

Views on Evaluation

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
1 Background and purpose of the study	5
1.1 Methodology	5
2 Conducting evaluations	7
2.1 Users of evaluations	7
2.2 Use of evaluations.....	7
2.2.1 <i>Accountability versus learning</i>	8
2.2.2 <i>Neither accountability nor learning</i>	10
2.3 Difficulties	11
2.3.1 <i>The planning process – evaluation question and terms of reference</i>	11
2.3.2 <i>Procurement of evaluation consultants</i>	13
2.3.3 <i>Lack of clear rules and guidelines</i>	13
2.3.4 <i>Assessing the inception and draft reports</i>	14
2.4 Demand for support	14
2.5 Support from UTV	15
3 Other activities	17
3.1 The Evaluation Network	17
3.2 The evaluation plan	17
3.3 Publication of evaluations.....	18
4 Implications for UTV	19
4.1 Use of evaluations.....	19
4.2 Facilitating the evaluation process – how and at what stage?.....	20
4.4 Evaluation Network.....	21
4.5 The evaluation plan, its implementation and publication	21
Annex 1 – Terms of reference	22
Annex 2 – Questionnaire	26
References	32
Interviews	33

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Summary

The purpose of the present study is to find out how Sida personnel view evaluations and their use, the support provided by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) and the difficulties encountered in the evaluation process. In addition some other activities, such as the compilation of the evaluation plan, the publication process and the evaluation network, have also been assessed. The overview provides input to improving the evaluation system at Sida and reviewing the support function of UTV. The study is mainly based on interviews with staff at Sida headquarters and a questionnaire answered by personnel both from the field and Sida Stockholm.

The overall results indicate that evaluations are not given high priority and that the understanding of evaluation as a concept varies amongst departments and desk officers at Sida. According to the respondents the preferred way of using evaluations is as input for decision making, followed by the use of evaluations for controlling that the goals of a project or a programme are being reached. Using evaluations to gain a deeper understanding of what Sida is doing is also considered desirable, although to a lesser extent.

Sida personnel experience most difficulties during the preparatory stage of the evaluation process. The formulation of terms of reference and the definition of appropriate evaluation questions are considered particularly difficult. Other issues posing problems are the procurement of evaluation consultants and a perceived lack of clear rules and guidance for when and why evaluations should be done.

The survey shows that there is widespread awareness at Sida of the support function at UTV although only half of the respondents have used it. The reason why Sida personnel do not consult with UTV is that they feel competent enough on their own, that the advice is perceived as unduly time-consuming or carries with it too many requirements. Those that have consulted UTV, however, are satisfied although many think that more active involvement by UTV at the time evaluations are conducted could increase the usefulness of the support. Other suggestions from the respondents are a HELP-DESK function and more support for personnel in the field. The evaluation manual is seen as a useful tool and has been very well received.

The study further indicates that the evaluation network does not function as intended. The network has a high turnover of members and the number of meetings has been low and sporadic, limiting its continuation and the dissemination of evaluation issues. In addition, the interest and expertise in evaluations among members vary to a large extent. These results should prompt UTV to assess the purpose and organisational structure of the network.

There is also some discontent with the evaluation plan. The person responsible for collecting the information (usually the evaluation network member) does not always see the usefulness of the plan and therefore lacks motivation for its compilation. There are also indications that not all evaluations are included in the plan for various reasons. In addition, Sida staff views the publication process as time consuming and quite complicated. The justification for publishing each evaluation, especially poor quality ones, is therefore questioned.

1 Background and purpose of the study

The Swedish Policy for Global Development from 2003 proposes a number of changes in Swedish development cooperation. As a result of these and the introduction of a new Swedish evaluation institute, UTV realises that there is a need for a general discussion about its role both at Sida and in Swedish development cooperation. This study examines views on evaluation amongst Sida personnel in both Sida's operative departments and at embassies and field offices, and is meant to serve as input for current discussions.

The two purposes of the overview are to find ways to improve UTV's support function, and to examine some of the activities carried out by UTV, such as the evaluation network, the compilation of the evaluation plan and the publication of evaluation reports.

The support function at UTV includes assistance in the planning and carrying out of evaluations and may involve advice on writing terms of reference, how to recruit external evaluators, the handling of tenders for evaluation work, as well as comments on draft reports and dissemination of evaluation results. The Sida Evaluation Manual, which was published in 2004, is expected to provide departments and embassies with additional support regarding evaluation.

The objective of the support function is to provide advice about evaluation as requested by departments and embassies, as well as to actively encourage this demand (Sida 2001: 3).¹

1.1 Methodology

The study is based mainly on interviews with staff at Sida headquarters and responses to a questionnaire, which was sent to 104 Sida personnel (Annex 2). In addition, policy documents, handbooks, minutes from meetings and other sources have been examined. The desk/programme officers and national planning officers (hereafter "desk officers") who received the questionnaire were chosen from those named in the evaluation plans for 2002–2004 or who were part of the evaluation network. The questionnaire was sent to most heads of division at Sida headquarters, as well as to embassy counsellors at designated embassies and field offices (hereafter "embassies"). The table below shows the distribution of questionnaires to headquarters and the embassies and the respective response rates.

Respondents	Number of questionnaires	Rate of response
Embassies	53	62%
Headquarters	51	47%
Total	104	55%

The persons interviewed were members of the evaluation network, heads of division, desk officers who received support from UTV and desk officers who recently returned from field positions and had commissioned evaluations during their time abroad. The table below shows the distribution of 17 desk officers and heads of division available for interviews. Five evaluators from UTV were also interviewed in order to provide a more complete picture of the evaluation system at Sida.

¹ Original text in Swedish: "Strategiskt mål för UTVs rådgivningsverksamhet: UTV tillfredställer avdelningarnas efterfrågan på rådgivning om utvärdering och revision. Förtydligande: Med efterfrågan menas att UTV ger rådgivning endast som respons på en aktiv efterfrågan från avdelningarnas sida. UTV kan också verka för att stimulera avdelningarnas efterfrågan på viss rådgivning."

Group/ Department	DESO	EUROPA	SEKA	AFRA	ASIEN	RELA	INEC	SAREC	Total
Heads of Division	1	2							3
Evaluation Network	2		1	1	1	1	1		7
Support from UTV	2	1						1	4
Evaluations at embassies	2	1							3
Total	7	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	17

All interview and questionnaire respondents had relevant experience, as they were Sida personnel who had participated in evaluations. As this sample was not randomly selected, however, the responses are not representative for all Sida personnel.

The evaluation experiences of the survey participants are shown below.

Experience	Embassies	HQ
Never commissioned an evaluation	3%	0%
Involved but never commissioned an evaluation on my own	18%	20%
Commissioned 1–2 evaluations	24%	17%
Commissioned 3–4 evaluations	24%	25%
Commissioned more than 5 evaluations	30%	38%

One weakness is the small sample size. Although the total response rate of 55% is enough to draw conclusions, the relatively small number of replies (33 from the embassies and 24 from headquarters) from each group (HQ and Embassies) prevents an adequate analysis of significance. Another weakness is the risk that only people who have a very strong interest in evaluation answered the questionnaire. On the other hand, the interviews provide in-depth knowledge on the views of the respondents but may not be suitable as generally applicable conclusions.

