

Dialogue and Strategic Communication in Development Cooperation



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Summary

In autumn 2005, the Department for Policy and Methodology (POM) and the Information Department (INFO) appointed a working group to propose measures to increase Sida's dialogue and communication capacity. The working group includes representatives with experience in these matters. Its assignment was to:

- recommend methods to strengthen Sida's capacity to plan and take part in the dialogue with partners and other donors
- recommend methods for Sida to support parties in projects and programmes to enable them to use strategic communication as a tool to achieve their goals

Dialogue is central in Sida's work. It is accompanied by hopes of changes in partner countries and in the collaboration with other donors, especially in the efforts now underway to achieve aid effectiveness.

The working group concludes that Sida uses dialogue and communication to 1) influence in accordance with Swedish attitudes 2) contribute to driving complex cooperative processes forward and 3) give advice and support for how others can improve their communication methods within the framework of Sida-supported projects and programmes.

The challenge for Sida employees becomes increasingly to listen, to understand and to act within the framework for complex contexts and processes.

The working group is well aware that dialogue and communication must be related to the context in which they take place. This seldom occurs on equal terms and cannot be neutral in relation to the environment. The process must also in part be understood as a matter involving power and influence. This approach is also expressed in Sweden's Policy for Global Development, which stresses that development cooperation is about listening to and giving poor people a human voice. Such broader questions that address participation, democracy and rights are treated in other contexts within Sida.

The group's work and proposals are based on the assumption that dialogue and communication can also be understood as assistive devices that become more effective if used carefully and strategically.

This document is the working group's report, which is largely based on about 50 interviews. The primary selection criteria were the individuals' experience of working with dialogue or planned communication.

In addition to the interviews, the conclusions in this report were also based on written documentation¹.

The working group found that new patterns for dialogue have evolved. The ability to take part in international networks is clearly growing in importance. Four pivotal factors for success in dialogue have emerged:

- planning of dialogue
- interest of leaders
- extensive cultural expertise of the person conducting the dialogue
- substantial factual expertise.

In the interviews Sida employees express a need for Sida to improve support for programme officers and managers in dialogue issues through measures such as

- recruiting personnel with dialogue skills
- creating a platform within Sida for sharing experiences and discussing dialogue issues
- creating an internal organisation that encourages dialogue
- continuing to discuss roles in relation to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- formulating and communicating certain internal guidelines to the field

The study also shows that those who have experience working with strategic communication within the framework of specific projects and programmes feel that planned communication helps to achieve the objectives of the cooperation. Certain recurrent factors suggest that planned communication contributes to greater fulfillment of objectives and results for a project:

- Early planning and incorporation of communication issues into the preparation phase of project or programme support
- Financiers and project owners agree to allocate resources to work with strategic communication within the project budget
- Considerable time devoted to planning and implementation of communication

According to many of the interviewed Sida employees, handling communication in projects depends on the individual officer's understanding of the importance of communication. People would like to see strategic communication included in regular project preparation.

Most important is that Sida strengthens its organisation and expertise in order to apply dialogue and communication in a planned and strategic manner throughout its development cooperation initiatives. Sida should continue to actively take part in the international development of dialogue and strategic communication methods in development cooperation. Dialogue and communication should be viewed as an integral part of the implementation of the Policy for Global Development and in the international efforts to make development cooperation more effective.

¹ Please see the references in Appendix B. For more background material, please see Appendix A.

1. Introduction

In everyday conversations at Sida, the concept of dialogue is often synonymous with exercising influence. It is common for Sida to include issues in the “dialogue” in order to convince the other party to take greater consideration to Sida’s view of issues such as human rights, gender equality, or environmental issues. Several such issues usually occur in country strategies, though less pronounced in projects and programmes.

However, in daily work, especially at embassies, this form of communication is only a small part of a broader pattern consisting of several contacts, formal and informal, planned and unplanned, with many parties, especially within the donor group.

Similarly, intensive communication takes place among many parties within the many projects and programmes that Sida supports.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the transition from bilateral projects to coordinated support for broad reform processes supports this picture of continuous communication among many parties. The purpose of communication is usually to encourage cooperation and to enable processes to move forward.

The challenge for a Sida employee today is to communicate well in this context which is, in part, new and more complex. The ability of the individual to “drive processes forward” is becoming increasingly important. Sida can also help to facilitate and improve communication among parties in a reform process without actively taking part, which is actually already occurring in practice, especially within the framework of the EU and with “delegated cooperation.” Documented experiences to date are limited.

It is almost a truism that international efforts to make development cooperation more effective depend on effective communication among the parties. Even if the working group is not able to give clear facts showing that this is so, it is still a reasonable basic premise.

In a broader sense, communication among players in national reform processes is pivotal for the effectiveness of the programmes. Dialogue and communication are also a matter of participation, power and influence and about giving poor people a voice. This broader dimension is addressed in various ways within Sida, through its work with the new cultural and media policy, methods for analysis of poverty, and perspectives and methods for “participation.” This report addresses dialogue and communication as a general methodological issue within Sida.

2. Concepts

Sida has no established definition of concepts in the field of dialogue and communication at this time. The working group has therefore used the following definitions:

Strategic Communication

Unlike spontaneous communication, strategic communication builds on analyses and strategic choices, which serve as the basis for a communication plan.

Planned Communication

Planned communication takes place based on an analysis of goals, sender, target group, message, method, resource needs, responsibility and financing.

Dialogue

A dialogue is the exchange of thoughts and ideas. In a dialogue all parties involved are givers and takers. Dialogue can be carried out at different levels at which participants are influenced or influence others. At Sida the dialogue concept is used in part to describe a process with the purpose of expressing Swedish positions on certain core issues such as gender equality, democracy and human rights, it is used in part to describe a mutual giving and taking, often with the goal of empowering the partner country's representatives in such cases Sida should largely serve as a good listener.

One way of achieving a good dialogue, whether the objective is to promote Swedish viewpoints or mutual giving and taking, is to work with strategic planning in communication.

Policy Dialogue

Policy dialogue is a concept used within Sida to describe dialogue that deals with development cooperation, but that addresses the country's policies and opportunities for development rather than project-specific issues. Policy dialogue often takes place with and among decision-makers, multilateral actors and other donor representatives.

Dialogue Issues

Dialogue issues are those topics to be addressed in the dialogue. In practice, these are issues in which Sweden has a point of view and wants to

influence the partner's attitude. Typical dialogue issues are gender equality, human rights, the environment and HIV/AIDS. Appendix C includes examples of how dialogue issues were incorporated in development cooperation strategies between 2004 and 2005.

Communication for Development

Communication for Development refers to strategic work with communication as an integrated part of development cooperation in order to facilitate planning and implementation, regardless of whether this involves road building, supporting democracy or research.

Communication for Social Change

Communication for Social Change involves communication initiatives aimed at increasing participation by target groups that lack resources and a voice, often through interactive methods.

Public Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy is communication that takes place in the public sphere – for example, through the media – in which a player that usually works through diplomatic channels wishes to create awareness about one or more specific issues.

3. Sida's Dialogue

Chapters four to seven of this report are about Sida's own dialogue. The basis for data collection has mainly comprised interviews with Sida employees.

One purpose of the working group's efforts has been to get a picture of how Sida works with dialogue today. The picture that emerges from the interviews is that several Swedish embassies use a strategic approach to dialogue issues. The significance of being a skilled dialogue partner and having the capacity to succeed in this task is well supported at these embassies. However, it is just as common for Swedish embassies not to have a strategic approach to dialogue. The quality of dialogue seems to depend largely on the personal characteristics of the embassy counsellor or programme officer.

The purpose of dialogue is to make aid work more effective. Dialogue is used to achieve this purpose in two ways: through increased coordination and adjustment to the positions of the partner countries and other donors, and by promoting Swedish positions in certain issues, including gender equality, democracy and human rights. One of Sida's challenges related to dialogues is to balance and combine these two perspectives. This challenge is addressed in Sida at Work:

“Part of the purpose of Sida's participation in the dialogue is to put such Swedish positions across which are within Sida's mandate and area of competence. It is important to identify a few issues and to develop a strategy of communication for them. This should and is being done both within the framework of country strategies and within programmes and projects. An important part of the international agenda for aid effectiveness is to build consensus and to create a platform for joint action. An ongoing dialogue based on agreed international principles is part of the process. Sida should make its contribution to this process by being an active dialogue partner”

Sida at Work – A Guide to Principles, Procedures and Working Methods p. 48, 2005.

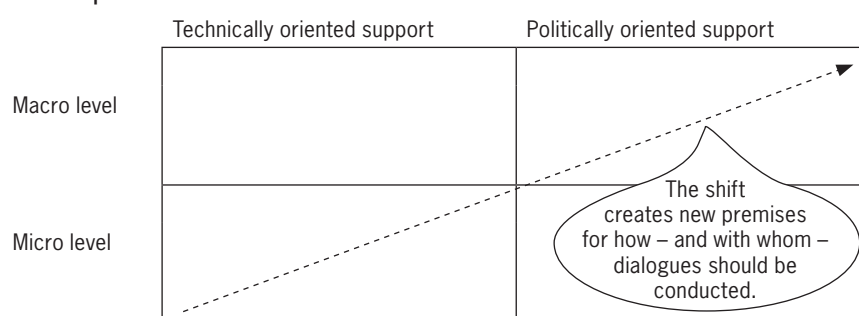
From the perspective of the field offices we see four key areas in which dialogue is conducted:

- Dialogue as a coordination mechanism within sector and budget support

- Dialogue within JAS² and PRS³ processes
- Dialogue related to projects
- Dialogue related to policy and development policy issues

Several of the interviewees state that they have acquired a new role as the dialogue has intensified and changed in nature and do not really feel comfortable in the new role. The dialogue has increasingly approached the political dimension of development cooperation. Please see the model below.

Development of aid



In a few of the interviews, the respondents noted the relation and distribution of work between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Such cases have mainly addressed the extent to which Sida should, or can, conduct political dialogue. The interviewees raise the issue of the Swedish Policy on Global Development and how Sida employees must apply this policy in practice. Some interviewees say that an empty space arises when Sida lacks the basis to illustrate Sweden's attitude in the work of formulating a strategy to fight poverty in a partner country. They feel that other donors promote their opinions, while Swedish embassy personnel do not know how to act – or whether they may act.

Below are quotes from interviews with Sida employees. The quotes show some of the views that Sida employees have with reference to the agency's dialogue.

- Since we aren't very "pushy", people appreciate the fact that we are engaged in the dialogue. Our main contribution in development cooperation is not primarily our funds, but rather our way of not being so "pushy" in our work.
- When the Sida office entered into the policy dialogue we felt there was a huge demand for the Swedish contribution from the local administration. Within an extremely short time the embassy would have a clear line on questions such as open or closed ballots, or whether or not to have ombudsmen.
- We focused the dialogue on one important issue and pursued that particular issue. We created a project group within the embassy that set aside time. We had both the embassy counsellor and the ambassador backing the project.

