

# **Sida Supported Municipal Twinning Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe, 1996–2001**

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Eastern Europe**



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**Sida Evaluation 01/20**

**Department for Central and  
Eastern Europe**

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Sida Evaluation 01/20

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Central and Eastern Europe

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Registration No.: 2001-3809

Date of Final Report: October 2001

Printed in Stockholm, Sweden 2001

ISBN 91-586-8816-1

ISSN 1401-0402

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMKR	Association of Municipalities in the Kaliningrad Region
BITS	Byrå för teknisk, internationellt samarbete
B7	EU-supported cooperation between the seven Baltic Islands: Rügen, Bornholm, Öland, Gotland, Åland, Saaremaa (Ösel) and Dagö (Hiiumaa)
BSSSC	Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
EU	European Union
SALA-IDA	Swedish Association of Local Authorities, International Development Agency
SEK	Swedish Kroner
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
SOU	Statens Offentliga Utredningar

# Executive Summary

## Background

Sida has since 1993 committed over SEK 145 million for 450 projects between Swedish municipalities and their partners in Central and East European (CEE) countries. The programme aims to support the development of competent, democratic local authorities.

## Overall context

The purpose of this evaluation is to acquire knowledge about the relevance, effects, sustainability, impact and efficiency and of the programme 1996–now and to provide recommendations to Sida on future support. An important presumption is that the Swedish Government plans to phase out bilateral assistance to more well off CEE countries. Thus Swedish aid-financed co-operation with Poland and Estonia is being phased out currently. Phasing out in Lithuania and Latvia is to take place 2002–2004. Relations with those countries is supposed to become as “normal neighbours”. Other sources of finance, notably from the EU, are supposed to replace the bilateral Sida funds. – However, stakeholders and key informants met by the evaluation team, think that the effect of the present twinning model is so positive that Sida funding ought to continue also after EU-membership.

## Methodology

The evaluation was conducted by T&B Consult during July–September 2001. The process has involved studies of relevant documents; meetings with the Swedish municipalities and partners; and with key informants; and questionnaires sent to the Swedish asking for quantitative and qualitative information. As the evaluation was conducted in the midst of the holiday season, it was not possible to consult and have feedback from all relevant sources. The evaluation team does not find consequences of this for the overall findings and recommendations, but we have been aware of these limitations when concluding.

## Findings and Conclusions

The overall conclusion is that the Sida supported twinning projects of the municipalities 1996–2001 have been relevant, effective, cost effective and efficient.

### The Relevance of the Twinning Projects

On an overall level, decentralised support has been and is still relevant. Most of the CEE countries still suffer from heavy problems in relation to economy, distribution, norm confusion and social polarisation. Distribution is so lopsided that overall economic growth has only recently brought most of the CEE countries back to the 1989 level. It is found that a large part of the twinning projects are responsive to needs, and that they contribute to the rehabilitation of public life. The projects have generally been quite well distributed to cover the countries geographically and to reach areas where needs are most pertinent.

As a result of concentration of foreign aid on the central level, it appears that on the municipal and regional levels, there are not too many donors. Yet, a growing number of other possibilities for technical and/or financial assistance under different EU-programmes catch the attention of the Baltic local and regional authorities. These already play an important role in practice and in the

prospects for the future, but still they are considered difficult to access and cumbersome to employ. The EU schemes, referred to in Annex IV, require foreign partners. In some cases, Swedish municipalities already are these partners.

### **Effectiveness**

Considering the objectives for the assistance, the most effective projects are found in the social care/assistance and educational (especially primary school) sectors. The picture is more dubious regarding “pure democracy projects” and technical projects which mainly serve only their own delimited objectives

In addition to the main observation of an overall high level of effectiveness of the Sida supported twinning projects, advantages could be achieved from

- some limited procurement of goods for example for the social care institutions
- more adequate preparation of Swedish seconded staff in relation to the task
- longer duration of stay for Baltic staff on secondment in Sweden
- an increased degree of openness towards the recipient partners in relation to the process, the institutional structure and the budgets

Also, more directly EU related projects would be adequate for the beneficiaries.

In addition, the twinning projects contribute to create goodwill and to enhance knowledge, interest and respect for Sweden in the recipient countries.

### **Impact**

Long-term effect, additional to their proper accomplishments, is difficult to measure for projects of this kind. Some projects have been so spectacularly successful on a regional or national scale, making it relevant to speak about impact. However, potential impact is severely constrained by the un-coordinated and sporadic nature of most of the projects and by the lack of support mechanisms for spreading the effects when they are good.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is a difficult to assess for small and short projects, where a large part of any lasting effect takes place in people's minds and most often are part of a larger process. We have come across projects with in-built continuation and obvious result in terms of both partner staff enthusiasm and results for the end-beneficiaries where there is no doubt about their sustainable nature. Some projects appeared definitely not sustainable. In between there is a large group of projects about which we have to say that we do not know for sure.

However, as the output is enshrined in a mainly stable partner structure, basic conditions for sustainability are in place. Continuity in the activity is strongly conducive to sustainable results and is present in the case of most communes.

### **Efficiency**

The Swedish taxpayers get good value for their money in the twinning projects, with the exception of the unavoidable, few failures. Normally, considerable value is added to Sida funds from the implementing municipalities. Also, Sida funds is still more frequently used to trigger off new and usually larger funds from the EU-programmes. The involved people appear very serious and do in some cases add from their own time or funds to the projects.



## **Administration**

Small and short projects should not be exposed to the same demands in terms of procedures and document writing as big ones, not to risk to kill the enthusiasm. Normally project design and reporting is of reasonable quality, while more standardisation of the formats applied but be beneficial.

## **Lessons Learnt**

Special consideration should be given to the often unstable institutional and financial structure on the regional and municipality level in the recipient countries. Declared government goals of decentralisation of tasks and responsibilities have usually not been followed by stable and sufficient sources of finance. Transfer of money from the central government level to the local levels is most often based on unclear negotiating procedures every year. This emphasises a need for cautiousness in a phasing-out process which might lead to considerable inequalities in the basis for continuation and sustainability of the projects. Actually, it is hard to see how the positive results in smaller municipalities can be continued at all in the present financial situation, when the Swedish assistance is phased out. The situation therefore calls for a high degree of flexible adaptation of the phasing out process to the availability of alternative funds in the smaller communities.

Where cooperation is planned to continue, it seems advisable to emphasise the need for basing it on a concrete institution to institution basis at the local level – thus contributing to a sustainable institution building process in an unstable local government.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the observations and conclusions, the recommendations include:

- The Sida supported twinning projects should continue until EU membership of recipient countries is in place, then be revised.
- Stronger focus should be placed on the social and educational sectors, at the expense of business development and technical projects, including tourism.
- The approval time frames should be prolonged to a maximum three years, with appropriation ceilings that are correspondingly higher.
- Standard application forms, reflecting the LFA check list in a simple form, should be applied. In the case of applications for several years, larger than the one-year ceiling, more comprehensive forms should be applied.
- Standard preparatory seminars for persons engaged in twinning co-operation should be developed and easily accessible, similar to Sida-courses for staff with foreign assignments, however smaller.
- Sharing of information and experience on technical assistance for the CEE-countries between the decentralised and de-concentrated parts of the Swedish public sector should be ensured in a simple way. Limited use of local consultants and project procurement of goods should be encouraged.
- The partners should be more integrated in project preparation and budgeting.
- Initiatives should be taken to increase the impact in the recipient countries by strengthening spread and communications mechanisms.

# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation – as stated in the Terms of Reference included as annex 1 – is to acquire knowledge about the relevance, effects, impact, cost effectiveness and sustainability of the Sida supported twinning programme 1996–2001 and to provide recommendations to Sida on future support and organisation of the support.

The evaluation was conducted June–September 2001 by the same team of consultants from T&B Consult who evaluated the Sida supported cooperation between the Swedish län and their counterparts in the Baltic countries. The findings of that evaluation is presented in a separate report and so is a comparative study of the two programmes.

The process involved interviews and focus group meetings with project stakeholders in Sweden and in partner countries (the Baltic countries, Poland and Russia/Kaliningrad). Questionnaires has been set out to the involved municipalities in Sweden and in the partner countries, including countries and regions not covered by the field studies (Northwest Russia, Ukraine). During meetings in Stockholm, the preliminary findings of the field studies were presented to and discussed with a number of stakeholders, including SALA who is administering the programme.

The report is structured as follows: An executive summary provides an overview of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. In chapter one an introduction is provided, while the methodology is explained in chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the programme context and history. In chapter 4 the findings regarding the relevance of the programme are presented, whereas effectiveness, sustainability and impact are discussed in chapters five to seven. Cost effectiveness and efficiency is discussed in chapter 8, while chapter 9 looks into the administration of the programme. The future perspectives for the programme are discussed in chapter 10, while overall conclusions and lessons learned are presented in chapter eleven and twelve. Finally, the recommendations are presented.

Initial meetings and desk study was undertaken by Mr Gunnar Olesen (teamleader), Mr Henrik Permin (Russian speaking) and Mr Peter Rekve. Mr Olesen held the meetings with the län in Sweden in July–August. Messr Permin and Olesen undertook field studies in the Baltic states during the weeks 32–33, messr. Permin, Rekve and Steenstrup undertook field studies in Kaliningrad and Poland during week 34, all together with national consultants who also had translated the questionnaires: Mmes Tiina Jäger, Anita Jakobsone, Roma Vilimieni, Anastasiya Kutsnetsova and Hannah Leki from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Russia and Poland, respectively.

Messr Palle Mikkelsen (public administration expert and quality assurance) and Olesen undertook the follow-up focus group meeting in Sweden. The above persons and Ms Elna Bering, gender specialist and quality assurance, have contributed to the draft Final Report.

Last but not least, the team would like to use the occasion to express their gratitude to all the enthusiastic and sincere persons we have met in Sweden and in the Baltic countries. It has been motivating and a pleasure to work with them.

## 2 Methodology

The information, on which the below report is based, is created by the use of different, supplementary methods:

1. *Written sources include existing documentation on the projects, which has been at our disposal in full coverage, and on the societal and administrative background on which the programmes operate:*
  - Background literature on the CEE states, supplementary to the teams' experience from other, recent tasks in this part of the world
  - Prior evaluations of the Swedish twinning programmes, especially the 1996-evaluation report on the Municipal Programme
  - Successive guidelines for the programme since 1996
  - Applications and reporting on selected projects implemented by the municipalities in that period of time
  - Responses of SALA (remissvar) on the Government Study on Future Cooperation with the CEE-countries (SOU 2000:122), from 2000
2. *Meetings with the Swedish and CEE partners and with key informants:*
  - In Sweden, we met with representatives for SALA in June
  - Subsequent to the field visits, a focus group discussion on the findings was arranged with SALA and 5 municipalities
  - In Sweden we also met with Sida-Öst, the MFA(UD)-office on Decentralised Foreign Policy
  - In the Baltic states, in August, we visited partners to the above mentioned, selected Swedish projects: Dagö, Ösel and Pärnu in Estonia; Cesis and Tokums in Latvia; Panevezis and a researcher from the University of Vilnius who participated in a Kleipeda project in Lithuania. In addition to immediate beneficiaries, civil servants and sometimes politicians, we have in some cases also been able to meet with end-beneficiaries of the projects. (The field studies in Baltic countries have been undertaken jointly with field studies on the county projects)
  - We met with each of the following key informants in all three Baltic countries: The Swedish embassies, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Information Offices, the UNDP-offices and the Associations of Local and Regional Authorities. In addition we met with representatives of the press in Latvia and Lithuania
  - The choice of the Kaliningrad region for field studies in Russia was motivated partly by practical and logistical necessity, partly by the de facto presence of a high intensity of Sida supported twinning projects in that region. We met with the Association of Municipalities in the region (AMKR), the city council, representatives of municipalities District and of the Tacis office. At the end of the mission, a focus group meeting was conducted. A representative of the Baltic Institute in Kaliningrad also took part
  - In Poland, meetings were conducted with representatives from, municipalities and the Euroregion Balticum Office in Elblag. At the end a focus group meeting was conducted with 14 Polish participants representing municipalities and schools. At Gdansk, a meeting was conducted with the BSSSC

3. *Questionnaires asking for quantitative and qualitative information were sent to the Swedish municipalities and some of their CEE partners:*

- Answers were received from 52 municipalities which had been engaged in Sida supported twinning projects 1996 – now. Most of the answers were not very detailed. This material can be used for establishment of valid information to a limited extent, but it does contain some indications additional to the other sources
- In the CEE-countries, similar questionnaires were sent, in local languages, to the partners of both twinning programs with the aid of the associations of local and regional authorities. In all countries, we received less than one third of the possible answers. Only few of them contained valuable qualitative information. Such answers are of limited use, but they do also contain some additional indications

4. *Statistical analysis of composition of the program:*

The figures available have covered 1997–2001 in some cases. In the graphic aggregations, the figures from 2001 has been omitted since their incompleteness would give a distorted picture of the total. Likewise, when 2000-figures in certain cases have only covered until End-September 2000, they have been omitted from comparisons where the result would be misleading

While the programme of field studies was implemented in a satisfactory way, the meetings in Sweden, and the questionnaires, have suffered from the timing of the evaluation where most of the activities had to take place over July–August. Supposedly, more evidence could have been established, especially from the surveys and from more meetings in Sweden, had the timing been different. We have been aware of these limitations when concluding.

### 3 Programme History

Since the late 1980s Sweden has been providing substantial support for the development in Central- and Eastern Europe. The Swedish support to decentral twinning arrangements between regions and municipalities in Sweden and in Central- and Eastern Europe constitute but one element in a broad package of Swedish assistance. Other types of assistance include support to twinning arrangements between public institutions, environmental projects; business co-operation programmes; legal co-operation etc.

In 1995, the Swedish Parliament specified that the overall aims of the support were to contribute to:

- a common security
- a deepened culture of democracy
- a socially sustainable economic transition
- an environmentally sustainable development

The Swedish support to Central- and Eastern Europe has focussed on Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, while especially Russia – but also Ukraine and Belarus – are increasingly becoming main recipient countries. In the period 1989–1998 more than SEK 6.5 billion was applied for bilateral assistance to these countries. When including funds channelled through the EU and through the “Baltic Billion” (which aims at promoting business cooperation), total Swedish assistance in that period of time amounted to 8.7 billion. For the ongoing programme 1997–2001, SEK 2.4 billion is channelled to bilateral development assistance programmes in Central- and Eastern Europe. Total Swedish public support to Central- and Eastern Europe (including Balkan, the Caucasus and Central Asia) in 2000 alone amounted to SEK 1.4 billion.

