

2024:1c

Sida Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022

Case Studies



Authors: Charlotte Örnemark, Ian Christoplos, Annica Holmberg, Dana Peebles.

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.

Sida Evaluation 2024:1c

Commissioned by Sida, Evaluation Unit.

Published by: Sida, 2024

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Date of final report: 2024-08-19

Art.no.: Sida62735en

urn:nbn:se:sida-62735en

This publication can be downloaded/ordered from www.Sida.se/publications

Case Studies of the Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022

INTRODUCTION

This document serves as an overview of the thematic case studies undertaken as part of the **Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022**, conducted by NIRAS Sweden AB commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), focusing on thematic areas and sub-areas as directed by the terms of reference provided by Sida. The thematic areas and sub-areas of focus for the four cases were initially determined by Sida in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and further refined during the evaluation's inception phase. It is important to note that these case studies are not stand-alone evaluation reports, but that they serve to provide insight and a deep dive into the thematic focus areas. The case studies cover the following **thematic areas and focus sub-areas**:

1. Environment and Climate Change

Focus: Locally-Led Climate Adaptation and Finance (LLCAF) at Global and National Levels

- Country examples:
 - Kenya
 - Bangladesh

2. Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Focus: Universal Health Coverage (at a Global Level) and Regional and Country SRHR Efforts and Policy Processes in Africa

- Country examples:
 - Access to Safe and Legal Abortion in Liberia
 - Ending Child Marriage in Mozambique

3. Democracy and Human Rights

Focus: Normative Dialogue around LGBTQI Issues at Global, Regional, and National Levels

- Country examples:
 - Republic of Moldova

4. Gender Equality

Focus: Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

- Country examples:

- Mozambique
- Bangladesh
- Somalia
- Tanzania
- Multi-country programming

Methodology and Approach

The core methods for the evaluation combine the case-based approach with a tailored version of outcome harvesting (OH) to allow for a participatory and learning-oriented approach, utilising both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data included indicators related to the thematic areas, while qualitative data encompassed key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions, document reviews, regular interaction with feedback from the evaluation steering group and reference group and case studies. An analysis of findings from these case studies was combined with a series of institutional KIIs and focus group discussions (Sida, Team Sweden) and synthesised in the main evaluation report.

The theory of change (ToC) for Sida's application of normative dialogue, developed by the evaluation team during the inception phase of this evaluation, is based on a number of underlying assumptions about the system that Sida and its partners apply when using dialogue to influence norms. The ToC is seen in Figure 1 below:

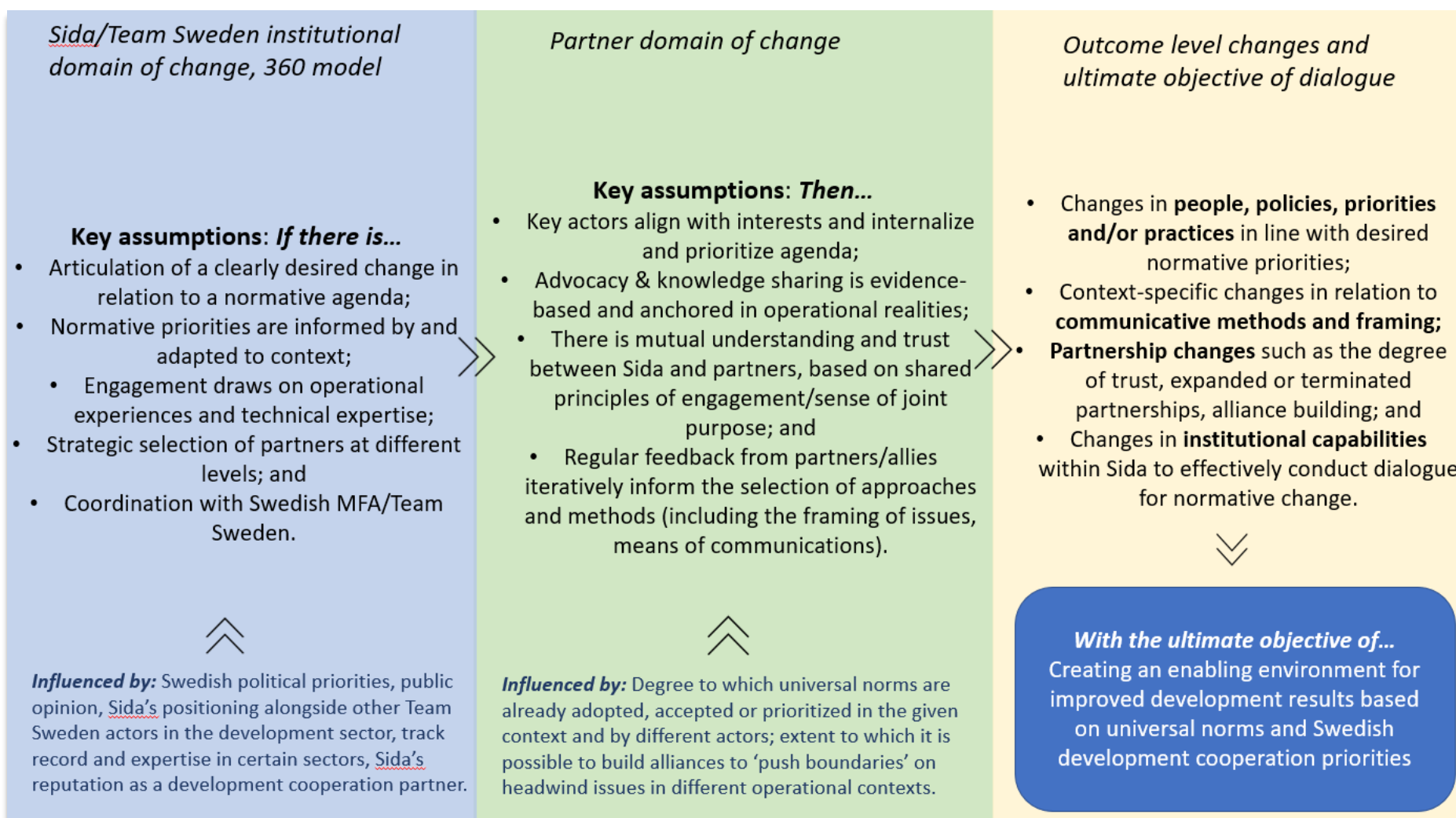


Figure 1 Theory of Change for the evaluation.

Table of Contents

Case Studies of the Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022	i
Introduction	i
Abbreviations and Acronyms	vi
1 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Locally-Led Climate Adaptation and Finance (LLCAF)	1
Thematic findings at a glance	1
1.1 Introduction.....	3
1.2 Background and context.....	6
1.3 Findings.....	9
1.4 Conclusions and lessons	23
Annex 1 Case-specific literature reviewed	26
2 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)	30
Thematic case findings at a glance.....	30
2.1 Introduction.....	32
2.2 Background and context.....	34
2.3 Findings.....	39
2.4 Conclusions and lessons	55
Annex 1 Case-specific literature reviewed	57
Annex 2 Data on the examples.....	64
Annex 3 Stakeholder mapping and target groups	72
3 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual (LGBTQI)	75
Thematic case findings at a glance.....	75
3.1 Introduction.....	77
3.2 Background and context.....	78
3.3 Findings.....	82
3.4 Conclusions and lessons	102
Annex 1 Case-specific literature reviewed	104

4 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)	107
Thematic case findings at a glance.....	107
4.1 Introduction.....	109
4.2 Background and context.....	110
4.3 Findings.....	113
4.4 Conclusions and lessons.....	131
Annex 1 Case-specific literature reviewed	134
Annex 2 WEE-related normative dialogue agenda summary.....	138
Annex 3 Summary of normative dialogue approaches in Sida-funded WEE interventions or processes.....	140

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AFI	Alliance for Financial Inclusion
AGIR	Action Programme for Inclusive and Responsible Governance
ANEP	National Authority for Professional Education
APHRC	The African Population and Health Research Center
AU	African Union
CECAP	Coligação para Eliminação dos Casamentos Prematuros
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage
CHAI	Clinton Health Access Initiative
Civsam	Sida's Unit for Civil Society
CoS	Church of Sweden
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERC	The Equal Rights Coalition
EU	European Union
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFP	Feminist Foreign Policy
FLLoCA	Financing Locally Led Climate Action
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEF	The Global Equality Fund
GHRI	The Multi-Donor LGBTQI+ Global Human Rights Initiative
GIF	Gender Inclusive Finance
GLC	Guttmacher-Lancet Commission
HLM	High Level Meeting
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
HQ	Headquarters
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
iCSO	The integrated Civil Society Organisations System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILGA	The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IVI	International Vaccination Institute
IWHC	International Women's Health Coalition
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual persons
LLCAF	Locally-Led Climate Adaptation and Finance
LoCAL	Local Climate Adaptation Living Facility
LoGIC	Local Government Initiative on Climate Change
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MfC	Mobilising for Change Programme
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSI	Marie Stopes International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OH	Outcome Harvesting
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PACJA	Pan African Climate and Justice Alliance
PMNCH	Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
RAP	Rainbow Advocacy Programme (part of RFSL MfC programme)
RFSL	The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights
RFSU	The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education
RWEE	Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Programme
SADC PF	The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

UPR	Universal Periodic Reviews
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEESMS	Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems programme
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIN	Women in Business
WRI	World Resources Institute

1 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Locally-Led Climate Adaptation and Finance (LLCAF)

THEMATIC FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

Key finding 1: *Outcomes related to people.* Normative dialogue relies on people knowing about and owning the norms for the dialogue and having the mandate/operating space to use them.

Key finding 2: *Outcomes related to priorities.* It may seem self-evident that consistent and coherent priorities should be a foundation for normative dialogue, but staff rotation and uneven communication efforts have hindered clarity and consensus.

Key finding 3: *Outcomes related to policies.* Sida has a generally low-key approach to promoting LLCAF policies, preferring to allow partners to lead, while investing in data and using the outcomes of contributions to inform policies.

Key finding 4: *Outcomes related to practices and partnerships.* Partner-led normative dialogue is encouraged as Sida seeks to avoid falling into an advocacy role. Sida sees its role as having a greater focus on reflection on lessons about practical application of LLCAF.

Key finding 5: Entry points for normative dialogue must be understood within diverse ongoing dialogues (and normative tensions) at national and local levels.

Key finding 6: Efforts to mainstream LLCAF norms within Sida are a ‘work in progress’, with significantly less engagement by Team Sweden than with what was the ‘gold standard’ of normative dialogue, i.e., the Feminist Foreign Policy.

Key finding 7: The gaps in the 360-model regarding LLCAF relate to insufficient broader engagements from Team Sweden. Initiatives are underway to address this, but it is too early to assess outcomes.

Key finding 8: With the important exception of the events such as those at Stockholm+50, Sida has generally kept a low profile in communicating LLCAF norms, which is partly related to an absence of dialogue and communications plans encompassing headquarters and embassy initiatives directly related to LLCAF.

Conclusions in brief: While the overall theory of change for normative dialogue within locally-led climate adaptation and finance (LLCAF) is relevant, the gaps are still

many. The 360 model, bringing together headquarters and field-level dialogue, is more of an aspiration than a reality. Linking the dots between the national and global dialogues involves bringing together two complex and dynamically changing agendas. Contributions, and the work of programme officers who manage them, are where global norms are brought to bear on programming at the frontline of normative dialogue. They are tasked with harmonising Sida's commitments with partners' practices. Efforts to learn from LLCAF are thus still strongly anchored in the contribution management sphere. This, together with Sida's often low-keyed and not always consistent messaging, has sometimes muddled the essential links between practical programmatic learning and a more global dialogue on normative LLCAF aims. Sida should consider how to ensure that the 360-model shifts from being seen as a 'hub and spokes' model linking headquarters and the embassies, to being better anchored in active sharing among embassies.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This case study traces the approaches and methods that Sida has used in contributing to a dialogue among key partners in applying emerging lessons about the implications of locally-led climate adaptation and finance (LLCAF). This includes how Sida has framed normative dialogue with these partners around Swedish priorities related to poverty, climate adaptation and local governance. Taking an inductive approach, the case study draws broader lessons that can be learnt from LLCAF for other normative agendas. The analysis also takes into consideration the implications of this experience for Sida's broader normative discourse on how environment and climate initiatives impact the poor from a human rights-based perspective.

1.1.1 Focus and scope of the case study

Sida designated environment and climate as priority areas for normative dialogue in 2022. However, Sida's work with LLCAF represents a long-standing aspect of normative dialogue, encompassing a number of global and national partners and programmes. This overall normative agenda is described in section 1.2.1 below.

This LLCAF case study looks at global learning and policy initiatives and seeks to understand if and how they are reflected in national programming and dialogues. It also seeks to identify if and how the emerging national lessons on how to contextualise LLCAF are influencing regional and global thinking.

As described below, the case study has been largely limited to looking at how normative dialogue has emerged around (a) two national programmes, one in Bangladesh and one in Kenya, (b) one global programming initiative, (c) one think tank collaboration, and (d) one support to a regional Civil Society Organisation (CSO) network. These were recommended by Sida as the focus during the inception phase. Together, these initiatives constitute opportunities to observe how the 360-model (Sida's efforts to link global and programmatic learning) has been operationalised in relation to normative dialogue with a range of intermediaries. It is recognised that these examples, proposed and agreed in the inception phase, do not encompass the breadth of locally-led climate interventions, but these were judged to provide sufficient basis for understanding the normative dialogue processes related to the LLCAF principles. This in turn was deemed to provide a basis for inductive analysis that could shed light on broader processes. It should be stressed that the intention has been to analyse a case, not undertake a portfolio review of LLCAF interventions.

1.1.2 Methodology

The data for this case study derives primarily from 28 semi-structured interviews¹ with Sida staff in Stockholm and at the embassies in Kenya and Bangladesh, as well as with a range of partners. This was combined with review of documentation related to dialogue initiatives, LLCAF policies and practice, and documentation specifically related to the contributions included in this case study. Partners interviewed were selected to include a diverse range of stakeholders involved with the following initiatives and organisations:

- The **Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL)**² is a global programme, led by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) that has been supported for several years by Sida. LoGIC (see below) is one of several pilot programmes initiated by LoCAL and implemented together with other United Nations (UN) and national partners. It is an entry point to raise attention to the importance and feasibility of locally led adaptation. Through LoCAL, UNCDF has become a global leader in introducing and developing methods to put into place LLCAF funding structures;
- The **Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC)**³ is a national LoCAL programme operating in selected areas in Bangladesh. It is managed by UNCDF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The experience has highlighted both the importance of LLCAF, but also the challenges that exist in replication and building widespread trust in the new financing models. The programme has developed approaches to maintain direct attention to climate vulnerability, rather than general (and overlapping) factors related to extreme poverty;
- **Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA)**⁴ is a relatively new programme with similar aims in Kenya. It differs from the Bangladesh experience in that it is anchored in the much more profound overall devolution process that has been underway in Kenya over the past decade. FLLoCA is moving to national roll-out at a much faster pace than LoGIC. A priority for Sida has been to ensure that FLLoCA investments are explicitly addressing the root causes of climate vulnerability, such as deteriorating biodiversity and over-exploitation of natural resources. FLLoCA is managed by the World Bank;
- With core support, the **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)**⁵ is a very long-standing Sida partner that has provided

¹ For list of interviewees see Annex 4 in main report, *Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015-2022*.

² UNCDF. (2023). <https://www.uncdf.org/local/homepage>.

³ UNDP. (2023). <https://open.undp.org/projects/00085984>.

⁴ Openaid. (2024). <https://openaid.se/en/activities/SE-0-SE-6-14698A0101-KEN-43060>.

⁵ IIED. (2024). <https://www.iied.org/>.

knowledge development support and has partnered with Sida and Team Sweden to raise attention to the importance of LLCAF, along with a range of other international climate initiatives. IIED is recognised as a partner linking normative dialogue efforts to local civil society; and

- The **PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)** is an important channel for support to civil society in Africa for a range of climate and local environmental issues.⁶ Its work exemplifies Sida's efforts to bring together overall climate-related dialogue between local environmental CSOs working to engage communities with national CSO umbrella organisations, national governments, Regional Economic Communities, and the African Union (AU).

The diverse actors analysed in this case study reflect the iterative nature of this evolving normative agenda. The ultimate 'targets' of the LLCAF dialogue include the international climate change community, which is being encouraged to ensure that climate finance is redesigned to be devolved to affected communities, while retaining a focus on underlying environmental issues. This is to be anchored in normative reflection among the national governments that are being encouraged to design their adaptation strategies to ensure that local governments and other local actors receive resources and capacity development support to take action. Sida financed pilot contributions are the main tools to generate evidence and credibility to drive these (hopefully) broader dialogues.

The case study analyses how Sida and its partners are reflecting over the LLCAF principles within the complex and often fraught relationships between national and local authorities in the control of climate finance and decisions regarding investments. Tools of climate and environmental awareness raising, and capacity development are part of this, as is deeper engagement in the *realpolitik* of overall changes in governance to ensure subsidiarity and enhance local voice.

The analysis applied has highlighted the overlapping nature of the evaluation questions (EQs). These have therefore been grouped so as to reflect the ultimate lessons emerging from the case study. This has also been important to avoid redundancy where, for example, description of successful and unsuccessful outcomes can be best explained in conjunction with the factors that led to success or failure. The importance of this flexible approach to describing the emerging findings was discussed and agreed to in the inception phase of the evaluation.

⁶ PACJA. (2022). <https://pacja.org/>.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.2.1 The normative agenda

This case study looks at the iterative normative dialogue process that has emerged and evolved over time in promoting LLCAF. This **reflects Sida's commitments to ensuring that climate finance reaches local governments, communities, and other local actors to enable them to make their own decisions and investments based on their knowledge and priorities regarding climate change.** The norms being promoted reflect long-standing Swedish commitments to designing development cooperation approaches that reflect the perspectives of poor and oppressed people. Through locally-led adaptation, these perspectives are brought together with human rights-based commitments to find ways to empower local actors to act on the climate threats they are facing to enhance their resilience and reduce their vulnerability. The 'local' in locally-led refers to sub-national government, local residents and CSOs that are jointly and individually exerting greater influence on climate change efforts.

This case study focuses on the dialogues leading to consensus and informed application of LLCAF as exemplified by how Sida and over 90 other organisations have endorsed a set of **eight principles in their work with LLCAF**. Sida signed onto these principles in 2021 as a global commitment, but no resources were earmarked for acting on the principles at that time. These normative principles, developed primarily by the World Resources Institute (WRI), IIED and others, with Sida support, are:⁷

1. **Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level**
Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritised, designed and implemented; how progress is monitored; and how success is evaluated;
2. **Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled and displaced people, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalised ethnic groups**
Integrating gender-based, economic, and political inequalities that are root causes of vulnerability into the core of adaptation action and encouraging vulnerable and marginalised individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions;

⁷ Marek Soanes, Aditya Bahadur, Clare Shakya, Barry Smith, Sejal Patel, Christina Rumbaitis del Rio, Tamara Coger, Ayesha Dinshaw, Sheela Patel, Saleemul Huq, Muhammad Musa, Feisal Rahman, Suranjana Gupta, Glenn Dolcemascolo, & Tracy Mann. (2021). *Principles for locally led adaptation*. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London.
<https://www.iied.org/10211iied>

3. **Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily**
Supporting long-term development of local governance processes, capacity, and institutions through simpler access modalities and longer term and more predictable funding horizons, to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions;
4. **Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy**
Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions, and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding;
5. **Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty**
Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, Indigenous, and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios;
6. **Flexible programming and learning**
Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, flexible finance, and flexible programming;
7. **Ensuring transparency and accountability**
Making processes of financing, designing, and delivering programmes more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders; and
8. **Collaborative action and investment**
Collaboration across sectors, initiatives, and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds and so on) support one another, and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.

These principles are fairly new, but LLCAF is not. In some respects, this dialogue dates back to 2007 when Sweden initiated an International Commission on Climate Change and Development that emphasised the importance of anchoring climate response in local and ‘human’ dimensions.⁸ Already then, the Commission raised attention to how decentralisation of decision-making without devolution of control of financial resources for climate adaptation would overwhelm, rather than empower,

⁸ Commission on Climate Change and Development. (2009). *Closing the Gaps; Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation in Developing Countries*. Commission on Climate Change and Development, Stockholm, Sweden. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/closing-gaps-disaster-risk-reduction-and-adaptation-climate-change-developing-countries>; and

Ian Christoplos, Simon Anderson, Margaret Arnold, Victor Galaz, Merylyn Hedger, Richard J T Klein and Katell Le Goulven. (2009). *The Human Dimension of Climate Change; The Importance of Local and Institutional Issues*. Commission on Climate Change and Development, Stockholm, Sweden. <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/human-dimension-climate-adaptation-importance-local-and-institutional-issues>.

local authorities. The Commission's work, in introducing a focus on the local level into the emerging global discourse on climate adaptation, was in itself a clear example of Swedish public diplomacy on these issues.

The Swedish response has also reflected the conclusions of the 2022 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report that highlighted the importance of local governments and civil society in responding to climate change.⁹ These efforts also reflected Sweden's commitments in relation to COP 26 to accelerate climate adaptation funding more generally, which has been contingent on exploring and expanding on approaches such as LLCAF. Previous to this the Swedish Climate Ambassador signed a 'Partnership Compact' to support the achievement of the LDC 2050 Vision through Least Developed Country Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience during COP25 in Madrid.

This case analyses how dialogue and programming at different levels, inspired by these various initiatives, have led to broad endorsement of a Sida focus on what has (often implicitly) been seen as a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to climate change adaptation. This case study recognises this intersection of climate change and human rights, in the local-level human dimensions, as implying normative commitments to the following:¹⁰

- By focusing on subsidiarity, the participation of rights-holders will be enhanced;
- By linking the evolving climate finance architecture to the realities of local rights-holders and duty-bearers, climate and human rights commitments will be more aligned;
- Systems for local finance and investments in local government and civil society capacities will strengthen accountability for responding to climate vulnerability and risk as experienced at local level;
- Through subsidiarity, patterns of discrimination of particularly climate vulnerable populations can be recognised and addressed;
- Rights-holders will be empowered by greater influence over planning processes and control over financial resources; and
- Transparency can be enhanced by managing resources closer to rights-holders and by better capacities for local-level planning and financial management among duty-bearers.

⁹ UNEP. (2022). *The Closing Window: Climate crisis calls for rapid transformation of societies*. Emissions Gap Report. <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>.

¹⁰ This is the evaluation team's interpretation of Sida perspectives, see Sida. (2022). *Human Rights Based Approach – Rättighetsperspektivet*. <https://www.sida.se/partner-till-sida/metoder-och-material/human-rights-based-approach-rattighetsperspektiv>.

This focus on poverty and human rights has more recently been exemplified and operationalised by widespread endorsement of the LLCAF principles. **Sida has been perhaps the main donor supporting this process, though it is attracting increasing attention due to widespread frustration that climate finance is not reaching and directly benefiting climate vulnerable populations.** However, it should be stressed that this is a ‘work in progress.’ Sida does not have an actual 360 plan for normative dialogue on LLCAF. Nonetheless, as will be described below, there are diverging viewpoints on what such a dialogue should consist of. A recent report acknowledges that normative dialogue on environment and climate is less common than in other areas.¹¹ As such, this case study analyses the ways that Sida is looking for ways to move forward in an iterative manner and in an uncertain context.

1.2.2 Normative dialogue to link global and local discourses

The LLCAF engagements involve inter-linked dialogue processes at several levels. Sida has supported think tanks, most notably WRI and IIED, to act as the main custodians of these principles at global level. Other actors such as PACJA have been encouraged to make links between local/national civil society and regional actors (e.g., the AU and Regional Economic Communities). UNCDF, through LoCAL, has provided experience, evidence, and models for capacity development at national and sub-national levels, while promoting awareness and application of this knowledge globally. The process of developing this normative dialogue agenda has also involved increasing awareness, understanding of these principles across Team Sweden, and adapting these to reflect national discourses.

Interviews indicate that the **practical field-level experience of Sida’s recent programmatic contributions in Bangladesh and Kenya is often a more important touchstone for national dialogue than the eight global principles.** The case study analyses how the embassies have engaged to ensure that the ‘practice’ associated with provision of Sida-financed contributions is integrated with normative dialogue to ensure that national governments buy into and apply the principles in their own climate adaptation funding and fund management.

1.3 FINDINGS

1.3.1 Outcomes

EQ1: How likely is it that the normative dialogue has *contributed* to change?

A total of nine (sometimes overlapping) LLCAF outcomes were observed, all of which related to people, processes, and partnerships. Three outcomes related to policies. In all

¹¹ Sida. (2023). *Vi driver svenska prioriteringar och universella normer inklusive jämställdhet, miljö och klimat*. Rapport, Analyshubb Mål 2

but one, Sida's role rested to a significant extent on its role as financier. The focus of these outcomes reflects the emergent and programme-based learning processes underway in LLCAF norms. Similarly, five of the normative outcomes were judged to be new to both Sida and its partners. In seven of the outcomes, Sida acted as a supporter of normative change, alongside its peers and partners. Unlike the other case studies, the engagement of ambassadors was quite limited.

Key finding 1: Outcomes related to people.¹² Normative dialogue relies on people knowing about and owning the norms for the dialogue and having the mandate/operating space to use them.

The overall global processes have been built around intended outcomes in terms of growing awareness of the LLCAF principles among stakeholders in the climate change community. The emphasis is on **ensuring that they understand why LLCAF is needed, how it can be achieved, how this relates to the broader climate adaptation agenda, and ultimately on how LLCAF reflects broad commitments to human rights and a multidimensional perspective on poverty.** Endorsement by over ninety countries of the eight principles and an increasing array of programmes exemplify what global stakeholders are learning about putting LLCAF into practice.

Like-minded actors are **developing partnerships, facilitated through IIED's convening role and the critical mass emerging from broad endorsements for the eight LLCAF principles.** Sida worked with its partners towards these aims by convening an event in conjunction with the Stockholm+50 environmental conference,¹³ and has encouraged and financed IIED and others to keep these conversations going. Some informants expressed hopes that more profound mainstreaming of the principles will influence massive new EU environment and climate commitments, and in so doing ensure that local voices are not overlooked amid rapidly growing investments.

The influence on people's awareness and attitudes in countries where LLCAF is being pursued is more mixed. Some actors express enthusiasm about LLCAF, but there are considerable levels of ignorance and even reported disinterest from some embassy programme officers about LLCAF. Across Sida it was reported that information necessary for normative dialogue is not actively or consistently shared. One informant stated, "Info on the eight principles has not gone out to the embassies and probably nobody knows what they imply." Others stressed how awareness regarding the importance and the implications of mainstreaming climate and environmental normative goals in general in Sida's work is low, particularly at the

¹² Refers to changes in people's individual awareness, knowledge, and skills, typically of those directly engaged in the dialogue process.

¹³ UNEP. (2022). <https://www.stockholm50.global/about/about>.

embassies. One interviewee described this as a competence issue when programme officers see the environment as an area outside their responsibilities and skills sets. This is despite instructions and obligatory e-learning on climate and the environment.

An important aspect of engaging people in normative dialogue is to ensure that they see this as being encouraged and supported by leadership. One interviewee mentioned being reprimanded by her superiors when she shared IIED's normative information as that was deemed a task for those higher in the hierarchy. She explained: "When I say we should discuss something they just say that it isn't your mandate." If such restrictions are widespread, it does not bode well for motivating those working directly with LLCAF contributions to share their experience and learnings.

Key finding 2: Outcomes related to priorities. It may seem self-evident that consistent and coherent priorities should be a foundation for normative dialogue, but staff rotation and uneven communication efforts have hindered clarity and consensus.

Different processes have emerged to structure and initiate a normative dialogue to put LLCAF on the agenda of Sida and other actors. The process of prioritising dialogue on the LLCAF principles was initiated by IIED a few years ago, when representatives came to Sida headquarters to ask for Sida's buy-in, together with support for convening efforts. Subsequent LLCAF discussions at Stockholm+50 were largely about setting these aims as a priority. In interviews, this was described as a new impetus towards shared norms and priorities related to environment and climate at Sida, particularly as related to biodiversity. This included a major upswing in reporting about normative dialogue in conjunction with the conference.¹⁴ There are varying views about how strong this impetus currently is, but a few interviewees acknowledge that momentum slowed after Stockholm+50.

In Kenya, Sida representatives report that the main priority is to **ensure that the LLCAF agenda, embodied in FLLoCA, encompasses the root causes of environmental degradation and dysfunctional adaptation, e.g., lack of environmental resilience due to overgrazing and loss of biodiversity.** The problem is that FLLoCA and much of the national/county level discourse is on social resilience and shorter-term disaster risk management rather than responding to chronic environmental degradation. One Sida interviewee described their engagements with the World Bank regarding this social resilience versus environmental resilience continuum as "They have a do no harm approach around environmental issues, but we want to look at co-benefits to biodiversity."

¹⁴ Sida. (2023). *Vi driver svenska prioriteringar och universella normer inklusive jämställdhet, miljö och klimat*. Rapport, Analyshubb Mål 2

When FLLoCA was being designed the embassy did not raise these concerns in their judgement memorandum.¹⁵ Changes in staff and varied capacities of staff were described by two interviewees as having a detrimental impact on Sida's ability to maintain clear and consistent messages about how it interprets LLCAF priorities. In response to a recognition that the programme was moving in a direction that did not reflect Sida priorities, normative dialogue (in conjunction with contribution management) was used to **draw attention to the need to engage more environmental resilience (as opposed to social resilience) expertise among the partners**. One interviewee expressed these concerns about how FLLoCA was being structured, “We can’t have a normative dialogue on environment and climate when they put forward social resilience people as those to talk to.” It is hoped that this will shift the mindset in a programme that is going to be extremely influential in Kenya's LLCAF efforts going forward. Through discussion around these concerns, Sida is trying to influence the World Bank and Kenyan authorities regarding how the programme is being staffed and how national and (especially) county-level procedures are being designed to overcome risks that ignorance about environmental resilience can lead to suboptimal financing priorities.

Key finding 3: Outcomes related to policies. Sida has a generally low-key approach to promoting LLCAF policies, preferring to allow partners to lead, while investing in data and using the outcomes of contributions to inform policies.

Sida has maintained an iterative approach to its dialogue on LLCAF. Policy change is expected to emerge from applying the lessons of pilot contributions, and those results will take time to emerge. For example, in Bangladesh Sida’s normative dialogue influence is most apparent in relation to ensuring that LoGIC leads to policies (and subsequent investments) that reflect normative goals of (a) shifting focus of the climate adaptation to local level; (b) anchoring environmental concerns in the goals of local authorities and their communities; and (c) recognising the need to base the planning decisions on climate vulnerability data. All of these require a patient, evidence-based, listening approach to policy influence.

There was a risk, apparent early in the contribution, that the programme would **fall into replicating policies for the use of already existing local development funds that focused on poverty and livelihoods, rather than the environment and climate**. Interviewees describe how, through dialogue and engagement with UNCDF in particular, it was possible to encourage actions to reduce climate-related vulnerability and to target the most climate vulnerable communities. Staff with environmental

¹⁵ Embassy of Sweden in Kenya. (2021). *Beslut om insats: Finansiering av lokalt drivna klimatåtgärder*. [https://documents.iati.openaid.se/document/kenya/14698_Decision14698WorldBank-FinancingLocallyLedClimateAction\(FLLoCA\).pdf](https://documents.iati.openaid.se/document/kenya/14698_Decision14698WorldBank-FinancingLocallyLedClimateAction(FLLoCA).pdf).

expertise were employed and data collected to drive this policy influence. Interviews suggest that, at Sida's urging, this is beginning to transcend the LoGIC programme itself and influence government approaches more broadly. One Sida staff member stated "We make clear that we don't want to just see pilots. We want to see systemic change."

At a global level, IIED's Sida-funded process of influencing policies is described by both Sida and IIED as being built around growing awareness of people about why LLCAF is needed, how it can be achieved, and how this relates to the broader climate adaptation agenda. This has involved a consensus-building process among important stakeholders, primarily at global/donor level. Policies are reported to be emerging in different countries that reflect what countries are learning from the growing body of knowledge about LLCAF. Like-minded actors are developing partnerships, facilitated through IIED's convening role.

Key finding 4: Outcomes related to practices and partnerships. Partner-led normative dialogue is encouraged as Sida seeks to avoid falling into an advocacy role. Sida sees its role as having a greater focus on reflection on lessons about practical application of LLCAF.

UNCDF and IIED see Sida's central position as a large donor to encompass a leadership responsibility to actively advocate for LLCAF. Interviews indicate that **Sida has a somewhat different and relatively low-keyed approach, compared with other 'pushier' donors.** One Sida staffer described their relationship with intermediaries involved with LLCAF as follows:

"At negotiations they have large events where they advocate for the principles. They engage with the ministers that are there, etc. They can hold these fora that we cannot. We are there due to having signed the principles, but we can't drive the agenda in the same way as a think tank devoted to advocacy."

Within the examples in this case study, Sida interviewees tend to **describe LLCAF as primarily being promoted by its partners**, with significant financial support from Sida. This exemplifies how Sida often plays a central role in creating conditions for credible normative dialogue that is then led by think tanks and programmatic partners. The extended processes, influencing people, practices, and partnerships, rely on lessons from programmes such as LoGIC and FLLoCA being applied more broadly, i.e., linking contribution management and normative dialogue.

As described above, in order to better target climate vulnerable communities and focus more on climate, Sida engaged with UNCDF and UNDP to ensure that staff with relevant environmental skills were hired and climate vulnerability mapping was undertaken. This enabled outcomes to emerge well beyond the communities targeted in the project itself. **Provision of data and enabling partners to develop their**

practical experience helped to maintain a focus on underlying problems. Awareness led to new partnerships and attitudes were influenced among key individuals. This exemplifies the importance of measures to maintain an evidence-driven normative focus in the face of risks related to bureaucratic inertia and path dependency that obstruct efforts to concentrate on emerging climate risks. LoGIC has been described by two interviewees as confronting vested interests who were defending the status quo of how local development funds are prioritised and utilised.

Partnerships analysed in this case study can be seen as falling into two broad categories. First, there are those wherein **Sida funds think tanks and CSO networks, which in turn drive their own normative dialogue.** Sida plays an essential supportive role (financially and normatively) without trying to define their agendas. These partnerships are largely driven by Sida headquarters and regional structures. PACJA and IIED are examples of this, but there are many others, including WRI and a range of CSOs.

The other set of partnerships are those that are anchored in, but also transcend, contributions. In these, **Sida funds a programme and then acts to support learning from the successes and challenges of the programming experience.** Sida may even encourage spin-offs or discussions on national scale-ups of these programmes. These contribution-related partnerships are managed by the embassies. Sida uses its **support to LoGIC and FLLoCA to justify being part of broader multi-donor processes to influence policies at national levels.** There are hopes that the LoGIC experience may lead to large-scale funding from the Green Climate Fund, which would entail a vast scaling-up of the model. As such, through this contribution-based initiative it is expected that Sida may soon exert significantly greater influence.

This approach may seem self-evident, but **challenges arise when trying to achieve synergies between the global and the contribution-based levels.** Sida has a growing range of local experience with climate adaptation, but awareness of this experience and the lessons that exist are not well shared across the range of global partners. Of particular note, there have been missed opportunities for exchange of the LoGIC experience with the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya and the regional office in Bangkok, both of which are involved in related initiatives. The regional Sida office in Bangkok, for example, is supporting UN Women in Bangladesh through the regional EMPOWER programme and is also supporting the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre regionally in gendered aspects of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, but there is no apparent awareness of the LoGIC experience and potential for bringing together these interventions for shared learning. The Embassy of Sweden in Kenya has had no dialogue with the Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh regarding lessons from LoGIC that can be applied in the newer FLLoCA, despite facing very similar challenges.

Dialogue with UNCDF has generally been regarded as constructive. For example, UNCDF displayed a readiness to adapt when Sida raised concerns that the framing of LoCAL was too focused on economic development, given environmental priorities.

With Sida's encouragement, UNCDF in Bangladesh played a central role in ensuring that the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change was brought into the dialogue with the Ministry of Local Government to situate environmental norms in the practices of LoGIC. The LoGIC team was also, at Sida's urging, engaged in the Bangladeshi Consultative Group on Climate Change. Sida also supported UNCDF by engaging a Swedish consultant experienced with systems for biodiversity financing that could perhaps be introduced in Bangladesh. Furthermore, Sida is described by government authorities as playing a significant role in encouraging inter-ministerial cooperation. This has normative implications in that the need to bring together poverty and environmental aims is emphasised. Examples such as these illustrate how a non-directive, collegial partnership with UNCDF can act as an entry point to raise ideas about new and innovative approaches beyond their actual financed programmes.