² Joint Assistance Strategy

³ Poverty Reduction Strategy

- In the past, Sida was not so involved in policy dialogue. The UN controlled most things. DFID was able to take part in the policy dialogue as a bilateral donor, but Sida did so to a lesser extent. People at the embassy tried to get involved, but they lacked both capacity and guidelines from home on how they should act. Neither Sida nor the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is in the habit of getting involved in political discussion. The signals from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Sweden and Sida HQ generally point to pursuing the gender equality and human rights issues.
- The unstable political situation sets the framework for Sweden's ability to address and pursue various issues with the partner country government. Dialogue is extremely difficult under these circumstances. Even if you succeed in delivering a message, you often have to start again when an administration is replaced.
- It is necessary to focus on the international dialogue perspective in various multilateral organisations, like DAC and others. This is missing in Sida at Work. Much of the framework for how to pursue dialogue in a partner country is decided in the international arena. ...//... For example, in a question involving chemicals within DAC, the US came with a fifty-person delegation; how does the Sida representative react then?

Dialogue for increased coordination and adjustment to the positions of the partner countries and other donors

The forms of development cooperation have continuously changed. In recent years new patterns for dialogue have evolved. In the field, discussions are carried out with a large number of actors, advisors, consultants, and other bilateral and multilateral donors. In some cases Sida's field personnel say that they carry out just as much dialogue pertaining to certain issues with the other bilateral donors as with the home agency's sector departments. Issues, as well as the methodological work of developing forms for development cooperation, are discussed increasingly in international networks. The ability to actively participate in these networks is emerging as increasingly important in order to influence the development processes.

Sweden is active in a larger donor group in several partner countries. This cooperation largely governs Sweden's dialogue initiatives. Interviews with Sida employees in the field, or those who recently returned to Sweden, show that dialogue initiatives today are increasingly carried out to achieve harmonisation. Frequently the Swedish position on an issue is close to that of the other donor countries, such as in the case of human rights. In such cases dialogue is easy to conduct. Sweden becomes one voice in a larger choir of donors. One of the interviewees states that Sweden gets a "larger ear to talk to"; in other words, the partner country's government listens more attentively to a large group of donors than to an individual partner country. At the same time, in certain areas the relationship among different donors may be competitive. The dialogue process in budget or sector programme support is often extremely complex and varies from country to country, although there are common features.

In dialogue initiatives to achieve adaptation to partner country positions Sida does not appear to have come as far as it did in the work with harmonisation, among donors even though Sida employees emphasise ownership issues as most important part of their dialogue efforts, followed by donor coordination and issues that focus more on advocacy.

- The dialogue between partner country and donor players often does not work too well. We need to complement this collective dialogue with another bilateral dialogue. The bilateral dialogue is needed as a complement and can never be dropped.
- The ability to conduct a dialogue is essential for leading multi-agency groups: 14–20 agencies that jointly formulate what to do and how to accomplish it.
- If you are the lead donor you formulate the group's opinion, then you carry out a dialogue with the government in the partner country. You wind up in the middle. You become a broker. It is incredibly educational.
- Much more dialogue and interaction could take place within the donor group. Today the US and the EU are the dominant donors, but more could become proactive.
- Our harmonisation and adjustment efforts are somewhat shaky. When you sit and discuss an issue within the donor group you think more or less the same, but some donors do not follow common policy guidelines when the project is carried out.
- For the past few years we've been working on five different issues where we, together with other donors, have formed dialogue forums. The primary issue is poverty reduction, with Sweden acting as chairperson together with DFID. Another issue is tied to constitutional changes. A third issue involves the budget and budget allocations. A fourth involves the actual adjustment and harmonisation and a fifth production efficiency.

Dialogue for promoting Swedish positions on certain issues

Traditionally, Sida has maintained a low profile in terms of advocacy. In recent years, however, the use of this method in development cooperation has increased. The absolute majority of Sida employees interviewed support Swedish efforts to influence attitudes and positions in the partner countries on certain issues that Sweden considers to be urgent.

According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' PIC⁴ unit, 25 country strategies were adopted between 2004 and 2005 and 19 of them mention that certain issues will be addressed in dialogue with the partner country. Five of these 19 strategies mention the dialogue just in passing, but even in the other fourteen the description of the dialogue issues is often brief. It is not possible to detect any analyses of or strategies for dialogue in any of the country strategies. In the strategies for development cooperation that address dialogue issues, one to seven issues have been given priority. The average number of high-priority issues is 3.7 issues per strategy. For more information please see Appendix C.

Themes addressed in dialogue issues

The interviews with Sida employees show that their perception of the issues addressed coincides well with the issues given priority as dialogue issues in the strategies for development cooperation.

According to the strategies for development cooperation the most common issues are:⁵

– HIV/AIDS	68%
– Democratic governance	63%

⁴ Press, information and culture.

⁵ In the case of East Timor, the Philippines and Indonesia, the strategies refer to conducting a dialogue on the issues given priority in the strategy. We have chosen not to include these issues since we feel that description of which dialogue issues to strategically pursue is much too weak.

– Human rights	63%
– Gender equality	44%
– Ownership and improved donor coordination	32%
– Anti-corruption	26%
– Children's rights	21%
– Environment and sustainable use of natural resources	16%
– Conflict management	16%
– Independence of the judiciary	11%
– Growth with a distribution policy that benefits the poor	11%
– Indigenous rights	11%

Some development cooperation strategies contain formulations stating that various reforms shall be given priority in the dialogue, that regional cooperation should be encouraged, and that it is important to follow up poverty reduction strategies and engage in dialogue issues that lead to poverty reduction. We have chosen not to classify these issues since we believe they are much too general.

In addition to the dialogue issues referred to above, individual dialogue areas are mentioned such as rural development, science and technology, land rights, access to the best health care, quality of undergraduate education, the role of civil society and the rights of people with disabilities.

Methods used for advocacy-related dialogue

The most concrete example of structured and planned advocacy with phases for planning, implementation and follow up are the dialogue matrices formulated for Sida in Africa and which the Africa Department encourages the embassy to use, specifying the planned dialogue opportunities, who is responsible at the embassy for bringing up the issues, and how follow-up should be carried out.

Countries with long-term (ten-year) plans for poverty reduction and a stable political climate have the opportunity to plan how dialogue relating to these plans should be carried out with the partner country. The task of carrying out planned dialogue in countries with great political instability is an enormous challenge. Bolivia is one such example, where political instability, with repeated reshuffling in the government in recent years, has made it extremely difficult for the embassy to plan any long-term dialogue with the government.

- We want the matrix to be designed in a more action-oriented and concrete manner, by specifying what steps should be included in a planned dialogue, etc.
- In the country strategy we have planned how to work with dialogue issues over the next three years. There is a dialogue matrix, but it focuses on the dialogue with other donors, as well as the NGOs that we support financially, not dialogue with the government. A new matrix is being developed in which we will focus more on dialogue with the government, since the NGOs that Sida supports are greatly affected by the government's policies.

- We work strategically with dialogue issues. We used the country strategy as our basic premise to formulate a dialogue matrix. The dialogue issues are broken down in the matrix at the sector level; who is responsible for conducting the dialogue within a specific question is defined. One of the issues in the matrix is political and economic governance to ensure that the financial control system “doesn’t leak”. During the spring, embassy employees deliberately brought up this issue at various meetings with government representatives. They achieved results and now the focus is on ensuring that follow-up is carried out. The matrix as a whole is followed up to see if any change has occurred. Moreover, we continuously stress in all contacts with journalists and politicians that the struggle against HIV/AIDS and corruption is everyone’s responsibility. Sweden can provide support as a donor, but the responsibility is theirs. Being consistent is important, though we do not issue statements to the mass media.
- We had a dialogue matrix at the embassy, but it was difficult to find occasions where the questions fit. Mainly the ambassador had the chance to bring up the issues. One important occasion was when we had a ministerial visit from Sweden.

We can see that the method of addressing certain issues – such as human rights, gender equality, HIV/AIDS – in the public sphere in partner countries has been developed at certain Swedish embassies⁶. However, it is rare for Swedish authorities abroad to work strategically with this method. In general, however, Sida employees support the method. Most of the 30 Sida employees interviewed feel that the method is appropriate, but it requires caution and contextual sensitivity. It can be important to inform the government before making a public move. In Kenya the Swedish embassy has been working for a few years with a project to deliberately generate debate about the country’s uneven distribution of income. The name of the project is “Rich and Poor”. One evaluation carried out during autumn 2005⁷ concludes that the project was successful, using “public diplomacy” to increase awareness of the uneven distribution of income as a threat to economic growth.

- Yes, we carry out public dialogue about the constitution in newspapers. But we don’t do it as a separate program of our own.
- It should not disturb the “alignment ambition”, but we should get involved. We have the opportunity to get involved.
- We shouldn’t interpret the Paris Declaration as meaning that now we can’t say anything or that we can’t have our own opinions. I see it as just the opposite – that we must be clear and decisive, we should have an open exchange of ideas.
- For us, Sweden’s policy is that we do not cooperate with the government. Therefore the dialogue is aimed at the public, mainly NGOs and other donors.
- It is important to carry out the debate with respect.
- In our partner country it’s more reasonable to support an organisation that has the same opinion as Sweden, or to carry on a dialogue with individual government representatives, than to make a move in the mass media, like in Kenya.

Another important dialogue area is Sida’s reporting of achieved results. This becomes extra important because of changed types of assistance such as sector and budget support, which place new demands on report-

⁶ See “Public Diplomacy” in chapter three.

⁷ Review of planned Communications: Swedish Embassy in Kenya, 2005 Adam Smith International.

ing the results of activities. There is a need to develop a functioning reporting structure to both the partner country's population and to the Swedish taxpayers. To fulfil this need a study is currently underway within Sida in cooperation with i.a. the DAC.

4. Factors for Success in Dialogue

In conversations with and studies of other bilaterals and multilaterals and through conversations with Sida staff, we have seen and heard many good examples of how dialogue has worked and contributed positively to greater achievement of results for projects and programmes. We have asked why the dialogue worked. Four factors emerged as key:

- planning of the dialogue
- interest of leaders in dialogue
- the person conducting the dialogue possesses extensive cultural expertise
- substantial factual expertise.

Several of the interviewees point out that it takes time to learn to be a good dialogue partner, to develop a sense of what can and cannot be done. This expertise comes with years of experience and in addition to the four factors for success, the following areas are also mentioned as important:

- daring to say what you think
- sensitivity
- language skills.

Dialogue Planning

Planning is the factor that most point to as important for conducting a good dialogue. According to some of the interviewees, Sida is not always particularly skilled at this task. Far too often a message is delivered because it must be delivered, but without any analysis or planning of the best way to express it. Planning is especially needed to delimit the issues and the target group.

- What I would mainly like to see is for people at each embassy to sit down and logically discuss these issues. People don't discuss these issues enough. You shouldn't make too much of it either. Some templates, good examples within the framework of best practices, and that people at the embassy should actually discuss these issues.
- A systematic approach! You need an internal plan for when it is important to put across the message in the actual aid process.