The understanding of “evaluation” as a concept varies greatly both amongst desk officers and between Sida’s departments and the embassies. There is a common difficulty in distinguishing evaluation from studies, reviews and assessments. One employee summed it up as follows: “Evaluations mean various things for different people at Sida. I am not quite sure of what an assessment is and what an evaluation is.”²

The survey shows that the definition of evaluation is very broad, ranging from all retrospective activities to only those conducted and commissioned by UTV. These varying interpretations can be of importance to the results.

² Original text in Swedish: “Utvärdering betyder olika saker för olika personer på Sida. Jag vet inte heller riktigt vad som är en “assessment” och vad som är en utvärdering.”

2 Conducting evaluations

This chapter deals with the following questions: How do Sida personnel regard evaluations? Who commissions them? Who are their primary users? What are they used for?³ What difficulties appear during the evaluation process, and what kind of support could mitigate them? The chapter also describes views of the support function provided by UTV.

2.1 Users of evaluations

Respondents at the embassies and headquarters vary in their views of who uses the evaluations. The main user is Sida itself, although governments and beneficiaries in Sida's partner countries and other donors are also seen as frequent users. Some of the respondents also noted that the organisations implementing the evaluated projects or programmes use Sida's evaluations.

Main users of evaluations	Embassies	HQ
Sida	34%	37%
Other donors	19%	17%
The governments in Sida's partner countries	25%	21%
Beneficiaries in Sida's partner countries, except government bodies	17%	25%
The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	1%	0%
The Swedish public	3%	0%

Almost half of the questionnaire respondents say that evaluations are most often planned and designed by *Sida together with the recipient partner*. The opinion that evaluations are planned by *Sida alone* is also more common, perhaps not surprisingly, at Sida Stockholm than in the field. Both personnel in Sweden and in the field responded that about one fifth of the evaluations are planned and designed by *Sida together with other donors*.

2.2 Use of evaluations

Evaluation literature identifies several types of uses for evaluation, broadly divided into the categories of learning and accountability. The accountability evaluations provide information about performance and results of development cooperation activities, and serve more as a control mechanism. Learning evaluations, on the other hand, are expected to provide information that can be transformed into better practice to improve activities and enhance organisational performance (Sida's Evaluation Manual 2004:12).

This study categorises results on the use of evaluations according to the learning and accountability definitions and Vedung's six varieties of use (instrumental, conceptual, legitimising, tactical, ritual and process). *Instrumental* use means that an evaluation, or its findings and recommendations, are directly used as input for decision-making. *Conceptual* use relates strongly to the learning process by changing a mental framework, which may or may not influence future thinking and decision-making. *Legitimation* use justifies current views, interests or policies, and is thus not intended to find answers to unresolved questions or

³ Since this study only is involved with the views on evaluation activities at Sida, those who are interested in a more comprehensive analysis on how evaluations are used at Sida could consult Carlsson, J et al. 1999: "Are evaluations Useful? – Cases from Swedish Development Co-operation"

provide solutions. *Tactical* use is intended to convince users that matters are under control, the programme is responsibly administered and so on. An evaluation that is used *ritually* is carried out for no other reason than that it should be carried out. *Process* use refers to the actual process of carrying out an evaluation rather than its products. Evaluation processes can be used to create shared understanding or boost confidence and morale (Vedung 1997).

The following sections outline the perceived uses of evaluations. In most cases, the respondents were asked to answer how common each use of evaluations is, on a scale of 1 (never) to 6 (very often).

2.2.1 Accountability versus learning

The accountability function of evaluations, which measures how well the evaluated activity fulfilled the goals established and so on, is, according to the respondents, the most common use of evaluations today. As shown by the table below, more than 80% believe this use is occurring often or very often (answers 5–6). Personnel at the embassies are more likely to see this as a common use than headquarters personnel. All respondents favour increased use of evaluations as a control mechanism.

Fulfilment of goals (At present)	Embassies	HQ	Fulfilment of goals (Should be)	Embassies	HQ
Never	0%	0%	Never	0%	0%
2	0%	0%	2	3%	4%
3	0%	13%	3	3%	4%
4	15%	8%	4	0%	8%
5	30%	46%	5	13%	17%
Very often	55%	33%	Very often	81%	67%

At the other end of the accountability-learning spectrum is the use of evaluations to obtain a deeper understanding, or a *conceptual* use, of the evaluated activity. Compared to the use of evaluations for accountability, the idea of using evaluations to gain insight into the structure and essence of the evaluated activity is advocated by fewer respondents. As shown in the table below, however, most staff at Sida, regardless of whether they work in Stockholm or in the field, want the conceptual use to increase compared to the present situation.

Obtain a deeper understanding (At present)	Embassies	HQ	Obtain a deeper understanding (Should be)	Embassies	HQ
Never	3%	0%	Never	3%	0%
2	6%	17%	2	0%	4%
3	22%	25%	3	0%	8%
4	25%	17%	4	16%	33%
5	16%	21%	5	34%	13%
Very often	28%	21%	Very often	47%	42%

Using evaluations to better understand supported activities seems to have become more common, as shown by the following quotation:

I'm becoming more and more convinced that the purpose of both monitoring and evaluation is to improve our work. How can we know what type of activities yield positive results if we don't use evaluations this way? I believe this use is more common today than what has been the case earlier.⁴

Another learning function of evaluations is to use the results from the evaluation *instrumentally*, as direct input for decision-making. Even if the recommendations from the evaluation are not followed, instrumental use implies that the evaluation is taken into account before decisions regarding the activity are made. Sida personnel regard the instrumental use as the second most common, and most preferred, way of using evaluations. The instrumental use of evaluations occurs mostly in ongoing projects or programmes or before a new agreement phase takes place:

The purpose of evaluations at our department is often operative; we want to know whether we should continue the support or not – or in what way the support could be changed or improved. It is all about pragmatism.⁵

This opinion does not vary substantially between the embassies and the headquarters. As the table below indicates, over 70% of all respondents regard this use as occurring often or very often (answers 5–6). Compared to the use of evaluations as a control mechanism, Sida personnel based in Stockholm are more favourable to using evaluations instrumentally than staff at the embassies. The personnel in the field believe evaluations should be used just as often for accountability as a means to collect information in order to make decisions.

Input to decision-making (At present)	Embassies	HQ	Input to decision-making (Should be)	Embassies	HQ
Never	0%	0%	Never	0%	0%
2	0%	4%	2	0%	0%
3	13%	8%	3	0%	0%
4	24%	13%	4	6%	4%
5	13%	25%	5	13%	4%
Very often	50%	50%	Very often	81%	92%

The third learning use focuses on the actual process of the evaluation rather than the results achieved. The rationale for such a *process use* is that evaluations can be used as a means for participants to meet and discuss the activity and its possible strengths and/or weaknesses. A small number of the respondents noted that the evaluation process could be just as important as, or even more important than, the results:

Reports and evaluations represent one way of treating these dialogues and creating opportunities to meet, which are objectives in themselves. We don't think evaluations are something you make at the end of an activity and therefore it is extremely important to include cooperation partners and other donors in the evaluation process.⁶

⁴ Original text in Swedish: "Jag blir alltmer övertygad om att syftet med uppföljning och utvärdering är att göra arbetet bättre. Hur ska vi kunna se vad det är för typ av aktiviteter som påverkar på ett bra sätt om vi inte använder utvärderingar på det här sättet? Jag tror att den här användningen är vanligare idag än tidigare."

