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Evaluation of Civil Rights Defenders' capacity development support to local partners

Final Report

Evaluation of Civil Rights Defenders’ capacity development support to local partners

**Final Report
June 2024**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CARD	Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy
CIVSAM	Sida's Civil Society Unit
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EHRDC	Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Center
EMWA	Ethiopian Media Women's' Association
EU	European Union
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IJAS	Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia
KRIK	Crime and Corruption Reporting Network
LGBTI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NCHRD-U	National Coalition for Human Rights Defenders Uganda
OD	Organisational Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
IT	Information Technology
PM&E	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PO	Partner Organisation
SEK	Swedish Kronor
SLAPP	Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation
SPO	Strategic Partner Organisation
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
WHRDN-U	Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda

Preface

This evaluation was commissioned by Sida/CIVSAM through the Sida Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services, and conducted by FCG Sweden.

The evaluation team consisted of Jonas Lövkrona (Team Leader) and Ardita Metaj Dika. The Draft Evaluation Report was quality assured by Florence Etta, whose work was independent of the evaluation team. Sofia Kliukina provided project management support.

Executive Summary

Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) is a human rights organisation headquartered in Stockholm and with eight regional branch offices across the world. Since October 2020, CRD has been one of Sida's Strategic Partner Organisations (SPOs), and received funding from the Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016-2022 (the CSO strategy). The evaluation coincided with the end of the first three-year contribution from the CSO strategy and served three purposes:

- For Sida to obtain a better understanding of CRD's contribution to partners' capacity development, and learn from what works well and less well;
- To provide an input to Sida's assessment of CRD's expected application for continued support;
- To inform CRD's approach and methods for capacity development support, and how these could be adjusted and improved.

The evaluation addressed the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. A utilisation-focused and theory-based approach was followed to explore outcome-level change and the influence of CRD's capacity development support. Data collection was carried out through a desk review, interviews, and a global partner organisation (PO) survey.

Conclusions

Relevance

The evaluation concludes that POs generally feel that CRD's capacity development support addresses their needs and priorities in a responsive and flexible manner. Well-established routines are in place for assessing the basic capacities of POs in various areas. Through dialogue and regular interaction, in particular in countries where CRD has a field presence, additional needs and ways of addressing them are identified and managed, as agreed, throughout the partnership cycle. This also helps to ensure PO's ownership of the capacity development support. At the same time, evidence put forward by the evaluation suggests that CRD's approaches and systems for capacity development could be improved and better documented, which potentially would make the support even more relevant (and effective). In general, the evaluation shows that POs have many un-addressed or insufficiently addressed needs in terms of organisational strengthening that are presently not catered for by CRD or other donors.

There is limited dialogue and coordination between the POs' donors in all three countries. This increases the risk of duplication and implies a lost opportunity to seek synergies, especially in areas where the focus and scope of different donor support

coincide. CRD's added-value is reflected in the overall partnership approach, as well as its flexibility and expertise, both in terms of human rights and contextual knowledge. However, many POs receive capacity development support from a range of different donors and, in some cases, this support is more focused on the needs of the POs as organisations than CRD's support.

Effectiveness

The assessment of the effectiveness of CRD's capacity development support was guided by the Theory of Change (ToC) developed during the inception phase of the evaluation. In general, the evaluation indicates that the ToC is generally sound and that the capacity development was implemented as planned, although with variations across regions and countries.

With regard to the immediate outcomes defined in the ToC, the evaluation shows that CRD has significantly contributed to enhancing the knowledge and skills of POs staff, especially in relation to human rights work. The capacity development support has also contributed to an increase in organisational resources, but mainly on a temporary basis, and new contacts between POs, particularly for the Serbian POs in the sample. Moving to the next level of (intermediate) outcomes, the evaluation concludes that CRD's contribution has been relatively more limited overall, with certain POs benefiting more than others. This pertains to improved and more democratic organisational management, strengthened programming capacity and outreach, and increased cooperation and coordination.

CRD's own methods for monitoring its partner portfolio have been improved but the capacity development of POs is not systematically measured. There is a lack of a dedicated learning element in CRD's PME system, which means that lessons from what works well and less well in terms of capacity development are not necessarily captured and shared. Relatedly, previous evaluations provide a range of recommendations of relevance for capacity development that have not yet been implemented.

Efficiency

The efficiency criterion focuses on how well resources are being used and have only been briefly assessed as part of this evaluation. A key finding in this regard is that the rate of implementation of planned activities has generally been high within the SPO agreement and Sida's support to the Ethiopia programme. The delays that have occurred have been mainly due to external factors, especially Covid-19, to which CRD appears to have responded well. With regard to the allocation of costs, it is found that CRD is providing an increasingly larger share of the SPO programme budget as subgrants, which POs consider being the most effective means of capacity development. At the same time, CRD's staff capacity in Ethiopia has not been adjusted in line with the increasing PO portfolio and focus on capacity development. A more elaborate assessment of cost-efficiency is rendered difficult by the fact that capacity development, beyond grants, is not explicitly budgeted for.

Sustainability

The evaluation shows that, globally, there is a common perception among POs that CRD's capacity development support has contributed to sustainable results, especially when directed to organisational strengthening, such as the creation of internal structures, plans, policies and manuals. Many POs in the evaluation sample also appear to have matured as organisations, including with support from CRD, and have strengthened their funding base. Nevertheless, many POs equally identify the lack of long-term financial viability as a major concern, as they continue to depend on short-term donor support and have limited ability to raise funding through other means. In general, CRD does not seem to pay sufficient attention to financial sustainability during the process of assessing project proposals and partner capacity. Although some of the POs, especially in Serbia, have been supported over a very long time period, there are no clear phasing-out strategies or exit criteria.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the evaluation are summarised below and presented in full in chapter 6.

1. CRD should improve and carefully document its approach and processes for capacity development, possibly in an expanded partner policy or dedicated capacity development strategy. This document could *inter alia* include a proper ToC, a refined set of partner selection criteria, steps to be followed when selecting new partners, and a distinction between different types of local partnerships.
2. CRD should provide longer-term grants, preferably core support, linked to the POs' strategic plans. This would create better conditions for sustainable capacity development. A process should be defined to determine if and when a PO is ready for core support. This could include scaling-up of the practice of commissioning external organisational capacity assessments.
3. CRD should invest more in tailored capacity development of POs to promote their sustainability and resilience. This support should be carefully coordinated with other donors to the same organisations, and anchored in capacity development plans developed jointly with the POs.
4. CRD should increase efforts to ensure that the capacity development support, especially global trainings, has an impact at the organisational level of POs. This could imply more emphasis on Training of Trainers (ToT) or ensuring that at least two staff members from each PO participate in trainings. CRD staff could also become more engaged in the follow-up to global trainings.
5. CRD should ensure that adequate attention is paid to sharing experiences and learning among POs with regard to capacity development. This could be realised through more regular regional and country-level capacity development events for POs (in-person and/or virtual) focusing on different topics, identified in consultation with the POs.
6. CRD should develop a standard set of indicators for monitoring and measuring capacity development of local partners, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

CRD is also recommended to: ensure that data from capacity development activities is systematically collected, aggregated and analysed; integrate a learning mechanism in its PM&E system, and; consider introducing a results-based budgeting system, which present funding targets by type of costs and desired outcome, including “capacity”.

7. CRD should ensure that adequate investment is made in local staff capacity to ensure that its added value in terms of partnership approach and field presence is maximised, including the capacity to conceptualise and monitor capacity development programmes and engage in dialogue.
8. CRD should, with guidance of indicators for measuring capacity development, develop exit criteria and phasing-out strategies for long-term partnerships, which may entail additional training and mentoring on fundraising and leadership. In general, sustainability should receive more attention in the grant management routines, with the templates for CRD partner assessment, project and grant request, and outcome reports adjusted accordingly.
9. Sida should initiate a dialogue with CRD (and possibly with other SPOs as well) on what can be done from Sida’s side to facilitate a shift from short-term project support to long-term programme-based support – or core funding – to contribute more effectively to building more sustainable organisational capacities among POs.

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) is a human rights organisation headquartered in Stockholm and with eight regional branch offices across the world. It was founded in 1982, as the Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, with the purpose of monitoring compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act (1975). In 2009, the organisation was renamed CRD and expanded its mission, which is defined as “to defend civil and political rights together with human rights defenders, and to increase their security, capacity and access to justice”.¹

Since October 2020, CRD has been one of Sida’s Strategic Partner Organisations (SPO) and, as such, receives programme-based funding from the Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016-2022 (CSO strategy). Contributions are also received from other Swedish development cooperation strategies for country-specific work.

The evaluation coincides with the end of the first three-year contribution (2021-2023) from the CSO strategy and serves three main purposes:

- For Sida to obtain a better understanding of CRD’s contribution to partners’ capacity development, and learn from what works well and less well;
- To provide an input to Sida’s assessment of CRD’s expected application for continued support;
- To inform CRD’s approach and methods for capacity development support, and how these could be adjusted and improved.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are Sida and CRD. Within Sida, the primary intended users include the Civil Society Unit (CIVSAM), which has commissioned the evaluation, and other units (and Embassies) that manage contributions to CRD from other strategies.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The objective of the evaluation was to assess CRD’s capacity development support to partner organisations, and provide recommendations for future adjustment/improvement. In line with Sida’s Terms of Reference (ToR), the evaluation focused on CRD’s support to a sample of eight partner organisations (POs) in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda.

¹ Strategy 2023-2030. CRD.

While CRD has received support from the CSO strategy only from 2021, the evaluation covered a longer time horizon in cases where selected POs had received support from CRD also prior to the SPO agreement (with funding from other Swedish development cooperation strategies).

1.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

Sida's ToR addresses four of the six OECD/DAC criteria for development evaluation – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability – and presents key evaluation questions for each of these four criteria, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

Relevance	• To what extent has CRD's capacity development for partners responded to partners needs and priorities? • Does CRD coordinate with other donors of their partners? What is the added value of the capacity development that CRD provides?
Effectiveness	• To what extent has CRD's support for capacity development achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives/results? (i.e. to what extent have partners capacity been developed?) What contextual challenges which partners have faced has hindered implementation and impact? • Are the methods CRD has used for supporting and following up on capacity development effective and based on learning? • To what extent has CRDs support in the development of diverse capacities so far contributed to or has the potential to contribute towards improving partner's abilities to influence policies or practices that improve the respect for human rights?
Efficiency	• To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?
Sustainability	• To what extent will the benefits of the capacity development be sustainable?

During the inception phase, the key evaluation questions were interpreted and refined in sub-questions for which data collection sources and data sources were identified. As reflected in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2), the sub-questions have expanded the scope of the evaluation beyond the questions in the ToR. This is particularly the case with the relevance and effectiveness criteria. For instance, the evaluation team considered it important to assess how CRD has selected partners and identified capacity development needs, to what extent the capacity development support has been responsive to changing circumstances, and what has been done to address the gender perspective. The sub-questions related to the effectiveness criterion have been defined based on a re-constructed Theory of Change (ToC) and the requirements of the Contribution Analysis steps (see section 3.1), and also capture aspects related to CRD's monitoring and evaluation of capacity development support.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Following the executive summary and this introduction (chapter 1), the report describes the evaluation object (chapter 2) and the evaluation methodology (chapter 3). Chapter 4 is the main part of the report. This chapter presents data, analysis and findings related to each evaluation criterion and (refined) evaluation question.² Findings are highlighted in bold font, normally in the beginning of a paragraph. The report ends with a concluding chapter (chapter 5) and a set of recommendations to CRD and Sida (chapter 6). Evaluation tools and sources can be found in the annexes.

² The questions are not necessarily addressed in the same order as they appear in the ToR and Evaluation Matrix.

2 Evaluation object

The work of CRD falls within four broad thematic areas – security, capacity, engagement and accountability. In the CRD Strategy 2023-2030, the strategic goal of capacity is defined as “human rights defenders have the capacity to defend human rights and democracy”.³ CRD’s Theory of Change, as presented in the same document, indicates that this entails capacity to manage human rights work effectively as well as broad organisational capacity, including in areas such as security, fundraising, strategy development, good governance, general administration, etc. More details are provided in the internal document Working with Partners (2019), which outlines the type of trainings and financial assistance that CRD can provide, and CRD’s Partner Policy, which emphasises that the capacity development should be tailored to the needs of partners and describes how these needs should be assessed. Capacity development is also an integral part of CRD’s Grant Management Routines, which have been recently updated.

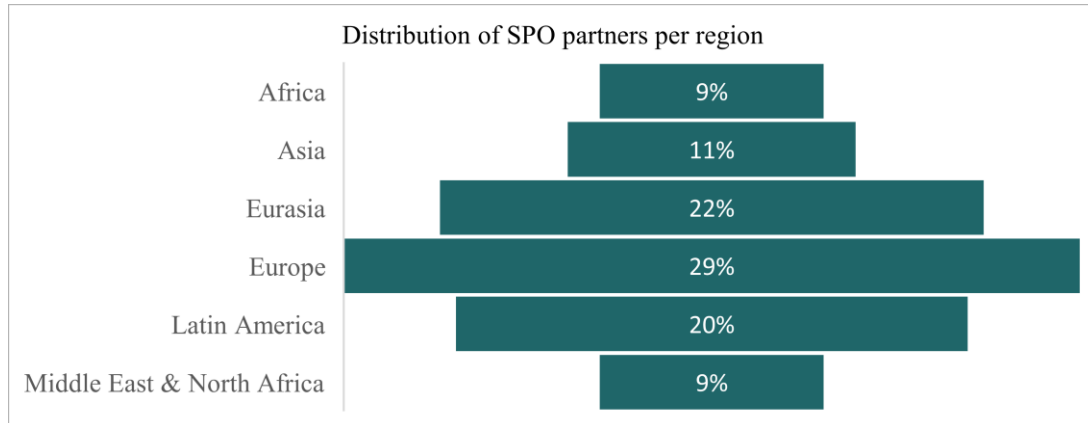
As one of Sida’s strategic partner organisations (SPOs), CRD is expected to contribute to “strengthened capacity within civil society in developing countries to contribute to poverty reduction in developing countries” and “promoting an enabling environment for civil society organisations in developing countries” (the two main objectives of the CSO strategy).⁴ The SPO application to Sida is developed based on CRD’s previous strategy (for the period 2020-2022), and covers the main elements of this strategy.⁵ The contribution from the CSO strategy consequently has an extensive scope, covering CRD partnerships and other work in six different regions, the work of thematic departments, as well as a number of global functions. At the time of the evaluation, the contribution from the CSO strategy covered 85 partnerships in 27 countries. According to a partner mapping conducted by CRD, a majority of the POs are based in Europe, Eurasia and Latin America (Figure 1). In all regions the POs are predominantly small- and medium-sized organisations (in terms of the number of staff). The length of current partnerships differs from one region to the other. Large variations can be found in Europe, where the length of partnerships ranges from one year to more than 15 years. In Africa, 67 percent of the partnerships are less than two years and 84 percent less than five years.⁶

³ Strategy 2023-2030. CRD.

⁴ Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations for the period 2016-2022. Government Offices of Sweden. MFA.

⁵ The new CRD Strategy for 2023-2023 has the same thematic focus and similar objectives, including in relation to capacity, as the former strategy.

⁶ CRD. SPO partner characterisation. Excel file.

Figure 1 CRD partner organisations by region in 2023

Source: CRD (2023)

In the countries of particular focus in this evaluation CRD has currently a total of 25 POs (four in Serbia, 15 in Ethiopia and four in Uganda). While the funding for Serbia comes from the SPO agreement, the Ethiopian partnerships are largely covered by a contribution from the Swedish development cooperation strategy for Ethiopia. Of the four partnerships in Uganda, one is currently funded under the SPO agreement. In Serbia, three of the four POs have been engaging with CRD for more than 15 years. In Ethiopia and Uganda, almost all current partnerships are less than five years. The POs in the three countries work across a broad range of themes, including rule of law and access to justice, anti-corruption and organised crime, freedom of expression and media freedoms, protection of journalists, digital rights, labour rights and peacebuilding and gender, and target particular vulnerable groups, such as women, minorities, conflict victims, prisoners, and persons with disability.