Summary response to EQ1: Normative dialogue on LLCAF is influencing the global dialogue, but it remains a 'work in progress' at national and sub-national levels as it is being tested and adapted to the local level.

1.3.2 Factors influencing effective dialogue

Approaches and mechanisms for success

EQ2: What are examples of *successful outcomes* of normative dialogue at Sida? What are examples of *unsuccessful outcomes*?

EQ3: Which key *success factors* and *mechanisms* can be identified? Which key factors and mechanisms can be identified as hindering successful normative dialogue?

EQ6: How do approaches to normative dialogue, such as the *choice of cooperation partner* at different levels and the way the collaboration is conducted, affect the results? Specifically, in regard to choices at the country level and the so called 360-model?

Key finding 5: Entry points for normative dialogue must be understood within diverse ongoing dialogues (and normative tensions) at national and local levels.

LLCAF involves engaging in broader ongoing dialogues within countries about devolution and power over financial decision-making that precede and extend beyond climate finance per se. As such, success is reliant on adapting aims and modalities to these wider processes. Choice of partners also reflects who is able to implement appropriate projects (with a central role for local government of course) rather than partners that are specialised in climate adaptation.

Climate adaptation efforts have been plagued by tendencies for financial resources and decision-making to remain 'stuck' at global and national levels, despite commitments to devolution. This relates to distrust and uncertainty about the capacities of local

governments and communities to handle investments¹⁶. This also reflects a range of path dependencies inherent in the climate finance architecture wherein centralised structures are the norm when channelling large financial resources. In Kenya there has been a particular recognised need to reflect over how climate financing norms can be aligned with national constitutional norms requiring devolution of power to the counties. This is central to the justification for initiating FLLoCA.

Localised approaches are not a panacea though. One Sida interviewee stressed the need for dialogue to ensure that funds remain targeted on environmental resilience:

“Just because they are local doesn’t mean they know about potential solutions and underlying environmental and climate risks... The problem of drought is about unsustainable natural resource management and too many cows. Cultural issues like this are so hard to discuss, but we need to get it on the agenda.”

Lack of awareness about the root causes of climate vulnerability and competing investment priorities among local (sub-national) governments may distract from intended overall objectives. **Interviewees acknowledge a risk that climate funds may be seen as ‘re-branded’ generic local development funds. Success is thus influenced by how local actors understand and reproduce their work with these pre-existing modalities, even when implementing ‘new’ projects.** This is a particular concern when decisions are made by local authorities in acute need of basic infrastructure who lack the technical background to recognise which investments contribute to or detract from climate adaptation. Efforts to overcome obstacles such as these have featured piloting of new granting mechanisms, investments in capacity of local actors to manage new resource flows, and (to a limited extent) general awareness raising regarding the value of the principles that are intended to guide LLCAF. LoCAL’s global efforts have been devoted to finding practical solutions to how to overcome these challenges to rolling out the LLCAF principles. Local level experience provides important and concrete evidence that these processes can be both viable and valuable, i.e., that local authorities can manage climate funds and that the investments reduce climate vulnerability. Normative dialogue involves sharing these lessons.

Evidence in this case study indicates that **national dialogues on devolution predominate over efforts to promote global environmental norms**. Interviews in Bangladesh and Kenya indicate limited awareness and engagement with the global LLCAF principles. The emphasis instead is more on working within a national discourse on the roles of local government in climate adaptation. At this level factors

¹⁶ Marek Soanes, Clare Shakya, Anna Walnycki, and Sam Greene. (2019). *Money where it matters: designing funds for the frontier*. IIED London.
<https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10199IIED.pdf>.

such as goal conflicts between local authorities' accountabilities for addressing short-term livelihood crises and long-term response to environmental issues are more apparent. Both Kenya and Bangladesh are very much affected by climate change, including recurrent natural hazards resulting in both acute disasters and chronic extreme poverty due to loss of biodiversity and natural resource degradation. As such, they experience pressures to address both short-term livelihood shocks and long-term environmental pressures. The role of Sida in normative discussions about control over climate funding therefore reflects a recognition of how politicians at national and sub-national levels are responding to this mix of pressures.

There are tensions in that LLCAF is, obviously, supposed to be locally-led. **Actions (and dialogues) at local level are largely beyond the sphere of influence from Sida staff** who express regret regarding how limited their direct contacts are with local authorities to monitor and influence the challenges of keeping the focus on climate. Key dysfunctions in these processes, as described by interviewees, can be summarised as follows:

- There is generally only a vague awareness of the eight principles at national levels (among both Sida and its partners), and it would be an exaggeration to suggest that they represent strong normative guidance. These principles may reflect broader human rights commitments and multi-dimensional perspectives on poverty, but these 'dots' are frequently not 'connected';
- Sida may not have a 'choice' of partners in a given country through which to promote selected norms as the operational capacities and financial management mandates may make ministries of local government and treasury preferred counterparts, rather than environmental authorities;
- Working through strong multilateral partners such as the World Bank and UNDP has meant that Sida inevitably has limited opportunities to directly engage in dialogue at sub-national levels;
- Given that national LLCAF dialogue is anchored in contributions, statutory management meetings and procedures are the main entry points for communicating with partners. But these are largely treated by partners as administrative fora with limited opportunities to raise attention to normative issues; and
- There is little apparent engagement with civil society at national and regional levels as partners that could (in principle) help to engage communities in this dialogue, despite close Sida collaboration with civil society-linked think tanks at global level and on other climate issues at local level.

In relation to FLLoCA, Sida has primarily emphasised normative dialogue related to ensuring that the environment end of the 'environmental resilience to social resilience continuum' remains in focus. This is not to imply that Sida does not work with social resilience. There are active normative dialogues and a significant contribution portfolio related to, e.g., social protection. There is broad recognition that a strong social

resilience system is important for addressing the rights of climate vulnerable populations. It is rather that the **LLCAF dialogue efforts are seen as a vehicle to also raise attention to environmental norms to address the underlying factors that generate this vulnerability.**

In Bangladesh this has involved supporting UNCDF to develop a national climate vulnerability index (based on lessons from LoGIC) that has become a way to better highlight environmental factors, rather than just extreme poverty, in prioritising investments. The Ministry of Local Government now has access to data to support these facets of decision-making and this has been described as contributing towards a shift beyond the standard Bangladeshi discourse on extreme poverty. **Sida was thus able to apply foresight in recognising the risks of a flexible local climate fund being 'captured' by local politicians who are used to just targeting poor households.** UNCDF was also encouraged to put into place measures, beyond LoGIC, to keep the focus on climate vulnerability.

The LoGIC initiatives to focus on environmental goals are driven by the Embassy of Sweden together with UNCDF in particular, with which these normative priorities (and concerns) have been shared. A challenge noted in efforts to drive normative discussions involves default assumptions (within the Bangladesh government) is that LoGIC is expected to be run as "just another project" to invest money in vulnerable communities.¹⁷ The embassy has therefore needed to make a particular effort to convey the message that it wants to promote normative change in how environmental resilience is perceived and addressed by local authorities and communities, i.e., an agenda beyond Sida's immediate core functions as financier and as a contribution manager. UNCDF and UNDP are supportive of these normative efforts being tied to the project.

Summary response to EQ2 and EQ3: Success in normative dialogue at local level involves integration of LLCAF aims into ongoing processes and conversations related to devolution of authority. Normative dialogue within contribution management is Sida's opportunity to influence this within pilot initiatives.

Summary response to EQ6: Sida has varying levels of control over choice of cooperation partners at different levels. The 360-model of bringing these levels together in a synergetic manner remains an aspiration. Selected partners at country level inevitably have mixed awareness and ownership for the LLCAF principles as they remain focused on adapting these concepts to local realities.

¹⁷ Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh. (2020). *Mid-Term Evaluation Report, Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) Project*. <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9959>.

Organisation, role division and follow-up

EQ4: How does Sida's *prioritisation, planning and follow-up* of normative dialogue affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

EQ5: How does Sida's *organisation* of the normative dialogue, i.e., roles, responsibilities, forum for dialogue, and timing affect the results of normative dialogue? How does Sida's role in and *coordination within Team Sweden*, affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

Key finding 6: Efforts to mainstream LLCAF norms within Sida are a 'work in progress', with significantly less engagement by Team Sweden than with what was the 'gold standard' of normative dialogue, i.e., the Feminist Foreign Policy.

Interviewees specifically differentiate between the status of the respective Swedish perspectives. **The low-keyed approach described above would not be used in reference to gender where, due partly to the Feminist Foreign Policy and a clearly pronounced and highly visible government commitment, Sida's stance is loud and clear.** It appears that this is indicative of how gender equality is an unequivocal normative priority that is shared across Team Sweden, but environment and climate, apart from when intersecting with gender, are still frequently seen to be technical or sectoral matters. This is a long-standing issue at Sida that is starting to be addressed. In the words of one interviewee:

"If you look at gender, you could go to any Swedish partners and ask about gender, they would have something to say. Not the case with environment. Normative dialogue comes in here. We need to be able to talk about environment, climate, and biodiversity in this manner as we do about gender. We have looked at the Feminist Foreign Policy and saw how it became natural. Needs to also happen with environment. Our main target is our colleagues at the embassies."

Despite a well-established 'success story' within the Feminist Foreign Policy, the question of how to pursue normative dialogue through stronger Team Sweden and 360 models is relatively new within environment and climate. Interviews indicate that **there is not yet a clear consensus on what normative dialogue means and what it should consist of when in terms of prioritisation, planning and follow-up when applied to environment and climate.**

Some interviewees stressed that attitudes among Sida programme officers need to change if they are to recognise and act on priorities to treat environmental issues as cross-cutting normative priorities and not just technical concerns. Some staff are said to 'get it', whereas others do not. Some statements in interviews implied that there is push-back in response to what may be perceived as yet another mainstreaming agenda from headquarters.

Key finding 7: The gaps in the 360-model regarding LLCAF relate to insufficient broader engagements from Team Sweden. Initiatives are underway to address this, but it is too early to assess outcomes.

The 360 model assumes a close vertical approach between headquarters and the embassies, tied with a horizontal engagement with MFA (and perhaps other parts of Team Sweden). This is not what LLCAF looks like at Sida. Instead, a model has emerged with a horizontal axis between Sida headquarters and its think tank, other donor, and multilateral partners at global level. There is another horizontal axis between embassy staff and their national partners who are involved in implementing contributions. In the view of the evaluation, the two horizontal axes are not sufficiently linked.

Ensuring embassy-level uptake of useful advice from headquarters may be obstructed where embassy-level programme officers see normative dialogue related to headquarters priorities to constitute additional tasks on top of their main responsibilities of managing contributions. Also, Trac guidance makes clear that contribution management is their main responsibility and that they should carefully prioritise their limited time and resources. The Trac guidance devotes minimal attention to normative dialogue (less than one page out of over 200 pages of help texts).

Related to this, the need to focus on “getting the money out the door” was mentioned as one possible reason for a hesitancy to engage with the normative dialogue agendas of IIED and other global think tank partners. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to delve further into analysis of Sida’s internal management and hierarchies, but it is noted that some stakeholders have stated that embassy-level programme officers do not have this discretionary power in relation to prioritising their work.

There are plans to **enhance the role of regional hubs which could serve to better link contributions to the global normative dialogue agenda, but this is a work in progress.** Despite a shaky start due to staff changes and other factors, a more proactive effort by the environment and climate change hub at the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya has begun work and intend to apply the 360-model as a central pillar. They seek to link environment to overall thinking across Sida and Team Sweden. This relates to broader efforts, driven by the regional hub, to ensure that environment becomes a profound cross-cutting perspective in Sida’s work. These ideas represent intentions to change how people at Sida think and engage with one another across embassies, with headquarters, across Team Sweden, etc., with an envisioned outcome that environmental concerns become fully integrated across Sida.

Interviewees could not identify significant engagements from the MFA in LLCAF dialogue. Some references to ambassadorial involvement were mentioned with regard to pollution and raising attention to the importance of addressing gender concerns when visiting climate hot spots in Bangladesh. In general, MFA engagements have been more

focused on drawing attention to the importance of gender-climate linkages, rather than LLCAF per se.

Summary response to EQ4: The prioritisation, planning and follow-up of LLCAF is a ‘work in progress’ and is being pursued with mixed levels of awareness across Sida. Limited ownership and understanding of the concepts thus far limits capacities to link global commitments to lessons emerging from the field.

Summary response to EQ5: Team Sweden is not optimally engaged in LLCAF. Efforts through regional hubs show promise for fostering a more joined up agenda, but they are too new and perhaps under-resourced to achieve these aims.

Communication means and tools

EQ7: How do *methods* within normative dialogue, such as the practice of different *communication means and messages* and the way Sida adapts them to local contexts, affect the results?

Key finding 8: With the important exception of events such as those at Stockholm+50, Sida has generally kept a low profile in communicating LLCAF norms, which is partly related to an absence of dialogue and communications plans encompassing headquarters and embassy initiatives directly related to LLCAF.

Beyond programmatic dialogues, **communication methods for LLCAF have emphasised leveraging conferences and large events to bring actors together to achieve consensus on the principles.** The main example of this was the Stockholm+50 conference held in June 2022 which was Sweden’s seminal event in recent years in positioning efforts towards environmental action going forward. At the conference there was a session co-hosted by Sida and IIED on LLCAF. Further engagements in global events (COP 25, COP 26) have also been leveraged to move discussions forward in relation to local aspects of climate change adaptation in general, and LLCAF in particular. In addition, interviewees emphasise narrower bilateral discussions where the results of pilot efforts provide facts and experience regarding what works in LLCAF.

Overall, **Sida tends to keep a low profile wherein partners are enabled to take a leading role in setting norms and driving the dialogue.** This is apparent in the relationship with IIED, wherein (based on a broad agreement on norms) IIED was funded and encouraged to work with WRI and a broad range of other actors to develop the eight principles. Sida could then, after extensive internal discussions, endorse the principles and provide a forum at Stockholm+50 to encourage broader agreement. It would be inaccurate to suggest that Sida took a leading role, but by encouraging and funding IIED to lead, it played an effective role. In the words of one Sida staff member,

“We buy into their strategy.” The side-event at the Stockholm+50,¹⁸ and an associated Sida-contracted IIED publication¹⁹ were central to Sida’s launching of its own engagement with the eight principles. This endorsement built on Sida’s long history of engagement in supporting inclusion of local and human perspectives on climate change.

The **internal Sida communication mechanisms for making LLCAF a visible priority are not fully in place**. There have been hopes that country level experience could provide examples that could be shared at headquarters and among the embassies of what LLCAF means and why it is important, but thus far this has rarely materialised. Feedback loops between headquarters and the embassies on lessons from normative dialogue are acknowledged by some interviewees to be weak due to (a) lack of joint concrete dialogue plans encompassing headquarters and embassies; (b) lack of shared awareness/knowledge; and (c) insufficient resources to make these exchanges happen.

The visibility of Sida’s support to civil society regarding LLCAF appears limited, notably among Sida staff who are not very aware of civil society’s potential roles. Sida is the main financier of PACJA, but has not been active in opening communication channels between them and Sida financed programmes. PACJA would like to engage more actively with FLLoCA, particularly with regard to ‘following the money’ and generally safeguarding the transparency of the approach, but has thus far not had an opportunity to become involved to a significant extent.²⁰ This may be due to PACJA being supported by Sida regionally via the Embassy of Sweden in Ethiopia. There seems to be minimal engagement from the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya with PACJA. This is despite PACJA being based in Nairobi and providing an important channel for support to civil society in Africa for a range of climate and local environmental issues and in liaising with regional economic communities and the African Union.

The ability of the embassy to engage actively in programmatic dialogue and thereby raise attention to broader normative aims varies according to the structure of the contribution. With FLLoCA there have been **frustrations regarding perceived lack of entry points** to influence what is primarily a conversation among the World Bank, the Kenyan treasury authorities implementing the programme, and county authorities.

¹⁸ UNEP. (2022). *Financing Locally Led Action for People, Nature, and Climate in the Decade of Action*. <https://www.stockholm50.global/events/financing-locally-led-action-people-nature-and-climate-decade-action>.

¹⁹ Ebony Holland, Sejal Patel, Dilys Roe, and Clare Shakya. (2022). *Money Where It Matters for People, Nature, and Climate: Driving Change Through Support for Local Level Decision Making over Resources and Finance*. IIED, London. <https://pubs.iied.org/20966iied>.

²⁰ PACJA is even engaged in other civil society watch dog initiatives related to climate funds, e.g., the Green Climate Fund Watch, <https://www.gcfwatch.org/>.

There is no evidence of LLCAF being raised at other levels of engagement between Sida/MFA and the World Bank at headquarters level.

By contrast, within LoGIC feedback highlights how embassy representatives are directly engaged in consultative meetings, public events, and meetings with relevant divisions. Issues are being raised regarding the importance of bringing together the normative aims of local governments, agencies supporting livelihoods (e.g., agricultural extension) and environmental authorities. **Sida was described as actively encouraging collaboration among these diverse authorities on local solutions that combine social equity and responding to environmental risks.**

Summary response to EQ7: Global events have constituted important communication channels that have both influenced Sida and been influenced by Sida. When pursuing the roll-out of LLCAF in practice, Sida has generally assumed a low-keyed role, preferring to encourage its partners to ‘do the talking.’ There is some frustration that insufficient structures are in place to communicate about LLCAF across Sida and to engage with civil society.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

The theory of change (ToC) for Sida’s application of normative dialogue, presented in the inception report for this evaluation, is based on a number of underlying assumptions about the system that Sida and its partners apply when using dialogue to influence norms. While the overall ToC, and the conditions for systemic collaboration in the different domains of change set out in the ToC are relevant – with regard to LLCAF the gaps are still many. The theory of change developed by the evaluation team in the inception phase of this evaluation is seen in Figure 1.

Regarding the Sida/Team Sweden institutional domain, it is apparent that the 360-model is more of an aspiration than a reality. Linking the dots between the national and global dialogues involves bringing together two complex and dynamically changing agendas. These normative priorities inevitably diverge and shift over time. Dialogue fora across Team Sweden and between headquarters and the embassies are insufficiently developed.

Selection of partners involves a mix of strategic and practical considerations and coordination among Sida headquarters, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and programme officers involved in contributions. But sharing is limited, and hierarchies may present obstacles to the intended joint approach. The role of the programme officers, at the frontline of normative dialogue, is of strategic importance as they are tasked with harmonising Sida’s commitments with partners’ practices. This is always going to be a difficult task.

The frustrations that exist within Sida and among its key partners around efforts to mount a coordinated, consistent, and coherent approach to LLCAF reflect long-standing challenges to establishing the environment and climate as a full-fledged ‘perspective’. Tendencies to treat the environment and climate as sectoral or technical concerns have not yet been overcome. More structured and conscious efforts are now getting underway to revisit approaches, but it is too early to judge the results.

Efforts to learn from LLCAF are still strongly anchored in the contribution management sphere. This, together with Sida’s often low-keyed and not always consistent messaging, has sometimes muddled the essential links between practical programmatic learning and a more global dialogue on normative LLCAF aims. This is not just a problem with environment and climate efforts, as a recent report states, “It is apparent that there is a lack of clarity around the concept of ‘normative dialogue’ and how it differs from ‘normal dialogue’.”²¹

Sida should consider how to ensure that the 360-model shifts from being seen as a ‘hub and spokes’ model linking headquarters and the embassies, to being better anchored in active sharing among embassies, including those with regional programming. The Bangladesh example has clear experience of relevance for the challenges being faced in Kenya. The regional experience in Bangkok supporting normative dialogue and learning about local disaster risk reduction from a human rights and gender perspective might also contain opportunities to inform the Bangladesh experience and feed into Sida supported regional learning processes. These are currently missed opportunities to operationalise the 360 model in a more appropriate manner. New approaches need to respect and reflect the learning underway around contributions, while also acting more proactively to utilise other normative analyses emerging from Sida’s support to global think tanks and CSOs. These components need to be brought together.

A lesson from the normative process related to FLLoCA is the importance of having a clear and consistent normative agenda which reflects strategic commitments. But clarity may not be enough. It is uncertain whether a stronger normative agenda at the outset would have changed the focus, and whether the current more forceful dialogue will succeed in influencing the direction of programming and with that Kenya’s broader LLCAF policies and practice.

A lesson from the normative process with LoGIC is that, if Green Climate Funds are accessed in the future, the lessons from contributions can be leveraged for genuine normative change at scale. Lessons can be learnt about the value of LLCAF that, in

²¹ Sida. (2023). *Vi driver svenska prioriteringar och universella normer inklusive jämställdhet, miljö och klimat*. Rapport, Analyshubb Mål 2.

principle, could be expected to even influence Sida's broader normative agenda and provide a country level validation of the aims embraced at Stockholm+50.

ANNEX 1 CASE-SPECIFIC LITERATURE REVIEWED

1. ALNAP. (2023). *Four Locally-Led Adaptation Recommendations for Humanitarian Actors for COP 28*. (17 November, 2023).
2. Christoplos, I., Anderson, S., Arnold, M., Galaz, V., Hedger, M., Klein, RJT and Le Goulven, K. (2009). *The Human Dimension of Climate Change; The Importance of Local and Institutional Issues*. Commission on Climate Change and Development, Stockholm, Sweden.
<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/human-dimension-climate-adaptation-importance-local-and-institutional-issues>.
3. Commission on Climate Change and Development. (2009). *Closing the Gaps; Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation in Developing Countries*. Commission on Climate Change and Development, Stockholm, Sweden. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/closing-gaps-disaster-risk-reduction-and-adaptation-climate-change-developing-countries>.
4. Embassy of Sweden in Kenya. (2021). *Beslut om insats: Finansiering av lokalt drivna klimatåtgärder*.
[https://documents.iati.openaid.se/document/kenya/14698_Decision14698WorldBank-FinancingLocallyLedClimateAction\(FLLoCA\).pdf](https://documents.iati.openaid.se/document/kenya/14698_Decision14698WorldBank-FinancingLocallyLedClimateAction(FLLoCA).pdf).
5. Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh. (2020). *Mid-Term Evaluation Report, Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) Project*.
6. Holland, E., Patel, S., Roe, D., Shakya, C. (2022). *Money where it matters for people, nature, and climate: driving change through support for local level decision making over resources and finance*. IIED, London.
<https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2022-05/20966iied.pdf>.
7. Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) Project. (2019). *Annual Progress Report*. Local Government Division.
<https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/BGD/LoGIC%20Annual%20Report%202019%20v2.pdf>.
8. Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) Project. (2020). *Annual Progress Report*. Local Government Division.
[file:///C:/Users/kano/Downloads/LoGIC%20Annual%20Progress%20Report_2020%20\(Final\)%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/kano/Downloads/LoGIC%20Annual%20Progress%20Report_2020%20(Final)%20(1).pdf).
9. LoCAL. (2022). *Accelerating Adaptation Through Local Adaptation*. Concept Note, Ninth Annual Board Meeting MFA and Sida. *Guidance note for strategic dialogue with the World Bank Group 2022-2023*.
10. Openaid. (n.d.). *Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA)*.
<https://openaid.se/en/contributions/SE-0-SE-6-14698>.

11. Rédaction Africanews and AFP. (2023). *Kenya: President Ruto lifts logging ban*. <https://www.africanews.com/2023/07/03/kenya-president-ruto-lifts-logging-ban/>.
12. Republic of Kenya: The National Treasury and Planning. (2020). *Financing Locally-led Climate Action Program (FLLOCA)*. Terms of Reference and Scope of Services. <https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ToR-for-the-Development-of-the-ASSA-Manual-Cleared-by-WB-June-2020.pdf>.
13. Sida. (2015). *Accelerating climate action through locally led adaptation*. LoCAL Annual Report 2021.
14. Sida. (2017). Chemicals and Hazardous Waste: Green Tool Box Information Brief. <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62042en-chemicals-and-hazardous-waste.pdf>.
15. Sida. (2018). Bilaga till regeringsbeslut. *Strategi för Sveriges globala utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar miljö, hållbart klimat och hav, samt hållbart nyttjande av naturresurser 2018–2022*.
16. Sida. (2019). *Dialogue Support for Environment Integration into Democracy and Human Rights*, Green Tool Box: Dialogue and Assessment Tool. <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62231en-dialogue-support-for-environmental-integration-into-democracy-and-human-rights.pdf>.
17. Sida. (2021). *Fördjupad strategirapport för utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar miljö, hållbart klimat och hav samt hållbart nyttjande av naturresurser 2018–2022*. <https://cdn.openaid.se/app/uploads/2021/11/23143022/Fordjupad-strategirapport-Hallbar-miljo-hallbart-klimat-och-hav-samt-hallbart-2018-2022-210515.pdf>.
18. Sida. (2021). *People and Planet: Gender, Environment and Climate in the 2030*. Session Concept Note, 2021, LoCAL.
19. Sida. (2022). *Climate and Environment Policy*. https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2022/05/30135810/10206291_Sida_Climate_and_Environment_Policy_may-2022_ENG_web.pdf.
20. Sida. (2022). *Human Rights Based Approach – Rättighetsperspektivet*. <https://www.sida.se/partner-till-sida/metoder-och-material/human-rights-based-approach-rattighetsperspektiv>.
21. Sida. (2023). *Vi driver svenska prioriteringar och universella normer inklusive jämställdhet, miljö och klimat*. Rapport, Analyshubb Mål 2.
22. Sida. (2021). *Normative Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, The case of Act Church of Sweden (CoS)*. <https://www.sida.se/publikationer/the-case-of-act-church-of-sweden-cos>.
23. Sida. (2021). *Normative Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, The Case of the Coffee, and Climate Initiative (CCI)*.

- <https://www.sida.se/publikationer/the-case-of-the-coffee-and-climate-initiative-cci>.
24. Sida. (2021). *Normative Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, The Case of the International Vaccination Institute (IVI)*.
https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/06/24092558/10205075_Sida_Normative_dialogue_IVI_webb.pdf.
 25. Sida. (n.d.). *Sidas verksamhetsplan 2022-2024*.
 26. Soanes, M., Bahadur, A., Shakya, C., Smith, B., Patel, S., Rumbaitis del Rio, C., Cogger, T., Dinshaw, A., Patel, S., Huq, S., Musa, M., Rahman, M., Gupta, S., Dolcemascolo, G., and Mann, T. (2021). *Principles for locally led adaptation*. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London. <https://www.iied.org/10211iied>.
 27. Soanes, M., Rai, N., Steele, P., Shakya, C., and MacGregor, J. (2017). *Delivering real change: getting international climate finance to the local level*. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London. <https://www.iied.org/10178iied>.
 28. Soanes, M., Shakya, C., Walnycki, A., and Greene, S. (2019). *Money where it matters: designing funds for the frontier*. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London.
<https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10199IIED.pdf>.
 29. Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa. (2021). *People and Planet: Gender, Environment and Climate in the 2030 Agenda – report from the MENA Hub*.
<https://www.swedenabroad.se/globalassets/ambassador/dialogue-institute/documents/mena-hub-report-from-sida-people-and-planet-conference-march-2021.pdf>.
 30. UNCDF. (2018). *Financing local adaptation to climate Change: Experiences with performance-based climate resilience grants*.
https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents/Supplements/Financing_local_adaptation_to_climate_change_UNCDF.pdf.
 31. UNEP. (2022). *Financing Locally led Action for People, Nature, and Climate in the Decade of Action*.
<https://www.stockholm50.global/events/financing-locally-led-action-people-nature-and-climate-decade-action>.
 32. UNEP. (2022). <https://www.stockholm50.global/about/about>.
 33. UNEP. (2022). *The Closing Window: Climate crisis calls for rapid transformation of societies*. Emissions Gap Report.
<https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>.
 34. World Bank. (2019). *Financing Locally-led Climate Action Program: Program Information Document (PID)*.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/762721583745126806/pdf/Co>

[ncept-Stage-Program-Information-Documents-PID-Financing-Locally-Led-Climate-Action-Program-P173065.pdf](#).

2 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

THEMATIC CASE FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

Key finding 1: *Outcomes related to people, policies, partnerships (national)*. The normative dialogue on Child Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) in Mozambique was built on strategic partnership and mobilisation of actors and alliances. The embassy brought like-minded actors together in a strategic advocacy process on a legal reform and the normative dialogue contributed to the policy shift and institutional changes.

Key finding 2: *Outcomes related to people, policies, partnerships (national)*. The dialogue process in Liberia on expanding access to safe and legal abortion led to mobilisation of partners and strengthened local capacities and evidence to take the process forward. The changes the normative dialogue has contributed to are mainly through Sida's partners and based on good relations with the Ministry of Health.

Key finding 3: *Outcomes related to priorities (global, regional, national)*. The CEFM and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) examples illustrate successful responsiveness to strategic opportunities aligned with priorities of Sweden's partners and allies. Both normative processes resulted in desired policy changes.

Key finding 4: *Outcomes related to policies (global)*. SRHR integration in UHC's agenda resulted from normative dialogue built on mutual alignment in strategic partnership and mobilisation of actors and alliances. The coordinated normative dialogue has contributed to several regional policy shifts and institutional changes.

Key finding 5: Team Sweden has used different global spaces, parallel to regional and bilateral opportunities, for normative dialogue on abortion rights and provided large financial support to SRHR actors that focus on abortion rights globally, regionally and/or nationally.

Key finding 6: The strong and well-coordinated partnership between Sida headquarters, the regional Sida SRHR team and the MFA was a key success factor. The fruitful in-depth Team Sweden approach at embassy-level in Mozambique has led to a strategic and structured approach to normative dialogue, and substantial gains against CEFM. Having strategic partnerships with key global SRHR actors, and with CSOs in Mozambique, was another success factor. These partnerships were built on long-term relations backed with financial support from Sida.

Key finding 7: The regional SRHR team with its thematic and contextual expertise was crucial for Sida's and MFA's normative dialogue on SRHR both in the UHC and Liberia abortion cases. Having seconded Swedish thematic expertise (or former Sida/MFA staff) in UN agencies is also a strength when working on policy agendas where Sweden has a forthright policy position.

Key finding 8: Embassies have a clear and strong mandate to directly engage in normative dialogue. The channel from Sida to the MFA helps facilitate strategic dialogue on priorities. Good teamwork can be achieved when the dialogue involves different positions and functions within the embassy in a participatory way. That enables a fruitful mix of thematic and political capacities and expertise.

Key finding 9: Using existing momentum for change and supporting national actors' needs to take a process forward were key in the case of Liberia's revised Public Health Bill; funding and capacity-building were critically used alongside the normative dialogue.

Key finding 10: The success of the normative dialogue was based on a structured and agreed plan, stakeholder, and event mapping, as well as presence at key events prior to the high-level political meeting on UHC.

Conclusions in brief: External opportunities for pushing boundaries and the level of opposition to SRHR are important factors in the case study. To navigate such political contexts and be able to tailor approaches accordingly, the existence of a regional thematic strategy that focuses on policy dialogue at regional level, supported by a regional team with both technical and diplomatic competencies have been effective. Team Sweden has played a significant role in the examples as proactive and strategic coordination between Sida and the MFA has paid off. The case study illustrates the importance of political commitment at management level, existence of thematic expertise, a clear mandate at the relevant unit to directly engage in normative dialogue and well-established alliances.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This case study focuses on Sida's and Team Sweden's use of normative dialogue around sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as per the ToR and approved inception report.²² More specifically, the case study focused on:

- The implementation of the previous and current regional SRHR strategy in Africa²³ through the example of SRHR and Universal Health Coverage (UHC),²⁴
- Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) in Mozambique; and
- Safe and legal abortion, both globally and with a focus on country examples in Liberia.

2.1.1 Focus and scope of the case study

The geographical focus (identified by Sida in the ToR) for the case study was Africa and an overview of the normative dialogue at the global level. The examples were mentioned in the ToR and then further identified and elaborated during the inception phase, in dialogue with Sida. Two of the examples have been reviewed more closely, namely the normative dialogue around the process leading to a law on CEFM in Mozambique, and SRHR integration in the UHC agenda. The country example of access to safe and legal abortion in Liberia is based on a desk review and remote consultations with a limited number of stakeholders, as with the study of normative dialogue around abortion at the global level.

“Sexual and reproductive health and rights are fundamental to health and well-being, gender equality, democracy, peace and security and sustainable development. SRHR is about the right of all people to control their own bodies and to live a healthy and productive life.”

<https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/thematic-areas/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>, (retrieved 05.07.2023).

Team Sweden's efforts behind the development of the EU Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, Team Europe Initiative and Joint

²² NIRAS. (2023). *Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015-2022*. Inception report, dated 25 January, 2023. See separate annex.

²³ Regeringskansliet. (2022). *Strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa 2022–2026*; Regeringskansliet. (2015). *Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa 2015-2019*.

²⁴ UHC means that all people have access to the full range of quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship. It covers the full continuum of essential health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care across the life course. The delivery of these services requires health and care workers with optimal skills mix at all levels of the health system, who are equitably distributed, adequately supported with access to quality assured products, and enjoying decent work. Achieving UHC is one of the SDGs targets. <https://www.uhc2030.org/fr/nouvelles-et-evenements/nouvelles-csu2030/political-declaration-for-the-un-high-level-meeting-meeting-on-uhc-555296/>. At the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on UHC in 2019, countries reaffirmed that health is a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-\(uhc\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc)).

Programming tracker were also discussed during the inception phase but were not included in the case study due to time limitation.²⁵

The introduction, including the case study analytical framework, methodology and data, is followed in section 2.2 by the background and the context. Section 2.3 presents the findings relating to the evaluation questions. Section 2.4 provides an overall conclusion of the case study. Annexes 2 and 3 to this case study provide detailed data on the global, regional, and in-country examples in the case study, and on mapped stakeholders.

2.1.2 Methodology

The case study is based on a review of documentation shared by Sida thematic specialists, the head of the regional SRHR team, and senior programme officers at the embassies in Maputo and Monrovia. KIIs were undertaken with the same, as well with former and present Swedish ambassadors, heads of cooperation, relevant previous Sida staff, and a broad range of external stakeholders, including partners.²⁶ For background and overview of abortion rights at the global level, sources available on the internet have been searched and consulted.

The two in-depth studies of CEFM in Mozambique and integration of SRHR in UHC are based on an iterative outcome harvesting of changes over time and in actors. Relevant documents were reviewed to understand the journey of integrating SRHR into UHC and documented success factors. Findings from a literature review were triangulated through targeted KIIs with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), Sida and external partners, including UN agencies and a private foundation.

The scope and nature of this evaluation focuses on Sida's role, effectiveness, and efficiency in the normative dialogue, including its role in coordination efforts with other Swedish actors (Team Sweden approach) and partners that create operating space

²⁵ A High-Level Development Cooperation Dialogue took place between Sweden, the European Commission's Directorate-General for the international Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) in Brussels. The renewal process for Sweden's Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Sub-Saharan Africa had just begun. This iterative process offered a unique operational window to explore and strengthen collaboration with the EU at the regional level. With this background and based on the analysis of a political and an operational window of opportunity with the EU, the SRHR team prepared a paper in 2019 "to test the appetite to develop a joint effort between the EU and SE with a focus on SRHR, within regional arenas, policy process and platforms in Africa as the point of departure, anchored through Sida and its regional SRHR team in Africa and under the political leadership at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs." The initiative was supported by the MFA and the dialogue with EU member states resulted in the establishment of a joint EU working group (June 2021) to develop this joint regional initiative: The TEI working group has engaged with the African Union in co-creating this joint initiative. The TEI builds on the joint analysis of needs and gaps, lessons learned from the past and ongoing actions, and will be coordinated with other actors present on the ground, while ensuring visibility of the Initiative.

²⁶ For list of interviewees see Annex 4 in main evaluation report, *Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022*.

and enable the delivery of results in line with universal norms and Swedish priorities. It does not seek to comprehensively assess programme-specific results or the effectiveness of programme management.

2.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.2.1 The normative agenda

Sweden's commitment to SRHR is **aligned with a global normative agenda** that, in part, continues to be contested in many countries, including those that receive Swedish official development assistance (ODA). SRHR consists of a diverse set of rights that can be supported partly or fully by different stakeholders. Sweden's comprehensive approach to SRHR, as per the definition of SRHR launched by the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission (GLC) in 2018²⁷ (See Box 1), is not shared by all partners and allies.

