

2024:1b

Sida Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida, 2015–2022

Annex 6 – Inception report



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 2024:1b

Commissioned by Sida, Evaluation Unit.

Published by: Sida, 2024

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Date of final report: 2024-08-19

Art.no.: Sida62734en

urn:nbn:se:sida-62734en

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

Annex 6 Inception report



Formative Evaluation of Normative Dialogue at Sida 2015-2022

Final Inception Report

Date: 25 January 2023

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Evaluation purpose and scope.....	1
1.2 Purpose of inception report.....	1
1.3 Evaluation use and users	2
2. The evaluation object	4
2.1 Normative dialogue at Sida.....	4
2.2 Working definition of normative dialogue for the evaluation	5
2.2.1 Normative dialogue in strategy reporting	6
2.2.2 Norms	7
2.2.3 Normative dialogue	8
Box 1. Other related concepts that impinge on the scope of the evaluation.....	9
Influence and influence effects	10
2.3 Factors influencing normative dialogue	10
3. Proposed approach and methodology.....	12
3.1 Approach	12
3.1.1 Conceptual framework and theory of change (ToC).....	12
3.2 Evaluability of evaluation questions.....	15
3.2.1 Overall observations regarding the evaluation questions.....	15
3.2.2 Effectiveness evaluation questions	16
3.2.3 Efficiency evaluation questions.....	16
3.3 Methods	17
3.3.1 Data gathering and analysis	18
3.3.2 Document review	19
3.3.3 Focused discussions among stakeholder groups.....	20
3.3.4 In-depth interviews.....	20
3.3.5 Survey(s).....	21
3.3.6 Case study methodology for the different sub-areas	22
3.3.7 Exploratory use of digital data science, social media and web-based data	22
3.3.8 Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)	23
3.3.9 Gender Responsive Approach.....	23

3.3.10	Stakeholder engagement plan	24
3.4	Limitations.....	26
4.	Thematic analysis for the case studies	27
4.1	Scope and selection of thematic cases.....	27
4.2	Gender equality and women's economic empowerment	29
4.2.1	Case study focus: Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)	29
4.2.2	Target groups	30
4.2.3	Context.....	30
4.2.4	Approaches and methods	31
4.2.5	Examples to be analysed	32
4.3	Democracy and human rights.....	32
4.3.1	Case study focus: LGBTQI+	32
4.3.2	Target groups	33
4.3.3	Context.....	33
4.3.4	Approaches and methods	34
4.3.5	Examples to be analysed	34
4.4	Sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR).....	34
4.4.1	Case study focus.....	34
4.4.2	Target groups	35
4.4.3	Context.....	36
4.4.4	Approaches and methods	36
4.4.5	Examples to be analysed	37
4.4.5.1	Global and regional levels	37
4.4.5.2	National levels.....	37
4.4.5.3	Possible synergies with normative dialogue related to other SRHR support:	39
4.5	Environment and climate	39
4.5.1	Case study focus: Locally led adaptation to climate change	39
4.5.2	Target groups	39
4.5.3	Context.....	39
4.5.4	Approaches and methods	41
4.5.5	Examples to be analysed	42
5.	Phases, organisation and timing.....	43
5.1	Data collection phase (February-early May 2023).....	43
5.2	Analysis and reporting phase (mid-May to end-November 2023)	44
5.3	Updated workplan	46
Annexes.....		47

Abbreviations and acronyms

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
EBA	Swedish Expert Group for Aid Studies
EaP	Eastern Partnership Countries
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EFCM	Early and Forced Child Marriage
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FLLoCA	Financing Locally Led Climate Action
HQ	Headquarter
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICPD	International Conference on Population and development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILGA	The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexual people
LoCAL	Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility
LoGIC	Local Government Initiative on Climate Change
RFSL	Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Reviews
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme
4Ps	People, Priorities, Policies and Practices

1. Introduction

1.1 Evaluation purpose and scope

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the evaluation sets out as its **overall objective**:

... "to promote learning about Sida's work with normative dialogue, (...) identify key factors behind successful normative dialogue, (...) and help Sida increase the understanding of what works, what does not work, and why, as well as identifying both key bottlenecks and ways to improve".

Furthermore, it states that findings and recommendations will be **used to inform Sida** in relation to:

- How a more *strategic approach*, including prioritisation, planning and follow up of normative dialogue can be developed,
- How *management and organisation*, including the role played by Sida within Team Sweden can be developed,
- How to develop the necessary *institutional capabilities* for engaging in normative dialogue, reflected in the design of future trainings and other planned learning activities,
- How *approaches and models* of normative dialogue can be developed, including how to work strategically with partners at different levels to advance Swedish priorities based on universal norms,
- What *communicative methods and instruments* for normative dialogue can be developed.

The ToRs identify four **thematic focus areas** where Sida has been active in normative dialogue and where lessons have been gained at different levels of operation, namely: gender equality, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), democracy and human rights, and environment and climate. As explained in the ToRs, these focus areas were selected to reflect the perspectives in Swedish development cooperation, namely for their "*clear-est guiding signal for the normative dialogue*" (p. 7).

The **period** covered by the evaluation is 2015 to 2022.

1.2 Purpose of inception report

The purpose of this inception report is to synthesize findings from the scoping phase and to further define the **design, scope, focus and boundaries** of the evaluation as proposed in the ToRs and discussed in the evaluation proposal. A key focus up until now, has been to further unpack the concept of normative dialogue, what it means, and how it is applied at different levels and functions within Sida (at headquarters and in-country operations). Another main aim is to apply this learning in the design of the evaluation and consider the scope, focus and boundaries of the four proposed **thematic cases**, sub-areas and proposed country examples, and to assess their evaluability against the objectives of the evaluation.¹

The **scoping phase** included a first review of available literature (including extracts from Sida's strategy reports from 2020 and 2021), scoping interviews with around 35 key stakeholders (primarily within Sida and two external), discussions with the evaluation steering group and inputs from the reference group, including at a facilitated face-to-face workshop to gain reference group guidance on working definitions and the scope and focus of the thematic cases.²

¹ As described in the ToRs.

² Held at Sida 10 November, 2022.

1.3 Evaluation use and users

As the ToRs indicate, the focus is clearly **formative and learning oriented**. The iterative approach applied in the inception phase will continue in the main phase of the evaluation as a basis for encouraging utility and engagement. This involves close interaction with users and is particularly important given the fact that there are currently multiple interpretations of what normative dialogue is, including how it could be optimised and used as a complementary tool to improve development effectiveness. This iterative approach has been reflected in designing the evaluation to emphasise the following:

- A highly *participatory process* (led by the Sida evaluation unit) to develop a shared understanding of the concepts in the ToRs,
- *Continuous communications* between the evaluation team and the Sida evaluation steering group to promote real-time learning,
- *Facilitated engagement* with the working group for normative dialogue, and the broader evaluation reference group (with a broad range of departments and functions present) during key points in the evaluation process, from the initial scoping phase through to the presentation of emerging findings and recommendations,
- *Choice of an evaluation approach and methodology* which allows for participatory engagement of key stakeholder groups (including peers, intermediaries, partners, etc.) where learning and internalisation of emerging concepts will be part of the data gathering and validation process,
- Extensive use of *regional experts* in addition to an international core evaluation team to allow for easier follow-up, validation and feedback in case countries.

The ToRs specify the following list of **primary intended users** for the evaluation (p. 9):

- Sida's Executive Management Group (including Director General, Deputy Director General and the Heads of Departments) and Sida board members,
- Policy specialists within the various thematic areas,
- The Sida working group for strengthened normative dialogue (coordinated by the department for international organisations and thematic support),
- Head of units, programme and communication officers at foreign missions and Sida's headquarters,
- Multilateral focal points who, for example, are involved in Sweden's high-level dialogue with multilateral organisations,
- Relevant functions at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and foreign missions.

Interviews undertaken during the scoping phase for the evaluation further suggests that the **Planning Coordinators** at the different departments in Sida play a key role in relation to the framing of content for normative dialogue, and linking it to operational goals, follow-up and strategy reporting.

During the inception phase, it has been emphasized by evaluation reference group members that it is important to clearly **focus on Sida as the main (primary) user of the evaluation**. However, there is likely a **secondary user group** which constitute actors in the so-called Swedish resource base (Swedish framework civil society organisations (CSO)s, academia, Sida help desks, key partners at international or national levels involved in influencing certain areas or sectors), who regularly engage with Sida on priority topics and how they are framed. They are likely to take an interest in the evaluation to inform their own advocacy efforts – particularly when seen as an extension of the Team Sweden approach. Key actors at this 'meso level' of funded or non-funded influencers and intermediaries have been identified per thematic area covered by the evaluation (Section 4).

At a **thematic level**, leading international actors engaged in influencing certain development sectors or development agendas may also be keen to learn from the evaluation findings, e.g., actors interested in the development effectiveness agenda, how to influence IFIs/multilateral cooperation, aid delivery and doing development differently, and/or think tanks specialising in issues covered by the thematic priorities (climate finance, gender equality and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) rights and inclusion etc.).

The evaluation will pursue **two parallel tracks** to ensure that the evaluation process leads to maximum buy-in, learning and co-creation with key stakeholder groups along the way:

- (i) through engagement with the *evaluation reference group* and the evaluation steering group so that they can substantially feed into key decisions about the course and boundary of the evaluation as well as any emerging areas for recommendations in order to make them useful and actionable as possible, and
- (ii) via the participatory engagement of key stakeholders operating at different levels (Headquarter (HQ), at 'meso level', in regions or in-country) including some that may be specifically focusing on actors in the four *thematic areas* as part of the data gathering and validation process.

Thematic engagement will be largely dependent on the **particular dynamics, contexts and capabilities** related to the theme, both within Sida, in the sector internationally and in the varying contexts of case countries.

Reference group inputs, on the other hand, will be facilitated to look across cases to **collectively deliberate** on how to adapt emerging findings to Sida's different institutional functions at different levels, e.g., in relation to:

- *Internal strategy processes (the 'what')*: Priority (also in relation to other priorities within Sida), planning and follow up of normative dialogue at different levels of operation related to change theory, development of strategic plans, strategy reporting, linking normative dialogue to an enabling environment for improved development results.

Important internal stakeholder groups: Planning coordinators (departmental), thematic policy leads, strategy development and planning at a corporate level (including senior management).

- *Organisation and delivery (the 'who and when')*: Management and coordination of normative dialogue as a stand-alone activity or as a complement to funded or non-funded engagement initiatives, and how it complements other types of influencing, capacity support and operations. It reflects Sida's positioning on the topic/in the sector (a leader, knowledge resource, broker, important funder, etc.), and within Team Sweden, including role division and coordination within Team Sweden and other key actors.

Important internal stakeholder groups: Unit heads, programme managers, results-based management unit and operational support, multilateral focal points, heads of cooperation at Embassy level, members of Team Sweden, including any 'extended' Team Sweden members (Swedish authorities, framework CSOs, programme implementers etc.).

- *Approaches and methods (the 'how')*: Choice of engagement channels, including the use of the so-called 360 model, tailored to the level of engagement and actors (including via intermediaries, partners, or directly at technical or policy level), communications means and tailoring of messaging, networking and relationship/trust-building activities.

Important internal stakeholders: Internal capacity development and support, methods development (corporate), partnership development and management, strategic communications support.

2. The evaluation object

2.1 Normative dialogue at Sida

The term **'normative dialogue'** is shorthand for 'dialogue for normative change' and is seen as a tool to *"advocate for Swedish priorities and universal norms"* in order to *"increase the impact and accelerate progress"* against the overall goal of Swedish international development cooperation, namely *"to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression."*³ While dialogue has always been an important element of Swedish development cooperation, the use of the term 'normative dialogue' appears for the first time in Sida's operational plan from 2019. In the current operational plan (2022-24), one out of six operational goals (goal 2), specifically refers to the fact that Sida, through normative dialogue, will advocate for Swedish priorities and universal norms, including gender equality, environment and climate.⁴

The emphasis on **normative change** as an enabler for better development results – in funded and non-funded development interventions – is a somewhat different conceptualization from what was typically covered by policy dialogue in the past. For instance, in a Sida Evaluation of *Policy Dialogue as an Instrument in Development Cooperation – the Case of Gender Equality* in 2015⁵, policy dialogue is defined as: *"...an instrument of development cooperation that brings together two or more parties to discuss, and possibly reach consensus on the core values underlying their policy and programming decisions, including resource allocation."* The 2015 evaluation, which looked primarily at dialogue efforts at embassy level, also recognised that there was no clearly articulated Theory of Change (ToC) of how to use dialogue as an instrument, and that approaches to dialogue were not consistently applied across Sida given the lack of a common understanding of it as specific method to be used to advance progress in addition to funding.

The 2019 articulation of normative dialogue as one of the operational objectives strengthened the importance of using dialogue as an **influencing tool**, and also made Sida's ambition clear to make normative dialogue *"strategically relevant, results-focused and effective"*. This has called for improved internal coordination (led by an internal working group on normative dialogue), and a more coordinated Team Sweden approach – i.e., co-operation between Sida, the Swedish ministries and foreign missions.⁶

Additionally, the so-called **360 model**, which has been de facto adopted as a good practice within Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, seeks to strengthen the information flow from and back to embassies.⁷ The aim is that more of the operational and contextual knowledge from in-country operations underpinning normative priorities is reflected in high-level negotiations with e.g., multilateral organisations, or taken up during their respective Board meetings. Outcomes from such global/international normative dialogue are then fed back to the field so that they can inform dialogue and follow-up by embassies in their bilateral in-country dialogues with the same agencies and governments as needed. Taking its basis in the international normative framework of

³ ToRs, p.2, 3

⁴ ToRs, p. 3

⁵ Peebles, D. et al, Sida Evaluation 2015:1

⁶ An 'extended Team Sweden' may include other actors such as framework CSOs, other Swedish authorities, and/or specific cooperation partners in a given context.

⁷ The 360-model, or "hela varvet runt" refers to the fact that all involved actors, at all different levels of policy dialogue or operations are informed of priorities for normative dialogue, and that information exchange between parties is coordinated and strategic, combining experiential evidence with dialogue efforts at different levels.

agreed conventions, declarations and resolutions, the starting point for dialogue should be to what extent partners have signed up to them and, at country level, to what extent specific norms are reflected in national legislative frameworks and/or in the agendas of advocacy groups. In other words, **partners' ownership and leadership** is the primary consideration, which normative dialogue supports and seeks to influence.

The '**norms**' in normative dialogue refer both to Swedish priorities and universal norms as spelled out in universal resolutions, conventions, and declarations. While Swedish priorities and universal norms typically are aligned, the steering framework for what Sida should prioritise in its dialogue *"is complex, as directions and priorities are primarily outlined by the Swedish government but are also developed in internal steering tools at Sida."*⁸

The Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid outlines the Swedish Government's directions and priorities for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and sets out both overall focus and thematic focus for development aid cooperation and, by extension, its priorities for normative dialogue. It is worth noting, however, that Swedish public agencies have a high degree of independence, and a minister may not interfere in public administration and public policy implementation. Strategic guidelines establish the main starting points, and objectives are set by the government in geographic, thematic, and multilateral strategies (usually for a duration of 4-6 years). Annual appropriation directives ('regleringsbrev') further set out Sida's (and other government agencies') objectives, resources and reporting requirements.⁹ Beyond this formal practice, the public debate and political actors influence the substance and implementation of development cooperation.¹⁰ The policy framework provides **five perspectives**, two **overarching perspectives** (the poverty perspective and the rights perspective), and three **thematic perspectives** (conflict and peacebuilding, gender equality and environment and climate) that are in line with international resolutions, conventions and declarations and should be integrated into development cooperation, including its normative dialogue.

The ToRs for the assignment specify that in Sida *"normative dialogue should address Swedish priorities based on universal norms, including the five perspectives and should be conducted on global, regional and national levels."* In other words, looking at normative dialogue as a means toward accelerating progress in line with **universal norms will be a key starting point** for the evaluation, and how Sida positions itself alongside other actors to promote these in line with its mandate (determined by the Swedish government).

2.2 Working definition of normative dialogue for the evaluation

The evaluation team recognises that normative dialogue encompasses **a broad range and types of themes and topics** and what it entails may be **understood differently by different stakeholders**. This was confirmed during scoping interviews where some key informants used a wide definition of the concept to cover any type of dialogue on a specific theme of priority to Sida (without necessarily having a planned or strategic approach). Others saw it as something that was undertaken primarily at high-level, e.g., by the Ambassador in a country context, and where Sida played a more technical backstopping role. Others felt that it was possible to engage strategically in normative dialogue only if such dialogue was based on a clearly articulated change theory to enable coordination and follow-up, and to avoid normative dialogue being superficial or falling back on platitudes.

When determining factors for what successful normative dialogue might look like, scoping interviews pointed to a distinction between situations in which partners can be **held accountable** to internationally agreed universal

⁸ ToRs, p.2

⁹ Keijzer, N., Klingebiel, S., Ørtnemark, C. & Scholtes, F., Seeking balanced ownership in changing development cooperation relationships, EBA Rapport 2018:08, Expert Group for Aid Studies, Sweden

¹⁰ Danielson, A., and L. Wohlgemuth. 2005. Swedish Development Cooperation in Perspective. In: Stokke, O., and P. Hoebink. 2005. Perspectives on European Development Cooperation. Policy and 179 Performance of Individual Donor Countries and the EU. Catholic University of Nijmegen

norms or development goals that country counterparts have already signed up to, and situations in which Sweden sought outcomes that were **pushing the boundaries** on certain topics in a given context (e.g., LGBTQI issues, abortion rights, etc.) and where the universality of the norms was contested.