The ToC developed during the inception phase of the evaluation captures how CRD envisages the role of its capacity development support in the change process. As shown in the diagram in Annex 3, the ToC takes CRD's capacity development methods and activities – training courses, networking and knowledge sharing events, continuous mentoring and coaching, and financial assistance – as a starting point. Together, the implementation of these methods and activities are expected to lead on to three immediate outcomes – enhanced knowledge and skills, new contacts, opportunities and ideas, and increased resources. Moving up the change pathway, CRD's control over the outcomes gradually diminishes but the assumption is that the immediate outcomes will contribute to increased coordination and cooperation among POs, more relevant and strategy interventions, and improved and more democratic organisational management (the intermediate outcomes). The ultimate outcome – more effective, sustainable and resilient partner organisations that are able to defend and promote human rights – can be seen as the *desired* long-term effect of the capacity development support.

Sida's contribution to CRD from the CSO strategy amounts to SEK 152 million for three years (2021-2023).⁷ The total budget for CRD's Ethiopia programme was SEK 6,1 million for the same period. The Embassy of Sweden in Ethiopia and CRD have recently entered into a new agreement for a second phase of this programme, with a Sida contribution of SEK 18 million for 2,5 years.

Project grants and other support to POs are managed by CRD's regional departments, including regional branch offices. The partnerships in Ethiopia and Uganda fall under the responsibility of the Africa Department, which has two staff members based in Ethiopia. In Serbia, CRD has a regional team of six staff members looking after both national partners and regional initiatives.

⁷ The budget for the SPO programme distinguishes between type of costs but does not include a breakdown on countries.

3 Methodology

3.1 OVERALL EVALUATION APPROACH

In line with the ToR, the evaluation was planned and conducted through a utilisation-focused approach that encouraged the participation of intended users. Start-up meetings were held with both Sida and CRD to explore overall expectations on the evaluation and ways of making it as useful as possible. During the inception phase, a Theory of Change (ToC) workshop was conducted to promote reflection and reach common agreement on expected outcomes, assumptions and key influencing factors pertaining to CRD's capacity development support. The refined methodology was discussed and confirmed by Sida and CRD at the inception meeting. Furthermore, at the end of the data collection phase, Sida and CRD were invited to a debriefing, which served to validate and discuss key observations, emerging findings and tentative recommendations. This Draft Evaluation Report was also shared for review and comments.

The re-constructed ToC (see Annex 3 and the brief narrative in chapter 2) was tested against the data collected by the evaluation team with the help of a simplified version of the Contribution Analysis approach.⁸ Relevant contribution claims were identified and in each case the evaluation team sought to clarify the significance of the claim, the influence of CRD's capacity development support, and the contribution of other donors/initiatives. When assessing CRD's approach to capacity development of partners the evaluation team also drew on lessons learnt, good practices and recommendations provided through previous evaluations of a similar nature, commonly used organisational capacity assessment and development models, and the 2021 DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance.

A gender perspective was incorporated in the evaluation methodology and the Evaluation Matrix, as well as in different tools for data collection. In line with Sida's gender toolbox and approach to gender mainstreaming,⁹ the evaluation interrogated to what extent gender equality had been integrated in the capacity development support, pursued through targeted efforts, and/or highlighted in the dialogue between CRD and

⁸ Contribution Analysis is not a strict methodology as such but rather a set of broad steps which help to frame and structure the analysis, and to assess the project's contribution. The main steps in Contribution Analysis are: (1) explore and reconstruct the project ToC (done during the inception phase); (2) gather the existing evidence on the ToC (to establish to what extent outcomes have been realised); (3) assess the contribution claim and challenges to it; (4) seek out additional evidence (if required), and (5) finalise the contribution story.

⁹ Sida Gender Toolbox <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/gender-toolbox>

POs. The environment and climate perspective was briefly assessed in the same manner.

3.2 PARTNER ORGANISATION SAMPLE

The selection of eight partnerships for in-depth assessment was done through a purposeful sampling technique, implying that priority was given to the most information-rich cases from which data could be obtained to answer key (evaluation) questions. Two key variables considered during the selection process were i) the length of partnerships in years, and ii) the grant amount and scope of capacity development support. The underlying notion was that longer partnerships and more comprehensive capacity development support will generate a richer and a more useful information base than more recent partnerships where CRD's support (so far) has been limited. POs' accessibility (location) and availability were also factored into the selection. The eight POs in the sample are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 PO evaluation sample

#	Name of partner organisation	Thematic area of work	Supported by CRD since
1	Pescanik	Media freedoms	2005
2	Crime and Corruption Reporting Network (KRIK)	Media freedoms, anti-corruption, organised crime	2016
3	Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (IJAS)	Media freedoms, protection of journalists	2000
4	Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Center (EHRDC)	Human rights defenders	2021
5	Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD)	Freedom of expression, digital rights	2019
6	Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA)	Women and media	2020
7	National Coalition for Human Rights Defenders Uganda (NCHRD-U)	Human rights defenders	2017
8	Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda (WHRDN-U)	Human rights, gender equality	2021

3.3 METHODS AND TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The use of different data collection tools was considered and discussed during the inception phase and an agreement was reached to complement the desk review and key informant interviews with an on-line survey.

Desk review

The desk review included documents and data pertaining to CRD's overall strategy and approach to capacity development, global and regional capacity development activities, and the eight partnerships in the evaluation sample. A standard set of documents was defined and requested for each partnership, including POs' concept notes, CRD's internal assessments of POs' capacity, external capacity assessments (when available), CRD project and grant requests, and POs' final project/completion reports. A full list of documents consulted can be found in Annex 6.

Key informant interviews

Key informants were identified in consultation with CRD and Sida, as well as through the evaluation team's own inquiry. They included CRD staff members at Head Office and regional branch level, senior managers and other key staff of the selected POs, capacity development providers, relevant other donors and CSOs, and Swedish embassy staff (in Ethiopia). In total, 51 individuals (38 women and 13 men) were interviewed, either in-person (in Sweden, Serbia and Ethiopia) or through on-line means (Uganda and elsewhere). Both individual interviews and group interviews were conducted. All the interviews were semi-structured and based on interview guides tailored to different categories of key informants.

Global PO survey

The on-line survey targeted CRD POs beyond the evaluation sample and had a global reach. It was disseminated to 51 POs, of which 39 (15 women and 20 men) completed it, giving a response rate of 69 percent. The survey (Annex 5) included a combination of multiple choice (ranked) and open-ended questions, and was administered in English, Spanish and Georgian.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

The effectiveness of CRD's capacity development support was assessed in conformity with the key steps in Contribution Analysis (see section 3.1). As previously mentioned, a first set of observations, emerging findings and tentative conclusions were presented for questioning and validation at a debriefing meeting with Sida and CRD at the end of the data collection phase. This was followed by an in-depth analysis to validate the re-constructed ToC and confirm CRD's contribution to the immediate and intermediate outcomes (see Annex 3).

Questions and related data that pertain to the criteria of relevance, efficiency and sustainability were also analysed in a systematic manner. If not otherwise mentioned in the report, the findings were corroborated against at least two data sources and aggregated whenever possible. Similarly, the conclusions were drawn based on multiple findings and convey the vital points of the evaluation with a focus on the key

evaluation questions. The conclusions also seek to communicate the result of the Contribution Analysis.

3.5 ETHICS AND PARTICIPATION

The evaluation was conducted in line with the OECD/DAC Guidelines on Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. Accordingly, the evaluation team has adhered to the principles of impartiality, independence and credibility. The need for confidentiality and safe handling of data has been recognised in each step of the evaluation process. Only the evaluation team has had access to the interview and survey data, which has been stored in compliance with European data legislation. In the evaluation report, no sensitive information is presented about organisations or individuals.

As elaborated on above, the evaluation was utilisation-focused and conducted in a participatory manner, especially through close engagement with CRD staff. Comments and suggestions on the Draft Evaluation Report will be handled in a systematic manner, including through the use of a Comments and Response Matrix. The latter will capture both general and specific comments, the evaluation team's response to these comments, and the changes, if any, made to the report. Disagreement over findings, if any, will be accounted for in the Final Evaluation Report.

3.6 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

In line with the ToR, the evaluation has focused on capacity development of organisations rather than individuals. According to the CSO strategy, SPOs are expected to contribute to the strengthening of partner organisations internally, including in relation to their thematic, organisational and financial capacity, which will contribute to improving their prospects of advocacy, influencing decision-makers, providing service delivery to communities, etc. This notion has informed the overall focus and scope of the evaluation, including the development of the ToC.

One challenge faced by the evaluation team was to delimit the scope of the evaluation to capacity development. While capacity is one of four broad thematic areas of CRD's work, it tends to be treated as a cross-cutting area (and rightly so). For instance, a significant part of CRD's capacity development support is geared towards strengthening POs' security and safety. When the focus is on advocacy, capacity development can also be said to address the thematic areas of engagement and accountability. Partly for this reason, PO representatives did not always make the distinction between project support focusing on addressing the human rights situation and capacity development addressing the needs of their own organisations. Nevertheless, the ToC developed during the inception phase and the Evaluation Matrix helped the evaluation team to focus its inquiry.

Another challenge was related to the data quality and access. Given the complex nature of capacity development, the contribution to outcomes was difficult to establish in some cases. As predicted in the inception report, some of the available evidence at the

outcome level turned out to be anecdotal and reflected the perceptions of key informants (that may not always tally with the actual situation). There is also the risk of response bias, especially when using on-line surveys. To the extent possible, the evaluation team sought to corroborate anecdotal evidence/perceptions and any response bias through the desk review and interviews with CRD staff and external stakeholders. With regard to data access, the evaluation team did not receive the requested data on the Defenders' Days/Bootcamps (i.e. summary of participants' evaluation and CRD's follow-up) in time for the drafting of the evaluation report.

A third challenge, or in-built limitation, relates to the sampling of POs, which is vulnerable to bias and limits the ability to generalise findings. The selected sample (eight POs in three countries) represent about 10 percent of all CRD's partnerships (85 POs in 27 countries). To some extent, the limitations of sampling has been off-set by the global partner survey and interviews with CRD staff in other regional departments and branches, which has provided useful data and views from partnerships beyond the selected ones Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda.

4 Findings

4.1 RELEVANCE

In line with the ToR, this section explores to what extent CRD's capacity development support has responded to partner organisations' (POs) needs and priorities, what coordination takes place with other donors, and the added-value CRD provides. It also addresses the selection and capacity assessment of POs, CRD's overall capacity development approach, adjustments made to changing circumstances, and gender equality and other perspectives – all of which are aspects considered important for the relevance criterion, as reflected in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2).

4.1.1 Selection of partner organisations

One of the sub-questions defined for the relevance criterion focused on partner selection and if relevant strategic choices have been made in this regard, considering the needs for capacity development among human rights organisations.

While CRD's targeted approach to selecting POs is essentially sound, the very broad partner selection criteria and lack of a clear selection process result in a lack of transparency and steering of PO portfolios. According to CRD staff, the POs in Serbia continue to receive grants based on considerations relating to their thematic focus (civil and political rights) and influence, and ability to raise funds from other donors. In recent years, priority is also given to projects with a regional perspective. In Ethiopia, CRD's ambition has been to support both established and new and upcoming human rights organisations. In the new application for support from 2023, young and women-led/focused organisations are the main target groups. In Uganda, CRD has chosen to work with some key human rights networks and support organisations working on LGBTI+ rights.

External stakeholders who are familiar with CRD's work and project portfolios generally seem to concur that the capacity development support has strong relevance in the respective countries, and that the selection of POs is justifiable. As further elaborated on below, among the perceived comparative advantages of CRD, especially in countries where it has a field presence, is its contextual knowledge and understanding, which informs its selection of partners. Although very broad, the partner criteria established at the global level (in the CRD Partner Policy) appears to have been largely adhered to in the selection process. According to interviews with CRD staff, this also holds true for other regions where CRD works (Asia, Eurasia, and Latin America). The CRD Partner Policy stipulates that CRD should give priority to partnering with organisations that are affected by and/or at risk due to policies and practices, have limited capacity to perform human rights work and/or formal structures,

and have, or have the potential to impact on the human rights situation in the local or regional context.

As CRD often have the ambition to develop long-term partnership, the relevance of the selection criteria changes with time. For instance, in Serbia and possibly in other countries where CRD has maintained the same partnerships for decades, partners have become increasingly capacitated, which means that they would possibly not be chosen again if the selection process is repeated (i.e., as these organisations no longer have “limited capacity to perform human rights work”). This may call for a distinction between different types of local partnerships. It is noted that CRD’s Partner Policy defines three types of partnerships (activity partner, strategic partner, and fundraising partner), but this categorisation is not clearly reflected in partner portfolios and in the selection of new partners. Another observation that is particularly valid for Serbia and Uganda is the tendency of CRD to work with capital-based organisations, which are often relatively resourceful. From a capacity development perspective, it would arguably be more relevant to, as in Ethiopia, increasingly work with “younger” organisations.

As indicated above, CRD applies a targeted (rather than competitive) approach to select POs and projects for funding, which potentially makes it easier to promote strategic partnerships and focus its resource on the most relevant POs, and their capacity development. At the same time, the targeted approach, combined with very broad selection criteria, implies that decisions on what organisations to partner with can come across as arbitrary and possibly create inequalities and exclusion (as highlighted by OECD research¹⁰). In fact, neither the SPO application nor CRD’s Strategy 2020-2022 explain the process of partner selection. In the initial application for Sida support to the Ethiopia programme it is stated that POs will be selected by reaching out to relevant partners in CRD’s network to establish which are the most “suitable”, both in terms of capacity needs and willingness and ambition to continue and expand their human rights work.

4.1.2 CRD’s overall approach to capacity development of partners

While CRD provides capacity development support through several different means, the overall approach to capacity development and the strategic choices made are not well-documented or clearly justified at the global level. CRD generally applies a long-term approach to capacity development and offers a range of opportunities to POs to that end, including financial support, in-country and global training, regional networking and experience sharing, and continuous mentoring. As conveyed by its (former) Strategy 2020-2022 the ambition has been to develop POs capacities in a wide range of areas with the purpose of building long-term and sustainable human rights networks. The notion expressed in CRD’s Theory of Change is that strengthening the capacity, security, networks and organisational structures

¹⁰ The Development Dimension: Development Assistance Committee Members and Civil Society. OECD. 2020.

enables impactful human rights work. It is also noted that CRD provides moral support and conducts research and advocacy together with POs.

According to the global PO survey, 35 percent of PO respondents have received financial assistance with a focus on capacity development from CRD. About 20 percent answered that they have participated in regional knowledge sharing, training and similar events and in-country trainings organised by CRD, respectively, while 15 percent answered what they had participated in global networking and training. A relatively small share of the respondents – seven percent – had benefitted from ongoing mentoring and coaching by CRD. In the sample of eight POs, organisational capacity development has been a particular focus of the financial assistance provided in Ethiopia, but to a lesser degree in Uganda and Serbia. Regional knowledge sharing and similar events have been used in the Western Balkans and wider Europe region, benefitting the Serbian POs, but not in Africa. However, as further discussed below, the regional events in the Western Balkans have not specifically targeted CRD's POs or focused on organisational capacity development. Similarly, while several of the PO representatives interviewed had participated in global networking and training (Defenders' Days and Bootcamps), there is not always a clear link between the knowledge and skills developed among these individuals and the strengthening of organisational capacities. The effectiveness of different types of capacity development assistance is further assessed in section 4.2.

In the CRD Strategy 2020-2022 it is envisaged that CRD support will strengthen the organisational/internal capacities of POs generally, as well as their capacity to engage in activities specifically aimed at ensuring accountability and awareness in relation to civil and political rights. While CRD's Partner Policy focuses on how to assess partner capacity as part of the grant management process, rather than how to provide capacity development support, another internal document (Working with Partners), from 2019, suggests that capacity development is mainly delivered in the form of training on different topics. Similarly, the approach to capacity development is not explained in any depth in the SPO application. In contrast, the applications for Sida support to the Ethiopia programme, which has a particular focus on capacity, include a relatively comprehensive context analysis that identifies strengths and weaknesses among local CSOs and outlines CRD's response, including in terms of how capacity development needs of POs will be assessed and what capacities will be strengthened.

