Sida's Management Response System

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Foreword

In 1999 Sida decided to institute a formal response system for its evaluations, in part inspired by a similar arrangement for the internal audit function at Sida. The overall purpose of the system is to ascertain that findings, conclusions and recommendations from Sida evaluations are given due consideration and are acted on.

The present study carried out by a team from UCER at Umeå University commissioned by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) contains an analysis of the programme logic as well as the application of the current response system. It is based on a sample of evaluations and responses produced by UTV and by other Sida departments and the Swedish embassies with responsibility for Swedish international development co-operation.

The underlying question of this report is the present and potential role of a formal response system to further learning from evaluations in the context of Swedish development co-operation.

Not many studies have been made of formal response systems. Thus the present study is also a contribution to a general discussion on mechanisms to promote learning from evaluations.

Stockholm January 26, 2006

Eva Lithman
Director
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

Content

Preface by the authors

This evaluation study was carried out between September 2004 and September 2005 by two researchers at Umeå Centre for Evaluation Research (UCER), Umeå University, Sweden. A reference group[1] has met three times to discuss the evaluation plan, preliminary results and a draft report. We would like to thank you all for your advice and comments, which have been of great value for us when compiling this report. However, only we are responsible for the analysis and conclusion, as well as any flaws in the report.

We also want to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to Sida personnel and other persons who have offered precious time and shared their experiences with us. We are especially grateful to Begoña Barrientos who helped us to collect the management response documents and arrange most of the interviews.

We have written a fairly short main report and elaborated the analysis on a general level. The empirical material and fine points are presented in annexes. It should be known that there are two versions of the same report, one Sida and one UCER. The only difference between the two is that the Sida version, published in 'Sida Studies in Evaluation', comprises a selection of annexes whereas the UCER report, published in UCER's series 'Evaluation Reports', includes all 11 annexes. However, all annexes are also available at the Secretariat for Evaluation and Internal Audit at Sida. The UCER report can be downloaded as pdf file (www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer) or ordered from UCER (see address below).

It is our hope that this report will contribute to the discussion on how to improve the utilization of evaluations in general and in developing Sida's and other organizations response system in particular.

We also welcome comments on the report for our future work. Please address correspondence to UCER, Umeå University SE-901 87 Umeå, Sweden or anders.hanberger@ucer.umu.se.

Umeå December 2005

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[1]   Kim Forss, Andante Tools for Research AB; Ulf Andersson, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency; Staffan Herrström, Sida (POM); Eva Lövgren, Sida (AFRA); Johanna Palmberg, Sida (NATUR).

Summary

In 1999 a management response (MRE) system was introduced at Sida with the purpose to promote learning and improve the administrative procedures for evaluations which in turn would enhance Sida's effectiveness. The purpose of this evaluation is to (a) describe and analyse the management response system's characteristics and assumptions, (b) to evaluate how the system works in practice, (c) and to assess the systems relevance, and present recommendations for the future.[2]

Three main conclusions have been drawn from this evaluation. First, the assumptions of the MRE system are reasonable and consistent to attain the desired outcome of better documentation and adding structure, but not quite consistent with the intention of (organizational) learning. This evaluation and other studies indicate that the quality of Sida evaluation reports is uneven and sometimes low, which implies that the accuracy needs to be examined in each case. The MRE system's integration with existing forums for decision-making is not considered thoroughly in the design of the system, neither are the conditions for learning and process use. The evaluation is viewed as an end product where conclusions and recommendations are to be used. Learning from evaluations, however, demands support from the top, feasible forums and time for deliberation throughout the evaluation process.

In practice the MRE system has, secondly, made a limited contribution to (organizational) learning which has to do with a number of implementation failures. The implementation of the MRE system has been slow and uneven. On average, still less than 50% of the evaluations are completed with MREs. The staff involved and the work devoted to developing MREs varies, but is in most cases limited. MREs for UTV evaluations are often more elaborate. Management responses have low status compared with other routines, and documents and are not generally used in forums where important decisions are made. Managers have been cautious when deciding about Sida's action in the MREs in order to avoid too many commitments. MREs are rarely requested at the management level and never by the Board. MREs often provide no or incomplete representation of evaluations, provide limited information about Sida's considerations and responses and thus have limited value for knowledge transfer. In addition, the follow-up of action plans is not always a routine.

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[2] The evaluation is based on documents guiding Sida's evaluation and MRE system, an overall analysis of all Sida evaluation reports and MRE documents produced for the period 1999-2003, a comparative analysis of the quality of 11 evaluation reports and 21 MRE documents, interviews with key persons behind the system and with participants in six evaluation and MRE processes, and five focus group interviews with Sida personnel.

Thirdly, the system does not enhance partnership, dialogue and ownership. Accordingly, it is not a support for Sida's overall endeavours.

Viewed from a political perspective the current MRE system strengthens the management level and its discretion to decide about which action to take and not to take. Assessed from an institutional perspective which gives attention to the values, norms, and procedures in which the MRE system is embedded, the system appears to be more important than single MREs indicating use of the scheme for organizational legitimatization. The prime value of the system is to add legitimacy to the organization by pointing to a system which takes care of evaluations. The limited interest shown in actual management responses become understandable from this perspective.

The evaluation identifies three options for the future. The status quo option implies no changes in routines and procedures in the current system. The main advantages are that the system could add some legitimacy to existing practice and provide freedom of choice for managers. The main disadvantages are that Sida's action could be based on weak grounds, basic conditions for learning are not at hand, and the system is not given high priority and insufficiently supervised by managers, which in turn sends signals to the staff that it is not so important.

The second option, referred to as the Sida Response (SR) system, modifies and strengthens the current system. Some of the improvements include better instructions and routines for the system, more time for reflection, a flexible response system which includes no response, a limited and a complete response. The SR system also needs a response committee for each evaluation. The main advantages are that a SR system provides better conditions for achieving the original intentions and guaranteeing that power and freedom of choice stay with Sida managers. The main disadvantages are that it is not adapted to Sida's field organization and to Sida's partnership, dialogue, and ownership goals/principles.

The third option is a Sida Partner Response (SPR) system which includes Sida's responses to recommendations directed to partners, and partner responses to recommendations addressed to Sida. "Reaching agreed consent" is added to the purposes of the SPR system. Criteria for situations when Sida is not prepared to seek a compromise need to be developed as well. The status of the response system is raised by using SPR in forums where important dialogues and decisions take place. This option also includes a flexible response system and a response committee for each evaluation. The main advantages are that SPR enhances rationality in collective action, promotes collective and inter-organizational learning and goes along with the overall goals of partnership, dialogue and ownership. The main disadvantages are that the evaluation process is prolonged and time consuming.

The two development alternatives allocate resources differently than today; time is saved in cases where no response or a limited response to an evalua-

tion will be produced, but the overall costs are difficult to estimate. Today the cost of dissemination, deliberation and follow-up evaluations is low compared with the evaluation process as a whole. If more time is spent on some of the evaluations it could be justifiable from a broad economic perspective and also from a partnership perspective.

The recommendation is to develop the SPR alternative if Sida personnel and partners, after discussion, approve it. Our main arguments are that this alternative can help to achieve the intentions of the current MRE system, promote collective learning and shared responsibility, and it harmonizes with Sida's overall goals of dialogue, partnership and ownership. Sida is also recommended to thoroughly discuss the conclusions and future options with different stakeholders within Sida and to a selection of partners.

1. Introduction

Evaluation is an indispensable part of decision making and a basic feature of organizational life. During the last decades evaluation has become more elaborated and diversified, and the formalization and institutionalization of evaluation have increased considerably. Furthermore, evaluation systems have become a normal feature of large organizations in their dealing with governance problems and uncertainty.[3] Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, is no exception.

Sida commissions around 40–50 evaluations every year. To deal with all these evaluations Sida has, step by step, built an evaluation system.[4] The current evaluation system provides a structure for evaluations undertaken by Sida's Department for Evaluation and Audit (UTV) and other Sida departments and embassies. Sida's evaluations are planned and managed in a structured way and used as a complement to monitoring.[5] Furthermore, Sida organizes and undertakes evaluations following the principles for evaluation of development assistance developed by the Development Assistance Committee, DAC, of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD.[6] This implies that impartiality, independence and credibility should exist at all stages of the evaluation process, to name a few of the guiding principles.[7]

In 1999, a so-called Management REsponse (MRE) system was introduced at Sida in order to improve the performance of the evaluation system. This last stage of the evaluation process has the overall purpose of enhancing learning from evaluations and consolidating the administrative routines for dealing with evaluation findings. This report summarizes an evaluation of how Sida's MRE system works in theory and practice. The evaluation was commissioned by UTV and carried out by Umeå Centre for Evaluation Research (UCER), Umeå University, from September 2004 to September 2005.

The MRE system is examined in this evaluation as part of Sida's evaluation system and organization. The way the system is intended to work is depicted from the guiding principles and policies for evaluations at Sida[8] and through interviews with key persons behind the system. The evaluation also takes into

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[3]   Forss & Samset, 1999; Power, 1997; Hofstede, 1980; Mark and Henry, 2004; Schaumburg-Müller, 2005; Widmer & Neuenschwander, 2004
[4]   Forss, 1984; Forss & Samset, 1999
[5]   Sida, 1999; Sida, 2003; Sida, 2004a; Sida, 2004b
[6]   OECD/DAC, 2002
[7]   ibid.; Sida, 2004b
[8]   GD decision 158/98; UTV, 1997; Sida, 1999; Sida, 2003; Sida, 2004b

consideration Sida's inter-organizational context, its collaborating partners' and some of the main stakeholders' experiences of how the system works in practice. The MRE system is also assessed in relation to Sida's overall principles for promoting dialogue, partnership and ownership. The dialogue with Sida partners should, according to this principle, be open and transparent, and also contribute to learning and information exchange.[9] Sida also strives to found partnerships "based on shared values and well-defined roles, with its cooperation partners".[10] Furthermore, Sida has recognized "Genuine ownership by the cooperation partner" as one important condition for prosperous development work.[11] Evaluations initiated by Sida "should reflect the interests and concerns of all parties, not just those of Sida",[12] a tenet we shall return to at the end of this report.

The MRE system can also be understood as a way of "linking evaluation findings to future activities", which is one of the requirements for good institutional structure for managing evaluation.[13] Thus, Sida's institutionalization of the current MRE system is anchored in international discourse and the DAC principles for the evaluation of development assistance.

This evaluation adopts a multi-methodological approach, briefly described below and in more detail in Annex 2. The analysis and conclusions are based on existing documents guiding Sida's evaluation and management response system, an overall analysis of all Sida evaluation reports and MRE documents produced for the period 1999–2003, a comparative analysis of the quality of 11 evaluation reports and 21 MRE documents, interviews with key persons behind the MRE system, five focus group interviews with Sida personnel, and interviews with participants in six evaluation and MRE processes. Because only a selection of evaluation and management response processes has been explored in depth, the basis for conclusions concerning how evaluation and MRE processes proceed is incomplete. However, six case studies (processes), together with five focus group interviews, and the documentation (terms of references, pre-study reports, evaluation reports, MRE documents) provide a sufficient basis for exploring most issues at issue concerning how the MRE system works in practice. If more processes had been explored the same issues would appear, but probably very few entirely new ones. The evaluation cannot, however, elucidate how common various issues are, or the number of stakeholders that perceive the evaluation and MRE process in a specific way. In addition, other studies of Sida's evaluation system are integrated in the analysis. In the main report the various data sources are synthesised. In a few cases when data collected with different methods point in different directions this will be indicated and emphasized.

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9   Sida, 2003:38
10   ibid.p.36
11   ibid.p.39
12   ibid.p.53
13   OECD/DAC, 1992:133

The structure of the report is as follows: First, the reader is briefly introduced to research on evaluation systems and use. Next, the purpose of the evaluation is specified and the applied methodology is briefly outlined. The analysis which follows in chapters two, three and four is based on empirical findings, extensively reported in annexes 4 to 7. The proposed guidelines for dealing with evaluation findings in a revised and developed response system are presented in annex 8.

1.1 Sida's Evaluation and Management Response System

Basically, two types of evaluation systems can be distinguished in organizations: a centralized and a decentralized organizational model.[14] The centralized model is a top-down model in which a specialized evaluation unit has responsibility for planning evaluations and disseminating findings. In this model, the evaluation unit is subordinate to the board or directorate with a certain degree of independence, and executes its commission primarily through external evaluators. A key feature of a centralized system is an advisory committee with representatives from different internal sections, which sometimes include external officers or experts. By contrast, in a decentralized evaluation system, the sections, departments or units are themselves responsible for initiating, planning and implementing evaluations. In the sense that the initiatives come from lower administrative levels, such a model can be referred to as bottom up. A special evaluation unit, if there is one, can have a supportive role in the design and implementation of evaluations initiated at lower levels. The centralized model has the overall purpose and intended function of providing accountability and legitimacy, whereas the purpose of the decentralized model is first of all improvement and development.[15]

Sida's current evaluation system is an internal evaluation system which combines the two models. Evaluations commissioned by UTV are organized mainly in line with the centralized model, whereas evaluations initiated by departments and embassies have most in common with the decentralized model. The central evaluation unit, UTV, has different roles depending on whether the unit itself is responsible for the evaluation. UTV's position and role in Sida's organization can, from a principal-agent perspective, be described as an agent acting on behalf of the board, but an agent with a certain amount of independence. The unit has a general commission to plan, initiate and undertake accountability and learning evaluations on a general and thematic level. However, the evaluation plan needs approval by the board, and UTV is responsible to the board directly. UTV operates according to the principles approved by OECD/DAC.[16] The evaluation unit also has a coun-

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[14] Widmer & Neuenschwander, 2004
[15] ibid.
[16] OECD/DAC1992; 1998

selling role at Sida. UTV assists the departments and embassies in their evaluation activities. Sida's Evaluation Manual is a result of its counselling commission. The manual, which is not intended to be binding, provides guidelines for undertaking Sida evaluations.[17]

Sida's launching of the MRE system in 1999 was a logical step in strengthening Sida's current evaluation system and a device to deal with the weakest link in the evaluation system, i.e. the insufficient use of evaluations.[18] Sida is not the only agency using a management response system.[19] One principle for evaluating development assistance concerns the dissemination (of findings) and feedback, and the most important feature of this principle is "integrating findings and recommendations into agency policies and programmes".[20] The MRE system is one way of practising this principle. The most common ways used by other countries for linking evaluation findings to future activities are, besides management responses, workshops and seminars for general staff.[21]

In line with Sida's evaluation system the management response system comprises two subsystems, one centralized and more complex for UTV evaluations, and the other decentralized, not so elaborate, for evaluations initiated and owned by departments or embassies. The evaluation examines the whole MRE system, but there is sometimes a need to distinguish between the subsystems.