Box 1. GLC-integrated definition of SRHR

Sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Therefore, a positive approach to sexuality and reproduction should recognise the part played by pleasurable sexual relationships, trust, and communication in the promotion of self-esteem and overall wellbeing. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right. Achievement of sexual and reproductive health relies on the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights, which are based on the human rights of all individuals to:

- have their bodily integrity, privacy, and personal autonomy respected;
- freely define their own sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression;
- decide whether and when to be sexually active;
- choose their sexual partners;
- have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences;
- decide whether, when, and whom to marry;
- decide whether, when, and by what means to have a child or children, and how many children to have; and
- have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services, and support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation, and violence.

²⁷ Ann M. Starrs, Alex C. Ezeh, Gary Barker, Alaka Basu, Jane T. Bertrand, Robert Blum, Awa M. Coll-Seck, Anand Grover, Laura Laski, Monica Roa, Zeba A. Sathar, Lale Say, Gamal I. Serour, Susheela Singh, Karin Stenberg, Marleen Temmerman, Ann Biddlecom, Anna Popinchalk, Cynthia Summers, and Lori S. Ashford. (2018). *Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission*. The Lancet, Volume 391, Issue 10140, pp. 2642-2692.

The normative global and regional frameworks include, for example:

- Programme Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo, 1994;
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995;
- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its 169 targets, one target calls for “universal access to reproductive health and rights”;²⁸
- Maputo Protocol of Women’s Rights in Africa, AU (2016–30);²⁹
- Montevideo Consensus;³⁰
- Action plan for sexual and reproductive health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe – leaving no one behind (RC66);³¹
- Nairobi Statement, Nairobi summit ICPD+25, 2019;
- WHO guidelines, e.g., WHO guidelines on abortion to help countries deliver lifesaving care;³²
- International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach, UNESCO, 2018;³³
- UN Resolution ban on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), December 2012; and
- UN Resolution on Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), November 2022.³⁴

Views on SRHR are linked to social norms and values and are embedded in social and cultural perceptions on gender, sex, age, sexuality, disabilities, etc. This is particularly true with regard to bodily autonomy, reproductive rights, access to safe and legal abortion, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for children and adolescents, young (unmarried) persons’ access to contraceptives, and rights for LGBTIQI persons.

Sweden adheres to Sida as one of the donors financing the process that led to the integrated and comprehensive definition of Annica Holmberg, Philip Wambua and Abena Acheampong. (2019). *Evaluation of the Guttmacher Institute programme on the use of SRHR evidence to inform action (2015–2018)*. Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2019:15.

²⁸ Target 5.6 <https://ourworldindata.org/sdgs/gender-equality#target-5-6-universal-access-to-reproductive-rights-and-health>

²⁹ African Union. (2020). <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20201117/maputo-protocol-womens-rights-africa>.

³⁰ Cepal, N. (2014). *Report of the first session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: full integration of population dynamics into rights-based sustainable development with equality: key to the Cairo programme of action beyond 2014*. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/40336>.

³¹ WHO. (2016). *Action plan for sexual and reproductive health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe – leaving no one behind (RC66)*. <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/EUR-RC66-13>.

³² WHO. (2022). *WHO issues new guidelines on abortion to help countries deliver lifesaving care*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2022-access-to-safe-abortion-critical-for-health-of-women-and-girls>.

³³ UNESCO. (2018). *International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770>.

³⁴ Built on previous progressive language in previous resolutions on CEFM.

Though many citizens might be in favour of some of the sexual rights or reproductive rights, they can still uphold traditional norms in fear of social stigma. A recent study on values and norms related to SRHR highlights this:

“The minority’s restrictive views may still play an important role in society. First, it is relevant to consider that the minority may be part of influential groups, such as community leadership or other reference groups, and therefore have disproportional impact on other people’s behaviour. Second, it is possible that while a minority of respondents have low levels of support for a range of SRHR dimensions, this number may still be large enough to impact society. For example, although only one third of respondents think that girls are ready for marriage upon the onset of menarche, this may be a large enough number to impact the lives of girls and young women. [...] Women as well as men may not personally support FGM/C but uphold this practice in order to avoid social exclusion.”³⁵

Normative dialogue thus takes place in spaces where **old wins must be reconfirmed and where many times it is a matter of maintaining agreed language** in human rights instruments where prospects are poor for advancing the agenda on SRHR. The main controversy is around reproductive rights rather than on reproductive health. Predominant discriminatory values and norms also relate to women’s decision-making, men’s control and power over women, violence against women and children, and divorce. SRHR also relates to young people’s sexuality and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, right to choose a spouse and make their own decisions about their sexuality and reproduction.

2.2.2 Country contexts

Two country contexts are included in this case study, Mozambique and Liberia. Both countries receive long-term development cooperation from Sweden. Women’s and girls’ rights and gender equality have been and continue to be priorities in both bilateral strategies as well as SRHR. The ODA to the two countries involves support to key line ministries, reform processes and civil society.

Mozambique has one of the most liberal legislations in Africa, with right to abortion at the woman's request up to 12 weeks of pregnancy, and later in cases of rape, incest,

³⁵ Anna Kågesten, Karin Båge, Jesper Sundewall, Helena Litorp, Bi Puranen, Olalekan Uthman and Anna Mia Ekström. (2021). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Measuring Values and Norms to Guide Swedish Development Cooperation*, EBA Report 2021:04. <https://eba.se/rapporter/ny-rapport-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-measuring-values-and-norms-to-guide-swedish-development-cooperation/17663/>.

and foetal anomaly.³⁶ The Act on Domestic Violence Perpetrated against Women came into force in 2010. Child marriage was banned in 2019,³⁷ discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment became illegal in 2007 and same-sex sexual relations were decriminalised in 2015.³⁸ Sexuality education is integrated in school curricula, however, in 2022 the Ministry of Education pulled out a science textbook for 12-year-old Grade 7 pupils due to its content on, e.g., masturbation and sexual orientation. The textbook had been used since 2004.³⁹ Despite the promising legal situation, Mozambique continues to have one of the highest child marriage rates in the world, while the combat against maternal mortality has been successful. From 532 per 100,000 live births in 2000, the rate was down to 127 in 2020.⁴⁰

The laws on SRHR in Liberia show a diametrically different case. Same-sex sexual relations are criminalised with a maximum penalty of three years in prison.⁴¹ Maternal mortality in Liberia continues to be very high.⁴² The country has a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy – higher in rural areas and among young women with no education.⁴³ Over half of the Liberian women have experienced some form of gender-based violence (GBV) and rape continues to be one of the most common serious crimes. Female genital cutting affects more than two thirds of women and girls. Age-appropriate and gender-sensitive sexuality education for adolescents is permitted and the government aims to provide essential SRH services, including maternal and newborn health, family planning, and quality care to survivors of GBV and sexual gender-based violence (SGBV).⁴⁴

Abortion is only legal in Liberia when a licensed physician believes the pregnancy would substantially risk the mental or physical health of the mother, if the unborn child has any serious mental or physical defects, or if the pregnancy resulted from rape.

³⁶ WHO. (2022). *Global Abortion Policies Database, Mozambique*. <https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/country/mozambique/>.

³⁷ Law No. 19/2019. According to this law it is illegal to marry or enter into union prematurely or before the age of 18.

³⁸ ILGA World. (2024). <https://database.ilga.org/en>.

³⁹ Chad Williams. (2022). *Mozambique pulls school textbook over sexual content after social media uproar*. IOL News. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/mozambique-pulls-school-textbook-over-sexual-content-after-social-media-uproar-b58d35f9-6438-4b83-a10b-c9bcbe9a3cc3>.

⁴⁰ WHO. (2023). *Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000 to 2020*. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNDESA/Population Division. Geneva, World Health Organization. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=MZ>.

⁴¹ ILGA World. (2024).

⁴² WHO, op. cit., Despite the decrease from 777 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 652 in 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=LR>.

⁴³ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). (2021). *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20*. Ministry of Health [Liberia], and ICF. <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR362/FR362.pdf>.

⁴⁴ UNESCO. (2023). *Liberia, Comprehensive Sexuality Education*. <https://education-profiles.org/sub-saharan-africa/liberia/~comprehensive-sexuality-education>.

Access to abortion and post-abortion care is severely limited by poverty. SRHR activists call for decriminalisation of abortion based both on claims for bodily rights and social and economic justice. Women, girls, abortion service providers and persons who assist can be sanctioned.⁴⁵ The penal code says women who abort illegally can be jailed for three years, but wealthier and more educated women take advantage of ‘medical guidelines,’ which allow terminations in the interests of a woman’s physical or mental health but require the signatures of multiple doctors.⁴⁶ Unsafe abortion is a significant contributor to maternal morbidity and mortality. This is compounded by high adolescent pregnancy rates, which make adolescents particularly vulnerable to lack of safe abortion access. In 2019, the Ministry of Health (MoH), lawmakers and a network of civil society organisations began revising the country’s Public Health Law (Title 33), which included provisions on expanding access to safe abortion. Inclusion of expanded access to essential SRH services had government backing, yet was seen to be more controversial among parts of the general public, with opposition among some religious communities. Framing and backing such revisions therefore had to have a multi-stakeholder approach operating in parallel at several levels.

2.2.3 Sweden and SRHR

Sweden has a longstanding commitment to SRHR as a standalone priority and as part of the aim to strengthen gender equality and human rights both in Sweden⁴⁷ and in the world. During the period under evaluation, the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy, which highly prioritised SRHR, was in place. Sweden’s development cooperation aiming at strengthening SRHR is defined in the Government’s policy framework and supported by one global strategy: *Strategy for Sweden’s global development cooperation in sustainable social development 2018–2022*;⁴⁸ and one regional – *Strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa 2022–2026*.⁴⁹ Greater access to and respect for SRHR is also an objective in 22 bilateral strategies for development cooperation.⁵⁰ The promotion of SRHR shares common goals with Sweden’s work for human rights, democracy, and gender equality, e.g., in the promotion of rights of

⁴⁵ WHO. (2023). *Global Abortion Policies Database. Country Profile: Liberia*. <https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/country/liberia/>.

⁴⁶ Tina S. Mehnepaine. (2023). *Liberia: “Decriminalize Abortion to Reduce Death among Women,” Activists Say*. Daily Observer. <https://abortion-news.info/liberia-decriminalize-abortion-to-reduce-death-among-women-activists-say/>.

⁴⁷ Folkhälsomyndigheten. (2020). *National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) - Good, fair, and equal sexual and reproductive health throughout the population*.

⁴⁸ Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategi för Sveriges globala utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar social utveckling 2018–2022*.

⁴⁹ Regeringskansliet. (2022). op. cit., Regeringskansliet (2015). op. cit.

⁵⁰ Regeringskansliet (various years). *Bilateral strategies for development cooperation with Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Zambia (2018–2022); Uganda (2018–2023); Palestine, Tanzania, and Rwanda (2020–2024); Afghanistan (2021–2024); Bangladesh, Bolivia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, Mali, and Liberia (2021–2025); Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe (2022–2026)*. <https://www.regeringen.se/strategier-for-internationalt-bistand/?page=1>.

lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex persons (LGBTQI) and in the fight against GBV.

Sweden is one of the key donors⁵¹ to multilaterals promoting SRHR and to global SRHR CSOs. Sida is recognised as a strategic partner in a challenging environment in which agreed common global and regional positions and new rights claims are being contested by a well-organised and well-resourced opposition at local to global levels. Sweden is known as a strong voice for SRHR in high-level spaces like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), ICPD, High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the SDGs, and in Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR).

2.3 FINDINGS

2.3.1 Outcomes

This section of the case presents the changes observed in actors and behaviours that the normative dialogue has contributed to. In some instances, it has also been possible to record impacts of the dialogue process where Team Sweden has played a substantial role in facilitating advocacy work or has been directly engaged in advocacy. The changes presented below are at global and regional levels in relation to the integration of SRHR in normative commitments around UHC, and at country level in Mozambique and Liberia.

EQ1: How likely is it that the normative dialogue has *contributed* to change?

Key finding 1: Outcomes related to people, policies, partnerships (national).⁵² The normative dialogue on CEFM in Mozambique was built on strategic partnership and mobilisation of actors and alliances. The embassy brought like-minded actors together in a strategic advocacy process on a legal reform and the normative dialogue contributed to the policy shift and institutional changes.

The decision by the Swedish and Dutch ambassadors in 2016 to focus on CEFM as a policy issue led to the establishment of the high-level, coordinated, and aligned group that has expanded from two to five ambassadors.⁵³ The fact that the group has remained active throughout all shifts of ambassadors since the start, demonstrates the level of

⁵¹ Sida provides long-term assistance for SRHR and humanitarian support in crisis situations. Focus areas are: Improving sexual and reproductive healthcare and knowledge; Sex education and the health of young people; GBV; LGBTQI persons' rights, and Climate change and SRHR. <https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/thematic-areas/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>.

⁵² Refers to changes in people's individual awareness, knowledge, and skills, typically of those directly engaged in the dialogue process.

⁵³ KIIs with former Swedish ambassadors in Mozambique, 27 March and 3 April, 2023.

policy commitment and endurance for the normative dialogue on this issue. All ambassadors have been supported by their MFAs, feminist and/or gender equality commitments, as well as the consistent priority given to SRHR.

The ambassadors' groups **brought people together** on a policy process based on partnerships the embassies already had with civil society and duty bearers. Good relations with the government helped generate willingness by the Minister of Gender, other key line ministers, and key members of the parliament, including presidents of the relevant committees, to engage in dialogue and to discuss the bill with academia and CSOs (supported by the AGIR⁵⁴ programme and other CSO-support by the other embassies), and the CECAP⁵⁵ network.⁵⁶ These dialogues took place in informal gatherings at the residence of the Swedish Ambassador, and similar events at the other ambassadors' residences. The facilitation of the ambassadors' group contributed **to building and strengthening alliances** between members of parliament and civil society.⁵⁷

The normative dialogue was informed by civil society advocacy efforts and research. It was held at national level and through ambassadors' visits to different provinces in coordination with CSO partners. This increased the visibility of the issues, awareness, and support at the provincial level. Civil society and supportive members of the parliament continued to lobby for the bill at provincial and national levels.⁵⁸

One key change according to civil society actors was the **contribution to a shift in UNICEF's mindset**. They did not support the CECAP advocacy in the beginning but changed mindset due to UNICEF's mandate, role, and ability to influence policy processes. The previous efforts to convince UNICEF had not been successful, but with the joint efforts from the CSOs and the ambassadors' group, UNICEF eventually changed their position.⁵⁹

The KIIs with former Swedish ambassadors informed that there were some loaded and heated debates in the parliament, where civil society was accused of promoting foreign agendas, and where the Ambassador of the Netherlands, who was present at a session, was accused of interfering in internal affairs. Nonetheless, the **bill was passed in 2019**

⁵⁴ Action Programme for Inclusive and Responsible Governance (AGIR), multiple donors supported civil society accountability programme, initiated by the Embassy of Sweden.

⁵⁵ Coligação para Eliminação dos Casamentos Prematuros (CECAP), national civil society network on CEFM.

⁵⁶ KIIs with former and current ambassadors and embassy programme manager in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 May, 2023.

⁵⁷ KIIs with former and current ambassadors and embassy programme manager in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 May, 2023.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ KIIs with civil society actors, various dates May 2023.

criminalising child marriage and through that honouring Mozambique’s regional and global commitments to ban CEFM.

After the passing of the bill, the ambassadors' group **contributed to increased awareness** among rights holders and duty bearers of the existence of the law. They did this through continued dialogue with duty bearers at different levels, publications, visits to different provinces and a campaign featuring young advocates acting as “ambassador for a day.”⁶⁰ Maintaining fruitful dialogue with the current key ministries has been more challenging, both for the group of ambassadors and their civil society partners. The action plan developed by the ambassadors has been delayed due to the lack of accessibility of the ministers, though the group continues to pursue normative dialogue at the national level. It is said to have been easier to engage with provincial governments over the last year. Sida has continued project support to partners administering the law at local and provincial levels.⁶¹

Key finding 2: Outcomes related to people, policies, partnerships (national). The dialogue process in Liberia on expanding access to safe and legal abortion led to mobilisation of partners and strengthened local capacities and evidence to take the process forward. The changes that the normative dialogue has contributed to are mainly through Sida’s partners and based on good relations with the Ministry of Health.

At the time of data gathering for this evaluation,⁶² the revised Public Health Law had passed the Liberian Lower House of Parliament. If passed by the Upper House and assented into law, the Public Health Law will effectively repeal the 1976 Liberia Penal Code, thereby expanding access to safe abortion.

Even though this ultimate objective is still pending, it was possible to conclude that the **dialogue and facilitation process to date helped create a strong evidence-base**, making the case from a public health perspective. This was considered vital among stakeholders, with strong national anchoring in the Ministry of Health. With the

⁶⁰ KII with former and current ambassadors and embassy programme manager in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 May, 2023. Shared action plans, reports and minutes by the Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique: CEFM High-Level Policy Dialogue - 2021 workplan - V. 2021-04-29-EMA; *Plans on Child Marriage*; *Action plan for the HoM’s advocacy work towards Ending Child Marriage Road Map*; *High level joint advocacy on CEFM – workplan for August 2019 to June 2020*; *High level joint advocacy on CEFM, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands & UK*, Updated On October 29th, 2018; *Advocacy work toward ending child marriage, Child Marriage Report*; *High level joint advocacy on CEFM, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands & UK*, Joint High-Level Advocacy Brief 2018 and 2019; *Minutes of the CEFM technical meeting with CECAP/AMODEFA, 2021-02-18*, several filed trip notes and minutes from meetings with partners and other stakeholders.

⁶¹ KIIs with current ambassador and embassy programme manager in Mozambique, 3 May, and 25 May, 2023.

⁶² July 2022.

election period in Liberia, solid research and a research methodology are being taken forward by national actors (including the University of Liberia Medical School) who are ensuring that the debate stays focused on the potential health and economic benefits from a law reform.

In other words, although the ultimate outcome of having the revised Public Health Bill passed is still outstanding – which would create an enabling environment for concrete impact level results – a number of **intermediate outcomes** can be identified from this process to date:

- *People and practices:* Involving national stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Health’s technical staff) in the data gathering and analysis built skills and buy-in and helped create an evidence-base. It provided support to policymakers and decision-makers at the Ministry in how to frame and approach the issue and how to navigate sensitivities and potential opposition;
- *Policies:* While the draft bill is still pending, it holds the potential to become a model for other Ministries of Health in the region where the same research institute has been working with national stakeholders to strengthen the evidence-base; and
- *Partnerships:* The draft bill included a consultative process and gathered multiple stakeholders from across ministries, multilateral agencies (WHO, UNFPA), CSOs, academia (Liberia University Medical School) and the extended Team Sweden in Liberia (the Swedish CSOs RFSU and Kvinna till Kvinna, both with operations in Liberia). This ensured that the evidence gathered can also feed into broader advocacy networks and lead to follow-up. Research from the African Public Health Research Centre (APHRC) provided an evidence-base that was critical for the advocacy work, leading to effective and close collaboration with regional bodies and the African Union (AU). A spin-off effect is that there is now increased interest and capacity of researchers at the Liberia University Medical School to take on this methodology and continue to research abortion practices from a public health angle.

The Liberian example concerns a contested right and is implemented in a context that is more challenging than Mozambique. The changes that the normative dialogue has contributed to are mainly through Sida’s partners and based on good relations with the Ministry of Health. The ‘in-principle’ support by the Liberian President is relevant when and if a new Health Bill, including more abortion rights, would pass. The steps so far are important and should be sufficient to raise political support for a more liberal abortion legislation. However, the **normative dialogue must happen with the legislators that, in turn, need to be convinced that they will not lose voters’ support** in a country dominated by conservative churches and traditional Islam. The cultural links with the US are strong, and groups opposing abortion in Liberia receive financial support from conservative groups in the US to fight against sexual and reproductive rights.

Key finding 3: Outcomes related to priorities (global, regional, national). The CEFM and UHC examples illustrate successful responsiveness to strategic opportunities which aligned with the priorities of Sweden, partners and allies. Both normative processes resulted in the desired policy changes.

The normative dialogue on CEFM was characterised by a **strategic plan and a tight alliance with like-minded actors at high diplomatic level**. It was backed by research and rights-based civil society claims on the accountability of duty bearers. While the Universal Health Coverage process⁶³ used both formal and informal mechanisms and spaces, the **Mozambican examples had informal and less protocol-based discussions** as the main strategy. All civil society actors consulted claimed that the significant engagement that their partnering embassies had on the process led to the new law. This process was also characterised by a series of attitude changes of technical and political gatekeepers at governmental level and within the parliament. What was different in the CEFM example was that the initiative of the ambassadors was inspired and informed by the long-term efforts led by civil society partners. The high-level diplomacy and creation of informal dialogue spaces, thus, added value to already ongoing and coordinated advocacy work, as well as to advocacy work within UN agencies.

In 2018, SRHR was not raised as an issue in the UHC process. Sida identified that there was no ownership of such advocacy efforts and had the mandate and the expertise to initiate dialogue with allies.⁶⁴ With **its five strategies and key messages**, the **road map**⁶⁵ was instrumental for both internal strategy meetings between partners and advocacy work at key spaces leading up to the UN High-Level Meeting (HLM) on UHC.⁶⁶ **Research** was collected⁶⁷ proving why SRHR needed to be integrated in UHC supported the normative dialogue at different levels. The claims gained **visibility** and were **clearly communicated** prior to the HLM. Together, this was a very well-articulated, planned, and successful normative dialogue and advocacy process.

Key finding 4: Outcomes related to policies (global). SRHR integration in the agenda of UHC as a result of normative dialogue built on mutual alignment in strategic partnership and mobilisation of actors and alliances. The coordinated normative dialogue has contributed to several regional policy shifts and institutional changes.

⁶³ See Annex 2 to the case study for details on the UHC example.

⁶⁴ KII with Sida 29 September, 2022. Sida. (2018). *Concept Note: Integrating SRHR into UHC, DRAFT*, not public document.

⁶⁵ Sida. (2019). *Draft HLM health equity, gender and SRHR roadmap*.

⁶⁶ KII with Sida, 21 September, 2022.

⁶⁷ Sida. (2018). *SRHR in UHC – Evidence Framework, Final*.

The UHC process aimed at influencing member states to adopt a UHC declaration that would include SRHR to as much an extent as possible. The strategy was to develop and follow a detailed road map together with allies to build collective action, evidence, and support for the desired change at the HLM in September 2019. A first result was the achievement of a coordinated approach by the Sida Regional SRHR Team, Sida headquarters and the MFA reaching the group of like-minded and multiple types of actors (governmental and private donors, multilaterals and international CSOs). The draft concept note developed by Sida was successfully negotiated and approved by the group. The identified and agreed strategies were backed by a road map and key messages that were used in the normative dialogue at different levels and in different spaces. In summary, **Team Sweden, with leadership and technical expertise from the SRHR team, managed to establish strategic support** for the agenda and mobilise a group of key actors to push the agenda forward together with Sweden.

At the highest policy level, as a result of the normative dialogue, SRHR was adopted as an integral **component of UHC at the Geneva 2019 HLM political declaration on UHC**. To support the technical operationalisation of the declaration, an SRHR and UHC **reference group was established at WHO**. At an institutional level, a

notable policy change is the **inclusion of SRHR and UHC integration in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) global strategy**.⁶⁸ The mandate and legitimacy of the two UN agencies, WHO and UNFPA, helped to create leverage for the political declaration. Policy briefs and position papers on SRHR and UHC have been developed, e.g., *Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: An essential component of UHC*,⁶⁹ and tools for strengthening SRHR into UHC have been developed, such as, the sexual and reproductive health interventions in the WHO UHC Compendium⁷⁰ and gender transformative tools by UNFPA.⁷¹

SRHR integration into UHC as one of the 12 Key strategic shifts of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025.

“Scaling up the provision of high-quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services, as part of universal health coverage plans.”

SRHR is being included in essential health services package in several countries in the SADC region. The partnership among UN agencies has been strengthened. The

⁶⁸ UNFPA. (2024). <https://www.unfpa.org/strategic-plan-2022>.

⁶⁹ UNFPA. (2019). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: An Essential Element of Universal Health Coverage*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/SRHR_an_essential_element_of_UHC_2020_online.pdf.

⁷⁰ WHO. (2021). *Sexual and reproductive health interventions in the WHO UHC Compendium*. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/340624>.

⁷¹ UNFPA (2021). *Gender-Transformative Accelerator*. <https://www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/gender-transformative-accelerator>.

regional 2gether4SRHR programme, funded by Sida's regional SRHR strategy, has helped strengthen UN partners (UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO) to work together to influence the SRHR agenda in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, through the 2gether4SRHR programme, SADC has developed a regional SRHR strategy⁷² that requires member states to integrate SRHR into the UHC and primary health care agenda.

These achievements are highly significant and have already had a transformative effect on policy formulation. The **political commitment can potentially become an important tool for health ministries and national accountability claims**. It also enables monitoring and comparisons between countries and provides legitimacy to SRHR interventions focusing on health systems and structural changes implemented by UN agencies and other donor support.

The outcomes support Agenda 2030 goals, both, directly related to right to health of all rights holders, and to gender equality. In a global climate where there is a resourceful and very vocal resistance to sexual and reproductive rights, the political declaration is a considerable win given its potential to contribute to shifts in norms at the institutional level. Sida's funding of the UN joint 2gether4SRHR programme, as well as other initiatives with a focus on SRHR and UHC in Sub-Saharan Africa are strengthening the likelihood of transformative effects.

Summary EQ1. The three examples were found to have led to significant changes. The CEFM and UHC examples illustrate successful responsiveness to strategic opportunities which aligned with the priorities of Sweden, partners, and allies, resulting in the desired policy changes at national level (Mozambique) and regional and global levels (UHC). In Liberia, the dialogue through Sida's partners led to mobilisation of actors promoting a more liberal abortion legislation and strengthened local capacities and evidence to take the process forward.

2.3.2 Factors influencing effective dialogue

Approaches and mechanisms for success

EQ2: What are examples of *successful outcomes* of normative dialogue at Sida? What are examples of *unsuccessful outcomes*?

EQ3: Which key *success factors* and *mechanisms* can be identified? Which key factors and mechanisms can be identified as hindering successful normative dialogue?

⁷² UNAIDS, SADC Secretariat. (2019). *Strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights in the SADC region, 2019-2030*. <https://hivpreventioncoalition.unaids.org/resources/strategy-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-sadc-region-2019-2030>.

EQ6: How do approaches to normative dialogue, such as the *choice of cooperation partner* at different levels and the way the collaboration is conducted, affect the results? Specifically, in regard to choices at the country level and the so called 360-model?

Key finding 5: Team Sweden has used different global spaces, parallel to regional and bilateral opportunities for normative dialogue on abortion rights, combined with large financial support to SRHR actors that focus on abortion rights globally, regionally and/or nationally.

The MFA directly conducts **global normative dialogue on abortion**.⁷³ These dialogues are mainly led by the permanent missions in Brussels, Geneva, and New York. In Brussels, this focuses on EU common positions; in Geneva, in relation to the Human Rights Council and UPRs; and in New York, on specific UN processes such as CSW, International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and SDGs. Sweden's firm and consistent position is known globally.⁷⁴

SRHR integration in UHC emerged from Sida's and MFA's discussion on how to ensure that abortion is part of health care systems and universal health coverage.⁷⁵ The examples give a good illustration of how Team Sweden has used different global spaces, parallel to regional and bilateral opportunities for normative dialogue. Figure 2 below illustrates how these and other elements came together in the UHC initiatives.

Normative dialogue at the global level is combined with large **financial support to SRHR actors that focus on abortion rights in their global, regional and/or in-country advocacy work**, and by providing abortion and post-abortion services.⁷⁶

Sida provides core support to International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and has a framework agreement with the Swedish IPPF member the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) as a strategic partner to the Strategy for support via Swedish CSOs. Both have a strong stand for abortion rights. Through several bilateral strategies, Sida provides project support to Ipas⁷⁷ and Marie Stopes International (MSI), both organisations focusing on abortion. Sida finances evidence-based research on abortion through the Guttmacher Institute. The regional SRHR strategy for Africa also supports research with funds to the APHRC,⁷⁸ and the Centre for Human Rights at

⁷³ The example is based on a light touch study of Sweden's engagement for access to safe and legal abortion around the world. It does not cover any specific process but summarises some of the main strategies used.

⁷⁴ KIIs with the MFA and permanent missions, 13 February, 24 February, and 23 May, 2023.

⁷⁵ KII with Sida, 21 September, 2022.

⁷⁶ See Annex 2 to this case for a table providing an overview of the support to SRHR through different aid modalities (core, programme, project support or pool funding) and strategies.

⁷⁷ Ipas also receives global core support from Sida.

⁷⁸ See also country example from Liberia in section 4.3.

the University of Pretoria. The latter provides technical support to civil society and ministries on how to report on the Maputo Protocol of Women's rights in Africa. Article 14 (2) (c) of the Maputo Protocol "guarantees the rights of women and girls to access abortion for pregnancies following sexual assault, rape, and incest and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental or physical health of the mother or the life of mother or the foetus."⁷⁹

Sida provides core support to several organisations which are, both, rather unique and essential for the long-term advocacy work of the partners (see Annex 3 to this case study). In addition, Sida initiated the Global Safe Abortion dialogues with other donors as a platform for discussion and information sharing around joint strategic advocacy and dialogue on safe abortion globally.

Summary EQ2: Examples of positive outcomes are provided under EQ1 above.

Summary EQ3 and EQ6: The use of global and regional spaces to promote abortion rights, combined with large financial support to key SRHR actors operating at different levels proved to be key behind success, as was the close collaboration between Sida and the MFA in identifying dialogue opportunities. Factors hindering successful normative dialogue were in this case mainly external, i.e. the very strong and resourceful opposition to SRHR in general and abortion rights in particular.

Organisation, role division and follow-up

EQ4: How does Sida's *prioritisation, planning and follow-up* of normative dialogue affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

EQ5: How does Sida's *organisation* of the normative dialogue, i.e., roles, responsibilities, forum for dialogue, and timing affect the results of normative dialogue? How does Sida's role in and *coordination within Team Sweden*, affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

Key finding 6: The strong and well-coordinated partnership between Sida headquarters, the regional Sida SRHR team and the MFA was a key success factor. The fruitful in-depth Team Sweden approach at the embassy-level in Mozambique has led to a strategic and structured approach to normative dialogue, and substantial gains against CEFM. Having strategic partnerships with key global SRHR actors, and with CSOs in Mozambique, was another success

⁷⁹ African Union. (2019). *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. <https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights-rights-women-africa>.

factor. These partnerships were built on long-term relations backed with financial support from Sida.

The Swedish position on SRHR in UHC was jointly developed by the MFA and Sida and forwarded both directly through permanent missions, Swedish diplomats, Sida policy experts, and through dialogue carried out by allies as part of the coordinated process, among them UN agencies and The integrated Civil Society Organisations System (iCSOs) receiving Sida funds.⁸⁰ Sweden **working as one** across Team Sweden was another success factor, illustrated by the partnership between Sida headquarters, the regional Sida SRHR team, the embassies and the MFA. There was full trust in the regional team, which was allowed to lead, together with a handful of other experts.⁸¹ The MFA was supportive and could exert additional influence where that was needed. The fact that Sweden could ‘press’ several buttons to influence was identified as a key success factor, along with the internal capacity at Sida to drive the normative dialogue. Consulted actors who were part of the process noted that the regional team had the right experts and leadership to influence SRHR integration into UHC.

Having **the right and strategic partnerships** was another success factor. This can be divided into two sub-factors: a) the fact that Sida has an established relationship both as an ally, co-donor and donor to many of the key actors in the field; and b) the combination of the resources at Sida and the partnership with a private foundation that had funding with easy access to facilitate the change.⁸² Sida, at the same time, had networks and partnerships they could reach out to influence. Globally, Sweden is known and respected as a promoter of gender equality and SRHR, which gave legitimacy to the process. Sweden could build on trust gained throughout the years as an SRHR advocate.

Respondents also mentioned strategic partnerships and ‘relationships’ through which Sida carefully mapped the partners to bring on board and provided them with the support they needed to influence. Sida strategically involved UN agencies, especially WHO and UNFPA. In addition to UN agencies, the choice of civil society organisations like HEARDS and IPPF also helped in mobilising and reaching the audience who may be difficult to reach through the UN agencies. The same respondents emphasised that it is not enough just to have partnerships but that it is also critical to have personal relationships with the partners. That helps to create trust, and trust is extremely important when promoting rights that are so heavily contested.

⁸⁰ KII with Sida and external stakeholders, various dates June 2023.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² KII with external stakeholder, May and June 2023.

Communication strategies involved combining dialogue with action. Respondents mentioned that, **beyond advocacy, it helps to finance some projects to demonstrate what is required.** As an example of this, Sida has funded UN partners to implement the 2gether4srhr program, which helps to influence and position SRHR in target countries.⁸³

The High-Level Policy Dialogue Group against CEFM is an informal group with a commitment to support the Government of Mozambique in its efforts to combat child marriage through targeted advocacy and policy dialogue. The still ongoing normative dialogue has been implemented since 2016 through strategic high-level and technical coordination with like-minded donors (from one to four other ambassadors), informed by civil society partners advocating, firstly, for legal change and secondly, for implementation of the new law.⁸⁴ Based on political commitment and will over time, thematic expertise, good relations with key ministries and civil society, including financial support, a structured plan closely monitored, the use of informal spaces, this initiative on high-level bilateral normative dialogue contributed to policy change as a result of a joint effort.⁸⁵

This example of country-specific normative dialogue illustrates a fruitful in-depth coordination at the embassy-level between the ambassador and national staff responsible for Swedish development cooperation. The Head of Cooperation has played a minor role but has been supportive of the dialogue directly planned and conducted by the ambassadors and the national programme officer (also deputy head of cooperation).⁸⁶ The initiative is entirely embassy-based, with the MFA and Sida headquarters being informed about the process.

Key finding 7: The regional SRHR team, with its thematic and contextual expertise, was crucial for Sida's and MFA's normative dialogue on SRHR both in the UHC and Liberia abortion cases. Having seconded Swedish thematic expertise (or former Sida/MFA staff) in UN agencies is also a strength when working on policy agendas where Sweden has a forthright policy position.

The presence of the SRHR regional team, previously based at the Embassy of Sweden in Zambia, now in Pretoria and at Sida headquarters, has provided Sida with local insight. The evaluation found that the **thematic expertise** on SRHR helped to push the

⁸³ Sida also bilaterally supports UNFPA and other UN partners as well as key SRHR CSOs in target countries; hence, this is done both regionally and bilaterally.

⁸⁴ KII with former and current ambassadors and embassy programme manager in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 April 2023. Action plans and minutes shared by the embassy, 2023.

⁸⁵ KII with former and current ambassadors and embassy programme manager in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 April 2023. Action plans and minutes shared by the embassy, 2023.

⁸⁶ KIIs with the current Head of Cooperation and the Ambassador, 2 and 5 May 2023.

agenda. The regional team, consisting of 12 staff members, provided data and country examples to the policy advisor and political leadership in Sweden. The SRHR team is unique, both in size (many thematic experts in the same unit), and the fact that they are responsible for a regional development cooperation strategy that gives the team a mandate to engage directly in normative dialogue. The global strategy on social sustainable development also explicitly mandates engaging in normative dialogue. Sida's lead policy specialist for health and SRHR is mandated to engage in normative dialogue. Sida headquarters houses several thematic SRHR experts across various units and departments.⁸⁷ The fact that SRHR was a priority for Swedish development strategy provided the impetus for Sida, MFA and civil society organisations to prioritise SRHR as part of the normative dialogue.

The thematic and contextual expertise allowed Sida to identify the empty policy space and utilise the opportunity that arose. The Sida team was **quick to identify UHC as an ideal opportunity** to advocate for SRHR, knowing that the **normative dialogue was grounded in Swedish positions and backed by its political agenda**. Several of Team Sweden key informants said, “We used UHC as an entry point.”

Having former Sida staff or Swedish experts seconded in strategic organisations was likewise important. Respondents observed that it is easier to influence when Swedish experts work in SRHR strategic organisations such as UNFPA and WHO.

Sida informants stressed that aligning **SRHR to global commitments, norms and standards** is a success factor. In all discussions and through the advocacy process, SRHR was seen and presented as part of human rights. It was also seen as part of universality as advocated in UHC. All the above contributing factors to the success of the UHC case are illustrated in Figure 2 on the next page.