- Templates. We need templates that show what is important to keep in mind. It's a bit of an art, so if we can get things down as guidelines it would help.
- At the embassy you have to analyse more deeply what you do to promote the message. But the risk is that we create strategies and they end up in a binder. Therefore it's important that we have a continuous discussion at the embassy about how we will discuss these questions.
- We have to become better at defining what we are criticising. Not speak in general terms. The discussion has to be built on trust. Partners are genuinely tired of people who come down and reel off a bunch of criticisms. Then they don't listen.
- I believe there is a need to formulate strategies and that these strategies are not static. They must specify in concrete terms what we want to achieve and which issues are most important.
- We could bring in consultants in projects and programmes. They can help to identify problems.
- I'm a little afraid of complicated dialogue matrices with huge diagrams – it's too easy for them to get lost on the desk!

Interest of Leaders in Dialogues

Several of the interviewees both within Sida and at other bilaterals and multilaterals emphasise that among the most important points is that the embassy and the departments have an ambassador, an aid counsellor or other leader who feels that dialogue and communication are important. However, it is not enough for them to just think that dialogue is important; they must also signal this attitude.

- The leadership must signal that Sida has to focus even more on becoming good at dialogue. Other governing instruments can be that we devote more time to dialogue elements in strategies for development cooperation.
- There should be requirements for leaders – especially at Swedish authorities abroad – to keep a discussion going on dialogue skills at the authority. Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs should offer courses for leaders in “how to conduct dialogues with partner country representatives”. This should be done in a format where we can give priority to certain people, who then devote two days to specialist training. It should be perceived as additional training with theory and practice! It should have good lecturers and should be held jointly by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida, because it involves much of the same needs for both. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs would also benefit from this type of course.

Cultural Competence

Most interviewees feel that cultural competence, i.e. cultural and political understanding of the country where the Sida employee works, is extremely important for success in dialogue. A relatively large number of the interviewees note, alongside the country-specific cultural expertise, the importance of understanding the diplomatic culture. One person feels that Sida employees would greatly benefit from learning traditional basic diplomacy. Some of the interviewees suggest that Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs should have a joint programme for these issues. Other proposals are to work internally at the embassy with role-playing games to practice dialogue situations.

- Today we get no preparation whatsoever for how to work with dialogues or address certain issues. For example, we need to learn negotiation skills and techniques for how to communicate a message. It would be good to have a little coaching to prepare for working abroad. Negotiating techniques, rhetoric, dialogue skills. It can be difficult to create forums, but this should absolutely be addressed by Sida's Centre for Learning! I felt this was missing from the preparatory course.
- We spent about a day on role-playing games. It was good to alternate theory and practice. It would be even more educational if we had it in conjunction with someone actually having an important meeting with some party.
- We practiced role playing how to handle the situation if the Secretary of State gets angry, or when you want to address important issues. We have often felt that dialogue is the political part, so the Sida officer does not have experience working with issues that are not of a technical nature. For this reason it was good to be able to practice this way.

Statements about country-specific cultural competence and political expertise:

- The ability to deal with the political context and understanding of the environment in which you are active cannot be underestimated.
- You have to prepare yourself by keeping up to date with political developments in the country. The analyses are very important for being able to carry out a good dialogue.
- When recruiting new people we should send them out from the embassy to work with local organisations in the partner countries to acquire the necessary expertise, rather than become better at what they already know how to do, i.e. write memos. You damn well don't learn dialogue at the embassy – you learn it out in the communities!
- It is indeed unfortunate if a delegation comes from Sweden to sign a few documents. There's no dialogue about this. The idea of the field vision is that the conversations are carried out between the Swedish embassy and the country's representatives.
- What is vaguely formulated in our culture (even though we believe we sent out a strong signal) may pass right over the heads of others.
- You can learn about the local culture at the embassies, where local employees can share their image of Swedes – they often have extensive experience – as well as about their own culture.

Statements about diplomatic cultural understanding:

- It's important to learn the concepts and the various roles of the bilateral and multilateral players.
- When the meetings take place they should not be with too many people and there must be continuity – the party with whom you are communicating must not lose face.
- There are a whole lot of general diplomatic principles that you have to learn.
- Everyone has their own agenda – it's a matter of give and take! This is the political game of aid.
- There is a need to focus especially on programme officers. They could often do with a little training in how to bring up issues with the government.

Expertise in the Issues

Many of the interviewees feel that in addition to cultural competence, they also need relatively extensive expertise in the area that will be addressed in the dialogue. This approach leads to the image of the “super officer”, who has to be both an expert in dialogue issues and an expert in the issue itself. Several of the interviewees see this as a problem and feel that it would be best if the field had both expertise in the issue and programme officers who can work as generalists. Others feel that the bilaterals and multilaterals on site have to cooperate in partnership and complement each other in terms of expertise in the issues.

At the same time it is important to be clear about the areas in which Sida has a comparative advantage. What are Sweden and Sida's strengths compared with other bilateral and multilateral actors?

The discussions have also included thoughts about whether aid in the future will deal more with sharing knowledge and ideas than transferring large sums of money to poor countries.

Daring and Being Able to Say What you Think

It is important to dare to accept your role in the dialogue. A few embassy counsellors say in the interviews that Swedes have to become better at expressing their opinions. Some of the interviewees commented on the difficulties national programme officers face as they represent Sweden in their own country now that the focus of the dialogue is shifting from aid-related technical to aid-related policy, issues.

Some have also wondered about the need to clarify what Sida is and the values for which Sida stands. It is difficult to accept your role when you are not really sure what role Sida has.

- If you have something to say, say what you think – don't be so shy! You have to accept the role of being significant. You have to speak out at meetings and discuss the future in terms other than implementation. Tell everyone that we want to take an overarching approach; we will have meetings at the embassy and we want to know who can and wants to attend.
- Make sure to expose younger colleagues to these situations when it is necessary to make a contribution to the dialogue. It is not so easy to get into that way of working. As time passes you learn how to behave in a UN context or at DAC (OECD's aid committee).
- Local employees may be restricted in what they can do in a dialogue situation.
- If we look ten years ahead, there will be a need to train NPOs to speak on behalf of Sida. We then need to know more accurately where we stand – we have to become clearer.

Sensitivity

The interviewees mention the need for sensitivity both within Sida and among external players. Some points in the dialogue do not result in any concrete results. It is a matter of give and take and you have to show that you are open to the opinions of others.

- If you're going to formulate principles for how to carry on a dialogue, then active listening, respect for the other party and humility are important, but also clarity about where we stand.
- You have to coordinate with other donors locally so you can share tips and advice about what to think about, which traps you can fall into and how to communicate an assignment in a convincing manner. Naturally this involves not just transmitting the message but also listening.

Language

Good written and verbal knowledge of English and other languages are noted as important basic skills.

- Despite everything, the basic language skills come first. If you can't express yourself well in another language it won't matter how good you are with substance issues.
- We have to become much better at English. First you have to understand the substantial issues, then the language.

5. Risks with Dialogue

Most of the interviewees do not see any direct risks in dialogue or more strategic communications. Of those who comment on the risks of expanded dialogue, most mention that donor harmonisation could cause donors to become too strong in relation to the partner country, or that Sida pursues dialogue with other donors and to a lesser extent with partner country representatives. Another risk is that political dialogues may be carried out between the partner government and the donors and not between the government and the local opinion or with the people.

Several of the interviewees also feel that contradictions can arise between working in harmony with the partner country and at the same time promoting certain dialogue issues that are important for Sweden such as gender equality, democracy and human rights. Several of the interviewees feel that the balance between being a good listener in the dialogue and pursuing Swedish opinions is a sensitive issue. In summary, the interviewees feel that Sweden and Sida must be permitted to have an opinion and that they must promote the issues they feel are important, but with sensitivity to the partner government and other stakeholders in the partner country so they do not make other cooperative processes more difficult. The risk is that advocacy complicates mutual dialogue and relations that are already difficult, in which one dialogue partner often possesses more power than the other.

- You have to strike a balance between carrying out your own processes and being sensitive, but this can be difficult. Perhaps you could be open with the government and say that now we're going to let everyone know about this matter. This would probably make it easier to handle in most cases.
- You have to be careful. In "Rich and poor" we built up contacts with the Ministry of Planning; you have to find catalysts within the government.
- You can't let the risk of conflict become an excuse for not carrying out a dialogue – we don't want to think about ourselves as neocolonial!
- The disadvantage is that to be a good leader for a donor group you sometimes have to tone down the Swedish element; you also have to bring everyone on board.
- We kept an extremely low profile about our position. Partly because it was hard to take up space, but also because it was a little in conflict with our ambitions for harmonisation and adjustment to partner positions.
- The issues are always pursued jointly with other donors. We are a little cautious with the Swedish flag.

- If too much emphasis is placed on donor coordination, it may become an all or nothing situation. Everyone may pull back at the same time or everyone may increase efforts at the same time.
- Meeting without the partner being present may be perceived as the donors gathering and conspiring; at the same time some of the donors feel that it is good for the donors to meet beforehand to avoid wasting time and placing more of a burden than necessary on the partner.
- As head of development cooperation I seldom have contact with the government in the partner country. It happens only a few times a year, when the government reports on what is in the budget and the issues that are relevant at this time. Our dialogue is mainly carried out with other donors.
- Joint dialogue can go too far (donor harmonisation). Sweden's voice can drown amidst those of the bigger countries.
- There is a risk that we are involved in many areas but not strong in any of them. You can do that if you don't think that dialogue is important.
- There can be risks for individuals who get involved in debate, especially about corruption – pure physical risks.
- It can happen that political dialogue is carried out between the local government and the donors, not with local opinion.

6. Development Needs to Strengthen the Dialogue

In the interviews Sida employees express a need for Sida to improve support for programme officers and leaders in dialogue issues through measures such as

- recruiting personnel with dialogue skills
- creating a single platform within Sida for sharing experiences and discussing dialogue issues
- creating an internal organisation that encourages dialogue
- continuing to discuss roles in relation to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- formulating and communicating certain internal guidelines in the area.

There are diametrically opposed interpretations of the last point. About half of the interviewees feel that no new policies should be formulated in general and therefore no policies that regulate dialogue. But people do not mind method support, even though they generally feel there are already too many policies and method papers. The other half sees a need for a policy or guidelines for working with dialogues.

Staff Recruitment

It would be a good idea to consider dialogue skills when hiring staff. Several of the interviewees feel there is a greater need in the field for people who can carry out a dialogue than for specialists. Tomorrow's employees need to be able to analyse political situations and nuances.

- Those responsible for countries must be able to nurture the processes and not become deeply involved in individual projects.

Internal Knowledge Sharing and Discussion of Dialogue

We asked the Sida employees if there is a need to discuss how to work with dialogue skills within Sida. Most would be in favour of such a forum. Even when we have pointed out the stressful conditions in which many work, quite a few of the interviewees believe that there is an interest in internally creating a platform for sharing knowledge on dialogue issues and communications.

- The internal dialogue can show the advantages of improving dialogue skills: that we will become better providers of aid. It's satisfying to sit with a recipient and feel that now I've got my message across. Conducting a dialogue is a bit of an art, and once you've mastered it, it's more rewarding than writing memos. It is essential that supervisors signal that it's fun and not something that is on top of what people have to do otherwise.
- It's great, I can learn more about Kenya's experiences than from having communications consultants come here.
- It can be important; certain embassies are more successful than others. It doesn't matter what it's about, as long as it's related to dialogue skills. If any embassy has had an unexpected breakthrough in its dialogue, they may have an innovative method.
- Someone from POM or INFO could attend a departmental meeting and say a few words.
- It's important to use something specific as a point of departure, such as a PRSP, which could serve as foundation to a lunch seminar.
- It would be good to have positive examples.
- The time is ripe to share knowledge at Sida, mainly within JAS and PRS. And the fact that we've signed the Paris and Rome declarations – what are the implications of this?