The assistance has been complemented by an expansion in trade, investments and other contacts. This is especially the case in the Baltic region and Poland where Swedish engagement has been characterised as a “public movement”. Relations with the Central- and Eastern European countries are increasingly becoming of a more regular and non-public funded character and the Swedish policy aim is to establish “normal neighbour relations”.

This aspect constitutes a core element in the Government Bill 2000/01:119 “*Europa i omvandling – Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Central- och Östeuropa*”. This government policy paper, which was adopted by the Swedish Government in June 2001, outlines a new programme for assistance to Central- and Eastern Europe 2002–03. The overall objective of the programme is to promote sustainable development and increased integration and partnership relations in the region, based on partner country needs and involving the Swedish resource base.

The bill states that the main areas for the future support are: mutual security; democratic anchoring; economic transition; social security; environment; education and research. In addition, it is stated that three crosscutting guidelines shall be taken into account:

- EU adaptation in the candidate countries (in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus system change and integration in European co-operation structures)
- Promotion of relations with Sweden
- Gender equality

In this process, the development funds for these countries will be phased out when EU membership has been achieved. The speed of phasing out will depend upon i.a. needs, adaptation capacity as well as on Swedish competence and national interests. Assistance to Poland is already being phased out and no new country strategy will be prepared. Likewise, assistance to the Baltic region is being scaled down – while assistance to Russia is increasing.

The criteria for phasing out the assistance appear not to be linked directly to specific indicators, but to reflect a more holistic assessment of the needs in the partner countries as well as of the nature and depth of the established relations and their capacity to be maintained without public funds.

### **Decentralised co-operation and twinning**

Decentralisation and the development of well functioning and democratic local authorities has been an important objective of the Swedish bilateral development co-operation in Central and Eastern Europe since the political changes in the beginning of the 1990s.

Municipalities and regions in Sweden have a long tradition for friendship co-operation with municipalities and regions in other countries. At present, the Swedish municipalities have more than 900 twin municipalities and regions abroad plus more than 500 different ongoing projects. The Swedish regions have approximately 150 projects and relationships with foreign regions. 90% of such co-operation is with European partners, the Nordic countries constituting the bulk of partners (e.g. 262 and 225 partnerships with Finnish and Danish municipalities and regions, respectively). Co-operation with municipalities and regions in Eastern Europe, notably the Baltic countries and Poland is of a relatively recent nature but nevertheless quite extensive, as shown below:

**Table 1: Swedish Partnerships with Municipalities and Regions in Sida Central- and Eastern European Partner Countries, at Present**

<b>Country</b>	<b>No. of Sida supported projects</b>	<b>No. Of twins in the partner country</b>
Estonia	134	91
Latvia	67	44
Lithuania	41	33
Poland	79	69
Russia	66	45
Ukraine	4	3
Romania	9	8

More than 200 of Sweden's 289 municipalities have some kind of twinning relation to a Central- or Eastern European partner, such relationship being more extensive than with most EU countries (e.g. 10 partnerships in Belgium, 13 in Greece, 29 in France and 57 in Great Britain)<sup>1</sup>.

Co-operation with municipalities in Central- and Eastern Europe is by nature different from that with other European municipalities as substantial public funds have been provided. In 1991 Sweden established the "fördjupade vänortssamarbetet" (intensified twinning co-operation at local level) program to co-finance partnerships and cooperation in Poland, the Baltic Countries, Ukraine and parts of Russia. The programme was from its outset administered by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALA) in co-operation with BITS. Since BITS was merged with Sida in 1995,

<sup>1</sup> Source: Svenska Kommunförbundet/Landstingsförbundet: Vänorter, vänregioner och partnerskap 2001.

SALA has administered the programme in cooperation with Sida East. The present co-operation agreement between Sida and SALA was signed in February 2000 and is valid to end-2001.

Since 1991 Sida has provided SEK 145 million for more than 600 projects and partnerships between Swedish municipalities and regions/counties in Eastern Europe. Some 150 municipalities have had projects with Eastern European partners financed by Sida.

**Table 2: Public Funds for Twinning Co-operation at Local Level**

	SEK 1000							
<b>Country</b>	<b>1991-93</b>	<b>1994-95</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000*</b>	<b>Total</b>
Estonia	3 274	10 037	8 586	6 764	6 047	7 075	3 568	45 351
% of total	26%	37%	35%	34%	26%	31%	25%	31%
Latvia	2 413	3 674	4 187	4 101	6 001	4 890	4 000	29 266
% of total	19%	14%	17%	20%	25%	21%	27%	20%
Lithuania	2 654	5 619	5 407	2 354	6 819	5 269	2 706	30 828
% of total	21%	20%	22%	12%	29%	23%	19%	21%
Poland	4 300	4 912	4 792	4 882	2 117	1 057	442	22 502
% of total	34%	18%	20%	24%	9%	4%	3%	15%
Russia	n.a.	2915	1 260	1 756	1 782	4 323	3 229	15 265
% of total		11%	5%	8%	7%	19%	22%	11%
Ukraine	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	481	869	402	552	2304
% of total				2%	3%	2%	4%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 641</b>	<b>27 157</b>	<b>24 232</b>	<b>20 338</b>	<b>23 635</b>	<b>23 016</b>	<b>14 497</b>	<b>145 516</b>

\* Until 31. October 2000

Specific guidelines have been developed for the planning and implementation of the twinning program:

*The present guidelines (February 2000) i.a. state that the project activities to be supported should focus either directly on the functioning of democracy in society or on strengthening the administration at the municipal level. The applications should document that the partner will make the necessary own resources available for the activities. Gender issues, as well as environmental aspects, should be an integrated part of all activities, and each project should have specific output and impact indicators. Also aspects related to the EU should be given priority. Funds are disbursed in phases, each phase with a maximum amount of SEK 450.000. The guidelines includes a list of pertinent questions/issues for the applicants to address and to consider in their application. This list, based on the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) addresses e.g. the relevance and importance of considering output and impact monitoring in project activities.*

Furthermore, the Swedish government has approved country strategies for all countries taking part in the twinning co-operation on the local level, except Romania, and these documents guide the direction of the Swedish bilateral assistance in a broader sense.

The funds have been distributed across the following sectors (figures in % of total):

<b>Sector</b>	<b>1991–1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000**</b>
Education*	22	36	30	19	26
Democracy	36	33	29	34	21
Environment	25	17	26	18	21
Trade	5	6	3	2	12
Social care*	n.a	n.a	n.a.	13	10
Infrastructure	12	8	12	10	8
Culture	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	4	2

\* Up to 1999 "Social care" was included in the category with "Education"

\*\* Until 31 October 2000

Source: SALA Annual Reports 1/1 1999 – 1/10 1999; 1/1 2000 – 1/11 2001. Various figures from SALA

#### **Twinning arrangements – some characteristic features**

Municipal and regional twinning arrangements have covered a very broad field of activities with six broad categories eligible for support: Education/schools; Democracy; Environment; Trade; Social care; Infrastructure; Culture. The distribution over time within the different spheres of activities is outlined in the table. Within these categories, the support include very different activities (e.g. tourism and business development; municipal port management; waste water treatment; ecological education; social care for handicapped children; election procedures; women's rights in local politics etc). The project activities in many cases involve representatives from the Swedish municipality visiting the partner municipality, providing training and courses, and interacting with their counterparts. Likewise, many projects have involved visits from the partner countries to look into specific areas. Hence, costs for travelling and boarding in general make up the largest part of the projects costs, typically in the range of 50%, while fee costs typically make up another significant share.

The twinning co-operation has over time evolved from being focused on promoting democratic principles, structures and working methods, to specific activities in areas such as environment, education and private sector development. The projects are generally small and low-cost projects and they are mainly utilising staff-members of the local authorities.

The projects, being often just one part of the bilateral relations between the two partners, are often linked up with other types of co-operation or are related to – or founded in – other Sida funded projects. For the period 1997–2000, 35 of the 115 Swedish municipalities engaged in Sida-supported municipal twinning projects had only one project in that period. 28 had two projects; 17 had three; eight had four project, eleven had 5–6 projects, while seven had 7-9 and nine municipalities had more than 10 projects. One municipality, Norrtälje, had more than 20 projects in that period of time involving close to SEK 4 million from Sida.

The projects range in size from a few thousand SEK up to SEK 450 000, being the maximum for a single project application. The average project size 1997–2000 was app. SEK 190 000.

#### **Results of evaluations and studies**

In October 1993, an evaluation of the twinning co-operation found that the programme was cost effective, dynamic in its approach and that there were indications of a certain impact. In 1996 another independent evaluation was conducted of the municipal programme. The evaluation was highly positive and contributed to the success of the programme in:

- The bottom-up approach, activities taking their outset in the needs and capacity of the local partner
- The projects are mainly implemented in cases where there are qualified and dedicated people to implement and follow-up ("self-correcting" programme)
- Partners learn, and learn from each other, doing the process, maturing and developing the cooperation (self-improving" programme)



The evaluation recommended a continuation of the programme, but did point out that more efforts should be made to address gender issues and the need for more institutional technical support related to reform work.

Likewise, an evaluation of the decentralised co-operation between the Swedish county boards and partner regions in East- and Central Europe was conducted. The evaluation found the co-operation to be very cost-effective and with good and satisfactory achievements, although it was difficult to estimate the outcome of the co-operation, especially as the programme included no performance indicators. However, it was found that the lack of a longer perspective over time hampered the strategic approach and made the cooperation too ad-hoc based.

The positive findings were reflected in the subsequent Government Bill "*Proposition 1997/98 vedr. grannlandssamarbete med Central och Östeuropa 1999–2000*". The Bill i.a. pointed at local and regional co-operation as a key area, underlining its relevance for building up local capacity in order to deal with demands related to expected EU membership. The Bill stated that Sweden has much to offer in this regard, and that the arrangements at municipality and county level should be further developed and expanded.

As background for the Government Bill 2000/1:119, two major studies were conducted: "Utvecklingssamarbetets bidrag till ett varaktigt samarbete med länderna i Central- och Östeuropa" and "SOU 200:122. Att utveckla samarbetet med Central och Östeuropa". An aim was to provide a conceptual analysis of the results achieved, and to have the involved parties provide ideas for the continuation of the co-operation, especially reflecting the policy decision to have "regular relations" to replace publicly funded co-operation.

It was found that regardless of the restrictions set in the municipal regulations, the municipalities had in practise mobilised an increased own financing for this co-operation. The parties consulted found that the decentralised cooperation had been an efficient way to improve neighbour relations and to create important contacts of future value within the EU. Also, co-operation had spin-offs, e.g. in the form of Swedish SMEs establishing business in Estonia or Sida-funded projects leading to new projects, financed by e.g. EU. It was found that the Swedish types of co-operation have been adequate and with a potential to continue without aid.

For the municipal twinning programme, the most successful arrangements were found to be those who

- had managed to anchor the cooperation outside the municipal administration
- mobilised support from the citizens and had created a public backing and rooting for the continuation of the cooperation
- also the LFA approach applied in many of the projects was found to be useful by making the cooperation more efficient, paving the way also for obtaining finance from other sources

However, a common concern among the Swedish parties – including SALA – is that the conditions for EU twinning support are seen as inadequate and difficult to access.

The analysis concluded that a type of cooperation which has been used unnecessarily little in the Swedish assistance is the secondment of long term technical assistance e.g. in the implementation of municipal reforms, even though this is often requested by partner countries. The analysis also

pointed at the fear among many Swedish parties that phasing out of assistance could harm ongoing projects and that there is a need for transitional funds to apply in the phasing out period.<sup>2</sup>

Separately from this, an independent review of SALA's administration of twinning programme was conducted by Earnest & Young (*Rapport från granskningen av Sida:s stöd till Vänortssamarbetet – February 2000*). The review found this to be done professionally and standards and procedures were characterised as good. It was noted that there had been little follow-up on the projects, but that KF was aware that more follow-up was required. It was found that costs for travel and representation were remarkably high in many projects as it was stated as a concern that KF is provided an administrative fee (7,5%) based on the number of projects and approved funds rather than having a fixed administration fee.

It should be mentioned that Sida has also provided support to decentral twinning arrangements in Bosnia, administered by SALA. The Sida evaluation report (00/15) of this programme comes out with some conclusions of a more critical nature. The report i.a. pointed at a lack of analysis and understanding of the specific preconditions for the programme, and found that SALA had devoted too little time and effort to networking, counselling and an active monitoring of the work of the twelve municipalities involved. It also found that reporting was weak and the programme characterised by unclear definitions of roles and insufficient flow of information. Finally, the evaluation found that Sida in the programme put too much emphasis on seeing the programme in the light of "development" and "achievements" rather than as a process of long-term co-operation between citizens and management of two municipalities, as should be the essence of municipal co-operation.

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<sup>2</sup> In its answer to the recommendations in the reports (*remissyttrande*), SALA stated the view that the Sida support should be continued, even if/when partner countries become EU members. SALA found that the basis for any policy should be the need in partner countries, and clearly the needs are still there. SALA also raised a concern that the phasing out will lead to established contacts and projects being terminated, as there are no alternative funds for such cooperation. Also, SALA found that the EU demand to own finance from project partners works against a broader engagement; in any case, mobilising any EU funds is found to be very difficult.

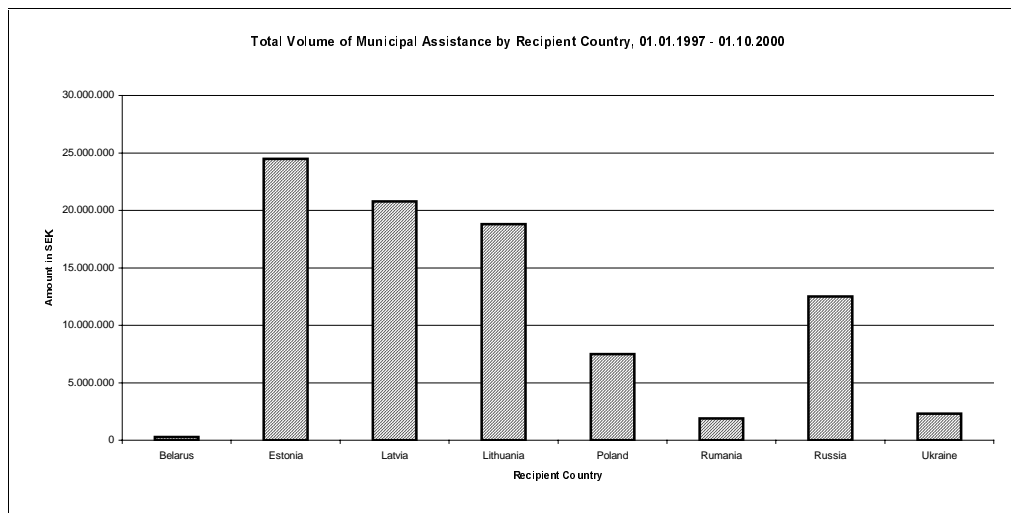
## 4 The municipal Sida twinning landscape

In the following, an overall picture of the SIDA-supported system is given based on the statistics available on all projects implemented between 01.01.1997 – 01.10.2000<sup>3</sup> and the 52 returned questionnaires from the Swedish municipalities.