The above observation points to a need for developing a capacity development policy and/or expand the existing Partner Policy with a stronger focus on capacity development, clarifying the role of CRD in the capacity development process. As a first step, this can be done by developing a ToC for capacity development, which provides an effective means to analyse the context in which the capacity development of POs take place and clearly justify the strategic choices made. It could also help to ensure a common understanding among stakeholders (CRD and its POs) of what the capacity development should achieve and how, encourage critical thinking on assumptions, and identify opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. In general, to strengthen POs as actors in their own right and enhance their development effectiveness, the ToC exercise

could shed further light on the contribution of various capacity development activities to organisational strengthening.

4.1.3 Capacity assessment of partners

CRD has well-established routines for assessing the basic capacity of POs in various areas, and is open to consider particular capacity development needs identified during the continuous dialogue. In general, CRD's long-term partnership approach has enabled the organisation to develop a thorough understanding of the needs of its POs, and the environment in which they operate. As indicated by the global PO survey conducted as part of the evaluation, and supported by interviews, CRD is recognised for being flexible and responsive towards the POs, and open to respond to capacity development needs that may arise. The survey and interviews also suggest that the annual review meetings with POs offer a regular opportunity to discuss such needs but POs also feel confident that they can approach CRD at any time. The common experience conveyed by POs is that CRD staff are accessible and open-minded.

CRD's Grant Management Routines include a process for assessing both the application and potential partner. The partners should be assessed in terms of internal capacity to support CRD's decision on funding and include clear and concrete follow-up actions that address identified weaknesses/risks, guiding the future dialogue between CRD and the PO. A particular form¹¹ is in place that ensures a uniform assessment across POs, and which covers:

- The POs' capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate the proposed project;
- The application of perspectives (gender equality, anti-discrimination and environment) in its internal processes and programming;
- The PO's internal organisational structure, governance, management and steering documents;
- The PO's accounting and financial routines and its financial position and sustainability, including funding from other donors and donor coordination;
- How POs have handled and followed up issues and recommendations given by auditors;
- POs' risk awareness and risk management capacity, including anti-corruption measures;
- How POs have handled and followed up evaluation findings and recommendations.

As evidenced by the desk review, the internal capacity assessments tend to be very brief and descriptive. External organisational capacity assessments, as commissioned in Ethiopia, provide a more comprehensive picture of both strengths and weaknesses, and thereby deemed to be more useful for identifying capacity development needs. The desk review conducted by the evaluation team shows that an internal capacity assessment has been done by CRD for seven of the eight POs in the sample.¹² The assessments of themes and topics are in most cases very brief

¹¹ Assessment of Partner Capacity. CRD. Internal document.

¹² For one of the PO no capacity assessment document could be found.

and generally do not address all of the questions asked in CRD's guidance on assessing partner capacity. Follow-up actions are normally suggested when weaknesses/risks are identified, but tend to be limited to continued dialogue rather than recommendations for capacity development support. The weaknesses/risks identified among Serbian POs are far fewer and less significant than among the Ethiopian and Uganda POs. In several cases, capacity constraints are identified with regard to the implementation of perspectives (gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination), financial sustainability, and the development of internal policies and regulations. External organisational capacity assessments have also been commissioned in South Sudan. In Asia, more limited "financial health checks" of POs have been conducted (by external consultants).

In Ethiopia, CRD's internal capacity assessment has been complemented by more wide-ranging, in-depth organisational capacity assessments conducted by an external consultant. Such assessments were done by the initial 10 POs and covered seven major capacity domains with data collected through interviews and a self-assessment survey. The results are presented in a report providing both general recommendations and recommendations specific to each of the assessed POs. When five new partners were added to the portfolio as part of the extension of Sida's support to CRD, a less ambitious rapid needs assessment was conducted of each organisation. This exercise resulted in the development of a capacity development action plan identifying focus areas for capacity development in the short and long term, and which organisations should be targeted.¹³

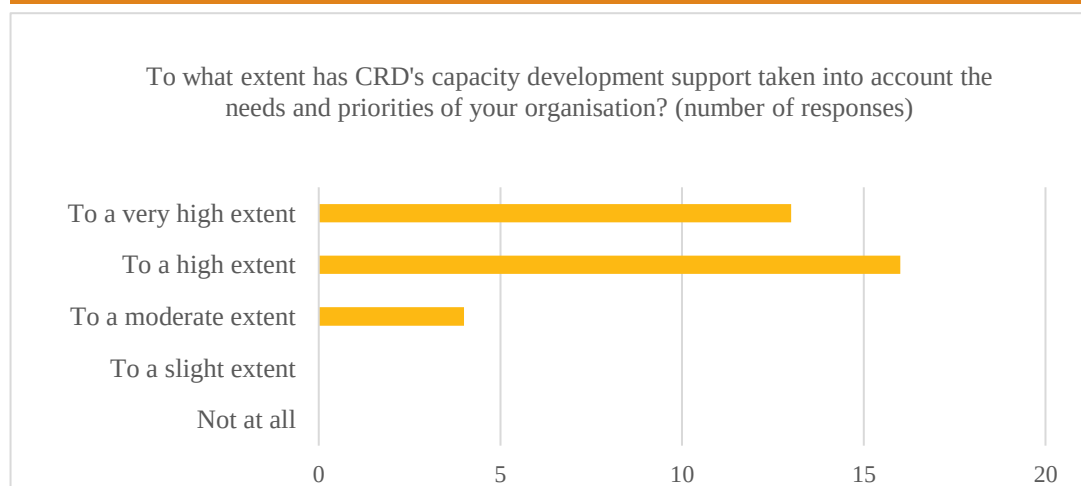
4.1.4 Responsiveness of CRD's capacity development support

POs generally perceive that CRD's capacity development support addresses their needs and priorities, although additional capacity development appears warranted in many cases, especially in terms of organisational strengthening. The global PO survey shows that 88 percent of respondents perceive that CRD's capacity development support had addressed their organisation's needs and priorities to a very high or high extent, while 12 percent answered "to a moderate extent" (Figure 2). At the same time, when asked if they felt that there were any organisational capacity development needs and priorities that had not been addressed, or not addressed sufficiently, many respondents recognised that this was indeed the case. The respondents identify a wide range of unaddressed or insufficiently addressed needs and priorities, including in the areas of strategic communication, risk management, security, project management, internal policy development, financial management, and networking. CRD staff, on their part, highlight continuous needs for strengthening POs project and grant management capacity, especially in Ethiopia and Uganda.

¹³ Report on Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) informed Enhanced Action Plan (EAP) of Organisational Capacity Support Programme. TGA Education and Development Consulting PLC. February 2023.

In the evaluation sample, the strongest focus on capacity development geared towards organisational strengthening can be found in Ethiopia. However, the organisational capacity assessments do not appear to have been sufficiently used as a basis for such capacity development. In the sample of eight POs, it is clear that financial support has been more explicitly directed to capacity development in Ethiopia than in the other two countries. Specifically, CRD has awarded small (SEK 50,000) organisational development grants to strengthen the administrative and financial capacity of the first 10 POs. The grants have primarily been used by the POs for developing and improving internal policies, but also for the preparation of strategic plans, investments in financial management systems, the upgrading of websites, etc. In-country training (non-grant-related) has also been conducted for single or several POs, on digital security, advocacy and communications, and civil society leaderships and human rights advocacy. However, the small OD grants and the training have only covered a small part of the needs identified in the organisational capacity assessments. The expectation, as conveyed by the consultant's report,¹⁴ was that the organisational capacity assessment of the 10 first partners would lead on to the development of capacity development plans for individual CSOs. This did not happen, which may explain the fragmented and ad-hoc nature of the support provided. It should be recognised that a capacity development plan has recently (February 2023) been produced as part of the recent rapid assessment of the five new POs.

Figure 2 POs' perception of the responsiveness of capacity development support



Source: Global PO survey

In Serbia, the financial support has primarily been used for the implementation of projects benefitting external target groups, rather than for capacity development of the POs themselves. For instance, the most recent grants to the selected POs have been used for developing indicators for media freedom and safety of journalists, conducting journalistic investigations, and regular media production (video, audio, articles). At the same time, in-country trainings have been organised for the POs on topics such as

¹⁴ Organisational Capacity Assessments of 10 Human Rights Organisations in Ethiopia. ATL Consulting. 2021.

strategic communication, fundraising, and security risk management. In one case CRD assisted a PO in conducting an external review of its financial management capacity. In addition, a number of regional activities are being organised for journalists, judges, human rights lawyers, CSO representatives, etc., to promote networking and dialogue, and facilitate cooperation. Moreover, CRD has organised advocacy trips to EU in Brussels for several of its POs to establish connections and draw the attention to critical developments in their countries.

The two selected POs in Uganda are both network organisations. CRD's financial support has been directed at strengthening the networks at the sub-regional level, and the network secretariats' capacity to deliver services to the members. Interviews indicate that both organisations would welcome more organisational development support and training geared towards the staff of their secretariats, as well as networking events with CRD POs in Uganda and the region. In contrast to Ethiopia and Serbia, CRD has not organised any in-country trainings or other joint activities with POs in Uganda. Hence, the capacity development support has mainly been limited to financial assistance through grants.

Feedback on CRD's global networking and training (see section 4.2.1 for details) is being collected through various participants' evaluation forms. As noted above, the evaluation team requested CRD to provide aggregated data or summary analysis of such evaluations but did not receive this material in time for the analysis and report drafting phase.

4.1.5 Adjustments to changing circumstances

CRD's capacity development support has generally been responsive to emerging needs and adjusted to changing circumstances, including the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. As elaborated on above, CRD is perceived as a flexible and open donor (or rather partner) among POs. In both Serbia and Ethiopia CRD works closely with the POs and help solving challenges and address needs that are not necessarily foreseen in applications or identified in prior capacity assessments.

One of the common challenges in recent years was the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions on movements and physical meetings. In Ethiopia, this affected CRD's ability to identify partners and their capacity development needs, as well as the POs ability to function as organisation and carry out their missions. Shifting to virtual meetings and trainings was not considered as a preferred option. As a result, unspent budget was reallocated to activities within the recently completed extension period of Sida's support. In Serbia on the other hand, physical trainings and networking events were transformed into virtual ones. This included the Regional Rule of Law Forum (see section 4.2), which was organised in eight different cities where participants attended local hubs, which were connected through video-links. At the global level, the Defenders' Days conference scheduled to take place in 2020 was cancelled. Instead, based on feedback received by POs, on-line trainings were organised, giving rise to the

Bootcamp concept, which has since been internalised as one of CRD's capacity development tools.

4.1.6 Donor coordination and CRD's added-value

A number of donors and intermediary organisations besides CRD provide capacity development support to the same POs, including in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda. With some exceptions, there is limited dialogue and coordination among donors, resulting in a risk for duplication and lack of synergies. The global PO survey suggests that CRD's POs receive capacity development support from a range of different donors, including both financial assistance and training, some of which is geared towards organisational strengthening. Within the evaluation sample, several POs in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda are supported by some of the same donors. Donors that frequently appear in application and reports include the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which provides grants to four of the eight selected CRD POs (in Serbia and Ethiopia), the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Balkan Trust for Democracy, Open Society Foundation, Belgrade Open School, Freedom House and DefendDefenders. Notably, in several cases the back donor is Sida, implying that some POs receive Sida funding from several channels.

There is generally limited dialogue and coordination between the donors. In Serbia, CRD participates in various donor fora and also occasional meetings with NED. Interviews indicate that NED staff regularly consult with CRD's office when visiting the country to receive first-hand information on the ground and the POs that are supported by both organisations. In Ethiopia, the Embassy of Sweden has encouraged the local staff of CRD and FOJO/International Media Support to get together and discuss their support to two of the same POs, which resulted in the organisation of two joint trainings for editors and female journalists. DefendDefenders, which is supporting some of the same organisations as CRD in Ethiopia and Uganda, is regarded by CRD as a strategic partner. The two organisations come together in project consortia and working groups at the regional level, and collaborate around case referrals and case verifications. No examples could be found of coordination at the PO level in Ethiopia or Uganda.

Staff interviews indicate that CRD is generally aware of which other donors are supporting the same POs, but do not actively coordinate their support. While such coordination should preferably be led by the POs themselves, some are too weak to assume this role or without the encouragement of donors may not be willing to invest the necessary time. According to the CSO strategy (and in line with the aid effectiveness agenda), SPOs should be working in a harmonised manner with other actors to coordinate demands on POs, e.g., with regard to planning, agreement periods, reporting, and the organisation of annual meetings.

The thematic focus and scope of the projects supported by CRD and other donors is similar in many cases. Several donors support PO projects and capacity development related to media freedoms, journalists' safety, physical and digital security, the

development of human rights indices, etc. With regard to organisational development, some of the POs have received support from several donors to develop strategic plans, internal policies and manuals. PO representatives are careful to point out that there is no duplication of support from different donors. However, in the absence of efficient donor coordination and dialogue, there is a general lack of efforts to ensure harmonisation and synergies.

CRD's partnership approach, flexibility and field presence are widely recognised as important comparative advantages. The value-added of its capacity development support in terms of organisational strengthening is mostly seen in Ethiopia. When asked about its added-value as a capacity development provider, many interviewees mention CRD's partnership approach. CRD is commonly perceived as a reliable partner (rather than a donor) that is responsive to POs needs and priorities, and can provide quick and flexible support when required to address urgent needs and situations. As mentioned earlier, CRD's field presence (in Serbia and Ethiopia) is recognised as a comparative advantage. It means that CRD, in these countries, have a strong ability to navigate the context and strong connections with the POs, as opposed to many other donors that are based elsewhere and, at best, only come for short visits. Its field presence and professional expertise also means that CRD can engage in collaborative work and co-creation of initiatives with its POs that other donors do not have the ability to do. Several POs also highlight CRD's experience of providing capacity development on digital and physical security, although some also receive support from other donors on this topic.

Although grants are perceived as the most effective capacity development support by a majority of the respondents in the global PO survey, the added-value of CRD in terms of funding is less evident, at least among the POs in the evaluation sample. This is because most of the POs in the sample have a relatively diversified income base when it comes to donor grants (see section 4.4. for details), and since CRD grants are typically small¹⁵, the financial dependence on CRD's contribution is generally limited. The added-value of CRD's funding can mostly be seen when recurrent grants are being provided over a longer period of time, or in cases where CRD has provided grants to project that would be too sensitive or otherwise difficult for other donors to support. POs also appreciate CRD's preparedness to cover administrative costs that may not be directly or exclusively linked to the projects funded. Nevertheless, as commented on by survey respondents and interviewees alike, despite CRD's long-term approach to partnership, grants are mostly short-term (one year) and project-oriented. According to CRD, the main reason for this is that back donor requirements, including Sida's annual budgeting and reporting cycle, are often not conducive to long-term and programme-based/core grants. At the same time, as observed in the 2021 evaluation of the CSO

¹⁵ The average annual grant amount in 2022 was SEK 322,000 in Serbia, SEK 160,000 in Ethiopia, and SEK 133,000 in Uganda. The OD grants in Ethiopia amounted to a maximum of SEK 50,000.

strategy, more than two-thirds of the SPOs have agreements with a duration of more than three years with 70 percent or more of their partners.¹⁶

While CRD have different means for providing capacity development support to its POs and staff, it is not evident that CRD has a particular added-value in this area, at least not with regard to organisational strengthening. As noted above, CRD POs tend to receive capacity development support from a range of different donors and, in some cases, this support is more focused on the needs of the POs as organisation than CRD's support. One exception is the Ethiopia programme. While other donors also provide capacity development support to the same POs, they generally do not treat organisational strengthening as a goal in itself. One issue to consider in this regard is again CRD's role in the capacity development process. As suggested by a previous evaluation¹⁷, CRD may not be in the best position (e.g. have the necessary expertise) to build organisational structures and systems beyond those that have a particular bearing on human rights work. At the same time, there is a clear, and often expressed, need for organisational strengthening that CRD would have to manage. This could entail providing funding to enable POs to purchase consultancy support from elsewhere, or, more easily, shift to core funding, which would leave the POs themselves in control of resource allocation.