Organisational Development

A number of ideas and opinions emerged during the interviews that can be described as organisational ideas to facilitate continued development of dialogue issues at Sida. To summarise these ideas, POM should gather examples of how dialogues have been successfully and less successfully carried out, and INFO could offer a help desk in dialogue methodology. People would also like to see an organisation to integrate communications into work with projects and programmes.

The interviewees would also like Sida Stockholm to provide better support in relevant issues for those in the field, in order for them to become generalists and dialogue specialists. Sida also has to find its own niche based on Sweden's and its own history. It is also essential to continue discussing the implications of dialogue and communication.

- Sida must be adept at being a dialogue partner as well as being specialists. When we say that we need aid generalists, the problem is that we lack specialist skills – this is extremely important. Sida must build up a structure to secure its areas of expertise.
- This requires a combination of general and specialist expertise. It must be supported by the organisation.
- If Sida is to be the lead agency, then you have to conduct the dialogue on behalf of the others – it cannot be just a vehicle for Swedish concerns – and to achieve this, dialogue with the other parties is essential. In this case you must have the capacity to accept the challenge of being the lead agency. Rather stringent requirements must be met. The home authority must be prepared to back the embassy in its role as lead agency.
- Sida could have a small sounding board in Sweden to work with dialogue issues and build up a knowledge bank.
- Dialogue is an enormous concept. It is important to define what you mean. Help desk functions for Sida employees are also essential. Our primary task in the sector departments is to know the issues; perhaps there is a need for an INFO/communications help desk within Sida?

- What do we stand for in Sweden? In our dialogue with the ministries we become wishy-washy and vague and we don't stand for anything. When we see that the democratic process is not moving in the right direction then we must express our opinions. There is no support from home to handle this. Don't know why this has come about; the opinion at HQ may differ, or possibly the country programme officer is unable to address the issue. Can be anything from not agreeing with the embassy to a lack of resources at HQ.

Relation between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

In the field, cooperation between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs usually works well, according to most of the interviewees, but Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs need to continue to cooperate in their roles related to dialogue on aid.

- If Sweden is to strengthen its position in the policy debate, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida must cooperate.
- Actually, I believe that the problem is in Stockholm, not at the embassy level. Single supervisor authorities can use their staff in the best way.
- But it's essential that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida deal with these issues because many issues need to be addressed.
- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the political side, while Sida coordinates the dialogue with representatives in the partner country's administration that work with developmental issues. The goal should be to develop concrete policies and guidelines and for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida to pursue them together.
- There must be coordination between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. We've carried out political dialogue since the birth of aid. We must cooperate – it's not possible to say that we're in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' domain or vice versa.

About Guidelines for Sida's Work on Dialogue and Advocacy

There are many different opinions about whether Sida should formulate guidelines for how to carry out dialogue. Some of the interviewees see the possibilities in receiving oversight and guidelines, while others see it as yet another mainstreaming document. It is not so much the guidelines for dialogue issues that people object to so strongly, but more the principle of developing even more guidelines than the agency already has.

Comments about guidelines

- Many people do not understand what is involved. It would be great to have a few guidelines that describe what this involves, demystify a little.
- The democracy issues are vague. Harmonisation with other donors also suffers from vagueness. How much should we compromise and what is our position? We lack support from Sweden. If we are to have a specific profile, we must have guidelines.
- Because we didn't have any guidelines, USAID and DFID dominated the discussion at informal meetings with the ministers.
- Sure to be good. More general guidelines that are written here at home.
- Yes, concentrated on a few questions.
- It would be good to systematise things. When we make our country plan proposals, we should indicate what the most important dialogue issues are. Then we would have a definite reason to systematise.

Comments against guidelines

- I was in a working group on how to conduct dialogue about human rights issues. We didn't get very far. To a large extent it's a matter of context specific knowledge.
- Don't believe that Sweden could ever work from a "blueprint" in PRS. It would only get in the way. Right now we are discussing the partner country's proposal for a PRS. The structure working with this is enormous. 23 working groups. Dialogue technique is definitely an important issue, but I'm not so sure about the content of the dialogue.
- Guidelines are tough, because it's such a dynamic process. Sensitivity, responsiveness, timing.
- Not that. Sida's guidelines drive us crazy. There's a certain enthusiasm for trying to generalise subjects that cannot be generalised, which I do not believe is applicable anywhere. But it doesn't help at all. It's just talk.
- However, I want to see a communication strategy for how Sida should act in the international arena. Instead, people should use Sida at Work as a point of departure and define what it means for Sida to be a dialogue partner in the international arena and what is required for Sida employees to be able to handle this task.

7. How Sida Supports Project Owners or Project Agents in Promoting Communication in Projects and Programmes

Chapters seven to eleven describe how Sida can support project owners and project agents to ensure good communication when planning and implementing projects and programmes. The background material for these chapters was mainly gathered through discussions with people outside Sida and through written sources.

In recent years Sida has begun working more systematically on implementing strategic communication in development cooperation. INFO has offered support for communication planning at departments and embassies and formulated proposals for guidelines in Sida at Work. More and more projects use strategic communication to support the initiatives. There are also examples of special communication initiatives to support dialogue between governments and citizens or to help governments with communication initiatives to carry out a PRS. However, working with communication in development cooperation is nothing new. There is a long tradition of strategic communication initiatives using information and communication as methods in the implementation of development cooperation in projects related to human rights, democracy and health. But it is relatively uncommon for Sida to support an unbiased needs analysis based on the project owner's need to cost-effectively carry out development projects.

A focus on the unbiased perspective of the project owner's need for strategic communication is important when we strive to achieve aid effectiveness. This perspective differs from the perspective of participation by the poor to the extent that it is not necessarily just the voices of the poor that constitute the problem in each project. It may be communication with stakeholders other than the poor in a programme that is a greater obstacle to achieving results, and then communication with these people should be planned and developed. As a result we conclude that the perspective "voices of the poor" can be part of, but not necessarily the same as, an unbiased, needs-controlled planned communication based on the needs of the project owner.

Interviews and studies show that people who have experience working with strategic communication within the framework of specific projects and programmes feel that planned communication contributes to aid effectiveness – that development cooperation is done correctly. At the same time it is difficult to find studies to confirm that unbiased planned communication makes a positive contribution to greater efficiency in projects or programmes. Through interviews with Sida's programme

officers in Central America we get a picture that shows that the process of developing communication plans has contributed to an attitude change in Sida's partners. One partner says that within one month after they had received help from a communications consultant they observed improved communication with the target groups of the initiative. In one partner country Sida's personnel state that the work with planned communication within project management has helped to achieve the project goals.⁸ In a number of studies commissioned by Sida we can also observe that there are many examples in which the lack of planned communication prevents achievement of results.⁹ This view of communications is also described in *Sida at Work*:

"The analytical work and dialogue that relates to programmes/projects typically reach few of the stakeholders, even when efforts are made to broaden participation. The direct involvement of stakeholders, in particular the poor, should take place at an early stage, such as the PRS stage, when development priorities and policies are defined. When these priorities and policies have been established, the analysis and dialogue shift to the formulation of activities for implementation ...

In Sida's own dialogue with cooperation partners, the issue of planned communication should be a standard agenda item. Sida should take a positive view on financing planned communication efforts out of the Swedish contribution. Sida should also be prepared to strengthen the capacity of the different stakeholders within projects and programmes to use strategic communication as a tool during planning and implementation of the project or programme."

Sida at Work, 2005, p. 49–50.

Sida's role

The working group sees that Sida's role in this could be to set requirements and provide support to project owners and agents so that they can develop their strategic communications within the framework of Sida-supported programmes and projects. On many occasions Sida initially has to support project owners and agents to recognise the need for developing a communication plan as support for planning and implementation. Sida should also offer capacity development and method support to the parties for implementation of communication planning. This may involve ensuring that the project or programme's preparation takes place in dialogue with the target group, local politicians, entrepreneurs, or representatives of civil society.

Many of the initiatives to support project owners or project agents in strategic communications have been implemented through a stakeholder analysis based on the project owner's needs and challenges. Analysis has been made based on existing communication and future communication needs. See the following example, which comes from Sida's Guidelines for Planned Communication.¹⁰

Guidelines for Planned Communication, appendix C. p.38.

⁸ The Sida experience of working with Communication for Development in Central America 2002–2004, Olle Wiklund, Amazonas relationship management AB 2005. Review of planned Communications: Swedish Embassy in Kenya, 2005 Adam Smith International.

⁹ For example: Planned communication at programme level, Field Study in Topola Serbia. Ulla Engberg, November 2004.

¹⁰ Can be found on Sida's Intranet.

Several of the Sida employees interviewed say that Sida is weak in this area. People also say that several partners already have a communication plan developed for the project and that partners see this as an important perspective to a greater extent than previously. Some of the interviewees state that in many cases, project owners have come farther than Sida in thinking in terms of communication. Many of the interviewees say that strategic communication is important and that it is good for Sida to recognise this fact. For years, Sida has had a model for how communication can be planned; see appendix D – Template for Communication Strategy.

How Sida can promote communication in a programme approach – unlike in a project

In a programme approach – compared with project format – financiers have less of an opportunity to influence the way a project is implemented. For example, it becomes more difficult for financiers to support the design of a communication plan for an individual project. Nevertheless, the need for project-specific communication plans will not diminish, since the international development cooperation format shifts from project to programme based approaches. The need for a carefully formulated communication plan, will be the same regardless of whether financing is at the project or sector level. Therefore it is important that, even within the framework of sector programme support, the financier carries on a dialogue with the programme owner to ensure that the communication perspective is applied in projects to be carried out within the sectors that are financed.

From a financier's perspective, for example, Sida, a certain need for developed communication arises in a programme approach. The following table has proved to be useful for looking at which communication needs arise and how communication can be planned within a programme approach.

Communication needs can be described at four levels:¹¹

- I. Communication in a partner country
- II. Communication between a country's government and the community of donors
- III. Communication among various donors
- IV. Communication with a bilateral or multilateral donor

Examples of affected stakeholders within the four levels in programmes

I. Communication in a partner country	II. Communication between a country's government and the community of donors	III. Communication among various donors	IV. Communication within a bilateral or multilateral donor
– Vertically within public authorities	– Project owner	– Coordination between multilateral and bilateral donors	– HQ and embassy
– Horizontally among different public authorities	– Multilateral and bilateral donors		– Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida
– Donors			– Ministry of Finance and Sida
– General public			
– Target group			
– Civil society			

¹¹ Dialogue perspective in evaluations of programme support, Sida 2005.

8. Factors for Success in the Work on Communication in Projects and Programmes

In conversations with several actors within international development cooperation¹² and through studies of project assessments we can see certain recurrent factors for planned communication to be perceived as contributing to increased achievement of results for a project. The factor for success mentioned most often is the need for early planning of communication issues. Another involves taking communication issues into account during the preparation phase of a project or programme support.