### Results of the Analysis of Statistical Information

As shown in figure 1A, Estonia has received the largest sum in project assistance over the (almost) four years, almost SEK 25 mill. But Latvia and Lithuania come close with approximately 20 mill. each. There is a considerable distance to Russia with about 13 mill. and Poland with 8 mill. Ukraine and Rumania are lacking far behind with less than 3 mill. The assistance to Belarus has been negligible.

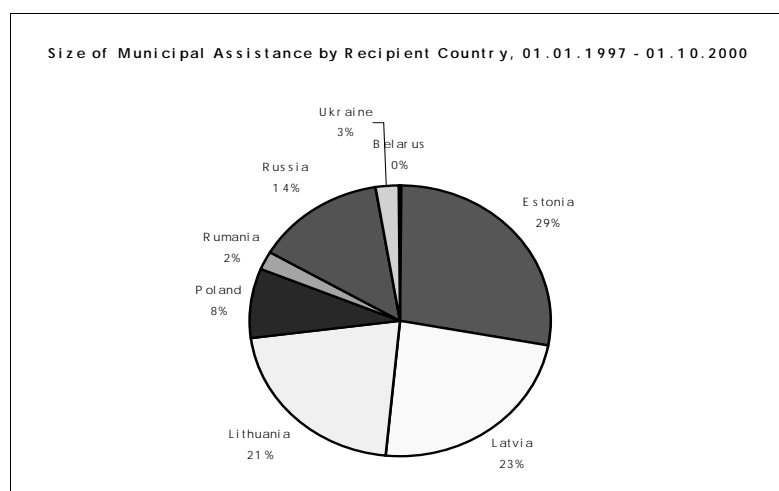
*Figure 1A*



Measured against the total amount of assistance in the analysed years, Estonia has received almost 30 percent and Latvia and Lithuania more than 20 percent respectively – a little less than three quarters of the total assistance, see figure 1B.

<sup>3</sup> In order to make the comparisons consistent, only figures from the full years 1997, 1998 and 1999 are included, when sequences over time are analysed.

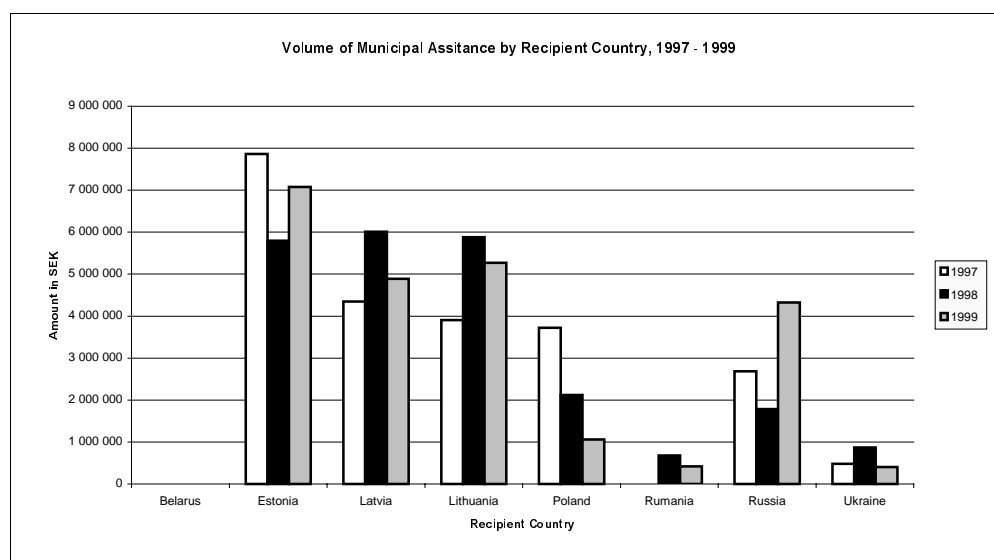
Figure 1B



As also shown in the figure, Russia's share has been about half and Poland's share a little more than a quarter of Estonia's. Thus, it is obvious that the three Baltic States with 73 percent of the total assistance have weighed considerably in the programme.

Looking at the distribution of assistance over the three years from 1997–1999, figure 1C reveals a rather stable picture in the Baltic states, while the assistance to Poland and Russia is characterized by two different developments: Assistance to Poland decreasing abruptly and assistance to Russia increasing sharply in 1999 after a decrease from 1997. This could indicate a preparation for phasing out assistance to Poland and a corresponding stepping up of assistance to Russia. However, the material does not allow any certain conclusions about this.

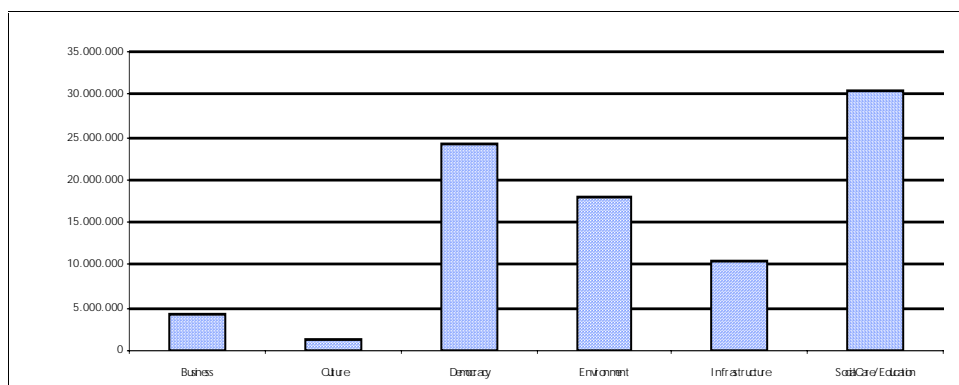
Figure 1C



From figures 2A, 2B and 2C it goes that social care/education projects have received the largest share of money, with “democracy” close behind. When assessing the amounts and shares, it should be taken into account that some overlapping between different groups cannot be avoided. Some of the social care/education projects certainly contain elements of environment and culture (as well as democracy), while projects concerning “democracy” might very well have changed content over the

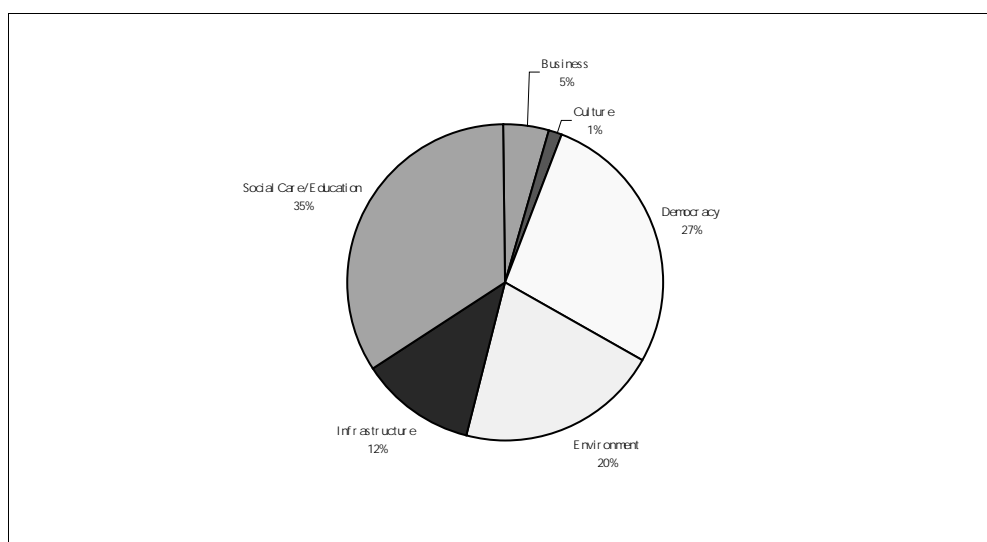
period – for example from more general to more concrete projects addressing problems of the of local institutions and involving both politicians, civil servants and service providers.

*Figure 2A: Total Volume of Municipal Assistance by Sector 1997–2000*



In spite of potential statistical problems, the figures do give a dynamic picture of the emphasis of the projects. There seems to be a particularly high degree of stability attached to the social care/education projects. The variations in amounts for democracy projects might to a certain degree relate to the need for specification of the content and the mentioned demand for more concrete projects concerning this subject. It must be remembered that “democracy” projects can include projects exclusively working with the political process in general as well as projects focusing on elements of the political-administrative institutions.

*Figure 2B: Percent Size of Municipal Assistance by Sector 1997–2000*



Amounts used on separate projects on environment and spatial infrastructure seem to be diminishing since 1998 (note again that 2000-amounts are not included).

Figure 2C

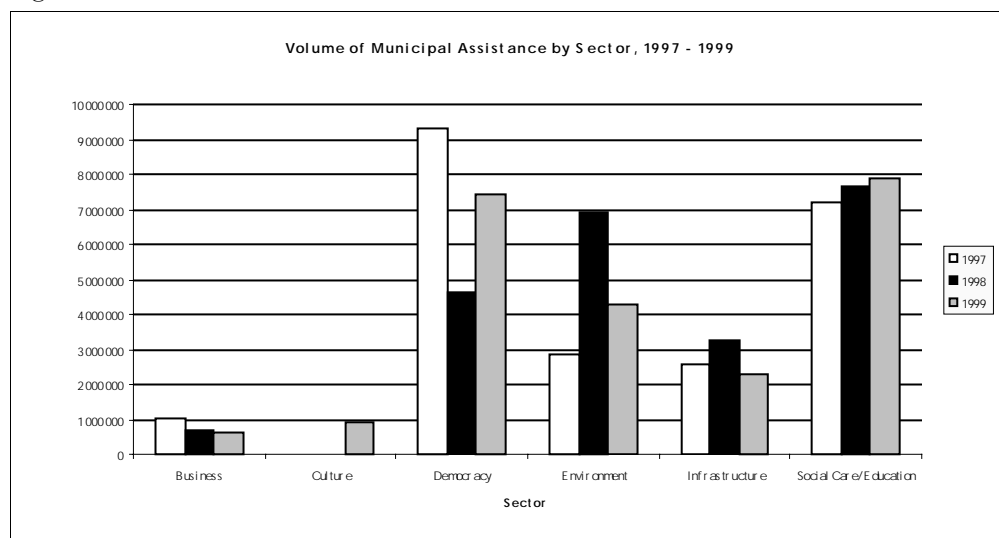


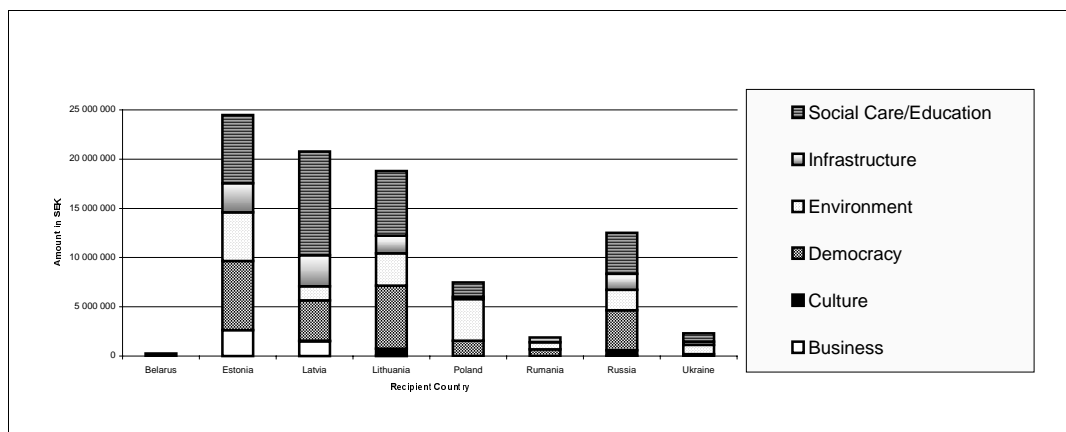
Table 3A shows considerable variations between municipalities concerning recipient countries – illustrating a high degree of complexity. There is a clear tendency towards concentration of the assistance effort on “nearest neighbours”. The bulk of the assistance from Southern Sweden is directed to Lithuania and the Kaliningrad region, from the East to Latvia, from mid-Sweden to Estonia and from Northern Sweden to North (West) Russia.

Table 3A: Direction of Assistance per Län

(in SEK 1000)	Belarus	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Rumania	Russia	Ukraine	Total	% of total assistance
Blekinge	0	0	0	2.891	1.425	0	1.497	0	5.813	6,56%
Dalarna	0	1.941	871	0	60	672	261	0	3.805	4,29%
Gävleborg	0	2.395	3.602	0	0	0	139	0	6.136	6,92%
Gotland	0	2.050	1.106	0	0	0	0	0	3.156	3,56%
Halland	0	222	0	0	888	0	466	0	1.576	1,78%
Jämtland	0	1.857	0	0	0	0	279	0	2.136	2,41%
Jönköping	0	463	734	571	1.958	0	0	0	3.726	4,20%
Kalmar	0	204	245	3.209	478	0	661	0	4.797	5,41%
Kronoberg	0	0	0	990	461	0	0	0	1.451	1,64%
Norrbottn	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.799	0	1.799	2,03%
Örebro	0	1.698	1.071	0	0	0	913	0	3.682	4,15%
Östergötland	0	631	7.161	2.827	0	497	0	0	11.116	12,54%
Skåne	275	806	30	2.706	1.468	0	805	0	6.090	6,87%
Södermanland	0	344	1.735	0	0	0	1.494	883	4.456	5,03%
Stockholm	0	3.670	3.625	1.185	0	0	1.427	22	9.929	11,20%
Uppsala	0	2.635	0	0	0	50	0	0	2.685	3,03%
Värmland	0	1.018	0	205	66	0	0	190	1.479	1,67%
Västerbotten	0	635	0	0	0	0	2.200	0	2.835	3,20%
Västernorrland	0	312	0	0	684	0	648	918	2.562	2,89%
Västmanland	0	444	0	0	0	0	0	0	444	0,50%
Västra Götaland	0	3.159	606	4.220	0	676	0	291	8.952	10,10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>24.484</b>	<b>20.786</b>	<b>18.804</b>	<b>7.488</b>	<b>1.895</b>	<b>12.589</b>	<b>2.304</b>	<b>88.625</b>	<b>100,00%</b>
% of total assistance	0,31%	27,63%	23,45%	21,22%	8,45%	2,14%	14,20%	2,60%	100,00%	

Figure 3B also shows a complex picture. Assistance to the different recipient countries has in the observed period of time usually been characterised by a mixture of subjects. There is a certain tendency to a larger share of the assistance being social care/education in Latvia than in the other CEE-countries. It has to be remembered, though, that the division of project content along subject lines is not very clear. A certain degree of overlapping for instance between democracy, environment and social care/education is unavoidable.

