

22nd January 2003

Proposed management response and actions concerning Evaluation Report 02/01:

Mainstreaming Gender Equality¹. Sida's support for the promotion of gender equality in partner countries.

Input material for this management response has been compiled by Policy.

1. Introduction

The evaluation of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for promoting gender equality raises many important general issues concerning Sida's gender equality promotion. The report focuses on such areas as resources and capacity, organisation, structure and leadership, the connection between gender equality and poverty reduction, capacity for dialogue, the necessity of knowledge concerning the socio-cultural context, the analytical content of projects, targets and follow-up/evaluation, and learning processes. The evaluation presents reasons for taking a number of clear measures which can advance the promotion of gender equality, and it will also be an important basis for revising the policy/strategy for gender equality (*Sidas Handlingsprogram för jämställdhet*, hereinafter called "the gender equality policy/strategy") which Sida will be implementing in 2003.

Sida's main task is poverty reduction. Sida's policy on poverty reduction, *Perspectives on Poverty*, lays down that poverty is multidimensional, dynamic and context-specific. Sida's approach to combating poverty must therefore be holistic, integrated, intersectoral and adapted to the individual situation. With this background in mind, Sida's vision for a field-oriented Sida gives high priority to good analytical and operational capacity in the field and to dialogue and actions at national level. This vision, accordingly, is the framework within which Sida also develops its capacity for promoting gender equality in the course of development co-operation.

Parallel use has been made of the evaluation as a basis for Sida's official statements to Globkom, in which the proposals regarding the status and positioning of the gender equality issue have been highlighted and reinforced. Internationally, there is an ongoing discussion concerning gender mainstreaming as a strategy for promoting gender equality. Many development co-operation agencies are currently reviewing their policy on gender mainstreaming, a process to which the evaluation contributes new knowledge and experience.

The evaluation has been conducted on a basis of constructive partnership between the consultants, UTV and the embassies and departments concerned. Thanks to a process-oriented working approach, the evaluation has contributed towards the

¹ "Gender mainstreaming" is here equated with "the strategy of making a gender perspective permeate activities".

development of gender equality promotion at all levels within Sida. Through training courses, other development work (networking, for example) and a general growth of practical experience, Sida has substantially improved the competence of its staff, and accordingly its own resources, for appraising gender issues and mainstreaming gender equality in the fabric of development co-operation. The present continuous activity within Sida reflects, in many respects, the type of action programme which the evaluation calls for.

2. General conclusions

One of the important conclusions presented in the evaluation is that the second generation of country strategies in the countries which the report has evaluated are less clear than the first regarding the mainstreaming of gender equality. Another conclusion is that mainstreaming has good capacity at policy level, whereas the great challenge for the future, according to the report, will lie in developing this work so as to make it permeate the programme and project level. The evaluation shows that adequate resources are needed for meaningful gender mainstreaming in order to promote gender equality as an objective of international development co-operation. The report recommends Sida to review its organisation and structure, especially with a view to reinforcing the work of the embassies, and to consider reinstating the socio-cultural counsellors formerly stationed at a number of embassies. The report further notes that leadership is a pivotal issue and that the role of the senior executive in promoting gender equality work is crucial. The evaluation sees the training of Sida staff, partners and consultants as pivotal, and recommends Sida to keep up the continuous development of competence but to make it more specific in order to suit a particular region or sector. The report expresses hopes that the conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation can be fed into Sida's revision of its policy/strategy for gender equality.

Sida finds that the evaluation highlights relevant issues and problems. At the same time, in Sida's opinion, several of the shortcomings indicated by the evaluation have already been addressed through measures which have been and are continuously being taken by the comprehensive work in progress within Sida concerning gender equality.

The country strategy is one of Sida's most important steering documents. Sida notes that during the year the Agency has strengthened its capacity for methodically improving the country strategy process for promoting gender equality as a target by lending additional weight to country strategic work in its gender equality training programmes. In addition, Sida together with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (UD) has compiled a guideline mainstreaming a gender perspective in country strategy work, as part of the document *Riktlinjer för landstrategier i svenskt utvecklingssamarbete*. To secure compliance with the guidelines, Sida intends developing QA mechanisms ensuring that the gender equality target and a gender perspective are mainstreamed as part of the country strategy process.

Sida agrees concerning the importance of its policy achieving impact at project level. This is an important task, both for Sida's sector departments and for the embassies when planning and implementing projects. The sector departments have an important part to play in conducting a dialogue in various forms with the embassies

as to how Sida can best promote genuine impact through the activity. At the same time as gender equality issues have to be handled by all Sida staff, the evaluation points to a continuing need for specialist resources. This must also be viewed in connection with the emphasis laid, both in Perspectives on Poverty and the Field Vision, on the need for greater analytical capacity in the field. That capacity is necessary in order to improve the quality both of strategic work and of project planning and implementation. Sida attaches great importance to gender competence forming part of this analytical capacity. One long-term aim should be for all fields with full-scale delegation to have access to an analyst (either posted or recruited locally, primarily with a socio-cultural profile), with certain training/experience concerning gender assessments. With the objective of strengthening capacity for gender equality and gender analysis in the field, the Regional departments and the embassies will be commissioned, as part of their budgetary process, with assessing the adequacy of gender equality competence and capacity in the field. Co-operation will take place with the Personnel Department on matters relating to qualifications profiling and preparatory training for field staff.