The purpose of the MRE system is more specifically to promote learning and to improve the administrative procedures for dealing with evaluation findings and recommendations which in turn is intended to increase Sida's effectiveness.

1.2   Evaluation Use

Evaluation research has drawn attention to the fact that evaluations are used in different ways, and that achieving an intended use requires certain conditions. On a general level this implies that the design of the MRE system could be more or less appropriate for enhancing a certain type of evaluation use. In this evaluation a distinction is made between eight types of use (Table 1).

One common use of evaluation is instrumental. To most people this is what one should expect from investment in an evaluation. This type of use implies that evaluation findings are considered and used directly in decision making. Hence, instrumental use has a problem-solving function. By contrast, a con-

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[17] See Bandstein (2005) for Sida personnel's attitudes and experiences of the current evaluation system, including the UTV support.
[18] GD 158/98; Sida, 2004b; see Annex 4
[19] cf. Danida, 2005; DFID, 2005; Schaumburg-Müller, 2005
[20] DAC, 1998:29
[21] ibid.

ceptual use of evaluation implies that evaluations are used for learning. The latter implies that evaluations contribute to opening new perspectives and ways to understand current practice. When the main problem is assumed to be a lack of resources, for example, and the evaluation indicates that structural problems or a lack of shared responsibility are more fundamental, a conceptual or learning use of evaluation could take place. A third type of use which occurs in this evaluation is when evaluation is used for legitimatizing ongoing programmes or routines. The legitimatizing use implies that (part of) the evaluation is used to justify established positions or endeavours. Ritual or symbolic use implies using evaluations because one is expected to do evaluations in modern organizations. However, there is no real interest in the evaluation results. Interactive use refers to use of many sources of information along with evaluation findings. Tactical use is associated with gaining time or avoiding responsibility and is one way of using the evaluation process.[22] Misuse implies using the evaluation for unintended purposes. Using evaluations as political ammunition, i.e. a form of selective use, can hardly be avoided once an evaluation is presented openly. As indicated further on, all uses listed in Table 1 have been identified in the assessment of evaluations commissioned by Sida.

Table 1: Use of evaluation and management response

Type of use	Refers to
Instrumental	When results are used directly as input to decision making
Conceptual	Adopting new perspectives and deeper understanding of current practice
Legitimatizing	Justification of positions, programmes or endeavours
Ritual/ symbolic	An association with rationality, but with no further interest in the results
Interactive	Use in conjunction with other sources of information (research, other endeavours)
Tactical	Gaining time or avoid responsibility
Process	Use of evaluation process for deliberation about a common practice
Misuse	Other uses than intended, including selective use

There is also a need to distinguish between process use and use after an evaluation has been finished. Process use implies that the evaluation process is used for deliberation, learning, and for improving the programme or policy under scrutiny. Process use is assumed to be of great value and can be facili-

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[22] Cf Vedung, 1998

tated by participatory evaluation approaches, for example.[23] However, Sida's MRE system is primarily designed for using evaluations as end products.

As this evaluation will illustrate, the same evaluation is often used differently by different stakeholders, which is not unexpected. An evaluation commissioned for accountability could be used for taking decisions about termination of assistance by Sida Stockholm, for example, whereas the same evaluation, or part of it, could be used by Sida's field organization or collaborating partners to indicate programme success. Accordingly, there is a need to distinguish between the ways different stakeholders use evaluation and management response. In general, the use of an evaluation is linked to one's position in the organization and one's own endeavours. Subsequently, in a study of the performance of Sida's MRE system there is a need to account for the following stakeholders' use of evaluations and management responses: Sida managers in Stockholm; Sida managers in the field; Sida programme officers; staff responsible for Sida evaluation; collaborating partners; and other stakeholders.

On a more general level, the use of evaluation and MREs is also interpreted in relation to different organizational perspectives. Thus, this evaluation not only describes how evaluations and MREs are used, but also tries to understand why they are used the way they are.

1.3 Purpose of Evaluation of the Management Response System

This evaluation has three interrelated purposes. The first purpose is to describe and analyse the MRE system's characteristics and assumptions in terms of its intervention logic. The second purpose is to evaluate how the system works in practice, and its effects and implications. The third purpose is to assess whether the system is relevant and appropriate for the problems and challenges it is intended to deal with. More specifically the evaluation seeks answers to four key questions:

– What are the assumptions of the management response system?

– How does the system work and what characterizes the processes?

– What are the effects and consequences of the system?

– Is the system appropriate and relevant according to its intentions?

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[23] Besides different evaluation approaches, specific conditions and factors tend to enhance different types of evaluation use. The relevance and credibility of an evaluation are two of the most common factors. Other factors are user involvement, quality of evaluation and contextual factors, for example. Annex 3 summarizes the literature on evaluation use.

1.4 Methodology

Below the multi-methodology approach adopted in this evaluation is briefly summarized. Annex 2 describes the methodology in more detail. First of all this evaluation is theory-driven and designed as a programme theory evaluation with elements of stakeholder evaluation. The analytical framework and data sources are intended to generate a sufficient account for assessing the MRE system in theory and practice, and also for exploring options for deciding about the future for the MRE system.

The programme theory evaluation is summarized in figure 1. The evaluation model is used to organize and structure the evaluation and to assist and focus the analysis. The analysis of the MRE system, based on theories of evaluation use, is indicated on the left of the figure. These theories are helpful in identifying various forms of evaluation use and pre-conditions for different types of use, and also for an assessment of the dominant uses of the current MRE system. These theories also provide a theoretical basis for final discussion of alternatives to the existing MRE system. The figure illustrates the three types or steps of programme theory evaluation undertaken in this evaluation.

The first step in the analysis is a reconstruction of the intervention logic, i.e. how the MRE system is intended to work. Intervention logic is a concept used to refer to the assumptions behind an intervention. The intervention logic under scrutiny here consists of assumptions that can be reconstructed for Sida's MRE system, i.e. how the architects assume that evaluations should be dealt with to promote learning and consolidation, and to arrive at a more effective Sida organization.

**Figure 1 Programme theory evaluation of
Sida's management response system**
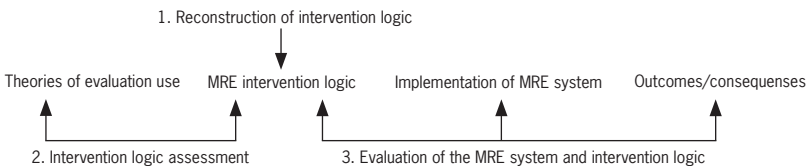
The second step in the analysis includes two assessments. The internal consistency of the MRE intervention logic is probed through a logical analysis of whether the assumptions are logical and coherent. The intervention logic, as a whole, is then assessed against theories of evaluation use. Theories of evaluation utilization are also used as a conceptual framework when exploring prevailing forms of use among different stakeholders.

The third step comprises an analysis of how the system works in practice and includes an assessment of the assumptions of the intervention logic after the MRE system has been implemented. This analysis is also made in order to

evaluate the implementation of the MRE system, the goal achievements, the system's effects, as well as the relevance of the system. A fourth step, not indicated in the figure, is to explore alternatives to achieve the aims of the current MRE system.

Interviews, focus group interviews and the collection of relevant documents are used as data collection methods. Semi-structured focus group interviews are used as a method for collecting qualitative data on attitudes and experiences of the MRE system at work.

The experiences of actors participating in the evaluation and MRE processes are analyzed with case study methodology, i.e. interviews and documents are used together with analytical categories as data analysis methods. Text or document analysis of evaluation reports and corresponding MRE documents is also used. The applied measures are exclusively developed for an assessment of the quality of evaluation reports with reference to management response.

2. The Management Response System and its Intervention Logic

In this chapter we describe the administrative procedures of the management response system according to the original directives, together with our interpretation of its intervention logic.[24] Actual practice in some instances differs from the directives. This is commented upon in the text.[25]

After an evaluation is completed a management response should be produced. This is Sida's reaction and answer to the evaluation and its conclusions and recommendations. The rules for it are found in two decisions by the Director General[26], one of which is Sida's Evaluation Policy. Some guidelines for the management response can also be found in Sida's manual for the evaluation process.[27]

According to the first decision the management response will begin with an overall judgement of the evaluation and its quality (which is not mentioned in Sida's Evaluation Policy). The recommendations given in the evaluation report should be commented on and Sida's position on each of them should be stated. The recommendations should be accepted or rejected. If they are rejected, reasons for the rejection must be given. If they are accepted there has to be an action plan, including a timescale for the action, and for each of the actions the name of the person who is responsible.

The system operates in two different ways depending on the type of evaluation at hand. For centralized evaluations, i.e. evaluations initiated by UTV, there are certain administrative procedures, and for decentralized evaluations, i.e. evaluations initiated by other Sida departments, units or embassies, the procedures are similar but not as elaborate.

Regardless of who has initiated the evaluation and regardless of what administrative procedures have been used, the purpose of the management response system is the same, and the outcome – the formal document – should contain the same type of information.

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[24] Annex 4 provides a background and a more detailed description.
[25] The description is based on studies of relevant documents and interviews with Bo Göransson (former Director General of Sida), Bengt Ekman (former Chief Controller of Sida), Ann-Marie Fallenius (former Head of UTV) and Eva Lithman (present Head of UTV).
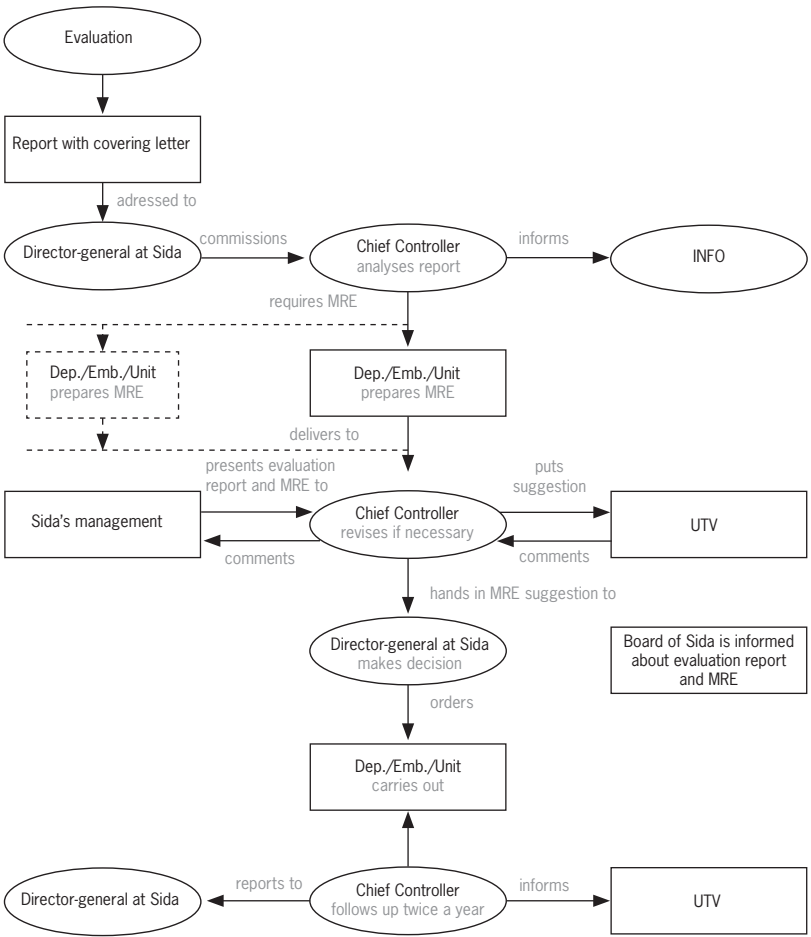[26] Gd 158/98; Gd 146/99
[27] Looking Back – Moving Forward, Sida, 2004b

2.1 The Management Response System for Centralized Evaluations

The steps in the administrative procedures for centralized evaluations (evaluations initiated by UTV) are outlined in figure 2.

Figure 2. Administrative procedures to follow a centralized evaluation

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Evaluation    │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
                    ┌────────▼────────────────┐
                    │ Report with covering letter │
                    └────────┬────────────────┘
                             │ adressed to
                             │           commissions
              ┌──────────────▼──────┐              ┌──────────────────┐  informs  ┌──────────┐
              │ Director-general at Sida │─────────▶│ Chief Controller  │─────────▶│   INFO   │
              └─────────────────────┘              │ analyses report   │          └──────────┘
                                                   └────────┬──────────┘
                                        requires MRE        │
        ┌─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─│─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─
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        ┆ │ Dep./Emb./Unit  │              │ Dep./Emb./Unit  │         ┆
        ┆ │ prepares MRE    │              │ prepares MRE    │         ┆
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        ┆          │          delivers to         │                   ┆
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          presents evaluation                      │        puts
          report and MRE to                        │        suggestion
   ┌──────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────▼──┐             ┌──────────┐
   │ Sida's management │◀────────▶│ Chief Controller    │────────────▶│   UTV    │
   └──────────────────┘          │ revises if necessary │◀────────────└──────────┘
                    comments      └────────┬───────────┘   comments
                                           │ hands in MRE suggestion to
                                  ┌────────▼───────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐
                                  │ Director-general at Sida │ │ Board of Sida is informed │
                                  │ makes decision     │   │ about evaluation report │
                                  └────────┬───────────┘   │ and MRE            │
                                           │ orders        └────────────────────┘
                                  ┌────────▼───────────┐
                                  │ Dep./Emb./Unit     │
                                  │ carries out        │
                                  └────────▲───────────┘
                                           │
   ┌──────────────────┐  reports to ┌──────┴─────────┐  informs  ┌──────────┐
   │ Director-general at Sida │◀────│ Chief Controller │────────▶│   UTV    │
   └──────────────────┘          │ follows up twice a year │     └──────────┘
                                 └────────────────────┘
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In this case the Chief Controller[28] has a central role in organizing the procedure. He decides which department(s) should be responsible for writing the MRE. He can also revise the suggestion for MRE if he finds it necessary, e.g. if he finds that it is not according to Sida's general policy. According to the

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[28] At present the position as Chief Controller is vacant as a change in the organization is being considered. Meanwhile the duties regarding the management response procedures are being handled by the former Chief Controller.

first decision[29] final drafts for all MRE regarding UTV evaluations have to be presented to Sida's management group. In "Sida's Evaluation Policy" it is stated that the responses from the different departments affected should be compiled and coordinated by the Chief Controller. The evaluation policy further states that UTV should be invited to comment on the draft before it is presented to Sida's management group.