*Figure 3B: Total Volume of Municipal Assistance by Sector/Recipient Country 1997–2000*



Altogether the main impression is high activity from, especially, the Swedish municipalities bordering the Baltic Sea and with concentration of the assistance on near-by areas. Social-care/education projects constitute a considerable share of the assistance in the recipient countries. This is in line with the observed big (and apparently increasing) demand for these concrete projects in the recipient countries and the usually recognised positive outcome from them. At the same time, of course, it also contributes to emphasise the potential negative consequences of diminished funds for this programme in some of the recipient countries.

## The Survey Results

As far as the answers of the questionnaire from the 52 Swedish municipalities are concerned, some of the most important results can be summarised as below. According to the answers, a large degree of goal attainment for the twinning projects has been reached. On a scale from 0–5, more than 84 percent state goal achievement as corresponding to 4 or more (average 4.2).

There are relatively big variations concerning local actors involvement in the projects. While 84 percent of the answers state that politicians have been involved, only 42 percent state that it is the case for citizens (and 53 percent for local enterprises). It should be remembered here that the field visits revealed great variation in the way in which politicians are involved, ranging from pure formality arrangements to very active participation in decision making concerning project content and implementation.

A considerable variation is shown in the degree to which the local press (media) has been involved. On a scale from 0–5, 67 percent state 3 or more (30 percent and 10.5 percent state 4 and 5, respectively). A large share (almost 91 percent) of the responding municipalities have not received additional external funding on top of Sida money. The rest have received funds also from either other Swedish Government Agencies or the EU, mostly through Interreg or Sokrates funds.

About 65 percent answer yes to the question of some follow up on the projects. There is, however, a rather big variation in the specific content of follow-up activities according to the answers. Thus, for instance, follow up activities range from doing questionnaire surveys covering all beneficiaries over follow-up visits and consultations between the partners to regular (bi-annual and annual) evaluation meetings. Generally, the answers to these questions have to be treated with caution due to the complexity of projects, content and countries. This is especially the case concerning the question of availability of other funds. 37 percent have answered, that other external funds (than Sida-funds) are available.

According to the field visits, availability of alternative or supplementary funds (and the administrative procedures necessary to go through in order to obtain them) is very dependent on the nature of the projects – at least on the recipient side. The field visits thus made it hard to see any alternative funds for social care/education institution to institution projects especially in more peripheral areas. Almost 100 percent of the answering municipalities find that the programme/the projects have given positive experiences. Only few percent less answer yes to undertake similar projects in the future. Almost 37 percent found overall project success excellent, and 83 percent of the answering municipalities characterised it as 4 or 5 on a scale from 0 to 5.



## 5 The Relevance of Programme and Projects

In certain relations it is not possible to discern between for example the effects of län-projects and municipal projects in the same localities. When this is the case, it will be mentioned.

### In Relation to the Needs of the Recipients

According to our studies of the present societal situation in the CEE-countries and further to our talks with key informants in those countries, it is our conviction that on an overall level, decentralised support is still relevant in those states, because:

- They still suffer from heavy problems in relation to economy, distribution, social coherence/polarisation and norm confusion/degradation (crime etc.). Even though the surface has become glamorous as long as you stay close to the capital centres, distribution is so lopsided that overall economic growth has only recently brought most of the CEE countries back to the 1989 level. Therefore, parts of the population are in dire needs and most of the still considerable rural population live under poor conditions. Many of the twinning projects are responsive to those needs.
- It takes time for democratic attitudes to prevail throughout society. The rapid democratic imposition at the top has been a mixed blessing considering the nature of the political parties and the widespread lack of respect for the political class and lack of belief in political problem solution at all. In this connection, the twinning projects often contribute in a very down to earth way in the rehabilitation of public life.
- There is a large discrepancy between centre and periphery, even in the small Baltic countries, and the institutional situation level is often uncertain and unstable between the central and local government level concerning division of functions and finances. Decentralised twinning projects per definition help to ameliorate this situation and the Swedish twinning projects, including those of the län, are generally quite well distributed to cover the countries geographically.

### In Relation to the Swedish Policy Objectives

Also measured in terms of their contribution to the overall goals for the Swedish “East-policy” we generally find positive inputs, as detailed below under “Effectiveness”. In addition it should be mentioned, even though this is not an official goal for Swedish foreign policy, that the twinning projects contribute to creating a lot of goodwill and to enhance knowledge, interest and respect for Sweden in the recipient countries. Sweden is one among the leading donors in the CEE-countries but on the decentralised level, it is undisputedly the leading one according to our key informants. We had the opportunity to confirm this statement by witnessing numerous warm statements towards the Swedish partners during our field visits. As an illustration of the human and civil society relations between the partner countries, it is not rare to meet persons in the local partner communities who have learnt good Swedish language.

Finally, it should be noted that the Sida supported twinning programme is a quite unique arrangement internationally. This is not to say that the Swedish supported projects are necessarily always successful, but it does imply that it is a good idea to work with structures of a certain

standing and in-built sustainability like the local and regional authorities. Not least in the present situation with a lot of institutional and financial uncertainty at the local and regional level in almost all of the recipient countries, the locally based Swedish projects seem to have brought valuable contributions to sustainable institution building in a very concrete way.

While it is common that communities, especially in the Baltic countries, have twinning relations with several Nordic countries, sometimes organised in “twinning chains” Sweden is the only Nordic country with a specific support programme for twinning projects.

## **In Relation to other Donors**

Considering the general concentration of foreign aid on the central level, it appears established that on the municipal and regional levels, there are not too many donors. A growing number of other possibilities for technical and/or financial assistance under different EU-programmes do catch the attention of local and regional authorities. They already play an important role in practice and in the prospects for the future, but they are considered difficult to access and cumbersome to employ. The EU partnership schemes, referred to in Annex IV, require foreign partners. In certain cases, Swedish municipalities already play a role as this partner.

## **In Relation to the Geographical Distribution**

As shown in section 4, the Baltic countries have been the largest consumers of Sida supported twinning project. On the one hand there is no doubt an even greater need for support in other adjacent area like Northwest Russia. On the other hand one can argue with a certain strength that the likelihood of a positive outcome and a strong impact is bigger in countries like the Baltic ones, where mutual like-mindedness and motivation may be bigger.

Nevertheless, the field studies in the Kaliningrad region and in Poland revealed a strong motivation for continuing bilateral cooperation and for using it to support the institutional (political-administrative) structures at the local level. In spite of cultural differences, the twinning projects – not least institution-to-institution projects within education and welfare services – seem to have contributed positively to the strengthening of the institutional (and democratic/participatory) capacity in concrete ways.

There is no reason to think that motivation would be less in more peripheral places, and one could indeed argue that the need is particularly strong given their uncertain financial situation. Thus, the need for future assistance appears as much related to remoteness from the centre as to what countries are involved. The general observation that more effort could be made to achieve systematic spread effects of the projects pull in the same direction.

But of course problems of administration, language etc. often grow bigger and maybe even become prohibitive in more remote areas, and these problems seem to be somewhat country related – smaller in the Baltic countries, bigger in Russia. In Ukraine, the limited experience until now point at needs as well as successes and to the inherent difficulties in working with partners having very few resources to contribute.

## **Conclusion**

The above considerations lead us to the conclusion that Sida-support for twinning-projects in the CEE countries is still relevant at this stage. (The future is discussed in section 11)

## 6 Effectiveness

Supported by statements from numerous meetings and from the questionnaires, most of the project ideas originate from and are developed in Sweden, often as an outcome of a visit to the Baltic partners. However, the Swedish donors appear very keen to secure the sense of ownership with the partners, and the partners in their turn have mainly expressed confidence with the Swedish partner and satisfaction with the content of the resulting projects as well as with the process which implies that the paperwork is done by the Swedes. In relation to goal achievement there are indications of a high degree of effectiveness – not least institution to institution partnership and cooperation, for instance within social care and education.

### Effects in Sweden

From meetings and questionnaires a human and professional positive motivation effect among the municipal staff has been underlined. It has been reinforced by positive project outcomes, personal friendship relations developed with partner counterpart staff and the possibility of new and different professional challenges.

In particular, positive effects in Sweden seem to have been connected to concrete institution-to-institution projects where staff from institutions in the donor and recipient country – for instance schools - have worked closely together about course curricula, teaching materials, books etc. For the Swedish counterparts, teachers as well as students, this sort of co-operation has contributed to a deeper understanding of subjects like environmental problems.

There are relatively big variations concerning which local actors are/have been involved in the projects. While 84 percent of the answers state that politicians have been involved, only 42 percent state that it is the case for citizens (and 53 percent for local enterprises). It should be remembered here that the field visits revealed great variation in the way in which politicians are involved, ranging from pure formality arrangements to very active participation in decision making concerning project content and implementation.

A considerable variation is shown in the degree to which the local press (media) has been involved. On a scale from 0–5, 67 percent state 3 or more (30 percent and 10.5 percent state 4 and 5, respectively).

However, a certain twinning-fatigue can be identified – even concerning the institution-to-institution projects, which are generally regarded as the most successful. There is, for instance, not the same enthusiasm among Swedish youth for going to Eastern Europe as ten years ago. It is not so trendy anymore.

This is more a barrier than a sign of less positive effects for those actually involved on the donor side. But the challenge to overcome this barrier might increase in the future. More so, as Swedish enthusiasm for assistance to Russia for many reasons (less cultural cohesion, closeness, personal ties etc.) seems to be smaller than to both Poland and (not least) the Baltic States.

## Effects in the Partner Countries

It is considered adequate to assess the effectiveness according to the following dimensions in order to catch the essentials of twinning projects, of which part of the justification is, that more than technical assistance in itself should be provided, “added decentralisation value”. Thus we will attempt in the following to assess the effects of the projects in relation to the following objectives, in addition to the stated specific objectives of the individual projects:

1. The involvement of the surrounding community. The capacity of the projects to promote exchange and interactivity of persons, associations and communities.
  2. The involvement of the business community. The capacity of the projects to trigger off also business relations between the partners, including tourism, and subsequent economic growth
  3. Their relation to the objectives of the Twinning Programme and of the Swedish East-policy in general, being respectively the promotion of
    - democracy
    - professional competence in the local and regional administrations
- 
- gender equality
  - social sustainability
  - environmental sustainability
  - EU-adaptation

## In Relation to the Project Specific Objectives

Seen from the Swedish partners, the projects have been successfully attaining their objectives. According to the survey answers from the Swedish municipalities, a large degree of goal attainment for the twinning projects has been reached. On a scale from 0–5, more than 84 percent state goal achievement as corresponding to 4 or more (average 4.2).

Also seen from the CEE side, the partners are of the clear opinion that the projects have reached their goals, leaving the Swedes in a modest position by normally choosing rating 5. From our meetings, the satisfaction is confirmed, even though you often during the talks come across project elements which have after all hampered effectiveness.

In concrete terms, most of the projects in the partner sample met had reached the stated objectives. In a few cases, feasibility studies had been aborted because of lack of political back-up for their follow up, be it in Lithuania where the political part of the feasibility study had been forgotten. Be it in Sweden, where a new majority following elections decided not to give any more priority already planned projects.

It should be added here that the stated objectives of the projects in most cases are of quite simple nature, like holding a seminar, meaning that it is difficult to miss the objective in the literal sense and that the challenge is what kind of sustainable impact is left behind.

Among the statements on how effectiveness might be improved are:

- *The language problem.* Translation is always somewhat ineffective and inefficient. The problem is decreasing, concomitant with more widespread command of English. But it should still not be underestimated. The closer you come to the end beneficiaries as you try to do in projects with democratic and social objectives, the bigger it becomes.
- *Lack of adequate preparation of Swedish advisors.* At three out of seven meetings, it was a point of view that some of them had not grasped an adequate understanding of the context they were to function in, thus making them less effective. One possible way to ameliorate this situation would be to take inspiration from the cooperation between the Högskola in Kalmar and the twinning project holders in that län on high quality courses on the CEE countries. Another is to make more use of the Swedish embassies who have a forthcoming attitude towards sharing their knowledge with more of their fellow citizens who come to their countries for twinning projects.
- *Alleged lack of insight in budgets and confidence shown to Baltic partners.* At most of our meetings, the attitude was only gratefulness and confidence in the management ability of the Swedish partners, but it was also mentioned at several occasions that these Swedish partners had an inclination to control more than was necessary and adequate. Most often the Baltic partners did not know the budget, and at a couple of occasions they expressed the opinion that the project would be more useful for them if the insight was full.
- *It is a problem that it is not perceived possible to make project procurements of goods* but only advice. In some cases, advice would allegedly have been more valuable if supplemented with tangible things, possibly for demonstration purposes. The opening in the guidelines to do so seem never used.
- *Most secondments in Sweden of Baltic staff have been of only some days' duration.* However satisfied most of the seconded persons have been, it still appears that longer stays would have been more adequate for relevant training and learning. (The existing facility under the Nordic Council of Ministers for exchange of staff in the public sector appears unknown among both the Swedish and Baltic partners).
- Even though great flexibility is applied in designing and implementing follow-up projects when such a need is perceived, it is hard to escape the idea that *projects might often gain from being conceived for a longer period of time* from the beginning rather than being continued in a stepwise manner.
- Finally, the *lack of co-ordination* between the decentralised and de-concentrated Swedish donors is glaring, when you observe the same wheel being invented in new projects visited. Effectiveness benefits could no doubt be harvested from some simple experience sharing. Swedish units could sometimes twin a bit more among themselves.
- More *systematized gathering of experience of various kinds of projects and follow-up on these experiences* have often been mentioned as a valuable mean of increasing the quality of the projects in the future

A windfall profit on the effectiveness plus-side is the apparent fact that the very act of undertaking a *study tour together abroad has a positive effect* on the effectiveness and pleasure with which you work together back home. Not least in post communist states under rapidly changing norms where you are used to insecurity and to watching each other closely, it should not be underestimated to have a good time and new experiences under relaxed circumstances.