A final finding on the UHC example was that this successful process has not fully been captured through Sida's reporting system. In fact, the entire process (up to the date of this evaluation) was covered for the first time through the case study.

⁸⁷ KIIs with Sida, 23 September 2022, 29 May and 2 June 2023.

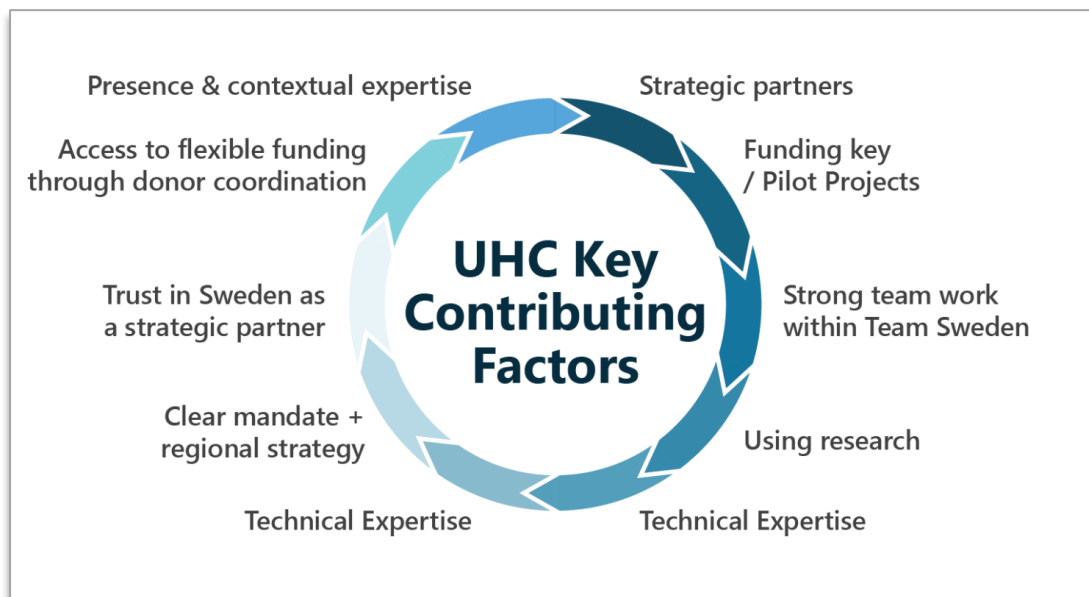


Figure 2 UHC - Key contributing factors: endurance, local knowledge, and strong teamwork.

Key finding 8: Embassies have a clear and strong mandate to directly engage in normative dialogue. The channel from Sida to the MFA helps facilitate strategic dialogue on priorities. Good teamwork can be achieved when the dialogue involves different positions and functions within the embassy in a participatory way. That enables a fruitful mix of thematic and political capacities and expertise.

The example from Mozambique involves a Swedish embassy that aligns with other embassies in-country. Embassies have a **clear and strong mandate** to directly engage in normative dialogue under the lead of the ambassador. The direct channel to the MFA helps facilitate strategic dialogue on priorities.⁸⁸ The normative dialogue was driven at the embassy-level with reporting to the MFA and Sida headquarters for information purposes. All staff at the embassy can be part of the process if required. In this particular case, the ambassador(s) placed trust in the national thematic expertise at the embassy and developed a **true teamwork** where the local staff and the political leadership combined their strengths:⁸⁹

“It was an issue of leadership. We need to demand that staff makes an effort to understand the role of other colleagues and give clear signals that it is about teamwork. The work needs to be developed together with the head of cooperation. The ambassador should engage in the overall political issues, but the head of cooperation also

⁸⁸ KIIs with former and current Swedish ambassadors in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 May 2023.

⁸⁹ KIIs, Mozambique, 3 April and 5 May 2023.

needs to understand these issues and think politically about the development cooperation as well.”⁹⁰

The ambassador could combine conviction and passion for gender equality and SRHR with the **passion, skills, and experience** of the programme staff.⁹¹ The process identified was well **aligned with Swedish policies and priorities**, while also reflecting **the partner portfolio**. Figure 3 illustrates how these and other elements came together in the CEFM initiatives.

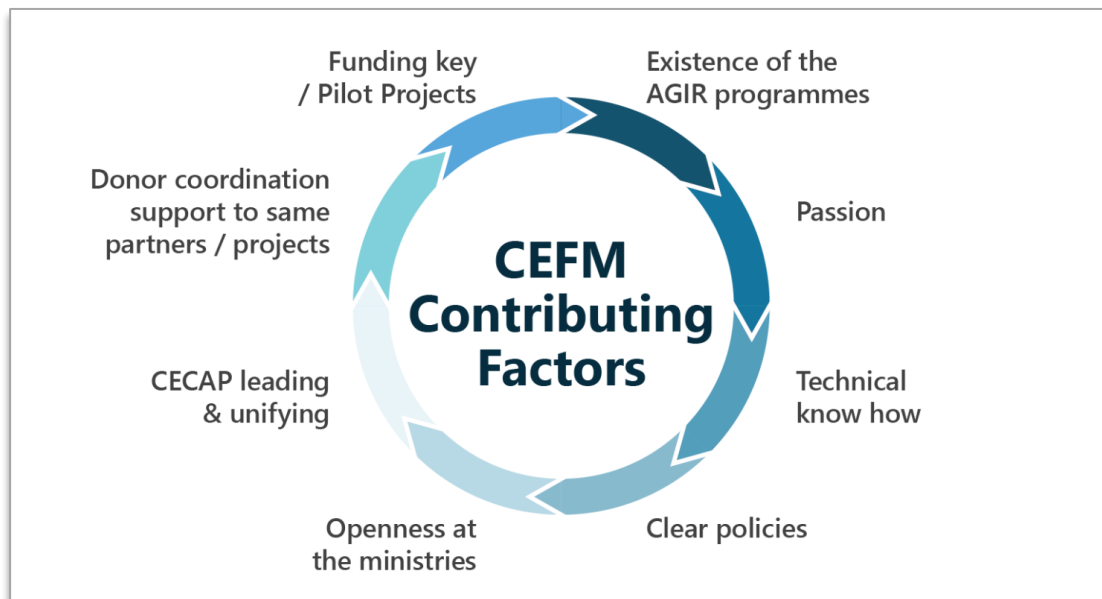


Figure 3 CEFM Key contributing factors: endurance, local knowledge, and strong teamwork.

The opportunity in Mozambique was identified and rooted in partners’ advocacy work (and a large accountability programme), which allowed the embassy team to capitalise on the knowledge of partners and collaborating networks.⁹² This relationship was kept throughout the process, and the embassy was **continuously informed by partners’ strategies** under the lead of CECAP.

The embassy team identified strategic **policy partners** among other donors, which **amplified the impact of the normative dialogue**.⁹³ The fact that different CSOs and research partners were supported by the different donors active in the dialogue also broadened and deepened the legitimacy of the normative dialogue. The dialogue was evidence-based and conducted through informal spaces, with no minutes or fixed agendas. Other contributing factors to the success were the development of strategic

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ KIIs with former and current Swedish ambassadors in Mozambique, 27 March, 3 April and 5 May 2023.

plans by the political and technical teams, informed by CSO partners, and consistent monitoring of “ambassador for a day” (2022 and 2023) action plans. There was also an openness to testing new approaches, such as shifting focus more to the provincial level when dialogue at national level was less successful.

Key finding 9: Using existing momentum for change and supporting national actors’ needs to take a process forward were key in the case of Liberia’s revised Public Health Bill; funding and capacity-building were critically used alongside the normative dialogue.

Key institutional factors included a clear and strategic approach at the regional level, including a **mapping of entry points and support to existing change initiatives** where there was existing national momentum/potential for change. Moreover, Sida facilitated the development of a clear ToC for the dialogue effort by involving partners and good utilisation of strategic synergy effects between the normative dialogue, funding, and capacity-building (e.g., the research which included training of ministry staff for widened knowledge and ownership).⁹⁴

Sida was able to build trust and attract partners by anchoring the process firmly in the African/regional context, supporting the domestication of the Maputo Protocol and bringing in a reputable African research institution/think tank, APHRC, that could conduct the research that resulted in the evidence-base critical for the advocacy. This research helped ‘elevate’ the issue to policy level while still providing granular and context-relevant evidence that can be used for health system planning and budgeting.⁹⁵ The framing of the issue in line with ongoing health reforms also contributed to a sense that the process was nationally anchored and in line with ongoing dynamics and calls for a revision of existing laws.

Strong **coordination between the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia and the regional SRHR team** in Lusaka also contributed to a strong positioning on the issue. Likewise, liaising with UNFPA, both in terms of their regional office and in Liberia, assisted in the follow-up and in ensuring coherence. Sida was also effectively involving and drawing on extended Team Sweden expertise and regional experiences, such as Kvinna till Kvinna and RFSU.⁹⁶

Partners also highlighted the importance of showing public commitment and leadership. For instance, the Swedish Ambassador has personally demonstrated his support for SRHR through public outreach and appearance at the first ever National

⁹⁴ KIIs with partners and other stakeholders, May and June 2023.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Stakeholders Conference on SRHR in Liberia, which Sweden co-financed, in May 2023.

Summary EQ4: The fact that Sida has prioritised SRHR in its organisation as well as funding decisions were crucial to the space and legitimacy for the normative dialogue. Embassies have a clear and strong mandate to directly engage in normative dialogue and the open channel for communications from Sida to the MFA helps facilitate strategic dialogue on priorities. All three examples demonstrate well-planned and structured processes, with good follow-up of the immediate processes. However, the reporting on lessons learned from normative dialogue processes could be stronger. The evaluation found that the two very good examples from CEFM and the UHC were not widely known at Sida or the MFA.

Summary EQ5: The strong and well-coordinated partnership within Team Sweden was a key success factor in all three examples. The existence of an expert regional SRHR team using existing momentum for change was key for the UHC process as well as for the Liberia case. The thematic expertise at the Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique combined with the long-term Sida support to strategic women's rights and SRHR partners were equally factors behind the success. Having seconded Swedish thematic expertise (or former Sida/MFA staff) in UN agencies is also a strength when working on policy agendas where Sweden has a forthright policy position. Also, the long-term global partnerships enabled the positive outcomes from the normative dialogue at global level.

Communication means and tools

EQ7: How do *methods* within normative dialogue, such as the practice of different *communication means and messages* and the way Sida adapts them to local contexts, affect the results?

Key finding 10: The success of the normative dialogue was based on a structured and agreed plan, including stakeholder, event mapping, and presence at key events prior to the high-level political meeting on UHC.

The changes achieved over five years involve a series of micro-level shifts of attitudes among technical and political gatekeepers at the ministry and governmental levels, as well as within UN agencies. In 2018, SRHR was not raised as an issue in the UHC process. Sida judged that there was no ownership of such advocacy efforts. The **road map**, with **its five strategies and key messages**, was instrumental at internal strategy meetings between partners and in advocacy work at key spaces leading up to the HLM. Research was used to make the case why SRHR needed to be integrated into UHC. The claims gained **visibility** and were **clearly communicated** prior to the HLM. Together this was a very well-articulated, planned, and successful normative dialogue and advocacy process.

Summary EQ7: The case study did not find that any particular communication means clearly impacted the results of the different normative dialogues. As discussed under other EQs, the Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique anchored its normative dialogue in its long-term partnership with CSOs, tailoring its messages to what the CSO partners viewed as feasible ways forward. The ambassadors used informal spaces to gather different stakeholders that normally did not meet and through those dialogue opportunities influenced members of the parliament and the government. In the case of UHC, Team Sweden together with its allies, used all possible policy spaces to raise the need of an SRHR-integrated UHC agenda. The road map had clearly tailored messages apt for those high-level meetings. The overall communication strategy was the main approach that guided interactions with allies and global and national CSO partners. The SRHR expertise at Sida and at embassy-level was leveraged through these alliances.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

The ToC for Sida's application of normative dialogue, as defined by the evaluation and introduced in the inception report, is based on a number of underlying assumptions that a system and change theory is in place. The ToC developed by the evaluation team in the inception phase of this evaluation is seen in Figure 1.

The case study on SRHR reflects the overall ToC relatively well and the conditions for systemic collaboration in the different domains of change set out in the ToC. Regarding the Sida/Team Sweden institutional domain, the **360 model appears to work well**. The examples in the case study provide evidence that it works when there is a strong team approach, and the thematic expertise is in place at different levels and organisations. Also, Swedish and international CSO partners play a crucial role in the dialogue and information sharing with both Sida and the MFA.

The political context and the characteristics of the right that is in focus obviously have an impact on how the normative dialogue can be framed and pursued. **External opportunities for pushing boundaries**, and the level of opposition to SRHR are important factors in the case study. An important conclusion is that, to navigate such political contexts and tailor approaches accordingly, it is very effective to have a regional thematic strategy that focuses on policy dialogue at regional level, supported by a well-resourced regional team with both technical and diplomatic competencies.

Sweden is expected to and can play an active role in the dialogue with big global partners, partly since Sweden is one of the key donors to SRHR and one of the few donors providing core support, but also due to Sweden's long-term and strong political position on a comprehensive SRHR agenda. The case study shows that Team Sweden has played an important role in the examples and that proactive and strategic coordination between Sida and the MFA has paid off.

The examples highlighted in this case along with other global SRHR policy efforts and Sida's support to partners aiming at securing safe and legal abortion for women all around the world, build on Sweden's **long-term commitment** to comprehensive SRHR. The examples illustrate the importance of political commitment at management level/lead positions, existence of thematic expertise, a clear mandate at the relevant unit to directly engage in normative dialogue (embassy and regional SRHR team) as well as well-established alliances. These factors were key in the level of success of each example in the study.

For the normative dialogue on SRHR, the policy lead at the MFA has support, both by thematic expertise at Sida headquarters and a team in Sub-Saharan Africa with a strong mandate to engage in policy issues through the regional SRHR strategy. In addition, several Swedish thematic experts work for global SRHR actors, including UNFPA and WHO.

The other thematic case studies in this evaluation show that there are few staff members available within Sida who can **provide guidance** on how to engage in normative dialogue. This case study demonstrates an exception. The regional SRHR team currently has 12 staff members. This team provides an important addition to Sida's lead policy specialist for health and SRHR as well as Sida headquarters and embassy staff with expertise on SRHR. The fact that Sida has a sizable regional SRHR team in Africa provides unique opportunities for a brokering role between different partners both at country and regional levels and for liaising with and mobilising other donors. The team brings thematic expertise to normative dialogue carried out at the global, regional, and country levels by embassy and Sida staff. The work initiated by the regional SRHR team demonstrates that the normative dialogue can enhance the effectiveness of the development cooperation when it is steered by clearly communicated political priorities, backed with thematic expertise and staff with a delegated mandate to actively look for dialogue opportunities. Under these circumstances it can also clearly contribute to better conditions for the realisation of human rights.

The example from Mozambique demonstrates that **close coordination** between the political lead at the embassy and the bilateral development cooperation allows for identification of normative dialogue that can leverage ongoing and supported political and social accountability processes led by Sida partners. Once again, joint and coordinated efforts, and well communicated roles and responsibilities between different levels within Team Sweden proved to be key. By being informed by the local expertise among embassy staff and partners, the group of ambassadors knew how to use the normative dialogue constructively to contribute to the reform agenda on child marriage.

ANNEX 1 CASE-SPECIFIC LITERATURE REVIEWED

1. African Union. (2019). *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*.
<https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights-rights-women-africa>.
2. Cepal, N. (2014). *Report of the first session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: full integration of population dynamics into rights-based sustainable development with equality: key to the Cairo programme of action beyond 2014*. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/40336>.
3. CSU 2030. (2019). *Political Declaration for the UN High-Level Meeting Meeting on UHC*. <https://www.uhc2030.org/fr/nouvelles-et-evenements/nouvelles-csu2030/political-declaration-for-the-un-high-level-meeting-meeting-on-uhc-555296/>.
4. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2017). *Advocacy work toward ending child marriage, Child Marriage Report*.
5. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2018 and 2019). *High-level Joint Advocacy on CEFM, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands & UK*. Joint High-Level Advocacy Brief.
6. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2018). *High-level joint advocacy on CEFM, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands & UK*. Updated on October 29th, 2018.
7. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2020). *High-level Joint Advocacy on CEFM – Workplan for August 2019 to June 2020*.
8. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2021). *Minutes of the CEFM technical meeting with CECAP/AMODEFA, 2021-02-18*.
9. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2021). *Sweden CEFM High-Level Policy Dialogue - 2021 workplan - V. 2021-04-29-EMA*.
10. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (n.d.). *Action plan for the HoM's advocacy work towards Ending Child Marriage Road Map*.
11. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (n.d.). *Plans on Child Marriage*.
12. Folkhälsomyndigheten. (2020). *National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) - Good, fair, and equal sexual and reproductive health throughout the population*.
<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/contentassets/5ced6a64b90f44ccb0dc56564e701ea1/national-strategy-sexual-reproductive-health-rights-srhr.pdf>.
13. Holmberg, A., Wambua, P., Acheampong, A. (2019). *Evaluation of the Guttmacher Institute programme on the use of SRHR evidence to inform action (2015–2018)*. Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2019:15.

- <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62224en-evaluation-of-the-guttmacher-institute-programme-on-the-use-of-srhr-evidence-to-inform-action-20152018.pdf>.
14. ILGA Database. (2024). *Legal Frameworks | Criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts*. <https://database.ilga.org/criminalisation-consensual-same-sex-sexual-acts>.
 15. ILGA World Database. (n.d.). <https://database.ilga.org/en>.
 16. ILGA World. (2020). *2020 Annual Report*. https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ILGA_World_Annual_Report_2020.pdf.
 17. Kågesten, A., Båge K., Sundewall, J., Litorp, H., Puranen, B., Uthman, O., and Ekström, A.M. (2021). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Measuring Values and Norms to Guide Swedish Development Cooperation*, EBA Report 2021:04. <https://eba.se/rapporter/ny-rapport-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-measuring-values-and-norms-to-guide-swedish-development-cooperation/17663/>.
 18. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), Ministry of Health [Liberia], and ICF. (2021). *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20*. Monrovia, Liberia and Rockville, Maryland, USA. <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR362/FR362.pdf>.
 19. Mehnepaine, Tina S. (2023). *Liberia: “Decriminalize Abortion to Reduce Death among Women,” Activists Say*. Daily Observer. <https://abortion-news.info/liberia-decriminalize-abortion-to-reduce-death-among-women-activists-say/>.
 20. Ministry of Health, Liberia, African Population and Health Research Center, Clinton Health Access Initiative Liberia, and Guttmacher Institute. (2023). *Evidence Brief Abortion Incidence and Severity of Related-Complications in Liberia*. <https://aphrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Evidence-Brief-incidence-of-abortion-study-Liberia.pdf>.
 21. Ministry of Health, Liberia, African Population and Health Research Center, Clinton Health Access Initiative Liberia, and Guttmacher Institute. (2022). *Abortion incidence and severity of complications in Liberia: Key Findings from the 2021 Liberia National Abortion Study*.
 22. Ndyanabangi, B., Livingstone, M., Gobeh, W., Logan, G., Atukunda, L. (2021). *Unsafe abortion – A Risk factor for maternal mortality in Liberia - An analysis of the characteristics of unsafe abortion clients and risk factors for maternal morbidity and mortality*. DOI: 10.29063/ajrh2021/v25i6.5. African Journal of Reproductive Health December 2021; 25 (6):43-50. <https://www.ajrh.info/index.php/ajrh/article/view/3031/pdf>.
 23. Regeringskansliet. (2015). *Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa 2015-2019*. https://www.government.se/contentassets/75e7c3cad79e4c6f9fb3e4b164482774/resultatstrategi-srhr---eng-2015_2.pdf.

24. Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Burkina Faso 2018–2022*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/6148d15d4363479e98e02475100ea161/within-the-framework-of-this-strategy-swedish-development-cooperation-with-burkina-faso-is-to-contribute-to-greater-respect-for-human-rights-institutional-capacity-growth-increased-resilience-to-crises-and-disasters-environmentally-and-climate-res.pdf>.
25. Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Sudan 2018–2022*.
<https://www.government.se/globalassets/regeringen/block/kontaktblock/utrikesdepartementet/tidigare-kontakter/mk-b/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-sudan-2018-2022.pdf>.
26. Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with South Sudan 2018–2022*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/c238fde2d7bc4d789d28eb52deef19ba/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-south-sudan-2018-2022.pdf>.
27. Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Uganda 2018–2023*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/41eab463a4a34483809e1892c672a8ec/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-uganda-20182023.pdf>.
28. Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Zambia 2018–2022*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/db59de2cb0254b2299ebd39669846767/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-zambia-2018-2022.pdf>.
29. Regeringskansliet. (2019). *Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in sustainable economic development, 2018–2022*.
<https://www.government.se/international-development-cooperation-strategies/2019/03/strategy-for-swedens-global-development-cooperation-in-sustainable-economic-development-2018-2022/>.
30. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Palestine 2021–2024*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/eafc7fcef5494153bfeaffad964b7fc1/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-palestine-20202024.pdf>.
31. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Afghanistan 2021–2024*.
32. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Myanmar 2018–2022*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/b1ba6e4ac293462fa147638677757>

- [b10/strategy---swedens-development-cooperation-with-myanmar-2018-2022.pdf](#).
33. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Bangladesh 2021-2025*.
 34. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Bolivia 2021-2025*.
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/ccaac708361c4f82a0e2f5906ea236d4/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-bolivia-20212025/>.
 35. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Colombia 2021-2025*.
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/13793d60b22a4e5ebd412fd48e5408a0/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-colombia-20212025/>.
 36. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Democratic Republic of Congo 2021-2025*.
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/df95f59a72ec4d83bf614ad3bab6d14f/resultatstrategi-kongo-engelska.pdf>.
 37. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Guatemala 2021-2025*.
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/a2c06d5d5c9244d0be16154966e197b3/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-guatemala-20212025/>.
 38. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Kenya 2021-2025*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/83cc124a50cd432db3474db4089871b5/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-kenya-20212025.pdf>.
 39. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali 2021-2025*.
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/b8fb55ac2ee84441b8fa04690743e2c6/strategi-for-mali-2021-2025.pdf>.
 40. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia 2021-2025*.
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/d093554024e74a43b78c1800a759da7e/strategi-for-liberia-2021-2025.pdf>.
 41. Openaid. (2020). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Rwanda 2020-2024*. <https://openaid.se/en/find-aid/strategies/strategy?strategycode=1060803>.
 42. Openaid. (2021). *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Tanzania 2021-2024*. <https://openaid.se/en/find-aid/strategies/strategy?strategycode=1061203>.

43. Regeringskansliet. (2022). *Strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa 2022–2026*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/2e67aeabd80b4ff48a22ce6b6d936dff/strategy-for-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-srhr-in-africa-20222026/>.
44. Regeringskansliet. (2022). *Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Ethiopia 2022–2026*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/814d6a51a0ab46c18a3bc43a5301c22d/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-ethiopia-2022-2026/>.
45. Regeringskansliet. (2022). *Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Mozambique 2022–2026*.
<https://www.government.se/contentassets/ade1766ea1ce49eeafd84924089d0f03/strategy-for-swedens-development-cooperation-with-mozambique-20222026/>.
46. Openaid. (2022). *Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Zimbabwe 2022–2026*. <https://openaid.se/en/find-aid/strategies/strategy?strategycode=1061504>.
47. Sida. (2018). *Concept Note: Integrating SRHR into UHC, DRAFT*. May 8, 2018.
48. Sida. (2018). *SRHR in UHC – Evidence Framework, Final*. December 2018.
49. Sida. (2019). *Draft HLM health equity, gender and SRHR roadmap*. May 31, 2019. Shared by Sida.
50. Sida. (n.d.). *Work with sexual and reproductive health and rights*.
<https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/thematic-areas/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>.
51. Sjöström, U. (2023, May 26). Twitter feed by Ambassador Urban Sjöström, Liberia. <https://twitter.com/SweAmbLiberia>.
52. Starrs, A. M., Ezeh, A. C., Barker, G., Basu, A., Bertrand, J. T., Blum, R., Coll-Seck, A. M., Grover, A., Laski, L., Roa, M., Sathar, Z. A., Say, L., Serour, G. I., Singh, S., Stenberg, K., Temmerman, M., Biddlecom, A., Popinchalk, A., Summers, C. and Ashford, L. S. (2018). *Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission*. The Lancet, Volume 391, Issue 10140, pp. 2642–2692. Published online May 9, 2018.
<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2818%2930293-9>.
53. UNAIDS, SADC Secretariat. (2019). *Strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights in the SADC region, 2019–2030*.
<https://hivpreventioncoalition.unaids.org/sites/default/files/attachments/SADC-SRHR-Strategy-2019-2030-for-public.pdf>.

54. UNESCO. (2018). *International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach*.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770>.
55. UNESCO. (2023). *Liberia, Comprehensive Sexuality Education*.
<https://education-profiles.org/sub-saharan-africa/liberia/~comprehensive-sexuality-education>.
56. UNFPA (2021). *Gender-Transformative Accelerator*.
<https://www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/gender-transformative-accelerator>.
57. UNFPA. (2019). *Abortion Study Commissioned by UNFPA Liberia*. Implemented by Platform for Dialogue and Peace, Liberia.
58. UNFPA. (2019). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: An Essential Element of Universal Health Coverage*.
https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/SRHR_an_essential_element_of_UHC_2020_online.pdf.
59. UNFPA. (2019). *SRHR an essential element of UHC2020*.
https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pubpdf/SRHR_an_essential_element_of_UHC_2020_online.pdf.
60. UNFPA. (2021). *Gender Transformative Accelerator*.
<https://www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/gender-transformative-accelerator>.
61. UNFPA. (2024). *The UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025*.
<https://www.unfpa.org/strategic-plan-2022>.
62. WHO. (2016). *Action plan for sexual and reproductive health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe – leaving no one behind (RC66)*.
<https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/EUR-RC66-13>.
63. WHO. (2021). *Sexual and reproductive health interventions in the WHO UHC Compendium*. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/340624>.
64. WHO. (2022). *Global Abortion Policies Database, Mozambique*.
<https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/country/mozambique/>.
65. WHO. (2022). *WHO issues new guidelines on abortion to help countries deliver lifesaving care*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2022-access-to-safe-abortion-critical-for-health-of-women-and-girls>.
66. WHO. (2023). *Global Abortion Policies Database. Country Profile: Liberia*.
<https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/country/liberia/>.
67. WHO. (2023). *Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000 to 2020*. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNDESA/Population Division. Geneva, World Health Organization.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=MZ>.

68. Williams, C. (2022) *Mozambique pulls school textbook over sexual content after social media uproar*. IOL News.
<https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/mozambique-pulls-school-textbook-over-sexual-content-after-social-media-uproar-b58d35f9-6438-4b83-a10b-c9bcbe9a3cc3>.

ANNEX 2 DATA ON THE EXAMPLES

SRHR integration in the agenda of Universal Health Coverage	
What it is about	Integrating SRHR (including abortion rights) in UHC agenda through a planned and structured process of normative dialogue.
How it started	Sida identified that SRHR actors were not on board 2018 prior to the high-level meeting on UHC that was to be held in 2019. The issue of SRHR integration in UHC was not owned by anyone. Sida headquarters/the regional SRHR team mobilised different actors to jointly advocate for inclusion of SRHR into UHC. As a prerequisite, Sida needed to have a common definition of SRHR and agree on technical indicators. To guide the process, Sida developed a concept note ⁹⁷ aiming at getting all key actors on-board. The note aimed to define key messages and indicate who does what before the high-level meeting.
The normative dialogue was initiated based on	The opportunity to advocate for integration of SRHR as part of the global high-level process leading to the political declaration on UHC. A road map and key messages developed by the group, confirmed by UNFPA and presented during the ICPD+25 meeting in Nairobi 2019.
The steps of the process	2018 • Development of the concept note (Sida lead) and main strategies: 1. Build and promote the evidence base for SRHR in UHC; 2. Ensure UHC policy commitments, standards and guidelines are inclusive of SRH services; 3. Define indicators, strengthen M&E and accountability around SRHR in UHC; 4. Build broad momentum around the integration of SRHR into UHC; and 5. Provide and coordinate technical support to countries in their efforts to integrate SRH services into their UHC schemes. • The UN HLM on health equity, gender and SRHR roadmap draft May 2018. • Meeting with a small group of partners on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly in May; SRHR in UHC ad hoc working group, June.

⁹⁷ Sida. (2018). op.cit.

	- GLC report⁹⁸ and the work of the Disease Control Priorities Vol. 3 provided evidence for SRHR's inclusion in UHC policies and benefits packages.⁹⁹ - SRHR in UHC Narrative final, December – Document outlining: The case for prioritising sexual and reproductive health in UHC; SRHR-UHC Evidence Framework, final, December. 2019 - In New York: Informal Consultations on the political declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage. - In capitals outreach to MFA and MoH via UN country office, and MS embassies where possible on content of the draft declaration to build support for progressive instructions from capitals to NY and outreach via CSO to MFA and MoH through country partners. - In Geneva, outreach via UN and MS to brief NY counterparts on positions MS, WHO, A key regional and global moments, engage with Ministers of Health at key global moments in the months leading up to the HLM.¹⁰⁰ - High-level Meeting on UHC September 2019. Declaration adopted. - Key messages at ICPD+25- UNFPA publication November 2019).¹⁰¹
The desired change	From the concept note “Our overall goal with this work is to ensure UHC standards, policies and schemes are inclusive of SRH services and based on principles of gender equality and equity in access, leaving no one behind.”
Choice of strategic cooperation partners	Different actors play different roles and functions within the advocacy field, Sida's regional SRHR team mainly has the role as broker and matchmaking, with a helicopter perspective seeing which actors would benefit from talking to each other. Alliance building to position Sweden and gain progress, both in external processes, and in system approaches like UHC.

⁹⁸ Ann M. Starrs, Alex C. Ezeh, Gary Barker, Alaka Basu, Jane T. Bertrand, Robert Blum, Awa M. Coll-Seck, Anand Grover, Laura Laski, Monica Roa, Zeba A. Sathar, Lale Say, Gamal I. Serour, Susheela Singh, Karin Stenberg, Marleen Temmerman, Ann Biddlecom, Anna Popinchalk, Cynthia Summers, and Lori S. Ashford. (2018). *Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission*. The Lancet, Volume 391, Issue 10140, pp. 2642–2692.

⁹⁹ Sida provided core support to Guttmacher Institute which in part financed the GLC report.

¹⁰⁰ Women Deliver Conference High level direct engagement, G20 Osaka summit, Release of Inter-Parliamentary Unions resolution on UHC for global consultation among members of parliament, UN HLPF on Sustainable Development; AU Standing Technical Committee on Health (ministers of health meeting), G7 in Biarritz.

¹⁰¹ UNFPA. (2019). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: an essential element of Universal Health Coverage*. <https://www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-essential-element-universal-health>.

	UNFPA, International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), IPPF, like-minded members states; Ministry of Health representatives; implementing and advocacy CSOs one research institution; and other donors.
Organisation and role division Sida/Team Sweden, partners	Sida/MFA shared agenda. Sida supported the MFA with backing documents for HL meetings with WHO, UNFPA, and these documents laid the ground for the agenda. The ICPD+25 had the same messages. After the ICPD+25 the work is expected to be pushed forward by partners and networks.
Follow-up	The process towards the HLM and the ICPD +25 in Nairobi was structured along a detailed road map. The follow-up is now more on bilateral partner dialogue.
Communication means & tools	Concept note, road map/action plan, bilateral dialogue with members states (New York, Geneva), statements, presence at HL meetings and conferences, research, publications.
Normative dialogue as a complement to other forms of influencing	Sweden as main donor to SRHR, donor to several of the key actors involved in the process.
Institutional capabilities & commitments	Existence of expert regional SRHR team, thematic expertise at headquarters, dedicated MFA staff in Geneva and New York, seconded Swedish expertise at UNFPA, Sida as a reliable donor to strategic countries and regional blocks. Established relations and partnership with research institutions.

Ambassadors High-Level Policy Dialogue Group against CEFM in Mozambique

What it is about	The High-Level Policy Dialogue Group against CEFM is an informal group with a commitment to support the Government of Mozambique in its efforts to combat child marriage through targeted advocacy and policy dialogue.
How it started	The plan to engage in normative dialogue on CEFM started in 2016 with the ambassadors of Sweden and of the Netherlands together with technical staff at the embassies, based on existing support to civil society partners focusing on SRHR, women's and child rights. The group now features five ambassadors, representing countries that view gender equality and the promotion of SRHR as priorities for their programming, policy, and advocacy in Mozambique.
The normative dialogue was initiated based on	• The existence of a national strategy to end child marriage, as well as Mozambique's global and regional commitments to end child marriage. • The fact that Sweden's and the Netherlands' ambassadors shared similar agendas with clear mandate from their MFAs to promote gender equality and SRHR.

	• High profile policy issue for both Sweden and the Netherlands. • The fact that dialogue with political actors was possible, ‘open door,’ with cordial and close relations between the government and the two donors. • The existence of a large civil society advocacy programme AGIR (Action Programme for Inclusive and Responsible Governance), initiated and mainly supported by Sweden, but also other donors. • The existence of a civil society network focusing on the ban of forced and early child marriage, CECAP (Coligação para Eliminação dos Casamentos Prematuros). • Ongoing supports to child rights, gender and SRHR programmes, mainly implemented by CSOs but also the UN.
The desired change can be divided into two phases	• Influence members of the parliament in favour of the adoption of national legislation against forced and early child marriage, coherent with Mozambique’s ratification of UNCRC, CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child. • Contribute to increased knowledge, awareness, and social acceptance of the law on CEFM leading to the implementation of the same.
Choice of strategic cooperation partners	• Like-minded donors (the Netherlands, Canada, UK, Finland). • Already supported feminist, SRHR and/or child rights CSOs, and a civil society network (not funded by Sida).
Organisation and role division Sida/Team Sweden, partners	• There are two groups: the five ambassadors, and one technical group consisting of programme staff at each embassy. This group manages the overall planning, follow-up and dialogue with strategic partners, mainly CSOs and the CCAP network. • The process has been led by three consecutive ambassadors¹⁰² in close cooperation with one national programme staff responsible for the Sida contribution on gender equality and SRHR. She is also the deputy Head of Cooperation. • The normative dialogue is conducted by the embassy in close coordination with CSO partners.
Follow-up	• The process has been ongoing for seven consecutive years, steered by action plans for the ambassadors and the technical group. • The initiative has gone from advocating for legal ban of CEFM to push for the implementation of the law and has so far engaged three consecutive Swedish ambassadors.

¹⁰² 2014-2017, 2017-2020, and 2020.

Communication means & tools	• Informal high-level meetings with key duty-bearers (outside protocol, no notes), always with at least three ambassadors. • Informal events at the residence with broad circle of stakeholders. • Op-eds by the ambassadors in national newspapers. • Yearly visit to provinces creating visibility at provincial level through the visit agenda, local and national media coverage. • Campaign through “ambassador for a day-concept.” • Twitter and Facebook.
Normative dialogue as a complement to other forms of influencing	The initiative aimed at giving leverage to the advocacy work conducted by civil society actors with Sida funds, and other CSOs supported by the other donors in the groups, as well as support to multilaterals.
Institutional capabilities & commitments	Based on in-depth thematic knowledge by embassy staff, a very close and mutual collaboration between ambassador and the technical staff.

Abortion rights in Liberia

What it is about	Since around five years back, national actors promoting SRHR in Liberia have sought to shift the legislative landscape around abortion from being primarily featured in the country’s penal code with an emphasis on restrictions and sanctions, to one framed in a rights perspective as part of an updated Public Health Law (last amended in 1976). If adopted in a revised public health law, this would automatically override the penal code.
How it started	At a regional level, Sida had identified it as a strategic opportunity to support the domestication of the Maputo Protocol in line with UHC commitments and engaged the APHRC alongside other partners in an initial mapping on existing entry-points at sub-regional level. Around 30 countries were reviewed, and a matrix developed to identify strategic entry-points for countries where there was momentum to change the law, and where new evidence and dialogue could be effective. Countries were then selected for each sub-region for further review and dialogue, with APHRC supported to undertake the research. Liberia was selected as one of two countries in West Africa.
The normative dialogue was initiated based on	• Liberia’s commitments to achieve quality essential health-care services in line with Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, and commitments in the Maputo Protocol. • There was a clear capacity need of government ministries (including in the lead Ministry, the Ministry of Health) on the issue of SRHR. This included both having relevant and up-to-date evidence and knowing how to delicately navigate the issue to avoid misinformation and opposition.

