

India



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1. Executive Summary

April–October 2002 was yet another eventful six-month period in India, marked by the formation of a new coalition government in Jammu & Kashmir, heated state elections in Gujarat, and a reshuffle in the Union Government. Meanwhile, India's first report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child testifies to the difficult circumstances facing many of the country's children. On the macroeconomic front, amid last year's poor agricultural performance and the slow implementation of reforms, economic growth continues to slip.

As far as the Indo-Swedish development co-operation is concerned, the preparation of the new country strategy entered into its final phase. However, following indications that the Indian government are preparing new guidelines for bilateral development co-operation, the process has since come to a standstill. Speculations that the government will no longer seek funding from "small" bilateral donors have also induced Sida to halt the preparation of new projects. Swedish bilateral development co-operation with India amounted to SEK 76 million in the year 2002.

2. Political Developments

After unusually clean elections in Jammu & Kashmir, a coalition Government including the Congress Party was formed in October with a common minimum programme. The new Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed of the independent People's Democratic Party wanted to apply a healing touch to victims of violence and kick-start the war-torn economy. The much feared Police Special Operations Group was disbanded. However, a severe blow to this reconciliation effort was the militant attack on the Kashmiri 'Pandits' in Nadimarg in March, leaving 24 people dead. A dangerous momentum for pre-emptive strikes against militants bases in Pakistan started to build up and parallels were drawn to the US/UK attack on Iraq.

Elections in Gujarat in December gave Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) an overwhelming victory using the hard-core 'hindutva' theme and riding on the sentiments after the communal riots of March–April 2002. Having chosen not to rally around its secular image, the Congress Party's elections campaign lead to a resounding defeat.

Gearing up for the next general elections in October 2004 and the test runs in Congress-governed Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in November 2003, the Union Government went through a reshuffle on 29 January, giving more space to hardliners and leaving Deputy Prime Minister Advani more firmly in control. The two Aruns – Jaitley and Shourie – were given important charges at Law, Commerce and Industry and, Disinvestment and Telecommunications respectively.

However, the elections in Himachal Pradesh in February threw the BJP out of power and the Congress Party was able to form the next Government. The BJP loss was blamed on indiscipline in the party ranks. In Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya there were also very few takers for the hindutva message.

Considering its options, the Indian Government has taken a relatively cautious attitude to the US/UK military intervention in Iraq but was hard pressed by the opposition in Parliament to issue a condemnation. After allied forces had taken Baghdad, a rather mild resolution was finally adopted using a Hindi word meaning "reproach" or "censure".

3. Human Rights

While India has a constitutional legal system with a vast number of regulations to protect rights of citizens as well as a judicial system to address violations of those rights, human rights continue to be abused all over the country. Arguable the worst situations are found in areas of armed conflict (including Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast), where civilians fall victims not only to the violence perpetrated by various political and militant groups, but also to the extraordinary measures taken by the police and security forces in response to such acts. In Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, clashes between upper caste militia and lower caste Maoist groups continue to claim lives.

In December, a special court sentences three of the accused of the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament to death for conspiracy and waging war against India. This was the first time the death sentence was imposed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA). The sentence is subject for confirmation by the Delhi High Court. Every year, about 20 people are believed to be executed in India. The exact number is not known since the government does not report on death sentences de facto carried out, something that it has been criticized for, by Amnesty International and others.

The reporting period also witnessed the publication of India's first periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (due in 2001). The report highlights priority areas for urgent action and presents what measures has been taken on the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. While expressing satisfaction about the progress in indicators related to literacy, immunisation and food security in recent years, the report also draws the attention to the slow improvement in infant mortality, malnutrition and in bridging regional disparities. The growing menace of child trafficking, child labour and the rights of the girl child are other issues that receive major attention in the report.

4. Macro-economics and Trade

Economic growth, which reached 5,6% in the fiscal year 2001/02, is expected to end at a modest 4,4% in the recently concluded fiscal year 2002/03. The downturn can mainly be attributed to poor agricultural performance caused by last year's severe drought. Inflation, currently at reasonable levels of roughly 3,5%, will be facing upward pressures from rising food prices, as well as the fear of increasing oil prices in the wake of the war in Iraq. Foreign trade increased in 2002/03: exports rose by 20% and imports by 15%, in a welcome contrast to the global trend of falling trade. The fiscal deficit remains alarmingly high at 5,3% of GDP and as much as 11% when state debt is taken into account. Public debt now hovers at approximately 80% of GDP.