Finally, it seems even more important than in the past to take the often *unstable institutional and financial structure at the decentralised administrative levels* into account. Though there seems to be a certain fatigue with respect to loosely defined democracy projects, concrete twinning projects nevertheless prove important in stabilising local institutions – thereby providing a necessary condition for the desirable development.

### **In Relation to the Involvement of the Surrounding Community**

In the CEE countries, the projects often have a high profile in the local community, reflected in an often quite impressive coverage in the local press – as opposed to the national press in the capitals, where knowledge of decentralised twinning activities is close to nil. (Another indication of the cleavage between centre and periphery is the fate of twinning projects who end up in Baltic capitals where the municipal departments have quite a compartmentalised attitude to them, opposed to the high priority such projects are subject to in the towns).

According to our meetings and to the questionnaires, some mobilisation of the surrounding community does take place. But it should be noted that the CEE-countries for many reasons do not yet have the same tradition for a civil society as in Sweden. The surrounding community is therefore in practical terms often groups of specialists like teachers or pedagogues touched by the projects.

### **In Relation to the Business Community**

Even though economic and business development is not part of the objectives for Sida supported twinning co-operation, (there are larger funds for this purpose elsewhere in Swedish East-assistance) we have still often met the point of view that it would be natural and desirable that business grows out of friendship. Thus, Swedish municipalities declare that enterprises participate in twinning arrangements in almost 53 percent of the projects.

A resulting number of projects are directed towards development of local enterprise and of business relations between Sweden and the partners. One area of priority has been business activities directed especially towards female entrepreneurs. We have devoted some priority to the exploration of possible results in this area during the field studies.

The answers received are usually that valuable inputs have come through the twinning projects to new business centres and that especially for the women, it has been useful. Trying to specify the results, however, is usually difficult and after several attempts the conclusion appears to us that it is hard to find convincing tangible results of business development related to twinning projects. This observation corresponds with most of the key informants, not least the embassies who agree that business relations mainly depend on other factors.

### **In relation to the Swedish policy objectives**

In relation to the promotion of *democracy*, the projects directly geared towards political life were more outspoken in the beginning, some five-ten years ago. Since then, twinning projects have become more specialised into different sectors. This does not mean, however, that they have necessarily become less relevant from a democracy point of view.

Maybe on the contrary. The reputation of the initial democracy projects represents a mixed picture. Some users have been very satisfied, especially with the first projects of this kind, while the follow-up projects are described as less successful. One Nordic key informant characterised the beginning of the twinning as being too missionary on the Nordic part.

Anyway, given the societal conditions in the CEE countries as described above, any project strengthening and helping the large, old and new, vulnerable parts of the population must be considered as a contribution to real life democracy.

In practical terms this is not least the case for the projects directed towards social care, inside and outside institutions and to a certain extent also gender equality projects as the position of women has deteriorated over a broad range in the CEE-countries over the last 10 years. Also, as mentioned before, the inequality between capitals and province in itself provides decentralised technical co-operation with an element of democratisation.

Concerning the other overall objective for Sida supported twinning: *Strengthening of the professional competence in the local and regional administrations*, there is no doubt for us, after numerous talks over the issue, that this objective is fulfilled very nicely. The local civil servants receive so little inspiration, incitement and inputs from the governmental level that the personal contacts and the technical assistance from abroad has been of great value for their job motivation and professional growth.

This is the case for many different sector specialists, but also for the generalists of the administrations, whose representative at one of our meetings exclaimed that the collaboration with Sweden had taught them how to make planning in a non-Soviet way. Another specific skill, perceived as very useful by the Baltics and for which they gave credit to the twinning projects, was the ability to conceptualise and implement projects – and not least the fundraising part, writing applications and project documents.

Among the supplementary goals for Sida's East policy which are somehow also valid for the twinning programming, *security* is benefiting in the sense that a much demanded type of twinning projects for the time being is the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Several projects in the social sector contribute to social cohesion.

The most important *gender equalising* part of the Sida supported twinning projects is supposedly not those projects with specific women components, but in the projects related to social care and in the education sector (in particular primary and secondary school) projects in general. In these sectors large groups of highly qualified mainly female professionals are working with societal important issues at a low pay, with low esteem and little professional stimulation. We have met several examples of very successful projects in this sector, which has improved conditions not only for the end-beneficiaries but also given the staff more joy at work and increased job satisfaction and respect from their surroundings.

In addition, a study of our list of twinning partner persons met in the Baltic countries shows that a majority were women and those women were not in an inferior position or less vocal than the male part of the interviewees. Given the size of the sample, we regard it as established that a majority of the staff of the partner counties who work with the twinning projects are women. Therefore it makes sense to claim that the benefits accrued to this staff in human and professional terms, as mentioned above, also contains an element of gender equality.

From our above interpretations of security and gender equality, it follows that we regard many of the projects in these sectors as also contributing relevantly to the objective of *social sustainability*.

*Environmental sustainability* is specifically promoted by a number of projects, including Agenda 21 projects in the schools. But it does not appear relevant to claim that environmental concerns should be a crosscutting criteria in all projects.

Finally, support for the *adaptation to the EU* has mainly been visible through co-financing initiatives.

## Conclusions

Considering the different criteria to be meaningfully applied on relevance and effectiveness, it appears to us that the most effective projects – in terms of the needs of the beneficiaries, coverage of several of the goals for Swedish decentralised assistance and in terms of spread effect – are found in the social care/social assistance and educational (especially primary school) sectors.

The picture is more dubious regarding projects focusing entirely on formal democratic procedures, (which are gradually disappearing anyway), business and tourism projects whose effect is not very convincing and purely technical projects which mainly serve only their own delimited objectives.

In between, the environmental projects are in high demand and according to the observations, not least in Poland, they are very relevant and effective. Some of the projects take place in schools, involving both Swedish and Polish students and teachers, thus promoting different objectives at the same time.

In addition to the main observation of an overall high level of effectiveness of the Sida supported twinning projects, it seems rather obvious that in some projects, advantages could be achieved and effectiveness enhanced from

- some limited procurements of goods, for example for the social care institutions
- more adequate preparation of Swedish seconded staff in relation to the task
- longer duration of stay for Baltic staff on secondment in Sweden
- an increased degree of openness towards the recipient partners in the preparatory phase eg. through participation in the planning and budgeting.



## 7 Sustainability

Sustainability is a difficult issue to deal with for small and short projects, where a large part of any lasting effect takes place in people's minds. More so, as they often take place as a part of a larger process together with the host and possibly other foreign donors. Of course, projects whose effectiveness is not convincing will also not be sustainable. In reverse, we have come across projects with in-built continuation and obvious results in terms of both partner staff enthusiasm and results for the end-beneficiaries where there is no doubt about their sustainable nature.

In between, there is a large group of projects about which we have to say that we do not know for sure. Still there are good arguments for expecting that most of them will not be wasted, even if the partner staff may not be able to recall their existence a few years later as we have often experienced. Because any output is enshrined in a mainly stable partner structure as well as in a development of human resources with those partners.

An inevitable price to pay for democracy is inbuilt reduction of sustainability on the part of the projects efforts invested in the elected representatives of the people since these have changed rather often at the elections in the new democracies. Even though the opposition would in principle benefit as much from democracy projects as the ruling party, the prevailing attitude we have met is that the investment is regarded as wasted among the recipient community. Maybe because it is a widespread attitude that political practice is strongly combined with the exercise of power in a more literal and open sense than in older democracies.

On the Swedish side, we have come across an example of project interruption as a result of a changed majority in the donor municipality after elections in Sweden. The new majority decided not to do anything to follow up on a feasibility study on water purification which had been undertaken in a project under the previous rule. The recipient community was of course not very happy with this development, where one might have expected a stronger moral obligation for continuity on the Swedish side.

This is not to say that lasting effect is granted in any circumstance, especially not when the small initiatives we are usually referring to are one time shots, without follow up, as it is sometimes, but rarely the case. It goes without saying that continuity in the activity is strongly conducive to sustainable results. Another factor promoting sustainability is consciousness about the political feasibility, meaning in practice often that it is wise to include top decision makers, even if they do not have a clear cut professional role to play.

Finally, the survey shows that less than 20 percent of the responding Swedish municipalities would undertake similar projects without external funding. This result, of course, represents a major challenge to the sustainability of twinning projects – for example during and after phasing out under “normal neighbour relations”.

### Conclusion

Small and short projects can normally not prove sustainable results, but granted the partner context there is good reason to believe in durable effects. In particular when continuity in the contact has taken place over a number of years.

## 8 Impact

Also the question of whether the projects have a durable and a spread effect additional to their proper accomplishments is difficult to measure for projects of this kind. In a few cases, projects have been so spectacularly successful and with sufficient communication outlets for the success to be safely established on a wider, regional and national cases scale. In such cases it surely makes sense to speak about impact, like in below example from the collaboration within social care between Utena and Lidköping.

Clearly it is an advantage for impact creation as well as for sustainability that the projects are linked with durable structures with a wider reach than the project area. This is, however, not often the case. Rather one must note that potential impact is severely constrained by the un-coordinated and sporadic nature of most of the projects and by the lack of support mechanisms for spreading the effects when they are good, even though fortunately examples in the opposite direction may also be demonstrated, as below.

Finally, it can be argued with some strength that additional to a possible impact from individual project or partner collaboration, an impact can be traced on the national level, once the twinning arrangements are many and good enough to raise the level of the decentralised or de-concentrated public sector.

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### *Good Practice Example*

#### **Training of Social Care Staff in Lithuania**

*One of the major Lithuanian towns, Utena, had a comprehensive co-operation with Lidköping over a number of years. In 1999 comprising no less than 3 projects with added budgets of SEK 700.000. Two of these were on training of staff, social pedagogues, in the social care institutions. No less than 100 staff, almost all women, have received training which included courses and secondments in Lidköping.*

*The chief pedagogue we met was very satisfied with the outcome, and there was no doubt for her that the project had led to a sustainable change of practice in the institutions, helped by tailor made manuals versioned from Sweden. Also impact seemed granted by the active participation in the project by the Social High School in Utena. At least at the county level, possible also at national level, depending on the communication among the education institutions in the field.*

*Photo: Combined social assistance and democracy projects have subsequently trained practitioners and politicians. The municipality and län of Gotland participated such initiatives in Saaremaa (Ösel) and Tukums, Latvia, where Sarma Upeslaja co-ordinates the activity.*

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## 9 Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency

When raising the question if the projects are effective when compared to their costs, a number of general considerations and viewpoints use to pop up:

1. Twinning projects are cost-effective for the Swedish state and taxpayers, because Sida support works as seed money for additional contributions from the län, typically in the shape of unpaid work. Thus, we were told that the rule of thumb is that the value of the municipalities' own contribution is as least as big as the Sida support.
2. Thanks to the additional results of the twinning projects in terms of engagement, learning and understanding, the total results in relation to the costs are amazingly good compared to the costs of so many other assistance programmes whose effects are more doubtful. (Statement brought forward by the Swedish embassies).
3. Cost-effectiveness is in a bad shape because disproportionately large parts of the budgets are used for travel, accommodation and meals. (Viewpoint of some letters to the editor in Swedish press).
4. Cost effectiveness is low because Swedish advisors are very expensive compared to the local ones. (Brought forward by some of the Baltic partners).

Obviously, not all statements can be correct at the same time. For instance 1) and 4) are contradictory: If all the advice was provided for free, it cannot be expensive. However, it was difficult for us to find supporting evidence for the municipalities contributing at least as much as Sida. That Sida-money is a major contribution is also indicated by the before mentioned: That rather few Swedish municipalities are willing to undertake similar projects without external funds.

So, statement no.1 is not entirely correct any more. No.4 is probably correct, but there is not much to do about it, because Swedishness is a necessary part of the rules from which so many other benefits accrue – which does not exclude that there might be scope for more collaboration between Swedish advisors and local ones. In a similar way, it is unavoidable that in decentralised, participatory projects, travel and related expenses will necessarily be a relatively big part. No. 3 will therefore be disregarded as well, leaving no.2 as the most valid statement on a general level.

Based on our studies and observations on the project level, we tend to agree. With the exception of the unavoidable, few failures, the Swedish taxpayers get good value for their money in the twinning projects. And even the seed money concept does acquire a new meaning thinking in EU-subsidy terms where co-financing and/or international consortia is often required. In both cases, Sida funds are still more frequently used to trigger off new and usually larger funds from the EU-programs.

Does this also mean that the programme is always efficient – in other words could the same results have been obtained in a cheaper way? Definitely not always, as we have seen examples of different and sometimes quite high remunerative claims in budget proposals. But apart from this observation we have not observed or heard of any cases of exaggerated use of funds. On the contrary do the involved people appear very serious and do in some cases add from their own time or funds to the projects.

## 10 Administration

Overall, we think that small and short projects should not be exposed to the same demands in terms of procedures and document writing as big ones, not to risk to kill the enthusiasm. Hence, the type of paperwork on which the projects have been based, applications and reporting, appears quite coherent in our eyes in most cases. Over the years considered, it has been increasingly influenced by the use of the inherent philosophy of the LFA-method (Logical Framework Approach).

In certain cases, we have met elaborate thinking in the applications. Like for instance in those from Linköping, in 1999, which amounted to six different projects with an aggregate Sida grant of circa SEK 1.650.000, thus largely superseding the 450.000 limit for individual projects.

All these projects were for collaboration with Kaunas, the second city in Lithuania. Two of them on democracy. These were reported to us as a bit disappointing follow up to a democracy project in the early nineties for which everybody was enthusiastic. Another one served to improve the University Library and still another to promote collaboration within the Fire and Rescue Service. These were reported as successful and Fire & Rescue believed they also taught the Swedes a lot.

Still, it is surprising that all the money and the thinking invested in those projects is not reflected in a more cohesive approach from the same donor together with the same recipient

Even if the projects are quite well monitored and reported, there appears to be, as indicated by the above example, a need for more systematic evaluation to reflect on practice.