The ToRs specify that normative dialogue should address Swedish priorities based on universal norms, including the five perspectives, and should be conducted on global, regional and national levels. It also specifies that *"normative dialogue differs from the day-to-day dialogue that Sida has with its cooperation partners regarding specific programs and projects, i.e., dialogue on capacity and risk assessment or the organisation's ability to implement the program and report results."*¹¹ However, the ToRs do not provide a specific **definition to be used**. Part of the scoping phase was therefore dedicated to gathering different views from key stakeholders within Sida and to workshopping a working definition with the evaluation steering and reference groups.

2.2.1 Normative dialogue in strategy reporting

Extracts from country and departmental **strategy reports** of 2020 and 2021 related to Operational Goal 2 on the use of normative dialogue have been systematically gathered by Sida since 2020. The evaluation team rearranged the data to make it possible to systematically analyse it and generated some new meta data with Natural Language Processing to visualize some of the trends. By looking at the use of key words, (i.e., 'dialogue', 'normative dialogue', 'strategic communication' and other forms of advocacy or influencing 'påverkansarbete'), it is possible to conclude that different forms of influencing tend to be **increasingly referred to** in 2021. It also seems noteworthy that there is an increase in the variation in 2021, and that key words used tend to vary between different departments, and in the different individual strategy reports within Sida (Figure 1, 2 and 3 below).

This measure clearly does not say anything about the effective use of normative dialogue as a tool and may rather reflect Sida's internal processes to better define and report on normative dialogue as part of the Operational Plan since 2019. Nevertheless, in order to better understand the evaluation object, it is interesting to note that there seems to be an **increase in awareness** of the need to engage in dialogue for normative change (even if different terms are currently being used to describe that process).

Figure 2.1: Average occurrence of key terms related to normative dialogue in Sida strategy reports 2020 and 2021

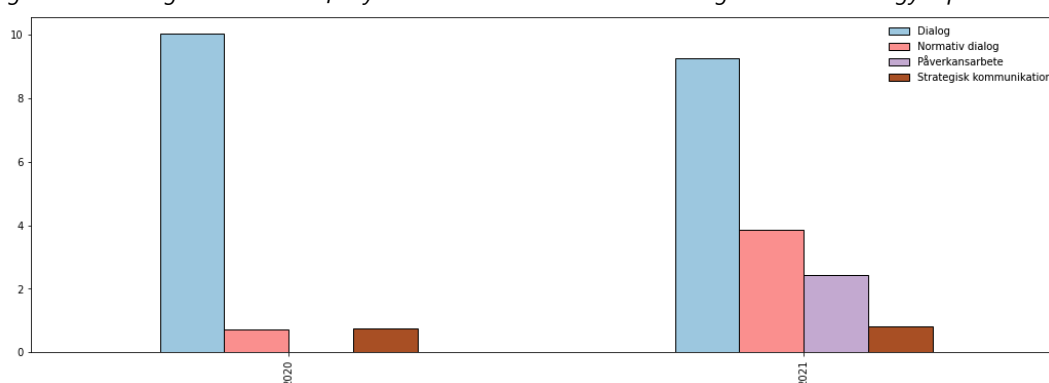


Figure 2.2: Absolute number of times key terms are used in Sida strategy reporting per region and year

¹¹ ToRs, p.3

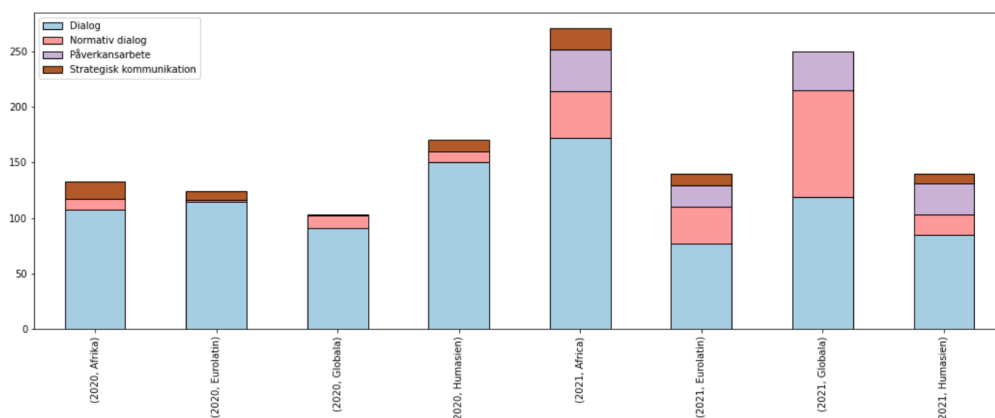
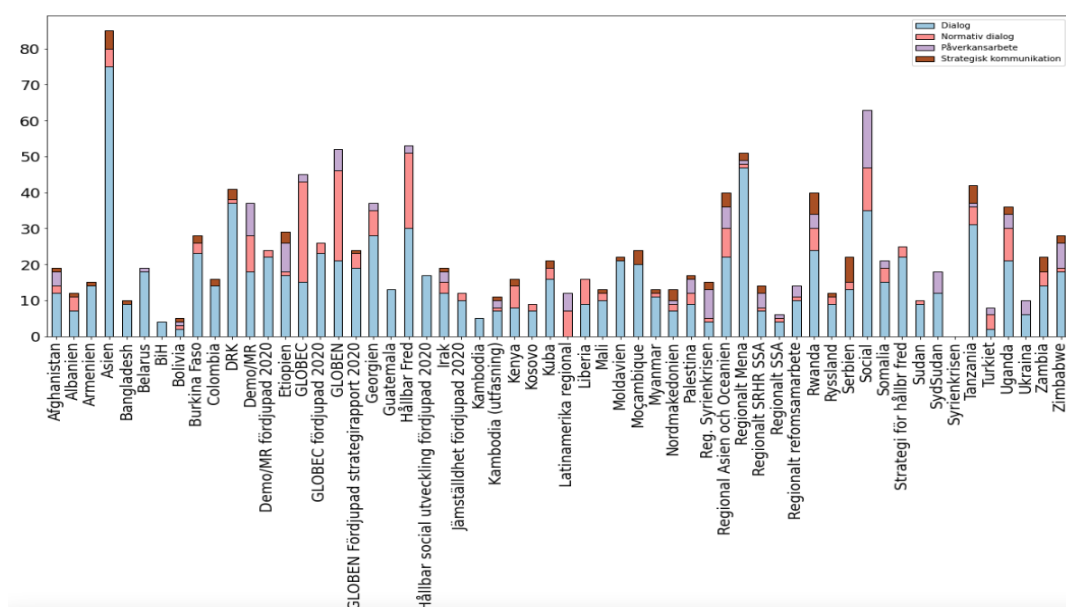


Figure 2.3: Absolute mentions per individual strategic report (2020, 2021 combined unless otherwise specified)



2.2.2 Norms

The initial background literature provided by Sida on normative dialogue often refers to the norms or messages to prioritize in dialogue as ‘the change we want to see’ as defined in Swedish government priorities and universal norms, and spelled out in Swedish development cooperation strategies, policies and universal resolutions, conventions and declarations. Even so, feedback during scoping interviews indicated that it can be difficult to fully grasp **what a ‘norm’ is**, and how to balance more value-based norms and informal social norms with highly technical norms and norms that are promoted for example through technical capacity-building. In fact, it was pointed out that internal capabilities in Sida to effectively adopt, adapt and incorporate certain norms into the work of staff who are not specialists on a given subject is very closely linked to internal training and

guidance to provide staff with the language, confidence and necessary expertise to bring up certain normative values in different types of conversations.¹²

Existing definitions of relevance talk about norms as a shared definition of desirable behaviour or the standards by reference to which behaviour is judged and approved or disapproved, etc. A norm is typically defined as “a standard of appropriate behaviour of actors of a given identity”¹³ or “a principle of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behaviour.”¹⁴ Both of these definitions indicate a strong link between norms and behavioural patterns. They are also implicitly value-based in relation to what is considered ‘right’ and ‘appropriate’ and by whom. This is also why it will be important to inquire into the extent to which there is joint agreement and ownership of the universal values and

For the sake of **this evaluation** and in order to enhance evaluability, the evaluation team proposes that ‘norms’ in ‘normative dialogue’ **fulfil the following criteria**:

- Norms are in line with international resolutions, conventions and declarations,
- Norms are clearly linked to the two overarching perspectives for Swedish development cooperation – the poverty perspective and the rights perspective – and may, to differing degrees, be linked to one of the thematic perspectives (conflict and peacebuilding, gender equality, environment and climate),
- Norms set out and/or represent desirable change or behaviour that is perceived to enable sustainable development results,
- Norms exist as a result of collective engagement by multiple stakeholders and actors and such, may emerge or evolve over time.

2.2.3 Normative dialogue

The ToRs clearly distinguish between day-to-day dialogue on partners’ delivery capacity and risk assessments in relation to specific programs and the dialogue for normative change conducted to influence or convince partners to adopt certain shared normative values in their work. Yet, feedback from scoping interviews and during workshop discussions suggested that this distinction is less clear in practice. While normative dialogue goes beyond specific programmes or management, it is also very **closely linked to the daily ‘learning-by-doing’** by partners, particularly if the promotion of certain norms has been agreed on upfront and is even supported by additional capacity building support from Sida.¹⁵

The evaluation therefore suggests a somewhat more **generic definition**, namely that:

- *Normative dialogue (or ‘dialogue for normative change’) includes any effort to strategically engage in dialogue about desired change with the explicit purpose of seeking to influence or safeguard universal norms as reflected in Swedish priorities, policies, and strategies.*

It implies that the desired change is based on universal norms and is in line with Swedish government priorities. It also assumes that the specific norms to be influenced or safeguarded are made clear up front and are in line with development cooperation strategies and policies. From an evaluability perspective, the articulated intention in having an **explicit purpose** of seeking to influence or safeguard universal norms will be critical in order

¹² Examples quoted in the areas of SRHR, LGBTQI and women’s economic empowerment.

¹³ Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. “International norm dynamics and political change.” *International organization* 52.4 (1998): 887-917)

¹⁴ Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary

¹⁵ Examples of this approach were mentioned, for instance, in relation to gender equality, climate and environment, and women’s economic empowerment.

to be able to track results at an outcome level and then trace back observed outcomes to the particular focus area, target group, context and approaches and methods applied.

The evaluation team recognises that that the proposed **definition may evolve** as lessons from the evaluation start to emerge, and that it can be revised once results are reviewed. The use of outcome harvesting is expected to leave room for interlocutors to redefine normative dialogue in relation to the dialogues that they are a part of.

It should however be noted that **outcomes** from normative dialogue may not be clear-cut or in any way solely or significantly attributable to Sida, given how beliefs that form the foundation for normative change are inevitably influenced by a variety of factors, including **previously existing beliefs and motivations** for behavioural change.

Also, dialogue around universal norms to safeguard and institutionalize these in line with international declarations, conventions and commitments is already **at the heart of the United Nations system** and other multilateral organisations. The extent to which Swedish efforts play a role in helping to reinforce or shape these alongside others may at times be difficult to determine.

The evaluation will therefore look for outcomes from normative dialogue that can be **credibly associated** with Swedish efforts, and where Sweden has intentionally and strategically used normative dialogue to advance certain outcomes. These outcomes will necessarily reflect a mix of the norms and values of the different parties involved in the dialogue process. The evaluation will seek to assess why and how changes can be reasonably associated with the dialogue in the given context, and how this, in turn, helped enable effective development outcomes. The evaluation will then seek to **trace the institutional capabilities** within Sida and Team Sweden¹⁶ that made change possible in order to distil lessons around internal strategy processes, organisation and delivery and approaches and methods used.

Normative dialogue is conceptualized as **a tool for influencing** the outcomes of development cooperation alongside other forms of influence (such as economic funding incentives, influencing via research, capacity development, knowledge exchange, facilitation, visibility, etc.). While important learning and organisational change is needed to build internal capabilities on how to maximise such influence – e.g., in relation to how to adapt approaches, tools and methods, and how to best tailor language and delivery of normative dialogue in different contexts – Sida is **not looking to change the norms themselves**. On the other hand, learning on the ‘how’ of normative dialogue is very central to the evaluation scope. In the context for this evaluation, it is therefore important to state, up front, what we mean with influence and influencing effects.

Box 1. Other related concepts that impinge on the scope of the evaluation

Several concepts in Sida’s background literature on normative dialogue interchangeably refer to or are closely related to normative dialogue. The below working definitions and brief descriptions of them is expected to contextualize these in the context of this evaluation.

Strategic communication: A broader concept than normative dialogue, the evaluation will refer to strategic communication as a way to communicate the desired normative change clearly and consistently, using multiple entry-points. To be strategic, the communication needs to reflect an understanding of and be adapted to the

¹⁶ Referring to Sida, MFA and/or other Swedish actors who align their agendas for normative change in relation to universal norms and principles.

context and level of engagement as well as the different target groups (i.e., those individuals or groups expected to be influenced as a result of the dialogue process). This, in turn, should affect the content and mechanisms of delivery in relation to how the communication is planned organised, what approach is chosen (e.g., via an intermediate messaging partner or through direct communication, or via mass communication or social media channels). The evaluation will refer to strategic communications as it is used **in relation to influencing normative change**, but will now seek to assess the extent to which communication is used more broadly as an outreach tool within Sida.

Public diplomacy: Though less commonly referred to, the concept of ‘public diplomacy’ is currently used interchangeably with strategic communication and/or normative dialogue in some Sida documents and discussions and was reportedly more commonly used by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). It implicitly refers to government-supported efforts aimed at influencing public attitudes in a cooperation country using a variety of governmental and non-governmental resources and actors beyond government-to-government relations (e.g., via civil society organisations, media, private sector actors or professional associations). Important to note is that for the purpose of this evaluation we will **not use the term** ‘public diplomacy’ unless specifically warranted, instead seeking to trace any influencing effects back to normative dialogue and the use of strategic communications to enable or strategically engage in such dialogue.

Influence and influence effects

‘Influence effects’ occur in **people, priorities, policies and practices** (in the context of this evaluation, referred to by the evaluation team as the “4Ps” in short) and are rarely attributable to one event or influencing source alone. In other words, influence effects can result from several interlinked strategies, of which normative dialogue is one (interlinked with other means of influencing, and other priorities within Sida). Importantly, it is the understanding of the evaluation team that **normative dialogue will always seek to achieve influence effects**, on its own or in combination with other means of influencing in order to maximise the effectiveness of development results. In this context, when referring to ‘influence’, it is simply defined as the power to have an effect on people, priorities, policies and practices as defined above.¹⁷

2.3 Factors influencing normative dialogue

The ToRs set out a number of **important variables** that inform normative dialogue at Sida and which will be used as important parameters in the evaluation namely:

- **Focus area:** which relates to theme, strategy objectives, the normative agenda and how it links to the five perspectives based on universal norms.
- **Target groups:** at multilateral/global level, at meso-level among peers and civil society groups, at regional levels and at country levels. Target groups are those who are expected to be influenced by, or change, as a result of the dialogue process.
- **Context:** which places the type of issue into a context that is either conducive for normative dialogue, or where normative dialogue is more contentious (e.g., in relation to so-called headwind issues). Context also refers to the geographical context, conflict or peace contexts, level of fragility, freedom of expression, etc.

¹⁷ Drawing on definition used in an evaluation that focused on Finland’s successes in influencing multilateral organisations, see: https://um.fi/publications/-/asset_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/evaluointiraportti-ulkoministeri-c3-b6-vaikuttaa-monenkeskisten-j-c3-a4rjest-c3-b6jen-toimintaan-1/384998

- **Approaches and methods:** including choice of cooperation partner, positioning and coordination within Team Sweden and application of the 360 model, whether to conduct dialogue directly or via intermediaries, etc.

Each of these variables will be applied to the **macro** level (global/international), at **meso**-level (Sida and other peers/Team Sweden actors), **regional** level (if applicable) and in the **country** context with a focus on synergies and feedback loops between the different levels as intended in the 360 model.

In line with the identified learning objectives for the evaluation, there should also be a strong focus is on **‘the how’** in addition to what is being done or achieved. Such lessons should allow for **comparison across cases** given that the different cases:

- a) have different universal norms and standard in focus,
- b) operate in different contexts,
- c) are aimed at different target groups, and
- d) uses different approaches and methods.

This means that each of the harvested outcomes should be linked, as far as possible to **institutional core capabilities within Sida** and in relation to Sida’s positioning in Team Sweden/other key actors, in order to respond to the different learning objectives. The below table gives some examples of institutional capabilities to look for in relation to the different learning objectives.

Table 2.1 Linking learning objectives to Sida institutional core capabilities

Learning objectives	Examples of institutional core capabilities (that enabled/hindered harvested outcomes)
• Internal strategy processes (the ‘what’): Priority-setting (also in relation to other priorities within Sida), planning and follow up of normative dialogue at different levels of operation related to change theory, development of strategic plans, strategy reporting, linking normative dialogue to an enabling environment for improved development results.	-Capability to plan and follow up on normative dialogue over time -Capability to link normative dialogue to development results -Capability to make strategy objectives rights-based and gender transformative with links to the thematic perspectives -Capability of staff to internalize issues, technical facts, and messages around norms to be promoted (with sufficient training and guidance)
• Organisation and delivery (the ‘who and when’): Management and coordination of normative dialogue as a stand-alone activity or as a complement to funded or non-funded engagement initiatives, and how it complements other types of influencing, capacity support and operations, reflecting Sida’s positioning on	-Capability to learn and adapt based on regular liaison with Embassies, partners -Capability to manage and organise normative dialogue across different levels of operations (HQ, in-country)

the topic/in the sector (and within Team Sweden.