Sida concurs with the conclusions that, in addition to the resource issue, competence is critical to the promotion of gender equality. Sida is already providing three residential gender equality training courses annually for employees, consultants and other important facilitators. Sida is also taking part in the introductory training programmes which are provided for field staff and which include training on gender equality. Sida's gender equality training courses is currently under review, and in response to the evaluation the course will go into greater depth on the issues which the evaluation considers in need of reinforcement. Sectorally adapted training programmes have been inaugurated within Sida and will be developed further. During the year a customised training programme for Sida Öst's environmental unit was conducted under POLICY's direction. Development of strategically targeted half-day training programmes at departmental level is under discussion within Sida's gender equality network. For the reinforcement of field capacity, field-referenced regional training programmes have been planned, based on collaboration between POLICY, the regional departments and embassies.

These training programmes, planned to commence in 2003/2004, will be offered to Sida staff and partners. Efforts will be made to achieve co-ordination with training on other priority overarching issues. The actions presented by Sida in this Memorandum are expected to lead to an increase in competence and capacity among Sida staff concerning gender equality. Consultants in the form of institutions and business enterprises are important agents of development co-operation. The gender equality competence of consultants is an important factor. When consultants are engaged by Sida or its partners, gender equality competence is to be one of several stipulated qualifications. Sida will have the important task of ensuring the existence of this competence.

For the further support of institutional development, capacity and competence regarding both analysis and implementation, Sida intends procuring helpdesk functions which will be tasked with supporting both the field and Sida/Stockholm in matters relating to gender equality and with mainstreaming gender analysis in the context of activities. The helpdesk will also be required to examine the

mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective and a gender analysis in all BPM put before Sida's Central Projects Committee.

Sida agrees concerning the importance of leadership for promoting gender equality. Sida's current action programme for gender equality makes the heads of department responsible for the mainstreaming of gender equality. In order to achieve systematic follow-up of the impact of its gender equality policy on country strategies, on the preparation of projects, and on project implementation and evaluation, Sida intends introducing an annual report to its Directorate concerning gender equality promotion in the course of Sida activities.

Embassy heads of development cooperation have a decisive role to play in ensuring that operational work is made to focus sufficiently on gender equality. Embassy contributions to annual reporting are therefore vital. The procedures for embassy reporting will be given further consideration in relation to other reporting.

3. Specific issues

3.1 Dialogue

The evaluation notes that dialogue is a powerful tool in the task of gender equality promotion. In addition, it concludes that dialogue capacity at various levels is in need of reinforcement, especially at project level, so as to streamline gender equality promotion in the partner countries. The report points to different levels of dialogue: intergovernmental dialogue, dialogue at project level and dialogue with civil society. At the same time the report describes the dialogue at governmental level as being greatly affected by obstacles and constraints also applying to other dialogue areas. The evaluation also problematises the question of how a dialogue is to be conducted when the partner country itself does not actively desire to promote gender equality, when there are many agents involved in a complex process or when Sida enters a process in which gender equality was not an active component from the very outset.

Sida shares the view that the dialogue issue is a complex one and that capacity for dialogue is crucial to the promotion of gender equality in the partner countries. Greater flexibility and responsiveness on Sida's part are therefore desirable in order to make the dialogue more effective. This touches on the possibility of using the comparative advantage of Sida's experience and knowledge concerning gender equality. A general discussion concerning ways of improving the dialogue, with a view to raising the staff's dialogue capacity, is now in progress within Sida. In order to strengthen capacity for dialogue concerning gender equality, Sida intends constructing a training module specially adapted to field and embassy level, and reinforced with material concerning dialogue and gender equality. This model will be tested in two regions, with participants from various stakeholders at the embassy and in the partner country; governmental level, NGOs, consultants, civil society. This work will be undertaken as part of the general work conducted with a view to augmenting capacity for dialogue within Sida. Special consideration will be given to how this dialogue can best be adapted within the framework of the dialogue on poverty based on POP (Perspectives on Poverty), mainly but not solely with reference to the PRS process. Sida also intends more actively creating scope for raising dialogue capacity in its gender equality training programmes. The purpose of

augmenting dialogue competence must be viewed in relation to increasing the partner's ownership of gender equality.