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*Good practice example*

### Civil Society in Tukums

*In the Latvian town of Tukums, collaboration between län, municipality and civil society in Gotland (and Tidaholm) with a very dynamic town and region leadership in Tukums provided an example of outstanding results, including many levels of activity and types of projects. Among these is water purification, teacher training in environmental matters, women and democracy (together with Saaremaa in Estonia), the creation of an NGO Centre and a number of young people attending a folk high school in Tidaholm. Tukums has also active relations with twins in other Nordic countries and uses the funds as co-financing and joint arrangements to obtain PHARE and other EU funds.*

*Photo: The well equipped Red Cross building in Tukums was first erected many years ago in Gotland, Sweden and subsequently dismantled and re-erected in Tukums.*



## 11 The Future

The perspective looming in the horizon for the Sida supported twinning programmes is their replacement by “normal neighbour co-operation” within the new European realities.

As shown in Annex IV, it is in principle possible to mobilise funds for twinning from numerous EU programs, together larger than the Sida present funds for this purpose.

At the same time, however, it must be taken into account that many Swedish and CEE-partners complain about lack of information, accessibility, timeliness of decision making and payments and of effectiveness in relation to the EU funds, indicating that these do not replace the flexible Sida funds as automatically as one might have believed. At least not at this stage.

In a full membership future, some of these problems must be expected overcome – but still it will be difficult to find EU-funding for projects related to social care and schools. In some cases, however, Sida finance interacts with EU finance:

- Sida funding may be forerunning larger EU-financed projects having become possible by the acquired partner competence
- Sida funding covers co-financing requirements

Also, the existence of the more modest, but more easily accessible funds for twinning related purposes from the Nordic Council of Ministers should be reckoned with, even though knowledge of their existence seems small. In addition to the EU-perspectives, normal neighbour relations will imply the same as it has “always” been: Twinning without state support, that is to say typically civil society interaction mainly related to culture and sport and exchange of persons, maybe most notably politicians, schoolchildren and their teachers – in addition to possible business relations.

The limiting factor is the ability of the municipalities to mobilise flexible resources for international purposes and it appears natural for us that Sida support for this purpose continues as long as they function as seed money in this respect.

That is, as long as the recipient countries are non EU-members. It is agreed by most partners and observers that after full membership, conditions will be different. But this is not agreed by everybody. Some, including staff at Swedish embassies, think that flexibility and value of the twinning projects are so positive that they ought to continue also after EU-membership. The field visits support this viewpoint to the extent it is hard to see how alternative external funds for some of the most valuable social care and education projects can be established in a foreseeable future especially in more peripheral areas – whether the countries are members of EU or not. Thus, in Poland a majority of the projects visited in this sector experienced difficulties in finding any finance, apart from the Sida funds, to undertake such projects.

In Poland, Sida support has been phased out and is only provided for environmental projects. It does appear that the contacts established with Swedish partners is maintained after the termination of the Sida support, albeit at a different scale. This is more so for the larger municipalities and voivodships (regions). At this level it appears that the cooperation with the Swedish partners often has a history and size, and comprises mutual interests, which imply that Sida funds are not a precondition for maintaining the cooperation. The Polish partner feel that they have established “normal neighbour relations” to their Swedish partners and focus is now on having EU projects with the Swedish partner. In the smaller municipalities the situation is different, as there is little

capacity and little access to funds to deal with projects, which goes beyond the twinning type of projects. EU applications are difficult to deal with and access, and the Swedish partner (e.g. a School involved in an Agenda 21 project) has little own means to finance continued cooperation. In the absence of Sida support the future for this type of “small scale” cooperation appear to be more uncertain.

There appears to be a potential for tripartite projects, where the experience of twinning partners in Poland and in the Baltic Countries is fed into projects with partners in e.g. Russia. Such tripartite cooperation is already taking place through e.g. the Euroregion Baltic (involving i.a. Kaliningrad, Elblag, Klaipeda, Kalmar and Karlskrona), and Agenda 21 projects in Poland have included partners from Russia. The experience of some Polish and Baltic partners is that they are being approached by municipalities and institutions in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus who want to use the experience and established networks of Polish and Baltic entities as a lever for their own engagement in international cooperation and as a platform for approaching the EU. It was a wish among a number of partners consulted that more such tripartite arrangements be established, holding potential for sharing of experiences and lessons learnt and paving the way for increased regional cooperation. However, the funding available for such tripartite projects, notably within the “soft” areas, appears to be limited.

## **Conclusions**

The needs for what the twinning projects can provide are still present in the CEE countries, and the real limiting challenge for them appears not to rest in modest state support, but in keeping the psychological momentum among the Swedish actors in the future.

Another argument for continuing the program, is its in-built ability to help to mobilise EU funds which are otherwise difficult to access. This is EU adaptation in a practical way.

## 12 Overall Conclusions

While not repeating the above concluding statements, the overall conclusion is that the municipal Sida supported twinning projects 1996–2001 have been relevant, effective, cost effective and efficient:

- Relevant with the only qualification that such support might be even more relevant in other recipient countries
- Effective generally, but more in some sectors than in others and with a scope for improvement
- Cost effectiveness is the main picture, even though it is not quite as high as often claimed

Concerning sustainability and impact there are limits to a precision with which these dimensions are measurable. Nevertheless, there are good arguments to claim a mainly high degree of sustainability and the tracing of some impact. But along both dimensions there is scope for improvement, especially regarding impact.

Concerning the administrative arrangement, its ways of working generally appears satisfactory in spite of a certain unevenness. However, more systematic monitoring and evaluation would be beneficial.

In relation to the future, it appears beneficial to the needs of the beneficiaries and to the interests of Swedish foreign and aid policies to endeavour to continue to use and fertilise the resources embodied in the municipalities.

Under all circumstances, it seems valuable to systematise more the lessons learned and to use experiences harvested for systematic follow up on implemented projects. This is emphasised by the vulnerable situation concerning the financing of many local governments in the recipient countries. Systematic assistance can contribute in a very valuable way to the institutional and democratic sustainability and empowerment.

## 13 Lessons Learnt

1. As mentioned in the beginning, the Sida supported twinning programs is an internationally unique arrangement, which can, therefore, be regarded as an experiment. The lesson is that this experiment has been successful. It has benefited people and institutions who needed it, it has benefited Sweden's standing in society at large in the recipient countries and it has mobilised good will and creativity among the staff and the citizens of the communities and given them new and appreciated challenges.
2. Among the motives for engagement in twinning projects are city council member and staff motivation; a genuine wish for helping the new neighbour nations and a wish for building up resources for international activities. In practical terms, city council member and staff motivation, including the development of good, human relations with counterpart staff, appear the decisive factor to keep up momentum in the activities, thus improving the prospects for effect and impact.
3. It is important that the twinning is not kept within the ranks and files of the political community but broadened to include large parts of civil society to obtain sustainability. This may require an active support on the part of the politicians.
4. Decentralised foreign policy and development assistance necessarily contain a certain element of chaos, seen from an overall perspective, to allow the local initiatives to flourish. In this way, the added decentralised and human value which makes the difference to the central policies, is created. However, there are no hindrances for enhancing effectiveness and impact of the local initiatives by creating a simple infrastructure for common preparations and for common learning through the sharing of experience. As recommended above, this might be promoted both in Sweden and in the recipient countries. Such initiatives can and will not be realised by the actors themselves but require the action of co-ordinating bodies.
5. In the future, new adjacent areas will be more relevant for the highest intensity of Sida supported twinning intervention. Still staff, for instance from the Baltic states supposedly to be among the first ones to be phased out, may have an important role to play in assisting the establishment of such twinning in Russia and other countries to which they may have more easy cultural and language access.
6. The limiting factor, and the socio-psychological and political challenge for Swedish donors, is to uphold societal engagement for doing an effort in the CEE countries. The challenges of twinning are not automatically the most trendy ones nowadays.
7. Institution-to-institution projects leave positive experiences – not least within social care and education – but they have limited possibilities to obtain alternative funding, irrespective of EU-membership. Their importance is underlined by the fragility of the institutions at the regional and local level in most of the recipient countries. The declared policy of decentralisation has usually not been followed by fixed arrangements concerning finances and functions between the central and regional/local levels. In this situation, the above-mentioned projects may provide an important contribution to institutional stabilisation and to the establishment of a sustainable base for local empowerment.



## 14 Recommendations

Based on the above observations and conclusions, we recommend the following:

1. Sida supported twinning projects should continue until the EU membership of the recipients is in place, then be revised with a view to possible termination or appropriate adaptation, pending an assessment of the possibilities for EU-financing.
2. It should be considered to continue the funding of institution-to-institution projects in a transition phase, even after EU-membership.
3. To enhance effects and impact, stronger focus should be placed on the social and educational sectors, together with the institutional competence of local government at the expense of especially business development and technical projects.
4. The experience gathered should be systematised and for future use in implementation
5. The approval time frames should be prolonged to a maximum of three years, with appropriation ceilings that are correspondingly higher. This also in view of assuring the survival of project started in a period of time when phasing-out may be approaching.
6. Standard application and reporting forms, reflecting the LFA check list in a simple form, should be applied. In the case of applications for several years, larger than the one-year ceiling, more comprehensive forms should be applied.
7. Standard preparatory seminars for persons engaged in twinning co-operation should be developed and easily accessible, similar to Sida-courses for staff with foreign assignments, however smaller
8. Sharing of experience on technical assistance for the CEE-countries between the decentralised and de-concentrated parts of the Swedish public sector should be ensured in simple way. For example a combination of a homepage, a quarterly newsletter and a yearly conference on the issue, with space for interactive debate, for the municipal and the läns-program together. Courses in skills, like how to approach funding sources would also be natural task for these bodies, in which partners could participate.
9. Limited use of local consultants should be encouraged when in close cooperation with the Swedish advisors. Also limited procurements of goods could be beneficial, e.g. for demonstration purposes.
10. Project preparation and budgets should normally be transparent for the partners abroad.
11. Initiatives should be taken to increase the impact in the recipient countries by strengthening spread and communications mechanisms. Projects with the associations of local authorities, and/or relevant ministries should be jointly prepared by the municipal and the läns-programs. Internet homepages could be used more for communication, while not forgetting that many of the small and most needy partner in the rural areas do not yet have access to this technology.

# Annex I

## Terms of Reference

### Evaluation of the Sida Supported Twinning Cooperation on the Local Level in Central and Eastern Europe

#### 1 Background

Well-developed local governments are widely accepted as a main prerequisite for the development of functioning democracies and economies. Whereas Central and Eastern Europe has experienced nearly half a century with strong centralistic and hierarchic systems, Sweden has a long tradition and is well regarded in the field of local and regional self-government.

Decentralisation and the development of well functioning and democratic local authorities has thus been an important objective of the Swedish bilateral development co-operation in Central and Eastern Europe since the political changes in the beginning of the 90'ies.

One important method in promoting a democratic and economic development at the local and regional level has been through the establishment of the so-called Twinning Co-operation.

Swedish local authorities have implemented the majority of the projects through the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALA). The county administrative boards as well as the county councils, through the Federation of County Councils, are the two main Swedish partners on the regional level.

A total of SEK 90 million has been channelled through Sida since 1995, as funding of the co-operation. In view of the relatively extensive support in this field and the importance to value long-term results and the impact on the process of development on local and regional level, Sida has decided to undertake an evaluation.

Evaluation and audit regarding the Twinning Co-operation on the local level was previously undertaken in 1996 (evaluation) and in 2000 (audit).

#### 1.1 Aims and Objectives of Swedish support to the CEE Countries

Specific guidelines have been developed in close co-operation with SALA in order to guide planning and implementation of the twinning program. These guidelines are the basis for the co-operation. Furthermore, the Swedish government has approved country strategies for all countries taking part in the twinning co-operation on the local level, except Romania, and these documents guide the direction of the Swedish bilateral assistance in a broader sense.

The overall aim of the Sida support to Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to the Twinning Program on the local level, is to contribute to a;

- common security
- deepened culture of democracy

- socially sustainable economic transition
- environmentally sustainable development

The specific objectives of the twinning-program on the local level is specified in the guidelines (Annex X) with the focus of strengthening the democracy and increasing the competence within the local administrations.

The adaptation to the EU has been another key feature of the program since 1999. Equality between men and women shall be an integrated part of the whole program.

The twinning-program between local authorities in Central- and Eastern Europe and Sweden should, according to the guidelines, have a focus on transfer of knowledge, institutional development, development of competence and economic co-operation. The co-operation with the authorities in the Baltic Region should moreover promote a regular co-operation between neighbouring countries (normalt grannlandssamarbete).

The twinning co-operation has over time evolved from being focused on promoting democratic principles, structures and working methods, to specific activities in areas such as environment, education and private sector development. The projects are generally small and low-cost projects and they are mainly utilising staff-members of the local authorities.

## 2 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to acquire knowledge about the relevance, effects, impact, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the twinning co-operation support so far. The specific task is to evaluate the results and to assess, the impact of the interventions brought about by the local authorities in Central and Eastern Europe between the years 1996 and the present.

The purpose is also to point out future development possibilities as well as lessons to be learned and to make recommendations to Sida on future support and organisation of the support to twinning co-operation on the local level (objectives, relevance, methodology, performance and administration). The evaluation should take into account changes in the relevant environment of the organisations on regional level for example regulatory changes or changes in the political context or administrative reforms that could have an impact on the co-operation. The phasing out of Swedish bilateral assistance to the EU-candidate countries is one important example in this respect.

The evaluation shall cover the twinning co-operation with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Russia.

Sida is also undertaking an evaluation of the regional twinning programme. A broader analysis on the decentralised co-operation is desirable (e.g. co-operation between municipalities and co-operation between county administrations) The evaluation of the local twinning programme should therefore be comparative discussed/analysed with the evaluation of the county administration programme.

### 3 Issues to be covered in The Assignment

#### 3.1 The evaluation

##### *Relevance:*

How do the program approach, goals and services carried out by the Swedish counterparts relate to the objectives as defined by the Swedish government and Sida, and to the needs at the local level in CEE?

To what extent do the local authorities in Sweden and in CEE have an interest in a long-term mutual co-operation (“normalt grannlandssamarbete”)? Are there any differences between sectors and countries?

##### *Effectiveness:*

To what extent has the twinning-program achieved the results as outlined in the guidelines and the overall objectives for the Swedish co-operation in CEE? Is it possible to distinguish any clear results of the program? Reasons for high or low achievement of goals. Are there any differences between countries and sectors as regards the fulfilment of the objectives? Cost effectiveness: Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources or with an alternative approach?

To what extent can the support estimated to have achieved long-term effects and strategic impact in the recipient countries (sustainability)?