-Capability to exchange information and coordinate communication efforts across different institutional functions (departments, thematic areas) within Sida,

-Capability to position Sida strategically in relation to other Team Sweden actors

- **Approaches and methods (the 'how'):** Choice of engagement channels, including the use of the so-called 360 model, tailored to the level of engagement and actors (including via intermediaries, partners, or directly at technical or policy level), communications means and tailoring of messaging, networking and relationship/trust-building activities.

-Capability to build trust and attract others (through coalition building, donor coordination etc)

-Capability to position Sida strategically in a given sector or area of support (e.g., as a knowledge resource),

-Capability to give sufficient guidance and advise to partners (including via capacity building)

-Capability to adapt communicative methods and instruments to context

-Capability to cope with level of resistance or political developments

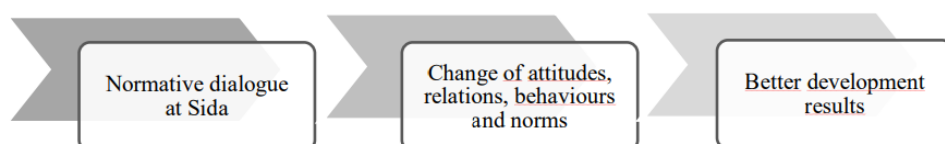
3. Proposed approach and methodology

3.1 Approach

3.1.1 Conceptual framework and theory of change (ToC)

The ToRs specify an underlying Theory of Change (ToC) for normative dialogue, which puts emphasis on the *change of attitudes, relations, behaviours and norms* as a means to achieving better development results. It also acknowledges that while this may seem like a straightforward process (as depicted in the graph below), guided by clearly spelled out strategies and tools, the process is in fact **complex with multiple actors and influencing parties** involved, with varying degrees of influence over both the process and outcomes.

Figure 3.1 Intervention logic for normative dialogue presented in the ToRs



The ToC also builds on the underlying **assumption that parties, through normative dialogue, align their interest in ways that help produce better development results**. While this is indeed an overarching aim, there may also be instances when promoting a previously identified policy agenda may cause pushback or fragmentation to collaborative relationships needed to deliver results. Dialogue may aggravate, rather than smooth, relations where differing norms become an arena for public debate and may trigger populist polemics that obstruct dialogue going forward. The evaluation design and choice of methods therefore seek to capture both

unintended (positive and negative) effects in relation to results, but also outcomes related to the nature of the partnership, and in how the framing of issues may need to be adapted to context along the way.

The evaluation will be **theory-based** in that it will take the implicit assumptions in the ToC as a point of departure and seek to unpack them throughout the evaluation process. To do so, the evaluation team has come up with an expanded ToC (see Figure 3.2 below, also in Annex 2 for clarity). This ToC will thus be used as a tool to understand how different actors are selecting and using different approaches to work towards a common ultimate objective.

Outcome Harvesting (OH) is an open-ended methodology in that it is **more inductive than deductive in its approach** with an emphasis on finding emerging patterns in outcomes before formulating causal pathways, particularly since these outcomes are a result of a complex environment with multiple influences, and change patterns are not linear. In that sense, it can be seen as somewhat contradictory to use a OH in combination with a theory-based evaluation approach where the results framework or ToC is fixed with key hypotheses up front that are then tested along the way. However, we still propose to frame the OH inquiry within **a broader theory-based approach**. This will allow the OH analysis of contribution to be organized in relation to the results and change pathways posited in the theory of change, so that this can be confirmed or revised to support learning and adaptation. This framing will also help the team **limit the number of outcomes identified** and **prioritize the most significant ones** from the point of view of intended results, while taking note of unintended or unexpected results valued by stakeholders.

The methods proposed will be geared to harvesting outcomes as well as to **substantiating outcomes that have already been harvested** in the available documentation, reporting, or which the evaluation team will seek to substantiate through additional key informant interviews (KIIs). In line with the OH approach, harvested outcomes will be organized in an Excel database¹⁸ and classified according to relevant categories of analysis, including the expected outcomes in the ToC and relevant evaluation questions. Careful triangulation of data from different sources will ensure that findings are grounded in valid, inclusive, and reliable evidence, with any significant gaps addressed through follow-up data collection and **workshopping with the Steering/Reference group at key moments of the evaluation process**. The evaluation team will identify **patterns and trends in outcomes** by mapping findings on outcomes against the proposed ToC, noting any gaps and any unintended outcomes – positive or negative. In that sense, any perceived need to update or adjust the ToC will be done in close consultation with the Steering Group and will be part of the participatory learning process.

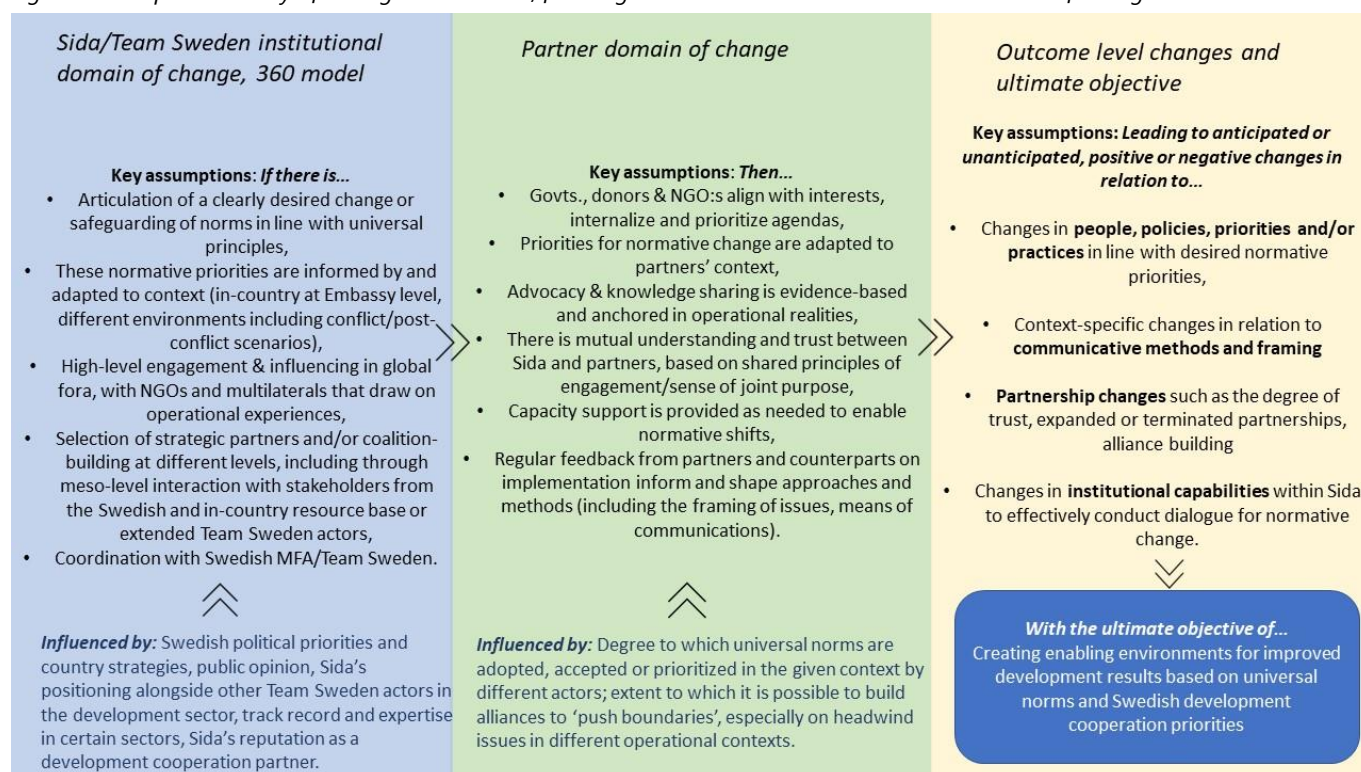
This ToC is based on feedback and literature reviewed during the inception phase on Sida's engagement in normative dialogue **to promote certain clearly defined universal norms, formalised in strategies and instructions from the government**. It further seeks to identify possibly varied pathways towards **intermediate outcomes** in different **domains of change**: (i) the institutional domains within Sida and in relation to Sida's positioning among other Swedish actors/in Team Sweden, (ii) in the domain of selecting and supporting partners, and (iii) in the sectoral domain, linking intermediate outcomes to the overarching goal of normative dialogue – namely to provide an enabling environment for improved development results based on universal norms and Swedish development cooperation priorities. The ToC will be contextualized and exemplified in relation to the

¹⁸ For each outcome, the Excel database will include an outcome description, its level of significance (by stakeholder group), as well as the enabling/hindering factors in terms of partnerships, operating context and institutional core capabilities. We will consider also tagging outcomes in relation to the stages of the dialogue, i.e. if this is a new/emerging topic or one that partners have worked on for a long time.

thematic case studies. It is expected that the cases will highlight how pluralistic approaches, adapted to e.g., local or sectoral normative discourses, ultimately converge around the creation of enabling environments.

Outcomes as they are referred to in Outcome Harvesting are defined as “an observable and significant change in a social actor’s behaviour, relationships, activities, actions, policies or practice that has been achieved, and that has been influenced by the change agent” (Wilson-Grau and Britt 2012).

Figure 3.2 Proposed Theory of Change to be tested, focusing on intermediate outcomes and domains of change



This proposed ToC will be used as a reference point throughout the evaluation period and will provide the **basis for reflecting on assumptions around processes and contributions** in the different thematic case studies as well as at an overall level. Validating actual contribution to specific development results may prove to be challenging given that Sida’s normative dialogue will be one among many influencing factors, often pursued indirectly via partners. The evaluation will therefore seek to establish contribution pathways to understand how the **enabling environments** have shifted in line with prioritized normative agendas based on observed changes in people, policies or priorities or practices (“4Ps”), in communicative methods and framing, and/or in the nature of the partnership itself.

The ToC should be seen against a backdrop of **contextual factors** that will influence progress at all junctures, e.g., existing internationally agreed goals and principles and the extent to which they are accepted and adopted in different contexts, existing legislation, availability of advocacy groups on headwind issues on norms that are more contested etc. Conversely, the lack of international consensus, unfavourable power structures, distrust, corruption etc. are examples of hindering factors in different contexts.

Given the formative nature of the evaluation, it will be important to document and analyse the **interplay** between Sida’s own efforts to achieve strategic objectives for normative change, and how these align with efforts

of external actors. The ToC (Figure 3.2) underscores that both Sida and partners operate in, and are influenced by, their own political operating environments which will inevitably affect the degree of alignment and political buy-in to common normative priorities and objectives. On top of that, there can be institutional hurdles to advancing normative change in a coherent and coordinated manner. An example from the scoping phase comes from the thematic area of Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) where it was stated that *"most people within Sida are aware of and think that they know how to promote gender equality, and external actors look to us for expertise. But the area of WEE is quite specialized and there is a need to better understand and incorporate more nuanced messages across our gender equality work that are specific to WEE in different contexts."*

A contextual factor that will receive attention will be the **conflict context**. The evaluation will not include humanitarian programming, but it will be attentive to how dialogue has been adapted to reflect the nature of dialogue related to programming that stretches across the **humanitarian-development-peace nexus** and is undertaken in conflict affected countries where **failures to defend humanitarian principles** may constitute a central aspect of normative dialogue. This includes dialogue with duty-bearers who may lack legitimacy, and with responsible actors from the UN system who are taking on extended roles in order to maintain basic operations amid deteriorating conditions.

Changes in **people, policies, priorities and practices** can be either linked to a specific programme and/or go beyond programmes to have wider systemic influence (as intended in the 360 model). The level of cohesion of messages and approaches across different domains of change and levels of interaction will be important to inquire into, as well as the extent to which they are mutually reinforcing. As such, factors related to coherence are likely to feature across the evaluation questions.

3.2 Evaluability of evaluation questions

As indicated above, the **expected learning outcomes** for Sida will be at the centre of this evaluation, namely in relation to **'what'** universal norms are being prioritized to what effect in different contexts (captured primarily in the EQs relating to effectiveness); the **'who and when'** in relation to organisation and delivery, management and coordination of the dialogue; and the **'how'** in terms of choice of approaches and methods, including the choice of engagement channels, including the use of the so-called 360 model (the latter two categories being captured primarily in the efficiency Eqs). These learning outcomes are expected to be cross-cutting and applicable to Sida at an **institutional level** even though the methodology prescribed in the TORs are largely based on four specific thematic areas and sub-areas where lessons are expected to be found and drawn on. The below sets out some initial thoughts on the evaluation questions, taking this into consideration.

3.2.1 Overall observations regarding the evaluation questions

Evaluability refers to the extent to which an activity or programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. The TORs contain a **comprehensive** set of pertinent evaluation questions in relation to the learning objectives for the evaluation (section 1.1). As stated in the TORs, *"considering the purpose and intended use of the evaluation, the evaluation will focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of Sida's dialogue"* (p. 8). This reflects the desire to learn about both **the 'what' and the 'how'** of normative dialogue, with a focus on how to improve Sida's internal approaches and working methods for using normative dialogue as a means towards delivering improved development results.

While effectiveness questions seek to establish what **successful normative dialogue** looks like (including the factors and mechanisms involved), efficiency questions seek to then trace such enablers for successful normative dialogue back to Sida's **institutional practices** across functions and capabilities in the organisation. At the same time, the TORs acknowledge that much of the actual dialogue work is undertaken by CSO or think tank partners (seen as intermediaries in developing and articulating normative arguments and evidence), rather than

Sida itself. In such instances, Sida's choice of partners in line with strategic priorities will be looked at and the role Sida plays in partnerships in relation advancing universal norms and Swedish development cooperation priorities.

3.2.2 Effectiveness evaluation questions

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

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?

Relevance: These evaluation questions are highly relevant in relation to the purpose of the evaluation and the learning needs that have been expressed in the inception phase. The emphasis of the analysis of 'change' will be on the 'what', among 'whom' and 'how'. Also, by 'successful' outcomes, the evaluation understands that to be **intended and unintended** positive outcomes, while 'unsuccessful' is understood to refer to instances where there were either no effects of normative dialogue, or where dialogue efforts led to pushback, backlash, or increased misalignment of actors (e.g., locking of positions).

Evaluability: As recognised at the outset, the main evaluability challenge relates to finding common and **generalisable contribution trends** across an exceedingly wide range of types of norms, geo-political contexts and ongoing (often competing) normative dialogues led by different development cooperation actors. The case studies are expected to reveal both trends and idiosyncratic examples of both achievements and non-achievement or even negative outcomes that illustrate salient factors and institutional mechanisms. It is judged that these questions are evaluable, but with a caveat that the relevance of applying lessons regarding the success factors and hinders that are identified within other dialogues will vary due to this contextual diversity.

3.2.3 Efficiency evaluation questions

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?

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?

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

Relevance: The questions are largely relevant in relation to the evaluation objectives and expected learning outcomes but, given the range and roles of actors referred to by interviewees as being involved in normative dialogue, there is a risk that the findings may be somewhat **skewed towards Sida's role** at the expense of understanding the multistakeholder nature of these dialogues.

Evaluability: EQ6 does include analyses of **partnerships**, but scoping interviews suggest that these partnerships are important for analysing all of these questions. Particularly at embassy level, and in relations with think tanks and other normative actors in Sweden and global levels, evaluability would be strengthened if, for example, the partners involved in articulating and developing an evidence base for the norms being communicated are analysed as actors within all the processes referred to in these EQs.

3.3 Methods

The core methods of the evaluation will be a tailored version of **outcome harvesting** to ensure that the evaluation is participatory, and utilization focused. This will be combined with **contribution analysis** to determine what factors or institutional mechanisms enabled (or hindered) the given outcome, and how it affects Sida's **institutional capabilities** of conducting dialogue for normative change. This is in line with the formative nature of the evaluation and the evaluation questions which look at both effectiveness (outcomes and results of normative dialogue) and efficiency (institutional mechanisms and capabilities across Sida's organisational functions and levels of operation).

As described in the above theory of change, this is in recognition of how normative dialogue driven by Sida is inevitably a contribution to ongoing internal normative dialogues underway in national governments, between governments and civil society, within regional institutions and multilateral agencies, and in academia. The evaluation will therefore seek to clearly identify **what the intended normative influencing effect was**, and then trace it back to the contribution of Sida and other influencing factors to get to the 'how'. Unintended or negative effects will also be assessed, and perceived outcomes will be validated with the relevant stakeholder groups.

The team considers that outcome harvesting is the most appropriate methodology for this evaluation because it is open-ended and seeks to **connect observed effects with triggering factors, obstacles or variables that have affected a given attitude or behaviour**. Given that effective normative dialogue takes place within both informal and formal fora and processes, it can be challenging to determine the level and type of contribution to changes. With this method however, the evaluation team asks different stakeholder groups to identify what the main results have been for them from diverse types of discussions and dialogue. The significance attributed to a triggering effect for action is thereby assigned by participants themselves, making it reflective of diverse viewpoints.

Contribution analysis, applied to normative dialogue suggests **documenting stories** about contributions to normative change, explanations of other contributing factors, and analysis of what stakeholders perceive to have occurred if Sida did not engage. Attention will also be given to how actors have striven to harmonise competing norms through dialogue, as well as where these efforts can be credibly associated with this harmonisation.