The steps of the process	• Initial consultations with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice were undertaken jointly with Swedish embassy representatives and APHRC to define the how to frame the support for the Public Health Bill Revision. Outcomes were fed back to the regional SRHR team for regular feedback and guidance. • Findings from an initial mapping showed a lack of national comprehensive data on abortion and post-abortion care, which meant little was known about the incidence of abortion and abortion-related morbidity. Getting this data was seen as strategic to address the issue of unsafe abortion in the ongoing legal reform process and to provide evidence for campaigns and advocacy around the abortion discourse in Liberia. • A long process of dialogue on the suggested study and consultation between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice and partners, where Sida (regional team) and the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia played a key role as a facilitator, knowledge broker and resource, using its reputation and track record on SRHR in the region. • <i>Abortion incidence and severity of complications in Liberia: Key Findings from the 2021 Liberia National Abortion Study</i> was undertaken, funded by Sida, with the MoH as the lead investigator and owner of the report and carried out by APHRC in collaboration with the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI Liberia) and the Guttmacher Institute. Published in April 2023, the report presents the first national representative estimates of the incidence of induced abortion and the severity of abortion-related complications in Liberia. It was strategic in the context of framing the issue as a public health issue, emphasising the economic burden of unsafe practices on the health system and to talk about harm reduction. Evidence showed a clear link between restrictive laws and unsafe practices and made a case, not just for improved SRH services, but also a law revision. The regional approach was also helpful to create Ministerial buy-in, knowing that similar processes also took place in other African countries (also signatories of the Maputo Protocol), and with an opportunity to compare ongoing law reform processes in Liberia with that in other countries, e.g., neighbouring Sierra Leone. • Government involvement, though led by the Ministry of Health importantly involved the Ministry of Justice and went up to the Deputy Minister and Ministerial levels at a more diplomatic level, where the embassy, supported by the Sida SRHR team could effectively use diplomatic channels. • At an embassy-level, there was clear coordination between the NPO following the process more closely over time, the Head of Development Cooperation (across consecutive staff members holding the position) and the Ambassadors. This illustrated an institutionalised commitment from Sweden over time.
---------------------------------	--

The desired change	Ensuring that SRHR, including access to safe and legal abortion, is included into the revision process of the Health Bill. By default, this would override some of the existing restrictions related to abortion that currently exist in the penal code.
Choice of strategic cooperation partners	• APHRC, CHAI Liberia and the Guttmacher Institute for the study. • UNFPA through ongoing regional and national agreements (with good coordination between regional and national levels). • Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice (with Ministry of Health being in the lead).
Organisation and role division Sida/Team Sweden, partners	The Sida regional team (based in Lusaka, Zambia, at the time) remained in the lead, and was the main coordinator and counterpart for APHRC for its multi-country mapping of opportunities at country level. They also acted as door-openers, connecting to relevant stakeholders both in-country and in the region. In Liberia, the Embassy of Sweden led the work. This involved regular follow-up and dialogue with national partners including participating in any dialogue between APHRC and the Ministry of Health. Partner feedback indicated that there was close coordination between the embassy at the national level and the regional team. The regional strategy and SRHR expertise complemented national efforts and added “a layer of expertise and strategic advantage that other national donors did not have.” ¹⁰³
Follow-up	There is still follow-up among involved actors (primarily the MoH, APHRC, UNFPA, the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia, relevant CSO networks) and all actors are still monitoring the process of adopting the Draft Health Bill. The regional team in Sida and the embassy continue to play a facilitation and knowledge-sharing role.
Communication means & tools	Informal and formal communications on an ongoing basis among partners. At the Embassy of Sweden, the designated national programme officer (NPO) played a key role in terms of institutional memory and consistency in approach. The NPO was strongly supported by the Head of Development Cooperation and the Ambassador(s) at country level.
Normative dialogue as a complement to other forms of influencing	Normative dialogue was primarily used as a complement to the National Abortion Study in Liberia -- a groundbreaking effort to make the debate evidence-based and linked to the provision of health care services and fulfilling Liberia’s commitments under the Maputo Protocol.

¹⁰³ KII. May 2023.

Institutional capabilities & commitments	Capability to mobilise actors, facilitate processes of joint priority setting and coming up with a ToC, thematic expertise at regional as well as country level with institutional memory and consistency through NPO, Head of Development Cooperation and consecutive Ambassadors. Ability to use multilateral discussions with UNFPA at global and regional levels and follow up in the national context. Capability to navigate a potentially controversial and political landscape by focusing on building an evidence-base, facilitating joint interpretation and national ownership of findings.
---	--

ANNEX 3 STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND TARGET GROUPS

Sida and Team Sweden engage in normative dialogue on different issues related to SRHR with a broad and diverse group of actors at local, national, regional, and global levels. The normative dialogue targets both formal and informal duty-bearers at local and national level and regional bodies, national and international civil society actors, media, research institutes, society at large and targeted rights holder groups. It also involves other donor governments, multilaterals, and joint donor initiatives. Sida's and Team Sweden's direct engagement is combined with different policy driven intermediaries partnering with Sida.

Several of the key players promoting SRHR at global, regional, and national levels are both allies to Sweden and partners receiving grants from Sida (and sometimes from the MFA). This dual relationship is seen across all levels, and the normative dialogue goes in both directions. In some instances, Sida or MFA engage with SRHR actors to encourage them to support Sweden's key priorities within the area of SRHR, and in other cases Sweden relies on the funded partner to push the agenda through their advocacy work or research.

At global level UN multilaterals play an important role in both engaging and enabling dialogue on different issues related to SRHR, like UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO, but also UN Women and UNICEF to certain extent. They are also important in regional and country processes. Global and regional human rights commissions and special rapporteurs are likewise important stakeholders.

Sida funds many CSOs engaged in SRHR advocacy. At bilateral level the normative dialogue targets legislators, parliamentary groups (regional and national), government and key line ministries such as the ministries of health, education, and gender/women, as well as local and traditional duty-bearers, media actors, private sector, and different rights-holder groups. Quoting one of the Sida internal documents reviewed for the UHC process in which Sida lists relevant stakeholders, provides a good example of the holistic approach:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, girls, and adolescents Communities, themselves; • Civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGO); and • Academic, research and teaching institutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments, parliamentarians, and policymakers at all levels; • Health care workers, managers, and professional associations; and • Community health workers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral development partners and philanthropic institutions; • UN agencies and other multilateral organisations; and • The private sector. |
|--|--|--|

The normative dialogue on CEFM in Mozambique targeted both parliamentary committees and the members of the parliament and key line ministries (gender, health and justice), as well as provincial political structures. Though there was an already strong consensus among feminist, child rights and SRHR civil society actors, key multilaterals were still not on board and CECAP and the ambassadors' initiative also included convincing UNFPA to support the bill. Once the bill had passed, the ministries continued to be main targets for the dialogue but also the judiciary, the police, and the public at national, provincial, and local levels.

The APHRC, being a renowned and Africa-wide research institute and think tank, enabled a strong anchoring in the regional/sub-regional context, aligning the dialogue with UHC and Maputo Protocol commitments. The normative agenda around access to safe and legal abortion was explored together with APHRC and UNFPA at the outset of the process to come up with a regional strategy and theory of change. In that process, several countries (of which Liberia was one) were identified where there was ongoing momentum for reform and where there could potentially be some (relatively) quick gains.

Once the normative agenda and priorities were agreed upon, Sweden provided continuity in funding linked to the implementation of its regional SRHR strategy but was also perceived as an ongoing dialogue partner. For instance, in Liberia, while the Ministry of Health was always behind the initiative of including SRHR (including expanded rights to having a safe and legal abortion), awareness and broad ownership among staff was at least in part derived from having been trained by APHRC to participate in the data gathering and analysis for the National Abortion Study where Ministry of Health was the lead investigator and author of the report. Gaining broad buy-in at a technical level and policy level was important, and the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia added value by keeping the diplomatic dialogue open and in framing the issue in a way that fed into the ongoing reform in a non-controversial manner.¹⁰⁴

Though not funded as part of carrying out the study, the research undertaken by APHRC and the Ministry of Health also included the University of Liberia Medical School which, together with the Guttmacher Institute set up a community of researchers to continue doing research after the first National Abortion Study's release. It was considered important to leave in-country capacity to carry out research, using the same methodology, beyond the Ministry of Health, and Sida was very supportive of this to incubate and expand the knowledgebase to also be housed in the medical school.

UNFPA has partnered and worked closely with Sida on the issue of access to safe and legal abortion both regionally and in Liberia since 2016: "Sida is a very strong partner.

¹⁰⁴ Based on KIIIs and partner feedback.

In addition to the funding, we work closely to co-create change strategies including how to communicate on the issue in the Liberian context.”¹⁰⁵

For Sida, it was important to involve UNFPA and WHO at an early stage both at national and regional levels. Efforts to bring all stakeholders, including Kvinna till Kvinna and RFSU together was perceived to be innovative and relevant to “brainstorm together rather than each agency pushing its own interests.”¹⁰⁶ The first ever National Stakeholders Conference on SRHR in Liberia, funded by the Government of Sweden was seen as a key milestone:

“It is important to combine public events, like the National Stakeholder Conference on SRHR, with building trustful relationships with law makers in one-on-one meetings. Sweden has played a key role in both of those settings.”¹⁰⁷

Partners also stressed the importance of fully understanding forces of opposition. For instance, in relation to child marriage, the embassy also played a role inviting traditional leaders for a chance to discuss the impact of teen pregnancies and its effects on the life of the girl child – again an initiative that went above and beyond specific programming, but which served as a door-opener on the issue for UNFPA and others partnering with Sweden on the issue.

¹⁰⁵ Quote from KII.

¹⁰⁶ KII feedback.

¹⁰⁷ KII feedback.

3 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual (LGBTQI)

THEMATIC CASE FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

Key finding 1: Outcomes related to people (global level). The presence of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual (LGBTQI) activists driving normative dialogue at high-level policy spaces has increased, including trans and intersex activists.

Key finding 2: Outcomes related to priorities (global and regional levels). Sweden's normative dialogue efforts have contributed to political and donor coordination to finance rights of LGBTQI. Sida has proved to other donors that funding LGBTQI-led organisations and movements is possible and has enhanced their legitimacy.

Key finding 3: Outcomes related to policies (global level). Coordinated normative dialogue has contributed to maintaining inclusive language in UN resolutions. The human rights focussed normative dialogue has been broadened to also include the sustainable development framework.

Key finding 4: The normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues takes place in intertwined and parallel policy spaces and processes. Team Sweden is present and vocal in these spaces using coordination and alliance building for successful dialogue.

Key finding 5: Sweden's LGBTQI related normative dialogue is characterised by commitment, consistency, and endurance, backed with substantial Sida funding, which positions Sweden as a key player.

Key finding 6: Sida's direct engagement in normative dialogue in policy spaces is limited to donor coordination. Sida's main method of LGBTQI normative dialogue is through partnerships.

Key finding 7: Sida's support is seen as strategic and quite unique by its partners, enabling them to engage in high-level normative dialogue and regional policy processes based on broad LGBTQI movements. The thematic expertise held by these partners informs Sweden's normative dialogue in the same spaces and processes.

Key finding 8: There is limited coordination on normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues between the MFA and Sida.

Key finding 9: While the human rights focus of Sida's development cooperation implicitly stresses the importance of LGBTQI inclusive interventions, this is not evident in instructions or tools guiding partner dialogue on norm critical approaches. There is insufficient focus on LGBTQI issues in humanitarian work.

Key finding 10: LGBTQI expertise at Sida is under-resourced and internal structures for coordination do not reflect the high level of commitment as a donor.

Conclusions in brief: Sweden is vocal in key policy spaces, using coordination and alliance building and is recognised for its commitment, consistency, and endurance. Sida's long-term and substantial LGBTQI funding positions Sida as a key donor demonstrating that it is possible to directly fund LGBTQI movements. When Sida has used its position as one of the key donors to LGBTQI groups, the normative dialogue has influenced like-minded donors. This indicates that there is space for Sida to use its experience also in other parts of LGBTQI related normative dialogue. Sida's core and programme support has enabled the presence and normative dialogue of LGBTQI activists at high-level policy spaces and contributed to important policy outcomes. Despite Sweden's strong commitment to an LGBTQI-inclusive political agenda, Sida continues to use a quite binary gender approach. Knowledge on LGBTQI specific issues at Sida is limited to a small group of programme officers and instructions and tools are generally silent on how to include LGBTQI issues and how they could be raised in contribution management. This poses limitations to the possibility for Sida staff to directly engage in normative dialogue.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Sweden's promotion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) persons' democratic and human rights through normative dialogue is one of four focus areas case studies of the Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida (2015-2022).¹⁰⁸ The focus is mainly, but not only, on normative dialogue through support to LGBTQI CSOs.

3.1.1 Focus and scope of the case study

Three examples were proposed by Sida in the ToR: The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights' (RFSL) regional programme, Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+, core support to The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) World, and programme support to RFSL's global programme, Mobilising for Change (MfC).¹⁰⁹ The case study focusses on the years 2018-2023.

The case study identifies the approaches used and enabling and hindering factors for the LGBTQI normative dialogue. It aims to help Sida increase the understanding of what works, what does not work and why, and identifies bottlenecks and ways to improve. The study looks at how Sweden has contributed to movement building of LGBTQI civil society organisations, enabling them to engage in normative dialogue within high-level spaces. The case study has also explored instances where Sida engages directly in dialogue at global level, together with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) or as a sole actor.

In principle, the global normative dialogue harbours all human rights for LGBTQI persons. Data demonstrate that it was difficult to isolate the dialogue to one space or one policy process due to the intertwined nature of Sweden's normative dialogue on LGBTQI. At the global level, the case study looks at Sida's and Team Sweden's direct normative dialogue within both UN spaces and the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC),¹¹⁰ while the regional focus is on Eastern Europe as per the ToR.

The introduction, including the case study analytical framework, methodology and data, is followed by the background and context in section 3.2. Section 3.3 presents the

¹⁰⁸ ToR state that: "For each focus area the evaluation will examine which methods and approaches have been used, the different contexts, as well as how Sida has worked with different target groups."

¹⁰⁹ Sida also support other RFSL programmes: Resilient Movements, Stronger Communities in Ukraine 2019–2022 funded by Sida through the Embassy of Sweden in Kyiv; Stronger Regional Movements 2021–2022 focuses on supporting regional organising in Southeast Asia and Southern and East Africa, funded with Sida funds via Forum Civ.

¹¹⁰ A global forum that comprises like-minded governments, donors, and CSOS.
<https://equalrightscoalition.org/>.

findings against the evaluation questions. Finally, section 3.4 provides overall conclusions and lessons learned from the case study.

3.1.2 Methodology

The case study is based on a desk review of programme documents and annual reports for two programmes: one on core support; and another on relevant sources related to UN spaces and ERC. Additionally, a final evaluation of Sida's support to the MfC programme, and semi-structured KIIs with Sida thematic specialists and programme officers at Sida headquarters (HQ), MFA staff in Sweden, Geneva, and New York, and LGBTQI-led partner CSOs¹¹¹ were also used as a basis for the case study. Findings from the literature review were triangulated through the KIIs. Fieldwork was undertaken in the Republic of Moldova.

The scope and nature of this evaluation focus on Sida's role, effectiveness, and efficiency in the normative dialogue, including its role in coordination efforts with other Swedish actors (Team Sweden approach) and partners that enable operating space and the delivery of results in line with universal norms and Swedish priorities. It does not seek to comprehensively assess programme-specific results or the effectiveness of programme management.

Findings in this case study are based on the review of the above-mentioned support to RFSL and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA), and shared information on normative dialogue conducted by Sida and the MFA. The report does not include a comprehensive summary of Sida's support of LGBTQI or detailed data on the Sida-supported interventions since some documents and data are classified.

3.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.2.1 The normative agenda

The discrimination and exclusion of rights-holders due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) concern all phases of life and all human rights. Sweden's **longstanding commitment** to the rights of LGBTQI persons is firmly rooted in a human rights-based approach (HRBA) focusing on inclusion of LGBTQI rights-holders. It is part of the strive for inclusive gender equality and is integrated in Sweden's promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

¹¹¹ For list of interviewees, see Annex 4 in the main report, *Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022*.

Sweden's LGBTQI normative dialogue is aligned with a global normative agenda that is far from being perceived as universal. It is contested by vocal global and national conservative and religious actors. Same-sex relations are criminalised in 62 countries,¹¹² of which approximately half are in Africa. The mobilisation against gender transformative policies and rights of LGBTQI persons are impacting both global policy processes and national legislation.

Parallel to this, there is a **strong global LGBTQI movement**. Locally, the movement is categorised by umbrella organisations, smaller groups, and loose communities. NGO legislation in many countries restricts LGBTQI persons to formally organise and register their organisations. In the Eastern Partnership region¹¹³ (EaP), the increasingly politically turbulent situation, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, has forced the LGBTQI movement to regroup to provide direct and immediate support to activists fleeing the war zone in Ukraine.¹¹⁴ The Sida-funded Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ was developed due to the spill-over effect in EaP countries of Russia's anti-"LGBT propaganda" law in 2013.¹¹⁵

Normative dialogue takes place in spaces where agreed common human rights positions need to be reconfirmed and where it is mostly a matter of maintaining agreed language in human rights instruments and maintaining operating space for LGBTQI-led movements and organisations. In EaP countries, the focus was on maintaining visibility for LGBTQI issues and protection for activists in a situation of regional turmoil. In countries where EU accession is being discussed, there is more openness to LGBTQI issues. Peer learning across EaP countries was noted to have been conducive to these processes.¹¹⁶

During the evaluated period, Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP)¹¹⁷ continued to prioritise global human rights and sustainable development policy processes from a gender transformative perspective and based on norms expressed in Sweden's national LGBTQI strategy (2014) and Action Plan 2020–2023.¹¹⁸ The FFP was perceived as LGBTQI-inclusive by several of the consulted stakeholders. The policy guidance on

¹¹² ILGA Database. (2024). *Legal Frameworks | Criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts*. <https://database.ilga.org/criminalisation-consensual-same-sex-sexual-acts>.

¹¹³ Sampled in the ToR to look at normative dialogue in relation to regional programmatic support.

¹¹⁴ RFSL. (various years). *The Eastern Coalition for LGBT+ Equality: Moving Forward Programme*. RFSL Annual Reports 2021-2022.

¹¹⁵ Kils May and June 2023. The bill criminalises any act regarded as an attempt to promote LGBTQ issues and rights with monetary penalties that are inhibitive for rights activists and organisations, and/or arrest and expulsion from Russia for foreigners. The Guardian. (30 June 2013). *Russia passes anti-gay law*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/30/russia-passes-anti-gay-law>.

¹¹⁶ Kils with regional programme grantees, May 2023.

¹¹⁷ Launched in October 2014, ended by the current Swedish Government in October 2022.

¹¹⁸ Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Handlingsplan för hbtqi-personers lika rättigheter och möjligheter*.

LGBTQI in Sweden's international development cooperation stems from a directive by the government in 2016.¹¹⁹

Most of Sida's support for LGBTQI issues falls under the Strategy for *Sweden's development cooperation in the areas of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law*,¹²⁰ categorised on Sida's website as "respect for the equal value and rights of all."¹²¹ Sida's Department for International Organisations and Thematic Support manages most agreements with LGBTQI-led partners and LGBTQI interventions, including joint funds led by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Support to LGBTQI-led CSOs or LGBTQI rights-holders is also channelled via Sida's strategic CSO partners under the *Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016–2022*.¹²² Dialogue on the need for an LGBTQI-inclusive gender-equality approach can also be part of the dialogue Sida's Unit for Civil Society (Civsam) has with their Swedish strategic civil society partners. This is, however, not highlighted in the *Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016–2022*.¹²³ Though not explicitly mentioned, rights of LGBTQI persons are included under the areas of SRHR, human rights and democracy in several bilateral strategies.¹²⁴ The *Strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa 2022–2026*,¹²⁵ supports LGBTQI-led partners, and initiatives. In addition to the strategies, Sweden adheres to the definition of SRHR launched by

¹¹⁹ Margot Wallström. (2016). *Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer i svensk utrikespolitik*. Skr. 2016/17:62. Human rights, democracy, and the principles of the rule of law in Swedish foreign policy. Sweden is a strong voice for LGBTQ people's enjoyment of human rights, globally, as well as in the European Union (EU) and close region. Within the EU, guidelines have been drawn on the enjoyment of human rights by LGBTQ people based on the principle of non-discrimination. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited under the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights. Sweden and other EU member states are also working to ensure that explicit references to the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are introduced and become more widely accepted in the UN system and other international forums. (...) Development cooperation is another important tool in the collective Swedish commitment to LGBTQ people's enjoyment of human rights in foreign policy. Swedish support has increased substantially over the last 10 years, guided by policies and strategies. Today, Sweden is an important player in international development cooperation. Translated from Swedish to English by the evaluation team.

¹²⁰ Regeringskansliet. (2017). *Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete avseende arbetet med de mänskliga rättigheterna, demokrati och rättsstatens principer 2018–2022*. Extended to December 2023.

¹²¹ Sida. (2023). *Sida's work with democracy, human rights and freedom of expression*.

¹²² Regeringskansliet. (2017). *Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations for the period 2016–2022*. Extended to 2023.

¹²³ Information obtained through evaluation team member's gender spot assignments and other help desk support to Sida Civsam.

¹²⁴ Strengthening rights-holders' SRHR is an objective in 20 bilateral strategies for development cooperation with Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, and Zambia (2018–2022); Uganda (2018–2023); Palestine, Tanzania, and Rwanda (2020–2024); Afghanistan (2021–2024); Bangladesh, Bolivia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, Mali, and Liberia (2021–2025); Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (2022–2026).

¹²⁵ Regeringskansliet. (2017). *Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete avseende arbetet med de mänskliga rättigheterna, demokrati och rättsstatens principer 2018–2022*; Regeringskansliet. (2020). *Ändrad strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete avseende arbetet med de mänskliga rättigheterna, demokrati och rättsstatens principer 2018–2022*.

the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission in 2018.¹²⁶ This definition is key for the normative dialogue on the rights and opportunities of LGBTQI persons. Also important is the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 commitment to leave no one behind.

LGBTQI normative dialogue conducted by Sida, the MFA, or Sida's partners can occur in different national, regional, and global policy processes. Sweden, its partners, and like-minded allies target the UN, EU and other global spaces and mechanisms. Examples of UN fora include: the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva; and the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR); the Mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity;¹²⁷ the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW); the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030; the UN LGBTI Core Group on Ending Violence and Discrimination; and the Third Committee¹²⁸ of the UN General Assembly. Another global forum is the Equal Rights Coalition.

In summary, Sweden's LGBTQI normative dialogue consists of four levels: i) **UN and regional human rights instruments**, all human rights of LGBTQI persons relevant to all UPRs, resolutions text, committee work, etc.; ii) **Donor coordination** for increased funding to LGBTQI-led interventions; iii) **Strategic partnership** (core/programme funding) with LGBTQI organisations leading the advocacy work; and iv) **Partner dialogue** – mainstreaming LGBTQI rights in development cooperation – all thematic areas, all sectors.

¹²⁶ Ann M. Starrs, Alex C. Ezeh, Gary Barker, Alaka Basu, Jane T. Bertrand, Robert Blum, Awa M. Coll-Seck, Anand Grover, Laura Laski, Monica Roa, Zeba A. Sathar, Lale Say, Gamal I. Serour, Susheela Singh, Karin Stenberg, Marleen Temmerman, Ann Biddlecom, Anna Popinchalk, Cynthia Summers, and Lori S. Ashford. (2018). *Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission*. The Lancet, Volume 391, Issue 10140, pp. 2642-2692. Op.cit. "All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right. Achievement of sexual and reproductive health relies on the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights, which are based on the human rights of all individuals to: have their bodily integrity, privacy, and personal autonomy respected; freely define their own sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression; decide whether and when to be sexually active; choose their sexual partners; have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences; decide whether, when, and whom to marry; decide whether, when, and by what means to have a child or children, and how many children to have; have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services, and support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation, and violence."

¹²⁷ UN OHCHR. (2024). *Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>.

¹²⁸ UN. (n.d.) *General Assembly of the United Nations, Social, Humanitarian & Cultural – Third Committee*. <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/69/index.shtml>.

3.3 FINDINGS

3.3.1 Outcomes

EQ1: How likely is it that the normative dialogue has *contributed* to change?

Key finding 1: Outcomes related to people (global level).¹²⁹ The presence of LGBTQI activists driving normative dialogue at high-level policy spaces has increased, including trans and intersex activists.

RFSL has used its consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to widen the space for LGBTQI participation at a session of the HRC by providing accreditation for activists participating in the MfC programme.¹³⁰ At the HRC, RFSL leveraged its relationships with Permanent Missions and Special Procedures offices in Geneva, to secure meetings for activists with several Permanent Missions, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Secretariat of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Independent Expert.

As a response to LGBTQI-led advocacy, in October 2020, 36 States from all regions of the world called on the OHCHR to urgently protect intersex persons in their bodily autonomy and right to health.¹³¹

Both RFSL and ILGA World have focussed on LGBTQI rights-holders during the reviewed period, enabling active participation of particularly underrepresented trans and intersex persons both at high-level fora and events, and within ILGA World and in the RFSL's support to movement building.¹³² The examples from ILGA World and RFSL demonstrate that Sida's financial support has been used to broaden the normative

¹²⁹ Refers to changes in people's individual awareness, knowledge and skills, typically of those directly engaged in the dialogue process.

¹³⁰ The aim of the Rainbow Advocacy Programme (RAP) of the MfC is to increase the number of LGBTQI leaders and activists who have the capacity to engage in advocacy at national, regional, and global levels through increased advocacy knowledge and skills, participating in UN processes and other fora, and designing and implementing organisational advocacy projects on local and national levels. Application to Sida: Mobilising for Change, Leaving No One Behind 2021–2023, Phase 2, RFSL 2020.

¹³¹ ILGA World. (2020). Annual report.

¹³² ILGA World. (2021) e.g., details in the Annual report 2021 to Sida that rights of on intersex persons were advocated for by ILGA World at the HRC, both on the Day against Female Genital Mutilations and the Intersex Awareness Day. ILGA World-supported campaigns and virtual events during the Trans Advocacy Week and Trans Day of Remembrance, and supported the Global Queer Youth Network around the Queer Youth Dialogues on International Youth Day. RFSL gave priority to LBTQI persons among the participants in the 13-month activist training part of the MfC programme phase 1 and 2. Out of the 56 participants that were selected to participate in one of the four RAP courses (2018/19, 2020/2021, 2021/2022) and 2022/2023) 86 per cent represented LBT women, trans and intersex, and/or queer persons. Data shared by RFSL similarly showed that the Rainbow Academy trainings, also part of the MfC programme, had a strong focus on trans activists and queer perspectives on development issues.

dialogue on LGBTQI to be more inclusive by also reflecting the realities of minorities within the LGBTQI community. The support has enabled direct LGBTQI activists from the Global South and East to advocate in their own name at high-level policy spaces.

Key finding 2: Outcomes related to priorities (global and regional levels). Sweden's normative dialogue efforts have contributed to political and donor coordination to finance rights of LGBTQI. Sida has proved to other donors that funding LGBTQI-led organisations and movements is possible and has enhanced their legitimacy.

Over time, **Team Sweden has contributed to a continued dialogue among like-minded governments and other development actors** by initiating the first conference in 2011 and participating in the follow-up, leading to the establishment of the donor coordination forum ERC.¹³³ This space has enabled Sida to directly showcase its support to LGBTQI-led organisations and influence other donors to follow its example, illustrating a unique application of the 360 model. Another platform has been the Global Equality Fund (GEF) under the lead of the U.S. State Department. While the case study is unable to account for any outcomes from these discussions, all consulted stakeholders claimed that it has made a difference. They indicated that even if the financial support has not increased, at least, together with a few other donors, like the Netherlands, Sida demonstrated that it is possible to fund LGBTQI movements. The normative dialogue has led to donor discussions on increased funding, and to integrate the needs of LGBTI persons into development programming and different aspects of diplomacy.

At the country-level, the role of Swedish Embassies and Sida included **providing legitimacy to local actors, which led to additional resource mobilisation from decentralised funding and other donors.** In some cases, core funding from the Swedish country portfolio complemented funding to local actors participating in the regional Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality programme, a regional initiative managed by Sida headquarters with funds and technical support provided via RFSL.¹³⁴ This regional programme helped solidify regular contacts and dialogue between country grantees and the Swedish Embassies in each of the respective countries in the region.¹³⁵ In addition to providing and mobilising funds, support from Swedish Embassies in partner countries has included amplifying advocacy messages and public outreach through strategic communications. However, Sida and the Embassies appeared to have had a lower profile in directly affecting the normative

¹³³ KIIs with Sida, February 2023.

¹³⁴ KII with RFSL, KIIs with partners to the Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality programme, May 2023.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

agenda in-country through complementary dialogue efforts. Instead, vital support was channelled via multilateral organisations, such as UN Women, which were considered less controversial in the given context.

Key finding 3: Outcomes related to policies (global level). Coordinated normative dialogue has contributed to maintaining inclusive language in UN resolutions. The human rights focussed normative dialogue has been broadened to also include the sustainable development framework.

Through coordinated normative dialogue, its active role in the LGBTI Core Group and in bilateral dialogues, Sweden has contributed to the adaptation of the two SOGI-inclusive resolutions and to maintaining agreed SRHR and gender equality language in UN human rights instruments.¹³⁶ This has **contributed to a conducive environment for ongoing discussions on rights of LGBTQI persons**. Sweden's positions have been informed and technically supported by Sida's LGBTQI-led partners.

RFSL (including its sub-grantees in the EaP region), ILGA World and its members, and other LGBTQI activists, have been present prior to and during high-level fora to provide duty-bearers with information, lobbying for their support, and delivering statements. The financial support from Sida has enabled the presence and possibility of the LGBTQI community to directly engage in normative dialogue at UN spaces and provide key data on LGBTQI issues.¹³⁷

Sida as a funding partner to RFSL and ILGA World, among other LGBTQI CSOs, supported the global advocacy campaign to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (#RenewIESOGI) targeting the 41st Session of the HRC. RFSL conducted “on the spot advocacy” by drafting and delivering a statement on behalf of LBT women in a briefing session with the Independent Expert on SOGI.¹³⁸ In parallel, the MFA, through the permanent missions in Brussels and Geneva, conducted

¹³⁶ KIIs with MFA and RFSL, 13 and 24 February, 28 April and 15 May 2023.

¹³⁷ ILGA World. (2020). op.cit. Among the numerous outputs in RFSL's annual reports, different forms are LGBTQI-led: In response to a call from the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Association for his thematic report 2020, RFSL, together with partners, provided comments to the section highlighting the need to ensure an inclusive interpretation and approach to language and definitions around gender and women. RFSL MfC annual report 2020: Also in 2020, at the regional level, RFSL published and disseminated research on anti-gender movements and resistance strategies in the Eastern Partnership countries and draft recommendations on anti-gender movements and preparatory work for hate crimes policy paper. RFSL annual report 2019: In 2020 ILGA World conducted global research into laws banning 'conversion therapies,' launched the World Map on Sexual Orientation Laws in 20 languages, released the State-Sponsored Homophobia Report and the Trans Legal Mapping Report, detailing the impact of laws and policies on trans persons in 143 UN member states across the globe, collaborated with the UN Envoy on Youth, and saw LGBTI youth appointed in two key initiatives by the UN.

¹³⁸ RFSL. (2019 and 2020). *Mobilising for Change: Leaving no one behind*. Annual reports.

normative dialogue with other member States, and Sweden voted in favour of the renewal of the mandate of the IESOGI, which won approval.¹³⁹

The **recognition of LGBTQI communities as ‘other stakeholders’ to the UN is an important achievement** and RFSL has been key in raising awareness on how to bring LGBTQI issues to the HLPF and increase the knowledge among LGBTQI activists on how to capitalise on the national discussions on Agenda 2030. **RFSL identified the HLPF of Agenda 2030 as a potentially important platform to broaden the space for LGBTQI advocacy.**¹⁴⁰ To have access to this process, LGBTQI CSOs had to be recognised as stakeholders in a major group which would enable making statements, writing reports, and participating in a formal way. From 2015, through its global advocacy advisor, RFSL was part of the process leading to the recognition of the LGBTI Stakeholder Group in May 2019:

“I put in place a communication plan for RFSL’s process. In May 2019, the group was recognised. It was historical. It contributed to change how we engage at the UN. [...] we have access, can do formal reports that will be part of the documentation of the theme for the July meeting. The group has access to funding and can propose speakers for formal sessions.”¹⁴¹

Since then, apart from enabling space at the HLPF for LGBTQI activists, RFSL has informed and capacitated partnering movements and activists on using the sustainable development framework for normative dialogue on the situation and rights of LGBTQI rights-holders. Annual MfC reports,¹⁴² as well as a Sida evaluation on the MfC programme,¹⁴³ demonstrate that activists in the Global South have found using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be a more constructive entry point in their dialogue with national duty-bearers.

As the main donor to RFSL, Sida has contributed to the inclusion of LGBTQI issues at the HLPF. The existence of the LGBT stakeholder group has enabled the MFA directly, and through the LGBTI Core Group, to have an LGBTQI counterpart at the HLPF.

Summary response to EQ1: The case study identified the following changes based on the normative dialogue. It has contributed to increased presence of LGBTQI activists at high-level policy fora speaking in their own name based on their lived

¹³⁹ KIIs with the MFA, 13 and 24 February 2023.

¹⁴⁰ KII with former advocacy advisor at RFSL, 24 April 2023.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² RFSL. (2019 and 2020). *Mobilising for Change: Leaving no one behind*. Annual reports.

¹⁴³ FCG. (2023). *Evaluation of RFSL Mobilising for Change: Leaving no one behind, 2021-2023 and 2018-2020*.

experiences. It has led to maintained inclusive language in UN resolutions and has broaden the scope for global policy dialogue on LGBTQI issues to also include the SDGs. Sida's example of financing LGBTQI-led initiatives and the normative dialogue around this have contributed to other donors' willingness to fund LGBTQI organisations.

3.3.2 Factors influencing effective dialogue

Approaches and mechanisms for success

EQ2: What are examples of *successful outcomes* of normative dialogue at Sida? What are examples of *unsuccessful outcomes*?

EQ3: Which key *success factors* and *mechanisms* can be identified? Which key factors and mechanisms can be identified as hindering successful normative dialogue?

EQ6: How do approaches to normative dialogue, such as the *choice of cooperation partner* at different levels and the way the collaboration is conducted, affect the results? Specifically, in regard to choices at the country level and the so called 360 model?

Key finding 4: The normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues takes place in intertwined and parallel policy spaces and processes. Team Sweden is present and vocal in these spaces using coordination and alliance building for successful dialogue.

The MFA and Sida engage in regional and global spaces promoting and defending LGBTQI rights, many times in collaboration with, and sometimes led by, the RFSL and ILGA World.¹⁴⁴ The MFA-led normative dialogue takes place through Sweden's permanent missions in Brussels (LGBTQI inclusive EU common positions), Geneva (the HRC) and New York, and through Swedish delegations to UN high-level meetings, to which RFSL¹⁴⁵ have been invited. At some of these meetings Sida has organised side events on LGBTQI issues together with RFSL and other CSO partners. In an interview with the MFA,¹⁴⁶ the respondent stated that:

“It is about highlighting LGBTQI all the time in all settings. LGBTQI rights are comprehensively addressed as human rights in all senses and dimensions (not as an isolated issue, or only some aspects or some groups within the LGBTQI community) and how LGBTQI persons are respected and enjoy their rights as indicator of democracy.”

¹⁴⁴ Also, with ILGA Europe.

¹⁴⁵ Other Swedish CSOs are also invited to the Swedish delegations.

¹⁴⁶ KII with the MFA, 24 February 2023.

The MFA shared that Sweden has an active role and often takes the lead on **LGBTQI issues in EU conclusions for different human rights**.¹⁴⁷ Sweden's membership in the LGBTI Core Group¹⁴⁸ is key for LGBTQI normative dialogue at UN meetings.¹⁴⁹ The group discusses conventions meetings, committee work, debate, makes joint statements, meets with LGBTQI activists, and monitors the situation of rights of LGBTQI persons around the world through frequent contact.