⁵ Original text in Swedish: "Syftet med utvärderingar hos oss är ofta operativt; vi vill veta om vi ska fortsätta med det här eller inte – eller på vilket sätt det ska förändras/förbättras. Det handlar om pragmatism."

⁶ Original text in Swedish: "Rapporter och utvärderingar är ett sätt att komma åt de här dialogerna och skapa mötesplatser, vilket är ett syfte i sig. Vi tycker inte att utvärdering någonting som man gör i slutet av en insats och det är därför oerhört viktigt att ta med samarbetsländerna och andra givare i utvärderingsprocessen."

There is a large variation on how desk officers at Sida view the process use. While some respondents strongly emphasised a process use and the need for including the cooperation partners in the process, others do not regard this use as an option. The latter view is by large the most common.

2.2.2 Neither accountability nor learning

In addition to using evaluations for accountability (control) or to obtain a deeper understanding of Sida's activities, as an input to decision-making or for process use, evaluations may be used for other purposes. The first of these is *ritual use* where evaluations are carried out purely for their own sake. There is no significant difference between the responses from the headquarters and the embassies. About a quarter of the respondents believe evaluations are used ritually often or very often (answers 5–6). However, almost half of the respondents also mention that evaluations never or very rarely (answers 1–2) are used this way. A clear majority of Sida's personnel think that evaluations never should be used ritually (more than 85%), which indicates that the ritual use of evaluations is seen as a problem.

The reason for using evaluations ritually was seen as part of what Sida usually does to end a project properly, as one of the interviewees expressed it: “Sometimes I wonder whether we only make evaluations in order to end an activity in a proper manner.”⁷ It could also be a result of inadequate planning processes and a lack of time for desk officers to question the usefulness of an evaluation.

In many cases there also seems to be an understanding that evaluations have to be done, no matter how they are used:

*I can imagine that evaluations are conducted in a routine manner without a clear idea on why, how and when an evaluation is to be made. I believe evaluations are made summarily, and as a matter of duty. Not many people have seriously considered what the purpose of the evaluation should be.*⁸

Sometimes evaluations are performed to give legitimacy for making an often uncomfortable decision. This is referred to as a *legitimization use*. There is a wide range of answers regarding the frequency of this use. More than half of the respondents mention that evaluations rarely (answers 1–3) are used to legitimise decisions, whereas the other half say this use appears rather frequently (answers 4–6):

*Sometimes evaluations are made in order to confirm something you already know. In this case, the evaluation gives legitimacy to the decision you want to make about continuing the support.*⁹

What is clear, however, is that respondents do not support the use of evaluations to legitimise decisions even though it appears that the embassies are slightly more positive to using evaluations this way.

A third use of evaluations is the so-called *tactical use* where the purpose of the evaluation is to evade responsibility or to show that matters regarding the evaluated activity are under control. Evaluations are often used tactically because the activity has been criticised in some way, and the responsible officer needs time to think about his next move. Sida's personnel feel that some evaluations are conducted for tactical uses although it is impossible to determine anything about the frequency with which this occurs.

⁷ Original text in Swedish: “Ibland undrar jag om vi bara gör utvärderingar för att kunna avsluta en aktivitet på ett bra sätt.”

⁸ Original text in Swedish: “Jag kan tänka mig att utvärderingar görs slentrianmässigt utan att man från början tänkt igenom så väl varför, hur och när en utvärdering ska göras. Jag tror att utvärderingar görs i en hast och pliktskyldigast. Det är inte så många som verkligen tänker till vad syftet med utvärderingen ska vara.”

⁹ Original text in Swedish: “Ibland görs utvärderingar för att bekräfta något man redan vet. Utvärderingen ger i det här sammanhanget legitimitet till det beslut man vill fatta om det fortsatta stödet.”

One respondent is of the opinion that “An evaluation can be a kind of receipt for the taxpayers and be an instrument for Sida in order to show what we have done and what the results were.”¹⁰

2.3 Difficulties

Ascertaining the difficulties experienced by Sida personnel during the evaluation process is useful for discussions on the support function at UTV. Although many experience difficulties at some stage of the evaluation process, Sida personnel also feel quite competent when conducting evaluations on their own. About one-third of the respondents consider that their competence is above average in evaluation matters (answers 4–6 on a scale 1 to 6). The distribution of the answers is shown in the table below:

Competence	Embassy	HQ
Very low	0%	0%
2	3%	13%
3	20%	17%
4	27%	35%
5	30%	17.5%
Very high	17%	17.5%

Although most of the respondents feel competent to perform evaluations, difficulties often arise in the planning process, the procurement process and because of the lack of clear rules and guidelines. The assessment of the inception and draft reports need to be discussed further since there is some ambiguity as to whether or not these are viewed as problems.

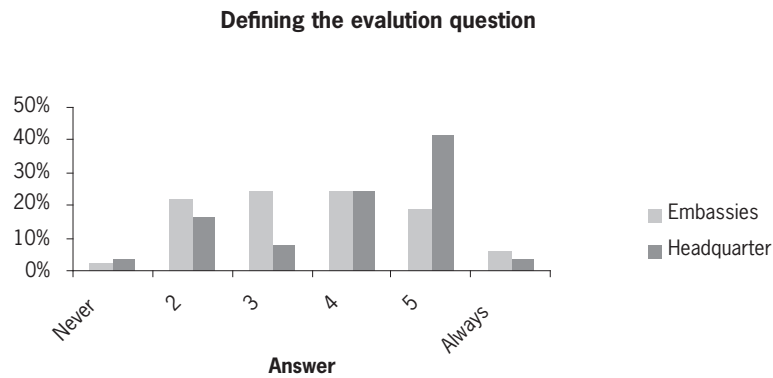
2.3.1 The planning process – evaluation question and terms of reference

The survey shows that Sida personnel experience the most difficulties during the preparation stage of the evaluation process, although the results vary to some degree between the embassies and the headquarters. The three most difficult issues in the planning process were:

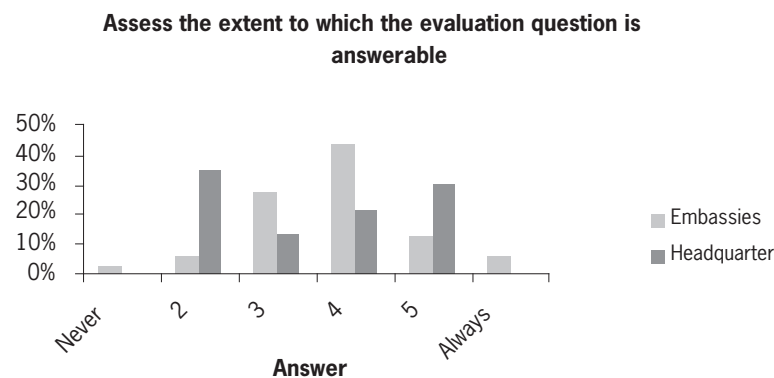
- Defining the evaluation question
- Assessing the extent to which the evaluation question is answerable
- Formulating terms of references for external evaluators

The respondents were asked to answer *how often* they experience difficulties on a scale 1 (never) to 6 (very often). As shown in the first chart, personnel based in Stockholm generally experience more difficulties when defining the evaluation question than the respondents at the embassies. About half the embassy respondents and more than 70% at headquarters consider that defining the evaluation question is often a problem (answers 4–6).