To reduce the number of matters to deal with in the meetings the management group decided in 2004 that only UTV evaluations and related MRE that are considered of high general interest should be presented and discussed. Evaluations that are interesting to a limited number of departments or units could be taken up in special working forums.

Although Sida's board decides the evaluation plan (based on proposal(s) from UTV), it is the Director General that decides about the MREs compiled for evaluations. This is not congruent with the procedures for internal audits where the board decides both about the audit plan and the MREs compiled for audits. By contrast, Sida's Board only has to be informed about the evaluations and corresponding MREs. The Chief Controller will make sure twice a year that the action plan has been carried out.
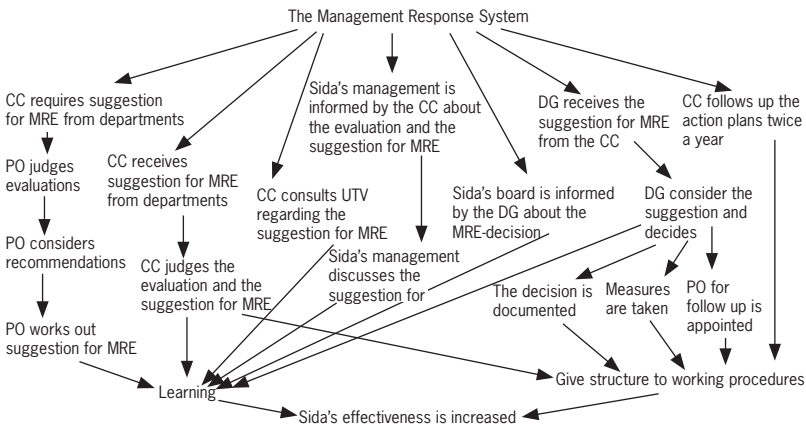
2.1.1   The Intervention Logic

Our reconstruction of the intervention logic indicates that the purpose of the system is to support learning and to give structure to the working procedures in Sida, to make them consistent and to consolidate them[30].

The means to achieve these sub-goals (learning and structuring) and the overall goal (effectiveness) are thus the different procedures in the system. In figure 3 we present our interpretation of the intervention logic of the system as it is supposed to work for centralized evaluations. The different procedures prescribed for the MREs should lead to learning and the structuring of working procedures. These two should in their turn increase Sida's effectiveness. Briefly stated, the intellectual work in the deliberation processes implies learning, and the outcomes in the form of MRE documents and documented actions will have a structuring effect.
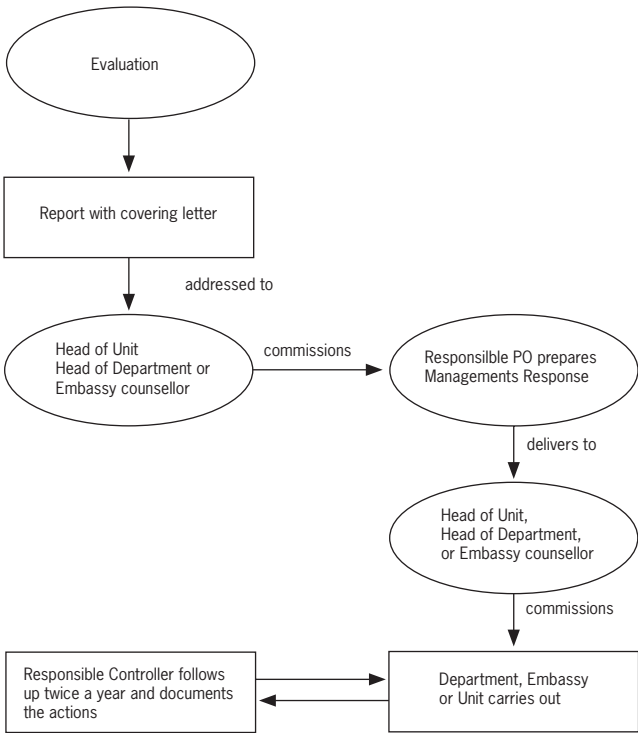
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[29] Gd 158/98

[30] In Swedish a part of the purpose is "ge stadga åt verksamheten". It has here been translated as "to give structure to the working procedures at Sida, to make them consistent and to consolidate them". Depending on the context we will use the most suitable of these three expressions when referring to this part of the purpose.

Figure 3. The intervention logic of the Management Response System applied to centralized evaluations.

The Management Response System

CC requires suggestion for MRE from departments

PO judges evaluations

CC receives suggestion for MRE from departments

Sida's management is informed by the CC about the evaluation and the suggestion for MRE

DG receives the suggestion for MRE from the CC

CC follows up the action plans twice a year

PO considers recommendations

CC consults UTV regarding the suggestion for MRE

Sida's board is informed by the DG about the MRE-decision

DG consider the suggestion and decides

CC judges the evaluation and the suggestion for MRE

Sida's management discusses the suggestion for

PO works out suggestion for MRE

The decision is documented

Measures are taken

PO for follow up is appointed

Learning

Give structure to working procedures

Sida's effectiveness is increased

Key: DG is the Director General. CC is the Chief Controller. PO is the Programme Officer.

Figure 4. Administrative procedures to follow a decentralized evaluation.

Evaluation

Report with covering letter

addressed to

Head of Unit
Head of Department or
Embassy counsellor

commissions

Responsilble PO prepares Managements Response

delivers to

Head of Unit,
Head of Department,
or Embassy counsellor

commissions

Responsible Controller follows up twice a year and documents the actions

Department, Embassy or Unit carries out

Key: PO is the Programme Officer.

## 2.2 The Management Response System for Decentralized Evaluations

The procedures for decentralized evaluations (evaluations initiated by departments, units or embassies) are similar, but with different actors involved. The MRE procedures for this type of evaluation are described in figure 4. Here we see that the Head of Department, Head of Unit or Embassy counsellor organizes the MRE procedure and takes the formal decision.

The responsible controller has to check that the action plan has been implemented and to document the action that has been taken.

2.2.1 The Intervention Logic

In the MRE processes for evaluations initiated by departments, units or embassies, far fewer people are involved than in those for centralized evaluations (UTV evaluations) and the intervention logic is less elaborated. Learning is limited to persons within the concerned unit and there are no formal rules for the dissemination of the MRE. Our reconstruction of the intervention logic for decentralised evaluations is presented in figure 5.

Figure 5. The intervention logic of the Management Response System applied to decentralized evaluations.
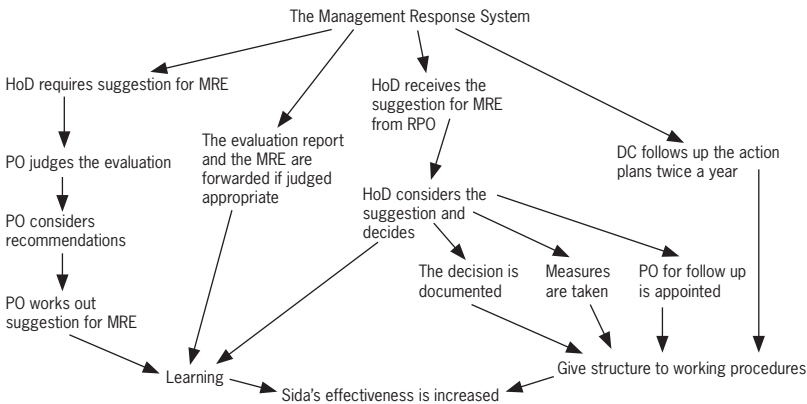
Key: HoD is the Head of Department, Head of Unit or Embassy Counsellor. PO is the Programme Officer. DC is Department Controller or corresponding

The same mechanisms to support learning and to give structure to the working procedures in Sida are present in both types of MRE. Learning may also occur in partner organizations and partner governments when measures are taken according to the action plan. Partner organizations are not mentioned in the instructions for the system and consequently this learning is not included in the intervention logic in figures 4 and 5. Thus, we interpret the MRE as mainly being a part of Sida's control system.

3. The Management Response System at Work

This chapter consists of an analysis of how the management response system works in practice. The examination and analysis are elaborated in four complementary ways. First, implementation of the MRE system at Sida is described and discussed followed by an assessment of the quality of 11 evaluation reports and corresponding MRE documents, and 10 additional MRE documents. These two analyses are intended to provide a general, overall picture of the performance of the system. Next, a synthesis of our examination of six evaluation and MRE processes is made in order to deepen understanding of how the system works in practice. The focus here is on how the processes evolve and the use and benefit of evaluations and MREs. Finally, five focus group interviews are analysed with attention paid to prevailing attitudes and experiences of the MRE system by Sida staff. The case studies and focus group interviews are intended to provide a realistic and valid representation of how the system works.[31]

3.1 Implementation of the Management Response System

During the five year-period 1999–2003 a total of 199 Sida Evaluation reports were produced, i.e. on average 40 reports per year.[32] During the same period 66[33] MRE documents were compiled in addition to these reports. The overall picture is that implementation of the MRE system was slow and partial. Although it is a compulsory system, on average no more than one third of all Sida evaluations were supplemented with MREs during this period. However, more MRE documents were produced in 2002 and 2003 compared with the first three years, although around 50 percent of the evaluation reports lack an MRE. As indicated below the departments and units differ considerably in the number of MREs produced.

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[31] The analysis made in this chapter is based on Annexes 5–7.
[32] For the same period 26 "Sida Studies in Evaluation" reports were produced according to Sida's own website and for 6 of these, management responses have been compiled. These reports and management responses are not examined in this evaluation.
[33] In addition, no evaluation reports can be found for 12 MRE documents during the same period.

Three departments/units, the Director General's office[34] (80–90%), the Department for Europe (51%) and the Swedish embassy in Zimbabwe (75%), compiled MRE documents most extensively during this period.[35]

What can explain the slow and partial implementation of the system? One interpretation is that the status of, and support for, the MRE system at the management level is not so high. Other administrative rules and regulations are given higher priority. Our interviews also indicate that the documents regulating the system are not perceived as entirely clear. Some controllers, for examples, do not know if MREs are compulsory. Compliance to implement new administrative routines can also be explained by personal factors such as experience, commitment, prioritisation, and rotation of personnel. A fourth explanation could be lack of time, and a fifth that in some cases it seems not reasonable to produce an MRE, if the evaluation contains no major findings, for example.

There is a need to make two methodological notes before leaving this part of the analysis. One experience of our data collection is that the term management response is not known by everyone. Sida personnel often refer to these documents as action plans. An assistant helped us gather all existing MRE documents. All departments and units which produced evaluation reports for the period 1999–2003 were asked to submit the corresponding management response documents or action plans. The assistant tried hard to gather MREs and action plans and communicated personally with the departments to explain what document we were searching for. Perhaps a few more MREs exists, but if that is the case, they are definitely not living documents. A second experience of the data collection is that the administrative procedures for filing MRE documents are not clear. Nobody feels responsible for this. This situation also indicates the perceived importance of the MRE system at Sida. All evaluation reports are collected at UTV, but this is not the case with MRE documents. Sida has a publication data base where most Sida evaluations[36] can be found. However, very few MRE documents, that is, only 15 percent of all MRE documents produced 1999–2003, are present in the data base.[37] Thus, MRE documents are not treated as important documents.

3.2 Evaluation Reports and Management Response Documents

A prerequisite for the MRE system to play a role in achieving better practice is that the basis for MRE maintains an acceptable quality. An implicit assumption behind the MRE system is not only that Sida is a rational and

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[34] The Director General's office has developed MREs for UTV evaluations.
[35] MREs are also produced more often for evaluations where NGOs are used for the distribution of support compared with the bilateral or the multi-lateral channel, according to the available statistics.
[36] The two series Sida Evaluations and Sida Studies in Evaluation.
[37] Management response, which is a search word, gives 10 hits, in combination with Sida Evaluation 1999-2003.

learning organization, but also that evaluations are trustworthy and valid. The following analysis of the quality of evaluations explores this assumption. What then is good or acceptable quality? First, general evaluation quality standards are applicable to a certain extent in this case. However, the standards and criteria used in this evaluation have been developed for an assessment of the quality of evaluations in the context of management response. Consequently, whether an evaluation provides sound and trustworthy data, leading to valid and reliable conclusions, should be measured. In addition, the clarity and comprehensiveness of conclusions and recommendations are critical for developing management responses. Accordingly these qualities are brought to the front in our assessment of the quality of evaluation reports.[38] In the assessment of quality we have used two measures: one based on two key accuracy indicators "systematic and relevant analysis" and "explication of results", and one based on 19 indicators, i.e. these two and 17 additional indicators referring to clarity and comprehensiveness concerning methodology, evaluation analysis and conclusions and recommendations.

Compared with other prevailing quality standards of evaluations, the criteria developed for this evaluation do not measure all phases of an evaluation. The programme evaluation standards,[39] developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, cover more aspects of an evaluation. Some of these characteristics of an evaluation cannot be measured entirely on documents, and do not seem all that relevant to the purpose of this evaluation. In this evaluation the centre of attention is on evaluation validity and reliability in relation to management response.