There are also sessions **with other Nordic countries to align positions**. Sweden and Finland have taken turns in promoting an inclusive language in the two unique UN resolutions referring to SOGI.¹⁵⁰ Due to the opposition to gender transformative and inclusive rights among many member states, Sweden and like-minded states stress the importance of maintaining previous wins and not back off on already agreed gender-inclusive language. It is currently not possible to promote more LGBTQI-inclusive language in these high-level policy spaces. MFA stated in the interviews that RFSL has recommended that Sweden be cautious to avoid backlashes:¹⁵¹

“Due to the big push-back right now, it is more about defending and keeping the human rights language. The opposition is very well organised, the work is becoming more and more challenging. The current normative dialogue is mostly about already agreed texts.”¹⁵²

Sida's LGBTQI-led CSOs are members of the LGBTI Stakeholder Group,¹⁵³ recognised in 2019 by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs as one of the 'other stakeholders'. The LGBTI Stakeholder Group focuses on the implementation of Agenda 2030. This group, along with RFSL's and ILGA World's consultative status at the UN ECOSOC, enable Sida's partners to attend high-level meetings and be present with members and partners.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ The LGBTI Core Group is an informal cross regional group of United Nations Member States established in 2008. In addition to the member states, UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, the European Union, Outright International and Human Rights Watch are also members of the group. UN LGBTI Core Group. (2024). <https://unlgbticoregroup.org/>.

¹⁴⁹ KII with Sweden's Permanent representation in New York, 24 February 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Resolution on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, adopted in November 2022. The renewal of the resolution last November 2022 by the Third Committee of the General Assembly marked the twentieth anniversary of this resolution referencing to 'sexual orientation' and the tenth anniversary of it including a reference to 'sexual orientation and gender identity' (SOGI). Resolution on free and fair elections, adopted in November 2021.

¹⁵¹ KII with Sweden's Permanent mission in Geneva, 12 May 2023.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ The LGBTI Stakeholder Group serves to influence human rights, the well-being of all persons, gender equality, and LGBTQI inclusion in UN processes, including the Sustainable Development Framework. LGBTI Stakeholder Group. (n.d.) <https://www.lgbtistakeholdergroup.org/about-us/>.

With Sida's financial support, RFSL and ILGA World advocate for SOGIESC-inclusive language in international human rights frameworks. During the reviewed period, there was a specific focus on renewal of the mandates of the Independent Expert on the prevention of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, UPR, the CSW and the HLPF, as they pertain to the sustainable development agenda.¹⁵⁴

The ERC is another space for normative dialogue with its 42 members states and CSO members, which was launched in July 2016, following LGBTI human rights and inclusive development conferences in Washington, Berlin, and Stockholm. Sweden has been a key player since the start, and Sida has participated in most conferences.¹⁵⁵ Sweden is part of the Donor Coordination Group¹⁵⁶ of ERC that aims to increase donor funding to LGBTQI organisations and the promotion of LGBTQI rights. Sida plays an active role in the dialogue with its peers in this group.

RFSL was previously a Co-Chair of the Thematic Group on Sustainable Development Goals and LGBTI together with the Government of the United Kingdom. It is also a part of the CSO Core Group steering and leading the work of CSOs in the context of ERC as well as their engagement with member states. The Thematic Group on Sustainable Development Goals looks to ensure that LGBTQI persons are included in the SDGs and related activities and move the goals forward by engagement with the Voluntary National Reviews. **They encourage member and non-member states to use this process to bring attention to LGBTQI issues in their national contexts;** engage at the HLPF; and analyse how the SDGs are applicable to LGBTQI communities.

While the ERC remains an important space for donor coordination, Sida shared that the Global Philanthropy Project¹⁵⁷ is a better forum for influencing the normative agenda among donors than the ERC, though they complement each other. The Global Philanthropy Project brings donors together and conducts valuable research through

¹⁵⁴ RFSL. (2018 - 2021). *Mobilising for Change*. Annual reports; ILGA World. (2019 - 2021). Annual Reports. RFSL also had a special focus on enabling the presence of LGBTQI activists from the Global South and East in these spaces.

¹⁵⁵ KILs with Sida and the MFA, 13 February and 8 March 2023.

¹⁵⁶ ERC Donor Coordination focus: increasing the level of funding of work to promote and protect LGBTI persons; integrating the needs of LGBTI persons into development programming and different aspects of diplomacy; promoting flexible and timely support to CSOs; ensuring assistance and diplomacy efforts are guided based on need; abiding closely to the principle of 'do no harm' and working in close collaboration and consultation with CSOs; and encouraging transparency of funding and funding mechanisms, without compromising security of grantees. Equal Rights Coalition. (2024). <https://equalrightcoalition.org/thematic-areas/donor-coordination/>.

¹⁵⁷ Global Philanthropy Project is a collaboration of funders and philanthropic advisors working to expand global philanthropic support to advance the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in the Global South and East. Global Philanthropy Project. (2023). <https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/>.

their monitoring of financial flows to LGBTQI issues and organisations. They have a webinar series for donors based on their research and are active at donor meetings and at ILGA World's global and regional conferences. They do not receive Sida funds, but Sida stated that, along with ILGA World, they are the 'go-to' organisation to get fresh data and facts.¹⁵⁸ Within the LGBTI Core Group and the ERC, the normative dialogue is with like-minded governments and other actors, while the normative dialogue targeting EU and UN member states takes place in spaces where rights of LGBTQI persons, as well as gender transformative goals and SRHR are increasingly contested.

Key finding 5: Sweden's LGBTQI related normative dialogue is characterised by commitment, consistency, and endurance, backed with substantial Sida funding, which positions Sweden as a key player.

All consulted stakeholders stressed the **importance of Sida's consistent and long-term support to LGBTQI initiatives and large funding**. This has enabled Sweden to position itself as a key player in the above-mentioned coordinated policy spaces. The results of this positioning were described as being heard, being credible and, likely, being an actor others would want to work with. The programme officers at Sida¹⁵⁹ stated, for instance, that even if Sida's contribution to the joint Global Equality Fund¹⁶⁰ under the lead of the U.S. State Department was significantly smaller than, for example, the US funding, Sida is still seen as a key partner as Sweden was said to be very responsive to its LGBTQI partners'¹⁶¹ requests to talk to Sweden's peers, to put forward 'asks' in Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) processes, and to have Swedish diplomats meet with LGBTQI activists in Geneva and New York. Swedish missions were described as very active. The support from Sida was complementary to the political support in New York and Geneva.

The consulted partners stressed that **there is good collaboration, but that it is very much based on individual contacts and not so much on an institutional approach**. LGBTQI issues tend to fall through the cracks, one partner said, and all agreed that a more structured mechanism would be helpful. The absence of an institutional approach was confirmed by both consulted Swedish missions. Most of the dialogue with

¹⁵⁸ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ The GEF provides resources to CSOs and human rights defenders, including those working to increase the visibility and empowerment of queer women, transgender and other gender diverse people, intersex people, and members of other marginalised LGBTQI+ communities, while advancing and protecting the fundamental principle of human rights for all. The GEF provides emergency assistance to individuals and organisations under threat or attack, small grants for grassroots CSOs, and human rights programming grants to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ communities with long-term, targeted support. U.S. Department of State. (n.d.) <https://www.state.gov/global-equality-fund/>.

¹⁶¹ KIIs with RFSL, ILGA World and Outright International, 16 February, 17 and 28 April 2023.

LGBTQI CSOs was described as *ad hoc* and not structured and that it depends on the sessions and the resolutions in focus.¹⁶²

Sweden was identified by consulted stakeholders as a **key promoter and supporter of LGBTQI agendas and of related local organisations in the former Soviet Union**. This was underlined in all KIIs held in the region, including governmental institutions, CSOs, and several EU countries' embassies. Availability of funds for creation and support to a network of LGBTQI organisations from the EaP countries was assessed as a key enabling factor in all five beneficiary countries, contributing to increased advocacy capacities in the region.¹⁶³

Key finding 6: Sida's direct engagement in normative dialogue in policy spaces is limited to donor coordination. Sida's main method of LGBTQI normative dialogue is through partnerships.

Sida headquarters' direct entry points for normative dialogue are only through the ERC and the two collaborations with the U.S. State Department and USAID. Other normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues is conducted directly by the MFA and Swedish Government delegations, and by the political lead in collaboration with the gender focal point¹⁶⁴ at Swedish embassies at the national level. The **main potential space for Sida headquarters influence is through the contribution management of partnerships**. This is also the case for the regionally focused programme in EaP countries, which is managed by RFSL. This is despite the fact that normative dialogue does not have a salient role in the instructions to the Trac system.¹⁶⁵ As one respondent said: "The method is partnerships; the partners are the expert, and they are the ones conducting the normative dialogue at regional and global levels. The partners aim to contribute to norm changes, and they are in the lead of this work."¹⁶⁶

Sida headquarters and the regional SRHR team provide core and programme support to LGBTQI-led and LGBTQI-focussed interventions. It is primarily through the **selection of partners and aid modality** that Sida can influence the scale of advocacy work carried out by partners.¹⁶⁷ Focus is defined by partners. The regional SRHR team

¹⁶² KII with Sweden's Permanent mission in Geneva, May 12, 2023.

¹⁶³ For instance, the Gender Doc-M organisation remains the strongest voice of LGBTQI community in Republic of Moldova (fully recognised by the Equality Council and several EU Member States embassies) while the Eastern Partnership Coalition has been invited to submit inputs to inform the independent experts report addressed to the on-data collection and management to UN Bodies with informative analysis at regional level. KIIs in the region.

¹⁶⁴ Based on fieldwork findings in Moldova.

¹⁶⁵ Trac guidance makes clear that contribution management is their main responsibility and that they should prioritise their limited time and resources. Sida. (2021). *A Guide to Contribution Management at Sida*.

¹⁶⁶ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

with its regional SRHR strategy has a somewhat larger mandate to initiate discussions on LGBTQI initiatives. Apart from partnerships with regional LGBTQI-led CSOs and networks and LGBTQI-inclusive CSOs, the team funds a special LGBTQI programme through the United Nations Development Programme with an emphasis on the change of social norms and reform of LGBTQI discriminatory policy and legislation.¹⁶⁸

Support to LGBTQI-focussed or inclusive projects is also provided by Swedish Embassies through bilateral strategies. In these cases, partners can be seen more as intermediaries implementing priority areas of the Swedish strategy, but the advocacy work is still led and defined by partners. This was confirmed by interacting with embassy staff and LGBTQI activists and CSOs in Moldova (who are part of the Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality) and resonated with other grantees in the regional programme as well. For instance, in Georgia, the Embassy of Sweden was appreciated for “always checking with the LGBTQI movement and the Eastern European Coalition partners in-country before issuing a special statement or communication on the issue so that it does not harm the work of the organisations or results in a backlash.” It was perceived that the **Swedish Embassies in Coalition countries always tried to publicly communicate things that were meaningful and advanced the advocacy work of the partners**. This has been much appreciated.¹⁶⁹

The collaborations with USAID and the U.S. State Department are also partnerships which include the GEF and The Multi-Donor LGBTQI+ Global Human Rights Initiative:¹⁷⁰

“What we try to push for is that if we are to work for LGBTQI rights it has to be with an HRBA and local ownership. This is something that all donors to the GEF have agreed to. It has been a clear expectation from Sweden that the support must be grounded in the LGBTQI movements. Sida has clearly spelled out that proposal should come from within the movement, and we feel that they have responded well to this in the last years. We can see a big difference from last year in the applications. We have played the role of the

¹⁶⁸ Sida. (2020). *Strategirapport för Strategi sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter i Afrika Söder om Sahara 2015–2021*.

¹⁶⁹ Based on KILs in the regional programme, 2023.

¹⁷⁰ The Multi-Donor LGBTQI+ Global Human Rights Initiative (GHRI) is a five-year public-private partnership with co-funding from Sida, Global Affairs Canada, and private sector entities. The GHRI leverages financial and technical contributions from multiple partner institutions to support grant-making to local LGBTQI+ led organisations; global research on the realities of LGBTQI+ people; social and behaviour change communications capacity building; and emergency response. Through USAID’s Human Rights Grants Program, funds are provided to Missions to respond to human rights challenges and opportunities affecting LGBTQI+ people. The goal of these programs is to help advance the human rights of LGBTQI+ people and protect them from violence, discrimination, stigma, and criminalisation. Together, these programs work in countries in all regions where USAID operates. USAID. (n.d.). *LGBTQI+ Programs*. <https://www.usaid.gov/lgbtqi/lgbtqi-programs>.

annoying donor. This is visible in the new applications from USAID and the State Department.”¹⁷¹

“We also have other channels, like ILGA, and together we have pushed for intersectionality and poverty perspective. This is also visible in the application. USAID has an extremely competent team, the people working with the LGBTQI rights are activists and have a lot of creative ideas. They have another and very different resource base, it is rewarding working with them, and we learn a lot. There is a big potential to jointly influence the donor landscape.”¹⁷²

The impact of Sida’s role in the GEF was confirmed by Outright International,¹⁷³ one of its CSO partners. According to Outright, Sweden has become even more visible as a result of joining the U.S. in the GEF. This also makes other donors see the importance of working together and that it is possible to support small LGBTQI organisations. The collaboration provides Sida with a platform to influence other donors, and Sida has been an important voice stressing the democratic space and the risk of democratic deficit leading to states criminalising LGBTQI.

At the regional level in EaP countries, Sida headquarters¹⁷⁴ and Swedish Embassies have played a supportive background role, being less engaged in normative dialogue efforts. **This background role was nevertheless considered important, particularly at country level, as it amplified messages of LGBTQI actors or gave legitimacy to LGBTQI-led CSOs in country-level donor coordination,** at times opening opportunities for complementary funding and support. The nature of discussions between Sida and RFSL, as the main implementing partner, focused on normative aims as part of the programme scope, management, and follow-up.

Key finding 7: Sida’s support is seen as strategic and quite unique by its partners, enabling them to engage in high-level normative dialogue and regional policy processes based on broad LGBTQI movements. The thematic expertise held by these partners informs Sweden’s normative dialogue in the same spaces and processes.

RFSL and ILGA World focus on the same global policy processes within the UN system through the **production of evidence-based reports on the legal situation in countries and lived realities of LGBTQI communities around the world.** This is in addition to coordination and alliance building prior to and during policy events and

¹⁷¹ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁷² KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁷³ KII with Outright International, 16 February 2023.

¹⁷⁴ From where the regional programme is managed.

through direct dialogue with permanent missions, embassies, country delegations, side events and statements at high-level fora. During the reviewed period, both organisations provided input and guidance on the work of many UN Special Procedures and published evidence used by Sweden and other like-minded actors in the normative dialogue.¹⁷⁵ KIIs with the permanent missions in New York and Geneva confirmed the exchange of information and coordination with both organisations, while the representation in New York was said to have the closest collaboration with Outright International.¹⁷⁶ The mission in Geneva shared that the advocacy by LGBTQI CSOs has an impact on the missions and embassies, and highlighted ILGA World as a central actor with a good network.¹⁷⁷

Making sure that lessons and messages used for normative engagement in global policy processes are grounded in ongoing advocacy work of RFSL's grantees (often funded at least partly by Sida) is something that is internally coordinated between RFSL and its partners. For example, regional and international advocacy work of the Eastern Coalition for LGBT+ Equality falls **less on the role of Sida**. In relation to the regional programme, the relationship with Sida headquarters was characterised “very much as donor-grantee,”¹⁷⁸ whereas, contacts with **embassies** in the respective countries of coalition members were found to be more focussing on dialogue and outreach.

Embassies also gave space and legitimacy to programme activists and CSOs, both through public outreach and in donor coordination fora.¹⁷⁹ At embassy-level, there was also an information sharing network in place among political secretaries and gender focal points **among embassies in the region** where gender issues, including LGBTQI issues, were regularly discussed – something which was found valuable by embassy staff given the sensitivity of the issue.¹⁸⁰ This was stated as a ‘go-to’ resource for embassy personnel given the regional context, and was more frequently used than information or coordination on the thematic area with Sida headquarters.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ For example, *Guiding Principles on the Inclusion of LGBTI People in Development Policy and Programs*, which is a set of 13 principles that are meant to guide all development actors, RFSL (2018); ILGA. (2019, 2020). *State-Sponsored Homophobia reports*; ILGA. (2019,2020). *World Map on Sexual Orientation laws in 20 languages*; ILGA. (2020). *Trans Legal Mapping Report, detailing the impact of laws and policies on trans persons in 143 UN member States*; ILGA. (2023). *Toolkit on strategic litigation with the UN Treaty Bodies*. Annual reports to Sida by RFSL (2018-2021) and ILGA World (2019-2021).

¹⁷⁶ KIIs with Sweden's Permanent Representation in New York, 24 February 2023, and Outright International, 16 February 2023.

¹⁷⁷ KIIs with Sweden's Permanent mission in Geneva, 12 May 2023.

¹⁷⁸ KII with implementing organisation, May 2023.

¹⁷⁹ Based on feedback from in-country activists and grantees in multiple countries, May 2023.

¹⁸⁰ KIIs, regional case example.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Partners to Sida stated that Sida’s support is key in enabling CSO participation at high-level meetings as well as supporting movement building of LGBTQI communities. Sweden was said to:

“Provide access, resources, and they are a partner. Sida has had an impact setting an example of how they fund, who they fund and the actual economic resources. Sida shows other states that you can resource movements. This is what makes Sida different, Sweden is ready to resource LGBTQI movements and show that it is possible to fund the movement directly.”¹⁸²

Partners at the global level said that, compared to other donors, Sida is more willing to provide long-term support, and for ILGA World, Sida is the only government donor providing core support. The importance of long-term support for advocacy in severe headwinds should not be underestimated. It does allow for building endurance, giving partners confidence to be bold and challenging those who remain silent on LGBTQI abuses.

Also important is **Sida’s efforts to raise awareness among other governments that it is possible to provide core support to small organisations** like ILGA World.¹⁸³ Outright International recommended that based on Sida’s long experience, Sweden could offer technical support to other like-minded countries that want to increase their support to LGBTQI communities. Sida could even be an intermediary to some other countries, as with the EU model that uses member states as intermediaries.¹⁸⁴

At a regional level in EaP countries, long-term **funding and mobilisation of support** for LGBTQI-led actors and activists have been key characteristics of the support provided by Sida (via RFSL), and Swedish Embassies in the region. Through RFSL support to capacity-strengthening resource provision, CSO partners are enabled to engage in peer-to-peer exchange and conduct joint advocacy and regional campaigns. In other words, partners have been at the centre of setting and pushing the normative agenda, both collectively as a coalition and in their respective national settings.

Like-minded countries **turn and listen to Sweden as a credible and knowledgeable defender** of the rights of LGBTQI persons. In the specific donor coordination within the GEF, Sida has contributed to the decision that funds should only be channelled to

¹⁸² KIIs with ILGA World, 17 April 2023, and RFSL, 28 April 2023.

¹⁸³ KII with ILGA World, 17 April 2023.

¹⁸⁴ KII with Outright International, 16 February 2023.

rights-based LGBTQI work with a strong local ownership, and Sida can influence how and which LGBTQI organisations should be funded.¹⁸⁵

All changes in this case study captured at the global level result from joint efforts between Sweden, like-minded governments and the LGBTQI community. This characterises application of the 360 model in addressing LGBTQI rights. The **changes have materialised through complex and intertwined dialogue processes without any linear causal chains**. Maintaining agreed language in human rights instruments, and the absence of major backlashes at the global level are important outcomes, even though they cannot be attributed to Sweden and its partners over others. Such positive results in terms of lack of negative change derive from multiple, parallel, bilateral and group negotiations that are not documented. The steps taken are only known to those directly involved in the conversations over time and in different spaces. These were shared with the evaluation in the form of anecdotal evidence.

All identified outcomes are assessed as significant, but their transformative effects are, with some exceptions, limited. This is due to the open resistance at both in-country and global arenas against the rights of LGBTQI persons, which has forced a focus on how to avoid backlashes on previously agreed human rights rather than on transforming human rights norms and standards.

The **transformative effects** harboured in the identified outcomes are assessed to be:

- Sida has influenced other donors to accept the principle of ‘nothing about us without us’ and to increasingly support LGBTQI-led initiatives. This includes the grassroots level, despite the challenges small LGBTQI organisations face related to institutional and financial sustainability. Sida has also proved that it is possible to support LGBTQI movements, which has the potential to shift minds of other donors.
- The recognition by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the LGBT stakeholder group in 2019 is a change-maker for all defenders of the rights of LGBTQI persons. Approaching LGBTQI issues through the sustainable development agenda has proven to be more effective in many countries where the human rights discourse on LGBTQI is not socially, culturally, or even legally, accepted.
- Sida’s support to its LGBTQI-led partners and their focus on minorities/marginalised groups have meant increased inclusion of underrepresented SOGIESC groups in global advocacy efforts in recent years. This has resulted in trans women, trans men, intersex, non-binary, and queer persons, becoming relatively more visible and vocal in high-level policy spaces, and, thus, able to raise their concerns and share their lived realities. It also has

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

the potential to influence which abuses and needs are discussed in global human rights agendas, e.g., the importance of including violence against trans women when fighting against GBV or raising awareness on how intersex children are exposed to forced and non-consensual genital surgery, which is a form of genital mutilation.

The case study demonstrates **that Sweden’s consistency and endurance** in stressing that “LGBTQI rights should be part of all dialogue and political processes discussing human rights, democracy, and development,”¹⁸⁶ and the fact that Sida is one of the largest donors to LGBTQI organisations and LGBTQI initiatives, have resulted in Sweden being requested to be part of donor coordination. This helps to influence the agenda in high-level fora. The dialogue efforts by the MFA, Sida’s donor coordination, and the advocacy by supported partners jointly contribute to this position and the possibility to influence.

Sida’s entry point to global donor coordination allows it to take part in different fora, in addition to the ERC. Being a small but rather significant donor in these collaborations gives Sida good leverage and allows it to influence how and which LGBTQI organisations are funded with amounts much larger than the Sida contributions. Within the GEF, Sida has stressed that Swedish priorities need to be clearly spelled out in the funding.

Summary response to EQ2: The case study finds that Sida has influenced other donors to accept the principle of ‘nothing about us without us’ and to increasingly support LGBTQI-led initiatives. The recognition of the LGBT stakeholder group at the UN is another example where Sweden’s supportive position was key. Another outcome from the support to the LGBTQI movement is that minority groups such as trans women and men, intersex, non-binary, and queer persons, have become relatively more visible and vocal in high-level policy spaces. Also see summary for EQ1 above.

Summary response to EQ3: Key success factors and mechanisms identified in the case study are Sweden’s ability to be vocal and operate parallelly at several policy spaces using coordination and alliance building. The fact that Sweden has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the rights of LGBTQI persons, backed with substantial Sida funding, has positioned Sweden as a key player that other actors listen to and seek advice from. Sida’s method of LGBTQI normative dialogue is through partnerships and donor coordination. Apart from the increasingly hostile global environment contesting the rights of LGBTQI persons, the main hindering factors for successful normative dialogue in this case are the

¹⁸⁶ KII with the MFA, 13 February 2023.

necessity to practically cover all policy spaces discussing human rights and freedoms combined with the scarcity of human resources and LGBTQI specialist at Sida and the MFA.

Summary response to EQ6: Sida has opted to fund mainly LGBTQI-led partners, and both Sida and the MFA are directly informed by these partners on what they see as priority policy issues and where there are opportunities for positive outcomes from the dialogue. The harmonisation of Sweden's position with the priorities of the very rights-holders contributes to the legitimacy of the dialogue, well aligned with Sweden's human rights-based approach.

Organisation, role division and follow-up

EQ4: How does Sida's *prioritisation, planning and follow-up* of normative dialogue affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

EQ5: How does Sida's *organisation* of the normative dialogue, i.e., roles, responsibilities, forum for dialogue, and timing affect the results of normative dialogue? How does Sida's role in and *coordination within Team Sweden*, affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

Key finding 8: There is limited coordination on normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues between the MFA and Sida.

Both Sida and the MFA, as well as consulted partner organisations agreed that there is **limited exchange of information between the MFA and Sida** on normative dialogue. Though the ministry requests information on Sida contributions ahead of bilateral discussions with other governments, the normative dialogue is more often informed by direct contact between MFA and Sida's partners. For Sida, the updates on policy processes also comes from the partners: "we fund RFSL and ILGA for them to conduct advocacy work, they lead this work as experts. Its only through them that we get updated on successes /backlashes in global processes."¹⁸⁷

MFA respondents stressed the **different culture and ways of working between Sida and the MFA**. Most notably, Sida staff do not see that they have a mandate to engage in normative dialogue. However, Sida respondents shared that the MFA in Stockholm and the embassy in Washington ask for technical support, particularly related to the ERC:

"We support each other and take turns being present at different meetings. We mainly work with the Swedish embassy in Washington. The contact with the MFA in Stockholm does not

¹⁸⁷ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

refer to the support to RFSL or ILGA. The MFA often wants to highlight the GEF.”¹⁸⁸

There is **no practice at the MFA of reporting on outcomes of high-level normative dialogue to Sida.**¹⁸⁹ Rather, it is Sida’s partners that inform programme officers at Sida on those processes, mainly through their annual and final reporting, but also through follow-up meetings on the contributions. The exception is the discussions held at ERC, where the MFA often delegates to Sida to attend the donor coordination group. Sida, on the other hand, report strategy specific progress and outcomes from different partnership to the MFA.

Key finding 9: While the human rights focus of Sida’s development cooperation implicitly stresses the importance of LGBTQI inclusive interventions, this is not evident in instructions or tools guiding partner dialogue on norm critical approaches. There is insufficient focus on LGBTQI issues in humanitarian work.

The **need to include LGBTQI in all development areas** – in economic development initiatives, in livelihoods programmes, and within the humanitarian aid – was highlighted at the latest ILGA World conference.¹⁹⁰ ILGA World research found LGBTQI persons to be totally invisible, something that was obvious during the Covid-19 pandemic. This call to include LGBTQI issues in humanitarian work was forwarded by the thematic lead and the programme officers at Sida headquarters to the Sida Humanitarian department. Partners in the Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality also raised this issue and mentioned that there seemed to be “no dialogue between development and humanitarian actors when it came to funding mechanisms,” and that they received little response when raising this with Sida. Because of the trust built-up over time among Eastern Coalition members, local CSO-grantees managed to get activists out of Ukraine and into Moldova at the outset of the war but could not use Sida funds to finance anything of a more humanitarian nature, indicating that they “had to work around funding restrictions to manage.”¹⁹¹ Both Sida and MFA respondents¹⁹² stressed that in general, **Sweden has been rather silent on LGBTQI in humanitarian assistance.** So far, it has not been a high-profile issue according to the MFA.

It is, however, not only the humanitarian assistance that is missing from the dialogues. **Many development interventions supported by Sida are also silent of the situation and the rights of LGBTQI persons.** The reasons behind this vary and are mainly

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ KIIs with the MFA and Sida, 13 February and 8 March 2023.

¹⁹⁰ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁹¹ Based on KIIs and validated with partners in-country.

¹⁹² KII with Sida HQ, 23 September 2022, and the MFA, 13 February 2023.

related to the level of knowledge, awareness, and thematic focus of the partners. However, it is also related to how Sida applies Sweden's commitments for an LGBTQI-inclusive human rights agenda. The few programme officers at Sida headquarters and embassies managing the support to LGBTQI-led partners have limited resources to support other colleagues to strengthen their dialogue with partners on how LGBTQI issues can be better integrated in Sida-supported interventions. There is no formal thematic network or focal point system specific for LGBTQI issues at Sida.¹⁹³ Although Sida promotes a gender transformative approach,¹⁹⁴ it is not explicit on how this relates to LGBTQI. In its most recent brief on gender equality *Portfolio overview 2022: Gender equality* (July 2023), Sida states that:

“Gender equality is a human right, a prerequisite and driver for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls, and boys, in all their diversity, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the same power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. As one of the main thematic priorities for Swedish development cooperation, a gender equality perspective shall permeate all of Sida's work, at all levels and at all stages throughout preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Sida applies a gender transformative approach which seeks to change unequal power relations through tackling the root causes of gender inequality.”¹⁹⁵

While “in all their diversity” can include all forms of sexual orientation, non-binary conforming gender identities are not explicitly accounted for in the above quote. Other guiding materials on gender equality¹⁹⁶ are also quite silent on LGBTQI. The overall and thematic briefs and technical notes on HRBA do not include any specific guidance on LGBTQI.¹⁹⁷ There are no other tools on LGBTQI inclusion on Sida's website. Sweden's normative dialogue at the global level is, thus, not reflected in contribution management instructions, nor in the tools used in Sida's dialogue with partners since they fail to mention LGBTQI. Normative dialogue on LGBTQI at contribution-management level is thus dependent on programme officers' individual knowledge, capacity, and initiative.

¹⁹³ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁹⁴ Sida. (2023). *Gender Equality*. <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/gender-equality-4>.

¹⁹⁵ *Portfolio overview 2022: Gender equality*, Sida, July 2023.

¹⁹⁶ Sida. (2023). *Gender Toolbox*. <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/gender-toolbox/>.

¹⁹⁷ Sida. (2024). *Human Rights Based Approach*. <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/human-rights-based-approach/>.

Sida supports partners that call for normative change and norm critical language, while Sida's overall gender discourse remains binary. Although Sweden is an important player, nuancing conversations, conventions, shifting norms, focusing on language at international level, the evaluation team found that this does not appear to be reflected in the overall contribution discussions, and only in part when SRHR issues are addressed.

Key finding 10: LGBTQI expertise at Sida is under-resourced and internal structures for coordination do not reflect the high level of commitment as a donor.

Sida has a strong but small team of three staff at headquarters managing LGBTQI-led partnerships, in addition to the thematic lead on Democracy and Human Rights. **There is no focal point for LGBTQI issues.** At the time of this reporting, all positions but one, are occupied by new staff. It will be a challenge to keep the gained thematic expertise and experience, and to respond to the in-house demand for support.¹⁹⁸

“It is a rather heavy task to support all the colleagues seeking support on how to approach LGBTQI issues. There is a huge demand among colleagues to discuss and to understand how the LGBTQI movement operates, its challenges of division, power relations and structures. It is a tricky issue for Sida. [...] ... the key issue is how we lack a structure and allocated resources to work on LGBTQI in a structured and systematic manner. However, it is well established in several strategies that we should work on LGBTQI rights, as for instance in the regional SRHR strategy.”¹⁹⁹

There is no formal network at Sida focusing on LGBTQI. An informal working group has emerged of programme officers whose programmes have an LGBTQI focus. This network has started to share updates at global, regional, and country levels, with some digital meetings since 2021. Due to internal process regulations at Sida to establish a formal working group, the group is only informal. One respondent saw this as symptomatic of the lack of a structural approach to LGBTQI issues at Sida as an institution: “It shows that the issues are not sufficiently important to allow us to have a formal status of the group. The bureaucracy speaks for itself.” However, several of the thematic Sida networks address LGBTQI issues in part, like the gender network, the democracy and human rights network, and the SRHR network.

Another hindering factor is the fact that Sida does not have a clear mandate to directly engage in normative dialogue in the LGBTQI area, which is **led by the MFA**. This

¹⁹⁸ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

means that Sida remains in the background and leaves it to partners or the MFA to lead the discussions on Sida's behalf, even if present at events:

“Sida has the expertise, and long experience from different funding mechanisms, something that could be used (more?) in the dialogue with other donors. We do not have that much manoeuvre since we do not formally have the role as advisors, we are only part of fora where we have support to interventions. [...] So, we will continue to heavily rely on our expert partners for the normative dialogue. These partners are very sharp, they are the right partners. [...] We have now several of the big and important actors connected to Sida.”²⁰⁰

Summary response to EQ4: LGBTQI is a prioritised issue at Sida across the development cooperation but at the same time instructions or tools guiding partner dialogue on norm critical approaches are not explicit on LGBTQI. There is also insufficient focus on LGBTQI issues in humanitarian work.

Summary response to EQ5: There is limited coordination on normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues between the MFA and Sida which to some extent hinders learning, synergies between the efforts made by each institution as well as a more coordinated monitoring of the policy processes different parts of Team Sweden are engaged in. LGBTQI expertise at Sida is under-resourced and internal structures for coordination do not reflect the high level of commitment as a donor. This means that Sida misses out from the opportunity to guide both in-house departments and units and other Sida partners on how they could link their work to important LGBTQI policy processes.

Communication means and tools

EQ7: How do *methods* within normative dialogue, such as the practice of different *communication means and messages* and the way Sida adapts them to local contexts, affect the results?

As illustrated throughout this case, Sweden – led by MFA (often with the support of permanent missions and representations) and Sida-funded partners – has used normative dialogue effectively in high-level policy dialogues to influence global policy processes within the UN system to safeguard the human rights language and the rights of LGBTQI communities. This has had **positive ripple effects** in fora where Sida is more present and vocal, namely in donor coordination and in their role as financiers of partners (global and national).

²⁰⁰ KII with Sida HQ, 8 March 2023.

Partly an effect of the normative dialogue, together with Sweden's long-term commitment and profiling of LGBTQI rights at high-level meetings, all respondents agreed that Sweden has established itself as a donor that is 'listened to' by other donors. This helped Sida to influence the **framing** donor discussions so that support to local LGBTQI-led organisations was seen as being part of the development cooperation portfolio of other donors.

Summary response to EQ7: The case study did not identify any specific communication means or messages key for the observed outcomes from the normative dialogue. Rather it was the consistent stressing of LGBTQI persons' rights in all possible policy fora and the coordination with likeminded governments and donors pushing for LGBTQI-inclusive and rights-based language that stood out as the communication strategy.

3.4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

The ToC for Sida's application of normative dialogue, developed by the evaluation team in the inception phase of the evaluation, is based on the underlying assumptions that both a system and a theory of change are in place. While the overall ToC and the conditions for systemic collaboration in the different domains of change set out in the ToC are relevant, there are still many gaps specifically concerning LGBTQI issues. (The ToC is depicted in Figure 1 of this report).

Regarding the Sida/Team Sweden institutional domain, it is apparent that the 360 model is only partly in place. If the Swedish CSO partners defending the rights of LGBTQI persons are included in Team Sweden, the 360 model could be said to be reflected in the dialogue across Sida and MFA headquarters and the embassies. The Swedish and international CSO partners play a crucial role in the dialogue and information sharing between Sida and the MFA. Unfortunately, the direct communication between Sida and MFA is insufficiently developed.

Sweden's approach to normative dialogue on LGBTQI is to closely coordinate with like-minded actors and raise LGBTQI issues in all key policy spaces and processes. The selection of partners is policy-driven by Sida headquarters, a selection that MFA confirmed as strategic.

However, the role of the programme officers at Sida in the normative dialogue after selecting strategic LGBTQI partners, is not always clear. The MFA leads the normative dialogue, which is informed by the thematic expertise at Sida and by Sida's LGBTQI-led partners. Sweden is vocal in practically all key spaces using coordination and alliance building and recognised for its commitment, consistency, and endurance. The MFA has been vocal and successful together with its allies in maintaining inclusive language in resolutions and notably in renewing the mandate of the Independent Expert on the Prevention of Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and

Gender Identity (at the HRC). Sweden remains a key player in like-minded coordination groups and spaces like the EU, Equal Rights Coalition and the LGBTI Core Group at the UN.

Sida's core and programme support have enabled the presence and normative dialogue of LGBTQI activists at high-level policy spaces and contributed to the following changes:

- The recognition of LGBTQI communities as 'other stakeholders' to the UN.
- LGBTQI issues are addressed within the sustainable development framework.
- Increased knowledge among LGBTQI activists on how to use Agenda 2030 in national advocacy.
- Increased visibility of LGBTQI Global South and East activists, including trans and intersex activists, at high-level policy spaces.

Despite these successes in the political discourse at the global level, a real LGBTQI-inclusive gender approach at Sida is lacking. Sida continues to use a binary approach that excludes other gender identities and experiences. Knowledge on LGBTQI-specific issues is limited to a small group of programme officers. There is no appointed thematic LGBTQI expert, and the current instructions and tools do not address what the inclusion of LGBTQI would entail and how it could be raised in contribution management. This poses limitations for Sida staff to directly engage in normative dialogue and to have a clear idea of what LGBTQI issues they should raise with which kind of partners. The absence of recent policy or strategy direction specific to LGBTQI also contributes to the perceived unclear mandate for Sida to engage in LGBTQI normative dialogue.