¹⁰ Original text in Swedish: “En utvärdering kan vara ett slags kvitto för skattebetalarna. Det kan vara ett instrument för Sida att visa vad vi gjort och hur utfallet blev.”



The second issue is the extent to which the evaluation question is answerable. As the chart below shows, about 50% of the respondents in Stockholm consider it difficult (answers 4–6) to determine whether the evaluation question could be answered, with a rather even spread between the possible answers. At the embassies, most answered 3 and 4.



The assessment of the extent to which the evaluation question is answerable is closely linked to Sida staff concerns that measuring the results of the supported development cooperation activities is complex, if not impossible:

I feel frustrated of the lack of adequate tools for measuring results of, above all, our activities. There is a desire to monitor activities by finding “golden” indicators to prove that civil society has been strengthened, for example.¹¹

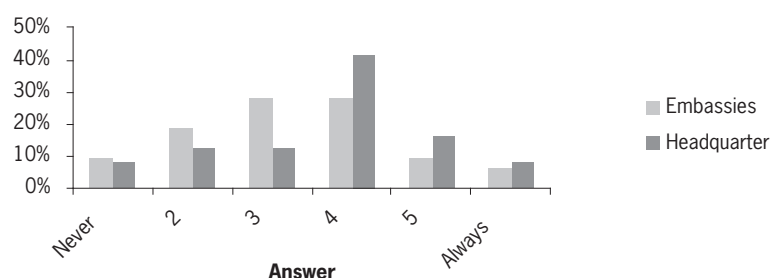
A third problem identified in the preparation phase is the writing of terms of reference for external evaluators: “I think it is difficult to write terms of reference. Communication is always difficult and that’s what terms of reference are about.”¹²

The chart below illustrates that, this is clearly seen as more of a problem for headquarters personnel than for those in the field. In fact, for respondents at the embassies, the formulation of terms of reference causes problems less often than for staff in Stockholm.

¹¹ Original text in Swedish: “Jag känner frustration över att det inte finns några bra verktyg för att mäta resultat av framförallt vår verksamhet. Det finns en önskan om att kunna kontrollera verksamheten genom att hitta “gylle” indikatorer för att påvisa att ex. det civila samhället har stärkts.”

¹² Original text in Swedish: “Jag tycker det är svårt att skriva ToR och där skulle jag vilja ha mer hjälp. Det är alltid svårt med kommunikation och det är ju det som en uppdragsbeskrivning handlar om.”

Formulation of terms of reference



Sida personnel also encounter difficulties when trying to meet the criteria for a retrospective study to be deemed an evaluation. According to one officer “...often you don’t want to call an evaluation an “evaluation” since there are too many requirements, too many quality controls.”¹³

As a result, many desk officers choose not to call an activity an “evaluation,” and instead use other concepts such as studies, reviews and assessments.

2.3.2 Procurement of evaluation consultants

The overview of evaluation activities at Sida shows difficulties in choosing competent consultants to conduct evaluations. Some respondents say this is because evaluation consultants need considerable expertise in not only evaluation methodology but also in the activity to be evaluated, both in the country-specific context and as a part of development cooperation in general. This combined expertise is hard to find.

In addition, the procurement process appears complicated and time consuming even though this is most likely due to the method used to select the consultants. The table below shows that the various methods of procuring consultants are used with about the same frequency. Embassies are slightly more likely to use direct selection of suitable consultants, while Stockholm uses framework agreements more often.

Procurement process	Embassy	HQ
Direct selection	31%	20%
Simplified bidding	21%	22%
Open bidding	18%	22%
Framework agreements	26%	36%
No opinion	4%	0%

The survey also shows that framework agreements and direct selection make the procurement process easier, provided total costs are below the LOU threshold value. However, some interviewees mentioned that since framework agreements decrease competition among consultants, this method limits the number of consultants to choose from. If most difficulties are associated with finding consultants with appropriate expertise, framework agreements may actually exacerbate the difficulties.

2.3.3 Lack of clear rules and guidelines

The survey found that the absence of clear rules and guidelines for when, how and why evaluations should be done is a problem. Since we cannot evaluate every activity, there is some confusion about what

¹³ Original text in Swedish: “Ofta vill man inte kalla en utvärdering “utvärdering” för det blir för höga krav – för mycket kvalitetskontroller”

and when to evaluate. “Sida at Work – a Manual on Contribution Management,” the main guiding document, states that “Retrospective follow-up will not be undertaken in all cases but should be reserved for cases where the parties jointly, or Sida alone, have identified issues of special interest or concern” (2003: 47). This confirms the view that the desk officer or department in charge has a great deal of freedom to decide on evaluations. The manual requires evaluations only after the completion of sub-phase activities (ibid.).

The perception that it appears to be acceptable not always to adhere to rules and guidelines further increases the uncertainty:

*Rules exist but my impression is that you don't always have to obey them, and we skip a lot, mainly due to time constraints. Every department, and even each desk officer or unit, has its own culture and way of working.*¹⁴

2.3.4 Assessing the inception and draft reports

The assessment of the inception and draft reports against the contract poses some problems. The table shows that almost half of the embassy respondents often experience problems when assessing the inception report (answers 4–6), while just over half do not experience these difficulties frequently (answers 1–3). For headquarters respondents this is less of a problem.

A similar picture emerges when Sida personnel are asked about assessing the draft report against the original contract. Embassy respondents experience more difficulties with this aspect of the evaluation process than those at headquarters.

Discussion of the inception report	Embassies	HQ	Draft report against the contract	Embassies	HQ
Never	6%	4%	Never	3%	8%
2	38%	35%	2	31%	46%
3	13%	48%	3	25%	29%
4	34%	13%	4	28%	13%
5	3%	0%	5	13%	4%
Always	6%	0%	Always	0%	0%

2.4 Demand for support

Since most personnel experience difficulties during one part or during the entire evaluation process, the survey has also inquired into the demand for support activities and material that desk officers find useful in their evaluation work. Both headquarters and field staff largely agree here. Almost half (46%) believe that a HELP-DESK function with a specific contact person would be helpful. About a quarter of the respondents would appreciate training in general evaluation methodology, and one-fifth requested written material in this area.

Although training in evaluation would be useful, time constraints make full day compulsory training for all both unrealistic and undesirable. Requests for training therefore focus on shorter modules or activities like workshops or UTV attendance at division meetings. Only 7%, however, requested support in the form of written material specific to desk officers' work.

¹⁴ Original text in Swedish: “Det finns regler men mitt intryck är att man inte alltid behöver följa reglerna och mycket faller emellan främst pga. brist på tid. Sen är det ju en sån kultur att varje avdelning, till och med varje enhet och ibland varje handläggare, i praktiken har sitt eget sätt att jobba.”