4.1.7 Gender equality and other perspectives

As conveyed by the SPO Application, CRD is committed to working closely with partners to ensure the integration and mainstreaming of the five central perspectives (gender, poverty, rights, conflict, and environment and climate). The approaches to working on the perspectives, especially the gender and environment/climate perspectives, have been carefully documented in various policies, plans and reports. In the Partner Policy, an “expressed commitment to take proactive steps to develop gender sensitive.... at the organisational level and in their external activities”¹⁸ is defined as one of the selection criteria for POs.

CRD is increasingly considering the gender perspective in its capacity development support, although, in practice, there is room for improvement, in particular with regard to integration. Since the signing of the SPO agreement, CRD has recruited a gender coordinator, strengthened the gender working group and adopted a gender action plan (based on organisational gender analyses). In this connection, an effort is being made to systematise CRD's gender equality work and the integration of the gender perspective in grant management routines and other engagement with POs. At the time of evaluation, a unified gender framework document was being finalised. According to interviews, this framework document will include all new and existing

¹⁶ Evaluation of the Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016-2022. Final Report. FCG Sweden. Jonas Lövkrona, Åsa Königson and Anna Schnell. February 2021.

¹⁷ Civil Rights Defenders in the Western Balkans. A Consequence Assessment. Rightshouse. Henrik Alffram. May 2018.

¹⁸ Partner Policy. CRD. Internal document. May 2020.

guidelines and tools. In addition, each department has been tasked with doing regional gender analyses.

As observed by the evaluation team, the Grant Management Routines (2023) requires that all grant applications and the ongoing dialogue with POs should address gender equality (as well as the environment and conflict perspectives). Relatedly, CRD's Partner Policy prescribes that CRD should assess prospective PO's capacity and commitment to take proactive steps to apply a gender perspective at both the organisational level and through their projects. This is also reflected in the template for assessment of partner capacity, which has a section devoted to the perspectives, in this case including gender, anti-discrimination, environment and conflict. In the document "Working with Partners" from 2019, gender mainstreaming is mentioned as one of the topics that CRD can offer training on. Notably, the 2022 Defenders' Days Conference included a workshop session on "building feminist practice".

In the global PO survey, almost half of the respondents answered that gender equality had been addressed to a very high extent in CRD's capacity development support (Figure 3). Among the remaining respondents, 22 percent answered that gender equality had been addressed to a high extent (22 percent), a moderate extent (26 percent), or to a slight extent (4 percent). Judging by the individual comments made by respondents, the gender perspective is mainly addressed through targeted interventions (i.e. focusing on certain issues or groups of beneficiaries) and to a lesser extent through integration. Respondents from three POs commented that CRD had helped them to develop organisational gender policies and/or other gender-sensitive internal steering documents, influencing the level of women's participation in the organisational structure and management.

Figure 3 Gender equality considerations in CRD's capacity development support



Source: Global PO survey

Mirroring the global PO picture, gender equality within the PO sample is pursued through dialogue and support targeted to women’s organisations and female beneficiaries, but less through integration and dedicated capacity development support for organisational strengthening. Several of the PO projects supported by CRD in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda have involved targeted support to women beneficiaries or issues closely related to gender equality, including domestic violence. In Ethiopia and Uganda, the partner portfolio includes four women’s organisations and two LGBTI+ organisations. It is also noted that, in Ethiopia, CRD has encouraged and funded a number of women’s internships across POs. There have also been workshops based on the CRD Feminist Pocketbook in Ethiopia and Uganda. At the same time, as in Serbia, the integration of the gender perspective is not always evident. This is recognised by CRD, which, according to interviews, has consistently raised the topic of gender equality in the dialogue with Ethiopian POs, and have supported them in incorporating the gender perspective in grant proposals (with varying success). At the same time, it is noteworthy that most POs appear to lack gender policies and dedicated tools for integrating gender equality across operations and programmes.

The environment and climate perspective is increasingly being considered by CRD at the global level but is much less addressed in the capacity development support to local POs than the gender perspective. With regard to the environment and climate perspective, it is noted that CRD for many years has had an environmental policy and, following the signing of the SPO agreement has established an internal environmental working group, which has developed an environmental action plan. Similar to the case of the gender perspective, CRD’s Grant Management Routines prescribe that the environmental and climate perspective should be addressed in partner capacity assessment and the ongoing dialogue with POs. CRD’s Partner Policy opens up for supporting organisations working on environmental rights.

The desk review of the eight POs in the evaluation sample reveals that although the environment and climate perspectives should be addressed as part of CRD’s capacity assessment of POs, only one of seven assessments actually do so. All the other capacity assessments merely address the gender perspective. Only one of the POs in the evaluation sample appears to consider the environment perspective in a systematic manner (both through programming and at the organisational level), although no targeted support to this end has been provided by CRD. An environmental impact assessment has been carried out of the new Ethiopia programme 2023-2024, whereby CRD pledges to provide capacity development grants for human rights organisations working on environmental rights.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness criterion is essentially about the achievement of intended outcomes. The assessment is guided by the re-constructed Theory of Change (ToC), which was developed with inputs from CRD during the inception phase of the evaluation. It also addressed external factors influencing effectiveness and the quality of CRD’s M&E system, with a particular focus on measuring capacity development.

4.2.1 Contribution to immediate outcomes

The ToC developed as part of the evaluation identifies three immediate outcomes to which CRD's capacity development support was expected to contribute:

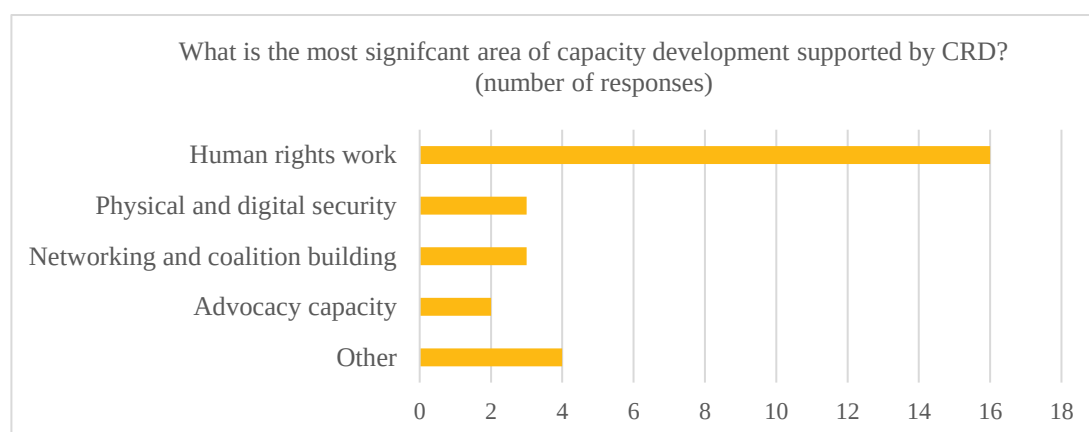
- Enhanced knowledge and skills (technical and managerial)
- Increased resources (financial, human, material/technology, information)
- New contacts, opportunities and ideas

CRD's contribution to these outcomes are briefly assessed at the overall partner portfolio level (mainly based on the on-line survey responses) and more in-depth with regard to the PO sample in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda. It should be noted that immediate outcomes are results that are likely to be generated as long as CRD's capacity development support is delivered as planned. In other words, the influence of other actors and external factors is deemed to be relatively limited.

Enhanced knowledge and skills

Training and knowledge sharing at the country, regional and global level is generally perceived as having been effective in enhancing knowledge and skills, especially in relation to human rights work. In the global PO survey, a large majority (70 percent) of the respondents answered that financial support (grants) was the most effective CRD capacity development activity in their experience. As suggested by the comments of the survey respondents, financial support was deemed to be critical for ensuring staff retention, expert mobilisation, adequate office infrastructure (including various security solutions), and continuous programming. On the other hand, training and knowledge sharing at the country, regional and global level were, not surprisingly, perceived as more important for enhancing knowledge and skills. When asked about how significant CRD's support has been in improving the capacities of their organisations in different areas, 62 percent answered that their capacity for doing human rights work had improved the most (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Significant areas of CRD capacity development



Source: Global PO survey

The Serbian POs in the evaluation sample seem to have been provided more opportunities – through in-country training and regional events – to develop staff knowledge and skills than the POs in Ethiopia and, especially, Uganda. In Serbia, as previously mentioned, CRD's financial assistance to POs has been complemented by in-country training on various subject matters, including on strategic communication, digital security, fundraising, and financial management, targeted to groups of POs or individual organisations. In addition, a number of regional events have been organised by CRD on various themes, including media freedom, rule of law, and human rights. Judging by interviews and survey responses, participants have found these events useful to gain a better understanding of common challenges and learn from the practices of peer organisations in other countries. The advocacy visits to the EU in Brussels are also perceived as effective in establishing connections and drawing the attention of the EU to critical developments in Serbia. Similar visits have been organised for POs in Georgia and Ukraine.

In Ethiopia, in-country training has similarly been organised for single or several POs, on digital security, advocacy and communications, and civil society leadership and human rights advocacy. Very few of the PO staff interviewed by the evaluation team had participated in these trainings. One staff member who had attended a Training of Trainers (ToT) on digital security confirmed that she had acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to train others in the organisation. For the POs in Uganda, no specific training or other forms of knowledge and skill building activities have been organised (although some individuals have participated in the Defenders' Days conference).

While the global training addresses a wide range of knowledge and skills, the evaluation team did not receive any data showing how effective it has been. In general, the link between the global events and organisational strengthening among local POs is not clear. The global training (both in-person and on-line through the Bootcamp) organised within the biennial Defenders' Days conference are demand-based. In connection with the 2022 conference, training sessions were held on a number of cross-cutting issues (e.g., digital security, building feminist practice, burnout prevention and stress management, data visualisation, mindful communication, risk assessment as well-being, digital forensics) and specific human rights themes. According to CRD's records, the 2022 Defenders' Days conference gathered a total of 207 participants from 51 countries. While interviews indicate that PO staff who have participated in the Defenders' Days conference feel that they have gained useful knowledge and enhanced their skills, CRD was not able to provide aggregate data or summary analysis of participants' evaluation in time for it to be considered in this evaluation report.

As indicated by interviews with CRD and PO staff, one of the key challenges related to the global training is to ensure that the knowledge and skills developed do not remain with individual participants but benefit the POs at large, i.e. contribute capacity development and organisational strengthening. Interviews indicate that the information and insights from trainings is not necessarily passed on to other staff members. In Ethiopia, this is often due to a combination of high staff turnover among POs and weak

(internal) information-sharing, including hand-over when a person leaves the organisation. CRD has recently commissioned a consultant to develop a capacity development guideline for the Ethiopia programme, including options for transferring training into the work place.

Increased resources

The flexible nature of CRD's grants has contributed to an increase of POs' financial, human, material and communication resources, but mostly on a short-term, project basis. CRD's financial assistance provide resources for the POs to carry out specific projects and contributes to essential running/administration costs, such as staff salaries, rent, transport costs, supplies, communication costs, etc. As conveyed by the comments made by several survey respondents, project grants have been used for strengthening office security, acquiring equipment, and upgrading websites, which have all benefited the organisations at large.

In Serbia, CRD's project support enabled one PO to recruit a full-time social media manager. Two other POs were able to strengthen their digital security around servers and websites. Additional security infrastructure, in the form of new entrance doors and cameras, was acquired by POs in both Serbia and Ethiopia, with CRD emergency funds. Moreover, in Ethiopia, two of the POs used the small OD grant from CRD to install/update financial management systems. Others had their websites upgraded and purchased new office and IT equipment. CRD has also funded a number of internships among Ethiopian POs, which according to interviews was valuable to both the interns and the organisations. Some of the interns have later been recruited as staff members by the hosting organisations, thereby potentially strengthening the POs on a more long-term basis.

Nevertheless, interviews indicate that more could be done to develop the resources of POs in a more sustainable manner. As earlier mentioned, CRD's grants are typically both limited in size and duration, and earmarked to specific activities. While CRD has introduced a provision for core support in its grant management routines and planned to provide such support to new POs in Ethiopia as part of the extension of Sida's support, all funding to date remains project-based. A range of studies¹⁹ show that core support strengthens local ownership by giving CSOs control over resource allocation. It enhances their ability to invest in long-term planning, programming, and organisational strengthening, as well as to cover ongoing administrative costs, thereby promoting sustainability.

New contacts, opportunities and ideas

CRD brings POs together in various networking and experience-sharing events. However, these events are not consistently organised across regions and countries, and may not always be geared towards forging new contacts and opportunities for

¹⁹ See The Development Dimension: Development Assistance Committee Members and Civil Society. OECD. 2020

collaboration. CRD's capacity development support includes the organisation of joint trainings and other common events, which partly aims at promoting cooperation and creating opportunities for networking and exchange of knowledge among POs. The most significant such event is the Defenders' Days conference, which is organised by CRD on a biennial basis in Stockholm, and is complemented by on-line trainings (Defender Days' Bootcamp) and a community of practice (Defenders' Days Community), to which all POs are connected and include a partner newsletter.

Interviews with PO staff in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda who had participated in the Defenders' Days conference suggest that it has broadened their horizons by bringing new ideas and approaches to their attention. There are also those that have been able to forge contacts with human rights defenders and POs from other countries. At the same time, interviewees indicate that the conference agenda is very packed and there is limited time for exchange outside the training seminars. There is also the language barrier and the fact that the conference is only organised every two years. Despite several requests, the evaluation team did not receive any aggregated data or summary analysis of the results of participants' own evaluation, or information on follow-up action taken by CRD.²⁰

As earlier indicated, CRD has invested in several networking events in the Western Balkans and wider Europe region. Several of these events are repeated on a regular basis and have, in some cases, led on to the establishments of information-sharing platforms and more continuous experience-sharing, according to CRD. However, it should be noted that these capacity development activities are not primarily directed at POs. One such example are the moot courts organised annually for law students to enhance their knowledge of the European Convention of Human Rights. Another example is the Regional Rule of Law Forum for South East Europe, which aims at identifying key obstacles to effective national implementation of European Court of Human Rights jurisprudence, and at promoting regional co-operation in overcoming them.

In Ethiopia, CRD has provided grant support to one PO for organising consultative workshops on the national dialogue, and with a view to agree on how human rights organisations could engage in this process. A couple of stand-alone events for CRD POs only have also been held, including one that provided an opportunity for sharing ideas on how to use the small grants for OD offered by CRD, and identify resources already existing in some organisations. Following this event, some of the POs exchanged plans and various manuals. No similar activities have been organised for POs in Uganda.

4.2.2 Contribution to intermediate outcomes

The ToC has three intermediate outcomes, formulated as follows:

- Improved and more democratic organisational management

²⁰ This information was only provided when the draft evaluation report had been completed.

- More relevant and strategic interventions
- Increased cooperation and coordination among POs

These are outcomes that typically are of a medium-term nature and to which CRD envisages that it is making a valuable contribution. At this level, the contribution of other actors and initiatives may also be significant, and CRD's control deemed to be more limited due to a range of influencing external factors.

Improved and more democratic organisational management

CRD's contribution to improved and more democratic organisational management appears relatively limited at the global level. In the evaluation sample, the most tangible results are found among the POs in Ethiopia and Uganda. Judging by the global PO survey, CRD's contribution to capacity development in areas such as internal governance, management, operations and administration, and internal rules and procedures has – on average and in relative terms – been relatively limited. At the same time, as revealed by the answers and comments in the survey, several POs have indeed received support in these areas, and many perceive that their organisations have become better managed over time.