The evaluation also examines MRE documents according to 14 quality criteria, specially developed for the purpose of this evaluation. In other words, this evaluation considers the quality of both evaluation reports and MRE documents. The applied MRE criteria indicate whether the MRE document consists of a correct overall assessment of the evaluation, a clear response to the findings and recommendations, and a proper action plan.

3.2.1 The Quality of Evaluation Reports

Based on 19 indicators, seven of the eleven evaluation reports (64%) under scrutiny maintain acceptable or partly acceptable quality (scores 2.5 or higher on a 4-grade scale). Acceptable quality implies comprehensiveness and clarity regarding methodology, evaluation analysis, conclusions and recommend-

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[38] Two scores are reported, one based on two key accuracy criteria, and one based on 19 criteria also measuring utility and feasibility (Annex 9). Good quality is defined as 2.5 or more on a four grade scale.

[39] The programme evaluation standard consists of four standards. The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users. The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal. The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results. The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the programme being evaluated. (http://www.eval.org/EvaluationDocuments/progeval.html).

ations. Measured this way, seven reports maintain acceptable quality, five reports low quality, and one report unacceptable quality. If the assessment is based on the two accuracy indicators, one more report moves from acceptable to unacceptable quality. Table 2 presents a simplification and summary of the quality assessment made in Annex 6.

Table 2. Average quality of eleven Sida Evaluation Reports (ERs) and corresponding Management Responses (MREs) produced 2000–2003

Department	Evaluation size (SEK m)	Quality of ER based on 19 indicators	Quality of ER based on 2 accuracy indicators	Quality of MRE based on 14 indicators
Sida-East (00/7)	0.30	2.2	2.0	1.1
Sida-ERO (01/11)	0.40	2.1	2.0	1.9
NATUR (01/34)	-	2.5	1.5	2.1
SAREC (02/15)	0.10	2.5	3.0	1.9
UTV (02/33)	3.20	3.4	3.5	3.5
DESO (02/40)	0.22	3.1	3.0	2.2
Emb/ZIM (03/03)	0.05	1.9	1.5	1.9
RELA (03/07)	1.36	3.2	2.5	2.3
UTV (03/18)	?	3.4	4.0	3.0
Emb/Ind (03/24)	0.06	2.8	3.0	2.2
SEKA (03/28)	0.36	2.1	2.0	2.2
Total		**2.7**	**2.5**	**1.9**

Key: Evaluation Reports (ERs) and Management Responses (MREs) are assessed on a 4 grade scale: 1 = not acceptable or absent; 2 = partly acceptable but can be criticised for incompleteness or vagueness; 3 = acceptable in terms of comprehensiveness and clarity, only minor criticisms raised; 4 = excellent in terms of comprehensiveness and clarity.

When we look into these reports, the weakest part turns out to be the evaluation analysis and methodology, whereas the clarity and comprehensiveness of the conclusions and recommendations are in most cases sufficiently developed. However, this is problematic, because it indicates that conclusions and recommendations could be based on uncertain grounds. More than half of the reports (55%) comprising clear and inclusive conclusions and recommendations are based on a weak evaluation analysis.

Our appraisal indicates that the quality is somewhat better compared with earlier studies of Sida evaluation reports. In our evaluation 10 or 20 percent of the reports, depending on which of the two criteria is applied, were as-

sessed as not acceptable,[40] whereas 23 percent were classified as inadequate in a study of 219 reports produced between 1975 and 1995.[41] The number of evaluation reports in our assessment is limited; it is based on 7 percent of all evaluation reports produced 2000–2003. One explanation for the higher quality could be that UTV evaluations are over-represented in our material and these evaluations are generally more advanced. However, the main purpose of assessing the quality of reports in this evaluation is to examine the relation between the quality of evaluation reports and the quality of corresponding MRE documents.

3.2.2   The Quality of MRE Documents

In contrast to the evaluation reports, no more than two of eleven MRE documents (18%) maintain acceptable quality (scores > 2.5 on a 4-grade scale) when assessed against 14 criteria.[42] Acceptable quality is in this case measured in terms of: comprehensiveness and clarity regarding overall assessment of the evaluation; an unambiguous response to conclusions and recommendations; and a proper action plan.

Most MRE documents are short and provide limited information. The picture is the same when 10 additional MRE documents, all produced in 2003, are assessed along the same lines.[43] However, the three MRE documents worked out as a complement to UTV evaluations were more elaborated and accordingly more in line with the intentions of the MRE system.

When the MRE documents are looked into more closely, an interesting feature becomes apparent. All MREs except three consist of a clear and inclusive action plan. At the same time, however, the assessment of the evaluation and Sida's response to the findings and recommendations are short and incompletely reported in most MRE documents.

The MRE documents generally maintain lower quality than the evaluation reports, indicating that the documents have limited value for knowledge transfer, i.e. for brief information to uninformed Sida personnel entering a project or programme process, for example.

Taken together, the eleven evaluation reports maintain higher quality than the MRE documents. Despite major deficits in MRE documents, in regard of overall assessment of evaluations, as well as Sida's responses to findings and recommendations, all action plans but two are clear and specific.

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[40] Three reports are just above the line for acceptable quality (score 2).
[41] Forss & Carlsson, 1997:497. In a study of 40 evaluations of European Commission aid to developing countries carried out by Healey and Rand and reported by Schaumburg-Müller (2005), the quality was found to be better, but the study "reports weaknesses in the way feedback of lessons learned for operational purposes was institutionalised" (ibid:121).
[42] See Annex 9.
[43] See Annex 6. All in all we have examined 21 MRE documents or one third of all those produced 2000-2003. The 10 additional MREs were all produced in 2003 and altogether we have examined 15 of 19 (79%) of the MRE documents produced in 2003.

Another observation is that there is no clear-cut correlation between evaluation size and the quality of evaluation reports.[44] If size and quality had been correlated, one could assume that major evaluations are more trustworthy and valid for developing MREs. However, this was not always the case.

The conclusion from our assessment so far is that most MRE documents are very limited in content and explication of Sida's responses, which is confirmed by the assistant who collected the MRE documents, as well as by the evaluation officer at UTV who looked through all 65 MREs when preparing the terms of reference for this evaluation. Only three MREs comprise an overall assessment of the evaluation, and no more than two MREs comprise an acceptable response with Sida's reasons for approving the recommendations. The MRE documents compiled for UTV evaluations and from some of the sector departments at Sida (SAREC and INEC) provide more information. However, even though the MREs score high in our assessment, as two of the MREs produced for UTV evaluations do, the representation of the evaluation might still not be considered acceptable by stakeholders in the evaluation process. One person, with major insights in one of the evaluations, considered the MRE a disaster because of misrepresentation of the evaluation. Thus, a standardized quality assessment may not be considered valid by all stakeholders. This implies that there is not a simple way to deal with evaluation findings in a multi-actor process, such as that operated by Sida. Obviously, stakeholders show different interest in the same evaluation and also view the validity, relevance and quality from different perspectives. This situation comes into view when six evaluation processes are scrutinized in greater depth.

A critical reader might question these results and argue that they were a product of the applied method. Even though the MRE document does not comprise an assessment of the evaluation or Sida's argumentation and response to the evaluation, nevertheless an undocumented assessment could have taken place. When six evaluation- and MRE processes are examined more closely in the next section, a modified picture emerges. In all six evaluation processes, some kind of MRE process and considerations, at least in the head of the person responsible for writing the MRE, emerge. In the two UTV evaluations more departments and people have been involved in developing MRE documents compared with the departments' own evaluations. However, the limited information found in the MRE documents can still be problematic. The MRE document should consist of a documentation of Sida's considerations, arguments, standpoints and agreed actions to be used as a reminder by Sida staff in general and by Sida staff not familiar with the evaluation in particular. At Sida there is continuing rotation of staff which complicates work and there is a demand for feasible information and knowledge transfer. To improve this situation, however, most MRE documents are not helpful. Personal contacts would in most cases lead to more insights re-

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[44] See Annex 6

garding evaluation findings and recommendations, and how Sida came to judge what action to take or not to take.

3.3 Case Study of Six Evaluation and Management Response Processes

This section deals with the results from case studies of six evaluation and MRE processes (Table 3). Each case is examined more closely in Annex 7.

Table 3 Six evaluation and management response processes

Evaluation	Type of evaluation	MRE documents
RELA evaluation of Diakonia (03/07)	Mid-term	2
NATUR evaluation of two forestry programmes in Vietnam (01/34)	End of programme	2
UTV evaluation of ownership policy (02/33)	Policy	1
UTV evaluation of Private Sector Development (03/18)	Policy	1
Embassy evaluation of Reproductive and Child Health (RCH)in India (03/24)	End of project	1
SEKA evaluation of distribution of Secondary Clothes in Angola (03/28)	End of phase	1

Key: In brackets is the number of the report in Sida Evaluation.

Here attention is paid to the perceived need for evaluations, the main experiences made by participating actors in the evaluation and MRE processes, and how evaluations and MREs are used. Finally, the impact of evaluations and the added value of MREs are explored. What then are the experiences of the MRE system from the point of view of the involved Sida staff and partners?

3.3.1 Need for Evaluation

The perceived need for an evaluation has implications for participation and involvement in the evaluation process, and also for the use of evaluation, which is the reason why attention is paid to the question of need.

Our examination of six evaluation processes indicates that the need for Sida evaluations differs considerably among stakeholders. Not surprisingly, the need is perceived quite differently at different levels and by Sida's partners. Generally, evaluations initiated by UTV meet a need at the central management level, whereas the same evaluation is not always considered of major interest in other parts of the organization. It is not that thematic evaluations

are considered to be of no relevance, but Sida staff operating at other levels, and in particular in the field organization, have found that UTV evaluations do not have the right timing for the field organizations when they deal with pressing problems and challenges. It does not, however, imply that such evaluations do not have value.[45] There is not enough time for reading and discussing advanced evaluations at lower levels, a result which is clear from our focus group interviews as well.

The perceived need for evaluations commissioned by departments/units (RELA, NATUR, DESO and the Swedish embassy in India) is strongly linked to the real purpose of the evaluation. RELA's evaluation was undertaken to legitimatize continuing support for and through Diakonia, whereas Diakonia felt a need to design and use the evaluation for learning and improvement. NATUR's accountability evaluation was decided long before it started, and the Head of Department indicated a perceived need to assess the result of ten years' development collaboration through two interrelated programmes. In the end, Sida's field organization and the Vietnamese side did not feel a need for this type of evaluation. DESO's evaluation was initiated by the Swedish NGO (Practical Solidarity) due to its experience of capacity problems with the implementing partner in Angola. In this case the need for the evaluation was the same for DESO and Practical Solidarity. The embassy evaluation is an example of a general need for evaluation in a project process.

Furthermore, the perceived need for an evaluation is associated with the purpose of the evaluation. A mid-term evaluation, with the aim of learning and improvement serves first and foremost the needs of programme participants, whereas an accountability evaluation initiated at the end of a programme serves decision-makers needs. The perceived need for an evaluation highly depends on one's role and stakes in the programme or object of evaluation. Evaluations can also serve the needs of the general public, but this need is not articulated in any of the six evaluations. It is, however, implicit in all Sida evaluations.

To return to the central level, the need for an UTV evaluation could be significant when terms of reference are developed, but due to an extended and prolonged process, the need has often declined somewhat when the evaluation has been completed. This implies that a pre-study, background papers and considerations expressed in terms of reference might contribute just as much to decision making as the final evaluation. Sida managers do not always wait for an evaluation to come to an end before important decisions are made – developing a new policy, for example. If we interpret this situation from the perspective of process use and take into consideration the entire evaluation process, which starts before an evaluation is commissioned, one could argue that the evaluation is being used in support of decision making.

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[45] One of the two UTV evaluations examined (the ownership evaluation) is not considered important by lower levels, whereas the PSD evaluation seemed more interesting at affected departments.

However, as the six case studies indicate, process use is not promoted by the MRE system. On the contrary, the system conceives evaluations as products, and is designed to deal with evaluations as end products. We shall soon return to this matter when the use of evaluations and MRE is discussed.

Although the MRE system is first of all intended for Sida, and also being primarily examined within Sida in this evaluation, some of the collaborating partners have been interviewed. Beside Sida staff, the evaluators, and Swedish NGOs collaborating with Sida in the current evaluations have been asked about their experiences of how collaborating partners perceived the need for, and value of, the evaluations. Generally, partner countries and the civil society actors involved in Sida programmes are confronted with a number of evaluations. They are evaluated by Sida and other donors and consider the need for a specific Sida evaluation in that perspective. External evaluations are something that comes along with development assistance. At the same time, there is a recognized experience of an overload of evaluations in development assistance. Generally, from the collaborating partners' perspective, projects and programmes have a short time frame, but need to be understood in context. A general experience among Sida staff, concerning partners' view of external evaluations, is that they feel a lack of adjustment of evaluations to the local context. The development towards joint evaluations and coordination of evaluations seem more appropriate to serve the needs of collaborating partners. Thus, the need for the same evaluation is perceived differently within Sida as well as by the collaborating partners.

3.3.2   Experiences from the Processes

The six evaluation and management processes scrutinized in this evaluation differ in several ways. The two UTV evaluations were experienced as top down processes by the collaborating countries and Sida's field organization. Despite the measures that had been taken to prepare and involve Sida's field organization, the ownership evaluation was perceived as a top-down initiative and had to live with a legitimacy deficit. UTV evaluations were not conceived as serving the needs of collaborating countries or Sida's field organization.

Two of the evaluations, the Diakonia and the RCH-India evaluation, are examples of participatory or process-oriented evaluations. Although the learning from the evaluations appears not overwhelming, still the evaluations are examples of cases where Sida's implementing partners take part in the evaluation process and learn from the evaluation underway.