Data collection and analysis for this contribution analysis will be undertaken through a modified outcome harvesting approach. This will involve **unpacking perceived outcomes** emanating from sets of interlinked dialogues. An assumption is that even though Sida may be engaged in dialogues with national governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society on a related theme within a given case study, they are striving towards somewhat different norms, have different metrics of success and failure, etc. The case studies will be used to map and compare these categories emerging from the outcome harvesting exercises, while remaining cognisant of potential parallel processes (e.g., pushback against LGBTQI rights or vested interests in central governments that hinder devolution). The evaluation will also be attentive to how Sida contributes to outcomes by **leveraging its programming to buttress its credibility and ensure access to a 'seat at the table'** in normative discussions and high-level meetings in the multilateral fora.

These contributions to outcomes are inevitably somewhat amorphous and part of the complex political economy of development cooperation, not the least when Sida is **pursuing headwind issues** where other parts of the development community are pursuing other norms, either because they do not share normative commitments or for pragmatic political reasons that lead them to de-emphasise certain norms. Contextual factors, particularly conflict, respect for rule of law and the commitment and role of duty-bearers in upholding norms in fragile states and hinterlands will be considered. It will be important to ensure that the evaluation draws attention to how normative dialogue is not just a technical process and is always political and contextual. The extent to which the evaluation can delve into these drivers may be limited, but it cannot ignore them.

From a methodological perspective, outcome harvesting will be used to also capture stakeholders' outcome narratives where the intended normative influencing effect was to **safeguard** a certain issue or rights focus, rather than to change it (e.g., safeguarding the rights agenda in certain development cooperation settings, and not the least in the area of SRHR and access to safe and legal abortion, or ensuring commitments to humanitarian protection in conflict settings). Whether the intended influencing effect was to actively change an agenda, or to safeguard certain norms, it will be similar from a methodological viewpoint since the evaluation will take the **actual perceived outcome** and the **intended influencing effect** as a point of departure for analysis, then tracing it back to the variables that affect Sida's contribution.

Outcome harvesting will be applied **the same way across four thematic cases** selected for data gathering (gender equality, SRHR, democracy and human rights and environment and climate change) as outlined in the ToRs (see section 4 below). Additional outcomes and institutional practices will be gathered at **a more general level**, e.g., through interviews and inputs by reference group members, as well as via additional Sida personnel via in-depth interviews and focus group discussions clustered around different functions within Sida (e.g., strategy processes and planning; organisational management, coordination and delivery; approaches, methods and internal capacity development support and training).

Harvested outcomes (or influence effects) will be **recorded and categorised based on the variables that emerge from these exercises**. These may reflect those applied elsewhere in the evaluation, i.e., focus area, target group, context, approach and method, but may also diverge into factors such as where in the change processes the dialogue is (emerging, well-established, or long-term) and to what degree normative dialogue complements or is integrated with other forms of influencing (via funding, capacity development, research, high-level policy engagement, etc.).

3.3.1 Data gathering and analysis

The **causality analysis** will be based on assumptions set out in the revised ToC and the conceptual and analytical frameworks. However, given the nature of the evaluation object (and the fact that normative change is dependent on multiple interlinked factors and competing interests and is rarely linear), it will be **inductive** in that it will take as a point of departure the specific observations and narratives of different stakeholder groups, and then conduct analysis in order to see **patterns across** the different variables and dimensions as illustrated in the thematic cases and overall observations. This, in turn, will allow the evaluation team to ultimately go back to the revised ToC to determine what successful (and less successful) normative dialogue may look like.

In contexts marked by multiple causalities (Sida is not the only actor involved in normative dialogue), **causal inferences will be grounded in the evidence collected and triangulated** through the mixed-methods approach.

Moreover, efforts will be put into ensuring solid data analysis using a two-faceted approach. First, we will analyse and **openly discuss the credibility of the findings** (source criticism) and make sure and visible that the conclusions drawn are based on the evidence collected. Second, we will promote participation throughout the evaluation process to interpret the evaluation results and to contextualise them or draw out more strategic implications, and sometimes even question our own interpretation of the findings by suggesting possible alternative conclusions (e.g., by close involvement and inputs from the evaluation steering group and reference group). Comparison across the case studies is likely to be important for understanding what can be generalised regarding causality and what may be valuable but idiosyncratic examples of change processes.

Box 2. Respecting subjective perceptions

Already in the inception phase it has become apparent that there often are **differing perceptions** regarding the content, nature and priorities of normative dialogue within Team Sweden. Most notably, the embassies and Sida headquarters often have differing understandings about how dialogue can and should be pursued, and different stakeholders are involved in very different dialogue processes. The 360 model is seen to be a way to overcome, or at least reflect on these differences. It is also to be noted that even if the understanding of what constitutes normative dialogue at a broader institutional level may differ by different parties, the dialogue undertaken on a specific focus area may still have been clear to those directly involved. It should also be noted that it is hoped that an open discussion around different perceptions regarding normative dialogue as part of the evaluation process can contribute to constructive reflection across Team Sweden actors at different levels.

Finally, careful attention will be paid to a **critical analysis of the sources**. Biases related to different types of data collection methods (interviews, web crawls, etc.) will be explained. The critique of the sources will also be done systematically in the limitation sections or in the methodological parts of the evaluation report and will be discussed openly during various workshops with Sida.

3.3.2 Document review

During the inception phase a **review of relevant documentation** was initiated. While several 'success cases' of normative dialogue have been documented by Sida and partners more recently, the evaluation team noted the relative lack available documentation to be used given that normative dialogue processes and their outcomes are not systematically documented and tracked (the more recent reporting against the Operational Objective since 2019 is providing better data for the more recent time period).

Documentation was also difficult to acquire given that normative dialogue typically only makes up one (often less visible) part of broader cooperation or programming frameworks. Available **gaps** are particularly pertinent in relation to strategic choices, pivots and methods and approaches used for normative dialogue. Instead, the evaluation will have to rely largely on key informant interviews to obtain this kind of information. Not surprisingly, major 'events' receive more attention in reporting than ongoing, low-key aspects of dialogue.

The approach to document gathering and review will therefore be **ongoing and 'snowballing'** in that the evaluation team will ask each interviewed stakeholder to send documentation that can provide further details and help validate claims and insights. The document gathering and review is therefore expected to be an ongoing process for the whole duration of the evaluation.

3.3.3 Focused discussions among stakeholder groups

Using the information gathered through outcome harvesting, the evaluation team will **facilitate focused discussions with each key stakeholder group** (within Sida, Team Sweden, implementing partners and/or intermediaries), and cluster the different actions and results they have identified into categories using the analytical framework. Each group will then discuss and assess which actions, values and norms contributed to these sets of results. While this type of participatory outcome harvesting is quite time consuming in person, a somewhat 'lighter touch' version will be undertaken, tailored to be conducted digitally (or partly digitally, partly in person). **Focus group discussions** will be held at Sida headquarters (three by function, see table 3.1 as part of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan), along with one or two focus group discussions in countries selected for in-depth study by thematic area (one for internal stakeholders with a focus on development cooperation units within the embassies) and one for key implementing partners or intermediaries per thematic area (as/if applicable).

3.3.4 In-depth interviews

There will be two rounds of one-on-one in-depth interviews with the **first having been undertaken as part of the scoping phase feeding into this inception report**. The first round of interviews included almost exclusively internal Sida stakeholders to better understand the 'universe' of normative dialogue from Sida's perspective, while the second phase will involve partners and external stakeholders at different levels of operation.

Interviews will be using semi-structured interviewing techniques to let the **interviewees lead the conversation**. Draft generic interview guides have been developed (Annex 4), and will be further tailored to the different stakeholder groups (internal and external).

In-depth interviews were undertaken during the inception phase with the purpose to determine the **boundaries and further refine the scope** of the evaluation. These will be expanded upon with a larger group of stakeholders, internally at Sida as well as externally, as part of the data collection phase to validate and add further nuances to data gathered in focus group discussions. While most key informant interviews will be linked to one of the four themes and sub-areas selected for data gathering, **other functions** who can give a more general perspective will also be included (some which are already represented on the evaluation reference group). In this sense, in-depth interviews may be used as a follow-up or alternative to focus group discussions as needed with e.g., all of the Multilateral Focal Points, Planning Coordinators at the different departments and others from the leadership as deemed relevant.

External key informants for in-depth interviews will include counterparts in multilateral organisations – such as UN agencies, IFIs, the EU – which have clear mandates when it comes to advancing the international normative agenda in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Another group will include **other donor institutions** (e.g., other bilateral development cooperation agencies and/or Ministries for Foreign Affairs) with whom Sweden coordinates and have a close collaboration (e.g., the Nordic Baltic Executive Director's office at the World Bank, and/or similar advisors in other IFIs).

Additionally, external **intermediaries and implementing partners** will be interviewed in Sweden (Swedish framework CSOs, academia, help desks, think tanks etc.) and **in-country**.

The list of interviewees will be drawn up with inputs from the evaluation Steering Group and the thematic focal points for the evaluation. (See section 4 for some of the partners linked to thematic cases).

Figure 3.3 Interviewing process



Key informant interview will particularly suited to **raise sensitive issues and/or validate findings of a more political nature**. Some stakeholders may also prefer one-on-one consultations, e.g., partners in key ministries in-country, or those whose schedules may be less flexible.

3.3.5 Survey(s)

At present, and as a result of scoping consultations, no surveys are foreseen to be undertaken. This is due to a number of factors, the most important being that a study by Swedish Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) evaluating the effects and impacts of **the Swedish feminist foreign policy**¹⁹ is currently being undertaken in parallel to this evaluation, and whose findings will be presented this spring of 2023. During data gathering for this study, **a survey was already distributed** to Swedish Embassies to inquire, among other things, about their perception and use of normative persuasion as a means for gaining influence around the policy agenda, and the data will be shared with the evaluation team once ready.

Ongoing exchange with the EBA study is also ensured through the participation of the lead author of the study in the evaluation **reference group**. There are several synergies that can be explored with this ongoing study given the strong focus on gender and the feminist foreign policy as an enabler for engaging in normative dialogue. The aim of the study *"is to systematically explore the gender equality work – normative as well as operational – that the feminist foreign policy has given rise to."* In addition to documenting what results can be observed in relation to the policy's six objective areas, the study also looks into what can be learnt in terms of *"effective forms of joint action and coordination between Swedish actors and policy areas within the gender equality area."*²⁰

Once survey data from this ongoing EBA study has been shared and assessed, the evaluation team will **discuss with the evaluation steering group to decide** whether additional quantifiable data will be needed in order to gather information from stakeholders more systematically, quantifiably and in a more confidential manner than through focus group discussions or one-to-one interviews. If so, one or a couple of shorter surveys will be

¹⁹ <https://eba.se/en/pagaende-studier/the-implementation-of-swedens-feminist-foreign-policy-in-partner-countries/18231/>

²⁰ Confirmed during scoping interviews.

designed in collaboration with the steering group. Nevertheless, given experiences during the scoping phase, we believe that a quick and simple survey format may be less well suited for evaluating normative dialogue initiatives given the complexity of the topic and difficulties of participants to fully relate to the subject. Rather, scoping interviews during the inception phase illustrated that data gathering relied on quite advanced interviewing techniques to **'tease out' answers** in a more nuanced way.

3.3.6 Case study methodology for the different sub-areas

Each of **the four thematic focus areas, sub-areas and country examples** will follow the **same analytical framework** and use **the same ToC** as reference to ensure consistency in the data gathering, and allow for comparability across the different cases (see section 5). At the same time, it will be important to understand the **diverse dynamics and characteristics** for the different focus areas and sub-areas, and how these influence approaches and methods used (including the choice of partners). A wide range of country contexts and examples have been included for each thematic area to increase the level of comparability across the cases. The generic ToC for the evaluation will be **tailored by theme** during the data analysis phase to illustrate Sida's different approaches and key actors at each level of engagement, and to test underlying assumptions.

The identification of **key stakeholder groups per theme** was initiated during the inception phase and will continue as part of the data gathering for both internal and external stakeholders. A description of each thematic case including the proposed country selection for in-depth study and for gathering a wider range of examples in different contexts is explained in Section 5 of this report.

The use of **focus group discussions followed/complemented by key information interviews** will be used for all country/regional level data gathering following the same approach and methodology as for the overall evaluation.

3.3.7 Exploratory use of digital data science, social media and web-based data

During the inception phase the evaluation team has researched the possibility to utilise various **data science techniques** for extraction of social media and web data that can secure evidence for the evaluation. Two different approaches have been tested. The initial approach harness data from the social media platform Twitter, and the second rely on software for sifting and extracting content from various web domains. Both approaches could potentially generate valuable complementary data to the evaluation, through the use of discourse analysis (what partners, Sida or other Team Sweden members are communicating through their websites and other official channels). The extent to which it will be used as a complementary source for the data analysis would, however, need to be further tested during the data gathering phase.

Twitter and other forms of communication may be a good source for supplementing data that show **how key persons, Sida departments or Embassies are communicating about content** that is relevant for the evaluation. Likewise, it could be possible to analyse the extent to which key norms promoted by Sida is being picked up and incorporated by partners in their own tweets or websites.

Performed tests via Twitter's API show that many key individuals are active on the platform and communicate on topics of interest in relation to pushing universal norms along Swedish interests. A test run that included accounts from five Sida staff members in leadership and senior positions showed that there are some 3700 tweets (or retweets) on topics directly relevant to normative influencing related to the evaluation themes over the course of the last 6 years. Many of these tweets contained relevant content. This can, for instance, help the evaluation team to secure additional data through a deductive approach to assess how well communication from key persons and organisations align with key priorities (i.e., check if and how content align with Sida strategies). A generic example for how to deploy this approach is to first secure a set of relevant stakeholders. Second, assess all tweets over a certain period of time and separate out tweets containing language relevant to the

evaluation (i.e., if tweet contains a certain word, concepts or hashtag, and/or if it makes reference to certain entities of interest (including Sida)). It is also possible to extend the search by including stakeholders who are mentioned and/or have engaged with relevant tweets. This can bear resemblance of reaching out and gathering data within Sida's sphere of influence.

The team has also assessed the possibility to search various **web domains for content of importance** to the evaluation. Given that a set of organisations can be identified, the team can set up a web crawler that sift through the organisations' web domains and scrutinise the content. This particular technique also allows for larger paragraphs to be extracted, parsed and analysed. For key partner organisations besides Sida, it can for instance assess if Sida, or specific normative priorities of Sida, is mentioned in these contexts; or if Sida is mentioned in other contexts (i.e., search for mentions of Sida in general) which could help in establishing robust contribution pathways. This can also be extended to include other organisations besides Sida.

In short, both these approaches can help bring in **complementary data**, without prompting the relevant actors for responses and/or engagement, which can shed light on questions such as: are relevant actors are talking about the things Sida want them to talk about? Do they talk about or reference Sida in these contexts? Are they talking about Sida in other contexts? Are there any champions for content of specific relevance? etc.

3.3.8 Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

HRBA encompasses two of the five perspectives applied by Sida (the rights perspective and the perspective of people living in poverty) and also informs how Sida positions itself with regards to gender equality, conflict and environment perspectives. Human rights in HRBA are seen both as an end and as a means (how development processes should be developed), which also includes normative dialogue. This means that for a normative dialogue to be rights-based, it needs to be anchored in human rights frameworks, and be guided by transparent, accountable, inclusive, participatory and non-discriminatory principles and practices.

The team will explore how and if the **different forms of normative dialogue are guided by HRBA**, with particular focus on how HRBA looks at different rights analysing intersecting power relations and power structures. This includes consideration of the power that different stakeholders have in the dialogue process, including both Sida and its partners.

It also includes **critical reflection on the power that the evaluation team and its interlocutors have to use evidence and knowledge to influence the processes with which they engage**. Even though neutrality is an aim, evaluations are inevitably part of contested political processes. The evaluation team is committed to using its power to contribute to reinforcing the universality of the human rights norms encompassed by the evaluation, but these processes are unpredictable.

3.3.9 Gender Responsive Approach

To ensure that the evaluation is gender-responsive, the team will ensure that there is a gender-balanced representation of stakeholder groups invited to take part in the evaluation process, and that gender representation is viewed not only from a binary perspective but is based on **an intersectional understanding**. This should be possible given that we will seek synergies between the different themes to be studied in the cases, of which three specifically focus on gender-related rights (WEE, SRHR, LGBTQI), and with the fourth case on locally led climate adaptation and finance having strong links to gender approaches and WEE.

In addition, the evaluation team will ensure that the outcome harvesting, and other methodological approaches include explicit questions related to **gender equality issues**, outcomes and normative values, including discussions on how the normative dialogue promotes (or not) a gender transformative approach. The data analysis,

conclusions and recommendations will include explicit analysis related to gender equality outcomes stemming from normative dialogue as well as identify any related gaps.

3.3.10 Stakeholder engagement plan

The evaluation's approach to stakeholder engagement and learning is closely aligned with the proposed focus on outcome harvesting and contribution analysis. It will also seek to link important **stakeholder groups** with different aspects of the learning so that they can be more actively involved in the analysis and deliberations on the shaping of recommendations (see Table 3.1 below)

Table 3.1 Stakeholder groups and functions of importance for different areas of learning

Area for learning	Important stakeholder groups and functions
<i>Internal strategy processes (the 'what'):</i> Priority (also in relation to other priorities within Sida), planning and follow up of normative dialogue at different levels of operation related to change theory, development of strategic plans, strategy reporting, linking normative dialogue to an enabling environment for improved development results.	Planning coordinators (departmental), thematic policy leads, strategy development and planning at a corporate level (including senior management).
<i>Organisation and delivery (the 'who and when'):</i> Management and coordination of normative dialogue as a stand-alone activity or as a complement to funded or non-funded engagement initiatives, and how it complements other types of influencing, capacity support and operations. It reflects Sida's positioning on the topic/in the sector (a leader, knowledge resource, broker, important funder, etc.), and within Team Sweden, including role division and coordination within Team Sweden and other key actors.	Unit heads, programme managers, results-based management unit and operational support, multilateral focal points, heads of cooperation and relevant programme officers at Embassy level, members of Team Sweden, including any 'extended' Team Sweden members (Swedish authorities, framework CSOs, programme implementers etc.).
<i>Approaches and methods (the 'how'):</i> Choice of engagement channels, including the use of the so-called 360 model, tailored to the level of engagement and actors (including via intermediaries, partners, or directly at technical or policy level), communications means and tailoring of messaging, networking and relationship/trust-building activities.	Internal capacity development and support, methods development (corporate), partnership development and management, strategic communications support.