Has gender-, environment-, and EU-integration (in the EU candidate countries) aspects been an integrated part of the program? What effects can be seen?

##### *Other issues to be covered:*

To what extent do the local authorities use other financial sources (EU and others) for this kind of co-operation? The relevance and sustainability of future co-operation and assistance from Sida. How shall possible future co-operation be directed in view of phasing out Swedish assistance? What possibilities are there for other ways of funding (EU etc.)? Make recommendations to Sida on future organisation of the support to local governments with regard to changes in goals, content, relevance methodology, performance/implementation).

The Consultant shall also make an assessment of areas of priority for continued support and co-operation.

#### 3.2 The comparative study

A broader analysis on the decentralised co-operation is desirable (e.g. co-operation between municipalities and co-operation between county administrations) The evaluation of the local twinning programme should therefore be comparative discussed/analysed with the evaluation of the county administration programme. The results from the evaluation of both local twinning-programmes and regional co-operation between counties shall be taken into account when making the final recommendation of Sida's support to local and regional co-operation.

## **4 Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule**

### **4.1 Method of work**

The evaluation may consist of the following parts (the Consultant is encouraged to make amendments to the methodology or to propose an alternative approach):

**Documentation Study:** Written documentation, including project proposals, reports and strategies, guidelines shall be studied. To collect the required material the Consultant will review relevant documentation at Sida and SALA.

Interviews with relevant actors, in Sweden as well as with counterparts in Central- and Eastern Europe (to be clarified in the inception report). Field visits should be made to all countries except Ukraine.

The Consultant *shall* prepare an *inception report* and present this to Sida and SALA. The report shall clearly and concretely specify and motivate the approach and methods to be applied in performing the assignment, including those employed in the various task of the assignment. The Consultant shall also provide a detailed time and work plan for fulfilment of the assignment. As the method of work shall be decided in co-operation with Sida and SALA, the tender should therefore be brief as regards the method of work.

### **4.2 Evaluation team**

At least one of members in the Evaluation Team shall have substantial knowledge and experience in evaluation methodology. Knowledge and experience from decentralisation issues, democratisation, and local administration shall moreover be available within the team. In addition, the team shall have documented experience from work in Central- and Eastern Europe.

A binding list of staff shall be part of the tender (please see Invitation to Tender).

### **4.3 Time schedule**

The inception report shall be presented to Sida and SALA not later than 3 weeks from the commencement of the assignment.

The Consultant shall in the inception report provide a detailed time, work plan and method of work for fulfilment of the assignment.

The time estimated for the fulfilment of the assignment is 15 man-weeks.

A draft report shall be presented to Sida not later than September 15th.

### **4.4 Undertakings**

The Consultant will be responsible for practical arrangements in conjunction with international missions and other visits. Sida will make available or cause to make available all written material (strategies, guidelines, reports, project documents, project completion reports, etc.) deemed to be of relevance to the evaluation by the Consultants and Sida. Responsible officer at Sida will inform the Swedish counterpart of the forthcoming evaluation.

## 5 Reporting

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes. Format and outline of the report shall follow the guidelines in *Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardized Format*. 3 copies of the draft report shall be submitted to Sida no later than September 15th, 2001. Within 2 weeks after receiving Sida's and SALAs comments on the draft report, a final version in 5 copies and on diskette shall be submitted to Sida. Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 6.0 for Windows (or in a compatible format) and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

The Comparative Study between the twinning co-operation on regional level and the twinning co-operation on regional level should be a separate report not exceeding 10 pages. A draft report should be submitted to Sida not later than September 15th, 2001.

The following enclosures shall be attached to the final report:

- Terms of Reference
- List of persons interviewed
- List of documentation

The evaluation assignment includes the production of a Newsletter following the guidelines in *Sida Evaluations Newsletter – Guidelines for Evaluation Managers and Consultants* and also the completion of *Sida Evaluation Data Worksheet*. The separate summary and a completed Data Work Sheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the (final) draft report.

## 6. Specification of qualifications

### 6.1 Compulsory qualifications

The tenderer shall meet the following qualifications:

#### *Staff resources for performance of the service*

The tenderer shall possess *documented knowledge, relevant professional background and experience* of similar assignments in a suitable combination within the requested areas of expertise (see 4.2), in addition to the analytical, linguistic and other skills. The tenderer shall further specify the qualifications of each member of the team and attach their individual Curricula Vitae (including name, address, education, professional experience, experience of work abroad and in developing and/ or transition countries), and shall state reference persons with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

The team shall possess knowledge of and experience from the countries selected for the evaluation, i.e. Central- and Eastern Europe.

The team must include members with good knowledge in spoken and written English and Swedish.

The team-leader shall have considerable experience from managing evaluations, preferably of the same size and character as the present.

### *Quality in performance of the assignment*

The approach and methods to be applied in performing the assignment shall be specified and motivated briefly in the tender.

The tenderer shall briefly present how they intend to make the comparative study of this evaluation and that of the Twinning Co-operation on Regional Level.

The tenderer shall account for his/her understanding of the assignment in his/her own words.

The tenderer shall provide a preliminary and brief *time and work plan* for fulfilment the assignment, including *a)* a manning schedule that specifies the tasks performed by and the time allocated to each of the team members, and *b)* estimates of the time required for the different tasks of the assignment.

Final reports including findings and conclusive assessments shall be presented to Sida not later than 2 weeks after receiving comments from Sida and SALA on the Draft Report.

### *Price and Other Commercial Conditions*

The tenderer shall present a budget, which differentiates between and proposes ceilings for *fees and reimbursable costs*, specified for the different elements of the assignment and for the different staff categories. *Total cost/price* shall be stated. All fees shall be stated hourly. All costs shall be stated in SEK, exclusive of Swedish VAT, but including all other taxes and levies. Individuals however shall state their fee exclusive of Swedish social contributions.

The tenderer shall state and specify any minor reservations as to the draft contract and Sida's General Conditions and propose alternative wordings, which shall however not lead to material changes of the present draft contract and conditions.

## **6.2 Preferred qualifications**

The tenderer should be ready to commence the assignment in week 26.

The tenderer should have sufficient knowledge in EU-financing mechanisms at the regional level as well as experience within the field of gender and environment.

The team should include members with good knowledge in spoken and written Russian.

## Annex II

### List of Persons Consulted

#### Sweden

Sida Öst

- Ms Marianne Tegman, Head of Division, Sida
- Mr Erik Wallin, Area Manager
- Mr Hans Lundquist, Area Manager

Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Mr Ulf Lewin, Ambassador, Head of Unit for Decentralised Cooperation
- Ms Margareta Torsein, Executive Officer

SALA-IDA

- Mr Steinar Langbakk, Programme Director
- Ms Margareta Gustafsson, Programme Manager
- Ms Jennie Andersson, Assistant Programme Manager

Representatives for Swedish municipalities:

- Ms Karin Dahlin, Eskilstuna
- Mr Lennart Kristiansson (Chapmanschool), Karlskrona
- Mr Göran Löfroth, Kramfors
- Ms Anna Paganus (Östhandelsforum AB), Norrtälje
- Ms Monika Mendment-Söderman (ibid), Norrtälje
- Ms Anni Persson, Piteå

#### Field Studies in the CEE Countries

##### Estonia

The Royal Swedish Embassy

- Mr Karl-Olof Andersson, counsellor
- Mr Carl-Henrik Andersson, trade commissioner, Swedish Trade Council

Information Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers

- Ms Kalli Klement, director
- Ms Merle Erm, adviser

UNDP: Ms Kristina Mauer, programme officer

The Association of Estonian Cities: Mr Kaimo Käärman, international relations officer

Focus Group Meeting (premises of the Association of Estonian Cities)

- Mr Michael Dubrovin, project manager (Narva)
- Mr Erwin Jürisoo, project manager (Türi)
- Ms Kairi Jõesalu, project manager (Vinni)
- Mr Jään Lõõnik, chief executive (Vest-Viru)



### **Hiijumaa (Dagö):**

Hiijuma County Council (premises of Kärddla Development Centre - Tuuru Foundation)

- Mr Aivar Pere, project manager
- Mr Matti Lüsi, project manager (freelancer)

Mr Mart Kaups, head of Technical Dept., Kärddla Municipality

Mr Ivo Eesmaa, headmaster (former mayor of Kärddla)

### **Saaremaa (Õsel)**

Saaremaa County Council

- Mr Madis Allik (head of Social Welfare and Healthcare Dept.)
- Ms Ene Kull (former chief specialist Healthcare Dept.)
- Mr Leo Filippov (chief specialist, Economic Dept.)

Mr Toivo Vaik, mayor, Kärla municipality

Ms Mari Sepp, beneficiary of the women & democracy project, Haeska hamlet

Pärnu County Administration

- Ms Epp Klooster, head of Social Welfare and Healthcare dept.
- Mr Urmas Kase, counsellor of regional development
- Ms Margit Kool, consultant

### **Latvia**

The Royal Swedish Embassy

- Mr Per Örnéus, councillor

The Information Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers

- Ms Hanne Petersen, director

UNDP

- Ms Inita Paulovica, programme manager.

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology:

- Ms Maruta Pranka, researcher
- Ms Ilze Trapeuciére, researcher

Focus Group Meeting (premises of the Union of Local and Regional Authorities of Latvia)

- Ms Dace Damkevica, co-ordinator of foreign affairs, ULRGL
- Mr Normunds Treijs, project manager (Riga )
- Ms Guna Kibere, business development officer (Rujiena)
- Ms Vita Brakovska, consultant (Jurmala)

Latvian Radio (Russian Language Section)

- Mr Valdis Paeglis, journalist,

Cesis County Council

- Mr Maris Niklass, chief executive
- Ms Rita Niklass, ass. chief executive (foreign affairs)
- Ms Inese Saigu, consultant

#### Tukums Town Council

- Mr Juris Sulcs, chairman
- Ms Liena Zervena, press secretary

#### Tukums County

- Ms Ludmila Krastina, head, Agricultural Advisory Bureau
- Ms Sarma Upesleja, chief, Social Assistance Office (local coordinator of women & democracy project with Gotland)
- Ms Velta Strupsmāne, coordinator NGO Centre in Tukums
- Jurmala Municipality: Mr Juris Hlevickis, vice mayor

### **Lithuania**

#### The Royal Swedish Embassy

- Mr Jan Palmstierna, ambassador
- Mr Kaj Persson, attaché

#### Information Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers

- Mr Knut Hjort-Johansen, director

#### UNDP

- Mr Tomas Baranovas, programme coordinator

#### Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania:

- Sarunas Radvilavicius, consultant

#### Focus Group Meeting (in the premises of Lithuanian Association of Adult Education)

- Ms Zita Sabelkiene, municipality of Utena, dept. of culture and education
- Mr Gedas Vaitkus, Institute of Ecology, University of Vilnius
- Ms Giedre Paunksniene, journalist, 11K TV (Vilnius Channel)
- Ms Olga Ugriumova, journalist, Russian Language Radio
- Ms Nadejda Doronina, journalist, the daily "The Republic"

#### Vilnius City Council

- Mr Romualdas Tavydas, head, foreign relations dept.
- Ms Angele Sabauskiene, dept. of Culture and Art

#### Kaunas Municipality

- Ms Daiva Palionyte, foreign relations officer.
- Ms Zyginta Reklaityte, library of Kaunas
- Mr Rutenes Lape, Kaunas fire and rescue service

#### Siauliai Municipality:

- Ms Audrone Jaugelaviciene, economic development officer,

#### Panavezys Municipality

- Ms Vilma Kucyti, head, Foreign Relations Dept., , co-ordinator of cooperation project with Kalmar
- Ms Zita Tverkute, head of ecology dept., ibid

## **Kaliningrad Region**

Association of Municipalities in Kaliningrad Region (AMKR)

- Mr Konstantin Gimbitskij, Executive Director
- Ms Anastasiya Kutsnetsova, local consultant

Kaliningrad City Council:

- Ms Nina Vychniakova, deputy head, foreign relations department

Baltiysk municipal district

- Mr Victor Koshelev, Deputy Head for spatial planning and foreign relations

Tacis office: Ms Alla Ivanova, adviser

Participants in Focus Group meeting (premises of AMKR)

- Mr K. Gimbitskij, AMKR
- Ms A. Kutsnetsova, AMKR
- Ms Elena Emilianova, manager, Baltic Institute
- Mr. V. Koshelev, Baltijsk
- Representatives Pravdinsk for and Sovietsk municipalities

## **Poland**

Euroregion Baltik, Elblag

- Mr Zdzislaw Olszewski, director

Region of Warmienseko-Mazurskie

- Mr Bogdan Twarowski, director, European Integration and International co-operation
- Ms Malgorzata Wasilenko, Project Manager

Municipality (gmina) of Piecki: Mr Piotr Juchimiuk, Mayor

Focus Group meeting (premises of Euroregion Baltik, Elblag)

- Ms Teresa Walipore, Gdynia
- Ms Alicja Czarnecka, Gdynia
- Mr. Jakub Klodziejczyk, Kwidzyn
- Mr Tomasz Styzata, Elblag
- Ms Dorata Wojceckowska, Gdansk
- Ms Danuta Golabek, Gorzow-Welikopolski
- Ms Elibieta Wysoczanska, Gorzow-Welikopolski
- Mr Zizstew Aszosc, Euroregion Baltyk
- Mr Krzysztof Kozlowski, Piecki
- Ms Romana Aziewioz, Rumie

BSSSC (Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation)

- Ms Krystyna Wroblewska, Director, Department of International Co-operation

Association of polish municipalities

- Ms Hanna Leki, adviser
- Mr Krzysztof Kozlowski, consultant

Secondary school no. 21 in Gdynia

- Ms Bernadeta Dolata, Head Master
- Ms Teresa Walipore, teacher

## Annex III

### List of Documents Consulted

#### Annual reports from SALA:

- 1/1 2000 – 1/11 2000 plus minutes from meeting 29.11.00
- 1/1 1999 – 1/10 1999 plus minutes from meeting 03.11.99
- 1/1 1998 – 1/10 1998 plus minutes from meetings 02.11.98
- 1/1 1997 – 10/2 1998 plus minutes from meeting 11.05.98
- 1/1 1997 – 30/9 1997

**Sida:** Evaluation 96/22: Svenskt stöd till Vänortssamarbetet. 1996.

#### Ernest & Young

- Rapport från granskningen av Sida:s stöd till Vänortssamarbetet – February 2000.