The identified weak coordination between Sida and the MFA on strategic priorities related to LGBTQI issues further blurs the expectations on what more Sida could do, or what could be done differently, i.e., apart from funding strategic LGBTQI-led partner organisations. When Sida has used its position as one of the key donors to LGBTQI, the normative dialogue has had an impact on like-minded donors. This indicates that there is space for Sida to leverage its experience more strongly in other aspects of LGBTQI-related normative dialogue.

ANNEX 1 CASE-SPECIFIC LITERATURE REVIEWED

1. Equal Rights Coalition. (2024). <https://equalrightscoalition.org/thematic-areas/donor-coordination/>.
2. Finnish Consulting Group Oy (FCG). (2023). *Evaluation of RFSL Mobilising for Change: Leaving no one behind, 2021-2023 and 2018-2020*.
3. Finnish Consulting Group Oy (FCG). (2023). *Evaluation of RFSL Mobilising for Change: Leaving no one behind, 2021-2023 and 2018-2020*. <https://www.fcg.fi/en/projects/evaluation-of-rfsl-mobilising-for-change-leaving-no-one-behind-2021-2023-and-2018-2020-call-off/>.
4. Global Philanthropy Project. (2023). <https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/>.
5. ILGA (2020). *Trans Legal Mapping Report, detailing the impact of laws and policies on trans persons in 143 UN member States*. https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ILGA_World_Trans_Legal_Mapping_Report_2019_EN.pdf.
6. ILGA World. (2019-2021). Annual reports. <https://ilga.org/about-us/annual-reports-documents/>.
7. ILGA. (2019, 2020). *World Map on Sexual Orientation laws in 20 languages*. <https://ilga.org/resources/map-sexual-orientation-laws-december-2019-20-languages/>.
8. ILGA. (2020). *State-Sponsored Homophobia report*. https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ILGA_World_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_report_global_legislation_overview_update_December_2020.pdf.
9. ILGA. (2023). *Criminalisation consensual same sex sexual acts*. <https://database.ilga.org/criminalisation-consensual-same-sex-sexual-acts>.
10. ILGA. (2023). *Toolkit on strategic litigation with the UN Treaty Bodies*. <https://ilga.org/news/ilga-world-launches-un-treaty-bodies-strategic-litigation-toolkit/>.
11. LGBTI Stakeholder Group. (n.d.). <https://www.lgbtistakeholdergroup.org/about-us/>.
12. Regeringskansliet. (2014). *Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*.
13. Regeringskansliet. (2017). *Ändrad strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete avseende arbetet med de mänskliga rättigheterna, demokrati och rättsstatens principer 2018–2022*. <https://www.regeringen.se/globalassets/episerver-forms/andrad-strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-avseende-arbetet-med-de-manskliga-rattigheterna-demokrati-och-rattsstatens-principer-20182022-002.pdf>.
14. Regeringskansliet. (2017). *Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete avseende arbetet med de mänskliga rättigheterna, demokrati och rättsstatens*

- principer 2018–2022.*
https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/c88c6c80be3642f986d081f70bdeff34/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete_sv_webb.pdf.
15. Regeringskansliet. (2017). *Strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016–2022.* <https://www.government.se/international-development-cooperation-strategies/2017/08/strategy-for-support-via-swedish-civil-society-organisations-for-the-period-20162022/>.
 16. Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Strategi för Sveriges globala utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar social utveckling 2018–2022.* <https://www.regeringen.se/strategier-for-internationalt-bistand/2018/11/strategi-for-sveriges-globala-utvecklings--samarbete-inom-hallbar-social-utveckling-20182022/>.
 17. Regeringskansliet. (2021). *Handlingsplan för hbtqi-personers lika rättigheter och möjligheter.* <https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/93e20976982b4d798400b20ac57a966f/handlingsplan-hbtqi-221031.pdf>.
 18. Regeringskansliet. (2022). *Strategi för sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter (SRHR) i Afrika 2022–2026.* <https://www.government.se/international-development-cooperation-strategies/2022/06/strategy-for-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-srhr-in-africa-20222026>.
 19. RFSL. (2018). *Guiding Principles on the Inclusion of LGBTI People in Development Policy and Programs.* https://www.rfsl.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/RFSL_Guiding-Principles_final_digital.pdf.
 20. RFSL. (2020). *Application to Sida: Mobilising for Change, Leaving No One Behind 2021–2023, Phase 2.*
 21. RFSL. (various years). *Mobilising for Change: Leaving no one behind.* Annual reports 2018–2021.
 22. RFSL. (various years). *The Eastern Coalition for LGBT+ Equality: Moving Forward Programme.* Annual reports 2019, 2021–2022.
 23. Sida. (2006). *Development Cooperation as a Tool.; Dialogue & Strategic Communications in Development Cooperation.* <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida30485en-dialogue-and-strategic-communication-in-development-cooperation.pdf>.
 24. Sida. (2020). *Strategirapport för Strategi sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter i Afrika Söder om Sahara, 2015–2021.* <https://cdn.openaid.se/app/uploads/2022/03/29130935/Strategirapport-for-utvecklingssamarbete-med-SRHR-i-Afrika-soder-om-Sahara-2015-2022.pdf>.
 25. Sida. (2021). *A Guide to Contribution Management at Sida.*
 26. Sida. (2023). *Portfolio overview 2023: Gender equality Mainstreaming gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment.*

- https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2024/05/16132506/62697-Portfolio-Overview-Gender-Equality-2023_WEB-1.pdf.
27. Sida. (2023). *Sida's work with democracy, human rights and freedom of expression*. <https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/thematic-areas/democracy-human-rights-and-freedom-of-expression>.
 28. Sida. (n.d.). *Gender Toolbox*. <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methodsmaterials/gender-toolbox/>.
 29. Sida. (n.d.). *The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) Toolbox*. <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/human-rights-based-approach/>.
 30. Starrs, A. M., Ezech, A. C., Barker, G., Basu, A., Bertrand, J. T., Blum, R., Coll-Seck, A. M., Grover, A., Laski, L., Roa, M., Sathar, Z. A., Say, L., Serour, G. I., Singh, S., Stenberg, K., Temmerman, M., Biddlecom, A., Popinchalk, A., Summers, C. and Ashford, L. S. (2018). *Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission*. *Lancet*, 391, pp. 2642-2692. Published online May 9, 2018. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2818%2930293-9>.
 31. The Guardian. (30 June 2013). *Russia passes anti-gay law*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/30/russia-passes-anti-gay-law>.
 32. U.S. Department of State. (n.d.). <https://www.state.gov/global-equality-fund/>.
 33. UN LGBTI Core Group. (2024). <https://unlgbticoregroup.org/>.
 34. UN OHCHR. (2024). *Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>.
 35. UN. (n.d.) *General Assembly of the United Nations, Social, Humanitarian & Cultural – Third Committee*. <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/69/index.shtml>.
 36. United Nations, OHCHR. (2022). *Resolution on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions*. Adopted in November 2022.
 37. United Nations, OHCHR. (2021). *Resolution on free and fair elections*. Adopted in November 2021.
 38. USAID. (n.d.). *LGBTQI+ programs*. <https://www.usaid.gov/lgbtqi/lgbtqi-programs>.
 39. Wallström, M., (2016). *Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer i svensk utrikespolitik*. Skr. 2016/17:62. <https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/b95748aea48940eb81c85b6ef60eb84b/manskliga-rattigheter-demokrati-och-rattsstatens-principer-i-svensk-utrikespolitik-skr-20161762.pdf>.

4 Case Study: Normative Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

THEMATIC CASE FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

Key finding 1: Normative dialogue contributed directly to positive WEE outcomes or served as a complementary process which enhanced the achievement of development results. Outcomes were found at all levels of operation (global, regional and at country level).

Key finding 2: The most successful outcomes combined financial support to like-minded partners with Sida's and embassies' complementary dialogue efforts held with other relevant stakeholders.

Key finding 3: The most effective country level normative dialogue efforts were those where Sida's global dialogue objectives were coordinated with but also tailored to the local context. Sida/MFA's willingness to take risks by using innovative dialogue approaches also contributed to success.

Key finding 4: Sida's implementing partners often led much of the normative dialogue that directly contributed to significant development outcomes and transformative change. Sida personnel frequently influenced these efforts, using the partner dialogue during the contribution management processes to advance Sida's objectives. These processes also served as a form of informal capacity building for the implementing partners.

Key finding 5: Sida selected its implementing partners based on their commitment and willingness to promote gender equality and WEE. This facilitates the normative dialogue considerably but raises questions where normative dialogue can have the biggest effect and how to deal with actors that are further in the periphery of the implementation chain who may not share the same values or priorities.

Key finding 6: Sweden's adoption of a Feminist Foreign Policy and related technical support and guidance contributed significantly to Sida officials becoming knowledgeable about gender equality in general. It also enabled Sida/embassy officials to raise gender issues in dialogue with both implementing partners and other relevant actors in diverse operating contexts.

Key finding 7: Sida's sharing of its knowledge products and resources related to gender equality and WEE served as a complementary process for its normative dialogue, laying the foundation for alliance-building, joint design processes and/or for partners to use in their own normative advocacy work.

Conclusions in brief: The evaluation found that normative dialogue has contributed significantly to positive changes related to WEE and gender equality, with numerous documented examples. Upon reviewing various approaches employed by Sida, the evaluation team concluded that five approaches have proven most effective to promote gender equality and WEE:

1. Close coordination between Sida headquarters and embassies on key gender equality and WEE dialogue issues;
2. Leadership or strategic input from Swedish ambassadors in high-level normative dialogue processes at the country level, complementing Sida/MFA programming;
3. Normative dialogue conducted within the context of contribution management, serving as a as a form of informal capacity building for like-minded partners;
4. Willingness to take considerable risks in terms of financial and human resources, supporting innovative normative dialogue that go beyond traditional approaches; and
5. Strategic secondment of gender expertise by Sida to influential host organisations.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This case study covers Sida interventions during the evaluation time frame of 2015 to 2022. It focuses on how Sida-funded interventions have used normative dialogue to contribute to outcomes related to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and gender equality (GE). The team collected and analysed data by conducting a review of 11 Sida-supported interventions or normative dialogue processes and conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with Sida personnel who either work on these interventions or in the WEE/GE areas as well as implementing partners. This was complemented by a document review (Annex 1).

4.1.1 Focus and scope of the case study

The sample includes global, regional, and country level normative dialogue processes and covers three global level normative dialogue processes, three regional ones, and five at the country level. The interventions selected are based on referrals from Sida personnel and relevant interventions outlined in Sida's 2019 Women's Economic Empowerment Portfolio Review.²⁰¹ This allowed us to examine Sida's normative dialogue in multiple contexts, across different approaches used, and across a wide range of implementing partners. The data and analysis are based on a combination of 32 interviews with Sida staff and implementing partners and a document review for each intervention as well as the overall thematic areas of WEE and GE.

The introduction, including the case study analytical framework, methodology and data, is followed in section 4.2 by the background and the context. Section 4.3 presents the findings relating to the evaluation questions. Section 4.4 provides an overall conclusion of the case study. Annexes 2 and 3 to this case study provide detailed data on the WEE-related normative dialogue agenda summary, and a summary of normative dialogue approaches in Sida-funded WEE interventions or processes.

4.1.2 Methodology

The team analysed 11 interventions from a WEE and GE-related normative dialogue perspective by undertaking KIIs,²⁰² document review, and harvesting outcomes from each intervention. For this case study, the evaluation focuses strictly on the outcomes generated through WEE and/or GE-related dialogue and draws specific conclusions related to this thematic area.

²⁰¹ Tripleline. (2021). *Sida's Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Portfolio Review*.

²⁰² For list of interviewees see Annex 4 in main report, *Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015-2022*.

4.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4.2.1 The normative agenda

Sida's normative agenda related to WEE was updated through a consultative process to generate an updated thematic review completed in 2023. This review articulates Sida's main normative dialogue discussion and action points related to WEE linked to the following areas: Business Development and Entrepreneurship; Education and Skills; Employment and Decent Work; Land and Property Rights; and Digitalisation. This agenda is quite broad and provides considerable scope for Sida and the MFA to engage in normative dialogue at multiple levels.²⁰³ (Refer to Annex 2 for detailed breakdown of dialogue categories under each WEE-related sub-heading.)

During the period covered by the evaluation, normative dialogue within the context of WEE was framed by the Swedish's government's **Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP)**, adopted in 2014. While Sweden dropped the FFP as an approach in the fall of 2022, the 2014 policy outlined key tenets and principles that strongly influenced how Sida addressed WEE within its global, regional, and national normative dialogues during the evaluation period and so merits a brief description here.²⁰⁴

The FFP placed a focus on human rights and on the promotion of women's human rights. It emphasised countering gender-based violence and discrimination; increasing women's representation and participation at all levels of decision-making; and ensuring equitable resource allocation among people of all genders. It was based on the core principle of standing against systematic and global subordination of women. It also recognised that gender equality was critical to Sweden's broader foreign-policy objectives, including economic development, prosperity, and security.²⁰⁵ Regardless of whether there is a feminist focus or one on gender equality for women and girls, striving to achieve increased gender equality remains a principal Sida objective and is a core Swedish value for which Sweden is globally recognised.

Sida's **2023 thematic approach to Women's Economic Empowerment** also states that "WEE is a priority in promoting economic justice, gender equality and the rights of women and girls within Swedish international development cooperation and that WEE is central to Sida's poverty alleviation efforts."²⁰⁶ It also emphasises the need to

²⁰³ Summarised from the technical guidance sections of *Sida's 2023 Thematic Overview of WEE*.

²⁰⁴ While framing a feminist approach as an important linchpin to achieving economic prosperity and reducing poverty, the recent evaluation of the 2014 Feminist Foreign Policy only makes passing reference to the fact that there have been several trade policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Ann Towns, Elin Bjarnegård, Katarzyna Jezierska. (2023). *More than a Label, Less than a Revolution: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*. EBA 2023:02

²⁰⁵ Rachel Vogelstein and Alexandra Bro. (2019). *Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy, Long May It Reign*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/30/sweden-feminist-foreignpolicy/>.

²⁰⁶ Sida. (2023). *Thematic Overview 2023: Women's Economic Empowerment*.

take an intersectional approach in the analysis, development and implementation of WEE-related measures and provides technical guidance on how Sida can and should support increased gender equality in five key areas, namely: business development and entrepreneurship; education and skills; employment and decent work; land and property rights; and digitalisation.

The **2019 portfolio review** of Sida's support for WEE-related interventions found a similar focus in terms of sub-thematic areas, with the 2023 overview adding an increased emphasis on digitalisation. Both past and present strategies are underpinned by the theory that increased gender equality benefits all society from both a social and economic perspective and that supporting WEE, GE and economic justice are critical elements needed to alleviate poverty. There is a substantial body of work of research and evidence to support this assertion.²⁰⁷

Sida's conceptual framework in the 2023 thematic overview of WEE starts with “the recognition that individuals and groups make choices and exercise agency but they do so within the constraints and possibilities imposed by the structural gender inequalities in terms of rules, social norms, power, assets, and identities between different groups in their societies.”²⁰⁸ It also indicates that gender disadvantages in labour, finance and other markets are ‘effects’/consequences of these ‘structures of constraint’ which operate over the course of women and men's lives in somewhat different ways or diverse social groups in different social contexts.²⁰⁹

The evaluation team reviewed normative dialogues that operated at a variety of levels with diverse actors, summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Stakeholder and Normative Dialogue Area Mapping

Dialogue Area	Actors
Gender and trade	World Bank, Sida Multilateral Unit, MFA
Gender-inclusive financial and monetary policy	Sida, Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI)
Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE)	Sida, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Women, World Food Programme (WFP)
Africa: Adoption of gender mainstreaming processes	African Development Bank (AfDB), Sida

²⁰⁷ Sida. (2023). op. cit., p. 3.

²⁰⁸ Sida. (2023). op. cit., p. 4.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

MENA: Adoption of decent work and employment policies and practices	Sida, International Labour Organisation (ILO)/UN Women
Central America: Care economy	WE Effect, government officials, development cooperation agencies, CSOs and women's organisations, academics
Bangladesh: Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems (WEESMS)	International Development Enterprises Bangladesh, The Asia Foundation, Bangladeshi market system actors, government regional and local training institutions, Sida/Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh
Guatemala: Market access for rural Mayan women	Embassy of Sweden, WE Effect, Rural Mayan Women's Economic Empowerment programme
Mozambique: Gender-inclusive market systems development	Sida, National Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) authority (ANEP ²¹⁰), private sector firms, banks, media companies
Somalia: Gender mainstreaming of multi-partner trust fund programmes	Sida, World Bank
Tanzania: Gender mainstreaming of agricultural sector programmes	Sida, Tanzania Horticultural Association, Private Agricultural Sector Support Trust, Agricultural Market Development Trust, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology and Small Industries Development Organization

²¹⁰ National Authority for Professional Education (ANEP).

4.3 FINDINGS

4.3.1 Outcomes

EQ1: How likely is it that the normative dialogue has *contributed* to change?

Key finding 1: Normative dialogue contributed directly to positive WEE outcomes or served as a complementary process which enhanced the achievement of development results. Outcomes were found at all levels of operation (global, regional and at country level).

4.3.2 Global level outcomes

At the global level, the evaluation examined WEE-related normative dialogue with **United Nations (UN)** agencies and two international financial institutions (the **World Bank** and the **African Development Bank, AfDB**) as well as the **AFI**.²¹¹ The latter is an international CSO working towards becoming an international governmental organisation. The team also found evidence of influence in the global dialogue with a joint UN multi-country programme led by FAO, the **Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (RWEE)** in multiple country-level outcomes. Through KIIs and document reviews the evaluation team documented the following outcomes to which normative dialogue contributed at the global level:

World Bank

Globally Sida has been working to influence how the World Bank addresses gender equality in its gender and trade unit, primarily through collaboration of World Bank personnel with a seconded Sida gender equality and trade specialist. This secondment coincided with a change in high level leadership at the World Bank who was committed to a gender mainstreaming agenda. Consequently, Sida observed a shift in how the World Bank addressed gender equality and trade issues. Prior to that, progress was difficult, and many World Bank personnel perceived trade as a gender-neutral area.²¹² Several Sida staff also observed that while the World Bank was aware of the need to integrate gender equality more effectively into its investment portfolio, it remained a significant challenge to get them to do so more systematically.²¹³ Some specific results include:

- With the support of a seconded expert from Sida, the World Bank produced a report on gender and trade; and

²¹¹ Sida is also working with international CSOs, such as CGAP, WIEGO, and Women's World Banking on WEE-related normative dialogue at the global level and is active in the global dialogue in different fora with different partners. The evaluation team was only able to include a selective and representative sample of these diverse organisations in this study.

²¹² Interviews, Sida HQ personnel, 15 and 17 May 2023.

²¹³ Ibid.

- The Government of Sweden negotiated that 5% of the funds Sida gives to the World Bank must be targeted to support increased gender equality.

Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI)

The AFI operates in the global **fiscal and monetary policy environment that is often quite conservative and gender blind**. Its mandate is to advocate for adoption of gender-inclusive fiscal and monetary policy at the global, regional, and national levels. Thus, the outcomes achieved with Sida dialogue support took place in a context where it is usually difficult to see much traction. The AFI attributed much of their recent success to the normative and process methodologies which Sida advocated with them.²¹⁴ Some examples included:

- AFI has grown rapidly in scope and size and now has a well-established business/operations unit;
- Multiple network members now view monetary and fiscal policy from a gender-inclusive finance (GIF) perspective;
- GIF is now mainstreamed in all AFI thematic committees, with a Gender Focal Point for each thematic committee and GIF issues no longer being siloed only in the GIF committee;
- Five policy changes at country level inclusive of GIF perspective in first year of project. Around 22 – 28 policy changes at the national level this past year; and
- Large cohort of women deputy governors of financial institutions in Africa meet every few months on WhatsApp to discuss ways to address gender-specific challenges they face, how they can address these and support each other.

UN agencies and global programmes

In its work with diverse, **UN agencies** Sida's role has been either as a partner presenting dialogue positions within important normative fora such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) or as a funding partner, trying to influence how each UN agency mainstreams or targets gender equality, particularly within the UN's Working as One framework. The latter is the case for the **RWEE**, where KIIs with diverse programme and Sida personnel found that key outcomes were attributable to the fact that:

- Sida was a partner in the normative dialogue process at the global and country levels;
- Since UN partners were already engaged on GE and WEE issues, this made it easier for Sida to have an internal dialogue on related matters;

²¹⁴ KIIs, Sida Partner and Sida HQ interviews, 18 April and 16 May 2023.

- There were two main funders for the programme that engaged in normative dialogue (Sida and Norad). This strengthened Sida's degree of influence as a dialogue partner;
- The other funder was strongly in alignment with Sida on gender equality issues and the two donors consulted on all comments related to design and implementation prior to sharing these with their UN partners (i.e., a high level of alignment and coordination); and
- The promotion of gender-responsive agricultural policy was an explicit programme objective and outcome.

Some outcomes specific to the RWEE²¹⁵ programme included:

- Sida influenced Phase II design to include work on normative dialogue issues with men and boys and ensure RWEE's results frameworks and risk assessments took into account the tensions that can arise when women become more empowered economically;
- Phase 1 of this programme contributed to the following policy outcomes: in Nepal, an agricultural development strategy was developed that integrated gender equality; in Guatemala, a gender responsive agricultural strategy was developed for first time; in Niger, a gender equality lens was added to its national nutrition policy; Nigeria passed a land rights bill with a gender equality lens; and Tanzania added a gender equality lens to their blue economy strategy;
- Governments were supported to make sure they were developing sex and gender disaggregated data to support evidence-based policy and identify needs of both women and men; and
- The programme has been able to bring women into policy dialogues at both national and local levels.

4.3.3 Regional outcomes

In the regional interventions reviewed by the evaluation team, the following outputs and outcomes were identified:

In the **MENA region**, Sida has been working with the ILO and UN Women to facilitate the adoption of universal standards and norms related to women's human rights and decent work and employment. Within a WEE context, this region is noted for having

²¹⁵ The joint programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) is a global initiative that aims to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development. Jointly implemented since 2012 by the FAO, the IFAD, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (UN Women) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). It is jointly financed by Norway, Sweden, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

the lowest rates of women's labour participation in the world.²¹⁶ This is due to prevailing labour policy discrimination in some countries in the region and social norms that act as a constraint for women's participation in paid work outside the home, regardless of their education levels.²¹⁷ This provides considerable space for WEE-related normative dialogue at both the governmental and societal levels. The **ILO/UN Women Joint Programme on Decent Work and Productive Employment for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine** included the following outcomes:

- Normative changes emerged as a key success of the Joint Programme; and
- More than 17 policy and legislative provisions on GE were introduced or amended during 2019 – 2021 in the targeted countries (including laws, articles, decrees and decisions). This exceeded the targets set for 2023, e.g., Ministerial Decrees (No. 43 and 44) issued by Egyptian Ministry of Manpower provides women with the right to work in any job or profession with no restrictions due to their gender (Ministerial decree 43/2021) and Ministerial decree 44/2021 allows women to work in any facility at any time of the night if they desire it and take the required precautions to preserve women's health.

A recent Sida mission to the **AfDB** observed that the Bank is quite aware of the need to become more gender-inclusive in its investment portfolios. The mission report noted that the AfDB experiences pressure to do so both from diverse funding members of the Bank, such as Sweden and Canada, as well as several African members.²¹⁸ The gender mission also found that it is clear that gender equality will be at the centre of AfDB's Core Investments in its 2023-33 strategy. However, at this point the extent of gender mainstreaming in the AfDB's core operations is still limited.²¹⁹

In general, AfDB appears to focus on **targeted and smaller gender equality actions**, in terms of scope and funding and their current gender equality actions do not seem to support the core aim of each investment but rather are add-on activities which may or may not be relevant.²²⁰ Sida's normative dialogue with the AfDB on gender equality thus is taking place within a policy environment in which the Bank's commitment to prevent and respond to gender discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment is clearly expressed in the AfDB's Operational Safeguards. However, the institution does not yet have the systems and procedures in place to deliver on this

²¹⁶ Statista. (2019). *Labor force participation rate in the Middle East and North Africa in 2019, by gender and region*, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1155104/mena-labor-participation-rate-by-gender-and-region/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20survey%20on%20female%20job%20opportunities,region%20was%2024.6%2C%20approximately%20half%20the%20global%20average.>

²¹⁷ DFID. (2020). *Evaluation of Arab Women's Enterprise Fund*. Jordan.

²¹⁸ NCG. (2023). *Gender Mission to AfDB*.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ NCG, op. cit., p. 7.

commitment.²²¹ The following achievements were noted as outputs from Sida's gender mission:²²²

- Set of recommendations and talking points on strategic entry-points for Sida/MFA to continue normative dialogue related to gender mainstreaming within AfDB investments and interventions; and
- Conducted assessment of the status of AfDB's gender mainstreaming to support the development of normative dialogue talking points for Sida.

In **Central America**, Sida supported a regional normative dialogue conference in 2022 on the care economy initiated by partners of **We Effect**, a Swedish international non-governmental organisation dedicated to strengthening cooperatives for women and men living in poverty.²²³ This issue has garnered considerable attention in this region and Latin America in general, with advocacy by the CSO sector and supported by Sida at the embassy-level, targeting governments and the private sector. Specific outcomes from the **Central American Colloquium "The care society in rural areas: a horizon for a sustainable recovery with gender equality"** included a colloquium statement and declaration on key issues related to and actions needed to address rural care economy issues in Central America.

4.3.4 Country level outcomes

Sida has utilised diverse normative dialogue strategies and processes at the country level. In the country-level sample for WEE and gender equality the evaluation found a range of strategies and approaches that contributed to these outcomes.

Two countries included in the case study are involved in **on-going conflicts** that limited aspects of Sida's normative dialogue processes there (Somalia and Palestine²²⁴). Normative dialogue in both countries has also been constrained by operating in a context where conservative, patriarchal gender norms prevail.

In **Somalia**, however, KIIs indicated that the Embassy of Sweden's development cooperation section has been able to use Sweden's strength as a major funder to lend weight to dialogue that seeks to hold the World Bank staff and operations accountable for strengthening how gender equality is mainstreamed within programmes funded through the World Bank Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Specific outcomes from this effort included:

²²¹ Ibid., pp 9-10.

²²² Achieved with the support of the Gender Helpdesk.

²²³ Originally called Kooperation Utan Gränser/ Swedish Cooperative Centre.

²²⁴ Sida support for Palestine in this context takes place within a regional programming approach.

- Creation of a Gender Platform to act as a resource for Multi-Partner Trust Fund implementing partners; and
- Increased integration of gender equality and rights issues in World Bank Somalia portfolio of projects (WB perspective).

While the Bank's establishment of a Gender Platform to serve as a resource for the Trust Fund implementing partners was seen as a positive development, **questions remain** whether the Platform is promoting a genuine gender mainstreaming approach or if the programmes involved are mainly just adding on a few targeted gender components. Multiple informants identified challenges as including the way in which gender outcomes were monitored and reported, with dialogue efforts often stalling over what both sides considered to be a lack of understanding by Sida of the World Bank's systems and ways of operating. The latter challenge made it more difficult to determine where in the process Sida should be investing its time in normative dialogue to affect strategic change.

In **Palestine**, Sida has been a major funder for ILO/UN Women efforts to advocate for decent work and employment for women.²²⁵ However, Sida is less visible in this programme since ILO and UN Women have drawn on the UN's own strength as neutral convening agencies to promote WEE-related policy change. Instead of taking a lead role, Sida acts a funder and complements the UN's related normative dialogue work with support from embassy-level dialogue.²²⁶

In **Guatemala**, the Swedish government is limited in terms of what it can advocate, given an increasingly repressive environment in relation to democracy and human rights. There Sida works more through CSOs such as We Effect, which has been supporting diverse normative dialogue processes at national and community levels. However, the Embassy of Sweden, through the ambassador, has been able to support this dialogue at national level by providing strategic inputs and using his position to strengthen We Effect dialogue efforts.²²⁷ This experience demonstrated that despite working in a repressive context, Sida and its implementing partners still experienced some success regarding WEE-related normative dialogue. This same operating principle applied in the conflict contexts such as Palestine and Somalia.

The successful normative dialogue that was achieved at higher level in the country may be in part due to WEE often being perceived as **a less threatening and sensitive area of dialogue** than some of the other priority areas laid out in the strategy for Sweden's

²²⁵ KII, Embassy of Sweden personnel, 29 May 2023.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ KIIs, diverse Swedish ambassadors, May-June 2023.

Development Cooperation with Guatemala 2021-25.²²⁸ For instance, in this Strategy, WEE falls under inclusive economic development rather than under support for the promotion of human rights, democracy, rule of law, and gender equality. The latter also includes increased access to sexual and reproductive rights. Some specific outcomes were documented from the programme on **Rural Mayan Women's Economic Empowerment**. These included:

- Agreement reached with government and private sector creditors to provide guarantees benefitting rural indigenous (Mayan) women who have limited to no access to land titles as collateral for business loans;
- Rural Mayan women gained capacity to organise in their communities and continue to do so;
- Rural Mayan women were capacitated to defend themselves and their individual rights (significant change for Mayan women who are normally subject to patriarchal cultural norms and behaviours); and
- Acceptance by the government of Guatemala to include traditional Mayan midwives in the national health system and its payroll and thus remunerating them for their work within the indigenous communities.

The other three countries in which the evaluation team reviewed Sida's normative dialogue process – **Tanzania, Bangladesh, and Mozambique** – have governments that are more supportive of democratic processes.²²⁹ Although their respective societies are characterised by patriarchal gender norms and have some laws (both formal and informal) that continue to restrict women's economic opportunities, there has still been an openness to normative dialogue on gender equality. This opened space for the Embassy of Sweden in the respective countries to use normative dialogue as a positive tool for change.

In **Tanzania**, the embassy was able to initiate and support a successful peer review process for its partners in the agricultural sector that focused on how they could strengthen their approaches to gender mainstreaming.²³⁰ Outcomes from the Tanzania gender mainstreaming initiative included the fact that five implementing partners in the agricultural sector gained better understanding of gender mainstreaming and related theories of change and developed organisation- and context-specific gender-inclusive solutions in formerly gender-blind projects.²³¹

²²⁸ KIIs Sida HQ Personnel, 15 May 2023.

²²⁹ KIIs with Embassy of Sweden personnel, 12 April, 2 and 5 May 2023.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ KIIs with Embassy of Sweden personnel, 12 April, 2 and 5 May 2023.

In **Bangladesh**, the final evaluation of the *Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems Project* found that although the policy environment in Bangladesh was an enabling one, the project still had to address challenges in policy application, which were limited by prevalent social norms.²³² Documented outcomes²³³ included the following:

- Changes in regulatory support made it easier for women to register their businesses;
- Decrease in the informal (not legally required) practice of many banks to require male relatives as guarantors for women entrepreneurs seeking business loans;
- Regional and district-level fairs undertook more outreach, and promoted and facilitated the participation of women entrepreneurs;
- More equitable treatment of women entrepreneurs at municipal level, e.g., rental access to municipally owned shops;
- Women's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that participated in the programme adopted more effective business practices and increased sales/income;
- Increased access to business loans for women entrepreneurs;
- Social norms in participating communities shifted to constitute less of an obstacle for women's economic participation; and
- Improvement in the working conditions for women workers in selected sectors and companies.²³⁴

In **Mozambique**, a challenge was the low literacy levels for women and overall societal norms. Thus, WEE support focused more on finding ways to change the institutional culture, particularly in the private sector, and attitudes and practices at the household level related to women's participation as micro-entrepreneurs than on policy change. The Women in Business (WIN) programme²³⁵ which supports women-owned businesses to increase their income through better access to financial products and services, produced the following outcomes steered by Sida's normative dialogue with the implementing agency:

²³² This has included women's difficulties in obtaining business loans without the signature of a male guarantor, a challenge that has contributed to only 15% of bank loan portfolios being allocated to women SMEs, Kimi H. Pedersen, Reza Patwary, Shamima Aktar, Eric Derks, and Daniel Ticehurst. (2021). *End-term Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems ("WEESMS") project, Bangladesh*. <https://www.sida.se/publikationer/end-term-evaluation-of-womens-economic-empowerment-through-strengthening-market-systems-weesms-project-bangladesh>. Sida 2021:36.

²³³ Validated through an independent evaluation undertaken by Sida in 2021.

²³⁴ Kimi H. Pedersen, et al, op. cit.

²³⁵ Women in Business (WIN). (2023). <https://www.win-moz.org/home>.

- Agreement reached that includes a curriculum on entrepreneurship skills, particularly for women, in Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions. This agreement also includes training for TVET teacher trainers to deliver the new curriculum, which is now being taught in TVET institutions across the country;
- Targeted private sector companies revised their human resource policies and practices to address gender-based constraints, which in turn led to significant increases in the hiring of female sales representatives;
- Women agricultural workers gained access to digital payment processes that increased their control of earnings and increased their financial privacy;
- Increased awareness of gender-based constraints facing women at household level and shift in gender norms among both men and women to create more conducive societal environment in which women entrepreneurs can work; and
- Increase in the number of women working as micro-entrepreneurs.²³⁶

Summary response to EQ1: Diverse types of normative dialogue have consistently and visibly contributed to positive changes related to WEE and gender equality, including transformative change. While often requiring a longer-term approach to effect change, normative dialogue processes are a key tool to affect this type of change and serve to complement programme approaches.

4.3.5 Factors influencing effective dialogue

Approaches and mechanisms for success

EQ2: What are examples of *successful outcomes* of normative dialogue at Sida? What are examples of *unsuccessful outcomes*?

EQ3: Which key *success factors* and *mechanisms* can be identified? Which key factors and mechanisms can be identified as hindering successful normative dialogue?

EQ6: How do approaches to normative dialogue, such as the *choice of cooperation partner* at different levels and the way the collaboration is conducted, affect the results? Specifically, in regard to choices at the country level and the so called 360-model?

Key finding 2: The most successful outcomes combined financial support to like-minded partners with Sida's and embassies' complementary dialogue efforts held with other relevant stakeholders.

Across the 11 interventions reviewed, there was consensus among all Sida and implementing partners interviewed that normative dialogue contributed positively (directly or indirectly) to WEE outcomes. Each person interviewed could also cite

²³⁶ KIIs with project, Embassy of Sweden personnel, and project beneficiaries/stakeholders, 13 and 23 April, 4,9,11, and 19 May 2023.

examples of positive outcomes related to diverse types of normative dialogue processes. Moreover, Sida personnel observed that “**normative dialogue is as important as financial support.**”²³⁷ While it is important to distinguish between the normative dialogue initiated by Sida and the dialogue led by its implementing partners with Sida's financial support, both have proven effective and have played complementary roles.

Normative dialogue efforts at the country level **initiated by implementing partners** were overall quite successful, e.g., through the Mozambique WIN programme, RWEE and the ILO/UN Women examples cited previously. These dialogues were led by the implementers and took place at three different levels: 1) with governments to influence policy and legislative change (formal rules); 2) with the private sector to promote more gender-responsive and inclusive institutional culture and practices; and 3) at the societal level, targeting changes in social norms that constrain women's full economic participation and rights (changes in informal rules).

Sida's dialogue undertaken **within a contribution management context** was particularly effective during the design stage of WEE-focused interventions. Sida personnel were able to exert strong influence on how diverse partners addressed gender equality within these programmes, often playing a facilitation role among partners and co-creating the scope and focus of funded initiatives. This was a particularly successful approach because Sida selected like-minded partners open to this type of dialogue and way of operating.

The evaluation found that of the 11 interventions analysed, **Sida's/Sweden's normative dialogue that accompanied implementation process** played an important role in six cases.²³⁸ It also played a key role in influencing **programme design** for the AFI, RWEE, WIN, Rural Mayan Women's Economic Empowerment, WEEMS, and Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women programmes. Including formal normative dialogue at the government level as a part of programme design was also a significant success factor for these same six interventions. This approach, when complemented with support from normative dialogue inputs by the Swedish ambassador and embassy was also effective (e.g., in Guatemala and Bangladesh). They raised issues as part of their policy dialogue with national actors or gave greater **legitimacy** to the dialogue of implementing partners and helped secure operating space

²³⁷ KILs with Sida personnel (HQ level), 15 and 17 May 2023.