A majority of the Ethiopian POs were just established or still very new as organisations when CRD's support started. Two of the three Ethiopian POs in the evaluation sample have since grown considerably in terms of funding, human resources and programme scope. Their organisational structures and systems have also been improved, including through the development of strategic plans and a range of internal policies and manuals (which did not exist at the time when the organisational capacity assessments were conducted in 2021). However, CRD's contribution to establishing such organisational structures and systems has been relatively minor – the first organisation received CRD support for updating a human resource development manual while the second organisation has received mainly project support. The structures and systems have instead been put in place with the help of other donors. The third PO in the sample remains very weak and lack basic structures and systems, although it has recently been able to attract some support (not from CRD) to address this situation.

One of the two POs in the sample in Uganda has strengthened its organisational structure and management and has essential policies and systems in place. CRD can in this case be said to have contributed to more democratic organisational management by supporting the PO in establishing sub-regional networks, with formal governance and consultative mechanisms. The other organisation has applied for CRD project funding for organising annual General Assembly meetings and develop a strategic plan.

In Serbia, two of the selected POs have, according to interviews, strengthened their project management and financial management capacity, including through trainings and mentoring offered by CRD. In one case, the training provided on fundraising has helped a PO to establish a system for raising funds from its readers, which have contributed to covering the administrative costs of the organisation. Interviews also

suggest that a more gradual improvement in organisational management have taken place over many years, and that the long-term partnership with CRD has promoted this change, at least indirectly.

More relevant and strategic interventions

While hard evidence is lacking, it is likely that POs programming capacity has increased with the support of CRD, especially in the context of long-standing partnerships. The reported results are mostly of a short-term nature, lacking details on links to more strategic aims and efforts. As suggested by the comments made by respondents to the global PO survey, CRD's capacity development support, including grants, trainings, networking events and mentoring, has been effective in advancing POs' programming, advocacy and outreach, especially when delivered over a long period of time. This sentiment is largely echoed by the POs in the evaluation sample. According to interviews, some of the POs have adopted new and more comprehensive approaches in different fields, e.g., in relation to media freedom and safety of journalists, corruption investigations, physical and digital security, and for addressing the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, such as women HRDs. Some interviewees also assert that their organisations have increased their leverage, including by participating in and influencing policy processes, conducting public awareness raising and investing in networking.

In general, it is difficult to substantiate gradual improvements in programme quality since available documents and data mainly pertain to short-term project grants. The evidence collected by the evaluation team shows that CRD's financial assistance to the eight POs in the sample has contributed to the following results:

- Changes in the legal framework with significance for the protection of the safety for journalists (in North Macedonia and Montenegro)
- Greater awareness on the violation of human rights of vulnerable groups, such as LGBTI+ persons and refugees, which increased the attention in independent media to these issues (Serbia)
- Significant investigations carried out into organised crime and state corruption (Serbia)
- Guidelines for the engagement of human rights organisations in the national dialogue process (Ethiopia)
- Enhanced knowledge among women journalists about the human rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs), prompting several news stories
- CSO involvement in human rights training at two universities, and the establishment of student human rights clubs in one of these universities (Ethiopia)
- Expansion of networks of human rights defenders to the sub-regional level (Uganda)
- Creation of new groups of women human rights defenders, and awareness raising for ensuring their safety and security (Uganda)

In several cases, the results have been achieved with the support of several donors. The significance of POs' contribution is also difficult to ascertain for some results, such as when it comes to changes in the legal framework.

Increased cooperation and coordination among POs

There are scattered examples and anecdotal evidence of increased cooperation and coordination among POs, implying that this is an area that CRD could invest more in, starting with increasing efforts to promote contacts and experience-sharing. As conveyed by the ToC, CRD's ambition is that the networking and knowledge sharing events at the global, regional and national level will help to forge new contacts, opportunities and ideas, which, in turn, will lead to increased cooperation and coordination among POs and other civil society actors. The evidence in this area is very limited, partly because of the lack of documented follow-up from such events.

As stated in a CRD summary of capacity development activities for POs in Serbia, the recurring regional events organised by CRD in the Western Balkans and Europe has in one case prompted the establishment of a network (of independent journalists), through which participants, including those from Serbian POs, can continuously update each other on recent developments. There is also one example of a couple of CRD POs in the Western Balkans region having started cooperating bilaterally, on a regional basis, following initial contacts established at CRD events. At the country level, as indicated by interviews, there are examples of referral of human rights cases between Serbian POs. In Ethiopia, CRD encouraged two of its POs to develop and implement a project together (on the engagement of human rights organisations in the national dialogue process), but according to interviews the cooperation did not work out well.²¹

It should be noted that in all three countries, the partner portfolio includes coalitions/network organisations. Interviews indicate that CRD's financial and other support has indirectly contributed to the strengthening of these coalitions/networks over time. In two cases (Uganda), more direct support has been provided for this purpose. Interviews also indicate that human rights organisations come together on an ad-hoc basis to sign petitions/joint statements, and that the POs cooperate with other human rights organisations in different working groups, without the direct involvement of CRD.

²¹ According to interviews, one of the POs did not implement agreed activities on time and submitted reports very late.

4.2.3 Factors influencing the effectiveness of capacity development support

The ability of POs to develop their capacities is affected by a range of external factors, most significantly the political context, which are directly and indirectly addressed by CRD in various ways. More could be done to address the internal factors, especially by strengthening the focus on capacity development. In the global PO survey respondents were asked to identify and rank the external factors that have facilitated or hindered the capacity development of their organisations. The political context was considered as the most significant factor by 40 percent of the respondents, whereas 20 percent perceived that economic factors and other donor support respectively, were the most important factors. The security situation, including threats experienced by the POs, were considered the most important factor by 12 percent of the respondents (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 External factors influencing capacity development



Source: Global PO survey

The significance attached to the political context and security situation by the POs mirrors CRD's own assessment, as conveyed in progress reports to Sida, that increasing autocratisation, restrictions on freedom of assembly, police brutality and crackdowns on HRDs and journalists, as well as repressive NGO laws make the work of CRD and its partners increasingly difficult. In all regions where CRD works, implementation of repressive legislation and threats against civil society has continued to shrink the civic space, which has challenged operations of partners and HRDs. In countries where there is ongoing violence conflict and war, the safety of partners is constantly at risk which results in additional stress, security risks and operational challenges for partners and CRD.

While the political context in Ethiopia has improved compared to the pre-2019 situation in the country, civic space is again deteriorating with increasing controls being imposed on human rights organisations. The war in norther Ethiopia and Oromia region has also had a severe impact on the state of civil society and the civic space. Because of the political dynamics in the country public support for the work of human rights organisations is shrinking and civil society is becoming more polarised, affecting the

prospects for collaboration and networking. In Uganda, human rights organisations and other civil society actors remain vulnerable to legal restrictions and burdensome registration requirements whereas journalists face intimidation and violence on a nearly daily basis. As conveyed by a recent report from CRD, Serbia remains somewhere between democracy and autocracy, and has not made any significant progress in resolving issues related to the rule of law, human rights and regional cooperation. Freedom of expression and assembly have been steadily deteriorating for decades and critical voices have been targeted, e.g., through SLAPP lawsuits.

Economic factors and support from other donors also have a significant influence on organisational capacity development, according to the global PO survey. As indicated by interviews, these factors refer back to the lack of financial viability among POs, and, relatedly, the dependence on project grants from foreign donors. This holds back POs outreach and impact, and limits their ability to invest in their own organisations. As earlier mentioned, many of the POs in the sample appear to have increased their funding base in terms of the number of donors but continue operate on small budgets and have great difficulties in mobilizing other types of income, especially at the local level.

CRD has often acted together with POs and other civil society actors to address factors in the external environment, including by helping POs to address threats, attacks and smear campaigns, and becoming more resilient over time. Many of the projects supported also aim at addressing the human rights situation caused by external factors, including the political context and conflict situations. The capacity development support has also been important for tackling internal factors, including capacity constraints in terms of PO's accountability and transparency, which affects the quality and outreach of their work, the public perceptions of human rights organisations, and their ability to mobilise and team up with other actors. Apart from poor funding, many POs suffer from huge and constant turn-over of staff, which means that knowledge and skills gained through trainings and other capacity development activities are not retained. In general, as indicated by this evaluation, such internal factors, which are often inter-linked with the external factors, deserve more attention. The increased use of ToC – as a process, product and mindset – can be an effective starting-point, as it involves an in-depth assessment of factors that may help or hinder the achievement of objectives and intended results.

4.2.4 Results management

CRD has strengthened its capacity and systems for results management but further investments are required to ensure that POs provide robust data that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes, especially capacity development outcomes. CRD has recently employed a PM&E specialist and established a working group on measuring human rights results. As part of the operationalisation of its new Strategy from 2023, indicators are being developed for the strategic goals and objectives. At the partner level, an outcome reporting template has been introduced (along with a guidance document), complementing the already existing Results-Based Management Guide. Based on a sample of such reports

submitted by POs, an outcome-mapping exercise has been conducted. Training of CRD staff has also been carried out. Prior to the above-mentioned developments, results management appears to have received relatively limited attention. As previously noted, the ToC presented in the SPO Application and the application to Sida for support to the Ethiopia programme (both from 2020) are very rudimentary, and the results frameworks are of mixed quality.

POs are generally weak when it comes to results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, especially in Ethiopia. Interviews indicate that while POs application tend to include a results framework (as requested by CRD), they often require several rounds of improvements with inputs by CRD staff, and are then disregarded during monitoring and reporting. Even with the new outcome reporting template and guidance, it appears difficult for many POs to distinguish between outputs and outcomes, as revealed by the sample of such reports reviewed by the evaluation team. The short-term nature of CRD's funding compounds this situation.

While PM&E capacities and systems are being strengthened overall, there is continued lack of indicators and tools for measuring CRD's contribution to capacity development. CRD staff in different regions all recognise that they don't have any specific monitoring tools for capacity development. Globally, the focus has been on tracking the number of people trained and the number of trainings, which does not reveal what organisational capacities have been actually strengthened and how CRD's support has contributed to such results. While CRD requests participants in the Defenders' Days conference and Bootcamp to fill out evaluation forms, it is not clear how this information is used and to what extent the results are followed-up at the level of individual POs. Notably, the results framework for the new Sida grant to CRD's Ethiopia programme for 2023-2025 includes a large number of indicators, some of which refer to capacity development. However, in many cases a clear link to CRD's organisational capacity assessments is missing. Several of the indicators and targets are also vaguely formulated and will be very difficult to track.

Lessons learnt from what works well and less well in terms of capacity development is not systematically captured and shared, and previous evaluation findings and recommendations in this regard have not necessarily been acted upon. As reflected in the title of the PM&E specialist and the contents of CRD's Results-Based Management Guide, the focus of M&E is more on accountability than learning. There is no formalised learning mechanism in place, although several CRD staff members indicate that there is a need for more internal discussion and reflection, including to share experiences and lessons learnt from capacity development of partners. A review of recent evaluation reports²² focusing on different regions and themes also suggest that more could be done to follow-up on the recommendations of such reports. This includes recommendations to: provide core support; allocate more

²² Civil Rights Defenders in the Western Balkans. A Consequence Assessment; Programme Evaluation. The Strengthening Implementation of European Human Rights Standards in the Western Balkans 2019-2020 Programme, and; Civil Rights Defenders – Capacity, Resources and Legitimacy: Improved Conditions for Human Rights Defenders at risk to promote and protect human rights, 2015-2018.

staff resources at the local level; evaluate the impact of regional networking events; survey partners with a specific focus on capacity; include non-formal actors as partners; consider collaboration on new initiatives with other donors; refine the theory of change to better reflect current strategies and capacities; improve results frameworks, etc.

4.3 EFFICIENCY

The efficiency criterion focus on how well resources are being used. In this evaluation, the assessment of this criterion has been mainly limited to a brief analysis of the delivery of capacity development support with a focus on grants, and the allocation of costs.

CRD's overall financial delivery, which includes capacity development support to POs, have been fairly high with delays mainly occurring as a result of external factors, and compensated for in different ways. The total budget for the SPO programme financed by Sida for the period 2021-2023 amounts to SEK 167 million, including Sida's contribution, CRD's own contribution and Sida's contribution to CRD's administrative costs. As shown by annual financial reports, actual spending amounted to SEK 37,9 million in 2021 and SEK 65,9 million in 2022.²³ As compared to the revised annual budgets, the financial delivery rates were 85 percent in 2021 and 107 percent in 2022.²⁴ The Sida contribution from the Ethiopia country strategy amounted to SEK 6,1 million from late 2020 to March 2023, of which CRD spent 96 percent.

According to interviews, none of the eight POs in the sample have experienced any major difficulties related to any delays in grant payments from CRD. The general impression is that activities have been implemented as planned, or else adapted in a flexible and responsive manner. To the extent that delays in the implementation of activities were encountered, the main reason given was the COVID-19 pandemic. In Ethiopia, the internal war was another reason commonly cited, affecting the outreach and implementation of activities. The quality of CRD's capacity development activities, including the training at the global and national level, is generally perceived to be very high, often described as interactive, practical and creative in interviews.

CRD is allocating an increasingly larger share of the SPO programme resources to local PO grants, which POs consider being the most effective means of capacity development. However, due to the lack of outcome-based budgeting and relevant capacity development indicators, it is generally difficult to assess both cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Until the end of 2022, direct programme costs under the SPO programme equalled 44 percent of total costs. Direct operating costs equalled 37 percent of total costs, whereas CRD's operational costs equalled 12 percent. The

²³ CRD CIVSAM/SPO Budget and Financial Report 2020-2021 and CRD CIVSAM/SPO Budget and Financial Report 2022-2023.

²⁴ Uncertainties caused by the Swedish government's decision (in April 2022) to reduce Sweden's aid budget, caused some delays in CRD payments to POs in mid-2022, and eventually resulted in an agreement with Sida to reduce the annual budget with 10 percent. The remaining balance was carried over to 2023.

remaining 7 percent is Sida's contribution to CRD's administrative costs. Grants to partners, which sort under direct operating costs equalled 29 percent in 2021 and 37 percent in 2022. In the budget for 2023, the share increases to 41 percent.²⁵ This is in line with CRD's (former) Strategy 2020-2022, which includes a target of increasing the share of funding to partners as one of the objectives under the capacity pillar. Compared to some other SPOs that the evaluation team has experience from working with, the share is still quite low. At the same time, it should be recognised that grants is one of several capacity development means available to CRD, and that CRD is perhaps not primarily, a subgranting organisation. It should be noted that CRD's budgets and financial reports to Sida are not outcome-based but simply lists type of costs/activities. This makes it difficult to determine whether the financial investment in capacity development, beyond grants, is reasonable considering the results achieved.

It is noted that CRD to a large extent relies on external consultants as training facilitators, e.g., for delivering the trainings at the Defenders' Days and Bootcamp. A greater use of its own staff could possibly reduce the costs of this training. However, according to interviews, the participant evaluations' have indicated a strong preference for external training facilitators, and CRD's own staff would not be able to cover all the identified training needs. Another cost-saving option would be to promote more peer-to-peer learning and coaching.