Yet another important factor is that financiers and project owners must agree to allocate resources to work with strategic communication within the project's budget framework. Moreover, several of the interviewees point out that a large amount of time must be allowed for communication planning and implementation. It is difficult to see effects and results within just a few years. Insight into the risks of planned communication can also be a factor for success. Information is seen in many of the environments in which Sida is active as the privilege of power rather than something that is to be available to everyone. Information is sometimes perceived as threatening, since it leads to people making demands. At the same time information is something that politicians see as an opportunity to be used for personal purposes, such as in conjunction with an election campaign.

Yet another prominent factor for success is the ability to support the connection between communication components (costs) in time and money and how this contributes to achievement of the project's goals. This applies in part to support from the leadership within Sida and in part within the leadership of the project/programme, which are often public authorities in the partner country. Success requires good arguments and good examples in which planned communication positively contributes to achievement of results. In one example, there was no information strategy at the start of a project and incorrect information was spread locally, leading to unrealistic expectations from local residents. In retrospect, the project staff concluded that they were forced to use three months of precious project time solely to receive inquiries and requests and to explain what the project was actually about to the people who formed long queues each morning outside the project office. Only long after the project was underway was an information officer appointed and an information sheet published.

¹² Bilaterals and multilaterals, external consultants who are involved in preparation and implementation of development cooperation, civil society actors and Sida personnel.

- In Bosnia communication issues were obvious. However, project coordinators had not included them in the project. It was only when Sida made a proposal that the information component was included. Sida and a consultant held a communication strategy workshop and the actual initiative consisted of a training programme for the participating municipalities' information officers and appointing an information officer to the project management team.
- A project in the Ukraine was stuck and needed help to spread information on experiences out in the community and upward in the hierarchy. Quite simply, the project could not be developed according to the plans without formulating a communication strategy. Now, the project has acquired new life and a partially new focus on opinion building on forestry issues and networking to pursue these issues in the political sphere.
- I can really see how much better it would have been if we'd had a communications specialist from the start. Much can be gained by planning communication at the same time as you plan the rest of the project. If we'd had a communications approach from the start, many things would have been so much easier.
- It is important to create understanding that communication is a process in which everyone is involved. It deals with structures for meetings, reports, etc. It also deals with much of the work organisation. You have to build a structure and an organisation. You also have to make annual communication plans so that communication is planned and not ad hoc.
- A budget must be allocated for this purpose.
- It's also important that ambassadors support this perspective.
- Motivating the recipient is essential, e.g. getting a government agency to find a positive way to disseminate the project's message to important stakeholders. For this to succeed they have to understand why it is important.
- For each project you have to be careful about coming with universal solutions. You have to carry out the communication needs analysis when you start a project. When you do this, you must have good knowledge of the region and country.
- It's important to build up the institutional capacity. Finding local expertise that can contribute to the project.
- There is a risk that communication is taken over by different forces, since there is so much power in this. If Sida doesn't say what is happening, someone else will do it instead.
- In order to succeed with transparency, anticorruption and democracy you have to work with clear and planned communication.
- Motivating the recipient is essential, e.g. getting a government agency to find a positive way to disseminate the project's message to important stakeholders. It's a communications strategy issue. In many cases, people do not make sure that they spread the message outside the project.

9. Developmental Needs to Strengthen Communication in Projects and Programmes

Sida Employees' View of the Needs

Many of the interviewees say that the issue of handling communication in projects depends on the individual officer's understanding of the significance of communication. Replacement of personnel in key positions in the administration of a partner country can also mean that you have to start all over again. Therefore a structure is needed; planning and communication aspects should be included in regular project preparation.

Several of the interviewees feel that Sida should develop indicators for measuring the extent to which achievement of results in a project or programme increases with strategic communication. Some want to know what roles INFO, POM and other departments, as well as the embassy/Ministry for Foreign Affairs have in this matter and some feel that Sida should offer support for communication planning in the form of expertise and economic resources.

- Within projects and programmes there is a great need for clear communication. We have had help from a consultant who showed the problems of inadequate communication planning in the programme.
- Simply the fact that financial backers ask project owners questions creates an interest in these issues.
- Training is needed within this perspective of dialogue for programme officers and department heads. Each embassy needs to have someone who is a bit of an expert in communication issues. Support from Sida's headquarters is important, since this is a rather new perspective.
- You have to free up time for this perspective in order to achieve success.
- In an environment in which there is a risk of a change of government, supporting communication initiatives with the country's opposition may also be important.

Implementing Consultants' View of the Need for Planning Communication

We have interviewed seven consultancy representatives who chose to work with planned communication in individual projects. We have also read three evaluations of strategic communication in projects.¹³ The pic-

¹³ A Communication Approach on the Ukrainian Forest, Sida 2005. Planned communication at programme level, Field study in Topola, 2004, Sida. Review of planned Communications: Swedish Embassy in Kenya, 2005 Adam Smith International.

ture that emerges is that those who chose to work with planned communication believe that it is essential for the project. Many of the respondents feel that communication planning is needed in the normal preparation phase, and it is important to realise that planned communication is cost-effective. It is also important to remember communication early in the planning phase. Several consultants would like to see support from Sida for communication planning. However, consulting firms show no substantial interest in working together on these issues. Several of the interviewees relate that it is essential for the individual companies to be allowed to handle these questions and that this can constitute a comparative advantage when tenders are to be submitted.

- Communication should be included in project management, as part of project management. It must also be included as part of the follow-up. Now, Sida is also making resources available for this work. So it may work better.
- Many people have a somewhat condescending perspective and do not see that this is essential within development cooperation. Providing good aid in the future will involve communication to a large extent. You have to be pedantic and highlight these issues day in and day out. Important to focus on how you present all the available information so that the recipient understands. It is an enormous challenge to get people in the partner countries to understand what you mean.
- There is no problem in handing over the “baton” in the preparation process between preparatory and implementing consultant. The problem is that people interpret the document differently within the donor and recipient agencies.
- I have a feeling that the bigger the investment in the aid project, the smaller the influence from the local population.
- Sida should not pay money when there is no clear communication plan.
- A primary question is how to get project owners to take responsibility for these issues. This work must begin at Sida, and the only way is to explain the benefit by providing examples. You can't just talk about communication in general terms.
- Since you work with a results-based focus you can't skip the communication perspective. The rest of the world has already recognised this fact. Planned communication is related to participation and transparency.
- Dialogue is often inadequate during preparation of projects. This may depend on which planning consultants are engaged.
- Communication often works well between us and the embassy, or between us and the officer at home in Stockholm. But often it is amazing how bad the communication is between the embassy and Sida in Stockholm.
- In tender documents these days it is sometimes specified that you have to manage communication – that's good.
- What we may have missed until now is that we've been a little too interested in technology, and worked too little on cultural and anthropological issues. We try to look at that too, but I believe that this is a neglected area.

Need to Plan Communication Expressed in Evaluations

Sida's evaluations of strategic communication in projects also show that early planning of communication issues is essential and that it is important to ensure that financial and human resources are available. Also included are proposals for establishing regional communications teams that can support several Sida offices. See evaluations in Appendix B.

10. Swedish Civil Society's Work on Dialogue and Communication

There are many experiences, good and bad, of dialogue-based working methodology in civil society.¹⁴ Sida can use these experiences to develop its own work on dialogue and planned communication.

Civil society actors have always had roles as opinion makers and pundits. Today many civil society actors in Sweden develop strategies for how to work with development cooperation by creating opinion and seeking to influence decision-makers. Several organisations work more strategically today with their information materials in Sweden as a part of international development cooperation. The organisations view their information cooperation as an alternative development method. This applies to several of Sida's umbrella organisations.

Within civil society there have always been organisations that worked with participative methods in order to plan and implement development cooperation in the most effective manner. There is also a tradition of – and continued focus on – working with dialogue-based methodology to strengthen the citizen/rights perspective, participation, and local democracy. Because the Swedish Policy on Global Development focuses on participants, Swedish civil society's experiences and methods may constitute a resource from which Sida can retrieve experiences to develop its own work on dialogue and planned communication in projects and programmes.

During spring 2006 Forum Syd is conducting a survey of how civil society in Sweden and internationally works with planned communication within aid work in order to increase the achievement of results of projects and programmes. The Christian Council of Sweden has also decided to take a closer look at communication components in member organisations' programmes and projects.

Interviews with actors within Swedish civil society show that the focus on strategic communication involves working with opinion building and lobbying as methods in development cooperation that complement the work which is already being carried out.

¹⁴ Annika Lyséns chapter on the Policy Dialogue in Dialogue in Pursuit of Development, Edited By Jan Olsson and Lennart Wohlgemuth, EGD, 2003:2

11. The Work of Other Bilaterals and Multilaterals on Dialogue and Communication

The working group has looked at how other bilaterals, multilaterals, implementation parties and NGOs work with communication within development cooperation. The interviews with Sida's employees have guided us in selecting the bilaterals and multilaterals at which we have taken a closer look.

The working group has been in contact with Norad, DFID, the World Bank, Danida, DGIS¹⁵, Unicef and FAO. We found that bilaterals with strategic planning mainly focus on the following communication trends:

- a) Building strategies that provide an opportunity for target groups for development cooperation to take part in the work on poverty reduction strategy.
- b) Informing taxpayers at home.
- c) Using planned information and communication as an implementation method within aid, in sectors such as democracy and health, and through support to the media.

The working group found it the most interesting to take a closer look at the World Bank and DFID.

Many of those interviewed feel that the World Bank is good at expressing its opinions and has substantial resources to do so, though some people feel that it is not as good at listening to the requests of the partner country. Moreover, UN bodies are considered to be good at official campaigns aimed at the public. DFID is the bilateral mentioned most often as a good dialogue partner. Some of the interviewees mention that the former colonial countries are burdened by their legacy and that consequently, in certain contexts, Sweden has a better starting position to conduct a dialogue with credibility. However, this advantage must be linked with substantial knowledge of the areas in which Sweden wishes to express its opinions. DFID's strength is considered to be that it selects a few issues that it constantly highlights in various contexts. DFID has capacity, often with many programme officers at the embassy, but also has an advantage in terms of the language. According to some, however, DFID fails to listen to those around it; it "runs its own race". USAID is also mentioned in several interviews as good at dialogue, even though the interviewees do not always agree with them on the issues.

¹⁵ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

11.1 The World Bank

The World Bank has a department, the Development Communication Division (Devcom) devoted exclusively to strategic communication. The department supports the bank's employees and customers with advisory services and implementation. It focuses on formulating communications strategies to spread adequate information about the reform programmes in which the bank is involved. Devcom also believes in working to strengthen grassroots organisations and developing participatory methods in development cooperation. As a result of Devcom's work about 65 percent of the World Bank's programmes currently have a planned communication component integrated in their action plans.

The purpose of the activity can be described as follows:

- Integrate strategic communication in projects and programmes to minimise risks and maximise the effect of programmes and projects
- Increase insight into stakeholders' attitudes towards and motivation for reform programmes and other developmental perspectives through attitude, opinion and knowledge surveys
- Capacity development among the bank's own staff and external stakeholders in using strategic communication to increase goal attainment of projects and programmes.