By contrast, the evaluation of a forestry programme in Vietnam is an example of an evaluation process which brought conflicting interests to the surface. This evaluation illustrates how an evaluation process can go wrong in that it strengthens existing tensions between the responsible department in Stockholm, the field organization, the evaluators and the collaborating part-

ners. It also illustrates the need for more than one management response. The Vietnamese reacted strongly to the lack of participatory processes which they had expected to be involved in, according to the terms of reference and to the assessment of the programme presented in the draft report. The Vietnamese government even tried to stop the publication of the report; and it took two years to get Vietnamese acceptance to publish the report. Sida finally convinced them that it had to be published and the inclusion of two management responses, Sida's and the Vietnamese, made it easier to accept the publication. However, the evaluation could not be used as a learning instrument for future collaboration in Vietnam.

Shared ownership of evaluation does not prevail in any of the six evaluation, at least formally. In some cases, however, Sida's implementing partners had considerable influence over the evaluation. Practical Solidarity initiated the evaluation and Diakonia was able to influence terms of reference, the Vietnamese side was offered a chance to work out their own management response, and in the RCH evaluation in India the stakeholders also had a great amount of influence on the evaluation, for examples. These cases indicate that in practice Sida evaluations can be designed and implemented with an amount of shared responsibility, but the general public and those not directly involved in the evaluation, get the impression that Sida evaluations are Sida's own products. Obviously, Sida evaluations are not designed in the same way as development cooperation in general. Moreover, the current MRE system reinforces Sida's ownership of the evaluation tool which does not correspond well with the principle of shared responsibility for evaluations.

3.3.3   Use of Evaluation and MRE

The six evaluation processes provide plenty of examples of evaluation use. Generally, the same evaluation is used in different ways by various stakeholders and some evaluations are used more, whereas others do not leave any deep traces at all. We have tried to single out the dominant use of the six evaluations. This appraisal indicates that the uses are highly associated with one's position in the organization, the perceived need for the evaluation, and the result and timing of the evaluation.

The most common type of use of Sida evaluations at the *Director General's level*, according to the chief controller, is *interactive use*. There are many sources of information and experience, together with evaluations and MRE documents that need to be taken into account in decision making at the central level. Generally, evaluations are used in combination with other sources and considerations. This level is faced with an overload of evaluations, and gives priority to evaluations that could be used at the management level or devotes time to evaluations which are expected to create turbulence and debate. Most evaluations comprise too many conclusions and recommendations, according to the chief controller, and a MRE process must lead to a reduction of

Sida measures in the action plan. Ideally, Sida gives responses to all recommendations, but decides to take limited action clearly specified in the action plan.

MRE documents are first and foremost used *instrumentally* for internal documentation and follow up, and particularly when Sida reports about evaluations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The dominant use of evaluations by *Sida managers* at different departments and units in Stockholm is for *legitimatizing* ongoing activities or radical decisions about phasing out programmes or financial support. A few evaluations are considered important and are used, but often documents produced in the planning and monitoring processes are just as important. Management responses are mainly considered important, but in practice they are not often asked for or used. When used, it is primarily as reminders and for follow up, and then in an *instrumental* way.

Sida's field organization uses Sida evaluations *interactively* together with other sources and considerations. The embassies' own evaluations are generally rather small and used in ongoing processes. Regarding Sida evaluations initiated by a Sida department in Stockholm, the embassies are inclined to consider these from a broader perspective, and also in the light of other evaluation activities. Accordingly, and in line with its collaborating partners, Sida personnel in the field adopt a broad perspective on evaluations. Management responses are considered important by managers in the field, i.e. for deciding about what action to take, but they are not used so much. The dominant use of MREs is *instrumental*, i.e. for follow up.

The *Sida personnel* who use evaluations most extensively are programme officers and the person responsible for the evaluation. The main use by these actors, in the six cases, is *legitimatizing* current practice or decisions about phasing out support. In some cases the evaluation manager responsible at Sida has learned a lot during the process, which thus indicates conceptual use. The same person is in some cases writing the MRE document in collaboration with the manager in charge. As elsewhere, the MRE document is used *instrumentally* and to a limited extent.

What does this evaluation tell us about the *collaborating partners'* use of evaluation and MREs? As stated, some of the NGOs have learned (conceptually) from the evaluation during the process. It is not possible to generalize about how partners use evaluation, because it differs very much. Diakonia, for example, who also wrote a management response, used the actual evaluation tactically in their next application. They tried to improve the things that the evaluators had criticized, but felt that Sida showed no real interest in these matters. The Vietnamese used the evaluation first of all as a warning. Selected parts of the evaluation could have been used for learning (i.e. conceptually) in the provinces and by other donors, according to one of our interviewees.

Generally, evaluations are used more than MREs. The added value of an MRE is that it serves as a tool for documentation and for follow up. However, once finished and put on file, the MRE document is not asked for. Few of our interviewees can recall the content of the MRE. When used, it is as a reminder and then in an instrumental way, i.e. implementation of the action plan is checked and what is left to be done is decided once more.

3.3.4 Issues Concerning the Management Response System for UTV Evaluations

Clearly, our study of the MRE processes illustrates four issues with the current MRE system for UTV evaluations. First, the responsible person for the evaluation at UTV could have a stake in an evaluation. Generally, an evaluation has been prepared for a long time by UTV. In one case study the pre-study was made by the responsible officer at UTV which gave him the power to define the issues, implying that vested interests can go along with an evaluation. Although the evaluation has been implemented by external consultants, the responsible person for the evaluation at UTV is not unbiased. Whether this is a problem or not depends on the perspective from which the situation is being viewed, and also how the evaluation is managed by the UTV officer. Secondly, there is an obvious limitation of time at the central management level for reading, digesting and deliberating about evaluations and management responses, because of the number of evaluations produced each year at Sida. Thirdly, the current routine for developing management responses in relation to UTV evaluations could lead to a situation where the baby is thrown out with the bathwater, i.e. important messages in the evaluation might be overlooked in the MRE process. The chief controller reads evaluation reports to find out which departments and units the evaluation could affect and to whom the request to develop a management response is to be sent. The focus is on what he sees as the hard core, i.e. the recommendations. Delegating the judgements to lower levels to begin with, and at a later stage make a synthesis is no guarantee of delivering justice to the evaluation or for rational decision making. There might be important messages in the evaluation that are overlooked with the current administrative routine, due to preoccupation with recommendations and also as a result of the firm intention to limit Sida's commitments in the action plan. Fourthly, the role of UTV in the MRE process is not quite clear. It seems reasonable to give UTV responsibility for presenting and disseminating the evaluation to concerned and affected departments and units, including giving a fair representation of the evaluation, not only the conclusions and recommendations. This role, however, occurs too late in the process to be constructive. It seems reasonable that UTV should comment earlier on the draft MRE.

In addition, Sida's board currently has an unclear role in the MRE process. The board has to be informed about evaluations and MRE decisions accord-

ing to the administrative procedure for MREs.[46] But in practice, only evaluations of high general interest, or synthesis reports based on evaluations, are occasionally presented to the board. According to the chief controller the board has never been presented with a management response draft, and MREs are not discussed in the board. The board's role in connection with MREs seems not well reflected in the current MRE system for evaluations.[47]

3.4 Attitudes and Experiences of the Management Response System

The five focus group interviews carried out with Sida personnel were aimed at collecting general and authentic experiences of the MRE system at different levels and departments/units.[48] The interviews covered three themes: experiences of working out management response; MREs and evaluation use; the value and benefit of MREs. Below we summarize the personnel's attitudes to and experience of the system. It should be known that it was rather difficult to acquire personnel, except from UTV, willing to participate in the focus groups. This also indicates a lack of interest in the MRE system. Secondly, it indicates that few people feel they have enough experience to have something to say and thirdly that few persons feel responsible for the system. Perhaps some of the participants in the interviews were more in favour of the system compared with their colleagues. But those who decided to devote some time generally had more experience of MREs. Hence, attitudes to the MRE system are mainly merged with experience of the system. One might assume that the attitudes among those that have no experience would be more negative, because there is a known perception of work overload.

Although attitudes and experience differ somewhat between the focus groups as well as within the groups, there are attitudes and experiences that seem more general. Some of the experiences can be assumed to be more valid than others. Obviously, nobody has experienced a proper introduction of the MRE system in the organization. However, we cannot tell for sure the extent to which the participants in the focus groups have provided a representative picture of the personnel's need for the system,. The participants were asked to report about the department's/unit's experience which implies that the assessment of the need for the system is not confined to the participants themselves.

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[46] Gd 45/98

[47] This evaluation has not examined how the board has dealt with and discussed evaluation summaries presented by the chief controller.

[48] They included Heads of Sida units, UTV, embassy counsellors, Sida staff with experiences of evaluations and MREs at Sida's regional and sector departments.

3.4.1 Attitudes

The general picture is that the MRE system meets a need at Sida. Some say that if the system were not there, somebody would eventually invent it. The system is thought of as a natural response to the need for systematizing how to deal with evaluations when they are to be completed. At the same time attitudes to the system are not overwhelmingly positive, primarily because it adds a burden to an organization already under stress. Those greatly involved in evaluation, in particular those that view evaluation as an important instrument, have expressed a need for a response system.

Our interviews indicate that the system is most appreciated by managers and staff in the field organization. The positive attitude among these two groups has primarily to do with the perceived need for the system and the potential they can see.

The main criticism among Sida staff is that the MRE system has not been well introduced and that not enough time has been devoted for it. Another criticism is that management responses are not requested or followed up by managers. Accordingly, personnel who have produced MREs ask themselves 'what is the point of providing an MRE if it is not used'? Furthermore, quite a few emphasize that the system is not given high priority and supervised by managers which in turn sends out signals to the staff that it is not so important.

Advocates feel a need for the system, and think it is misleading to expect too much from MREs. The system provides an administrative structure for the considerations and judgements made by Sida, and a single MRE is no more than documentation of this work. Staff attitudes to the MRE system differ between Sida departments/units. However, in general, the main attitudes are:

– There is a need to improve the utilization of evaluations

– Personnel think there is an overload of documents and documentation.

– Managers and staff in the field organization are those most in favour of the MRE system.

– Some think it is an important device, whereas others can easily live without it.

3.4.2 Experience

In most cases the system is first of all used for documentation. Not much time is spent compiling MRE documents and these are not generally used specifically in decision making. The MRE document can be hard to find and the content has generally been forgotten, even by those who were involved. Very few refer to MREs as living documents. There are, however, some parts of the organization where the system seems to work better. MREs made as a

complement to UTV evaluations involve more people and departments. The MRE process, which the chief controller coordinates, can be described as collaborative with concerned departments. As indicated earlier in this report, UTV evaluations and corresponding MRE are generally more elaborate compared with departmental MREs. Likewise, at some embassies the staff have actively discussed evaluations and provided input to MREs.

Once the management response has been developed and disseminated to those most concerned, and this does not include Sida partners, the demand for MREs is very low. Evidently, there are no clear routines for taking care of MREs.

There is some confusion about the status of MREs. Controllers, for example, do not know whether it is a compulsory rule. Concerning departmental MREs, it is not clear whose responsibility it is to write them.

The action plans are not always followed up, and MREs are rarely integrated and used in decision making. MREs seems to follow a side track, and not normally taken into consideration in forums where important strategic decisions are made.

The learning that takes place in relation to management response is for the most part confined to those involved in developing the MRE document, and in most cases few people are involved. The documentation is assumed to have a value as such by managers – a value which few of Sida staff interviewed think it has. In short, staff experience of the MRE system is as follows:

– The system was launched with no introduction and poor instructions

– There is confusion as to whether the MRE system is compulsory

– MRE is not known by all staff and some refer to it as action plan

– Staff do not consider Sida to be a learning organization, which is indicated by scarce use of evaluations and MRE

– Evaluations/MREs are not generally dealt with rigorously and thoroughly

– Sida staff feel that managers are content when MREs are produced

– Managers strive to keep Sida's commitments/action plans short

– Managers do not give high priority to MREs

– Managers do not generally remember the content of an MRE

– A limited amount of time is spent on MREs

– Action plans are followed up ad hoc[49]

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[49] In addition: Informal MREs are sometimes developed; i.e. agreed minutes in mid-term reviews, and MREs are sometimes produced for joint evaluations, and partners are sometimes encouraged to write MREs.

Based on staff experience of when things work at Sida in general, the following conditions and factors seem critical for the MRE system to work:

– It is highly dependent on experienced officers and active managers

– The status of MREs is low, which explains their limited use.

– There is not always a need for developing MREs. (When an evaluation has ended without major findings, for example)

– The timing of evaluations and MREs compared to project/programme processes is a problem.(Important decisions have sometimes already been taken)

Attitudes to the system are generally more positive compared with the experiences of how the system works. This could partly be explained by a more positive attitude among the interviewees, but also because of the experienced implementation failures revealed in this evaluation.

The added value of an MRE compared with the evaluation is first of all documentation. Advocates also point to the value of the system for information and knowledge transfer, but, as indicated, this added value can be questioned. In addition, the persons commissioned to develop input to, or the entire, MRE learn more from the evaluation, because they are forced to go through the evaluation carefully. According to our interviews, however, there are doubts as to whether MREs contribute to learning at the management level. Important evaluations are used anyhow, and MREs do not add much in those cases. Evaluations of low interest are not used, and MREs do not enhance use in such cases.

In short, the value and benefits of the system perceived by the staff are as follows:

– The prime value is for documentation

– MREs mark a clear end to an evaluation

– The person who writes the management response learns more from the evaluation

– MREs would be valuable when new staff need to learn about an evaluation and Sida's judgements and standpoints.

Not surprisingly, most managers, in contrast to most staff, consider the system to have an intrinsic value. It is first of all a management and steering tool. The system does not facilitate learning in an open and collaborative way. On the contrary, the "learning" is management-oriented and instrumental.