The team is taking a **two-pronged approach** to its application of outcome harvesting during the data collection process that will also serve as the basis for collective learning of the different stakeholder groups (see also section 1.3 on use and users).

The first involves engagement with the **reference group** in workshops of two to three hours each at key points during the data gathering and evaluation finalisation stages so that they can substantially feed into key decisions and methodological considerations as well as actively participate in the formulation of recommendations to ensure that they are actionable. We envisage holding two such workshops in the data collection, and analysis and finalisation stages:

- (i) once data collection has started and tools have been pilot tested with Sida personnel and in at least one country selected for in-depth study, in order to assess whether we are getting the type of information that will be useful to answer the evaluation questions, and/or if we need to fine-tune instruments or the process (*tentatively late March/early April*)

- (ii) once the evaluation team can present preliminary findings, involving the reference group members in workshopping the formulation of recommendations (*tentatively early/mid-June 2023*)

The second strand of participation is **part of the data gathering process** and involves holding a **series of outcome harvesting workshops with diverse stakeholder groups by function within Sida** and by theme in **in-depth case countries**. These will take place in person in Stockholm and in the in-depth case study countries. The workshops will take approximately two hours each. **Three focus group discussions with Sida personnel are foreseen** (followed up by one-on-one interviewing), along with thematic consultations with external stakeholders and partners in in-depth case countries:

- **Sida functions:** Three focus group discussions will be held in Stockholm (with the option of field-based staff dialling in as needed) on the topics of: (i) internal strategy processes within Sida, (ii) organisation, coordination and delivery of normative dialogue, and (iii) approaches and methods. (*Tentatively in late March 2023*)
- **Thematic operationalisation in the field:** Three or four additional focus group discussions are foreseen in each of the countries selected for in-depth study (Mozambique, Moldova, Kenya) with another potential focus group discussion in Bangladesh and/or with stakeholders in in East Africa (WEE) or Southern Africa (SRHR) conducted by a Kenya-based regional expert. (*Between early March and end April with possible piloting of tools in late February*)

For the focus group discussions within Sida in Stockholm, the plan is to group **relevant staff functions** within Sida and MFA/Team Sweden personnel to get their input on the key results that they have observed in different normative dialogue contexts such as in informal and formal dialogue, using diverse communications methods etc. There will also be a second part of each focus group that will seek to **match key outcomes with institutional mechanisms and practices** in order to identify **enabling of hindering institutional capabilities** with key outcomes.

The team will hold **similar focus groups at the country level** in the in-depth case study countries selected (and potentially in Bangladesh where we have an in-country regional expert). Additionally external partners and implementers/intermediaries will be consulted separately (e.g., CSOs and government partners).

All outcome harvest workshops/focused discussions will be **facilitated**, using a trained facilitator and/or core functions (including thematic expertise) in the evaluation team.

As a part of the learning process (and in case time allows) the final exercise in the outcome harvesting workshops is to have each group summarise their findings and analysis and to make recommendations for how Sweden can strengthen its normative dialogue approaches and results. The **summaries from each workshop will form the basis for shared learning during a preliminary findings validation presentation and discussion** (*tentatively early June*) and as part of a debriefing session at the country level.

The evaluation team will also hold **individual key informant interviews** with selected representatives from each stakeholder group (see 3.3.4) to obtain more detailed data about specific normative dialogue processes and programmes/projects that have used dialogue as a part of their implementation in the thematic case study areas. The team will hold these interviews both in the case study countries (in-depth and second tier) and for **specific institutional functions at Sida headquarters**.²¹

²¹ This started with a few one-on-one scoping interviews with reference group members during the inception phase.

Learning will thus take place **in multiple ways**:

- through the *collective outcome identification* and analysis process that are core to the outcome harvesting methodology,
- through lessons emerging from institutional, programme, project and policy specific *key informant interviews* that will deepen the analysis and be fed back in synthesized form to the steering and reference group,
- through *workshopping of key findings* to come up with actionable and useful recommendations (for the reference group and steering group which represent a diverse range of functions from within Sida).

3.4 Limitations

The evaluation period covers 2015-2022. While dialogue has always been an important element of Sida's development cooperation, it is only recognized as a specific tool to accelerate progress in relation to the objectives given by the government **in 2019** by including "normative dialogue" as an objective in its operational plan. This is a fairly new term, and one that is still poorly understood across the organisation, even if dialogue has always been used as a tool in Sida's work (though not consistently reported on). Data is likely to be scarcer and **less systematically captured and reported** in the early part of the evaluation period.

Conventional approaches to outcome harvesting depend on return visits to stakeholders to validate findings. The extent to which this will be possible may be limited given time constraints and the restrictive use of travel. The evaluation will therefore **adapt the use of the methodology** accordingly, taking advantage of the validation process described above.

Key informant interviews conducted to supplement the outcome harvesting workshops will mostly be held online and thus cannot go into the analysis process in the same in-depth way as the workshops, since realistically one-on-one interviews need to be limited to an hour in length. However, they will still follow the outcome harvesting process of asking the key informants what outcomes/results they have observed, why these outcomes are considered to be significant, and what they think are the key contributing factors.

The **diversity of the case studies** will provide a rich basis for learning, but also generate challenges in comparability. We will overcome this by firmly anchoring analysis against the same proposed ToC that emphasises enabling and hindering factors and pathways for change over the 'what' of what was produced or achieved. We will also apply the same analytical framework and indicators across all themes (set out in the Evaluation Matrix).

The analysis in the inception phase led to the realisation within the evaluation team and among some of the interlocutors interviewed that the framing of the evaluation risks **over-emphasising the influence of dialogue led by Sida (particularly headquarters)** and therefore could underplay the often modest role that a small country like Sweden can play given the broader geopolitical contexts and as a relatively small funder of international/multilateral organisations compared to other donors in certain contexts. While recognising this risk, the use of outcome mapping and contribution analysis should provide a basis for ensuring contextual balance in this regard. More specifically, the evaluation will address this in two ways. First, by bringing out the views of the partners and intermediaries regarding who they see as making different types of contributions to the normative dialogue, even where this indicates a relatively limited role for Sida. Second, the case studies will highlight the views of the embassies and others working more closely with implementation (and in closer dialogue with national partners). Field and partner perspectives will add nuance to the view from stakeholders in Stockholm where dialogue may focus more on international fora and relations with multilaterals.

Evidence already collected suggests that this may include examples of where **global positions regarding normative commitments may have a modest role in dialogues that are centred around national norms**. In fact, some in-country interviewees during the inception phase had difficulties assessing whether certain activities with partners could be considered part of normative dialogue, for example when CSO partners were given core support to strengthen their own normative work, or in relation to providing technical capacity building. On the other hand, national normative dialogue may be much more specific in relation to ongoing national reform efforts which may only be marginally linked to the global efforts to conduct dialogue for normative change. Applying the working definition of norms and normative dialogue (described in this inception report) along with the open-ended outcome harvesting methodology, the evaluation will seek to gather a wide range of outcomes at different levels and highlight when and where synergies between the global and national levels exist (in line with the 360 model), but also where such information exchange and coordination could be further strengthened.

4. Thematic analysis for the case studies

4.1 Scope and selection of thematic cases

As outlined in the ToRs, the scope of the evaluation is defined and limited mainly through **a selection of thematic focus areas and sub-areas**. For each of these, the different variables of the type of issue and how they relate to the five perspectives based on universal norms will be considered. Additionally, the variables of target groups, context and approaches and methods will be considered.

The chosen **focus areas** are: (i) gender equality, (ii) democracy and human rights, (iii) sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and (iv) environment and climate. For each focus area, sub-areas and specific examples were proposed in the ToRs, representing *“areas where Sida has been involved in normative dialogue in different ways using various methods and approaches”*. Geographical focus was selected with an ambition to cover all levels involved in the 360-model as well as ensuring a breadth of countries.

During the scoping phase each of these cases were looked into further to ensure **sufficient coverage of variables in different contexts** when looking across both the overall theme (global level) and in the proposed case countries. Around 5-6 scoping interviews were undertaken per thematic area, including key informants at both headquarters and in the proposed case countries²².

Additional interviews were undertaken in the area of environment and climate change given that the initially proposed area of pesticides management (broadened into chemicals management) generated a discussion about the lack of clarity about links to a wider and strong Sida-led normative agenda around pollution. Alternative cases explored through scoping interviews included linking climate change to nexus objectives related to disaster risk reduction and resilience, anticipatory action etc., but there were doubts as to whether there was a sufficiently clear normative dialogue agenda in this field. In consultation with the evaluation steering group and reference group, the area of **locally led climate adaptation and finance was selected based on a proposal from the thematic environment team**.

The scoping phase also clarified that each case and focus sub-area will be covered at **global, regional and country levels** to fully capture the 360 model. Additionally, the internalisation of messages within Sida across different levels and functions will be important to cover, as well as potentially another ‘**meso level**’ of

²² For WEE the scoping phase reached out to the Embassy in Mozambique but did not yet get any response or further background documentation.

interactions with the Swedish resource base (Swedish framework NGOs, civil society, academia, Sida help desks, think tanks, the media and other actors that shape public opinion and support for development aid and cooperation in Sweden). In some cases, the meso level includes global think tanks and regional civil society actors as well. Such interactions will not change Sida's norms but may contribute to the prioritisation of how issues framed and communicated that may be of importance.

Another important clarification to the ToRs was that rather than having one or two full country-cases per theme, the evaluation team has proposed that they conduct **one in-depth country example** (including field work and full validation with a range of beneficiaries) and a **wider range of 'second tier' country examples** (more light-touch and conducted through remote interviewing and data gathering) per case. This would allow for coverage of normative dialogue on the same topic or theme in a wider range of contexts (using different approaches and types of partners) which may allow for a better evidence-base for seeing trends and extracting lessons from across the different thematic areas. It would also allow for inclusion of examples in more challenging contexts, where political space for normative dialogue may be limited, without developing a full country case. Given the thematic (rather than country or programme-specific) criteria for selection, this would give more flexibility in finding a range of different country examples on the same agenda.

For countries selected for **in-depth study** (including field work with one regional expert for each country, supported by at least one international team member from the core team), it was also decided to select countries where at least **one or more themes** could be covered. The following countries are proposed for in-depth field work:

- **Mozambique:** SRHR including safe and legal abortion, Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)
- **Kenya:** Environment & climate
- **Moldova:** LGBTQI, WEE (to a lesser extent and as/if applicable)

Several **second-tier** examples could also be generated in **East Africa** (supported by a Kenya-based regional expert):

- **Uganda:** SRHR
- **Tanzania, Somalia:** WEE

Additional second-tier examples would be generated from:

- **Liberia:** SRHR including access to safe and legal abortion
- **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus:** LGBTQI
- **Bangladesh:** Environment & climate, WEE
- **Guatemala:** WEE (a more limited project example given the difficult operating context for normative dialogue)

An overview by theme is provided in the below table (countries selected for in-depth study with country visits in bold).

Table 4.1 Case countries and examples by theme and sub-area

Theme	In-depth (field visit)	Second tier (remotely)	Regional and global
Gender equality: Women's economic empowerment (WEE)	Mozambique (with synergies to SRHR)	Bangladesh, Tanzania, Somalia, Guatemala (project on indigenous women that includes WEE component)	IFIs (World Bank case), WE Effect, OECD-DAC, EBRD Women in Business (including a country example in Moldova)

Theme	In-depth (field visit)	Second tier (remotely)	Regional and global
SRHR: <i>Regional Africa (UHC, CSE, Safe and legal abortion)</i>	Mozambique (with synergies to WEE)	Liberia (safe and legal abortion), Uganda (SRHR in a difficult context)	Ipas, RFSU, Regional bodies, UN organizations, AmplifyChange, Universal Health Care (UHC) (done remotely or with visits to the Sida Regional Team in Pretoria)
Democracy & Human rights: <i>LGBTQI</i>	Moldova (LGBTQI network housed there)	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus (members of the Eastern Coalition for equality, led by RFSL)	ILGA, RFSL, RFSU, OHCHR, GEF
Environment & climate: <i>Locally led adaptation and finance</i>	Kenya (FLLoCA and PACJA, with synergies also to WEE and SRHR)	Bangladesh (synergies with WEE) as well as one or two country examples from the LoCAL programme countries (e.g., Mozambique)	'Climate change community' (architecture), other donors, OECD/DAC, Think tanks (IIED, WRI), UN programmes incl. LoCAL (led by UNCDF), PACJA (included in Kenya data collection)

A more detailed description of each of the respective cases is included in the sections below.

4.2 Gender equality and women's economic empowerment

4.2.1 Case study focus: Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

The **objective** of the WEE case study is to promote learning about Sida's normative dialogue work related to WEE. This will involve identifying key factors behind successful normative dialogue in this area as well as to help Sida increase the understanding of what works, what does not work and why, as well as identifying key bottlenecks and ways to improve.

In terms of **the 'what' of normative dialogue**, the case study will look at how prioritization, planning and follow-up of normative dialogue in the area of WEE has led to, and been adopted, at different levels of operations and how it has contributed to generating gender transformative results. Compared to more instrumental approaches common in the area, Sida has been promoting a holistic and transformative framing where support for WEE is described as "*processes which increase women's real power over economic decisions that influence their lives and priorities in society and to gain equal access to and control over critical economic resources and opportunities, and the elimination of structural gender inequalities in the labour market, including a better sharing of unpaid care work*".²³

In terms of contributing to transformative change, Sida defines this as, "changes in discriminatory social norms, power structures and discriminatory legislation, policies, systems, processes, etc. and to ways of working that exclude and marginalize."²⁴

Therefore, the case study will be looking for **examples of normative dialogue** related to, for example, the:

- Reduction or elimination of legal discrimination that limit women's access to diverse economic rights

²³ Based on Sida definition of WEE from 2009. Interview with Sida personnel, Sept. 2022.

²⁴ Gisela Strand (Sida Gender Policy Advisor – Africa Dept.) Women's Economic Empowerment Ppt presentation, 09 Sept 2022.

- Reduction of gender-based access constraints to productive resources and finance
- Adoption & implementation of inclusive economic processes and programming
- Reduction or elimination GBV in the workplace
- Increases in women's agency within an economic development context both within the formal and informal labour markets and at the household level
- The involvement of men in the work to change social norms and women's status with regard to WEE.

However, in line with the chosen methodology of Outcome Harvesting, other examples will of course also be considered. This should allow the evaluation team to collect data which will document normative dialogue within the WEE area and to analyse where Sida and Team Sweden have used comparable approaches, methods and processes in the other thematic case study areas. For example, all four areas will be examining formal dialogue at the government level as well as the role of Swedish-supported CSOs in the promotion of normative dialogue.

4.2.2 Target groups

Sida has been seeking to influence transformative change related to WEE at diverse levels and with diverse actors. These range from the multilateral to community levels and include multilateral organisations, governments, civil society organisations and the private sector. At the multilateral level this includes international financial institutions such as the World Bank, other donors, the EU, OECD/DAC, and international CSOs. At a more meso level, normative dialogue related to WEE also takes place with UN agencies and programmes, regional CSOs, as well as within Sida's regional approaches and programming (e.g., in East Africa and Central America) as well as with larger scale private sector firms and business organisations at the regional level. At the national level, normative dialogue also engages governments, CSOs, the private sector and business organisations as well as national level representatives of multilateral organisations and other donors.

The regional normative dialogue approaches can take multiple forms, such as dialogue with Sida's development partners to influence the application of transformative WEE approaches with their own partners at the country level and/or support for partner-driven regional dialogue (e.g., the recent regional conference on the Care Economy organised by WE Effect regional partners in Honduras).

To effect change with regard to WEE at these diverse levels in the short, medium and long term Sida has been working with these different actors by engaging in dialogue to influence how each approaches different types of WEE policy and programming. Each context, type of institution and type of partner or counterpart calls for a different dialogue approach and the evaluation team will explore each to the specificity possible with the data available.

4.2.3 Context

Sida has been working actively to influence WEE policy and programmes in multiple contexts for several decades. Sida conducted a global **thematic overview** of WEE in 2009 when it addressed this thematic area from the perspective of a focus on Inclusive Growth as well as added WEE as a sub-result area in its core results strategies. In 2014, Sida conducted a limited portfolio analysis and found that WEE comprised just 2% of its programming portfolio. From 2016 to 2020, Sida then made a concerted effort to introduce WEE in their policy and normative dialogue at the global level with multilateral level and donor partners.²⁵

This dialogue has focused its work with the World Bank, the OECD-DAC WEE working group and the Donor Committee on Economic Development. In 2021, Sida adopted the Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2023. This

²⁵ Strand, op. cit.

included a strategic shift to focus on WEE, particularly from the perspective of gender equality in sustainable economic development and financing. The latter has included work on Gender Lens Investment.²⁶ There has thus been a strong focus on global and regional dialogue processes.