²³⁸ KILs with Sida and Partner personnel from 11 WEE related interventions: 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, and 23 April; 4, 5, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 29 and 30 May; 7 June 2023.

for them. This sometimes acted as the tipping point to convince government actors to adopt more gender-responsive economic and labour policies.²³⁹

Based on KIIs with diverse partners, the evaluation found there was evidence that aligning interests with likeminded and/or **champions for change within partner institutions** was a significant success factor. In the World Bank example cited above, this was the case for the global-level dialogue on integrating gender in trade, while at country-level it was used to facilitate the alignment of interests among partners and government stakeholders in e.g., Guatemala and Mozambique.²⁴⁰

Sida also had considerable success in efforts which fostered or supported **local ownership** and the content of normative dialogue processes in two interventions (Tanzania and the case in Central America previously mentioned in the regional outcomes section, 4.3.3). In the Tanzanian case, the Swedish Embassy initiated and funded the normative dialogue process among peer organisations. This led to a significant positive shift in how its partners in the agriculture sector mainstreamed gender equality in their respective programmes and institutions, as well as generated a strong sense of institutional ownership using a peer review process.²⁴¹ Thus, although the embassy initiated this process, it evolved into **a locally driven and owned process and set of outcomes**.

The other success factors that stood out were when Sida was the **only funder or one of a few like-minded funders** that coordinated their normative dialogue messages jointly when working with relevant and diverse stakeholders (e.g., the RWEE example referenced above). Sida's choice of aligning with **like-minded funders and partners**, and its use of normative dialogue in the programme design and follow-up have been important tools to achieve WEE objectives and have been key success factors in how normative dialogue has added value to the documented results in this thematic area.

Key finding 3: The most effective country level normative dialogue efforts were those where Sida's global dialogue objectives were coordinated with but also tailored to the local context. Sida/MFA's willingness to take risks by using innovative dialogue approaches also contributed to success.

²³⁹ This is illustrated in examples of outcomes recorded in Guatemala for diverse programmes, and also Egypt through a regional initiative.

²⁴⁰ Please refer to Annex 2 to this case for a table which provides details on the approaches and methods that Sida used with the 11 WEE interventions and processes reviewed at the global, regional, and national levels.

²⁴¹ KIIs with Embassy of Sweden personnel 2-23 May. plus, PWYC. (2017). *Support to Improve the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Private Sector Development Programmes with Swedish Partners in Tanzania*. Gender Needs Assessment Report. Dar es Salaam.

Systematic **coordination within Team Sweden** (Sida, MFA, and related Swedish public sector actors) on WEE and GE related issues took place at the global level in global normative dialogue processes with multilateral institutions. These include the World Bank and collaboration with UN partners within global fora. The evaluation interviews did not find much reference to Team Sweden efforts at the country level. However, where a ‘whole-of-embassy’ coordination on normative priorities took place (e.g., on gender equality in Bangladesh) and Swedish public agencies developed an extended Team Sweden approach, it proved to be effective.

While the Swedish government’s country strategies generally refer to WEE objectives, embassies’ operational plans rarely included a dialogue plan to support implementation of the normative dialogue aspects of these strategies. Part of the challenge lies in the fact that reporting on outcomes from normative dialogue only captures dialogue elements that are immediately connected to or incorporated in programmes and lead to specific programmatic results. There are **no institutional mechanisms** in place to report on normative dialogue that takes place outside of a specific programme results measurement framework.

Nevertheless, the evaluation team found some **innovative examples** to overcome this. For example, in Bangladesh, the embassy developed a strategic whole-of-embassy approach to gender equality. This included a related results matrix across programmatic areas and allocated dedicated staff time to coordinate and follow up on related efforts, including on WEE. The embassy also worked closely with the Humanitarian-Asia Department at Sida headquarters to both develop and implement the dialogue strategy.

This approach needed dedicated investment in terms of **staff time as well as consultant costs** for related thematic gender analyses to support this coordinated dialogue process. The question this raised for the evaluation team is whether Sida will be able to duplicate and scale-up this good practice in view of recent cuts in the budgets for its strategic communications, both of which are key elements contributing to the success of a whole-of-embassy approach. This is critical as these are mutually supportive processes in furthering Sida and MFA’s normative dialogue objectives related to gender equality and WEE at the country level.

Another innovative approach to normative dialogue, identified by the evaluation, stemmed from the use of **diverse social media and communication models** to influence normative change at the societal level. The WIN programme in Mozambique for example, supported interactive weekly telenovelas featuring a female character who faced real life dilemmas related to gender equality issues and the establishment and operation of her own micro-enterprise. This TV show could have easily fallen ‘flat on its face’ and been an expensive mistake. Instead, the show’s main character, Janette, has now been picked up for use by another private sector company to encourage more

women to work as sales representatives.²⁴² WIN also established a rigorous tracking system to document the reach and changes stemming from the discussions generated by the telenovela and demonstrated that its effect was quite positive.²⁴³ This approach was expensive, and it was risky for Sida to support. While taking this risk paid off, it is likely that there will also be times when innovations in normative dialogue will fail or will not be perceived to be a form of normative dialogue. In the case of the WIN programme, for example, some Sida/MFA officials did not perceive the programme to have achieved much in relation to normative dialogue objectives,²⁴⁴ **possibly perceiving normative dialogue to be mainly limited to conventional government-to-government dialogue.**

Summary response to EQ2: Sida has experienced success in its normative dialogue work at the global level in its work with some INGOs through contribution management related normative dialogue but has had less success in trying to influence larger institutions such as the World Bank. At the country level, the most successful WEE related outcomes were achieved through market systems development programme approaches which have used normative dialogue as one tool to influence positive change within market systems development.

Summary response to EQ3: The main factors contributing to these diverse successes include choosing like-minded partners, engaging in ongoing normative dialogue in contribution management contexts and taking risks to support innovative market systems development approaches. The main factor limiting success remains the cultural and political context in which normative dialogue takes place, which in some countries is quite restrictive due to narrow views of what are considered appropriate economic roles for women and men. Change in these contexts requires a longer-term approach and ongoing normative dialogue at multiple levels to establish a foundation for incremental progress, ultimately leading to more transformational change.

Summary response to EQ6: Development cooperation programming related to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and gender equality was most effective when closely linked to the political work undertaken by Swedish embassies, with these two streams complementing each other well. This effectiveness was particularly evident when the connection between political work and development programming was systematic and based on a coordinated, explicit normative dialogue plan. However, these processes still tend to be ad hoc and vary from one embassy to another.

²⁴² KIIs with programme personnel, 13 and 23 April. 2023.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ KIIs with Embassy of Sweden personnel, 5 May 2023.

Organisation, role division and follow-up

EQ4: How does Sida's *prioritisation, planning and follow-up* of normative dialogue affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

EQ5: How does Sida's *organisation* of the normative dialogue, i.e., roles, responsibilities, forum for dialogue, and timing affect the results of normative dialogue? How does Sida's role in and *coordination within Team Sweden*, affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?

Key finding 4: Sida's implementing partners often led much of the normative dialogue that directly contributed to significant development outcomes and transformative change. Sida personnel frequently influenced these efforts, using the partner dialogue during the contribution management processes to advance Sida's objectives. These processes also served as a form of informal capacity building for the implementing partners.

The evaluation found that normative dialogue took place **simultaneously at multiple levels** and was both political (diplomatic or policy-oriented) and technical in nature. In the WEE area, Sida/MFA personnel played a consistent role using contribution management processes to engage in normative dialogue discussions with partners. In doing so, Sida/embassy officials have had to engage in a delicate dance in which they assume their implementing partners have the capacity to mainstream GE and WEE effectively, while still finding ways to influence how they do so. This way, normative dialogue has served as a form of informal direct **capacity building** for partners.

Several partners that noted they found this dialogue process and ongoing engagement with Sida to be quite helpful, and that it has **enabled them to subsequently convince other actors** of the need to address gender equality within the WEE context more systematically.²⁴⁵ The evaluation observed that this overall approach has been successful, because in the WEE area Sida has largely selected partners with whom there is a mutual sense of trust and understanding and shared principles.

In the case of Sida's support to the global AFI, Sida advocated for the adoption of an integrated approach to gender-inclusive finance, again using **a combination of dialogue and contribution management** to strengthen the normative dialogue approach of its partner. This, in turn, also helped Sida/Swedish embassies raise issues based on partners' knowledge and experiences in different fora for policy dialogue.²⁴⁶

Specific examples cited by Sida and the project personnel interviewed showed how this ongoing partner dialogue was able to **facilitate implementation** by providing

²⁴⁵ KIIs with implementing partners, 12 and 16 April, 30 May, and 7 June 2023.

²⁴⁶ Referred to internally as the 360 model.

increased legitimacy and helping safeguard operating space, or by raising the profile of implementing partners with other national stakeholders. This was particularly relevant in more restrictive operating contexts.²⁴⁷

Key finding 5: Sida selected its implementing partners based on their commitment and willingness to promote gender equality and WEE. This facilitates the normative dialogue considerably but raises questions where normative dialogue can have the biggest effect and how to deal with actors that are further in the periphery of the implementation chain who may not share the same values or priorities.

Sida selected most of its implementing (core) partners with considerable care, and a **commitment to promoting gender equality was a common criterion** in this selection. The close alignment of purpose and core values, combined with Sida's strong reputation and credibility in gender equality, particularly in WEE, enabled Sida **staff to effectively negotiate** necessary changes to advocate for transformative gender results with and through partners.

A more challenging issue was the partners that Sida's core partners in turn selected and with whom Sida had no direct interaction. With some of these, this common ground was less clear. The evaluation encountered instances where one of Sida's core partners had decided to stop funding several country level partners largely because these organisations were unwilling to work in any significant way on the gender equality/WEE issues that had been identified as a part of their partner assessment process after several years of collaboration. While it is quite laudable that core partners were diligent in this process, **it begs the question of whether it is also possible to effect slow, incremental change when partners of core partners consider gender equality/WEE to either be low priority or headwind issues.**

It is also likely that if Sida mainly works with like-minded organisations with regard to gender equality, the normative dialogue process will consist of engagement with those who are already aligned with Sida's agenda. It then becomes a question of **where Sida should strategically invest its normative dialogue resources** – with those organisations most likely to effect change or with those that from a Swedish perspective have the furthest to go regarding gender equality and WEE.

Summary response to EQ4: Where Sida systematically prioritised normative dialogue, such as through various support processes related to the adoption of the 2014 Feminist Foreign Policy, there was considerable evidence of success. This success was linked to clear expectations set by Sida and the Swedish government,

²⁴⁷ Guatemala being a case in point.

the provision of related training and technical support, and consistent follow-up to ensure accountability for changes focused on gender equality.

Summary response to EQ5: Within the WEE area, most of the documented positive changes linked to normative dialogue occurred in programming and contribution management contexts where roles, responsibilities and accountabilities were clear among like-minded partners and Team Sweden actors. This was less clear when there was less initial alignment in priorities and interests and when there was no or limited coordination to develop such a joint vision on key normative priorities.

Communication means and tools

EQ7: How do *methods* within normative dialogue, such as the practice of different *communication means and messages* and the way Sida adapts them to local contexts, affect the results?

Key finding 6: Sweden's adoption of a Feminist Foreign Policy, along with related technical support and guidance, significantly contributed to Sida officials becoming more knowledgeable about gender equality. It also enabled Sida/embassy officials to raise gender issues in their dialogue with implementing partners and other relevant actors in diverse operating contexts.

Institutional mechanisms to facilitate the **Feminist Foreign Policy** included a clear policy framework and mandate, extensive internal capacity building and support, a robust evidence base to back positions, and strong internal leadership and prioritization. The evaluation team found that the Swedish government's adoption of a Feminist Foreign Policy in 2014, along with the related support and accountability processes, enabled Sida and Embassy of Sweden personnel to develop a high level of capability related to gender equality. However, embassy staff interviewed noted that they still needed more support to understand which key messages to use regarding women's economic empowerment in different contexts.

The 2023 overview of the WEE thematic area defined **normative priorities at a more global level** and outlined clear actions Sida programming can take to target/mainstream WEE in programmes and dialogue efforts for normative change. To address specific contexts and tailor related key messages, however, requires resource investment for gender analyses and normative processes as was done in Bangladesh.

Given that the Feminist Foreign Policy was abandoned by the Swedish government in 2022,²⁴⁸ there may be less clarity for Sida/MFA personnel about which approaches they should be using in the future to support increased gender equality in general as well as for WEE, in particular. Lessons gathered by this evaluation and recent studies from the implementation of the Feminist Foreign Policy can nevertheless be used to guide future efforts for normative dialogue in this thematic area (see Box 3).

Box 1. Lessons from the implementation of a Feminist Foreign Policy

There are several relevant lessons derived from the way in which the Government of Sweden implemented its Feminist Foreign Policy, and its effects on Sida's contribution to WEE:

- The policy was established following extensive consultations with multiple members of Team Sweden;
- It was accompanied by dedicated staff with relevant expertise in both MFA and Sida, related staff training, and investment in tools, resources, and guidance to assist staff in gaining a solid understanding of the policy and what was expected of them;
- It was accompanied by an accountability system which held managers, policy, and programme personnel responsible for implementing the policy in a highly visible way that was mainstreamed throughout the work of both institutions;
- Senior leaders were not only expected to but also actively reinforced key messages pertaining to the implementation of the Feminist Foreign Policy, both in public forums and within the organisation; and
- Sida employed internal normative dialogue to help shift its institutional culture so that a feminist gender equality approach became seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the Swedish brand. Sida engaged in external normative dialogue with partners to convey the message that adopting this approach to enhance gender equality is an effective way to achieve diverse development and poverty reduction outcomes.

Key finding 7: Sida's sharing of its knowledge products and resources related to gender equality and WEE served as a complementary process for its normative dialogue, laying the foundation for alliance-building, joint design processes and/or enabling partners to use these in their own normative advocacy work.

Implementing partners noted that Sida was **generous in sharing its knowledge products and resources** related to GE and WEE. Several observed they had benefited from having ready access to these and related training and information seminars. For its part, Sida staff generally worked on the premise that their implementing partners have adequate gender capacity and that Sida's role is more one of sharing resources and/or providing funding to conduct research that can form the basis for evidence-based normative dialogue. This was certainly the case for the AFI and RWEE. RWEE

²⁴⁸ Following a change in government and in policy priorities.

implementers cited access to Sida's knowledge products as a solid form of support for the programme's normative dialogue processes. The AFI noted that Sida provided funding for strategic research inputs they have been able to use to provide a dialogue tool for their network members.

This raises the question of **what responsibility Sida has towards building partner capacity on gender equality and WEE**, i.e., whether this should occur through more informal discussions within contribution management, or if there is a need for more formal training for partners. Experience from Sida staff illustrated that even some larger partners, such as UN agencies and other multilateral organisations, may need such hands-on capacity support even if they represent institutions with dedicated units for gender mainstreaming. This speaks to a capacity gap that still remains within some of these institutions. Sida partially addresses this gap through ongoing normative dialogue. Moreover, the evaluation found that Sida's experience has been that many smaller partners do seek support from Sida to strengthen their gender capacity. Given Sida's strong reputation and resources in this area, these partners **saw their partnership with Sida as an opportunity to learn more.**

The other effective normative dialogue method that stands out as was the **joint design process** between Sida and its implementing partner for the WIN programme in Mozambique. The ongoing discussion during the 18-month process allowed both sides to develop a normative dialogue approach that was both innovative in the country context and met Sida's gender equality and WEE objectives. This lengthy co-designed inception process represented a risk for Sida but allowed for considerable discussion of which type of WEE-related normative dialogue approaches would most likely work well within the Mozambiquan context.

The results recorded to date provide strong evidence that a combination of strategic investment and risk-taking to develop innovative local approaches can generate significant returns.

Summary response to EQ7: Innovative approaches to communicating key messages related to WEE and GE, tailored to the local context, were successful particularly when reinforced by high-level inputs by Swedish ambassadors. Strategic staff secondment to selected institutions to foster and drive change from within has also been effective, provided there is support from the host institution's leadership for normative change that align with Sweden's interests. The key to success in these processes is the coordination of communication methods used and key messages from the global to the national levels, ensuring that different actors do not operate in isolation.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

The evaluation has found that normative dialogue has **contributed significantly to positive changes** related to WEE and gender equality, with numerous documented examples. While pathways across the domains of change²⁴⁹ vary, the case study illustrates that assumptions and variables in the evaluation ToC are relevant for normative dialogue related to WEE.²⁵⁰

Institutional mechanisms are strongly anchored in operational experiences and technical expertise, while the most important outcomes are found in the interaction and follow-up with partners. Sweden generally employs a systematic and strategic approach in its **360 model** to fund interventions that support gender equality and WEE. However, coordination on normative dialogue among Sida, MFA and headquarters **remains somewhat ad hoc and as such, represents a weakness** in how this approach is applied.

Sida has a strong reputation for supporting **innovative approaches** in international development, particularly in promoting gender equality. Innovation often carries an increased risk of failure and potentially higher costs, but it frequently yields more effective results as demonstrated in some of the examples reviewed in the area of gender equality and WEE. Sida's continued dialogue with multilateral institutions in particular, requires gaining a better understanding of their institutional cultures and operations to identify strategic entry points for collaboration.

Globally, Sida has established clear action points related to WEE through its updated thematic review of this area. However, there is a **disconnect** in translating these action points into coordinated normative dialogue messages that form a continuum across global, regional, and country levels.

The shift back to decentralised approaches a few years ago has often led Swedish embassies to take the lead in planning processes related to normative dialogue. A key lesson in these decentralised processes is **that embassy personnel and their implementing partners must have a common understanding** of what normative dialogue on gender equality and WEE entails and the diverse forms it can take. They also need a clear approach to measuring related change, particularly transformative change, which can be challenging due to the informal nature of much of this dialogue.

The gaps in understanding and **monitoring normative dialogue change** also tend to result in ad hoc approaches to planning of normative dialogue on gender equality and

²⁴⁹ As set out in the evaluation ToC.

²⁵⁰ The ToC for Sida's application of normative dialogue, developed by the evaluation team in the inception phase of this evaluation, is depicted in Figure 1 of this report.

WEE, even though some good example practices exist to come up with a ‘whole-of-embassy’ approach in some countries. Increased coordination is also needed across the global, regional, and national continuum.

Overall, upon reviewing various approaches to normative dialogue employed by Sida, the **most effective** in the area of GE and WEE include:

- Close coordination between Sida headquarters and embassies on key gender equality and WEE dialogue issues;
- Leadership or strategic input from Swedish ambassadors in high-level normative dialogue processes at the country level, complementing Sida/MFA’s programming;
- Normative dialogue conducted within the context of contribution management, serving as a as a form of informal capacity building for like-minded partners;
- Willingness to take considerable risks in terms of financial and human resources, supporting innovative normative dialogue that go beyond traditional approaches; and
- Strategic secondment of gender expertise by Sida to influential host organisations.

Sida has actively worked on WEE and gender equality for several decades, building a **robust body of work, evidence and lessons learned** on what works well. The organisation has supported both successful targeted and integrated approaches to WEE and gender equality, including related normative dialogues.

Despite gaps in coordination of messages and approaches across different levels of operation, there have been **better linkages on more general approaches to gender equality** than specifically on WEE. This was primarily due to the clarity of expectations regarding Sida/MFA’s role in advancing gender equality as a core Swedish value and human rights, stemming from the leadership and policy guidance established by Sweden’s former Feminist Foreign Policy.

Sida has also **selected new partners carefully** based on their commitment to promoting increased gender equality as well as developed a group of trusted partners who share this commitment, particularly from an economic empowerment perspective. The lesson from this approach is that it creates considerable space for open and constructive dialogue and follow-up actions on related issues.

When strategic communications are coordinated from global to country levels, they have proven effective and have reinforced Sweden’s credibility as a leader and innovator in gender equality and WEE. However, **greater clarity is needed** regarding the different forms that normative dialogue can take, the key normative messages for each action area outlined in the 2023 WEE thematic review, and how to measure changes to which normative dialogue contribute, including within the contribution management process.

The evaluation team observed that, since WEE focuses on inclusive economic development, it is often perceived as a less threatening and sensitive area of dialogue than some other priority areas. Consequently, Sida and MFA have learned that WEE sometimes serves **as an entry-point** for dialogue also on other forms of normative change linked to gender equality, human rights, and economic inclusion.

ANNEX 1 CASE-SPECIFIC LITERATURE REVIEWED

1. AFI. (n.d.). *Advancing Gender Inclusive Finance Policies*. Sida Phase Two Proposal. Kuala Lumpur.
2. AFI. (n.d.). End-of-Project Evaluation of the AFI-Sida Project: Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment through Financial Inclusion. Briefing Note. Kuala Lumpur.
3. DFID. (2020). *Evaluation of Arab Women's Enterprise Fund*. Jordan.
4. Embassy of Sweden in Kenya/Somalia. (n.d.). *Somalia Policy Note on Gender for the New Government*.
5. Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique. (2022). *Women IN Business (WIN) Programme 2019-2022*.
6. Embassy of Sweden. (2023). *Embassy Gender Equality Project 2023*.
7. FAO, IFAD, UN Women, WFP and Mokoro, 2021. *Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020: Final evaluation*. Rome. https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000144835/download/?_ga=2.249745542.1011759905.1718623081-1308006646.1710951753.
8. FAO, IFAD, WFP, and UN Women. (2021). *Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women - Final joint programme narrative report*. Reporting period: 15/10/2014 – 31/12/2021. https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-06/rwee_final_report_phase_i.pdf.
9. FAO, IFAD, WFP, and UN Women. (2021). *Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (Phase II)*. Joint programme document. (September 2021). Rome.
10. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. (n.d.). *Handbook on Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*. <https://fojo.se/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/handbook-swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf>.
11. NCG. (2018). *The Gender Transformative Journey – workshop report. Support to Improve the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Private Sector Development Programmes with Swedish Partners in Tanzania*.
12. NCG. (2023). *Gender Mission to AfDB*.
13. Pedersen, HK., Patwary, R., Aktar, S., Derks, E., and Ticehurst, D. (2021). *End-term Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Market Systems (WEESMS) project, Bangladesh*. Sida decentralised evaluation 2021:36.
14. Peebles, D., Lövkrona, J., and Jubb, N. (2015). *Evaluation of Policy Dialogue as an Instrument - the case of Gender Equality*. Sida Evaluation 2015:1. <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61883en-evaluation-of-policy-dialogue-as-an-instrument---the-case-of-gender-equality---main-report.pdf>.

15. PWYC. (2017). *Support to Improve the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Private Sector Development Programmes with Swedish Partners in Tanzania*. Gender Needs Assessment Report. Dar es Salaam.
16. PWYC. (2018). *End of Assignment Report: Results at Output and Outcome Levels*. Dar es Salaam.
17. Regeringskansliet. (2022). *Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation on sustainable economic development 2022–2026*. <https://www.government.se/contentassets/38225ad1ff5c425f9c212ff5dcfeec6c/strategy-sustainable-economic-development-2022-2026.pdf>.
18. Sida. (2010). *Instruktion för bidrag ur anslagsposten stöd genom svenska organisationer i det civila samhället*. <https://www.sida.se/publikationer/sidas-instruktion-for-bidrag-ur-anslagsposten-stod-genom-svenska-organisationer-i-det-civila-samhallet>.
19. Sida. (2010). *What to say and do? Practical examples on how to address gender equality when elaborating the dialogue plan*. <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61347-what-to-say-and-do.pdf>.
20. Sida. (2018). *Grant Agreement between The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and TechnoServe Inc. Regarding Women in Business Programme (2018–2022)*.
21. Sida. (2020). *Dialogue for Normative Change: Report from a Pilot Project with the World Bank on Gender Equality*.
22. Sida. (2020). *Grant Agreement between The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida and Global Banking Alliance for Women regarding Strategic partnership Financial Alliance for Women and Sida*. Sida Contribution No. 13995.
23. Sida. (2021). *Normative Dialogue for Gender Equality: Gender Responsive Budgeting in North Macedonia*. https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/06/24092359/10205075_Sida_Normative_dialogue_GRB_webb.pdf.
24. Sida. (2021). *Normative Dialogue for Gender Equality: the Case of Colombia*. https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/06/24092147/10205075_Sida_Normative_dialogue_Colombia_webb.pdf.
25. Sida. (2021). *Normative Dialogue for Gender Equality: the Case of OCHA*. https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/06/24092759/10205075_Sida_Normative_dialogue_OCHA_webb.pdf.
26. Sida. (2022). *Gender Transformative Change: An Evidence-Based Review*. https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2022/08/16125152/10206354_Thematic_Brief_Gender_Transformative_Change_2022.pdf.
27. Sida. (2023). *Gender Equality*. <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/gender-equality-4>.
28. Sida. (2023). *Gender Toolbox*. <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/gender-toolbox/>.

29. Sida. (2023). *Thematic Overview 2023: Women's Economic Empowerment*. <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/womens-economic-empowerment-2>.
30. Sida. (2024). *Human Rights Based Approach*. <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/human-rights-based-approach/>.
31. Statistika. (2019). *Labor force participation rate in the Middle East and North Africa in 2019, by gender and region*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1155104/mena-labor-participation-rate-by-gender-and-region/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20survey%20on%20female%20job%20opportunities,region%20was%2024.6%2C%20approximately%20half%20the%20global%20average>.
32. TechnoServe Mozambique. (2020). *Mid Term Evaluation Report: Sida Women IN Business (WIN) program*.
33. TechnoServe Mozambique. (2020). *Program Document Sida Women IN Business (WIN) program*.
34. TechnoServe Mozambique. (2022). *Women IN Business (WIN) program. Annual Report*.
35. Towns, A., Bjarnegård, E., and Jezierska, K. (2023). *More than a Label, Less than a Revolution: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*. EBA Report 2023:02. The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), Sweden. https://eba.se/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023_02-Webb.pdf.
36. Tripleline. (2021). *Sida's Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Portfolio Review*.
37. UN Women, ILO. (2022). *Mid-Term Evaluation: Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women, in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine*. Joint Programme, UN Women and ILO – Palestine.
38. UN Women, ILO. (2022). *Mid-Term Evaluation: Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women, in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine*. Joint Programme, UN Women and ILO – Synthesis Report.
39. UN Women, ILO. (2022). *Mid-Term Evaluation: Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women, in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine*. Joint Programme, UN Women and ILO – Jordan.
40. UN Women, ILO. (2022). *Mid-Term Evaluation: Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women, in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine*. Joint Programme, UN Women and ILO – Egypt.
41. Vogelstein, R., and Bro, A. (2019). *Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy, Long May It Reign*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/30/sweden-feminist-foreignpolicy/>.
42. We Effect, UN Women. (2022). *Sistematización del Coloquio Centroamericano: "La sociedad del cuidado en la ruralidad: horizonte para una recuperación sostenible con igualdad de género."* Del 26 al 28 de octubre, 2022.
43. We Effect. (2020). *Luchas de Alto Riesgo - las mujeres en primera línea en la defensa de la tierra y el territorio*.

44. We Effect. (2022). *Comunidado: Coloquio Centroamericano “La sociedad del cuidado en la ruralidad: horizonte para una recuperación sostenible con igualdad de género.”*
45. We Effect. (2022). *Declaración Coloquio Centroamericano “La sociedad del cuidado en la ruralidad: horizonte para una recuperación sostenible con igualdad de género.”*
46. We Effect. (n.d.). *Ellas alimentan al mundo tierra para las que la trabajan.*
47. Women in Business (WIN). (2023). <https://www.win-moz.org/home>.
48. World Bank Group. (2023). *Report from the WBG and IMF Spring Meetings 2023*. Washington DC, April 10-16.

ANNEX 2 WEE-RELATED NORMATIVE DIALOGUE AGENDA SUMMARY

WEE Normative Dialogue Agenda linked to Business Development and Entrepreneurship

- Advocacy to create an enabling environment and removal of structural constraints to women-owned businesses;
- Support for development of inclusive markets and value chains;
- Support promotion of women's organisations;
- Support promotion of gender transformative trade policies;
- Advocate for and support increasing women's access to financial and business services;
- Promote and support skills development for women and women's access to business services; and
- Advocate for and support scaling-up assistance to women-owned businesses; promote inclusion of men and boys in care work; and improve access to care services.

WEE Normative Dialogue Agenda linked to Education and Skills

- Gender unequal norms, values and practices impacting family and individual choices of education;
- Need to facilitate women's access to quality primary and post-primary education (including cash transfers, stipends, and scholarships);
- Advocacy for increasing enrolment in early childhood education;
- Support for gender equal curricula and pedagogies;
- Support for vocational programmes and specific skills development for women and girls;
- Support for safe and violence-free environments at educational institutions, to and from home (and at home);
- Support for SRHR, including measures to counter early marriage and harmful practices to prevent early education drop-out rates for girls and ensure access to comprehensive sexuality education; and
- Support for public transportation and other basic infrastructure investments to increase safe mobility and/or reduce distance to educational institutions.

WEE Normative Dialogue Agenda linked to Employment and Decent Work

- Promotion of full and productive employment for women;
- Promotion of access to equal work opportunities;
- Ensuring safe working conditions, and collective and individual labour rights, according to the Decent Work Agenda;
- Advocacy to remove legal and non-legal barriers to the labour market, including countering of discriminatory norms;
- Advocacy to close wage gaps;
- Promotion of the inclusion of men and boys in care work; and
- Advocacy to improve access to care services.

WEE Normative Dialogue Agenda linked to Land and Property Rights

- Promotion of policies to increase gender equality in terms of access to, control over and benefit from land and property rights, for all types of tenure (including customary tenure);
- Promotion of tenure security at an overall level and women's access to decision-making powers over collective tenure;
- Promotion of broader access to formal documentation and access to legal support;
- Promotion of equal marital status and inheritance laws; and
- Advocacy to ensure equal access to financial services.

WEE Normative Dialogue Agenda linked to Digitalisation

- Facilitation of relevant Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including improving women's access to fixed wireless broadband communication/ internet access and to mobile phone wireless communication;
- Promotion of gender inclusive digital financial and non-financial innovations (for mobile solutions);
- Ensuring that capacity building in use of digital solutions and ICT is inclusive women and other excluded groups; and
- Support research on Cyber GBV and actions to curb it.

ANNEX 3 SUMMARY OF NORMATIVE DIALOGUE APPROACHES IN SIDA-FUNDED WEE INTERVENTIONS OR PROCESSES

Intervention or Process	Normative Dialogue Processes used by Sida and/or MFA	Normative Dialogue Processes used by Partner
<u>Global</u> On-going dialogue about integration of gender into World Bank trade interventions	- Regular coordination meetings between Sida and MFA to discuss dialogue positions to take with World Bank globally; - Sida staff secondment to Trade Unit; and - MFA/Sida donor coordination and positioning within the World Bank Executive Board.	World Bank staff engage in normative dialogue discussions with Sida/MFA personnel.
<u>Global</u> AFI (gender-related interventions)	- Sida-led normative dialogue while also being a funding partner to enable AFI to grow from nascent organisation to one with a strong business unit; and - Sida worked with AFI to influence organisation to integrate GIF approach in all aspects of its own dialogue about fiscal and monetary policy.	- AFI's entire mandate and means of operation is normative dialogue intended to raise awareness of membership about gender-inclusive finance; - Is accompanied by GIF capacity building process for members; and - Uses participatory thematic committee approach to cover all aspects of GIF.
<u>Global</u> <u>Coordination but implementation at country level</u> Rural Women's Economic Empowerment programme (Sida, FAO, IFAD, UN Women, WFP)	- Sida-initiated normative dialogue in the lead up to, and throughout the funding cycle; - Sida dialogue to reinforce UN agencies "Working as One" approach; - Sida's provision of knowledge products and resources to facilitate related normative dialogue; and - Sida/MFA participated in policy dialogue alongside UN agencies in high level global dialogues & at	- UN partners provide technical support based on their mandates and expertise; and - Seeks policy entry point in alignment with UN country program

	country level with other donors on selected WEE-related and gender equality issues.	
<u>Regional – Africa</u> Sida Gender Mission to AfDB	• Sida conducted assessment of status of AfDB regarding gender mainstreaming to support development of normative dialogue talking points for Sida, supported by the Sida Gender Helpdesk.	• Share data on policy and processes related to gender mainstreaming in AfDB investments; and • Engaged in dialogue regarding what more the AfDB could do in this regard
<u>Regional - MENA</u> Joint ILO/UN Women Programme - Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women, in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine	• Normative dialogue as a part of Sida contribution agreement process.	• Engage governments in each country in normative dialogue related to productive and decent work for women at policy and legislative level; and • Engage private sector in ND regarding how to make employment processes more gender-responsive.
<u>Regional – Central America</u> Central American Colloquium "The care society in rural areas: a horizon for a sustainable recovery with gender equality"	• Funding of WE Effect core programming which subsequently used to support regional normative dialogue; and • Raised profile of partners and issue with key officials in the national context, securing buy-in and operating space for CSO partners through profiling of the issue by the Embassy of Sweden, including the Ambassador.	• Dialogue forum initiated and organised by We Effect partners; and • Convened public sector officials from Honduras and Guatemala, CSOs, women's organisations, academics, development cooperation agencies in normative dialogue related to the care economy in rural areas in the region.
<u>Bangladesh</u>	• Embassy-led normative dialogue with partners to identify scope and focus of funded programme; • Embassy connected with local authorities such as Chambers of Commerce to make them aware of the programme and related	• Normative dialogue and engagement to encourage market actors to be more responsive to and serve business skills development needs of women's SMEs by working through existing services offered by government-owned institutions at the regional level,

	normative issues as well as to help establish these contacts for local businesses; and • Embassy facilitated hiring of Swedish experts to support the capacity building of the women entrepreneurs (normative dialogue through training).	and to respond to input supply needs of women's SMEs; • Organisation of diverse thematic regional events such as access to finance for women entrepreneurs, access to market for women entrepreneurs, etc. to meet the needs of female SMEs in finance and market access and make customers relations agents at financial institutions more aware of gender-related constraints; • Working through local councillors to get their endorsement for women's participation as entrepreneurs; • Dialogue with regional enterprises about adhering to social standards and core working condition values; • Advocated for establishment of a digital marketplace for women's SMEs; and • Normative dialogue to encourage market actors to be more responsive to and integrate women's SMEs in forward linkages.
<u>Guatemala</u> Rural Mayan Women's Economic Empowerment programme (WE Effect)	• Sida dialogued with WE Effect at multiple levels as a leading Swedish NGO working on WEE, including in relation to the funding arrangement and focus of the programme in Guatemala; and • Embassy engaged in high level normative dialogue processes with Guatemalan government by Swedish Ambassador.	• Lead normative dialogue with government and private sector to influence changes in loan collateral policy for women entrepreneurs; and • Facilitate normative dialogue process at community level with women to help them understand that they have a right to demand and realise their rights and with men at this level to influence changes in gender norms so that men would accept rural Mayan women realising their rights and becoming involved in

		entrepreneurship at the cooperative level.
<u>Mozambique</u> WIN programme (Gender-inclusive market systems development)	Embassy partnered with Techno serve in methodology and normative dialogue approach development (joint programme design process) during the first 18 months of the programme to identify target segment and frame the issue to ensure it reflected Sida's holistic approach to WEE.	- Normative dialogue with national TVET authority to include gender module in TVET curriculum and make this mandatory training for all TVET students; - Normative dialogue in combination with training process with private sector to facilitate shift in institutional human resources practices and gender norms; and - Development of interactive TV and radio aimed at generating discussion among the public related to gender norms constraining women's participation as micro-entrepreneurs.
<u>Somalia</u> World Bank Multi-Partner Trust Fund	Sweden as a major trust fund funder facilitated ongoing dialogue and influence alongside other donors, with a consistent focus on gender, including WEE, in Bank operations.	Establishment of USD 2 million Gender Platform resource for use by programmes in Somalia funded through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund to assist them mainstream gender application of World Bank gender tagging system to all programmes funded with results of tagging used as basis for further dialogue on gender mainstreaming (initiated by WB).
<u>Tanzania</u> Gender Mainstreaming of Agricultural Sector programmes initiative	Embassy of Sweden initiated and financed gender mainstreaming training and peer review process with 5 partners in the agricultural sector (included hiring of consultants to facilitate this normative dialogue process. This was done in close collaboration with the Sida	Partners engaged in gender mainstreaming peer review process and discussed respective plans and actions taken to address gender equality, and made changes / improvements based on this peer review dialogue process.

	lead on WEE at Sida headquarters, facilitating consistency in messaging.	
--	--	--

Case Studies

Related to the Final Report on:

“Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022”



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Visiting address: Rissneleden 110, 174 57 Sundbyberg

Postal address: Box 2025, SE-174 02 Sundbyberg, Sweden

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: sida@sida.se Web: sida.se/en