4. Overall Assessment of the Sida Management Response System

The purpose of the management response system is to enhance the use of evaluations, improve learning and documentation, and in turn contribute to a more effective Sida. Based on our empirical findings and other studies of evaluations of development cooperation one could partly question the assumptions or intervention logic of the MRE system. The system is built on assumptions of a rational and learning organization. A prerequisite for the system is high quality evaluations and integration with existing forums for decision making. However, this evaluation and other studies, indicate that the quality assumption is not realistic. The quality of evaluation reports is uneven and sometimes low. The way the system is constructed there is no clear quality control built into the MRE or the evaluation system.[50] This implies that the assumption of accurate and valid evaluations needs to be probed in each case. Preoccupation with recommendations tends to give an impression of rationality, but when evaluations are used instrumentally without probing the validity it could have the opposite effect. The system is not well integrated with other documentation and decision making. Forums where major decisions are taken do not often use evaluations and management responses. The learning assumption, probed against theories of evaluation use, shows that the conditions for learning are not well reflected in the design of the system.[51] The evaluation is viewed as an end product where the hard core, i.e. the conclusions and recommendations, is to be used. Learning, however, demands appropriate institutions, time for reflection and shared understanding, and also support at management level, for example.[52]

The management response system does not work as well as it could, due to a number of implementation failures. Staff experience of how the system works in practice indicates that there is a need for a system, but managers do not use or request MREs. Management responses have low status compared with other routines and documents. The organization does not provide enough time for deliberation for the system to work well. Furthermore, sufficient time available to deal with evaluations at the management level is a

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[50] If a quality control system had been in place, approximately 20 percent of Sida's evaluations would not have been published without revision (cf. Forss & Carlsson, 1997 and chapter 3 of this report).
[51] Boyle and Lemaire, 1999: 10
[52] See Annex 3; Boyle and Lemaire, 1999; Forss et al. 2002; Patton, 1994, 1997.

prerequisite for the system. As indicated, the Director General's Office does not deal with all UTV evaluations. The argument is that not all evaluations are of high general interest. Management responses are first of all used for documentation which adds structure to the evaluation process. Those involved in writing MREs learn more from the evaluation, but the main use of MREs is instrumental, i.e. MREs are used to check the implementation of action decided. However, the follow up is not always routine in various departments. Managers have been restrained about Sida's commitments in order to ensure that action plans and Sida's commitments do not become too demanding. The timing of evaluations and MREs is often a problem when it comes to use. Important decisions are taken before the MRE is made and quite a few action plans refer to ongoing work or decisions already taken. However, as indicated in this study, evaluations are used in various ways. If the end product is not used, the evaluation process might well be. Process use is not generally thought of as a significant type of evaluation use. Moreover, such use is not reported upwards in the organization, and could be underestimated in this evaluation. The evaluation could also be used for tactical reasons or for legitimatizing ongoing programmes or projects, but such uses are not generally considered as justifiable use but they still exist.[53]

The chief controller has the responsibility for developing and coordinating MREs for UTV evaluations. UTV's role is to keep an eye on the MRE document to make sure that the evaluation is represented fairly. However, UTV's remote role seems problematic in cases when UTV officers feel a need to sound the alarm about misrepresentation of the evaluation in the MRE document. UTV and the chief controller can read an evaluation in different ways and what the chief controller thinks could be overlooked might be perceived as a violation by UTV. If UTV's comments come in to the MRE process late, it could be too late to carry out revisions. In practice, and in contrast to UTV evaluations, the persons responsible for the evaluation at departments and embassies are far more involved in developing management responses. The role of the person responsible for the evaluation at departments as well as the routines for the MRE process is not familiar to all. The remote role of UTV could need discussion and perhaps be reconsidered, especially if the current system is revised, whereas the person responsible for evaluations within departments seems to be far too involved.

The MRE system has limited value for knowledge transfer. Most MRE documents are very short and can only marginally help new personnel to become familiar with Sida's argumentation and responses to the evaluation. For a person unfamiliar with the evaluation, an MRE document might give an impression of rationality, but if the representation of the evaluation is not fair, the documentation and knowledge transfer could be counterproductive.

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[53] Cf. Annex 7; Bandstein, 2005

Sida's board exercises general guidance and supervision of Sida's activities, but has currently no clear role in the MRE process. Its commission, however, indicates a responsibility for evaluations that goes beyond deciding evaluation plans. If the hard core of evaluations, from a management perspective, is conclusions and recommendations, the hard core of MREs, not only from a management but also from a board perspective, could be Sida's response, action plans and follow ups.

Management responses are rarely requested and used, and the content is often forgotten, at management level. The system seems more important than single management responses, which indicates that the system is used for organizational legitimatization.

The way the current system is designed first of all matches the engineering model of evaluation use.[54] This model implies that evaluations are used as a tool for improving a goal-oriented and rationally working organization. At the same time Sida wants to be perceived as a learning organization. However, viewed from a learning organization perspective, the system does not provide enough time for learning, and the learning is confined to desk officers and management level. Thus, the current system cannot meet the requirements and assumptions of the engineering model. The assumption of evaluation quality and of evaluations providing Sida with complete and correct information could be questioned. Similarly, the pre-conditions for the system to work according to a learning model of evaluation use are not in existence at Sida. Insufficient time and commitment is being provided for MRE processes at present.

The current system is more understandable from a political and institutional perspective. From the political perspective Sida's organizational context can be described as a division of power where different actors and interests prevail within and outside the organization. The current system strengthens the management level and its power to decide about what action to take or not to take. The institutional perspective also contributes to understanding of the system. The values, norms, and transparent routines and procedures which the system promotes appear to be more important than the content of single management responses. One could conceive managers' use of management responses as a form of system use. From this perspective the limited interest shown in actual management responses becomes understandable. The prime value of the system is to add legitimacy to the organization by pointing to a system which takes care of evaluations; a rational organization takes good care of the evaluations it produces.

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5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This evaluation has identified a number of advantages and disadvantages with Sida's management response system:

Advantages

– The system meets a need for enhancing the utilization of evaluations

– Despite insufficient launching and implementation it is appreciated on principle grounds by most Sida staff

– It forces Sida managers to consider evaluations and take action

– The documentation adds some structure to the evaluation process

– It serves as a reminder

– It adds some legitimacy by associating Sida with a rational organization

Disadvantages

– Management response is negatively loaded in parts of the organization

– In many cases MREs prolong the evaluation process

– The system is Sida-centred and does not facilitate dialogue, partnership and ownership. (Sida's partners are not included in the MRE process. Recommendations directed to partners are not considered in Sida's MREs and there are no routines for taking care of these.)

– There is a timing problem. The evaluation process and the process to which the evaluation and the MRE are supposed to contribute (project, programme process) are not brought together.

– MRE is not well coordinated with other documentation

– If there is a follow up of action plans it is often ad hoc

– A weak instrument for organizational learning (the learning stays mostly with those commissioned to develop MREs)

– The conditions for organizational and collective learning based on MRE are weak (capacity problems, timing, low status, decisions already taken)

– Managers are often contented to refer to the existence of the system, but rarely refer to individual MREs; MREs are not living documents

5.1 Main Conclusions

We have summarized our findings and assessment of the management response system and reduced them to three main conclusions. These are:

1. The assumptions of the system (intervention logic) are reasonable and consistent to attain the desired outcome of better documentation and structure, but not quite consistent with the intention of (organizational) learning. This has to do with the following:

   a. MRE analyses focus on conclusions and recommendations without systematically checking the accuracy of evaluations, which implies that Sida's action may be being based on questionable grounds.

   b. (organizational) learning demands forums for deliberation, which is not well reflected in the management response system.

   c. the working procedures for dealing with evaluation findings and developing MREs at management level promote an instrumental and mechanic use of evaluations.

   d. the system's integration with existing forums for decision making is not considered thoroughly in the design of the system.

2. In practice the system's contribution to achieving (organizational) learning has been limited due to the following implementation failures:

   a. the staff involved, and the work devoted, for developing MREs varies but is in most cases limited, indicating that the conditions for learning are not provided in practice.

   b. the system as such is appreciated and used by managers, but individual MREs have low status particularly in decision making.

   c. MRE documents provide incomplete representation of evaluations, provide scant information about Sida's considerations and responses, and are therefore of limited value for knowledge transfer and learning.

3. The system does not enhance partnership, dialogue and ownership, and is thus not a support to Sida's overall endeavours.

   a. Sida's partners are not included in the MRE system, which does not correspond to Sida's overall principles.

   b. Sida does not respond to recommendations directed to partners, and partners do not respond to recommendations directed to Sida.

   c. Partners assume that Sida welcomes the requested changes presented in the evaluation (which is not always the case).

5.2 Options

Based on these three conclusions we have identified four options for the future – courses of action which need to be communicated within Sida and with Sida's partners before a decision is made about the system's future. As indicated, Sida personnel criticised the introduction of the current system. There is now an opportunity to anchor the decision through discussions with Sida personnel and their partners. We have identified four options: termination, the status quo, and two development alternatives.

5.2.1 Termination

The alternative to close down the current system could be considered despite the fact that we do not consider this to be a realistic option. If the system is terminated, and everything else is equal, this would free up time for the evaluation process. But there is still a need for some kind of response system as long as evaluations are produced continually. Most likely some kind of routine or system to deal with evaluations would sooner or later evolve.

5.2.2 Status Quo

– no changes in routines and procedures in the current system

– main advantages: the system, including documentation, could add some legitimacy to existing practice and this option provides freedom of choice for managers

– main disadvantages: a risk that Sida's action are based on weak or even invalid grounds (evaluations), basic conditions for learning are not provided, the low priority shown by managers also sends out signals to Sida staff that writing MREs is not so important.

In those (few) cases where the current system works fairly well, the management level is actively involved in developing MREs, treating MREs as an important device, and using MREs in combination with the evaluation for learning and future action.

5.2.3 Sida Response (SR) System

– modify and strengthen the existing response system, and clarify the centralized (UTV) and decentralized (Dep./Units/Emb.) subsystems for Sida staff and partners.

– change the name to Sida Response (SR) system

– develop better instructions and routines for the system[55]

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[55] A SR response sheet that can be easily downloaded and perhaps filled in electronically with clear instructions would be helpful.

- enhance the status by using SRs in forums where important decisions are taken

- provide more time for reflection and move from doing "duty MREs" to serious and authentic SRs

- develop a flexible response system which includes a decision not to respond, a limited response and a complete response.

- the SR system would need a response committee for each evaluation.

- main advantages: improve the original intentions with the management response system and guarantee that power and freedom of choice stay with Sida managers. Move resources from "duty MREs" to authentic SRs.

- main disadvantages: not quite feasible for Sida's field organization model and not in accordance with the overall goals/principles of partnership, dialogue, and shared responsibility.

5.2.4   Sida- Partner Response (SPR) system

- extend the system to include partners' responses

- clarify routines for generating responses from Sida departments and partners involved

- demand Sida response to recommendations directed to partners, and partner response to recommendations addressed to Sida

- add the purpose to reach agreed consent (between Sida and its partners) to the intention of the SPR system, and decide criteria for situations when Sida cannot reach agreed consent. Sida can use a veto if basic Sida principles are violated

- develop a flexible response system which includes: deciding not to respond, a limited and a complete response.

- the SPR system would need a response committee for each evaluation.

- enhance the status by using SPRs in forums where important dialogues and decisions take place

- provide more time for reflection and move from producing "duty MREs" to serious SPRs

- main advantages: enhance rationality in collective action, facilitate collective and inter-organizational learning

- main disadvantages: the evaluation processes is prolonged; time consuming

Annex 8 comprises a presentation of the proposed administrative guidelines for dealing with SRs and SPRs.

5.3 Implications for Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

What are the implications of these options for cost efficiency and effectiveness? The termination alternative, not considered as a serious option, could be cost efficient in the short run if the time freed up were used in a more effective way. However, the close-down alternative would need to be combined with other measures in order to enhance evaluation use. It is not reasonable to invest money in an evaluation if it is not used. Even though the status quo alternative is not very demanding it might not be cost efficient because it can lead to decisions which "throw the baby out with the bath water", i.e. valuable resources could be thrown away if decisions are based on an inadequate evaluation, poor conclusions and recommendations. The two developing alternatives demand resources and might be time-consuming and costly. However, they imply an allocation of time for reflection in a more effective way. If cost efficiency is viewed from a learning organization or collective action perspective, both these alternatives could be cost efficient in the long run. These alternatives have introduced a new step to avoid spending time on developing time-consuming and insignificant responses. However, the two development alternatives will add burden to Sida and its partners if everything else is equal. Both these alternatives could be economically defendable if they were coordinated with other evaluation activities to avoid over-evaluation.

The termination alternative could perhaps improve Sida's effectiveness, if viewed from a pure Sida perspective. A prerequisite, however, is that the released resources are used more effectively. If Sida's effectiveness increases, it could still reduce the partners' effectiveness, and also reduce the pay off from development cooperation in general. If the SR alternative is considered from a learning organization perspective, and the SPR alternative from a collective learning and partnership perspective with shared responsibility and ownership as important endeavours, both these alternatives have a potential to promote (collective) effectiveness. Thus, what seems effective depends on the perspective from which effectiveness is viewed.

Moreover, evaluations have many intended functions, and not only to promote effectiveness. The design of a future response system would need to consider other intended functions with evaluations as well.

5.4 Recommendations

Our recommendation is to develop the SPR alternative if Sida personnel and partners, after discussion, approve it. Our main arguments are that this alternative can help to achieve the aims of the current MRE system, promote collective learning and shared responsibility, and it harmonizes with Sida's overall goals of dialogue, partnership and ownership. Sida is also rec-

ommended to disseminate the summary, together with chapter 5 of this report (or a more elaborated document based on this evaluation) to different stakeholders within Sida and to a selection of partners along with questions to be thoroughly considered and answered.[56] A seminar could also be considered for deliberation concerning the design of the future system.

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[56] Examples of questions: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the three options? Can the SR and SPR system work? Is there a need to refine or modify the options? What information should a response sheet collect? (How) can the two options be integrated into existing institutions/forums? What course of action, based on what arguments, is considered to be the best?

Annex 1

Terms of Reference

Utvärdering av Sidas Management Response-system för utvärderingar

Bakgrund

Enligt GD-beslut 158/98 ska Sida sedan den 1 januari 1999 göra ett systematiskt ställningstagande, ett så kallat Management response (MRE), för varje utvärdering[57] som utförts:

1. av eller på beställning av Sekretariatet för utvärdering och intern revision (UTV).