At the **country level** the WEE case study will look at how Sida has been using normative dialogue within diverse contexts such as countries that are heavily affected by conflict, disaster prone, are either favourable/less favourable for small entrepreneurs from the perspective of societal gender norms and/or enabling (or not), have legislation in place etc. For instance, in contexts with refugee camps or large migration populations, this may create a particular nexus between disrupted and stable local market development for informal traders or small entrepreneurs, with both market failures and new opportunities as a consequence. It will also look at the extent to which Sida's dialogue processes are inclusive of specific demographic groups such as indigenous women, informal traders, food processing and textile processing workers or women with disabilities. It will also examine specific issues within WEE such as dialogue related to the care economy and compliance with international labour standards and norms.

The factors the case study is seeking to identify include what **approaches to normative dialogue** Sida uses successfully, and how these can be improved or tailored when it comes to organisation and implementation of normative dialogue in operating environments where **democratic space is shrinking**, and women's rights are either being undermined or ignored. Scoping interviews illustrated that this has been affecting the receptivity to and effectiveness of dialogue related to WEE. This is particularly with regard to the **level of alignment of actors** and building of alliances across institutions and actor groups.

The evaluation process will also look at how **Sida's clear positioning on WEE** has (or has not) contributed to related change and to what degree these changes are transformative. It will also examine how Sida has adapted its normative dialogue approaches to current changes in the global, regional and national contexts such as the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways this global event has worsened the economic situation for many groups of women. The evaluation will also look at how Sida applied its Sweden's **former feminist foreign policy** to normative dialogue to support WEE as well as look for examples where dialogue in more conservative societal contexts where the use of the language associated with a 'women and girls approach' might be an easier "sell" than that of a feminist empowerment approach or a more comprehensive framing of gender issues related to WEE. The aim is to assess how these approaches can contribute to Sweden's strong commitment to the promotion of human rights.

4.2.4 Approaches and methods

As indicated above, Sida uses a **range of approaches, methods and entry-points** for normative dialogue on gender equality and WEE. The evaluation will explore the choice of engagement channels and how they are tailored to different actors in different contexts, along with institutional capabilities within Sida to effectively coordinate and learn from such engagements.

This includes leveraging change in combination with other forms of influencing, use of strategic high-level dialogue with multilateral organisations and NGOS, and the use of an ambassadors' network in Mozambique for direct engagement in policy dialogues, etc. In contexts operating in a more restrictive democratic space, such as Guatemala, support is instead channelled via CSOs as intermediaries. The case study will analyse how the embassies have engaged to ensure that Sida-financed grants are integrated with normative dialogue to ensure that national actors, including the private sector, CSOs and national governments, buy into and apply the

²⁶ Ibid.

principles in their own policy frameworks on WEE. This will help illustrate how Sida and Team Sweden can use multiple entry-points to connect individual programme initiatives to sectoral or institutional shifts at higher levels of policy or sector reform.

4.2.5 Examples to be analysed

The case study will look at the work Sida has been doing at the **global level** in its pilot project with the World Bank as well as the regional initiative related to the care economy in Latin America organised by WE Effect regional partners. Other dialogue at an international level may include efforts to engage with the European Union and other multilateral institutions. This can include how normative dialogue is used to influence the design and in the implementation of larger scale **multi-country programmes** such as the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment which involves several multilateral partners (IFAD, WFP, FAO and UN Women) which includes both normative and operational work to provide a comprehensive suite of services related to WEE.

At a **regional level**, taking advantage of the fact that Moldova has been identified as an in-depth country for studying normative dialogue on LGBTQI issues, Sida's long-standing support to Women in Business via the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) can be included as a more light-touch example of how normative dialogue and programming with regional IFIs transpire into the country context. The EBRD Women in Business programme covers all Eastern Partnership countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and would therefore allow the evaluation to cover both LGBTQI issues and the use of normative dialogue on WEE in the region, with a focus on normative dialogue with the EBRD.²⁷

At the **national level** the plan is to examine one national programme more in-depth (Mozambique)²⁸ with a more limited number of face-to-face interviews also in Bangladesh and possibly in Moldova to ensure that lessons are captured from a range of different approaches and actors. This would help track the effectiveness, e.g., of the Women in Business programme in Mozambique and the Women's Economic Empowerment through Strengthening Economic Systems programme in Bangladesh. The case study will supplement these with specific country examples reflecting different types of normative dialogue approaches in selected countries such as Tanzania where a Sida-funded partnership alliance has been working to get a highly diverse group of institutions to adopt stronger WEE approaches. Somalia could also provide an example of working with WEE in a conflict setting. For Guatemala, the evaluation team proposes looking at the Indigenous Women's and Youth Empowerment project as an example of working in a more restricted democratic and human rights setting.

4.3 Democracy and human rights

4.3.1 Case study focus: LGBTQI+

The focus on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex persons (LGBTQI+) is aligned with Sweden's commitment to human rights, gender equality and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). In this case study focus is on Sweden's promoting LGBTQI+ persons' democratic and human rights through normative dialogue, mainly, but not only, through support to LGBTQI organisations. This will involve identifying key factors behind successful normative dialogue in this area as well as to help Sida increase the understanding of what works, what does not work and why, as well as identifying key bottlenecks and ways to improve. Specifically, the case study will examine how Sida has been using normative dialogue to contribute to movement building of

²⁷ <https://openaid.se/en/activities/SE-0-SE-6-5503020301-REU-32130>

²⁸ During the scoping phase the evaluation team reached out to but did not receive any response or documentation on WEE from Mozambique. This will have to be further pursued and assessed as part of the data collection phase.

LGBTQI organisations enabling them to engage in normative dialogue at high-level (HL) meetings and spaces, and in promoting particularly trans and intersex persons' human rights.

Three case studies were proposed in the ToRs and explored during the inception phase: one regional programme and two global interventions. All three are based on Sida working through partnership in enhancing LGBTQI+ rights, and through these actors (ILGA World, RFSL global programme Mobilising for Change: Leaving No One Behind²⁹, and RFSL and Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality) supporting normative dialogue. The normative dialogue is two-fold: the dialogue on the need for increased support/funding for trans and intersex persons/groups/organisations is both movement internal and external, and the dialogue on LGBTQI+ rights is also held at high level policy spaces.

Additionally, the thematic focus will further explore instances where Sida engages directly in dialogue at the global level, together with the MFA, e.g., in the intergovernmental body the Equal Rights Coalition comprising 42 Member States, but where Sweden has been very active.

4.3.2 Target groups

The target groups for the normative dialogue are duty-bearers present at UN (like UN Human Rights Council, CEDAW, SDG summits, ICPD, etc.), EU and other high-level spaces, including like-minded member states. One of the programmes included in the case study also targets national government in the Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality, PACE and OSCE Human Dimension implementation meetings.

4.3.3 Context

LGBTQI rights are contested in many parts of the world, and 67 UN Member States criminalise consensual same-sex conduct, with two additional UN Member States having so called de facto criminalisation as part of their law.

There is a strong and vibrant LGBTQI movement globally. Locally the movement is both categorised by strong umbrella organisations, and smaller groups and loose communities. NGO legislation in many countries restrict LGBTQI persons to formally organise and register their organisations. Sida supports movement building and institutional development both through global and bilateral funding. Programmes are also funded under the SRHR regional strategy in Africa. The Swedish MFA and Sida engage in regional and global spaces promoting and defending LGBTQI rights, many time in close collaboration with the RFSL and ILGA, two strategic partnerships.

The 2021 RFSL annual report (for the years of the Covid-19 pandemic) states that:

"Two years of digital advocacy have certainly led to some increases in opportunities to make connections, form new partnerships, and increase capacities on using digital platforms and technologies to hold events, reach audiences, and increase accessibility for participation in regard to language and ability. However, it has also shown how easily civil society voices can be shut out of spaces, how weary movements can become when sanctioned to digital spaces only and is leading to a fatigue among activists."

²⁹ Three other RFSL programmes: *Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality* 2018-2021 are funded by Sida and includes capacity and coalition building on a regional Eastern Partnership level, as well as sub granting to organizations in seven countries. *Resilient Movements, Stronger Communities* in Ukraine 2019-2022 funded by Sida through the Embassy in Kyiv. The program includes funding and capacity strengthening activities to the LGBTQI movement with a focus on underrepresented groups (2 staff). *Stronger Regional Movements* 2021-2022 focuses on supporting regional organizing in Southeast Asia and Southern and East Africa. The program, funded by Forum Civ, supports regional LGBTQI+ initiatives

4.3.4 Approaches and methods

Based on the initial desk review on the selected cases and scoping interviews with Sida, the main approaches and methods applied by Sida and the strategic partners ILGA and RFSL can be summarised as:

- Influencing other donors' funding to LGBTQI issues and advancing LGBTQI rights,
- Core and programme support to ILGA World and RFSL,
- Partners conduct lobby and advocacy at HL meetings, and other global spaces, with strong focus on inclusion of SOGIESC specific language in international human rights framework, e.g., Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), High Level Political Forum (HLPF), SDG summit, as well as participation and focus on human rights instruments as the Independent Expert on the Prevention of Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Human Rights Council sessions,
- Funding of global campaigns (through core or programme support), e.g., 2019 global advocacy campaign to persuade governments to protect LGBTQI rights Human Rights Council to #RenewIESOGI – which got a positive response, or bringing activist to country Universal Periodic Reviews,
- Funding (through core or programme support) of publications of reports on the status of LGBTQI persons and their rights around the world, including ILGA's annual reports on State-Sponsored Homophobia, *World Map on Sexual Orientation laws*, *Trans Legal Mapping Report*, evidence-based studies, toolkits for strategic litigation with UN Treaty Bodies, factsheets and other resources supporting advocacy and lobby efforts at HL meetings, and in bilateral normative dialogue.
- Funding of forums and conferences (through core or programme support), e.g., the International Intersex Virtual Forum, ILGA regional conferences for Oceania and Europe & Central Asia.
- Joint strategizing within The Equal Rights Coalition (ERC, the intergovernmental body of 40 States dedicated to the protection of the rights of LGBTI people).
- Inviting RFSL to the Official Swedish Delegation to the High-Level Political Forum
- Dialogue between partner programme and Sweden's Ambassador to Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries on the rights of LGBT/QI people in the EU Commission's Eastern Partnership Policy Beyond 2020.

4.3.5 Examples to be analysed

1. Core support to ILGA World and their advocacy interventions at UN and other HL meetings.
2. Programme support to RFSL global programme Mobilising for Change: Leaving No One Behind. Global advocacy and enabling participation of LGBTQI activists from the global South and East Europe at UN processes and HL meetings.
3. Programme support to RFSL and Eastern European Coalition for LGBT+ Equality, regional programme. The second objective of the programme is the most relevant for the case study, namely, Improvement of the regional legal framework for LGBT + rights Bridging Outcome 2.1: States take measures to protect the rights of LGBT+ persons. Spaces mentioned in the 2020 annual report: UN Human Rights Council, PACE and OSCE Human Dimension implementation meetings.

4.4 Sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

4.4.1 Case study focus

The TORs indicate two types of cases for looking into different uses of normative dialogue around SRHR: (i) around the implementation of the regional SRHR strategy in Africa and (ii) in relation to normative dialogue around safe and legal abortion both globally and with a focus on country examples in Liberia and Mozambique.

The focus on SRHR is aligned with Sweden's commitment to gender equality and priority focus on SRHR, as well as to Sweden's (current and previous) regional SRHR strategy in Africa³⁰.

Three case studies were proposed in the ToRs and explored during the inception phase: two country-specific cases (Mozambique and Liberia) and one regional (example of normative dialogue under the regional SRHR strategy in Africa). As suggested in the TORs, one aspect of the case would look at normative dialogue around access to safe and legal abortion while the other aspect would look more broadly into normative dialogue for SRHR. The regional SRHR suggested focus on comprehensive universal health coverage (UHC), while the Swedish embassy in Maputo suggested child marriage/prevention of teen pregnancies.

Normative dialogue in global policy spaces will also be included in the overall case on SRHR. That could involve light touch case studies on core support to global SRHR organisations, Swedish funding to SRHR funds, like AmplifyChange Swedish positions in donor coordination in CSW, ICPD and UPR processes, as well as Team Sweden's direct interventions in these high-level policy spaces. At an overall level, it will also be interesting to connect efforts to develop comprehensive guidance and training materials for Sida/MFA and partners to the uptake of key messages in different fora.

4.4.2 Target groups

Sida and Team Sweden engage in normative dialogue on 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 national level and regional bodies, national and international civil society actors, and society at large. Sida's and Team Sweden's direct engagement is combined with different policy driven intermediaries partnering with Sida. The selected country cases also target broad groups for the SRHR normative dialogue, but specifically focus on legislators (Liberia) and on government and key line ministries (Mozambique).

Intermediaries are multilaterals (UNFPA, WHO), UN and regional human rights commissions, civil society, and parliamentary groups (regional and national). Geographical focus for the case study is Africa.

For the regional SRHR case study focussing on universal health care (UHC), stakeholders would include Sida/MFA, likeminded donors, MoH, governments engaged in the process leading to the UHC resolution, and a broad list of stakeholders identified by Sida as key actors:

- *Women, girls and adolescents*
- *Governments, parliamentarians, and policymakers at all levels*
- *Civil society and non-governmental organizations*
- *Academic, research and teaching institutions*
- *Health care workers, managers and professional associations*
- *The private sector*
- *Bilateral development partners and philanthropic institutions*
- *UN agencies and other multilateral organisations*
- *Community health workers,*
- *Communities, themselves*

Additionally, EU likeminded members, African Union and RECs would be included, primarily for the regional normative dialogue, but also relevant for the country case studies.

³⁰ <https://www.government.se/country-and-regional-strategies/2022/06/strategy-for-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-srhr-in-africa-2022026/>

4.4.3 Context

SRHR in general, and free and legal abortion, comprehensive sexual education (CSE) and LGBTQI+ rights in particular, are highly contested in most of the contexts where Sida operates through different aid modalities and instruments. Sweden is one of the key donors to multilaterals promoting SRHR and to global SRHR civil society organisations (CSO). Sida is recognized as a strategic partner in a challenging environment where agreed common global and regional positions and new demands on SRHR are being contested by a well-organized and well-resourced opposition at global, regional and country levels. Sweden is known as a strong voice for SRHR in spaces like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), ICPD, and in universal periodic reviews (UPR).

4.4.4 Approaches and methods

Influencing other donors' funding to SRHR is a key role for Sida to play, where Sida/Sweden can have an added value through its own role and influence others to fund 'the right things' and align with Swedish priorities. This includes global funding mechanisms, where the MFA plays a leading role. These efforts need to also be monitored at country level where there is a chance to have a greater impact.

The fact that Sida has a regional SRHR team in Africa provides unique opportunities for a brokering role both at country and regional level. The team brings thematic expertise to normative dialogue carried out at country level by embassy and Sida staff, and is able to broker relations between different partners, e.g., between research partners and Ministries of Health (MoHs).

"Key issues for the planning of the normative dialogue are what do we want to achieve, who has the capacity to contribute to this, and what will be the key messages in the dialogue. Many times, this involves several actors in informal spaces between the governments, the UN and the civil society."
(Feedback from scoping interviews)

Sweden is expected to/and can play an active role in the dialogue with big global partners, since Sweden is one of the few donors that provide core support, and many times the Swedish core support is also the largest core support. But in general, there are very few resources that can engage in the normative dialogue, the big exception is the SRHR regional team that currently has 12 staff members.

In cases of informal support to governmental and intra-governmental agencies it is important to build trustful and close relations, to hold an expertise that is requested and seen as valuable. In other cases, the team or staff at Sweden's embassies sits on technical working groups together with line ministries. Then the technical advice happens in the open. However, the SRHR team try to avoid being part of such groups since there is always a risk that the work can be viewed as donor driven. When the team is invited, they always ask if they are really needed at the table and if not, some other actor rather should be there. To know when not take part in the dialogue is also strategic communication.

The SRHR team use alliance building a lot for question where Sida wants to position itself and gain progress, both in external processes, and in system approaches. One example of the latter is the work on the UHC declaration 2019³¹, that was a very planned and structures process of normative dialogue. Another example is the EU SRHR in Sub-Saharan Africa Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programme tracker.

³¹ <https://www.uhc2030.org/news-and-stories/news/political-declaration-for-the-un-high-level-meeting-meeting-on-uhc-555296/>
[Universal Health Coverage | General Assembly of the United ...](https://www.un.org/pga/75/event)
<https://www.un.org/pga/75/event>

4.4.5 Examples to be analysed

4.4.5.1 Global and regional levels

- **Team Sweden's (and the role of Regional SRHR Team) in promoting SRHR integration in Universal Health Coverage resolution:**

Sida's work on pushing for SRHR in UHC was initiated by the SRHR regional team. Sweden participating and contributing to the steps towards the resolution at various HL meetings and different dialogue spaces, resulting in the development and roll-out of a road map among like-minded member states. The normative dialogue contributed to SRHR being integrated into the UHC resolution, as well as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: An Essential Element of Universal Health Coverage, Background document for the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 – Accelerating the promise ICPD 25 UNFPA.³²

- **Team Sweden's efforts behind the development of the EU Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Sub-Saharan Africa Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programming tracker:**

A High-Level Development Cooperation Dialogue took place between Sweden (the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida), the European Commission's Directorate-General for 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, with a new strategy expected from 2020. This iterative process offered a unique operational window to explore and strengthen collaboration with the EU at 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: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Sweden and the European Commission "in order to work together and achieve greater, improved and more tangible and focused results, while enabling a joint policy dialogue critical to the advancement of SRHR in the region. The TEI working group has engaged with the African Union and RECs4 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."