Devcom is organisationally divided into four units:

- Operational Communications Support
- Knowledge and Capacity Building Unit
- Operational Communication for Sustainable Development
- Public Opinion Research Unit

11.2 DFID

In order to work with Development Communication, DFID set up an Information and Communication Development team (ICD team) that supports several regional and local ICD teams out in the world. The purpose of the team is to promote the effective use of information and communication. Its aim is also to influence policy and practice by showing that communication and dialogue are essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The team works by offering DFID colleagues

- policy advice
- advice on communication strategy
- basis for "best practices" in communication
- project management
- new communication methods
- capacity development
- support in hiring consultants.

The ICD team also works for outside parties on building capacity, knowledge sharing, networking and integrating communication in policy work.

DFID works internally to strengthen the communication culture in programme management. One important contribution is the message from DFID's administration that department heads in the organisation must have extensive communication skills.

The Information Department supports DFID's communication skills development in many ways:

- Capacity building through courses for department heads at headquarters and in the field. ICD recently held a course in conjunction with the World Bank for department heads at various levels.
- Media training for department heads.
- During 2006 DFID is starting dialogue courses for programme officers and in October 2006 DFID will publish guidelines with "best practices".

Appendix A – Background

POM and INFO appointed a working group in autumn 2005 to propose measures that would increase dialogue and communication capacity at Sida. The working group includes the following representatives with experience in these matters: Ingemar Gustafsson, POM (convenor), Gunilla Cederqvist, INFO, Mats Sundgren, EUROPE and Jörgen Schönning, ASIA. Day Jonzon, SEKA (SCSC), was co-opted into the working group at a few meetings. Klas Palm from Amazonas Relationship Management was hired as consultant.

The working group's assignment was to

- recommend methods to strengthen Sida's capacity to plan and take part in dialogue with partners and other donors
- recommend methods for Sida to support parties in projects and programmes to enable them to better use strategic communication as a tool to achieve their goals

The two components of the assignment differ in that the first point is about Sida's own dialogue, while the second point deals with how Sida can support partners – project owners and project agents – to develop the dialogue as a tool for high achievement of results in development cooperation.

About 50 people were interviewed about their experiences of dialogue and planned communication. About 30 of them are employed by Sida as programme officers, unit and department heads and embassy counselors. In addition to Sida personnel, interviews were carried out with representatives of bilaterals, multilaterals, Swedish NGOs and representatives of Swedish consultants in the field of development cooperation.

The representativeness of the selection of interviewed candidates was not a goal for Sida.

The primary selection criteria were the individuals' experience of working with dialogue or planned communication. In addition to interviews the working group also used written documentation.¹⁶

All of Sida's activities involve communication. The working group focuses on developing dialogue and planned communication as a method in development cooperation, regardless of the sector that the actual contribution involves. The working group's initiative therefore does not particularly cover Sida's support to programmes and projects aimed at strengthening communications channels in order to increase democratic participation through media and culture.

¹⁶ Please see the references in Appendix B.

Appendix B – Sources

- A Communication Approach on the Ukrainian Forest, Sida 2005
- Dialogue – biståndets nav, Folke Albinsson, Forum Syd, 1996
- Dialogperspektiv i utvärdering av programmet, Sida 2004
- Dialogue in Pursuit of Development, Edited by Jan Olsson and Lennart Wohlgemuth, EGDI, 2003:2
- Förhållningssätt för Sidas kommunikation med svenska aktörer, Agneta Rolfer, 2005
- Information Flow-back – Information Flow-back for Accessible and Comprehensible Results on Programme Support, Sida, 2005
- Planned communication at programme level, Field study in Topola, 2004, Sida.
- Review of planned Communications: Swedish Embassy in Kenya, 2005 Adam Smith International
- Southern Transport Development Project Road Safety Component Sri Lanka. Public Information and Campaigns Communication plan, November 2005, SweRoad
- The Sida experience of working with Communication for Development in Central America 2002–2004, Amazonas relationship management AB, 2005
- Evaluation of Sida's Communication initiatives in Central America, Tanzania and West Balkan 1999–2002, Danicom, October 2003

Appendix C – Dialogue Issues in Strategies for Cooperation

Albania 2004–2007

- Anti-corruption measures shall be stressed in the dialogue with all actors in Albania.

Burkina Faso 2004–2006

- In development cooperation with Burkina Faso, Sweden shall encourage Burkinese ownership. Support should therefore follow Burkina Faso's PRSP as far as possible. The dialogue should reflect equality and respect for each other's differences, in order for Sweden and Burkina Faso to get to know each other better and understand each other's viewpoints.
- Development cooperation with Burkina Faso shall be concentrated to a few sectors and dialogue issues, in order to better influence development in Burkina Faso and achieve an effective aid programme.

The Swedish bilateral development cooperation with Burkina Faso shall strive to:

- ... in addition, to provide strategic project support, where appropriate through multilateral channels (multilateral cooperation). The project instrument should mainly be used I)..., II)..., III) as leads into dialogue.
- actively use dialogue as a means for improved, mutual comprehension.

“Areas of cooperation and intermediate goals”:

This will be achieved by:

- dialogue on all levels promoting the significance of the equal rights of women, men, girls and boys.
- preventing an increase in the HIV/AIDS epidemic: Sida will explore which opportunities, in addition to dialogue, can be found to support strategic interventions to prevent the spread of HIV. In this area Sida will particularly recognise the situation of refugees, as well as the different premises and roles of men and women.

“4.5 Dialogue issues”

- The currently limited Swedish presence in the region and in Burkina Faso entails certain difficulties in monitoring and pursuing a political

dialogue on a high level. The embassy in Abidjan is also responsible for monitoring Burkina Faso. Dialogue will continuously be pursued on comprehensive developmental issues, on both the sector and project levels. The exchange on the ministerial level between Sweden and Burkina Faso has increased in recent times. In the dialogue with Burkina Faso's government, Sweden should particularly address the following issues:

- Significance of democracy, including combating corruption, and respect for, protection of and provision for human rights, especially the rights of girls and women.
- The importance of Burkina Faso playing a constructive role for peace and stability in West Africa.
- The importance of regional cooperation and integration, especially within the framework of ECOWAS. The importance of eliminating obstacles preventing poor people from participating in the economy. Significance of preventing HIV/AIDS.

On the programme and project levels the following issues should particularly be addressed:

- The access of girls and women to power, security and opportunities.
- Significance of preventing HIV/AIDS.

“Volume, Swedish capacity and implementation”:

- Sida's annual country plan for development cooperation with Burkina Faso shall state how the adopted strategy will be implemented on an annual basis. A detailed dialogue plan will also be formulated in connection with this process.

Portions of Southeast Asia 2005–2009

“Strategic Considerations”

- Policy dialogue and coordination with the EU, the UN system, ADB, the World Bank and bilateral donors continue to be of great significance. In most cases, Sweden has little potential for conducting its own active dialogue in the relevant countries within the scope of this limited development cooperation. A few strategic areas linked to the cooperation will therefore be selected.
- Swedish presence in the field will also be limited in the future, which means limitation of the possibilities for actively participating in coordination and dialogue in the development area. Dialogue may be pursued to a large extent through coordination with like-minded organisations within the international community, which are better represented in the field.

“HIV/AIDS”

- Increased priority shall be given to coordinated dialogue relating to HIV/AIDS in the region, where synergy effects between bilateral and regional programmes are desirable.

Thailand

The Swedish bilateral partnership with Thailand shall be discontinued during the strategy period.

Indonesia

“Goals and focus”

- Gender equality should be a high priority dialogue issue within the framework of support.

“Dialogue and cooperation”

- Dialogue should be pursued in Issues related to the objectives for national collaboration. HIV/AIDS is an additional question for dialogue whenever reasonable. Current cooperation will mainly involve cooperation with multilateral organisations as well as a developed and more flexible form of Contract-Financed Technical Cooperation and institutional cooperation or other forms of twinning arrangements. Loans and guarantees can be considered if there should be any demand.

Philippines

“Dialogue and cooperation”

- Whenever possible, dialogue should be pursued in issues related to the objectives of the national collaboration. The level of objectives is limited. HIV/AIDS is an additional issue for dialogue whenever reasonable. Current cooperation will mainly involve cooperation with multilateral organisations as well as a developed and more flexible form of Contract-Financed Technical Cooperation and institutional cooperation or other forms of twinning arrangements. Loans and guarantees can be considered if there should be any demand.

East Timor

“Strategic Considerations”

- No Swedish presence in the field is anticipated for the strategy period. Opportunities for active participation in coordination and dialogue in the development area therefore remain limited. The fact that many donors mainly provide support through the UN and other organisations represented on site presumes that initiatives will be coordinated in a satisfactory manner. Dialogue may be pursued to a large extent through coordination with the actors that have a presence in the field.

“Dialogue and cooperation”

- Whenever possible, dialogue should be pursued for issues related to the objectives of the national collaboration. HIV/AIDS is an additional dialogue issue. Cooperation with multilateral organisations is the primary type of cooperation. Twinning arrangements and other forms of bilateral cooperation may be considered in a few cases.

Burma

“Sweden’s activities within the EU”

- Sweden, together with countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines, initiated a project aimed at increasing dialogue and knowledge of HIV/AIDS;
- the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) contributes to a dialogue about issues such as human rights, education and culture

India 2005 to 2009

- Sweden will play an active role within the scope of its Policy on Global Development in order to pursue a dialogue with India and Indian society on various levels relating to selected dialogue areas, such as democracy and human rights, the environment and science and technology.
- New instruments and new actors will gradually become relevant in development cooperation. Sida's role will change. Sida will support processes and initiatives taken by other stakeholders. Sida's role will be more limited than today. Sida's work will be focused on evaluation, the preliminary phase of new programmes/initiatives with new actors and on a few selected dialogue issues.

Iraq 2004–2006

- It is difficult to assess how tensions between different groups, which were created or repressed during Saddam Hussein's regime, will be expressed in the future. Development cooperation should be attentive to discrimination tendencies and actively take part in dialogue to prevent these.

"6.2.3. Dialogue issues within the framework of development cooperation"

- Within the framework of development cooperation and international donor coordination, Sweden should encourage an active dialogue on Swedish core issues such as good governance, human rights with a special focus on the rights of women and children, gender equality issues, vulnerable groups, the role of civil society, ownership issues and other issues that are emphasised within respective areas of cooperation. The Swedish resource base, including the Iraqi diaspora, is an important asset for supporting Swedish positions in dialogue contexts.

"Coordination with the country's authorities"

- To ensure Iraqi ownership, contacts should include dialogue on how Swedish development aid should be designed to meet Iraq's priorities.

"Democratic governance"

- Support through the fund facility gives access to central forums for dialogue on human rights issues.

Kenya 2004–2008

- Development cooperation should focus on democratic governance and human rights, gender equality, popular participation and co-determination. The following three points state how this focus will be achieved:
 - Dialogue on all levels, both politically and within the programmes.
 - Integration of principles for democratic governance in all programmes.
 - Direct support for measures that encourage democratic governance to strengthen the rights of the poor and encourage necessary reforms.
- The following subjects are particularly important for Sweden in the dialogue. They are closely related and reinforce and complement one another:

- Equality, including
 - growth with a distribution policy that benefits the poor
 - gender equality, with particular focus on women's right to co-determination, land, property and other productive resources.
- Sustainable management of natural resources.
- Children's rights.
- Implementation and national priority setting of measures to fight HIV/AIDS.