Fiscal reform continues in leaps and starts. On the revenue side the Minister of Finance proposes lowered import tariffs – above all on industrial inputs – broadened taxation of services and further steps toward the implementation of a nation-wide Value Added Tax (VAT). When it comes to limiting public spending, the government is less ambitious. While proposing a number of steps to trim the edges of the public deficit, the so called Fiscal Responsibility Bill – a much needed overhaul of public spending policy aiming at better budget discipline – remains stuck in committee due to the resistance of vested interests.

The disinvestment target for the current fiscal has been set to US\$ 2.6 billion. However, considering that the government has not once come close to delivering on its targets when it comes to selling out public sector enterprises, it remains likely that political compulsions will prevent this year's commitment from being fulfilled as well. The prospects have improved somewhat though, since the last hurdles to the controversial sale of oil majors HPCL and BPCL were finally cleared in the beginning of the current calendar year. On foreign direct investment (FDI), the Indian Government has taken an important step by raising the cap on foreign ownership in Indian banks from 49 to 74% and – more importantly – doing away with the limits to foreign voting rights in Indian banks. The reservation policy has also witnessed welcome changes with the proposal to de-reserve 75 sectors of the economy. This would allow consolidation and economies of scale in the inefficient reserved sectors of the Indian economy.

The introduction of VAT, scheduled to take place on 1 April 2003, has again been deferred, the deadline already having been missed twice before, in April 2001 and 2002. This time around half of India's 32 states and Union Territories have agreed to enforce VAT from 1 June 2003. The stalled reform reflects the difficulty of the Central Government to push through reforms in areas where the states are sovereign. On a more up-beat note, parliament has finally passed the so-called Electricity Bill, which may hopefully increase investments and efficiency in the single most neglected sector of Indian infrastructure. The bill proposes to allow competition in distribution, increase private investments, allow consumers to choose their own suppliers, de-couple generation, transmission and distribution, as well as put an end to the cross-subsidisation of power, by which urban consumers indirectly pay the bills of rural electricity users.

5. Indo-Swedish Development Co-operation

The preparation of a new country strategy for India entered into its final phase during the reporting period. All the three main documents – the Country Analysis, the Performance Analysis, and the proposed Country Strategy – were completed and presented to Sida headquarters in mid-March. The draft Country Strategy was also shared with the Indian Ministry of Finance, which, however, has declined to discuss the proposal in the anticipation of new Government guidelines for bilateral development co-operation. Speculations that the government will no longer seek funding from “small” bilateral donors have also induced Sida to halt the preparation of new projects.

Year-end disbursements for 2002 amounted to SEK 76 million, down from SEK 112 million in 2001. A majority of the funds, SEK 25 million, were spent in the area of natural resource management, while support to social sectors, human rights and democracy, urban development and emergency relief accounted for roughly SEK 5 million respectively. The collaboration between Swedish and Indian NGOs, financed through Sida/SEKA, amounted to SEK 26 million.

In terms of staffing, Åsa Andersson joined the Development Co-operation Section in February as Regional Adviser on HIV/AIDS. In line with Sida’s international strategy on HIV/AIDS, Åsa will encourage, support and advise the embassies in the region – Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka – to integrate HIV/AIDS in programmes and policy dialogues. Other important tasks include sharing information and build networks, as well as assessing opportunities for support to regional cross-border initiatives.

6. Programmes and Projects

6.1 Environment & Natural Resource Management

The appraisal of the proposal *Capacity building for participatory and sustainable management of degraded forests in Orissa* was completed during the reporting period. The appraisal concluded that the project document needs to be revised to achieve a clearer focus on: a) a robust model for Joint Forest Management, in selected locations where there are no conflicting rights; b) a strengthening of the capacity of the Orissa forest department, and; c) a more streamlined project management structure supported by appropriate technical assistance.

In December, the annual review of the *UNICEF – National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme* was conducted. The Indian Government outlined that UNICEF should focus on providing technical assistance, sharing of international expertise, and piloting innovations and action research. Top priority should be given to water conservation and water quality monitoring. Being the main bilateral donors to the programme, Sida and DFID are overseeing the preparation of the next phase of the programme (2004–2007). As part of this process, discussions were held with UNICEF on the need for organisational change.

Completed in March, an external evaluation of Sida's support to *Tarun Bharat Sangh* concludes that the outreach of the organisation is impressive and that the rejuvenation of traditional water harvesting on a wider scale is indeed possible. However, the evaluation also underlines the need for consolidation of the work undertaken so far, by improving monitoring standards and strengthening the capacity of the village institutions to undertake maintenance of the water harvesting systems.