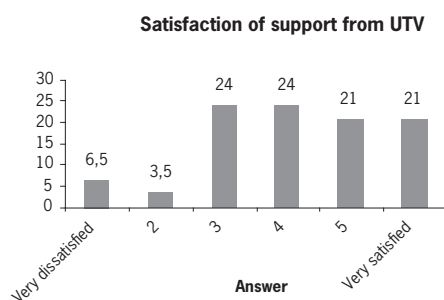
There is also a greater need for more direct support at the time an evaluation is commissioned, rather than general support. This kind of direct support (from UTV) could be based on the evaluation plan.¹⁵ The suggestion made is that UTV could be the active part in the establishment of a relationship during the evaluation process and offer its support.

*I think UTV should have more direct support to each desk officer. Every year an evaluation plan is presented where desk officers responsible for the evaluation to be conducted are named. UTV could contact them directly and offer a review of evaluation questions and describe the kind of support UTV can offer.*¹⁶

In addition, the study shows that respondents from both Stockholm and the embassies favoured giving more support to the embassies, since these have been receiving less support due to distance.

2.5 Support from UTV

The support provided by UTV is well known among the personnel at Sida. Almost 80% of the field respondents and 90% from Sida Stockholm are aware that UTV provides support in evaluation matters. Slightly over 50% of embassy respondents have consulted UTV and 63% of the staff in Stockholm has used the services provided. Most of those that have consulted UTV, both from headquarters and embassies, are satisfied with the help they received. The diagram below shows that more than 65% are satisfied (answers 4–6) and 21% are very satisfied (answer 6) with the advice received.



Some Sida personnel express the view that support from UTV is laden with requirements and unduly time consuming. Some desk officers even avoid consulting UTV for support, since they feel the benefit would not be worth the time expended:

*UTV should modify its quality requirements. When you consult UTV you only get complicated theoretical discussions. Perhaps UTV should get down to work and joining the rest of the organisation.*¹⁷

According to the study, 80% of Sida personnel are aware of the evaluation manual “Looking Back, Moving Forward,” published in 2004, and 75% of these have used it. All departments and levels at Sida, both in Stockholm and in the field, gave the manual good marks, and found it useful. As one respondent expressed it: “I think the evaluation manual is excellent. It gives great guidance.”¹⁸

¹⁵ See Chapter 3.2 for a discussion on the evaluation plan.

¹⁶ Original text in Swedish: “Jag tycker att UTV borde ha mer riktad rådgivning till respektive andläggare. Varje år har vi ju en utvärderingsplan där det står vilken handläggare som kommer att genomföra utvärderingar under det kommande året. UTV skulle kunna kontakta dom direkt och erbjuda en genomgång av utvärderingsfrågor och berätta vad UTV kan stå till tjänst med.”

¹⁷ Original text in Swedish: “UTV borde sänka sina kvalitetskrav. När man rådfrågar UTV blir det bara teoretiska komplicerade diskussioner. UTV borde kanske kavla upp ärmarna lite och vara med i organisationen och jobba.”

¹⁸ Original text in Swedish: “Jag tycker att utvärderingsmanualen är utmärkt. Den ger jättebra vägledning.”

The evaluation manual is most commonly used during the initial phase of the evaluation, with about one- third of all respondents using it. One- fifth uses it during most of the evaluation process and another 20% in other areas of their work not related to evaluation. The respondents who have not used the manual (about 20%) explain that this is due to the manual being new and/or to their not having commissioned any evaluations since its publication.

3 Other activities

This chapter outlines activities related to the evaluation function at UTV, such as the evaluation network, the compilation of the evaluation plan and the publication of evaluations.

3.1 The Evaluation Network

UTV began the evaluation network in 1995 to promote regular contacts between UTV and the departments, increase department influence of common norms and routines for evaluation in an organised way, and to raise evaluation skills and knowledge at Sida (Sida 2002:2).¹⁹ This study indicates, however, that the network is unknown to non-members and works very differently from what was intended.

Sida personnel are generally sceptical to the network function, and the evaluation network is no exception. The arguments expressed are that networks are difficult to organise and that the dissemination effect at the department or division levels is limited. The evaluation network has a high turnover of members and little continuity of meetings. The members of the network also vary greatly in interest, knowledge and skills regarding evaluation. Some evaluation coordinators have never initiated an evaluation while others have completed several.

Many of the evaluation coordinators see their role only as collecting information on the status of planned or ongoing evaluations in their department, once a year. As a result, many evaluation focal points question the role of the network and their own role within it. One person expressed the lack of interest by saying that he “doesn’t feel he gets anything out of the network at this point.”²⁰ Another person expressed it in the following way:

*I have not really felt the need for the evaluation network since I don’t work actively with evaluations. You don’t want to see yourself as a person who only compiles information for the evaluation plan.*²¹

However, some of the respondents were very satisfied with the meetings they had attended. They were generally more interested in evaluation and saw the network as a means to gain more knowledge in evaluation methodology and a platform for discussions on how the evaluation system at Sida could be improved.

3.2 The evaluation plan

Each year, in accordance with Sida Evaluation Policy, UTV compiles the Sida Evaluation Plan which outlines ongoing and planned evaluations both at UTV and at the departments (including the embassies) at Sida. The survey found some discontent with the evaluation plan. Some respondents, mostly the members of the evaluation network, view the task of collecting information as time consuming. Since several desk officers are responsible for commissioning evaluations, it is difficult for the evaluation coordinator to get an overview of all activities. Evaluation activities at the embassies are seen as especially difficult to compile due to the distance to the person in charge in Stockholm. They question the incentive structure

¹⁹ Original text in Swedish: (1) Underlätta de löpande kontakterna mellan UTV och avdelningarna. (2) Öka avdelningarnas möjligheter att i organiserade former medverka i utformandet av för Sida gemensamma normer och rutiner för utvärdering. (3) Långsiktigt stärka avdelningarnas kompetens på utvärderingsområdet.

²⁰ Original text in Swedish: “Känna att man får ut något av det, vilket man inte gör idag”

²¹ Original text in Swedish: “Jag har väl inte riktigt själv känt behovet av utvärderanätverket eftersom jag inte jobbar aktivt med utvärderingar. Man vill inte bara se sig som en person som samlar in information till utvärderingsplanen.”

relating to the evaluation plan, with some respondents believing that UTV itself should be responsible for collecting the necessary information. One person puts it this way:

*From my department's point of view I think UTV has delegated tasks that it could have done itself. After all, UTV has its deadline and has the most interest in tracking down the embassies.*²²

There are also indications that not all planned evaluations are included in the plan. One reason for this is the perception of the publication process as rather troublesome and time consuming. Another reason is the large numbers of donors involved in joint evaluations, which are associated with great uncertainty in scheduling and/or planning, and are therefore left out of the plan.

This brings us to the issue of why planned evaluations that are included in the evaluation plan are not implemented. The most common reasons are a lack of time and the higher prioritisation of other tasks. According to 60% of the respondents, these two reasons account for most of the explanation of why evaluations are not implemented. Another common argument is the lack of incentives for commissioning evaluations. Less important reasons include forgetting the planned evaluation, lack of knowledge among desk officers, lack of prioritisation by managers and content that is too politically sensitive. In addition, high staff turnover and changes (often unexpected) in the evaluated activity are possible reasons for a lack of implementation of planned evaluations.