Kosovo 2005–2006

“General considerations for Swedish development cooperation with Kosovo”

- Measures against corruption shall be stressed in the dialogue with all actors in Kosovo.
- Corruption, gender equality and the environment have been identified as dialogue issues that are to be given extra attention in the dialogue between Sweden and its partners.
- Sweden already has a leading role in the gender equality debate in Kosovo by being an active dialogue partner in contacts with both local actors and with the international community.

Croatia 2004–2006

The country strategy does not focus on any dialogue issues.

Laos 2004–2008

- The lack of political reforms, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Laos are the most important dialogue issues in the cooperation work between Laos and Sweden. Sweden will give priority in the dialogue to issues concerning:
 - Increased respect for human rights
 - Democratic governance with a focus on increased transparency and the possibility of accountability, including corruption control within public administration.
 - Application of the rule of law with a focus on ensuring the independence of the judiciary and the right to an impartial trial.
 - Rights-based rural development.
 - Improving the quality of compulsory education.
 - The need to pay greater attention to HIV/AIDS.
- Progress in social and economic reforms has been clear yet limited. The Laotian Government's desire for reform is not completely clear. Sweden will continue to focus on these issues in bilateral dialogue with Laos.
- Increased emphasis will be placed on issues concerning reforms related to human rights. In its dialogue Sweden will focus on these issues to an even greater degree than previously, as well as on the premises for political reforms.
- The lack of a clear desire from the government regarding the reform of the legal system is a problem for the project and should be addressed in the dialogue with Laos.
- Since Laos' government signed the UN conventions for civil and political rights as well as for economic, social and cultural rights, Sweden has engaged Laos in a dialogue about human rights during

the strategy period. This dialogue has been rewarding and has contributed to the government formulating a work plan aimed at ratifying the conventions.

Mali 2004–2006

- The Swedish bilateral development cooperation with Mali shall strive to:
 - provide strategic project support, where appropriate through multilateral channels (multilateral cooperation). The project instrument should mainly be used I)..., II)..., III) as leads to dialogue.
 - actively use dialogue as a means for improved mutual comprehension.

“Areas of cooperation and intermediate goals”:

- in dialogue on all levels promoting the significance of the equal rights of women, men, girls and boys.

“Poverty-focused and sustainable growth”

- The importance of safeguarding women’s potential to achieve such growth should in particular be emphasised in dialogue.
- Given that the conditions in the guidelines for forms of support are met, Sweden shall advocate sustainable, increased growth and implementation of Mali’s PRSP through dialogue and continued budget support.

“Democratic governance and social development”

- To prevent an increase in the HIV/AIDS epidemic Sida will explore which opportunities, in addition to dialogue, can be found to support strategic interventions to prevent the spread of HIV.

“4.5 Dialogue issues”

- The currently limited Swedish presence in the region and in Mali entails certain difficulties in monitoring and pursuing political dialogue on a high level. The embassy in Dakar, Senegal, is responsible for monitoring Mali. The exchange at ministerial level between Sweden and Mali has increased in recent times. During the strategy period, dialogue will continuously be pursued on comprehensive developmental issues, on both the sector and project levels. In the dialogue with Mali’s government, Sweden should particularly address the following issues:
 - Significance of democracy, including combating corruption, and respect for, protection of and provision for human rights, especially the rights of girls and women
 - Significance of eliminating obstacles that prevent poor people from participating in the economy
 - Significance of improved donor coordination of sector programme and budget support to the country’s PRSP
 - Significance of preventing HIV/AIDS
 - Significance of regional cooperation and integration, especially within the framework of ECOWAS

On the programme and project level the following issues should particularly be addressed:

- Access of girls and women to power, security and opportunities
- Significance of preventing HIV/AIDS
- Significance of the fact that the initiative is conflict -sensitive

“Volume, Swedish capacity, implementation and follow-up”:

- Sida’s annual country plan for development cooperation with Mali shall state how the adopted strategy will be implemented on an annual basis. A detailed dialogue plan will also be formulated in connection with this process.

Republic of Moldova 2004–2006

“Democratic governance”:

- Networking and knowledge sharing between departments and organisations within cultural and social life should be encouraged in order for the parties in dialogue to create an understanding of democratic culture and to advocate democratic structures.

Namibia 2004–2008

“4.3 Dialogue with partner”

- Dialogue is an important instrument for Swedish development cooperation. In this phase when Sweden is phasing out gift aid to Namibia and at the same time wishing to nurture and broaden relations with the country, dialogue will be an increasingly important tool. The purpose of dialogue during the strategy period is to ensure Namibian ownership of the development projects and to help to ensure that allocation of Swedish funds remains in line with Namibia’s priorities. When the strategy process began a dialogue was initiated at a high political level addressing how Swedish-Namibian relations could be broadened. The dialogue will continue during the country strategy period both in Sweden and in Namibia.
- The primary partner for development cooperation is Namibia’s National Planning Commission Secretariat (NPCS). A continued dialogue with other parties, such as the line ministries and other implementing organisations, is also important, especially during the first few years of the strategy period. The embassy has developed a format for this dialogue, mainly focused on possible sustainability of the different programmes and projects that until now gained support from Sweden. The aim is that the dialogue will be broadened later to also include opportunities for other forms of cooperation.
- The political dialogue with Namibia is targeted at poverty reduction, eradication of HIV/AIDS, and relevant issues that apply to democratic governance. Sweden pursues a dialogue with several different representatives and decision-makers on different levels in Namibia, within both the government and civil society. Regular donor meetings, sector reviews, and other essential consultations are important forums for dialogue, as are meetings with the Heads of Mission from the EU.

“HIV/AIDS”

- Sweden should also pursue the HIV/AIDS issue in the dialogue with the government, multilateral organisations, other donors and partners.

“International courses”

- Implementation of this country strategy shall take place in continuous dialogue with the Namibian government, including through the joint working group.

“Financial and administrative aspects”

- At the same time as the Swedish development cooperation is to be consolidated and phased out, extensive effort will be devoted to dialogue and communication between various partners in Sweden and Namibia.

Russia 2005–2008

The strategy addresses neither the dialogue perspective nor communication aspects of development cooperation.

Serbia and Montenegro 2004–2007

The dialogue is not used as a central tool for achieving development targets in the country strategy.

African Great Lakes Region 2004–2008

Rwanda

“3.5.5. Dialogue issues”

- A detailed dialogue strategy shall be included in the annual country plans. Consultation will take place with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs pertaining to formulation of the dialogue strategy. Sweden shall bilaterally and within the EU conduct a dialogue with a focus on the implementation and follow-up of the poverty reduction strategy, HIV/AIDS, peace and reconciliation, democracy, human rights and issues of a regional nature, especially the conflict situation.

Democratic Republic of Congo

“Experiences of Swedish development cooperation”

- Sweden gave financial aid to the Inter-Congolese dialogue that led to the final peace agreement in December 2002.
- In the dialogue with the DRC Sweden shall work to convince people to recognise HIV/AIDS as a serious obstacle to poverty reduction and development and that the fight against HIV/AIDS should constitute one of the cornerstones of the DRC’s poverty reduction strategy.
- Overall, Swedish support has helped to alleviate the effects of violence, normalise life for parts of the population, protect vulnerable groups and encourage dialogue among different actors.

“Peaceful development, safety, security and reconciliation”

- Work on peace and reconciliation will need to continue. Sweden’s initiatives to support peaceful development, safety, security and reconciliation shall promote dialogue and conflict management, which may occur, for example, through support to the media and through international and national organisations.

“4.5.5. Dialogue issues”

- Sweden shall bilaterally and within the EU advocate dialogue with a focus on the peace and reconciliation process as well as the formulation and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy. Within the

framework of these dialogue areas it is particularly important to bring up the safeguarding of democracy and human rights, especially the rights of women and children, integration of returning refugees and demobilised soldiers, fighting HIV/AIDS and the need for a functioning legal system. Dialogue shall also address regional issues. The annual country plans shall include a dialogue strategy.

Burundi

“Experiences of Swedish development cooperation”

- Examples of initiatives include legal aid for prisoners, training for members of parliament, initiatives to create dialogue between different ethnic groups and efforts to establish contacts between rebels and the government.
- Despite the difficult security situation in the country it has been possible to implement most of the initiatives and help to alleviate the effects of the conflict, protect people’s lives and encourage dialogue among different groups in society.../.../. Seminars to promote dialogue among ethnic groups have been carried out.

“Design”

- In the dialogue with Burundi, Sweden shall work to convince people to recognise HIV/AIDS as a serious obstacle to poverty reduction and development and that the fight against HIV/AIDS should constitute one of the cornerstones of Burundi’s poverty reduction strategy.
- The need for peace and reconciliation initiatives remains. Sweden’s initiatives to support peaceful development, safety, security and reconciliation shall encourage dialogue and conflict management.

“5.5.5. Dialogue issues”

- An elected government should mean new opportunities for dialogue between Burundi and the international community. A brief dialogue strategy will be included in the annual country plans. The dialogue strategy shall take into consideration the fact that Sweden does not have a permanent presence in Burundi. Sweden shall bilaterally and within the EU advocate dialogue with a focus on the peace and reconciliation process, democracy and human rights, as well as regional issues.

South Africa 2004–2008

Resources have been allocated for an intensified dialogue on various issues and areas of cooperation.

Under Sweden’s transformed development programme, ownership will be shared between South African and Swedish partners. This will necessarily involve a new role for Sida in Stockholm and for the Swedish embassy in Pretoria as regards dialogue with the various stakeholders on cross-cutting issues.

This dialogue will include existing and potential partners and must focus increasingly on capacity development. Funding for this purpose should be made available in the various partnerships.

Turkey 2005–2009

- The EU commission recommends intensified dialogue between the EU’s institutions and Member States and Turkey in several areas, and that civil society shall play an important role in this dialogue.

“Support human rights”

- Sweden has conducted an active dialogue and built up a well functioning collaboration process that can serve as a platform for continued dialogue. This dialogue is to pursue important issues such as the rule of law and human rights, particularly with a focus on the rights of women, minorities and people with disabilities.

Ukraine 2005–2008

- Support for and implementation of the extensive reform programme should constitute a central element in the dialogue on development cooperation.

Vietnam 2004–2008

- Higher demands have been placed on dialogue issues, particularly in Sweden’s high-priority areas. The increased number of aid donors has made it possible to collaborate, but this also requires improved coordination capacity from both the aid donors and the Vietnamese government.
- In order to make progress a policy dialogue needs to be pursued regularly in several areas, some of which can be considered sensitive on the Vietnamese side. However, this will require higher capacity than is now available at the embassy or at Sida. Therefore the level of objectives needs to be reformulated for development cooperation with Vietnam and procedures and methods adapted so that Sweden’s specific comparative advantages in Vietnam are retained, while taking advantage of opportunities for partnership with others to achieve the objectives of Sweden’s aid. The existing programme is dominated by several rather complex bilateral programmes in sensitive areas with high ambitions for conducting dialogue. This form of partnership has often been based on the assumption that there is a “special relationship” between Sweden and Vietnam. Unless capacity increases, however, the conclusion will be that the level of objectives must be lowered in a few difficult areas of reform. The dialogue and project portfolio has been evaluated and considered in the analysis of results.
- A basic premise for dialogue and measures should be to use the Vietnamese ordinance on grassroots democracy for the population’s participation in public issues. Such an approach will be further strengthened, particularly in upcoming poverty reduction programmes. Sweden shall encourage the rights perspective in its dialogue in general, as well as in its development cooperation with Vietnam.

