCA and the Ministry of Taxes, which contributes also to renewing and upgrading the real property classification for tax purposes. However, main obstacle to achievement of outcome level results is the fact that the Presidential Decree on mass valuation has not been adopted yet.

Finding 6. The evaluation found that the sustainability prospects of achieved results are mixed. Investment in capacity building of individuals, institutions, and organisations as well as IT and software have a strong sustainability potential. Training material, shared practices and guides developed by the project provide a good basis for further capacity building and enhancement of the material for wider use. However, the system uptake of mass valuation mechanisms and corresponding taxation as well as more systematic engagement of civil society is still in its embryonic stage and require further investment. In particular, the IEC's institutional sustainability is still questionable and has not been resolved. Besides, limited geographic and thematic scope and limited no. of partners does not allow for the creation of a critical mass or a pool of experts and NGO partners who could replicate and expand the consultation approaches at country level.

Finding 7. The project invested efforts towards mainstreaming gender, albeit with limited outputs, mainly of formal nature. Changes at the institutional and structural level within organisations have not yet taken root, particularly with regards to engraining gender dimension in land management and urban planning.

List of conclusions

Conclusion 1. The Swedish Cadastre project aligns with priorities set for land management sector and also with Swedish Sida cooperation objectives. It remains continuously relevant to the context and responsive to the needs of the government institutions, primarily the NCA, and NGO partners. The main value added of Swedish engagement is the longevity of cooperation and the fact that SIDA remains the most stable donor. EU currently funds a twinning project in the field as well and there are complementarities between projects.

Conclusion 2. The Project was effective in achievement of its desired outputs. It has succeeded in achieving some of its outcomes, and variations are visible.

Conclusion 3. The sustainability of many achieved effects and benefits remains fragile. The main hindering factor for sustainability is the fact that the Presidential Decree has yet to be adopted, while funding is not secured for IEC also the NGO Land reform. Development partners in Belarus are not very engaged in the land reform and urban planning sector, so Sida and EU are the only active donors. Sida remains the only donor that offers long term and stable support, which has been the key driver of more sustainable outcomes of assistance, in particular with NCA. Another driver of sustainability is ownership that has been manifested across all project partners.

Conclusion 4. Gender mainstreaming is limited.



Evaluation of the project «Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus»

The Final Evaluation of the Project “Improving Land Management and Urban Development in the Republic of Belarus using Contemporary Methods and Technologies” was conducted in the period October-November 2019 and commissioned to respond to accountability requirements and to provide an in-depth overview based on an independent assessment for the use of different stakeholders, while at the same time being forward-looking aiming to take stock and learn from the work done thus far to inform the preparation of the potential next cycle of Sida support. The evaluation methodology conformed to OECD/DAC’s Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and was guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) with application of qualitative data collection methods, primarily key informant interviews and group discussions in the Minsk and in one region targeted by the project. The evaluation found that the project aligned and responded to the priorities of the government within the reform of the land management sector and also with Swedish Sida cooperation objectives. The Swedish support has been continuous and stable, targeting multidimensional problems of land ownership, land management and urban planning systems problems that are deeply rooted and require long-term efforts before measurable incremental results can be observed. Within an environment with very little donor support, the longevity of Swedish support brought added value to the reform process. The Sida implementing partner, Lantmäteriet, was highly successful in increasing the awareness and technical capacities of partners. These interventions have helped the government, public institutions and other actors dealing with land management and urban planning to better understand the existing institutional and policy gaps. As such, increased knowledge offers a direct contribution to improved planning and prioritization of mechanisms, in particular for mass valuation and taxation and the engagement of citizens in urban planning processes.

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