3.3 Publication of evaluations

UTV has found that some evaluations conducted never reach UTV for publication. The most common reason, according to the respondents, for not publishing evaluations is that the quality of the evaluation is poor. If an evaluation does not satisfy minimum quality standards, the desk officer, department or embassy handling it may not feel it is worth expending additional effort to publish it. Another reason is that the results of the evaluation may differ from the views of the desk officer, department or embassy handling it: "Sometimes, our view of the activity evaluated was contrary to that of the evaluators, and we therefore chose not to publish it."²³ Other reasons mentioned were overly critical evaluations, delayed evaluations becoming too outdated to publish, and high staff turnover.

Generally, Sida personnel consider the publication process to be time consuming and question whether all evaluations need to be published, especially those of low quality.

²² Original text in Swedish: "Från min avdelnings perspektiv har jag kanske snarare tyckt att UTV har lagt ut uppgifter som egentligen UTV kunde göra själva. Det är UTV som själva har sin deadline att hålla och det är också UTV som har det största intresset att jaga ambassaderna."

²³ Original text in Swedish: "Ibland har det hänt att vi tyckt tvärt emot vad utvärderaren tyckte och då har vi valt att inte publicera den."

4 Implications for UTV

This chapter identifies areas that need to be assessed and discussed further, based on the previous descriptive sections, and also outlines possible implications for UTV.

4.1 Use of evaluations

Although evaluations are primarily used internally by Sida, many respondents also mention that Sida's partners and governments and other donors are involved with the planning process and use the evaluations rather often. Even if we do not know anything about actual practices, it is positive that the personnel experience recipients to be involved to some extent. These results further indicate that views, and perhaps even practices, are moving toward a more participatory evaluation process.

As shown by this overview, Sida personnel mainly view evaluations as a means to control whether the goals of projects or programmes have been fulfilled, as tools to assist in decision-making, and as instruments to better understand Sida's activities. There seems to be a clear discrepancy between how evaluations are supposed to be used and how they are actually used. Respondents advocate an increase in instrumental, conceptual and accountability use, and a decrease in ritual, tactical and legitimatisation use. Process evaluations are unknown and hardly used at present.

One explanation as to why the accountability purpose is seen as very attractive is the general feeling that Sida-supported projects and programmes lack clear goals. When the activity has been implemented, many desk officers feel frustrated by not being able to tell whether or not the project or programme fulfilled its goals. This inability to measure results is either due to insufficient planning processes or inadequate monitoring systems. The main reason why evaluations are used instrumentally is that they are viewed as useful to the day-to-day work of the desk officer, the department or the embassy. The usefulness of an evaluation can be more easily perceived if it provides necessary input for a desk officer's decision making.

Although the accountability purpose and instrumental use are viewed as more practical, an increase of the conceptual use is highly desirable. The incentives for commissioning evaluations depend largely on their usefulness. Since conceptual evaluations usually take longer to implement, they are more costly and may be difficult for individual desk officers to initiate. There is thus a trade-off between direct short-term instrumental and accountability evaluations and long-term conceptual evaluations.

The lack of time and relatively low priority given to conducting evaluations, and the need for evaluations to be of immediate use, probably explain why evaluations are used the way they are. Another reason is insufficient knowledge of how evaluations can be used and a lack of appropriate planning processes, such as LFA. Inadequate planning could first affect a project and programme, and then the evaluation process. A lack of sufficient planning processes could explain the ritual use of evaluations, instrumentally or as a means of monitoring an activity. Changing the ways evaluations are used would also need changed views on evaluation and the planning processes of the projects and programmes. Changing views takes time, however, and not even evaluators at UTV agree on what uses of evaluations that best serve the need of the organisation.

As already mentioned evaluations can be used for many different purposes and a single evaluation can serve both the accountability and learning objectives. Sida's Evaluation Policy recommends that the main purpose of a planned evaluation should be stated in advance, as the purpose of an evaluation may be important for its planning, conduct and use (Sida 1999: 2).

Interestingly, views on how evaluations should be used differ between the respondents at the embassies and the headquarters. Respondents at the embassies seem to have a stronger preference for accountability evaluations whereas headquarters respondents prefer the instrumental use of evaluations. One explanation to this is the greater closeness of embassy personnel to the actual activity evaluated and consequently, a stronger interest in following up the results. Respondents in Stockholm, however, may prefer instrumental evaluations because more decisions are still taken in Stockholm than at the embassies.

4.2 Facilitating the evaluation process – how and at what stage?

The difficulties experienced by Sida personnel are caused by factors both inside and outside the organisation. Procurement-related problems are primarily associated with Swedish laws (mainly LOU). The establishment of framework agreements or maintaining evaluation costs below the threshold value would be the only possible solutions. As shown by this study, these two possibilities are already used by a large percentage of Sida personnel.

More framework agreements do not solve the problem of a lack of qualified consultants, since they decrease competition. One possible solution to this problem could instead be the provision of lists of consultants with qualification in evaluation methodology and/or specific sector knowledge. Such lists would facilitate the identification of consultants, especially if small evaluations not reaching the threshold value are used.

The lack of clear rules and guidelines regarding evaluations is primarily an organisational problem. At present, desk officers and departments have different views on how to conduct evaluations. This is an effect of inadequate central policies, handbooks and guidelines, or by personnel not using these as recommended. To achieve a more coherent approach, policies need to be both relevant and in use by the organisation. If there are no risks associated with deviating from the existing rules or guidelines, the incentive for following them are lower. However, creating clearer rules and requiring them to be followed by all Sida personnel would probably lead to other problems such as less flexibility.

UTV has an important role to play in resolving problems relating to the planning process and to the assessment of inception and draft reports. Respondents who have conducted evaluations are well aware of the support provided, although only just over half consulted UTV in evaluation matters. The reason for not consulting UTV is that the desk officers feel they are sufficiently competent and do not need the support, that obtaining support is time consuming, and that the requirements are set too high. Although the majority of those who have consulted UTV are very satisfied, additional types of support are requested.

The primary proposal, greatly supported by the personnel, is more active involvement by UTV at the time evaluations are conducted. UTV should be the active party, identifying ongoing or planned evaluations and offering support. Another proposal is a HELP-DESK function with a stronger focus on involvement in the operative work than at present. Increased support to Sida's embassies has also been requested. Since most embassies are far away from headquarters, they have not received the same amount of support, although many evaluations are conducted in the field. These supportive activities, in turn, would require UTV to take a more active role, with a deeper involvement in the operative activities and more time spent on the support function.

Depending how far these active and direct services would reach, UTV would need to reassess its independence towards the rest of the organisation. A stronger focus on the support function would also lead UTV to either initiate fewer activities of its own or increase the number of evaluators working to support the departments and embassies.

4.4 Evaluation Network

Since the evaluation network does not fulfil the stated goals, and some evaluation coordinators are dissatisfied with the network and their own role, changes and improvements are needed. First, it is important to decide what the purpose of the network should be, as the present goals and motives are unrealistic. Second, the members of the evaluation network need to benefit in one way or another from attending meetings or receiving information. The varying levels of both interest and expertise in evaluation amongst the evaluation coordinators make it difficult, however, to provide “one size fits all” solutions or improvements. Those who are already interested in evaluation are probably content with one type of network, whereas the others would request another. Thus, activities to increase incentives would be very different for different members of the evaluation network. This, in turn, raises the question of who the evaluation coordinators should be. Is there a need for representative distribution with at least one person from each department, or could the network instead consist of people with a special interest in evaluation, no matter where at Sida they are positioned?