2. på beställning av Sidas operativa avdelningar[58].

I den till beslutet bakomliggande promemorian konstateras att "behovet av systematiska ställningstaganden avseende utvärderingar och revisioner tidigare tagits upp i ett flertal tillfällen och sammanhang". Ett sådant sammanhang var Sidas verkslednings internat 14–15 maj 1997, då den dåvarande chefen för UTV, Ann Marie Fallenius, lagt fram ett förslag för reformering av UTV och Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet. I förslaget skriver Fallenius:

Enligt Policy för Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet har samtliga chefer vid Sida ett ansvar för att resultat av utvärderingsverksamheten beaktas i Sidas policyarbete, vid hanteringen av pågående insatser och vid beslut om utformningen av nya insatser. De gångna två årens erfarenheter har emellertid visat att denna föreskrift inte är tillfyllest för att slutsatser och rekommendationer av utvärderingsverksamheten skall beaktas och åtgärder vidtas. Det krävs förmodligen mera formella mekanismer för att åstadkomma detta.[59]

Varpå hon skisserar hur ett management response-system skulle kunna se ut. Förslaget påminner om det system som då redan tillämpades för internrevisioner och syftet med detsamma skulle enligt Fallenius vara "att stärka Sidas resultatstyrning och säkra kvaliteten i verksamheten"[60]. Denna målbeskrivning kom dock att modifieras något i nämnda GD-beslut. Enligt detta är systemets syfte "att stärka lärandet och skapa tydliga ställningstaganden och

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[57] Beslutet gäller också för management response för revisioner, men detta system är inte föremål för denna utvärdering.
[58] Till kategorin 'operativa avdelningar' ska i detta sammanhang också utlandsmyndigheter med biståndsverksamhet hänföras.
[59] Ann Marie Fallenius, "UTV och Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet – tankar om reformering av Sidas utvärderingssystem", förslag daterat 1997-05-06, s. 4.
[60] Ibid. s 6.

klara ansvarslinjer för åtgärder i (sic.) anledning av utvärderingar och revisioner". När Sidas utvärderingspolicy senare reviderades och sedermera beslutades av Sidas generaldirektör (GD) infördes konstateras att MRE-systemet har till syfte att "säkerställa att utvärderingsresultat och därav följande rekommendationer beaktas av Sidas berörda avdelningar, samt att åtgärder som vidtas som följd av utvärderingarna registreras på ett tillfredsställande sätt"[61].

Systemets praktiska tillämpning beskrivs i utvärderingspolicyn. Här framgår att alla UTV:s utvärderingar ska tillställas GD. GD ger den eller de av den aktuella utvärderingen berörda avdelningarna i uppdrag att ta fram en handlingsplan som ska beskriva de insatser som berörd avdelningschef bedömer som nödvändiga för att lösa problem som identifierats i utvärderingen. Handlingsplanen bör också innehålla en tidsplan för genomförandet av dessa insatser. Dessutom bör den innehålla uppgift om hur vunna erfarenheter kan spridas. Förslag till handlingsplan ska helst upprättas inom sex veckor efter att utvärderingen tillställts GD. Handlingsplanen (eller om flera avdelningar berörs handlingsplanerna) sammanställs av chefskontrollern till en MRE som UTV bör få tillfälle att kommentera innan den genom ett formellt beslut fastställs av GD.

Av policyn framgår det vidare att Sidas avdelningschefer är ansvariga för uppföljning av hur handlingsplanerna inom deras respektive ansvarsoMREåde genomförs. Chefscontrollern har till uppgift att var sjätte månad rapportera resultatet av dessa uppföljningar till GD och UTV. UTV ska i sin tur regelbundet granska i vilken omfattning åtgärder vidtas med anledning av de utvärderingar som de genomfört.

När det gäller de operativa avdelningarnas egna utvärderingar är det den aktuella avdelningen som själv ansvarar för beredning av handlingsplaner, beslut om MRE och uppföljning av desamma. Enligt utvärderingspolicyn bör dock chefscontrollern, i samarbete med UTV och Sidas avdelningar, varje år genomföra en "genomgripande analys av alla resultat och vunna erfarenheter från alla Sidas utvärderingar"[62].

MRE-systemet har vid det här laget varit i bruk i drygt fem år. Under denna tid har Sida kunnat samla erfarenheter om både för- och nackdelar med systemet. En sådan erfarenhet är att systemet med tiden har fått genomslag i organizationen så tillvida att de allra flesta utvärderingar blir föremål för berörda avdelningars ställningstaganden. Erfarenheterna visar emellertid också att det finns problem med bland annat kvaliteten av dessa ställningstaganden och uppföljningen av handlingsplanerna. När det gäller kvaliteten av MRE genomförde UTV vid föreberedelsearbetet till denna uppdragsbeskrivning en analys av ett stort antal MRE. Det visade sig då att utvärderingarnas slutsatser sällan analyseras och operationaliseras av de berörda avdel-

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[61] Policy för Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet, s. 8.
[62] Policy för Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet, s 9.

ningarna. I stället kommenteras bara utvärderingarnas rekommendationer. Relativt ofta avvisas också rekommendationer i dessa kommentarer som felaktiga eller irrelevanta. När det gäller uppföljningen av handlingsplanerna är dessa bristfälliga. Det finns sålunda indikationer på att det finns brister i handläggningen av MRE.

Utvärderingens syfte och användning

UTV finner det mot denna bakgrund angeläget att utvärdera MRE-systemet. Utvärderingens syfte är att:

1. Kartlägga hur MRE-systemets interventionslogik och hur det fungerar i praktiken.

2. På basen av kartläggningen och relevant utvärderingsforskning analysera och värdera MRE-systemets måluppfyllelse[63], effekter[64] och relevans[65].

3. På basen av utvärderingsresultaten framlägga rekommendationer avseende MRE-systemet.

Utvärderingsprocessen och utvärderingsresultaten är ämnade att användas som en input i en ständigt pågående reflexionsprocess beträffande kvaliteten i UTV:s och Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet. På så sätt kan den både bidra till framtida förändringar av utvärderingspolicyn, och till såväl individuellt som organisatoriskt lärande om utvärdering. Vad avser det senare är det av stor vikt att relevanta intressenter aktivt involveras i utvärderingsprocessen. Detta sker dels genom att UTV upprättar en referensgrupp för utvärderingen, dels genom att denna grupp och andra nyckelpersoner deltar som respondenter i utvärderingen.[66]

Uppdraget

Konsultens uppdrag är att:

1. kartlägga MRE-systemets interventionslogik och praktiska tillämpning.

2. analysera och värdera systemets måluppfyllelse, effekter och relevans.

3. framlägga rekommendationer avseende MRE-systemet.

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[63] Här handlar det, som framgår av utvärderingspolicyn, om att bilda sig en uppfattning om planerade resultat uppnåtts och målsättningar infriats. I Sidas utvärderingshandbok används den engelska termen 'effectiveness', dvs. graden av måluppfyllelse givet de mål som formulerats för systemet, för detta utvärderingskriterium.

[64] Utvärderingspolicyn definierar detta kriterium som de avsiktliga eller oavsiktliga effekter, som en verksamhet medfört. Kriteriet innefattar positiva och negativa effekter på kort och lång sikt. I Sidas utvärderingshandbok är definitionen för den motsvarande engelska termen 'impact' "Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention", Looking Back, Moving Forward – Sida Evaluation Manual (Sida 2004), Annex C, s. 105.

[65] Enligt definitionen i utvärderingshandboken är relevans (relevance) "the extent to which a development intervention conforms to the needs and priorities of target groups and the policies of recipient countries and donors" (s. 25) I detta sammanhang är emellertid relevans en fråga om huruvida MRE-systemet är ändamålsenligt i förhållande till de problem i utvärderingsverksamheten som det är ämnat att lösa.

[66] Mer om detta i metodavsnittet nedan.

Kartläggningen

Kartläggningen ska vara deskriptiv och åskådliggöra MRE-systemets *interventionslogik*, det vill säga för hur systemet är avsett att fungera och vad det är avsett att åstadkomma. I detta sammanhang är det särskilt viktigt att uppmärksamma att MRE-systemet inte är ämnat att lösa alla problem som kan uppstå i utvärderingsverksamheten. En kartläggning av systemets teori är sålunda en kartläggning av vad just MRE-systemet är avsett att bidra med i Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet.

Det formella uttrycket för denna interventionslogik är utvärderingspolicyn. Denna fastslår att systemet främst är avsett att säkerställa att utvärderingsresultat och därav följande rekommendationer beaktas av berörda avdelningar. Därutöver framgår som nämnts att detta rent praktiskt ska ske genom att avdelningarna upprättar och följer upp handlingsplaner. Policyn ger emellertid en tämligen knapphändig beskrivning av vilka problem systemet är ämnat att lösa, och vad det på vad som i LFA-terminologin kallas för outcome-nivå är avsett att åstadkomma[67]. Därför bör konsulten också vid en beskrivning av systemets interventionslogik beakta två viktiga bakgrundsdokument; närmare bestämt GD-beslutet 158/98 och det förslag som framlades av UTV till VL-internatet i maj 1997. Av dessa dokument är det möjligt att både explicit och implicit härleda systemets interventionslogik.

Konsulterna ska vidare kartlägga hur systemets teori i praktiken *uppfattas* av dess nyckelintressenter[68]. Konsulten förväntas därvidlag att kartlägga några nyckelpersoners uppfattningar om:

1. Vilket som är MRE-systemets syfte.

2. Hur MRE-systemet är tänkt att fungera rent praktiskt.

Denna kartläggning ska ligga till grund för jämförelser mellan olika intressenters förväntningar på systemet, och de förväntningar som finns formulerade i text.

Konsulten ska också kartlägga hur MRE-systemet tillämpas i praktiken. Denna kartläggning ska belysa hur en MRE-process ser ut, och därvidlag besvara frågor som de följande:

1. Vilka är inblandade i en MRE-process?

2. Hur arbetar de inblandade i MRE-processen?

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[67] Logical Framework Approach (LFA) ska tillämpas vid beredningar av Sida-finansierade insatser. Outcome definieras i Sidas utvärderingshandbok som "The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an interventions outputs" (s. 109). Outputs är enligt handboken "the products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention" (s. 109). MRE-systemets outcomes är alltså de effekter som den i policyn föreskrivna handläggningsordningen resulterar i.

[68] Sådana intressenter är UTV:s ledning, avdelningschefer, controllers samt Sida-handläggare som skriver handlingsplaner.

Värdering och rekommendationer

Konsulten förväntas vidare att analysera och värdera MRE-systemet utifrån utvärderingskriterierna måluppfyllelse, effekter och relevans. Bedömningsgrunden för denna värdering ska förutom av kartläggningen bestå av erfarenheter från relevant utvärderingsforskning.

Måluppfyllelse

Måluppfyllelse är den i utvärderingspolicyn svenska översättningen av utvärderingskriteriet effectiveness. Den engelska terminologin återfinns bland annat i Sidas utvärderingshandbok där följande formulering ringar in begreppet:

The term effectiveness refers to the extent to which the objectives of an intervention have been achieved as a result of the implementation of planned activities. Effectiveness can be measured at the level of outputs as well as at the levels of outcome and impact.[69]

I denna utvärdering förväntas konsulten att undersöka huruvida implementeringen av MRE-systemet är tillfyllest vad avser de output-mål (alltså den handläggningsordning) som formuleras i utvärderingspolicyn. Det vill säga om, och i så fall i vilken utsträckning:

1. MRE skrivs för alla utvärderingar.

2. handlingsplaner skrivs inom den stipulerade tiden på sex veckor från överlämnandet.

3. åtgärder som vidtas som följd av utvärderingarna registreras på ett tillfredsställande sätt, det vill säga om a) MRE alltid innehåller handlingsplaner och tidsplaner, b) handlingsplaner och tidsplaner åtgärdas och följs upp systematiskt.

4. det genomförs någon genomgripande analys av alla resultat och vunna erfarenheter från alla Sidas utvärderingar. Av vem och hur i så fall?

Frågan om MRE-systemets *måluppfyllelse* ska vidare bedömas i förhållande till de mål som avser systemets outcomes. Dessa mål är de som kan härledas ur den interventionslogik som konsulterna kartlagt genom granskningen av utvärderingspolicyn, GD-beslut 158/98 och Fallenius förslag till reformering av Sidas utvärderingsverksamhet. Konsulten bör sålunda bland annat besvara hur och i så fall i vilken utsträckning:

• MRE-systemet stärker Sidas resultatstyrning och säkrar kvaliteten i verksamheten.[70]

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[69] Looking Back, Moving Forward – Sida Evaluation Manual (Sida 2004), s. 28.
[70] Fallenius, s 6.

- MRE-systemet stärker lärandet och skapar tydliga ställningstaganden och klara ansvarslinjer för åtgärder med anledning av utvärderingar.[71]

Bedömningen av måluppfyllelse avseende dessa, och andra i utvärderingen uppmärksammade, avsedda outcomes genomförs genom att konsulten värderar kvaliteten av såväl MRE-processerna som de skrivna MRE-produkterna. Bland annat följande frågor ska härvidlag besvaras.

1. Stärker MRE-processerna lärandet? Hos vem och hur i så fall?

2. Skapar MRE-processerna klara ansvarslinjer för åtgärder?

3. Svarar MRE mot utvärderingarnas slutsatser och rekommendationer?

4. Uppvisar MRE generellt en god förståelse för utvärderingarnas slutsatser och rekommendationer?

Effekter

Effekter är den i utvärderingspolicyn svenska översättningen av utvärderingskriteriet impact. Effekter är de avsiktliga och oavsiktliga, positiva och negativa konsekvenser som direkt eller indirekt orsakats av en insats. I den här utvärderingen analyseras och värderas de avsedda förväntade konsekvenserna inom ramen för utvärderingskriteriet måluppfyllelse. Inom ramen för det som här avses med effekter ska konsulterna försöka klarlägga MRE-systemets eventuella positiva och negativa, direkta och indirekta, oförutsedda effekter. Exempelvis kan konsulten härvidlag fråga sig vad införandet av MRE-systemet kan ha haft för konsekvenser för:

- utvärderingsverksamheten i stort och de mål som formuleras för densamma i utvärderingspolicyn.