A report on pesticides in mineral water, brought out by the *Centre for Science and Environment*, made headline news during the reporting period. In response, the Indian Government was quick in setting up new regulatory standards for bottled water. The report also highlighted the deteriorating quality of groundwater, from which most of the bottled water is sourced.

Oxfam India Society has submitted a revised proposal on *Rejuvenating traditional tanks* (small water harvesting systems). The proposal was revised based on the comments provided by the DCS Project Committee. A decision on support is expected before summer.

6.2 Health and Education

During the reporting period, Sida carried out an evaluation of the MAMTA-RFSU twinning project on *Evolving strategies for better health and development*. Coinciding with the end of the first phase of the project, the evaluation concluded that the Sida support has created a good foundation for the promotion of youth-focused reproductive and sexual health and rights policy and practices in the country. The evaluation recommends that the next phase of the project should include a comprehensive capacity building strategy and quality assurance mechanisms.

Other recommendations pertain to the need of reaching out to the poor, making inroads to the school system, as well as dealing with out-of-school children and youth. Undertaken in March, the annual review of the project ended in an agreement to extend the current phase of the project with three months, up to June 2003.

As part of the processing of Sida support to strengthening midwifery, another planning workshop was conducted in January in Bangalore. The project proposal *Strengthening safe motherhood through enhanced ANM service delivery and community demand for service* has now been finalised and forwarded to the Central Government by the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. A Core Group with representatives from all relevant stakeholders has also been formed.

In October, at the annual review of the *Northeast NGOs Network on HIV/AIDS*, it was decided to extend the current agreement up to June 2003, thereby giving more time to the network partners to discuss the next phase of the project with relevant stakeholders, and to develop a LFA-based funding proposal.

An external audit of the Tamil Nadu Primary school Improvement Campaign's (TanPIC) project *Decentralisation of elementary education administration in Tamil Nadu* revealed weak internal controls systems and management structures. Sida is currently considering corrective actions.

6.3 Human Rights and Democracy

In March, Dr Rajesh Tandon, President of the *Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)*, made a presentation at a Sida workshop on democratic decentralisation in India. The workshop forms part of a dialogue within Sida on possible future support to decentralisation efforts in general, and to PRIA in particular. Meanwhile, the *Institute of Social Sciences (ISS)* has submitted a concept note to the Embassy, exploring the potentials of an advocacy-based project in the same field.

The *Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)*, co-ordinated by the NGO SLIC, was further consolidated. During the reporting period, not less than 21 state level training programmes were held, the impact of which were most evident in Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Allahbad, Panaji, Bhubaneswar, Imphal and Ranchi. All the network partners have also contributed to furthering national campaigns, focusing on issues such as the right to housing, sexual harassment at work place, right to food, sex selective abortion, land rights, and labour rights. In addition, a wide range of legal aid cases and public interest litigations has been pursued. An appraisal of a proposal for expansion of the network was made in September, the recommendations of which are currently woven into a revised project document.

Following an internal review of organisational strengths and weaknesses, the Partner's for Law and Development (PLD) has redefined its role and the contribution of the project *Access to Justice*. Accordingly, the organisation will reinforce the focus on non-formal or alternative practises in law. The thrust of this work will be on women's rights, specifically in relation to violence against women and the personal laws, and the rights over natural resources. In December, the annual workshop of the project was held, this time on the subject of Common Property Resources and the Law. PLD also helped in the organisation of a workshop in Rajasthan on the issue of The Legal System and Social Justice, which was acknowledged as being the first forum for interrogating the justice system in the state. Moreover, PLD conducted a number of field trips to map the ongoing work of its partner organisations and their need for support, and provided technical assistance to the preparation of programmes, studies, and seminars.

6.4 Urban Development

In January, Sida and World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) signed the formal agreement on support to *urban sector reforms* in India. Amounting to SEK 80 million over three years, the support will facilitate the design of specific measures – such as a City Challenge Fund and Private Sector Participation guidelines – that could facilitate institutional and financial reforms in the water and sanitation sector. The support will also be used to initiate new activities to respond to the demand for reforms at the state level.