Increasing PO portfolios and greater investments in capacity development require matching staff resources at the local level. Another observation linked to efficiency, but also effectiveness, is the lack of correlation between the size of partner portfolios and CRD's staff resources to manage them. In Serbia, where CRD has a well-staffed regional office, grants are currently provided to four POs implementing projects with a regional dimension in the Western Balkans, while in Ethiopia one local staff member manages all 20 POs, and also some of the POs in Uganda (other POs in Uganda are managed by a staff member in Stockholm). This has implications for how much time CRD can invest in individual partnerships, including the scope of capacity development support, as well as for the organisation of any networking activities. Interviews indicate that CRD staff resources in Ethiopia are indeed very stretched.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

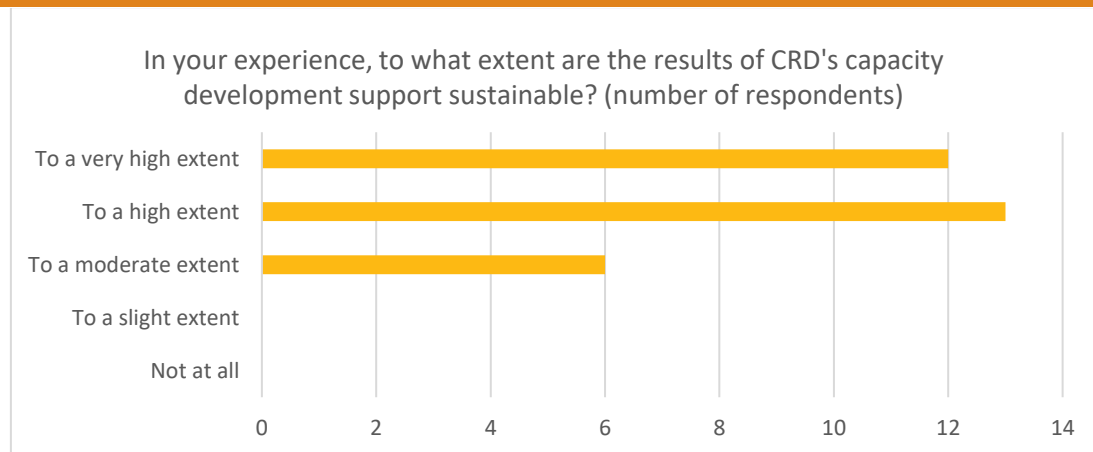
The sustainability criterion is essentially about the extent to which an intervention generates lasting change over time. As with the impact criterion, sustainability is difficult to assess when a project is still on-going or has recently been completed, although some signs can be detected.

Globally, CRD's capacity development support is perceived by POs to have contributed to sustainable results, especially when directed to strengthening organisational structures and systems, and capacity for fundraising. A large majority of the respondents to the global PO survey answered that, in their experience, the results of CRD's capacity development support was sustainable to a very high or

²⁵ CRD CIVSAM/SPO Budget and Financial Report 2022-2023.

high extent (Figure 6). One-fifth of the respondents replied that the support had been sustainable to a moderate extent. Relatedly, 92 percent of the respondents answered that they felt that their organisations were more sustainable and resilient today compared to when the partnership with CRD started, whereas eight percent felt that there had been no significant change.

Figure 6 Sustainability of capacity development support



Source: Global PO survey

In their comments, six respondents referred to the structures, plans, internal policies and/or manuals that had been developed with CRD support, and that had been adopted and continue to be used by the organisations. Another six respondents commented that they felt that their organisations had become more financially sustainable, as they had become more effective in mobilising other donor funding. Still, several respondents highlight that long-term sustainability is an issue and they continue to be dependent on short-term donor support and have limited ability to raise funding through other means.

According to interviews with the eight POs in the evaluation sample, there is a general commitment to continue the work started or expanded with CRD support but, judging by the reports from POs, there is often some uncertainty as to where the funding would come from. Several of the PO reports include implicit or explicit requests for further – and more long-term – financial support from CRD to ensure the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes. In general, sustainability is more clearly demonstrable when CRD's capacity development support has contributed to the development and adoption of internal structures, policies and manuals than in the cases where it has been limited to training and mentoring of individual PO staff members or when purely directed to external target groups (as also suggested by the global PO survey). Since the activities promoting increased coordination and cooperation among POs continue to be owned, driven and funded by CRD, the results achieved in this regard are not necessarily sustainable.

Many POs in the evaluation sample appear to have matured as organisations, including with support from CRD, and have strengthened their funding base. However, the dependence on short-term donor grants threatens their long-term

financial viability. As with a large majority of the online survey respondents, PO staff commonly feel that their organisations have become more sustainable and resilient. According to the interviewees, this is manifested in more funding, increased staff resources, improved professional skills, networking with other strong actors, and/or increased visibility and recognition. The applications and reports reviewed indicate that the POs in the sample have a relatively diversified income base when it comes to donor grants. One of the POs have as many as 16 different donors. In other cases, the number of donors ranges from two to 10. In general, the POs in Serbia and Uganda appear to be better funded than the ones in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, two of the POs had two donors only at the time of application and reporting, but according to interviews, their donor base has since expanded.

When asked about factors adversely influencing their efforts to achieve greater sustainability and resilience, several PO staff highlight the need for longer-term and unrestricted grants, more diversified funding, and additional capacity development directed at organisational strengthening. Many of the POs are also concerned over the political situation, shrinking civic space, and threats, which in all three countries have affected the ability of POs to effectively operate and consolidate their organisations and activities. As highlighted by CRD staff, another factor is the lack of delegation of powers, which means that many POs are overly dependent on one person (the Executive Director).

In general, CRD does not seem to pay sufficient attention to organisational and financial sustainability and responsible exit when assessing project proposals and partner capacity. CRD's own assessment of the sustainability of its capacity development support tends to be very much lacking, if at all documented. None of the CRD project requests or CRD grant requests reviewed by the evaluation team explicitly mention sustainability. The template for CRD's internal assessment of partner capacity includes a section on financial management and sustainability, but when completing these forms CRD staff tend to focus on financial management and very seldom raise concerns about financial sustainability. In practice, however, some POs report that CRD has helped them to reach out to other donors and, in Serbia, a training on "building up unrestricted reserves through fundraising" was organised by CRD for its POs in 2016. It is noteworthy that the Serbian POs in the evaluation sample have received recurrent CRD project support and other capacity development assistance over an extended period of time without the development of any phasing-out strategies or exit criteria, although interviews indicate that sustainability and phasing-out strategies are indeed discussed (informally). As identified in existing literature, good practice is to plan for exit from the outset, think about sustainability early on, consult with partners and stakeholders regularly, and communicate constantly.²⁶

²⁶ INTRAC (2016): Exit strategies and sustainability. Lessons for practitioners.

5 Conclusions

This concluding section of the report attempts to answer the key evaluation questions posed in the ToR, while also highlighting other key findings pertaining to the sub-questions in the Evaluation Matrix.

Relevance

The evaluation concludes that POs generally feel that CRD's capacity development support addresses their needs and priorities in a responsive and flexible manner, and through a wide range of different means and activities. Well-established routines are in place for assessing the basic capacities of POs in various areas. Through dialogue and regular interaction, in particular in countries where CRD has a field presence, additional needs and ways of addressing them are identified and managed, as agreed, throughout the partnership cycle. This also helps to ensure PO's ownership of the capacity development support. At the same time, evidence put forward by the evaluation suggests that CRD's approaches and systems for capacity development could be improved and better documented, which potentially would make the support even more relevant (and effective). In general, the evaluation shows that POs have many un-addressed or insufficiently addressed needs in terms of organisational strengthening that are presently not catered for by CRD or other donors.

While many of CRD's POs in the evaluation sample have been successful in securing new grants, including for capacity development purposes, there is limited dialogue and coordination between donors in all three countries. This increases the risk of duplication and implies a lost opportunity to seek synergies, especially in areas where the focus and scope of different donor support coincide. CRD's added-value compared to other donors is reflected in the overall partnership approach, its flexibility and expertise, both in terms of human rights and contextual knowledge. Many POs receive capacity development support from a range of different donors and, in some cases, this support is more focused on the needs of the POs as organisations than CRD's support. In general, CRD's added value as a capacity development provider is more prominent when it comes to human rights work than in terms of building organisational structures and systems.

Effectiveness

The assessment of the effectiveness of CRD's capacity development support was guided by the re-constructed ToC developed together with CRD during the inception phase of the evaluation, and a simplified version of Contribution Analysis. The evaluation findings indicate that the ToC is generally sound and that the capacity

development was implemented as planned, although with variations across regions and countries.

With regard to the immediate outcomes defined in the ToC, the evaluations shows that CRD has significantly contributed to enhancing the knowledge and skills of POs staff, especially in relation to human rights work. The capacity development support has also contributed to an increase in organisational resources, but mainly on a temporary basis, and new contacts between POs, particularly for the Serbian POs in the sample. Moving to the next level of (intermediate) outcomes, the evaluation concludes that CRD's contribution has been relatively more limited overall, with certain POs benefitting more than others. This pertains to improved and more democratic organisational management, strengthened programming capacity and outreach, and increased cooperation and coordination. In their own experience, the most significant factor influencing the capacity development of POs is the political situation and civic space, which has deteriorated in all three countries in recent years.

CRD's own methods for monitoring its partner portfolio have been improved but the capacity development of POs is not systematically measured. There is a lack of a dedicated learning element in CRD's PME system, which means that lessons from what works well and less well in terms of capacity development are not necessarily captured and shared. Relatedly, previous evaluations provide a range of recommendations of relevance for capacity development that have not yet been implemented.

Efficiency

The efficiency criterion focuses on how well resources are being used and have only been briefly assessed as part of this evaluation. A key finding in this regard is that financial delivery has generally been high within the SPO agreement and Sida's support to the Ethiopia programme, and that delays, mainly caused by external factors, have been properly compensated for by CRD. With regard to the allocation of costs, it is found that CRD is providing an increasingly larger share of the SPO programme budget as subgrants, which POs consider being the most effective means of capacity development. At the same time, CRD staff resources at the regional level (in Ethiopia) have not been adjusted in line with increasing PO portfolios and focus on capacity development. A more elaborate assessment of cost-efficiency is rendered difficult by the fact that capacity development, beyond grants, is not explicitly budgeted for.

Sustainability

The evaluation shows that, globally, there is a common perception among POs that CRD's capacity development support has contributed to sustainable results, especially when directed to organisational strengthening, such as the creation of internal structures, plans, policies and manuals. Many POs in the evaluation sample also appear to have matured as organisations, including with support from CRD, and have strengthened their funding base. Nevertheless, many POs equally identify the lack of long-term financial viability as a major concern, as they continue to depend on short-

term donor support and have limited ability to raise funding through other means. In general, CRD does not seem to pay sufficient attention to financial sustainability during the process of assessing project proposals and partner capacity, and the only example of support to fundraising in the evaluation sample is confined to Serbia. No exit criteria have been established and there is no common practice for phasing-out partnerships and capacity development support.

6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from the key findings and conclusions of the evaluation and, in line with the ToR, aim at providing CRD a basis for informed decision-making on ways of adjusting and improving its approach to capacity development of POs. The recommendations are not intended to bureaucratize or standardise CRD's approach to capacity development across countries, or to mould CRD into a particular form of organisation (i.e. subgranting or capacity development organisation). As indicated by the evaluation, there is a continued need for tailoring capacity development to the particular context of each PO and country situation, and to safeguard CRD's role as a human rights organisation in its own right.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CRD

1. CRD should improve and carefully document its approach and processes for capacity development, possibly in an expanded partner policy or dedicated capacity development strategy. This document could inter alia include:
 - A proper theory of change for capacity development clarifying how CRD sees the process of capacity development unfolding, what strategic choices are being made and why, and what assumptions and influencing factors are at play. Similar, locally-adapted ToC may be developed for particular regions and countries.
 - A refined set of partner selection criteria that caters to different types of partnerships and consider the particular need for capacity development of both mature and recently established organisations, including non-formal actors and organisations based outside capital cities.
 - Clarifying the steps to be followed when selecting new partners, including what analysis of the civil society landscape should be conducted, what consultations should take place, and how the selection criteria should be applied in practice.
 - A distinction between different types of local partnerships (strategic/project-based) and the implications for capacity development support.
2. CRD should, as provided in its own Grant Management Routines and as pledged in applications to Sida, increasingly provide longer-term grants, preferably in the form of core support linked to the POs' strategic plans. This would create better conditions for sustainable capacity development. A process should be defined to determine if and when a PO is ready for core support. In this connection, the scaling-up of the practice of commissioning external organisational capacity assessments, as has been done in Ethiopia, should be considered.
3. CRD should, in general, invest more in tailored capacity development of local POs to promote their sustainability and resilience. This support should be carefully coordinated with other donors to the same organisations, and anchored in capacity

development plans developed jointly with the POs. While CRD may not always be best positioned to provide capacity development support in areas such as governance, financial management and fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, etc., the coordination with other donors should ensure that any significant capacity constraints are covered in some way or the other.

4. CRD should increase its efforts to ensure that the capacity development support, especially global trainings provided in the context of Defenders' Days and the Bootcamp, have an impact at the organisational level of POs. This could imply more emphasis on ToT or ensuring that at least two staff members from each PO participate in the trainings (to minimise the impact of staff rotation). CRD staff at the regional and country level could also become more engaged in the follow-up to global trainings, for instance by encouraging training participants to hold debriefings with other PO staff and jointly reflect with senior management on the implications for organisational development.
5. CRD should ensure that adequate attention is paid to sharing experiences and learning among POs with regard to capacity development. This could be realised through more regular regional and country-level events (in-person and/or virtual) focusing on different topics, identified in consultation with the POs. In each event, one or several POs could be invited to prepare and present their approaches, ideas and learnings. To maximise the added-value of these events, participation may not be limited to CRD's formal POs but also include other stakeholders, including donors.
6. CRD should develop a standard set of indicators for monitoring and measuring the progress and results achieved towards capacity development of local partners, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The newly introduced outcome reporting template may be adjusted accordingly to ensure that all POs report against these indicators, and that this information can be aggregated at different levels. CRD is also recommended to:
 - Ensure that the data collected on participants' evaluation of training seminars and similar events at the global, regional and country-level, including the Defenders' Days conference and Bootcamp, is systematically collected, aggregated and analysed with clear recommendations for improvement provided.
 - Integrate a learning mechanism in its PM&E system, which ensures that lessons from what works well and less well in terms of capacity development are captured and shared among CRD staff in an organised manner.
 - Consider introducing a results-based budgeting system, which present funding targets by type of costs and desired outcome, including "capacity". This would ensure that the focus is on how to achieve results rather than how to spend the allocation, and that conditions are in place for a proper cost-efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness analysis.
7. CRD should ensure that adequate investment is made in local staff resources to ensure that CRD's added value in terms of partnership approach and field presence is maximised, including the capacity to conceptualise capacity development programmes, identify and select the most relevant partners, engage in dialogue,

organise capacity development and experience-sharing events, and continuously monitor progress and overall contextual developments. This may also require developing and broadening the skill set of local staff, including in areas such as results-based management and M&E and the integration of the gender and environment perspectives.

8. CRD should, with guidance of indicators for measuring capacity development, develop exit criteria and phasing-out strategies for long-term partnerships, which may entail additional training and mentoring on fundraising and leadership. In general, sustainability should receive more attention in the grant management routines, with the templates for CRD partner assessment, project and grant request, and outcome reports adjusted accordingly.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION TO SIDA

1. Sida should initiate a dialogue with CRD (and possibly with other SPOs as well) on what can be done from Sida's side to facilitate a shift from short-term project support to long-term programme-based support – or core funding – to more effectively contribute to building more sustainable organisational capacities among POs.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Capacity Development Activities of Civil Rights Defenders

Date: 18 April 2023

1. General information

1.1 Introduction

Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) was founded as the Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in 1982 with the purpose of monitoring compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. In 2009, the organisation was renamed Civil Rights Defenders. The mission became to support local human rights defenders in the world's most repressive regions.²⁷

The headquarters of CRD is situated in Stockholm, Sweden. In addition, CRD has regional offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Funds are sub-granted to 39 implementing partner organisations in 15 countries.

CRD became a Strategic Partner Organisation (SPO) within the strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations (the CSO strategy²⁸) in 2020. The support from the strategy amounts to 158 000 000 SEK for the period 2021-2023. CRD is expected to submit a request to Sida in September 2023 for a two-year cost extension of the current support.

The programme supported is based on CRD's strategy 2020-2022 which focuses on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) – individuals, organisations and networks – assessed to have the ability to change suppressive power structures. CRD operates in Europe, South America, Africa, Asia and MENA where democracy and respect for human rights are in decline and where there is a need to work for an enabling environment for civil society to operate. CRD does this by for instance contributing to security for and legal assistance to HRD's but also by creating and developing platforms for dialogue and cooperation between HRD's and local, regional and international institutions and relevant decision makers with an influence on human rights.