4.4.5.2 National levels

- **Sweden's support to abortion rights in Liberia:**

The case study on abortion rights in Liberia involves a programme support to UNFPA, and partner dialogue led by Head of Cooperation/Programme Staff, backed by MFA dialogue in UN spaces (CSW, UPR). The focus on abortion is aligned with the above-mentioned strategies and with the bilateral development cooperation with Liberia 2016-202033. The country strategy expects, among other issues, to contribute to Increased respect for and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The normative dialogue is linked to an ongoing legal reform process where the restricted law on abortion currently falls under the penal legislation. The

³² <https://ddei5-0.ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2fwww.un-fpa.org%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2fpub%2dpdf%2fUF%5fSupplementAndUniversalAccess%5f30%2donline.pdf&umid=2773203A-ED1F-3705-8D0E-2CF0A8E9A7F4&auth=aa2a6666dad3109e072cd23e72dcb4db4081a53-b78d17de52828916cf34a50b3ce268dda53ee44b>

³³ Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia 2016–2020. Government Offices of Sweden

Embassy/Sida supports UNFPA Liberia country programme 2020-2024, with 43MSEK, which includes work on abortion rights.

The case study will focus on how the partnership with UNFPA is seeking to influence the legislators to pass the health bill and to decriminalize abortion and expand the abortion rights. The parliamentary discussion on a domestic law reform is aligned with global and regional human rights instruments, including the Protocol on the rights of Women in Africa, the so-called Maputo Protocol, and would potentially allow analysis of possible synergies between the support in Liberia and normative dialogue at regional and global level.

Sweden has also supported a technical partner Dkt³⁴ on social marketing of emergency contraceptives. The case study will look into how the dialogue with the Ministry of Health lead to clarified policy gaps, increased access to the emergency pills and awareness among health staff of what the current law on abortion actually includes

The case could also allow review of possible synergies with normative dialogue related to other SRHR supports in Liberia, around UHC, female genital mutilation (FGM), as well as within the African region.

- **Mozambique (early and forced child marriage). Sweden's support to SRHR in Mozambique: Informal ambassador group, round table discussions and similar. Back by programme and project support to partners working on gender equality, women's rights and SRHR:**

The original proposal for this case study was to focus on abortion. However, the consultation with the embassy/Sida recommended a different focus, also aligned with Sida's focus on gender equality and SRHR, namely early and forced child marriage (EFCM) and unwanted teenage pregnancies. It is still possible to follow up abortion. Through the bilateral strategy, Sida supports Ipas with a country programme focusing on the access to safe and legal abortion, where Ipas collaborates closely both with the MoH and civil society. There is also a large joint UN programme focusing on adolescent's access to SRHR, Rapariga Biz, (the Joint Programme Action for Girls and Young Women), that receives Sida funding.

The issues raised during the scoping interview are aligned with the mentioned strategies and with the bilateral development cooperation with Mozambique 2022-2023.³⁶ The current country strategy expects, among other issues, to contribute to greater gender equality, including access to and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights. The previous strategy, 2015-2020³⁷, also had an expected result related SRHR, namely, to improved opportunities for girls and young women to take independent decisions regarding their sexuality and reproduction.

The normative dialogue was linked to ongoing legal reform processes related to the new legislation on banning early and forced child marriage, passed in 2019, and to prevent teenage pregnancies. The focus on normative dialogue on EFCM provides an example of an approach where the Swedish ambassador fronts the process, while the more technical level is carried out by Sida staff, including head of cooperation and programme officer, including meeting with the other heads of cooperation, and technical staff at the ministries.

The domestic law reform is aligned with global and regional human rights instruments, including the Protocol on the rights of Women in Africa, the so-called Maputo Protocol, the SADC SRHR protocol The African Union campaign to eradicate forced and early child marriage.

³⁴ <https://dktwomancare.org/contraception/emergency-pills>

³⁵ Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia 2016–2020. Government Offices of Sweden.

³⁶ Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mozambique 2022–2026, Regeringskansliet Utrikesdepartementet.

³⁷ Results strategy for Sweden's international development cooperation with Mozambique 2015-2020, Government Offices of Sweden.

4.4.5.3 Possible synergies with normative dialogue related to other SRHR support:

The emphasis of normative dialogue efforts some years ago was on the Access to Information Law. Partner CSOs led these initiatives, but Sida also hosted events and provided spaces for dialogue, including inviting stakeholders to round tables and dinners when visitors came from Sweden.

Another case is the challenges LGBTQI organisations have faced in their application for NGO-registration. The methods deployed by the embassy to raise awareness on the situation include arranging dinners and round tables, and other events, to push for an attitude change among members of parliament.

4.5 Environment and climate

4.5.1 Case study focus: Locally led adaptation to climate change

The case will look at the iterative normative dialogue process that has emerged and evolved over time in promoting locally led adaptation to climate change and finance. This includes ensuring that climate finance reaches local governments and other local actors to **enable them to make their own decisions and investments** based on their knowledge and priorities regarding climate change. This case study provides a striking example of long-standing Swedish promoted norms related to designing development cooperation approaches that reflect the **perspectives of poor and oppressed people**. Through locally led adaptation, these perspectives are brought together with rights-based commitments to find ways to empower local actors to act on the climate threats they are facing.

4.5.2 Target groups

The target groups that are involved in this case study reflect the iterative nature of this evolving normative agenda. The ultimate 'target' of the dialogue includes both the **international climate change community**, which is being encouraged to ensure that climate finance is redesigned to be devolved to affected communities, and also **national governments** that are being encouraged to design their adaptation strategies to ensure that local governments and other local actors receive resources and support to take action. This has also involved a rebalancing of international and national climate change priorities to provide an increased proportion of funding to adaptation (rather than mitigation). Sida works with global think tanks (most notably the World Resources Institute -WRI, and the International Institute for Environment and Development -IIED) and programming actors at national levels in e.g., Kenya and Bangladesh, and global programmes, e.g., the UN Capital Development Fund -UNCDF-led LoCAL programme, together with a range of discussion fora bringing together those who share these commitments to undertake and facilitate dialogue on how to test and scale-up these efforts. Efforts are also underway to link these discussions around subsidiarity in climate finance and interventions with related normative dialogue regarding **devolution more generally as a way to ensure development effectiveness** and to respect the perspectives of poor and marginalised communities.

4.5.3 Context

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 factors such as distrust and uncertainty about the capacities of local governments and communities, and a range of path dependencies inherent in the climate finance architecture. Sometimes this relates to a disconnect between efforts to devolve climate finance in relation to broader ongoing national decentralisation procedures and processes of public financial management. As such, this dialogue agenda emphasises the interface between climate change and development effectiveness norms.

Efforts to overcome these obstacles have featured piloting of new granting mechanisms, investments in capacity of local actors to manage new resource flows, and general awareness raising regarding the value of the

principles that are intended to guide locally led adaptation and finance. The local level experience provides important and concrete evidence that these processes are both viable and valuable.

The **eight normative principles**, developed primarily by WRI, and promoted by IIED and others with Sida support, which are the basis for these efforts – and which are **well aligned with Sida's overall normative commitments to development effectiveness** – are:

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.
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.
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.

4.5.4 Approaches and methods

This case will be pursued by tracing the approaches and methods that Sida has used in contributing to a dialogue among key partners in developing the norms that have emerged over the past decade. This includes how Sida (and Team Sweden) have started with normative dialogue with these partners around Swedish priorities related to poverty, climate adaptation and local governance. In some respects, this dates back to the work of the Swedish initiated **Commission on Climate Change and Development** and its report on the Human Dimensions of Climate Change: The Importance of Local and Institutional Issues, from 2009. The Commission's work was in itself a clear example of Swedish public diplomacy on these issues. The evaluation will analyse how dialogue and programming at different levels, inspired partly by this early initiative, has led to the current eight

principles, and how these may have contributed to outcomes that reflect shared normative commitments. Sida has been perhaps the main donor supporting this process.

This involves following inter-linked dialogue processes at several levels. WRI and IIED have come to act as the main custodians of these principles at global level, other actors such as the PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance - PACJA have been encouraged to make links between local/national civil society and regional actors (e.g., the African Union -AU and the Regional Economic Communities -RECs). UNCDF, through the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility -LoCAL and other national programmes inspired by LoCAL, have provided experience, evidence and capacity development at national and sub-national levels. The process of developing this normative dialogue agenda has also involved increasing awareness and understanding of these principles across Team Sweden and adapting these to reflect national discourses. Scoping interviews suggest that the practical experience of these programmes is often a more important touchstone for national dialogue than the eight global principles. The **interplay of global normative dialogue based on 'principles' and national normative dialogue based on 'practice'** will be analysed to better understand the role of the 360 model.

The case study will analyse how the embassies have engaged to ensure that the provision of Sida-financed grants 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 –and that these programmes are thus not seen as a **bypass of their national climate funding mechanisms**. This will involve exploring how normative dialogue related to locally led adaptation and finance has been integrated into the overall development effectiveness dialogue, particularly as related to devolution.

This will involve looking at how Sida and its partners work with normative 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 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 evaluation will look at the effectiveness of the mix of approaches applied. It is recognised that Sida's direct engagement with local governments is inevitably limited and therefore the role of partners with stronger field-level engagements will be important to understand.

Within this range of partnerships, a broad variety of communications methods have been employed, including leveraging conferences and large events to bring actors together to achieve consensus, and also narrower bilateral discussions where the results of pilot efforts provide facts and experience regarding what works with regard to locally led climate finance.

It will be particularly important to explore if and how the dialogue processes related to **devolving financial resources to local governments has led to greater engagement with communities**. It is expected that the role of civil society will be important in this regard and links to civil society will be investigated via global and regional dialogue partners.

4.5.5 Examples to be analysed

The case study will primarily involve looking at how normative dialogue is reflected in two national programmes, one in Bangladesh and one in Kenya, one global programming initiative, LoCAL, one think tank collaboration, IIED, and one support to a regional CSO network PACJA. Together, these initiatives will constitute opportunities to observe how the 360 model has been operationalised in relation to normative dialogue.

The **Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC)** is a programme that is supporting locally led adaptation and finance in selected areas in Bangladesh. The experience has highlighted both the importance of these objectives, but also the challenges that exist in dialogue about the need to learn from and scale-up

programmes to national level. Replication and building widespread trust in the new financing models have been difficult in a context where projectisation stands in the way of development effectiveness. The analysis will include seeking to understand if and how normative dialogue has been effective in overcoming these challenges.

Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) is a 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. As such, Sida's role has been more focused on bringing out how locally led finance can be anchored in existing government initiatives. This may also involve normative dialogue with other donors regarding the role of this programme amid an increasingly 'crowded' space for local climate action. FLLoCA is managed by the World Bank and funded through a trust fund, so it will also provide an opportunity to explore Sida's normative dialogue with the World Bank and how attention to Swedish norms is raised within World Bank led programmes.

The **Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL)** is a global programme, led by UNCDF that has been supported by Sida to work with similar modalities to FLLoCA and LoGIC, largely through pilot programmes. It is an entry point to raise attention to the importance and feasibility of locally led adaptation.

With core support, the **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)** is a very long-standing Sida partner that has provided knowledge development support and has partnered with Sida and Team Sweden to raise attention to the importance of these issues. It has worked with Sida in a range of international climate initiatives. IIED will be interviewed as a potential partner linking normative dialogue efforts to local civil society.

The **PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)**, based in Nairobi, is an important channel for support to civil society in Africa for a range of climate and local environmental issues. 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, the RECs and the AU.

5. Phases, organisation and timing

5.1 Data collection phase (February-early May 2023)

Following the conclusion of the inception phase (September-Jan 2022), we will initiate the data collection phase in February 2023. The data collection phase includes the bulk of the **data collection activities** needed to respond to the evaluation questions and produce the evaluation report. These include:

- Continuous **documentation** review,
- Mobilisation of **regional experts** for the 3 field visit countries (Mozambique, Kenya, Moldova). We also propose to mobilise one Bangladesh-based expert to help gather examples for both the environment and WEE case studies. Regional experts are based in the region and have in-depth contextual knowledge for undertaking in-country data gathering with a range of stakeholders. Regional experts will also support data gathering at a regional level. They will be supported and supervised by the international core team (Team Leader and three thematic experts), with the possibility of having one core team member attend each of the countries selected for in-depth data gathering as/if needed (e.g., in order to pilot test data gathering instruments).
- **Field work** including focused discussions/ workshops with stakeholder groups (outcome harvesting method) in the in-depth case countries,

- Undertaking remote interviewing and data gathering for **second-tier countries** and additional programme examples.
- Participatory focus group discussions **for key functions at Sida** headquarters and across the organisation,
- **In-depth interviews** with Sida institutional functions and case specific key informants (in-country and for second tier country examples done remotely),
- Assessment of **available survey data** on Embassies' involvement in normative dialogue as part of the feminist foreign policy (drawing on ongoing EBA study) and the design of complementary quick feedback surveys as/if needed,
- Digital **data science tools** developed and tested to add to the quantifiable analysis and/or triangulation in terms of identifying contribution pathways,
- Implementation of **digital approaches** to data collection where relevant,
- Liaising and seeking inputs from the **evaluation steering group** and **reference group members** (e.g., one methods workshop with the reference group, with one or two additional with the evaluation steering group).

To ensure that the process during the data collection phase is clear to all stakeholders and carried out in a participatory way, the evaluation team will maintain **close dialogue with the Sida steering group** (led by the Sida Evaluation Unit), and the reference group throughout the process, ensuring early engagement of key stakeholders.

5.2 Analysis and reporting phase (mid-May to end-November 2023)

In this phase, both thematic and cross-cutting analysis will be conducted in order to come up with the evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and a participatory workshop will ensure that recommendations will be relevant across different functions in Sida. These will be presented in a final report and synthesized in evaluation briefs (one brief on overall findings, and one brief per thematic area). These will be developed following these steps:

- **Analysis and drafting of preliminary findings** (*early to end May*). A succinct, digestible presentation will be produced after the completion of the analysis by theme and across themes with emerging trends across data, using the ToC as a reference point to how it plays out in different contexts and for different thematic areas.
- **Initial findings presentation to Sida** (*early June*) To validate emerging findings and discuss preliminary answers to the evaluation questions, a workshop will be organised in early June before starting the writing of the actual report. It can be decided in collaboration with the steering group the extent to which this will be involving a broader group of stakeholders or be a smaller (potentially online or hybrid) meeting between the steering group and the evaluation team before involving the reference group in workshopping the drafting of recommendations.
- **Report writing** (*mid-June to end-August*). The evaluation team will work on writing a concise and clear synthesis report, which will contain one report for each of the thematic areas in Annex. The draft report will draw on and incorporate discussions at the initial findings workshop at Sida.
- **Reference group workshop to draft recommendations** (*end-August*). The drafting of recommendations will be done in a participatory manner involving reference group members who represent a wide range organisational functions to maximise their practical application and uptake. The workshop would seek to come up with a set of draft recommendations based on findings and the available

evidence, synthesised in draft write-ups that will be presented. The evaluation team will then tweak and align those recommendations, making sure there is evidence to support all that has been suggested, and that there is coherence between the evidence gathered, the analytical framework, and the final recommendations, being cognizant of any possible bias. Our facilitator will arrange and orchestrate the workshop to seek collective engagement and moving the workshop participants towards consensus.

- **Finalisation and QA of draft report** (*early to mid-September*). Following the workshop to develop recommendations, the evaluation team will finalize the report, which will undergo Niras QA process before submission of the draft report in mid-September.
- **Feedback on the draft report** (*mid-September to mid-November*). Sida and stakeholders will be invited to provide comments on the draft report. If useful, the evaluation team will provide the opportunity to stakeholders to have two rounds of comments on the draft report within the available time between mid-September to mid/end-November.
- **Submission final report and dissemination.** (*mid/end-November*). The draft report will be revised based on the comments received and a final report will be submitted, including any required translation of the Executive Summary. The final report will include a synthesis report and four separate annexes for each of the thematic case studies. The evaluation team will make itself available for participation in any dissemination efforts to a broader stakeholder group as needed.
- **Evaluation briefs.** The final report will include evaluation briefs for both the synthesis report and each of the four annexes (i.e., a total of five briefs) with the purpose of attracting a larger readership and for wider dissemination and communication purposes.