In November, Sida signed a three-year agreement with *Toxics Link* on support to research and advocacy in the areas of hazardous waste (including industrial, bio-medical and chemical waste), municipal waste, and persistent organic pollutants (POPS) and pesticides. Sida's support will also be used for strengthening the institutional capacity of the organisation to enable it to respond to the increasing demand for interventions in the focus areas mentioned. In March, together with the Imperial College London, Banaras Hindu University, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, and Delhi School of Economics, Toxics Link carried out a study revealing high levels of heavy metal contamination in some of the vegetables sold in Delhi markets. The study was extensively covered by the local media, and led to questions in the Indian Parliament. Toxics Link is now planning to form a multi-stakeholder 'food safety' forum in an attempt to influence the Indian Government's policy on food safety.

During the reporting period, Sida also decided to co-finance, along with DFID, a *Community Led Infrastructure Facility Fund (CLIFF)*, being set up under the auspices of Cities Alliance. The fund is being established with the double objective of supporting local communities in managing investments in urban infrastructure, and encouraging the involvement and support of commercial and public sector institutions in the provision of finance for slum development. Towards this end, CLIFF will offer medium term (up to two years) bridging finance loans to allow projects to begin while financing is being negotiated with existing local financial institutions. If proven successful in India, the project will be replicated in

other developing countries. In December, KOMIN, the INEC project committee, gave its approval to a SEK 20 million contribution to the fund.

In response to the recommendations of the appraisal, the Embassy assisted SPARC in revising its project proposal on *Capacity building of the Slum Federations in six Indian states*. The appraisal concluded that the project has major potential for creating awareness among the urban poor on the important issues of land tenure, shelter security and demand for better infrastructure, including housing.

6.5 Consultancy Fund

The Consultancy Fund covers the cost of participation of Indian officials in international training programmes organised by Swedish universities and research institutes. During the period October 2002 to March 2003, out of 87 nominations, 36 Indian nationals was selected for and attended such training programmes.

In addition, Sida has agreed to the proposal from the Ministry of Finance on arranging three special courses for Indian participants during 2003. First out is a training programme on Small and Medium Enterprise Management Development, the first part of which is to be held in September in Sweden.

6.6 Swedish NGOs

Eight Swedish NGOs have received funding from Sida for projects in India during the last years: SMR, Diakonia, LO/TCO, Svenska Kyrkan, Forum Syd, PMU Interlife, Olof Palme International Center and SHIA. A majority of the activities, which to a large extent are implemented by Indian NGOs, fall under the category of human right and democracy, education, health, social infrastructure and organisational development.

7. Crosscutting Issues

7.1 Good Administrative Practice

The Development Co-operation Section is following up on its administrative processes on a regularly basis in order to improve quality and efficiency. Several administrative instruments like country-specific templates, standard letters and checklists have been developed over the past three years in particular.

In January, new procedures were adopted for the monthly financial review in an attempt to improve financial planning in general, and firm up budget/disbursements estimates in particular.

7.2 Monitoring & Evaluation

Out of the seven external project evaluations envisaged and indicated in Sida's Evaluation Plan for 2002, five were completed during as envisaged.

In addition, within the framework of the call-on agreement with Subhash Mittal & Associates, five audits were undertaken and completed.

7.3 Donor Co-ordination

The main instrument for donor co-ordination are the meetings of the EU development counsellors and activities resulting from the conclusion of these meetings. The reporting period witnessed the last three months of the Danish Presidency and the first three months of the Greek Presidency. All in all, three regular meetings and one ad-hoc meetings were held during the period. Major discussion topics included: the scope for development assistance to Jammu & Kashmir, disaster preparedness, and EU development co-operation in the education sector.

In addition, a flurry of donor meetings was held to discuss the possible implications of the Indian Government's forthcoming policy decision on bilateral assistance (see below).

7.4 Country Strategy Preparations

The preparation of a new country strategy for India entered into its final phase during the reporting period. All the three main documents – the Country Analysis, the Performance Analysis, and the proposed Country Strategy – were completed and submitted by the Embassy to Sida head-

quarters in mid-March. The documents were presented and discussed in a series of meetings with the Asia Department and the concerned sector departments, the general comments of which overall were very appreciative.

In addition, the reporting period saw the finalisation of six background studies to the Country Strategy, four of which were presented at a seminar in November. Attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, NGO representatives and donor partners, the seminar provided a rare opportunity for in-depth discussion of critical issues in development co-operation.