²⁷ [Our Story - Civil Rights Defenders \(crd.org\)](https://www.crd.org/Our-Story)

²⁸ [Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations for the period 2016–2022 - Government.se](https://www.government.se/strategy-for-support-via-swedish-civil-society-organisations-for-the-period-2016-2022)

1.2 Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated

The evaluation object is CRDs capacity development of partners within the programme supported by Sida's CSO Strategy. The programme has four strategic goals:

1. Security: We have improved the security of selected HRDs or partners.
2. Capacity: We have improved the capacity of selected HRDs or partners.
3. Accountability: We have improved the level of accountability of duty-bearers related to civil and political rights.
4. Awareness: We have improved the level of awareness in the general public, rights-holders and duty-bearers related to civils and political rights.

The focus for this evaluation is hence on CRD's second strategic goal on capacity.

In 2023 CRD adopted a new strategy 2023-2030²⁹ presenting CRD's vision, mission, core values and brand; together with its strategic goals defining their organisation 2023-2030. The vision is "A world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights". The new strategy also presents four strategic goals which to a great extent are the same as they were when Sida/CIVSAM and CRD entered into the agreement:

1. Security: Human Rights Defenders are secure
2. Capacity: Human Rights Defenders have the capacity to defend human rights and democracy
3. Engagement: Stakeholders in society take action for human rights and democracy
4. Accountability: Duty bearers are held accountable.

Capacity strengthening is offered both to individuals and formal partners. CRD supports individuals directly via for instance technical security solutions. The focus for this evaluation however is the capacity development of formal partners.

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

1.3 Evaluation rationale

Conducting an evaluation of CRDs capacity development for partners is an agreement condition. Sida wishes to get a better understanding of how CRD works with capacity development and an assessment of its quality and results with recommendations to CRD. The learning aspect of the evaluation is important as CRD is a relatively new agreement partner within the CSO strategy.

Earlier evaluations, conducted by other units at Sida, have concluded that partners were generally pleased with the capacity development assistance but other than that an independent assessment of the quality and sustainability of the support has not been conducted.

²⁹ [Strategy-Civil-Rights-Defenders-2023-2030.pdf \(crd.org\)](#)

Sida is expecting to assess an application of continued support this year and this evaluation will also provide an input for that assessment.

2. The assignment

2.1 Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose or intended use of the evaluation is to give Sida a better understanding of CRD's support to their partners' capacity development and learn from what works well and less well. The ambition is for CRD to use the information and inform its decisions on how its support may be adjusted and improved. The primary intended users of the evaluation are Sida – both the Civil Society Unit and other units supporting CRD – and CRD.

The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation scope

The evaluation scope is limited to CRDs support for capacity development of a selection of partner organisations (approximately eight) in two to three countries – Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda. In Serbia the focus is on CRD's capacity development of partners included in the programme financed by the CSO strategy since December 2020. Most of them have received support from CRD for a longer period of time and it is relevant to look at the results of capacity development financed/provided by CRD to the chosen partners also prior to 2020. In Ethiopia it may be more relevant to look into the capacity development of partners within the bilateral strategy for Ethiopia, as CRD has had a special focus on capacity development there. In Uganda CRD has four partners which they have cooperated with since 2019. All of them are now included in the programme financed by the CSO-strategy.

The consultant is expected to interview local partners. The scope of the evaluation, specifically which local partners to include, shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

2.3 Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The objective of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of CRDs support to capacity development of local partners and formulate recommendations on how CRD can improve and adjust implementation.

The evaluation questions are:

Relevance: Is CRD doing the right thing?

- To what extent has CRD's capacity development for partners responded to partners needs and priorities?
- Does CRD coordinate with other donors of their partners? What is the added value of the capacity development that CRD provides?

Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

- To what extent has CRD's support for capacity development achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives/results? (I.e. to what extent have partners capacity been developed?) What contextual challenges which partners have faced has hindered implementation and impact?
- Are the methods CRD has used for supporting and following up on capacity development effective and based on learning?
- To what extent has CRDs support in the development of diverse capacities so far contributed to or has the potential to contribute towards improving partner's abilities to influence policies or practices that improve the respect for human rights?

Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

- To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?

Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

- To what extent will the benefits of the capacity development be sustainable?

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation.

2.4 Evaluation approach and methods

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report. For environmental considerations, innovative and flexible approaches/methodologies and methods for remote data collection should be suggested when appropriate and the risk of doing harm managed. Given the nature of CRD's operations, data access can be constrained. The evaluation hence needs to be planned for in a way that considers risk both in relation to the fulfilment of the assignment and in relation to the assignment causing harm (e.g. putting beneficiaries at risk).

The evaluator is to suggest an approach/methodology that provides credible answers (evidence) to the evaluation questions. Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The evaluator shall to the

extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods.

A *gender-responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used³⁰.

Sida's approach to evaluation is *utilization-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

2.5 Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by Sida's Civil Society Unit (CIVSAM). The intended users are primarily CIVSAM and CRD, but the evaluation can also be relevant for other units at Sida or Embassies which have agreements with CRD, in particular the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa.

2.6 Evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation³¹. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation³² and the OECD/DAC Better Criteria for Better Evaluation³³. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

2.7 Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The time and work plan must allow flexibility in implementation. The evaluation shall be carried out between May and September 2023. 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.

³⁰ See for example UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

³¹ OECD/DAC (2010) Quality Standards for Development Evaluation.

³² Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

³³ OECD/DAC (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meetings (two virtual meetings)	Sida CIVSAM CRD	Tentative 3 May Tentative 3 May
2. Draft inception report		Tentative 23 May
3. Inception meeting (virtual)	Sida CIVSAM	Tentative 25 May
4. Comments from intended users to evaluators (alternatively these may be sent to evaluators ahead of the inception meeting)		Tentative 2 June
5. Final inception report		9 June
6. Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance	Evaluators	
7. Draft evaluation report		Tentative 4 September
8. Comments from intended users to evaluators		Tentative 15 September
9. Final evaluation report		Tentative 29 September
10. Seminar/presentation (at Sida or virtual)	Sida (CIVSAM and program officers for CRD at other units/Embassies) and CRD	Tentative 5 October

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 *including how a utilization-focused and gender-responsive approach will be ensured*, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design, including an *evaluation matrix* and a *stakeholder mapping/analysis*. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for 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 clear structure and follow the layout format of Sida's template for

decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages.

The report shall clearly and in detail describe the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection and analysis and make a clear distinction between the two. The report shall describe how the utilization-focused approach has been implemented i.e. how intended users have participated in and contributed to the evaluation process and how methodology and methods for data collection have created space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users. Furthermore, the gender-responsive approach shall be described and reflected in the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with other identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Limitations to the methodology and methods and the consequences of these limitations for findings and conclusions shall be described.

Evaluation 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. Evaluation questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and in the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions and be specific, directed to relevant intended users and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The report should be no more than 35 pages excluding annexes. If the methods section is extensive, it could be placed in an annex to the report. Annexes shall always include the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report, the stakeholder mapping/analysis and the Evaluation Matrix. Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personal data if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the evaluation) based on a case based assessment by the evaluator and the commissioning unit/embassy. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on a written consent.

The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation³⁴.

The evaluator shall, upon approval by Sida of the final report, insert the report into Sida's template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C) and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication database. The order is placed by sending the approved report to Nordic Morning (sida@atta45.se), with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".

³⁴ Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

4. Type of allocation: "sakanslag".
5. Type of order: "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas.

2.8 Evaluation team qualification

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

- experience from similar assignments, including evaluation of capacity development, civil society, and sensitive, repressive contexts.

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 evaluation consultants are included in the team, as they often have contextual knowledge that is of great value to the evaluation.

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

Please note that in the tender, the tenderers must propose a team leader that takes part in the evaluation by at least 30% of the total evaluation team time including core team members, specialists and all support functions, but excluding time for the quality assurance expert.

2.9 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 700 000 SEK.

Invoicing and payment shall be managed according to the following: after approval by Sida of the Final Report and when the assignment is completed.

The contact person at Sida is Eva-Lotta Gustafsson. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation and contact details to intended users will be provided by Eva-Lotta Gustafsson.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics, such as booking interviews and preparing visits, including any necessary security arrangements.

3. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation

CSO-strategy, Programme document, Strategy Civil Rights Defenders 2023-2030

Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention)	
Title of the evaluation object	Civil Rights Defenders (CSO strategy) 2020-2023
ID no. in PLANIt	13513
Dox no./Archive case no.	20/000777
Activity period (if applicable)	1 October 2020 to 31 December 2023
Agreed budget (if applicable)	Total 173 MSEK (Sida contribution 158 MSEK)
Main sector	Human rights
Name and type of implementing organisation	Civil Rights Defenders, NGO
Aid type	Core contributions/pooled funds
Swedish strategy	Strategy for support via Swedish Civil Society Organisations for the period 2016-2022

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit	CIVSAM
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Eva-Lotta Gustafsson
Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post, or other)	Mid-term
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	16621

Annex C: Decentralised evaluation report template

Annex D: Programme document

Annex 2 – Evaluation matrix

Evaluation criteria and questions from ToR	Refined questions and sub-questions	Data collection methods	Data sources
Relevance: Is CRD doing the right thing? - To what extent has CRD's capacity development for partners responded to partners needs and priorities? - Does CRD coordinate with other donors of their partners? What is the added value of the capacity development that CRD provides?	- Have CRD partnered with the most relevant organisations considering the context in the three countries? What strategic choices have been made? - How has CRD assessed the capacity development needs of partner organisations? Did partner organisations participate in the identification and design of capacity development activities? - Do partner organisations feel that the focus and scope of the capacity development have been relevant to their needs and priorities? What needs/priorities, if any, remain unaddressed or under-addressed? - To what extent has the capacity development support been responsive to changing circumstances? How flexible has it been and in what ways have it been adjusted? - Do partner organisations receive capacity development support from other donors/actors?	- Desk review - Key informant interviews with: - CRD staff members at Head Office and regional branch level (in Stockholm, Belgrade and Addis Ababa) - Managers and other key staff of the selected partner organisations - Selected capacity development providers (consultants);	- External human rights analysis and reports (to be identified and collected prior to and during country visits) - CRD's own partner portfolio and monitoring data - Partner organisations' grant proposals and narrative reports to CRD - CRD's partner capacity assessments and approved grant requests - Notes from annual review meetings with partners (if any) - Partner organisations' annual reports (published) - Records from various capacity development activities at the country level - Reports from regional and global networking and knowledge sharing

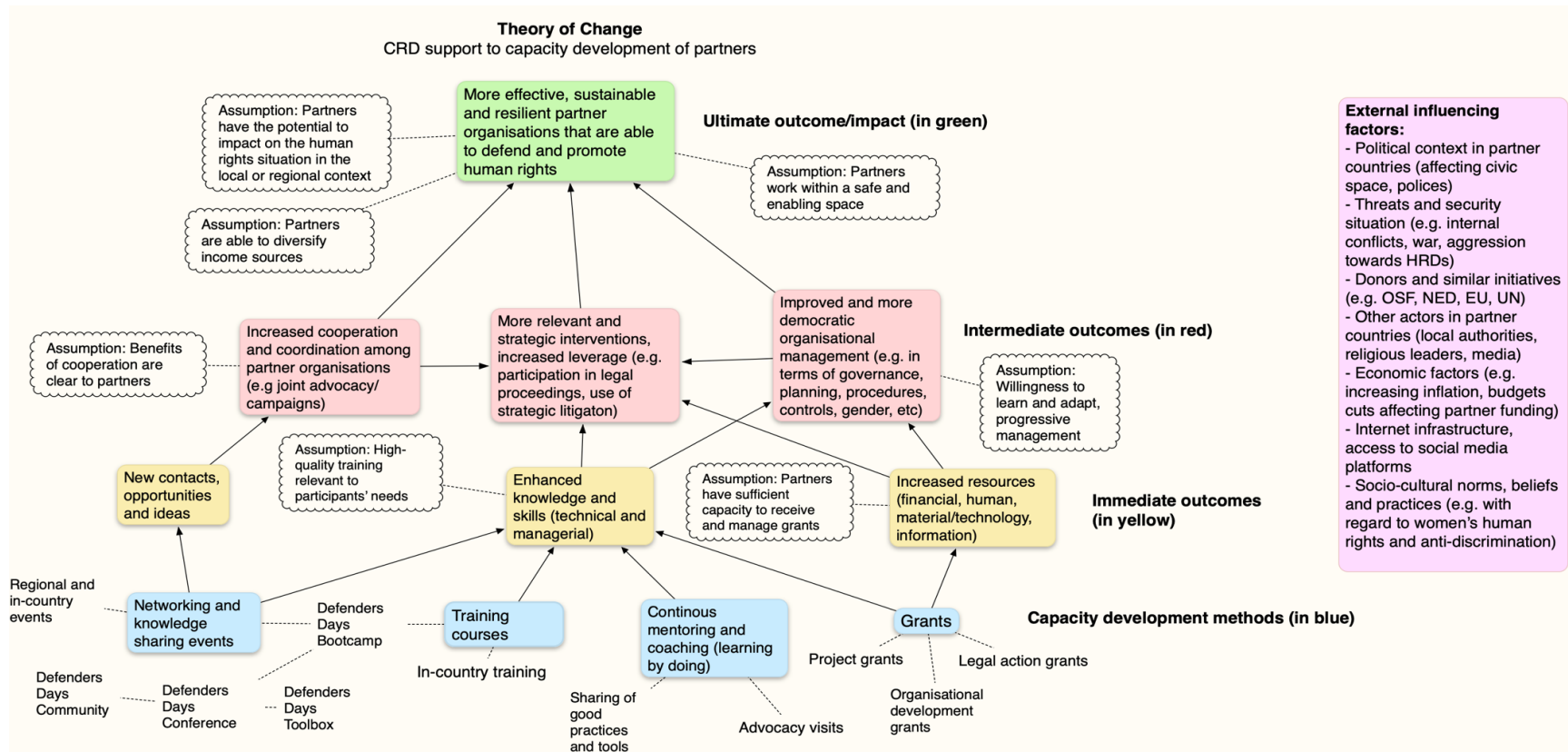
Evaluation criteria and questions from ToR	Refined questions and sub-questions	Data collection methods	Data sources
	Can any duplication or synergies be detected? What dialogue and coordination has been pursued? • In the partner organisation's opinion, what, if anything, sets CRD's support apart from the support of other donors/actors? How innovative is CRD's approach and support? • How consistent is CRD's capacity development approach with good practice/commonly accepted capacity development models? • Has the gender perspective been considered in the capacity development support? To what extent has this perspective been analysed, integrated and highlighted in the dialogue with partners? What about the other perspectives?	○ Swedish embassy staff (in Ethiopia) ○ Representatives of other donors • On-line survey	events (e.g. Defenders' Days), including participants' evaluations • Prior evaluations and reviews • Online survey report • Interview notes
Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives? • To what extent has CRD's support for capacity development achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives/results? (i.e. to what extent have partners capacity been developed)	• What significant changes, if any, have taken place in relation to the outcomes identified in the re-constructed ToC with regard to the selected partnerships in Serbia, Ethiopia and Uganda? • What is the relative contribution of CRD's support to changes at different outcome levels? What has been the contribution of other donor support and initiatives?	• Desk review • Key informant interviews with: ○ CRD staff members at Head Office and regional branch level (in Stockholm, Belgrade and Addis Ababa)	• External human rights analysis and reports (to be identified and collected prior to and during country visits) • CRD's own partner portfolio and monitoring data • Partner organisations' grant proposals and narrative reports to CRD • CRD's partner capacity assessments and approved grant requests