5.3 Updated workplan

[illegible]

Annexes

1. Evaluation Matrix

2. Theory of Change

**3. Proposed structure for Thematic
Case Study Reports**

4. Interview guides (draft)

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

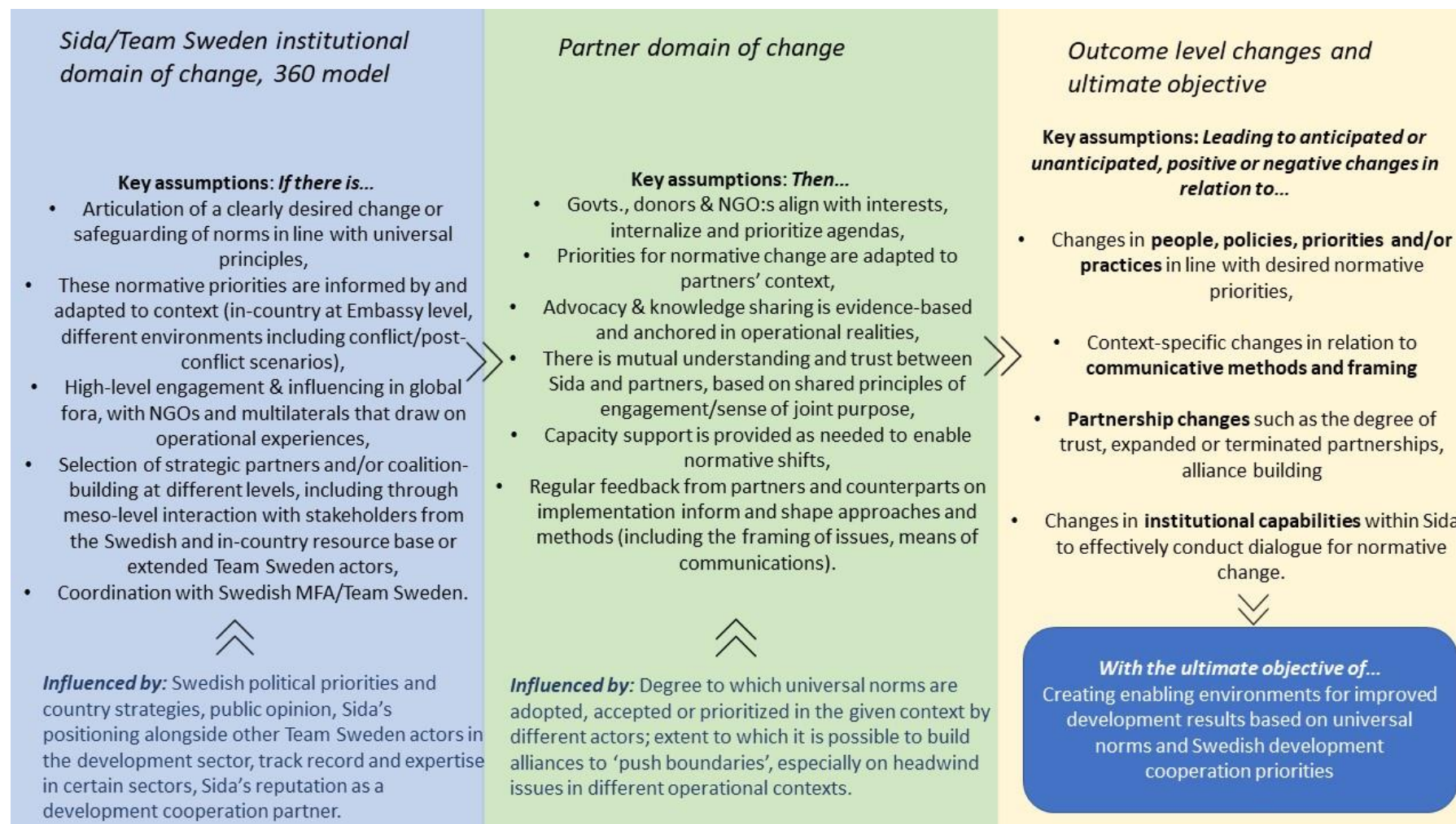
Questions raised in ToRs	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data /comments
Effectiveness				
EQ1: How likely is it that the normative dialogue has <i>contributed to change</i> ?	• Level of mutual understanding among dialoguing parties influencing partnerships • Level of evolution and trust in partnership relations • Level of perceived change in people, policies, priorities and practices • Level of significance attributed to observed changes to above by different stakeholder groups • Perceptions of Sida's contribution vis-à-vis other stakeholders (with due recognition of Sida's role as a small donor in some contexts)	• Outcome Harvesting • Key informant interviews (internal functions) • Validation through focus group discussion with relevant stakeholders in-country	• Thematic cases • Sida HQ interviews • Validation meetings	Little available documentation; will rely on gathering and analysing of stakeholder narratives
EQ2: What are examples of <i>successful outcomes</i> of normative dialogue at Sida? What are examples of unsuccessful outcomes?	• Stakeholder perceptions/examples of success cases of normative dialogue • Stakeholder perceptions/examples of less successful attempts at	• Outcome Harvesting • Key informant interviews • Contribution analysis to trace successful examples to Sida's institutional practices	• Thematic cases • Sida HQ interviews • Validation meetings	At present there is little consensus and difference in understanding of what successful outcomes from normative dialogue would look like and how it enables development results.

	normative dialogue (no difference, resistance or pushback/backlash) • Examples of accelerated progress towards development results that incorporate Swedish priorities and universal values -including how they relate to outcome level changes and the ultimate objective in the ToC			EBA study on feminist foreign policy survey may provide informative insights on Embassy perception and use of normative dialogue as an influencing tool.
EQ3: Which key <i>success factors</i> and <i>mechanisms</i> can be identified? Which key factors and mechanisms can be identified as hindering successful normative dialogue?	• Examples of and degree to which internal factors (as outlined in the factors of influence in the partner domains) played a positive or negative role • Examples of and degree to which partner roles and approaches played a positive or negative role • Extent to which positive or negative factors are manifested in institutional domains and work practices • Extent to which different stakeholders perceive Sida's ability (and 'soft power') to take part in and generate credibility in dialogue	• Outcome Harvesting • Key informant interviews • Contribution analysis to trace successful examples to Sida's institutional practices	• Thematic cases • Sida HQ interviews • Validation meetings • Digital data gathering (web scraping)	A high degree of reliance on key informant interviews will be needed, potentially combined with the use of digital data science of key partners websites.
Efficiency				

EQ4: How does Sida's <i>prioritisation, planning and follow-up</i> of normative dialogue affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?	• Extent to which resources (financial and human) are systematically allocated to support dialogue on key issues at HQ and embassy levels (e.g., media campaigns, research & analysis, etc.) • Extent to which strategic communication plans are implemented in timely way • How Sida, other members of Team Sweden and development partners are able to engage effectively in reactive dialogue and respond to risks/pushback when needed	• Mapping over time, across levels, and over interlinked themes of normative dialogue processes • Key informant interviews with Team Sweden actors, global partners (notably multilaterals) compared to in-country relations and follow-up and use of multilateral agencies	• Strategy reports (extracts) from 2020, 2021 • Key informant interviews with Team Sweden actors (case specific)	• Cases will concretise with practical examples and seek to draw parallel between differing contexts and approaches
EQ5: How does Sida's <i>organisation</i> 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 <i>coordination within Team Sweden</i> , affect the results of Sida's normative dialogue?	• Degree of coordination and shared thinking on key dialogue issues among Team Sweden and with development partners • Clarity in allocation of responsibility for specific dialogue issues in thematic areas • Extent to which lessons are recorded and strategically used	• Mapping of partner engagements, fora, linking of dialogue to programming related to normative dialogue processes • Mapping of Team Sweden relationships in normative dialogue efforts	• Internal key stakeholder interviews and workshopping of findings with different internal functions	• Different configurations and roles between Team Sweden actors will be considered across the different cases.
EQ6: How do approaches to normative dialogue, such as the <i>choice of cooperation partner</i> at different levels and the	• Perceptions (presumably differing) within Sida, among partners and between Sida HQ and	• Data science methods using web-crawling (for network analysis of which partners refer to Sida, how	• Thematic cases • Sida HQ interviews	• Documentation on country-level choice of partners is currently scarce but will be gathered

way the collaboration is conducted, affect the results? Specifically in regard to choices at the country level and the so called 360-model?	embassies regarding efficiency and effectiveness of different types of partnerships in normative dialogue • Level of alignment of partners with Sida norms • Degree of evolving trust between partners and Sida based on shared principles and norms	partners refer to each other in relation to a certain theme for normative change) • Analysis of country strategy reports and programme reports	• Partner key informant interviews • Country strategy reports • Programme reports	through in-depth country cases and country examples
EQ7: How do <i>methods</i> within normative dialogue, such as the practice of different <i>communication means and messages</i> and the way Sida adapt them to local contexts, affect the results?	• Extent to which there is internal learning and uptake of lessons within Sida on how to approach and conduct normative dialogue on different thematic issues • Cross analyses of communication methods and their relative effectiveness with different types of messages • Examples of different types/levels of effectiveness when methods are applied across the 'continuum' of two-way versus advocacy approaches	• Internal workshoping with Sida personnel in charge of strategic communications, learning, capacity support and adaptive management	• Communication and strategy plans by different units and departments • Thematic cases • Sida HQ interviews	• Degree to which the 360 feedback loops are reflective of operational lessons and insights will be looked into and validated through country cases.

Annex 2: Proposed Theory of Change



Annex 3: Proposed structure for Thematic Case Study Reports

This is a proposed outline for Thematic Case Study Reports. There will be four reports prepared with findings and lessons from the case studies related to normative dialogue in connection with gender equality, SRHR, democracy and human rights and environment and climate change, as well as other issues that have emerged in these cases. Section 1 will give a brief introduction and background to the case and an overview of key stakeholders and target groups for normative dialogue. Section 2 will present findings regarding observed outcomes at different levels of engagement. Section 3 will present analysis and conclusions regarding institutional outcomes and enabling/hindering factors. The main synthesis report will follow a similar structure wherein findings from across cases will be analysed and findings from the different cases will be contrasted and compared. Each of the case study reports will be distilled into a 4–6-page long brief.

1. Thematic case description & theory of change

1.1 Introduction to the thematic area

- Strategy objectives in Swedish government policies, Swedish strategies (including country strategies)
- The articulated normative agenda including links to the five perspectives based on universal norms
- Relations between Swedish strategies and agendas and other countries'/agencies' global, regional and national strategies and normative agendas

1.2 Stakeholder mapping and target groups

- Multilateral/global level
- Meso-level among peers and international/regional/national think tanks, civil society groups, Swedish resource base (including interactions with intermediaries), drivers and influencers of the normative agenda at a collective/sector level
- Other actors at regional and country levels including other intermediaries (if applicable)
- Conflict factors impinging on the legitimacy and engagement of normative actors

1.3 Context

- Level of political contestation and alignment of actors related to normative goals
- Legislative context and level of alignment with international norms as enshrined in declarations, conventions, resolutions (and whether adopted and to what extent implemented at country level)
- Geographical and country context (heavily conflict affected, disaster prone, favourable/less favourable for civil society, private sector, quality of governance, etc.)
- Positioning of Sida in context (e.g., knowledge resource, funder, known to push the agenda, ability to engage in sub-national discourse, large/small donor) as perceived by different stakeholder groups

1.4 Approaches and methods to normative dialogue

- Internal prioritisation, planning and follow-up
- Choice of cooperation partners as a strategic approach to the normative work
- Organisation and role division (in Sida, with other members of Team Sweden, with partners)
- Communication means and tools
- Use of normative dialogue as a complement to other forms of influencing (linked to financing, in strengthening/using research and evidence, in high-level dialogue, related to capacity-building, etc.)
- Institutional capabilities/commitments (within Sida) to engage and learn from normative dialogue at different levels, including the capability to connect and adapt high-level dialogue to feedback from partners and country-level operations (effectiveness of 360 model)

1.5 Evaluation ToC adapted to thematic case

- A thematic-specific ToC, following the overall evaluation ToC (Annex 2)

- Observations on the ToC and its applicability/adaptation to the specific sub-area and country examples
- Key assumptions and implications for tracking results from normative dialogue

2. Observed outcomes at different levels of engagement

*Contributing to answering EQ:s related to **Effectiveness**: EQ1: How likely is it that the normative dialogue has contributed to change?; 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?*

2.1 Outcomes by level of engagement where relevant at global level, in meso-level interactions including interactions with intermediaries, and peers in the donor community, at regional or in the country context), the following may be considered:

- Effects **on people** (attitudes, beliefs, motivation and capability to enact new behaviour), priorities (linked influence on people/key actors), **priorities** (including in organisational narratives, agreement on joint/shared principles etc.), **policies** (extent to which narratives are institutionalised or informal norms are formalized), **practices** (exemplified by increased resource allocation to a certain theme, changed individual or organisational practices etc.)
- Effects on **the partnership** (increase in trust, mutuality, alignment, mobilisation of actors and alliances (coalitions, network, public, private partners donors etc.), and/or unintended negative effects (increased fragmentation of actors, locked positions on normative agenda and goals, adaptation to conflict)
- Effects **on visibility and communicative methods** (level of 'traction' of a particular topic in line with normative priorities, increased media exposure – including social media, willingness to raise and discuss normative issue).

2.2 Level of significance and transformative effects both **anticipated** and **unanticipated** effects or side-effects will be analysed in relation to:

- Enabling development results
- The overarching perspectives and/or thematic perspectives
- Actors' accountability to universal norms and conventions in their own national or institutional context
- 'Pushing the boundaries' on certain topics or framings in a context where it is not generally accepted or safeguarded in institutional arrangements or principles
- Increasing local ownership and leadership of the norms in question
- Gender equality and human rights
- Conflict sensitivity

3. Institutional mechanisms and enabling/hindering factors

*Contributing to answering EQs related to **Efficiency**: 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 with Team Sweden, affect the results of Sida's 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?; EQ7: How do methods within normative dialogue, such as the practice of different communication means and messages and the way Sida adapt them to local contexts, affect the results?*

3.1 Institutional factors and strengthened capabilities (may be combined with section 3.2)

A synthesis covering some of the institutional capabilities built in line with the different learning objectives set out in the efficiency EQs. Such capabilities may include, e.g.:

- Capability to build trust and attract others
- Capability to manage and organise normative dialogue at different levels and across different institutional functions within Sida
- Capability to position Sida strategically in a given sector or area of support
- Capability to adapt communicative methods and instruments to context
- Capability to cope with level of resistance or political developments
- Capability to position Sida strategically within Team Sweden
- Capability of staff to internalize issues, technical facts, and messages around norms to be promoted
- Capability to respond to contextual volatility

3.2 Enabling and hindering factors across different domains of change

- In the **Sida/Team Sweden domain of change**, including in Sida's internal capabilities to conduct normative dialogue, Sida's positioning and role within Team Sweden, and in the use of the 360 model
- In the **partnership domain of change**, including capability to attract partners and relevant actors, the role of funding and other means of influencing (e.g., via tailored capacity building, making relevant research or evidence available, acting as a backstopping partner on technical issues etc.)
- In the **development sector domain of change** more broadly

4. Conclusions & lessons learnt

Annex 4. Interview guides

Draft to be further refined and tested

Generic Outcome Harvesting guide (to be adapted to different groups of individual interviewees and focus groups)

1. What **changes did you want/hope to see** in {normative area} that Sida and/or its partners could viably pursue through dialogue?
2. In what ways has Sida expected the dialogue to be a **useful tool** to encourage the norms being pursued in {normative area}?
3. What changes **did you observe** take place due to Sida's diverse dialogue processes? *Please give specific examples (people, processes, policy, practices etc.)*
 - a. Why and how were these considered significant? (To whom?)
4. What **factors enabled/hindered** the achievement of these normative and other changes related to the dialogue process?
 - a. *Contextual factors*
 - b. *Internal factors within Sida/Team Sweden*
 - c. *Timing and history of engagement (a new area, a long-time track record, level of buy-in by other actors etc.)*
 - d. *Communication methods*
 - e. *Others*
5. In relation to **internal factors within Sida/Team Sweden**, how are such **practices institutionalised** and/or how could they be made better?
6. Which **forms of engagement** from Sida (working with different partners, fora, etc.) contributed to these normative changes?
7. How did Sida's efforts to pursue dialogue in this area **complement** that of other actors? Why was this **significant**?
8. **Who** is part of the dialogue? Who (which actors) decides who joins these discussions?
 - a. Has Sida conducted its dialogue for normative change in {normative area} in a way that ensures it benefits intended **rights holders**? How? Enabled/hindered by what factors?
9. Have the dialogue processes used a **gender transformative and inclusive** approach, including for potentially discriminated groups based on sexual orientation (LGBTQI) ethnic groups and/or persons with disabilities to make their voices are heard in these processes? How? Is this a priority aspect of the dialogue? What is Sida's interest/influence over this?
10. How much do factors such as **money, power, knowledge, and persuasion** play in determining which/whose norms prevail in the diverse dialogue processes in which you are engaged?
11. What kinds of **preparatory materials** or processes do you use or need to engage in effective dialogue? How do you **follow-up and report** on influencing effects?

Team Sweden/Sida specific questions (to be asked in addition to selected Outcome Harvesting questions from the list above)

1. Generally, how does the **360 model** enable Sida and Team Sweden to obtain a more holistic perspective on how to build trust, tailor messages more effectively and pursue effective normative dialogue?
2. Are there **common gaps** that arise in the 360 model or across Team Sweden that need to be addressed and where other partnerships need to be leveraged? Are these partnerships sufficient?
3. Are you generally satisfied with the engagement of **other Swedish intermediaries** in normative dialogue processes? *Please provide specific examples.*
4. Do you think there is a need to strive towards a **broader multistakeholder** approach, engaging with additional intermediaries?
5. Does Sida (and MFA) have a sufficiently **central role** in these dialogues, or is it best for Sweden to play a supportive or financier role?
6. Are **dialogue capacities** sufficient within Team Sweden to achieve key dialogue objectives? If not, what is needed within Team Sweden actors to build this capacity?
7. Do Sida's internal procedures at headquarters and embassies facilitate/obstruct normative dialogue? *Please provide specific examples.*
8. Is there adequate coherence between Sida/MFA's high level and policy-oriented normative dialogue and dialogue focused more on 'walking the talk' in terms of putting norms into practice?
9. Are country/regional/other **strategies and government instructions** sufficient as a foundation and launching point for designing strategically relevant, results-focused and effective normative dialogue? If not, why not?
10. Have you had to deal with **pushback or threats** to partners when authorities reject normative aims? If so, how do you manage these risks?
11. What happens to the dialogue when these strategies are **extended or on hold** pending their renewal?
12. How do you manage dialogue around **universal norms** when partners **do not share Sweden's views about their universality**? (i.e., when parties have not signed or adopted relevant international conventions, declarations or protocols).

Annex 6 – Inception report

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