4.5 The evaluation plan, its implementation and publication

The survey shows discontent with the evaluation plan being time consuming and inadequate. Responsible desk officers do not see the direct usefulness of the evaluation plan and are therefore not motivated to contribute to it. Another problem is that the plan does not provide a true picture of planned or ongoing evaluation activities. A number of reasons for this have been outlined: a lack of incentive (lack of time), difficulties in getting an overview of activities at the embassies, an increasing number of joint evaluations and a complicated or time consuming publication process (which militates against UTV notification). There is thus a need to discuss how the evaluation plan should be used, who should collect the information and how to make sure that all evaluations are being registered.

The reasons why some planned evaluations are not conducted are a lack of time and low priority. This lack of prioritising of evaluation activities is evident in all areas examined in this study. The most important reason for not publishing an evaluation is insufficient results although lack of time is named as a contributing factor. This lack of quality is viewed as a problem and needs to be considered.

Annex 1 – Terms of reference

Study of the support provided by the Secretariat for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) to the operative departments and embassies at Sida.

Introduction

The new Swedish Policy for Global Development proposes a number of changes in Swedish development cooperation. For the Secretariat for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV), the most important of these are the creation of an independent institute for the evaluation of development cooperation, a stronger emphasis on collaboration with other donor countries in the field of monitoring and evaluation and the position that developing countries' own evaluation capacity should be strengthened.²⁴

Within this changing environment UTV has realised a need to discuss its role within Sida and in Swedish development cooperation at large. The purpose of the present study is to provide additional input into these ongoing discussions with regard to one of the current tasks of UTV: the support to the departments of Sida and the embassies.

Background

The evaluation system at Sida is dual, with each department and embassy evaluating development assistance within its own area of responsibility, whereas thematic and comprehensive evaluations of strategic importance are the responsibility of UTV. UTV also conducts joint evaluations in cooperation with other donor organisations and partner countries and provides technical assistance to Sida's operative departments and embassies in its area of expertise. In addition to these tasks UTV is responsible for documentation through the Sida Evaluation Series and Sida Studies in Evaluation and for the provision of information in the field of evaluation.²⁵

The support provided by UTV includes evaluation planning, the writing of terms of reference, recruitment of external evaluators and guidance on how to evaluate tenders for evaluation work etc. The new Sida Evaluation Manual, which was published in 2004, is expected to further support the departments and embassies in evaluation matters. In addition, some of the advisory services given by UTV are the contribution to Sida Management Board and the Central Project Committee.²⁶

The objective of the support at present is to *satisfy the demand* for advice on evaluation from the departments and embassies. In this context, demand implies an inquiry from the departments and embassies. However, UTV may also actively work to increase demand in needed areas. Satisfied demand should be interpreted as quick and constructive response from UTV on an inquiry and that the support given is well suited for the specific case.²⁷

To assist the departments further in evaluation matters UTV has created a network of evaluation coordinators consisting of at least one person from each department. The purpose of this network is to facilitate regular contact between UTV and the departments, improve the possibilities for the depart-

²⁴ Government Bill 2002/03:122 78–79

²⁵ Sida's Evaluation Plan 2005: 18

²⁶ Sida's Evaluation Plan 2005: 2f, 18

²⁷ "UTVs verksamhetsidé och strategiska mål" 2001: 3

ments to influence common norms and routines for evaluation and to increase the general competence on evaluation at Sida.²⁸

Purpose of study

The purpose of the present study is to assess the support provided by UTV to the departments and embassies at Sida. This assessment should be divided into two parts. The first part, which is descriptive, should outline the *views* on evaluations, with a special emphasis on how evaluations are used, and the *needs* for support at the departments and embassies. UTV's views on evaluation should also be included for the purpose of comparison. The second part of the study, which should be more normative in nature, should aim to clarify the *purpose* and the *structure* of the support function at UTV.

The study also has as an objective to find evaluations made by the departments and embassies but still not published in the Sida evaluation series or Sida studies in evaluation.

Evaluation questions

The overall question for the study is to define the purpose and the structure of the support task of UTV. In particular, the study should focus on the following issues:

The views on evaluation at UTV and at the departments and embassies:

- What is the purpose of evaluation? (Is the main purpose of evaluation to control development cooperation activities, to support learning in development cooperation, to create a knowledge base? Does the purpose differ between UTV and the departments and embassies? In what way?)
- How are evaluations used? (Which is the most common of the six varieties of use: Instrumental use, conceptual use, legitimisation, tactical use, ritual use and process use?)
- At what stage, during the project- or programme process should evaluations ideally be performed?

The needs for support

Departments and embassies:

- How do the departments perceive the support they receive from UTV?
- Do the departments and embassies use the evaluation manual when conducting their own evaluations?
- What kind of support do the departments need? (advice, education/training etc.)
- At what stage do they need the support?
- *Preparation of an evaluation plan* Do the departments and embassies need support to establish an evaluation plan when preparing a project or a programme?
- *Preparation of evaluation tasks.* Do the departments and embassies use consultants when conducting evaluations? Is there a need for framework agreements with selected consultants? Would it be useful if UTV provided a list with frequently contracted consultants?
- *During the evaluation research phase?* Do departments and embassies need support in the dialog with the consultants?

²⁸ Möte med Sidas utvärderingssamordnare 2002-09-27 s 2

- *Reporting and dissemination* Is there a need for quality assurance of the finished report by UTV?

UTV:

- What kind of support does UTV provide to the operative departments?
- How much of total staff time is used for the support to the departments and embassies?
- Should the support provided today be different? Is there any lack of knowledge in evaluation matters at the departments and embassies according to UTV?
- At what stage of the evaluation process should the support increase/decrease? Initial phase, preparation of evaluation tasks, the evaluation research phase, reporting and dissemination, management response? (In order for the quality of evaluations to increase.)

Network of evaluation co-ordinators

- What is the role of the network?
- To what extent is information on evaluation spread at the departments through the network?
- What is the role of UTV in this context?
- What is the preferable purpose of the network? (How should it function ideally?)
- What is the role of the co-ordinators at each department?

Documentation

- X% of the planned evaluations from year XX were not made, what are the reasons for this?
- There have been indications that some evaluations are not published in the evaluation series, what is the reason for this?
- How can UTV assist the departments in the publication of evaluations?

Use of study (UTV response to the findings)

The results from the study could be used by UTV to:

1. Change or improve the content and the form of the support UTV provides to the departments
2. Review its evaluation policy with regard to the departments and embassies
3. Change or improve the working methods of the network of evaluation co-ordinator

Methodology

The descriptive part of the study will be carried out in three steps. The first step will outline the experiences and the views of UTV staff on their own services to the operative departments. To receive additional input, a comparison between the support provided by UTV and evaluation departments at development cooperation agencies in other countries should be made. In particular the support provided by evaluation departments in countries that belong to the “like minded group” should be outlined.

The second step will describe how the departments and embassies view evaluation and the support provided by UTV. The third step will examine the role of the network of evaluation co-ordinators.

Based on the findings from the descriptive part, the analysis of the study will consist of a discussion on the purpose and the structure of the support to the departments and embassies.