Evaluation criteria and questions from ToR	Refined questions and sub-questions	Data collection methods	Data sources
• What contextual challenges which partners have faced have hindered implementation and impact? • Are the methods CRD has used for supporting and following up on capacity development effective and based on learning? • To what extent has CRD's support in the development of diverse capacities so far contributed to, or has the potential to contribute towards, improving partners' abilities to influence policies and practices that improve the respect for human rights?	• What external factors have facilitated/impeded outcome change and the implementation of the support? Have assumptions held true? • What unintended effects – both positive and negative – of the capacity development support can be detected? Did the support have any (intended or unintended) effects on gender equality? • To what extent has the choice of capacity development methods and activities influenced the effectiveness of the support? Which methods and tools have been the most and least effective? • How well does CRD monitor and evaluate its capacity development support? To what extent have M&E practices delivered robust, useful and gender-disaggregated information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning? • To what extent have lessons learnt from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust the capacity development support? Have previous evaluation findings and recommendations been considered?	○ Managers and other key staff of the selected partner organisations ○ Selected capacity development providers (consultants) ○ Swedish embassy staff (in Ethiopia); ○ Representatives of other donors • On-line survey	• Notes from annual review meetings with partners (if any) • Partner organisations' annual reports (published), including financial statement with income sources • Records from various capacity development activities at the country level • Documents and data pertaining to changes in organisational capacities, such as new policies and internal manuals • Reports from regional and global networking and knowledge sharing events (e.g. Defenders' Days), including participants' evaluations • Prior evaluations and reviews • Online survey report • Interview notes

Evaluation criteria and questions from ToR	Refined questions and sub-questions	Data collection methods	Data sources
Efficiency: How well are resources being used? To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?	- To what extent have activities and outputs been delivered as anticipated in work plans and budgets? What are the reasons for any delays or additional costs? - Is the distribution of costs reasonable considering the results achieved? Could outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity?	- Desk review - Key informant interviews with: - CRD staff members at Head Office and regional branch level (in Stockholm, Belgrade and Addis Ababa) - Managers and other key staff of the selected partner organisations	- CRD's narrative and financial reports to Sida - CRD's departmental actions plans and related targets and budgets - Partner organisations' narrative and financial reports to CRD - Records from various capacity development activities at the country level - Reports from regional and global networking and knowledge sharing events (e.g. Defenders' Days), - Prior evaluations and reviews - Interview notes
Sustainability: Will the benefits last? To what extent will the benefits of the capacity development support be sustainable?	- To what extent are the project outcomes likely to be sustainable? What key factors contribute to sustainability or lack of sustainability? - Has the capacity development support been designed in a way that promotes sustainable outcomes? Are exit strategies in place? - What can be improved? What could be done to decrease partners' reliance on CRD/Sida support? What are the lessons learnt for other capacity development interventions in this regard?	- Desk review - Key informant interviews with: - CRD staff members at Head Office and regional branch level (in Stockholm, Belgrade and Addis Ababa)	- CRD's narrative and financial reports to Sida - Partner organisations' narrative and financial reports to CRD - Records from various capacity development activities at the country level - Documents and data pertaining to changes in organisational capacities, such as new policies and internal manuals

Evaluation criteria and questions from ToR	Refined questions and sub-questions	Data collection methods	Data sources
		○ Managers and other key staff of the selected partner organisations ● On-line survey	● Reports from regional and global networking and knowledge sharing events (e.g. Defenders' Days), ● Prior evaluations and reviews ● Online survey report ● Interview notes

Annex 3 – Theory of Change



Annex 4 – Interview guides

Interview guide for CRD staff

Name and title of interviewee	
Gender	
Organisation	
Data and time of interview	

Introduction

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the interview
Explain how any information collected from the interview will be reported
Ask the interviewee to present him/herself

Questions

Evaluation criteria/question	Notes on response
<i>Relevance</i>	
1. How were the partner organisations identified and selected? What specific considerations or criteria served as a basis for this process? What strategic choices were made and why?	
2. How were the capacity development needs of the partner organisations identified and assessed? To what extent did the partner organisations participate in this process?	
3. In your experience, to what extent does the capacity development support provided by CRD correspond to partners priorities and needs? Did CRD introduce any new ideas and approaches? Are there any gaps?	
4. Have any new capacity development needs emerged during the past few years? Have partners voiced additional demands? If so, to what extent have you been able to accommodate these needs and demands?	
5. What dialogue and coordination has been pursued with other donors/actors? What has been done to avoid duplication? Have any potential synergies been identified and explored?	

6. How unique is CRD's capacity development support in your experience? What sets it apart from the support provided by other donors/actors?	
7. Has the gender perspective been considered in the capacity development support? If so, how? What about other perspectives (environment/climate, poverty, and conflict)?	
Effectiveness	
8. What changes have you seen in the organisational capacities of your partners since the support started? Please give examples	
9. To what extent would you say that partner organisations are better and more democratically managed today than when the support started? Do you see any changes in terms of governance, planning operational management, M&E, financial controls, etc? Please give examples	
10. In your experience, are partner organisations willing to learn and adapt their structures, policies and practices? What external factors facilitate or hinder change in organisational capacities?	
11. Do you see any changes with regard to cooperation and coordination among partner organisations? What factors facilitate and hinder such cooperation and coordination?	
12. Can you detect any changes in the partner organisations' approach to their work and performance? Have the partner organisations contributed to any changes in the human rights situation? Please give examples. What are the external factors that facilitate or hinder such contributions?	
13. Which capacity development methods and activities have been the most effective in your experience? Which have been less effective? Why?	
14. What do you do to monitor and evaluate the results of the capacity development support? Do you feel that you have enough tools and data to understand what progress the partner organisations are making in this regard? If not, what is missing?	
Efficiency	
15. What challenges, if any, have you encountered during the delivery of capacity development support? What is the reason for any deviation from work plans and budgets?	

16. What are the strengths and weaknesses with regard to CRD's management of the capacity development process in your experience?	
<i>Sustainability</i>	
17. What has CRD done to promote sustainability and how effective have those measures been in your experience? What other factors have contributed to sustainability or lack of sustainability?	
<i>Lessons learnt and recommendations</i>	
18. What are the main lessons learnt from what works well and less well in the capacity development process?	
19. Have anything been done to adjust or improve the capacity development support based on lessons learnt? What else needs to be done?	

Interview guide for partner organisations

Name and title of interviewee	
Gender	
Organisation	
Data and time of interview	

Introduction

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the interview	
Explain how any information collected from the interview will be reported	
Ask the interviewee to confirm that he/she is still willing to participate in the evaluation	
Ask the interviewee to present him/herself	
Ask the interviewee to briefly present the organisation	

Questions

Evaluation criteria/question	Notes on response
<i>Relevance</i>	
1. How and when did the partnership with CRD start?	
2. What types of CRD capacity development support have your organisation participated in and/or benefitted from? (In-country training; regional knowledge sharing, training and similar events; global networking and training (e.g. Defenders' Day conference and Bootcamps); ongoing mentoring and coaching by CRD staff; financial support (grants); other)	

3. How were the capacity development needs identified? To what extent did CRD consult you about your needs and priorities?	
4. Do you feel that there any needs and priorities that have not been addressed, or not addressed sufficiently?	
5. Have any new capacity development needs emerged during the partnership with CRD? Were you able to voice those needs with CRD and were they addressed? Please give examples	
6. Have your organisation received any capacity development support from other donors/actors than CRD? If so, what has been the focus and scope of this capacity development support? What are the main differences compared to CRD's support?	
7. Has the gender perspective been addressed in any way in CRD's capacity development support?	
Effectiveness	
8. What organisational capacities, if any, have been developed/strengthened in recent years? Have there been any change in terms of governance, planning, procedures, financial controls, etc? What prompted this change? Please give examples.	
9. What external factors facilitate or hinder change in organisational capacities?	
10. Have there been any change with regard to your organisation's cooperation and coordination with other human rights organisations? If so, what prompted this change?	
11. What are the benefits of cooperation and coordination in your experience? What external factors facilitate or hinder such cooperation and coordination?	
12. Have you experienced any change in your organisation's approach or performance with regard to defending and promoting human rights? What prompted this change? Please give examples.	
13. Has the human rights situation in the local or national context changed in any significant way since 2021? If so, how and what prompted this change? What influence did your organisation have, if any?	
14. What external factors facilitate or hinder your ability to defend and promote human rights?	
15. In general, which types of capacity development activities supported by CRD have been the most effective? Which have been less effective? Why?	

What other types of capacity development activities could have been considered?	
16. Do you have the necessary means and tools to measure the progress made in terms of organisational capacity development?	
Efficiency	
17. How would you rate the quality of CRD's trainings and other capacity development support? (Very high, high, moderate, poor, or very poor)	
18. In your experience, has CRD's capacity development support been provided in a timely and cost-efficient manner? What can be improved in this regard, if anything?	
Sustainability	
19. How sustainable are the capacities developed with support from CRD in your view? What factors have contributed to sustainability or lack of sustainability?	
20. In general, do you feel that your organisation is more or less sustainable and resilient today than a few years back? Why? How dependent is your organisation on CRD's support?	
Lessons learnt and recommendations	
21. In conclusion, what are the main lessons learnt from what works well and less well with regard to the capacity development support provided by CRD?	
22. Do you have any final recommendations to CRD?	

Interview guide for other stakeholders

Name and title of interviewee	
Gender	
Organisation	
Data and time of interview	

Introduction

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the interview	
Explain how any information collected from the interview will be reported	
Ask the interviewee to confirm that he/she is still willing to participate in the evaluation	
Ask the interviewee to present him/herself	
Please briefly describe your relationship with CRD and any of its partner organisations, if any	

Questions

Evaluation criteria/question	Notes on response
Relevance	
1. From what you know about CRD's support, how relevant is the choice of partner organisations? Do CRD's partner organisations have the potential to impact on the human rights situation in the local or national context?	
2. Have you had any dialogue or coordination with CRD in recent years? What has been done, if anything, to avoid duplication and promote synergies in the support to local partner organisations? (Questions for other donors to the same organisation(s))	
3. From what you know about CRD's support, is there anything that sets it apart from the support of other donors/actors? What would you say is the added-value/comparative advantage of CRD?	
Effectiveness	
4. What changes or improvements, if any, have you seen in the capacity of partner organisations in recent years? To what extent do you perceive that the support of your organisation has contributed to such change/improvements? (Questions for other donors to the same organisation(s))	
5. Can you detect any changes in the partner organisations' approach to their work and performance? Have the partner organisations contributed to any changes in the human rights situation at the local or national level? Please give examples (Questions for other donors to the same organisation(s))	
Lessons learnt and recommendations	
6. What good practices and key lessons learnt have you identified from your own capacity development work with local partners?	
7. Do you have any recommendations to CRD in terms of future priorities and approaches?	

Annex 5 - Survey questionnaire

This is an on-line survey conducted by FCG Sweden on behalf of Sida. Your responses are very valuable to us and will inform the evaluation of Civil Rights Defender's (CRD) capacity development support to local partner organisations.

The survey focuses on the relevance and effectiveness of the capacity development support, and the sustainability of capacity development outcomes. Your answers will feed into recommendations for improving CRD's approach and methods for capacity development, and the identification of lessons learnt for wider application.

Responses are anonymous and this survey is not linked to any funding call or decision.

The survey should not take more than 20 minutes to complete. If a question is not relevant to your organisation, skip to the next one. Feel free to consult colleagues in your organisation to ensure that the responses are as objective and representative as possible. Only one completed survey per partner organisation is required.

Thank you very much for your time!

Introduction

Questions	Choices
1. What is your gender?	• Female • Male • Other
2. For how long has your organisation been partnering with CRD?	• Less than one year • One to three years • Three to five years • More than five years
3. What types of CRD capacity development activities have your organisation participated in and/or benefitted from? (Multiple answers possible)	• In-country training • Regional knowledge sharing, training and similar events • Global networking and training (e.g. Defenders' Day conference and Bootcamps) • Ongoing mentoring and coaching by CRD staff • Financial support (grants) • Other
If other, please specify:	

Relevance

Questions	Choices
4. To what extent do you feel that CRD's capacity development support has addressed your organisation's needs and priorities?	• To a very high extent • To a high extent • To a moderate extent • To a slight extent • Not at all

5. How did CRD consult you about your organisation's capacity development needs and priorities? Please explain

6. Do you feel that there are any organisational capacity development needs and priorities that have not been addressed, or not addressed sufficiently? Please explain

7. Has your organisation received capacity development support from other donors/actors than CRD? If so, please explain any unique features of CRD's support

8. To what extent has gender equality been addressed in CRD's capacity development support to your organisation?	• To a very high extent • To a high extent • To a moderate extent • To a slight extent • Not at all
Please elaborate on your response:	

Effectiveness

Questions	Choices
9. How significant has CRD's support been in strengthening the capacities of your organisation in the following areas? Please rank the five most significant areas of improvement (1 being the most significant)	• Human rights work (standards, mechanisms, methods) • Physical and digital security • Advocacy capacity • Networking and coalition building • Internal governance (e.g. Board development) • Leadership/general management capacity • Strategic planning • Internal rules and procedures

	• Results-based management/M&E • Administration and financial management • Fundraising • Gender mainstreaming • Other areas
If other areas, please specify:	

10. What external factors have facilitated or impeded the capacity development of your organisation? Please rank the five most important factors (1 being the most important)	• Political context • Economic factors • Socio-cultural norms, beliefs and practices • Security situation, including any threats • Other donors and their support • Other local actors, e.g. authorities, religious leaders, media • Access to internet and social media • Other factors
If other factors, please specify:	

11. In your experience what types of capacity development activities supported by CRD have been the most effective? Please rank the activities from 1 to 5 (with 1 being the most effective)	• In-country training • Regional knowledge sharing, training and similar events • Global networking and training (e.g. Defenders' Day conference and Bootcamps) • Ongoing mentoring and coaching by CRD staff • Financial support (grants) • Other
Please elaborate on your response and give examples:	

Sustainability

Questions	Choices
12. In your experience, to what extent are the results of CRD's capacity development support sustainable? Sustainable capacities = The capacities developed with CRD support will remain in your organisation and continue to be	• To a very high extent • To a high extent • To a moderate extent • To a slight extent • Not at all

used/capitalised on even without donor funding.	
Please elaborate on your response:	

13. In general, do you feel that your organisation is more or less sustainable and resilient today than when the partnership with CRD started? Resilient = the ability of an organisation to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to gradual change and sudden disruptions	• More sustainable and resilient • About the same • Less sustainable and resilient • Don't know
Please elaborate on your response:	

Recommendations

14. What would you change in terms of CRD's approach and methods to capacity development?
15. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to CRD?

Annex 6 – Documents consulted

Annual Narrative Report. Sida Contribution no. 14285. Reporting period: January-December 2021. CRD. February 2022.

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Environment Spot Check Civil Rights Defenders. Sida Helpdesk for Environment and Climate Change. Gunilla Ölund Wingqvist. September 2020.

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Evaluation of the Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016-2022. Final Report. FCG Sweden. Jonas Lövkrona, Åsa Königson and Anna Schnell. February 2021.

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Organisational Capacity Assessments of 10 Human Rights Organisations in Ethiopia. ATL Consulting. 2021.

Outcome reporting template. CRD. Internal document.

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The Development Dimension: Development Assistance Committee Members and Civil Society. OECD. 2020.

Thematic Approaches at Civil Rights Defenders. Poverty and Conflict through the Human Rights-Based Approach. CRD. Undated.

Working with Partners. CRD. Internal document. January 2019.

PO sample documents:

- Annual reports
- CRD Assessment of Partner Capacity
- Grant proposals
- Grant request
- Outcome reports
- Partner concept notes
- Project final/completion reports
- Project request sheets
- Training records



Evaluation of Civil Rights Defenders' capacity development support to local partners

This report presents an evaluation of Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) as one of Sida's Strategic Partner Organizations (SPOs) under the CSO strategy from October 2020 to 2022. The evaluation assessed CRD's contribution to partner capacity development, to inform Sida's decision on continued support, and guide CRD's future approaches for capacity development. The evaluation found that CRD's capacity development support generally aligns with partners' needs, yet improvements in approach documentation are recommended. CRD's ToC is deemed sound, with successful implementation, particularly in enhancing staff skills and resource mobilization. However, intermediate outcomes varied among POs, and systematic measurement of PO capacity development is lacking, CRD's high activity implementation rate is noted, though staffing adjustments are suggested, and POs perceive CRD's support as contributing to sustainable outcomes, despite financial viability concerns. Recommendations from the evaluators include better documentation of capacity development processes, longer-term core support for POs, tailored capacity development plans, enhanced impact measurement, and investment in local staff capacity.

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