- hur och på vilket sätt Sida-personal lär av utvärderingar.

- hur och på vilket sätt utvärderingar leder till förändringar i den operativa verksamheten.

- ansvarsutkrävande och kontroll.

- Sida-personals attityder till utvärderingsverksamheten.

Erfarenheterna av systemets effekter på Sida förväntas jämföras med erfarenheter i relevant utvärderingsforskning.

Relevans

Enligt definitionen i utvärderingshandboken innefattar utvärderingskriteriet relevans (relevance) "the extent to which a development intervention conforms to the needs and priorities of target groups and the policies of recipient countries and donors" (s. 25) I detta sammanhang ges relevanskriteriet

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en något snävare innebörd. Det är här en fråga om att bedöma huruvida MRE-systemet är ändamålsenligt i förhållande till de problem som det är ämnat att lösa. Dessa problem beskrivs förmodligen tydligast av Fallenius då hon, i det i bakgrundsdelen citerade stycket, konstaterar att utvärderingars slutsatser och rekommendationer inte tillräckligt beaktas av Sidas avdelningar. MRE-systemet är en "formell mekanism" avsedd att råda bot på detta problem. Konsulten förväntas att på basen av relevant utvärderingsforskning och slutsatserna beträffande systemets måluppfyllelse och effekter göra en sammanvägd bedömning av om denna formella mekanism är ett ändamålsenligt sätt att lösa problemet. Det handlar alltså om att granska giltigheten av systemets interventionslogik.

Metod

Konsulten förväntas att:

1. Analysera ett urval av MRE på utvärderingar som utförts på beställning av UTV, operativa avdelningar (inklusive utlandsmyndigheter), samt de slutsatser och rekommendationer som dessa MRE bygger på. Urvalet av MRE sker i saMREåd med UTV. Konsulten väljer själv analysmetodik, och redogör för densamma i sin utvärderingsplan. Denna plan ska diskuteras med ansvarig handläggare på UTV.

2. Kartlägga och analysera olika nyckelintressenters uppfattningar om MRE-systemet. Sådana intressenter inbegriper avdelningschefer på Sida och vid utlandsmyndigheter, Sidas controllernätverk, personal på UTV, Sida-handläggare på huvudkontoret i Stockholm och på utlandsmyndigheter som formulerat handlingsplaner samt konsulter som genomfört utvärderingar för Sida. Denna informationsinsamling ska inbegripa, men behöver inte uteslutande bestå av, kvalitativa metodiker, där nyckelintressenterna får möjlighet att diskutera utvärderingsfrågorna sinsemellan. Exempel på sådana metodiker är fokusgruppinterviewer, gruppinterviewer, seminarier och workshops. Användandet av en eller flera av dessa metodiker är ämnat att stimulera deltagande och lärande i och med utvärderingsprocessen. Konsulten förväntas att överskådligt redogöra för sitt metodologiska angreppssätt i utvärderingsplanen. Denna plan fastställs efter dialogue med ansvarig handläggare på UTV.

3. Analysera de empiriska resultaten med utgångspunkt i relevant och aktuell utvärderingsforskning inom detta oMREåde.

Den referensgrupp för utvärderingen som upprättas av UTV ska beredas möjlighet att kommentera ett rapportutkast, och konsulten ska beakta dessa synpunkter.

Konsulten

Konsulten upphandlas på basen av en skriftlig utvärderingsplan. Utvärderingsplanen ska innehålla förslag till utvärderingsmetod, inkluderande metodiker, analysmetoder, budget, arvode och tidplan. Planen utgör en utgångspunkt för saMREåd med ansvarig handläggare på UTV. Efter att konsulten och UTV enats om upplägget av utvärderingen arbetar konsulten oberoende i förhållande till UTV.

Konsulten ska ha stor erfarenhet av utvärdering och utvärderingsforskning, särskilt vad avser utvärderingars användning. Konsulten bör också ha erfarenhet av att arbeta med kvalitativa metodiker.

Tidsplan och rapportering

Utvärderingen, som skrivs på engelska och inte får överskrida 50 sidor exklusive bilagor, ska vara slutförd senast 31 maj 2005. Konsulten ska diskutera ett rapportutkast muntligt med ansvarig handläggare på Sida/UTV samt med utvärderingens referensgrupp, och bearbeta rapporten på basen av dessa diskussioner. Rapportutkastet ska vara Sida tillhanda senast den 18 april 2005.

Slutrapporten ska skrivas i Word och överlämnas till UTV i publicerbart skick. UTV ansvarar för och finansierar en professionell språkgranskning. Rapporten publiceras i UTV:s serie Sida Studies in Evaluation. UCER har rätt att på egen bekostnad publicera rapporten i sin egen publikationsserie.

Annex 2
Evaluation Methodology

Annex 2 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 3
Evaluation Use

Annex 3 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 4
The Background to the Management Response System

Annex 4 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 5
Implementation of the Management Response System

Annex 5 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 6

Assessment of 11 Sida Evaluation Reports and 21 MRE Documents

Eleven Sida evaluation reports and corresponding MRE documents produced for the period 2000–2003 are examined in more detail in this annex. In addition 10 MRE documents produced in 2003 are described according to the same criteria.

A summary of the assessment of these evaluation reports and MRE documents have been listed in Sida's version of the report, but the annex also consists of an analysis of the reports. The entire annex 6 has been published in UCER's full text report (see preface).

Table a. Characteristics of 10 Sida evaluation reports and corresponding MRE produced 2000–2003

Report	Year	Department	Channel	Timing	Sida support SEK m (Total support)	Evaluation costs: Man weeks (SEK m)	Quality of evaluation report			Quality of MRE		
							P/M	EA	C/R	AE	R	AP
#1 (00/7)	2000	Sida-East	-	Mid-term	37 (800)	8 (0.3)	2.4	1.5	2.6 (2.2/2)	1	1.2	1 (1.1)
#2 (01/11)	2001	Sida-East (ERO)	Bilateral	End of phase	15 (22)	11 (0.4)	1.9	1.8	2.5 (2.1/2)	1	1.4	3.2 (1.9)
#3 (01/34)	2001	NATUR	-	-	-	-	2	2.5	3.1 (2.5/1.5)	2.5	2.4	1.4 (2.1)
#4 (02/15)	2002	SAREK (Tema)	NGO	Ex ante	3.5	4 (0.1)	2.8	2	2.8 (2.5/3)	1	1.6	3.2 (1.9)
#5 (02/33)	2002	UTV	-	Policy		? (3.2)	3	3.5	3.7 (3.4/3.5)	3.5	3.4	3.4 (3.4)
#6 (02/40)	2002	DESO (Health)	NGO	Explorative project	10	12 (0.22)	2.9	2.5	3.8 (3.1/3)	2	1.2	3.4 (2.2)
#7 03/03	2003	Emb/ZIMB	NGO	Mid-term	2.2	2 (0.05)	1.9	1.3	2.5 (1.9/1.5)	1	1	3.6 (1.9)
#8 (03/07)	2003	RELA	NGO	Mid-term	180	30 (1.36)	3.3	3	3.3 (3.2/2.5)	2.8	2.2	2 (2.3)
#9 (03/18)	2003	UTV	-	Policy		-	3.4	3.8	3.1 (3.4/4)	2.3	3.5	3.0 (3)
#10 (03/24)	2003	Emb/Ind	NGO	End of project	2.9	4 (0.06)	3	2	3.3 (2.8/3)	2	1.2	3.4 (2.2)
#11 (03/28)	2003	SEKA (HUM)	NGO	End of phase	45 (480)	9 (0.36)	1.6	2	2.8 (2.1/2)	1.3	1.6	3.8 (2.2)
Based on 11 reports							2.6	2.5	3.0 (2.7/2.5)	1.9	1.9	2.9 (1.9)

Key: In column "C/R" two quality measures are reported and marked in bold. The first measure refers to 19 indicators and the second (in italics) to 2 indicators. In column "AP" the quality of MRE documents, based on 14 indicators, is reported in bold.

Table b. Characteristics of 10 MREs produced 2003

Report	Year	Department	Channel	Timing	Sida support SEK m (Total support)	Evaluation costs: Man weeks (SEK m)	Quality of MRE		
							AE	R	AP
03/02	2003	EBC	Bilateral	Other	14.5 (30)	9 (0.5)	1	1.8	2.4 (1.7)
03/06	2003	Emb/Zim	NGO	End of project	.7 (.9)	(0.009)	1.8	1.8	No need for (1.8)
03/09	2003	UTV/INEC/Sida-East	-	-	-	3.9 (4.3)	3.3	3	3.6 (3.3)
03/15	2003	ERO	bilateral	End of project	29 (62)	7 (.35)	1	1.2	No need for (1.1)
03/23	2003	Emb/Zimb	NGO	End of phase	.7 (.9)	3 (.15)	1	1	4 (2)
03/25	2003	INEC	bilateral	End of project	-	(1)	3.5	3.4	No need for (3.5)
03/26	2003	URBAN	multilateral	Mid-term	14	8 (.3)	3.5	3.2	1.8 (2.8)
03/27	2003	HUM	NGO	End of phase	15	9 (.35)	2.3	1.8	3.6 (2.6)
03/35	2003	SAREC/ UNI	bilateral	other	160	21 (1)	3.3	3	3.4 (3.2)
03/36	2003	NÄRING	bilateral	End of project	27 (36)	18 (.5)	1.5	1.8	1 (1.4)
							2.2	2.2	2.8 (2.3)

Annex 7
Six Evaluation and Management Response Processes

Annex 7 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 8

Proposed Guidelines for Administrative Dealing with Sida Response (SR) system and Sida Partner Response (SPR) system

Guidelines for Administrative Dealing with SR

Step 1: A response committee is set up for each evaluation. The first decision is to develop or not to develop SR in each case. If Sida decide not to work out a SR some of the following arguments could justify such decision: the evaluation is not validated, holds an unacceptable quality, findings have no implications, or all suggested recommendations have been implemented. A formal decision is taken by the committee not to develop SR, including Sida's arguments. The decision is filed together with the evaluation. If a decision is made to work out SR, the response committee then has to decide what kind of SR to develop. A limited response could be reasonable when the evaluation has limited scope and implications, and a complete SR in all other cases.

Step 2: The committee gives a person the commission to administrate the dissemination of evaluation reports together with a newly developed response sheet to collect the following information (could be the responsible for the evaluation): a summary of main findings (could be executive summary), an assessment of evaluation quality, lessons learned, implications for Sida, agreement/disagreement to conclusions and recommendations, suggestions for actions. It decides to whom the evaluation report and SR sheet should be sent. A limited response implies that the response is not so elaborated and the response sheet is sent to one or two of the most concerned.

Step 3: Responsible for SR at Sida gathers responses and brings them together into one document. The manager who owns the evaluation has the responsibility for developing Sida's joint response and the action plan comprising responsible departments, persons, time plan for implementation of actions and follow up. Once the "draft SR" is developed it is disseminated for comments. The draft is sent to all concerned departments for comments which will promote learning. A decision is made whether a response seminar should be arranged. A SR decision is then taken in the response committee. Next, the SR is disseminated to those concerned together with the evaluation report.

UTV evaluations and related SR are presented to the DG, discussed and formally approved by DG. If the DG disagrees with the SR it can be changed or decided to be reworked.

Step 4: The SRs are systematically linked into existing system for organizational planning and decision making. The SR and evaluation reports are filed together at concerned departments and units, at UTV, and on the publication data base.

Step 5: SR are followed up twice a year by the chief controller and controllers. The Sida Board is presented a summary report on evaluations, SR and follow ups twice a year. The Board keeps an eye on how the SR system works, checks system dysfunctions, standardisation effects, role conflicts, and requests quality controls.

Guidelines for Administrative Dealing with SPR

Step 1: A joint Sida-partner response committee is set up for each evaluation which consists of the most concerned and affected by the evaluation. The first decision is to develop or not to develop SPR. The committee decides not to work out SPR when the evaluation is not validated, holds an unacceptable quality, findings have no implications, all suggested recommendations have been implemented. If this is the case a formal decision is taken by the committee not to develop SR, including the arguments. If SPR is found worthwhile the most concerned Sida manager in dialogue with partners take responsibility for the next step (by giving two persons the commission to administrate the second step).

Step 2: Disseminate evaluation report together with a newly developed response sheet to collect the following information: a summary of main findings (could be executive summary), an assessment of evaluation quality, lessons learned, implications for Sida and partners, agreement/disagreement to conclusions and recommendations addressed to Sida and partners respectively, suggestions for actions. The committee decides to whom evaluation report and SPR sheet should be sent.

Step 3: Responsible manager for SPR at Sida and the partners collect responses and synthesis, in collaboration, the pieces into one document "a draft SPR". Once the draft SPR is developed it is sent back for comments to Sida and partners. The committee decides whether a response seminar should be arranged. A joint decision is taken on SPR (comprising collected information, the response, an action plan with responsible departments/persons, time plan for implementation of actions and follow up). The SPR is disseminated to those concerned together with the evaluation report. If no compromise can be achieved without violating basic Sida principles, Sida has to use its veto and end the process and switch to developing its own response.

Step 4: SPRs are systematically linked into existing organizational planning and decision making forums. The SPR and evaluation reports are filed together at Sida.

Annex 9
Quality Assessment Criteria

Annex 9 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 10
Five Focus Group Interviews

Annex 10 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

Annex 11
Interview Questions and Interviewees

Annex 11 has been published in UCER's full text report, can be downloaded at http://www.ucer.umu.se/Publikationer.

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Sida's Management Response System

Sida's management response system was introduced in 1999 to promote learning and enhance Sida's effectiveness. This study analyses the system's characteristics and basic assumptions as well as how it works in practice. One important conclusion is that the present system does not enhance partnership, dialogue and ownership.

Consequently, it is important for Sida and others interested in the discussion on mechanisms to promote learning from evaluations to consider how formal response systems could be developed.