#### SALA and Swedish Municipalities

- Application schemes, budgets, reports and other information from various project files

#### The Swedish Government

- Regeringens proposition 1997/98 vedr. granlandssamarbete med Central och Östeuropa 1999–2001.
- Regeringens proposition 2000/01:119: Europa i omvandling – Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Central- och Östeuropa. April, 2001.
- Regeringens proposition 2000/01:42: Kommuner och landsting i internationell samverkan. November 2000.
- SOU 2000:122, Att utveckla samarbetet med Central- och Östeuropa

#### UD info

- Gott grannskap – Sveriges samarbete med Central- och Östeuropa. May 1998.

#### Regeringskansliet/UD – SIDA:

- Country strategies for the relevant partner countries, various years.

#### Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/T&B Consult

- Evaluation of the Danish Democracy Fund. 2000.

#### European Commission

- EU-tilskud. En oversigt over programmer, lån og støtteordninger. 2001
- EU Online web service
- Partners around the Baltic Sea, EU-project

#### Other:

- UNDP Human Development reports 2000 on all three Baltic countries
- Annual Reports from the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and ILO on the CEE countries
- A number of publications from the *Nordic Council of Ministers including* "Closer neighbours"
- The Baltic Sea – our common heritage, Swedish Institute
- Twin Town 2001, *SALA IDA AB*

Material on Local and Regional Government in the field study countries

## Annex IV

### Overview of EU Partnership Schemes

#### 1. Programmes in the pipeline targeted at local and regional authorities participation

##### **Phare Institution Building Programme for regions and cities.**

In view of the large need for transfer of experience to local and regional authorities in the candidate countries in connection with the accession to the EU there has for some time been work going on developing a new Phare programme on local and regional government level complementary to the existing Twinning Cooperation programme for central government level. This work is an initiative of Brussel based representatives of European cities and regions.

The programme under development has, according to available information, several features in common with the Sida programme for Twinning Cooperation on Regional and Local Level. Furthermore, considering the movement towards decentralisation of the day-to-day management of regional EU-programmes, e.g. as seen in the Community initiatives Swebaltcop and Interreg Baltic Sea Programme, there could be reason to expect a decentralised management also of this new programme.

A parallel *Tacis Institution Building Programme* is also in the planning phase. That would cover the non-candidate countries/regions in the Baltic.

#### 2. EU-programmes not targeted at Regional and Local authority participation, but covering parts of the Sida-programme themes (complementary and/or follow-up programmes)

##### **Phare Twinning programme.**

This programme is implemented on Central Government level involving only central institutions and organisations. In that way it is a complement to the regional and local efforts. The themes covered are environment, agriculture, finance, legal and domestic affairs.

##### **ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession)**

This programme is a kind of cohesion fund for the candidate countries and is managed by the candidate countries themselves. It aims at environment and infrastructure.

##### **The mainstream Tacis programme**

This covers a large range of sectors, however with 3 priority sectors chosen by the recipient country. The Russia and Ukraine have chosen the following focus areas: institution building, governance and private sector development. A Tacis twinning programme in parallel with the Phare Twinning programme is being developed.

### 3. Initiatives in other fora

On the multilateral level the following organisations are doing an effort to further the cooperation on regional and local level in the Baltic Sea Region:

The *Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC)* under the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). This organisation has, however, not own funds for projects, but acts as an initiator and coordinator.

The *Union of Baltic Cities (UBC)* also plays a coordinating and initiating role, but also without own project funds.

The *Nordic Council of Ministers* runs its own programmes for the Baltic Sea States especially in the education and social care area with a total yearly budget of 20 mill. SEK

Under the working title *The Northern Dimension*, EU has taken a series of initiatives aiming at better coordination and targeting of the numerous multilateral initiatives in the Baltic Region. Efforts are also done to alleviate the sometimes cumbersome application procedures.

### 4. Options and opportunities for increased use of EU programmes in a situation of phasing out of bilateral programmes:

First of all the Phare and Tacis Institution building programmes under development will be of special relevance. It will probably be worth following attentively the development, as there would in this phase be room working for a decentralised management of such programmes along the lines of the EU initiatives Interreg and Swebaltcop. It could furthermore be obvious to look for possibilities of using existing secretariat experience built up already under these programmes. This would also further a coordination of the activities and optimal pre-application advisory service.

To this one can add a series of programmes covering many of the same aspects as the Sida programme. Much depends on the outcome of the efforts to simplifying and streamlining the procedures.

Using the opportunities in an interplay between the Sida programme and EU programmes,

in some cases the Sida finance has the function as a forerunner to EU-finances projects and in some cases as the local contribution in larger EU-co-financed projects.

In the following projects:

- The Halland cooperation with Kaliningrad and the Warmienseko-Mazurskie region.
- The Karlskrona cooperation with Kaliningrad.
- The Swebaltcop-programme covering most of the Baltic Sea Region.

Sida-funds act as a forerunner for EU projects, the use of Sida funds as co-finance in EU projects as well as a way to broaden the scope of projects and bringing about a synergy effect both thematically and geographically.

## EU-cofunded programmes of interest for Swedish Local authorities in their cooperation with CEE partners in the Baltic Sea Region Multi-theme programmes

Programme	Relevant for Sida Cooperation theme							Application Handling		Eligible countries			Yearly EU-fin. (MSEK)		EU-co-financ Per Cent
	Demo-cracy	Envi-ron-ment	Socia Care	Edu-ca-tion	Infra-struc-ture	Cul-ture	Bus. Dev.	Brus-sels	Decentral.	EU	Cand. Count-ries	Other BSR count.	Total	Swed. share	
Interreg III B –BSR*) (Community initiative)	X	X			X				X	X	X	X	135	50	50-75
Tacis Bistro (small projects)	X				X		X	X	X	X		X	50	1.6	75-100
Tacis TwinCity	X									X		X	27	0,8	80
EU-Twin City fund	X									X			30	1	100
Recite II *) (Community initiative)	X	X		X			X	X		X			200	6	100
Total													472	89.4	

\*) 3 partners required

\*\*) co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Phare and Tacis Cross-Border Cooperation programmes.



## Thematic programmes

Programme	Relevant for Sida Cooperation theme							Application Handling		Eligible countries			Yearly EU-fin. (MSEK)		EU-cof. Per Cent
	Democracy	Environment	Social care	Education	Infrastructure	Culture	Bus. Development	Brussels	Decentralised	EU	Cand.*)	Other BSR count.	Total	Swed. share	
Leonardo daVinci				X			X	X	X	X	X		1,500	45	100
Socrates				X					X	X	X		2,650	50	100
Youth			X	X				X	X	X	X		670	20	100
Life III	X				X			X		X	X		1,150	35	30-60
Culture 2000						X		X	X	X	X		150	5	60
<b>Total</b>													6,120	155	

\*) Since the Copenhagen Council meeting in 1993 there has been an opening up towards CEE of the thematic programmes.

EU-schemes, total for both tables	6,592	244.4
Nordic Minister Council Schemes	80	(30)

### Basic EU financial sources:

- Phare (assistance to the EU-candidate countries): total finance 1.600 mill. euro/year.
  - Tacis (Technical Assistance to the CIS-countries): 450 mill. euro/year
  - Cohesion fund for CEE: ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession): 150 mill. euro/year.
- Sources: EU's Information Services' publication on EU's co-finance schemes, EU Online web service and the Nordic Council og Ministers' homepage.

## **Annex V**

### **Summary of Main Findings from the Evaluation of the Danish Democracy Fund**

In 2000, the Danish Democracy Fund was subject to an external evaluation of the Fund's 10 years existence. The evaluation focussed primarily on the period after 1995 and on the impact of the activities in the recipient countries regarding the accomplishment of the objectives of the Fund, i.e., "to promote and consolidate democratic processes and the respect for human rights".

To further this goal in the new democracies in Central- and Eastern Europe as well as globally, the Fund has supported approximately 5.500 projects – equivalent to DKK 563 million – over the years 1990–99. The majority of these projects have consisted of study tours to Denmark and scholarships at Danish Folk High Schools. In this way, an estimated 70.000 visitors have established contact to a substantial number of Danes. Furthermore, an estimated number of 1.000 Danes have received support from the Democracy Fund for travelling abroad as part of project activities..

#### **Findings Regarding Impact Assessment in Recipient Countries**

Initiating the evaluation was a huge task, as an impact assessment had not been endeavoured earlier. No precise data on who and how many had participated in the projects were available, neither any information about the outcome and impact of the projects.

Initially, four countries were chosen as representatives for the different categories of recipient countries: Latvia; Hungary; Romania and South Africa. A random sample of 500 participants from the four countries were identified. Assisted by local consultants, questionnaires were distributed to them. A return rate of 40% should be seen against the irregularity of the mail distribution systems in some countries and the old age of some of the addresses. Each country was visited by an evaluation team who interviewed a total of 201 former project participants, observers to the participants and key informants, including Danish embassies in recipient countries and embassies of recipient countries in Denmark.

Overall, it was found that the Democracy Fund projects have made a difference and that they have had a positive impact in the countries studied, although the results are not always as remarkable and easy to identify as the Danish organisers tend to think. Also, the Fund's rules for support to preparation and follow-up on projects have been quite restrictive. The participants were in general very satisfied and pleased with the projects. Findings verified that their experiences in Denmark have left substantial and lasting impressions on their world outlook and societal comprehension.

Most participants had become more enterprising at their workplace and had transformed changes in attitude and insights into new practices. Such new practices, ranging from reform in childcare institutions in Rumania and adult education in Hungary to trade unions in South Africa, contribute to the democratisation of society.

In terms of promoting democracy and human rights in the local community or in the organisations of civil society, the commitment of the participants was quite limited. Regarding tangible results or dissemination of ideas and informing the public about aspects of democracy or human rights, only

a minority of cases were found where a clear relation could be established to projects supported by the Democracy Fund. This was also found to be the situation at the national level, where only a few participants have been active.

The limited commitment among the participants might be rooted in different problems:

- A frustration with political life which in certain cases seems to be reinforced by the visit to Denmark, where the economic and other conditions are so much better.
- The selection of participants, which is mainly based on personal contacts and, maybe therefore, only to a limited extent include leaders and opinion-leaders.
- The lack of follow-up. Some participants have spontaneously established their own networks, but without support from or contact to the Democracy Fund.
- The invisibility of the Democracy Fund among the public in the recipient countries, as opposed to similar organisations from other countries.

Even though the intensity of the activities derived from the Democracy Fund projects have varied, they have had traceable results. Especially regarding the strengthening of civil society, democratic culture and specific human rights' improvements for some of the most vulnerable groups like orphanage children. The best results have been achieved in areas with already existing project activities and/or where a sufficient number of people have taken part in Democracy Fund projects. It is also a positive factor when lasting relations have been developed between the Danish organisers and the participants, facilitating constant dialogue both before and after the implementation of the project.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The overall conclusion of the evaluation team was that the Democracy Fund has furthered its objectives in a manner where substantial human, material and moral resources have been added through the implementation of projects by the civil society. In addition to this democratic value added, the projects have also promoted intercultural understanding as a positive side-effect as well as allowing several thousand Danes to become acquainted with a different reality.

It was recommended that the Democracy Fund undertakes a shift in strategy from spontaneous spread of activities, mainly through a large number of individual study tours, to better prepared and more focussed projects. Reciprocity between the Danish organisers and the foreign participants should be a precondition for support, and more emphasis and support should be given to follow-up activities in the recipient countries.

It was recommended to change procedures for granting support, i.a. by supporting more activities within the recipient countries, by a more careful selection of participants, and by requesting the applicants to specify the expected results of each specific project taking into consideration the overall situation in the recipient country.

It was found that the Democracy Fund has supported a wide range of activities, of which some have only had little to do with the most pressing needs for democracy support in the recipient countries. At the same time, there have been only few projects – and hence few results – within other areas of crucial importance for the development of democracy, like the law enforcement, the judiciary, media and political parties. Hence, it was recommended to tighten the funding criteria together with a more extrovert and active information policy in order to obtain a larger number of qualified applicants.

## Recent Sida Evaluations

- 01/05**     **Resource Centre for Panchayat Training and Democratic Processes.** Nirmala Buch, Rukmini Rao.  
Asia Department
- 01/06**     **Sida's Contribution to Humanitarian Mine Action. Final report.** Göran Andersson, Kristian Berg  
Harpviken, Ananda S. Millard, Kjell Erling Kjellman, Arne Strand  
Division for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management
- 01/07**     **Assumptions and Partnerships in the Making of a Country Strategy. An evaluation of the Swedish-Mozambican Experience.** Marc Wuyts, Helena Dolny, Bridget O'Laughlin  
Department for Africa, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 01/08**     **NGO Cooperation with Belarus. Evaluation of programme implemented by Forum Syd.**  
Peter Winai.  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/09**     **Active Labour Market Policy in Russia. An evaluation of the Swedish technical assistance to the Russian Employment Services 1997–2000.** Henrik Huitfeldt.
- 01/10**     **Svenska bataljonens humanitära insatser i Kosovo.** Maria Broberg Wulff, Karin Ströberg.  
Avdelningen för Samverkan med Enskilda Organisationer och Humanitärt Bistånd
- 01/11**     **Democracy and Human Rights. An evaluation of Sida's support to five projects in Georgia.**  
Birgitta Berggren, Patrik Jotun.  
Department for central and Eastern Europe
- 01/12**     **Sida's Support to the University of Asmara, Eritrea; College of Science and Faculty of Engineering.** Eva Selin Lindgren.  
Department for Research Cooperation
- 01/13**     **Strengthening Local Democracy in North West Russia 1995–2000.**  
Ilari Karppi, Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith.  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/14**     **Approach and Organisation of Sida Support to Private Sector Development.** Sunil Sinha,  
Julia Hawkins, Anja Beijer och Åsa Teglund  
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 01/15**     **Follow-up to Social Sector Support to Moldova.** Nils Öström.  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/16**     **Human Rights Training in Vietnam.** Carl-Johan Groth, Simia Ahmadi-Thosten, Clifford Wang,  
Tran van Nam  
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 01/17**     **Swedish-Danish Fund for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Vietnam.** Shashi R. Pandey,  
Darunee Tantiwiranmanond, Ngo Thi Tuan Dung  
Asia Department
- 01/18**     **Flood Relief Assistance to the Water and Wastewater Services in Raciborz, Nysa and Klodzko, Southern Poland.** Olle Colling  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/19**     **Sewer Pipe Network Renovation Project in Sopot, Poland.** Olle Colling  
Department for Central and Eastern Europe

### Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

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Fax: +46 (0) 8 690 92 66  
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### A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:

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