The descriptive part of the study shall use interviews and a questionnaire as the main source of data.

- Interviews: Interviews should be conducted with the members of the evaluation network, but could also be with other persons involved with evaluation and associated issues at Sida, in particular the Heads of Department and the Heads of Unit.
- Questionnaire: The interviews should be complemented with a questionnaire. This should be sent to all persons at the embassies who have conducted evaluations during the last X years and to the Heads of Unit at Sida.

Work Plan and Schedule

The assignment shall be completed by April/May 2005

The following preliminary schedule is suggested for the study:

	Material	Reporting
March week 10	Preparation of interviews Book interviews Make questionnaire	
March week 11	Interviews. /questionnaire	
March week 12	Interviews /questionnaire	
March week 13	Interviews	
March week 14	Interviews	
April week 15	Interviews	
April week 16		
April week 16–17		Report 10–15 pages. Presentation “utvärderarmöte” 18th of May or 1st of June

Reporting

The results from the interviews and the questionnaire should be presented in a report. An analysis of the results should be made with the questions of the study as a basis.

Annex 2 – Questionnaire

Study of the support provided by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) to the operative departments and embassies at Sida

Due to the new Swedish Policy for Global Development and changes in priorities and methods in Swedish development cooperation, the conditions for working with evaluation at Sida have been altered. Within this changing environment, the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) is discussing its strategies and future activities. To provide UTV with additional inputs to the discussion I have been asked to assess one of the department's current tasks; the support to the evaluation activities at Sida's departments and embassies. The main purpose of the study is to find out what kind of support the departments and embassies need and at what stages in the evaluation process they need it.

The material for the study will mainly consist of separate interviews with desk/program officers at Sida, Stockholm and of this questionnaire. The questionnaire has been sent to about 100 desk/program officers, national planning officers and managers at the embassies and the head office in Stockholm.

If you have the possibility to fill out this questionnaire it will be of much value for the assessment and will help UTV to improve its future support. Answer the questions from your experience of Sida as a whole and not necessarily from the department/embassy where you are positioned at the moment.

The estimated time to answer the following questions will be 10 minutes. All answers will be treated anonymously. I would greatly appreciate if you could try to return the form no later than 29th of April.

The report should be finished by the beginning of June. If you have any questions or want to know more about the study do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks in advance

Sincerely

Sara Bandstein

The Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV)

The following 17 questions have the purpose of outlining your views and experiences of evaluation activities at Sida. In this context, the concept of evaluation refers to all activities which aim to assess projects and program.

1. What experience do you have of carrying out evaluations at Sida's departments and embassies? Please check the relevant box

- ☐ I have never commissioned an evaluation
- ☐ I have been involved with evaluations but never commissioned one on my own
- ☐ I have commissioned 1–2 evaluations
- ☐ I have commissioned 3–5 evaluations
- ☐ I have commissioned more than 5 evaluations

2. How do you usually proceed when planning and designing evaluations? Please check the relevant box(es)

- ☐ Sida plans and designs the evaluation alone
- ☐ Sida plans and designs the evaluation together with other donors
- ☐ Sida plans and designs the evaluation together with the recipient partner
- ☐ No opinion

3. According to you, who are the main users for the evaluations carried out? Please check the relevant box(es).

- ☐ Sida
- ☐ Other donors
- ☐ The governments in Sida's partner countries
- ☐ Beneficiaries in Sida's partner countries, except government bodies
- ☐ The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- ☐ The Swedish Public
- ☐ No opinion
- ☐ Other, please specify:

4. Do you feel you have enough competence to commission evaluations? Please check the box mostly in accordance with your views.

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	No Opinion
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. When you commission an evaluation, during what phase/es are you experiencing difficulties? Please check the relevant boxes.

	Never					Always
When you define the evaluation questions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you assess the extent to which the evaluation question is answerable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you make an estimation of the total budget for the evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you formulate terms of references for external evaluators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you discuss the inception report	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you assist and communicate with the evaluators during the research phase	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you examine the evaluator's draft report against the contract	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When you disseminate the results to all interested parties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In the publication of the final report in Sida's evaluation series as well as on Sida's website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other, please specify:						

6. To assist you in your evaluation work, what kind of support would be useful? Please check the relevant box(es)

- ☐ HELP-DESK function with a specific contact person
- ☐ Education in general evaluation methodology
- ☐ Written material in general evaluation methodology
- ☐ Written material specific to your line of work
- ☐ Other, please specify:

7. Are you aware of the fact that UTV gives support to the evaluation activities of Sida's departments and embassies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered no to question 7, please move directly to question 10

8. Have you ever consulted UTV when commissioning your own evaluations?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered no to question 8 move directly to question 10

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the support provided by UTV? Please check the box mostly in accordance with your views.

Very
dissatisfied

☐☐☐☐☐

Very
satisfied

☐

No Opinion

☐

10. Are you aware of the fact that Sida has a new evaluation manual?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered no to question 10, please move directly to question 12

11. When have you used the evaluation manual in your own work? Please check the relevant box(es).

- ☐ During most of the evaluation process
- ☐ During the initial phase of the evaluation
- ☐ During the evaluation research phase
- ☐ During the reporting and dissemination phase
- ☐ In other areas of my work not related to evaluation activities
- ☐ Never

12. When you procure consultants for conducting evaluations, which methods do you use? Please check the relevant box(es).

- ☐ Direct selection of suitable consultants
- ☐ Simplified bidding procedure
- ☐ Open bidding procedure
- ☐ Selection of consultants with whom Sida has framework agreements
- ☐ No opinion
- ☐ Other, please specify:

13. What aspects of the procurement process do you find difficult?

14. Each year, a number of planned evaluations are not carried out/commissioned by Sida. According to you, what could the reasons for this be? Please check the relevant box(es).

- ☐ The desk/program officers do not have sufficient knowledge in evaluation methodology
- ☐ Lack of time
- ☐ The planned evaluation is forgotten
- ☐ Evaluations are not prioritised by the management
- ☐ Other work tasks are more important
- ☐ Lack of incentives to carry out evaluations
- ☐ Contents are too politically sensitive
- ☐ Other, please specify:

15. According to your experience what are the actual purposes of evaluations initiated by Sida? Please check the boxes mostly in accordance with your views.

	Never					Very often	No Opinion
The findings and recommendations from evaluations are directly used as an input to decision making in the evaluated project/program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations are used to measure how well the project/program fulfilled its goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations are used to obtain a deeper understanding of an activity or type of activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations are used to gain support for views that are already held	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations are carried out for no other reasons than that they should be done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations are used for participants to remind themselves on the purpose and goal of the evaluated activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. The previous question relates to the *actual* practices of evaluation, according to your experience what *should* the purposes of evaluation be at Sida? Please check the boxes mostly in accordance with your views.

	Never					Very often	No Opinion
The findings and recommendations from evaluations should be used as an input to decision making in the evaluated program/project	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations should be used to measure how well the project/program fulfilled its goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations should be used to obtain a deeper understanding of an activity or type of activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations should be used to gain support for views that are already held	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations should be carried out for no other reasons than that they should be done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluations should be used for participants to remind themselves on the purpose and goal of the evaluated activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. What could be done to strengthen the evaluation function at Sida?

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