3.2 Gender analysis Targets Follow-up/Evaluation

The evaluation indicates that the gender analysis instrument needs to be refined and linked to the individual project, sectorally and geographically. The analysis should also result in a description of the project on which all parties agree, clarifying the best way of developing the project to meet the varying needs of the sexes. The evaluation calls for a description of distinct targets which should be achieved through the project which can be linked to structural changes and a changed relation between women and men. The evaluation also calls for clearer evaluation instruments. Sida agrees that capacity concerning targets, gender analysis and mechanisms for gender equality monitoring needs to be developed further. Gender equality targets must be more clearly aimed at changing the structures in society which keep women and men in positions of inferiority and at changing the prevailing power structures between women and men. These questions recur as important points, for example, in Sida's gender equality training programmes, but the methods can nevertheless be refined and developed. In a future revision of its policy/strategy for gender equality, Sida intends specially developing sections dealing with targets, gender analysis and follow-up/evaluation, and also to observe the need for specific material addressing these questions.

3.3. The link between poverty reduction and gender equality

The report points to a clear causal connection between lack of development and inequality between different social groups, gender, ethnicity and class, and it stresses the connection between gender and poverty. It stresses the need for a clearer link between the poverty and gender equality targets. Sida agrees on the need for a clearer analysis and relevant links between gender equality and poverty reduction. This connection has been integrated with the strategy Perspectives on Poverty (PoP). Work on strengthening the gender equality component of the PRS process, especially in training initiatives, is in progress within Sida, in collaboration with other donors. In order to further remedy the deficiencies, Sida intends, in the process of revising its policy/strategy for gender equality, to take PoP as its starting point, so as to fruitfully analyse and search for relevant links between gender equality and poverty reduction.

3.4 Mainstreaming as a strategy. Learning processes

The evaluation notes that the strategy of mainstreaming a gender perspective is a relatively new working method which was only 4 or 5 years old when the evaluation took place. The report notes, however, that the strategy has achieved results and should remain in force and be developed. Much has been achieved in the short time during which the strategy has been employed, but the report observes that the lofty ambitions expressed in Sida's action programme have not been achieved at all stages. The evaluation speaks of mainstreaming still being at an embryonic stage and of consolidation, reinforcement and development now being called for.

Sida agrees that the strategy of gender mainstreaming must have a crucial bearing on the promotion of gender equality. Sida's task in future will be to go on

systematising and developing experience of the strategy through its gender equality training courses, at seminars, within the gender equality network and through the work undertaken in the partner countries. In order to develop work on learning processes in the field, Sida intends to strengthen the interchange of knowledge and experience between different countries and between the field and Sida/Stockholm. This will also include collaboration with other agents, in which connection Sida has an important role to play in pursuing gender equality issues, e.g. in connection with donor co-ordination, support for research and experience interchange. The evaluation also highlights the resource constituted by Sida's gender equality network. The network is vitally important as a resource bank, forum for dialogue and fund of experience. Thematic seminars jointly organised by the departments and POLICY on the subjects of gender equality and gender mainstreaming are a proposal which the network is to begin addressing in 2003. Other proposals are the more active creation of meeting points for discussing current research, books, evaluations, articles etc. Developing co-operation with the focal points of gender equality at the embassies will be a task for 2003. The network will have a key role to play in the task of revising the gender equality policy/strategy during 2003. A plan of activities will be drawn up for the network.

3.5 Lessons to bear in mind when revising Sida's policy/strategy to promote gender equality .

The evaluation argues that it should serve as input documentation for a new, revised gender equality strategy. The report points out that the level of ambition should be critically appraised as part of this revision, and it counsels Sida to define a "minimum level" of gender mainstreaming so as not to lose itself in an all-or-nothing perspective. The report also suggests which levels are to be included. The evaluation notes that the prospects of pursuing the gender equality issue are decidedly less auspicious than four or five years ago, and it recommends Sida to intensify its gender equality work. Sida shares the view of the evaluation as a valuable source of knowledge and experience for the revision of Sida's policy/strategy to promote gender equality, and intends taking the results, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation into account. This work will proceed in close co-operation with the sectoral and regional departments.

Summary of action plan	Responsibility of	Time frame
1 Gender equality policy Action: Revise the present action programme.	Policy, in collaboration with the sectoral and regional departments	2004, 1st qu.
2 Ensure policy impact Actions - QA Model for gender equality in the country strategy process - Ensuring that the gender equality perspective is taken into account in the preparation and implementation of projects - Establishment of gender equality helpdesk for (1) gender equality QA in projects examined by PK (2) counselling of departments and embassies - Annual report on gender equality	Reg. Dept Methods Group Sectoral depts and embassies Policy Policy	2003 Ongoing June 2003 2004, 1st qu.
3 Strengthen knowledge and capacity for gender equality Actions - Compile training material on gender equality and dialogue, to be tested in two partner countries - Develop dialogue competence in ongoing gender equality training programmes - - Testing of field capacity and competence, as part of the budgeting process	Policy, in collaboration with Metod and Reg. Dept Policy Reg. Dept., in partnership with embassies and PEO	2004 2003 2003