In March, the draft Country Strategy was also shared with the Indian Ministry of Finance, which, however, has declined to discuss the proposal in the anticipation of new Government guidelines for bilateral development co-operation. Reference is being made to the Indian Finance Minister's budget speech, in which he stated that *"While being grateful to all our development partners of the past, I wish to announce that the Government of India would now prefer to provide relief to certain bilateral partners, with smaller assistance packages, so that their resources can be transferred to specified non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in greater need of official development assistance. The current agreed programmes will, however, continue and reach their completion. Of course, there will be no more 'tied aid' any longer."* Not surprisingly, this statement raised a lot of questions in the international donor community, and clarifications have been sought at various levels of the government administration. The message received is that a government decision on the matter can be expected in early May. In the meantime, Sida has decided to put the country strategy process on halt.

1. Country allocation 15512 (All amounts in MSEK)**14-apr-03**

Project/Sector	Period of Agreem.	Agreed Amount	Disb. upto 2002	Disb.by 31/3 2003	2003	Forecast 2004	2005	Contribution number
Natural Resource Managem.								
UNICEF Water & Sanitation	9804-0406	92,5	72,4		16	30	30	43100017/ (43199317)
Forest Management in Orissa	(i)				1	3	3	43199315
Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS)		1,4			1,5	1,5	1,5	43199318
RCDC	0106-0408	1,9	0,5		0,6	0,5	1	43199217
Sankat Mochan Foundation	0101-0312	1,4	0,4		0,3			43199132
OXFAM - Tank Network	(i)	20			2	4	4	43199316
Social Sectors								
Midwifery	(p)	30			5	10	10	43199336
NE Network HIV/AIDS	0108-0307	1,2	0,5	0,05	1	1,5	1,5	43199211
Lawyers Collective	(i)	7			1	2	2	43199337
RCH Network, Rajasthan	0010-0303	2,9	0,6	0,1	1	1,5	1,5	43199127
Mamta/RFSU	0002-0309	25	2,8	0,7	2	5	5,5	43199103
Disability	(i)	0,8				1	2	43199338
TanPic	0002-0306	0,8	0,3		1	1	1	43199101
Child Labour	(i)	8			2	3	3	43199339
Girls education	(i)	15			0	5	10	43199342
RCH II	(i)	10			2	3	5	43199343
Human Rights & Democracy								
PRIA, Strengthening of PRIs	0007-0312	10,4	2,9	0,6	4	4	4	43199113
ISS/CSH	0201-0306	0,2	0,1		0	0		43199131
PLD, Access to Justice	0201-0406	2	0,6		0,6	2	2	43199130
SLIC, HR Law Network	0012-0312	1,2	0,3		2	3	4	43199129
Urban Development								
Centre for Sce & Env, Phase II	0004-0312	11,7	9,1		3	4	4	73002056
CSE Emission Inventory	0112-0411	3,5	2		1	1,5	1,5	43199223
Toxics Link	0211-0512	3,3	1		1	1,1		43199312
WB Water and Sanitation	0301-0603	90		50	50	30		43199309
SPARC	(p)	16			5	5	5	43199310
CLIFF	(p)	21			10	5	5	43199311
Air Quality Management	(i)				0	5	5	
BMTC	(p)	35						

Project/Sector	Period of Agreem.	Agreed Amount	Disb. upto 2002	Disb.by 31/3 2003	2003	Forecast 2004	2005	Contribution number
Consultancy Fund	9701-0312	23		0,2				43100001
Int Training Programmes				0,02	6	4	4	...01
Appraisals/Evaluation				0,15	2	2	2	...12
Other								
Staff Costs			8,1		5,2	9,2		41002720-21
IND Music (i)		3,5			3,5			72500008
Home of Folk Art (i)		0,1			0,1			72500009
Studies, audits, appraisals, visits etc			0,7		3	3,5		...
Total Amount		438,8	102,3	51,82	133	151	118	

2. Other

Project/Sector	Period of Agreem.	Agreed Amount	Disb. upto 2002	Disb.by 31/3 2003	2003	Forecast 2004	2005	Contribution number
Emergency/Relief Asst. (15571)								
UNICEF/Guj - Women & Childr.	0104-0306	10	10					74001602
SRC, Earthquake	0101-0306	7	6					74001593
ICRC Appell 2002	0201-0306	4,1	4,1					74001837
Sw Church, Frame	0201-0410	1,1	1,1					74001772
SMR Hum Frame 2002	0201-0311	0,9	0,9					74001779
Regional contributions (15519)								
NGOs (via SEKA)								
All Projects		n.a	25,5		15	10		
Total Amount		10	47,6	0	15	10		
GRAND TOTAL INDIA		448,8	149,9	51,82	148	161	118	

List of reports received

1 October 2002–30 March 2003

- Annual Joint Progress Report of DFID/Sida funded projects*, 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002, New Delhi, April 2003.
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Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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