Sweden should give priority in its policy dialogue to issues involving human rights, land rights, HIV/AIDS, the right to the best possible healthcare and a sustainable allocation of resources that benefits the poor.

West Bank and Gaza (Palestine) March–Dec 2005

“8. Dialogue issues with the Palestinians”

- Sweden should play an active role in the dialogue with the Palestinians – both within the official structure and in civil society – and with other aid donors relating to how aid best can interact with other actors to achieve the goals that have been set, especially in light of the violence on both sides that complicates and hinders the implementation of development activities. Swedish dissociation from violence toward the civilian population should be actively promoted regardless

of the source of violence. Special attention should be devoted to the following issues:

- reform of the Palestinian administration, in a direction towards increased efficiency, greater transparency and greater citizen influence
 - corruption within all areas of cooperation
 - the role of development aid in promoting conditions for a two-state solution and avoiding participation in measures that have a permanent effect, such as the consequences of the separation barrier
 - donor coordination
- Dialogue issues related to development cooperation shall be handled in consultation with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Appendix D – Template for Communication Strategy

Introduction

- Description of the overall objective(s) of the project/programme.
- What role will communication play in the project/programme?
- Explain why it is important to prepare a project/programme-specific Communication Plan.

Analysis of present situation

- Description of all stakeholders involved and related to the project/programme.
- Which are the basic preconditions that will affect communication related to the project/programme (this analysis needs to include both internal/inside and external/outside communication).
- For on-going projects, an analysis of the existing communication (incl. possible problems and opportunities) should be included.

Target groups

- Includes the identification of the most important and (for the project/programme) relevant stakeholders. Out of these, the “target groups” for the communication activities will be selected.

Communication goals

- Description of the aims and overall objectives of this Communication Strategy.

Overall message(s)

- Description of the overall message(s) that needs to be transferred to the target group(s).

Methods

- Describes the different methods that will be used in order to reach the communication goals. These will later be further concretised into activities in the Action Plan.

Time frame

- Describes the time frame for which the Communication Strategy shall apply (part of, or whole, project period with regular and periodic revisions).

Limitations

- Which are the limitations of this Communication Strategy? It is important to limit the planned communication to the objectives, areas and target groups that are prioritised for the project/programme.

Monitoring

- How can we assure that the communication plan is put into effect and how do we follow up and measure results? (important to appoint a person/function as responsible for the follow up of the Communication Strategy, as well as for the various activities included in the Action Plan)

Action Plan

Communication goal (as expressed in the communication strategy)	Target group Should be an entire, or part of, the identified target group (expressed in the communication strategy)	Activity Concrete description of the planned activity within the framework of the project (should be related to the expressed communication goal)	Message(s) What is/are the main message(s) that should be communicated?	Expected result(s) Concrete description of expected outcome and result(s)	Time frame Specification of the time and duration of the planned activity	Responsibility Responsible person/function for the implementation and follow-up of the activity	Cost Estimated costs reserved for the activity (financial and/or human resources)

Appendix E – Sida's Guidelines for Planned Communication

1. Why planned communication?

Planned communication can – when adequately used – facilitate the management of dialogue in projects/programmes. It can also help us foresee and take preventive action against communication problems that otherwise might occur and jeopardise Sida's contributions.

Planned communication has been defined as the “systematic and creative activity in which information, attitudes, emotions, and ideas are managed, to be exchanged and transmitted via specific messages through specific channels.”¹⁷ This exercise is also described as “the defining of objectives and actions (for communication) with selected target groups during a specified period of time and with a certain economic frame”.¹⁸

Dialogue is essential for creating good relations between different stakeholders. Building and maintaining good relations are prerequisites for achieving a *high level of goal fulfilment* in any development project. In order to secure a good dialogue, communication needs to be *planned* in all phases of the management of Sida's contributions.

Information or communication?

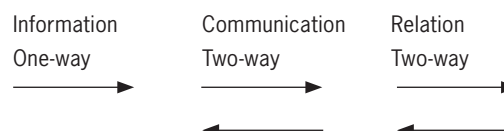
Communication – or dialogue – is normally required to build and maintain good relations with key stakeholders. On the other hand, in certain situations *information* is sufficient or even preferred (e.g. for sending out well-defined messages to certain target groups). If applied appropriately, communication and information are both useful tools that complement each other.

In Sida's management of contributions, however, focus should be on *planned communication*, both as a means to achieve higher goal fulfilment and as a lubricant in the pursuit of good dialogue with key stakeholders. By using planned communication as a systematic tool in contribution management, activities will become more structured and focused and therefore have a higher probability of contributing to the project's overall objectives.

Using communication as *a means of building relations* with and between key stakeholders in a project/programme can be illustrated as follows:

¹⁷ S. Windahl, B. Signitzer and J.T. Olson; “Using Communication Theory”, Sage 1992.

¹⁸ P. Eriksson; “Planerad kommunikation” (Planned Communication), Liber 2002.



Information is when the sender gives/sends a message to a receiver (one-way). *Communication* is when there is a possibility for two-way exchange of messages and when the receiver has the possibility of reacting back to the sender. A *relation* exists between two communicating parties when there is a connection between the two, e.g. when values are shared and/or when the overall objectives are of mutual interest and benefit.

2. Planned communication in the management of Sida's contributions

The role of Sida's staff is to make the various key stakeholders, involved in a project/programme supported by Sida, aware of possible communication needs, i.e. communication *problems* and *opportunities* that might exist in a particular project/programme. Sida should always make sure to promote and raise awareness of communication aspects in our contributions, even though it is *the project owner/manager* that must make the decision to embark on a communication-planning process.

Planned communication should be considered and *included from the very beginning of the contribution (project) cycle*. It is of utmost importance to include communication aspects already in the early preparatory phases of a project (and in the official project document).

Planned communication is a strategic tool in both initial- and in-depth preparations of a project/programme. Properly used, it will contribute significantly to make activities more focused during the implementation and follow-up of a contribution's agreement phase.

Listed below are some specific considerations that have to be made in each phase of the contribution cycle:

2.1 Initial preparations

In the very initial stages of a project-proposal process, Sida's staff will have to make an initial estimation/evaluation of the project owner's capacities, as well as of other key stakeholders involved. This first evaluation of the main stakeholders should also include an appreciation of their capacity to communicate with other stakeholders.

The question to ask here is:

- Does the proposed project owner have the necessary dialogue capacity vis-à-vis other key stakeholders, or *can this capacity be acquired or built?*

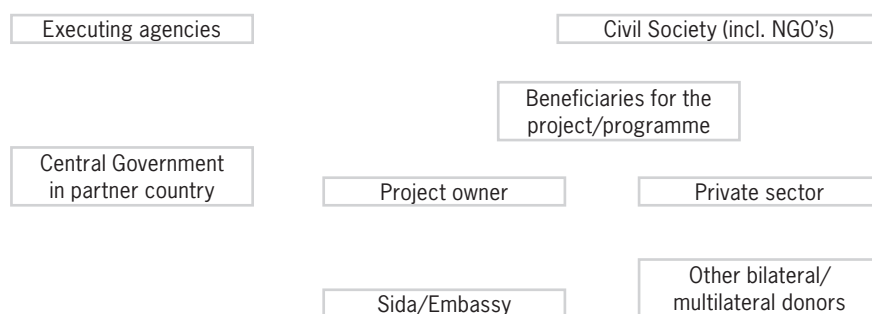
FIRST STEP: Making a communication-needs analysis

Communication planning is normally divided in two steps. The first one includes an *analysis of existing and future communication needs* in a specific project/programme. Each phase of the contribution cycle implicates different needs and purposes for using planned communication.

The process, described below, will lead to the articulation of appropriate measures (actions) that will meet the identified – and specified – needs.

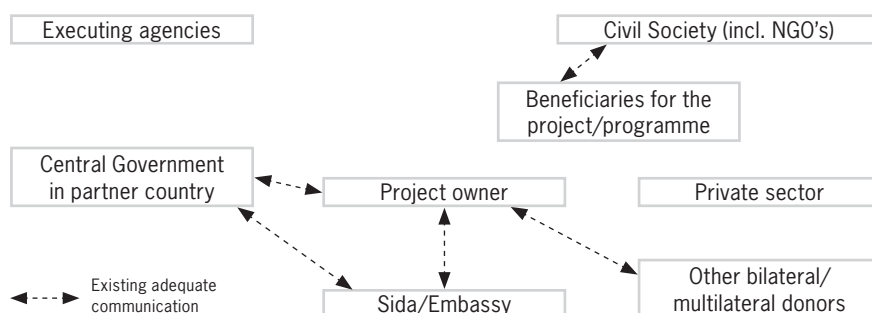
- a) *Map all important stakeholders* included in the project proposal.
This mapping should include both existing and future stakeholders.

Mapping of stakeholders (example)



- b) *Review the existing communication* between the identified stakeholders in order to see if relations and on-going communication between the considered stakeholders is adequate and sufficient or if there are communication gaps that will have to be filled or dealt with.

Mapping of stakeholders and existing communication (example)

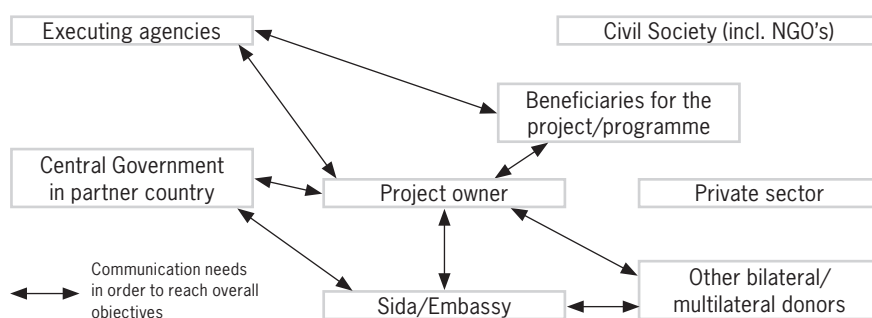


2.2 In-depth preparations

If a project/programme has been approved by Sida after the initial preparations of the contribution cycle, a more thorough analysis of the stakeholders and the communication aspects is needed. This deeper analysis will be made during the in-depth preparations phase.

- c) Identify which stakeholders need to have good communication with each other in order for the project to run smoothly and in order to reach the project's overall objectives.

Analysing stakeholders and identifying communication needs (example)



3. Dealing with the identified communication needs

SECOND STEP: Dealing with the identified communication needs and gaps

When communication needs and possible gaps have been identified, it is time to identify and specify appropriate measures/actions that will address the previously identified needs/gaps. This will also help the project owner – and other stakeholders in the project – to plan communication activities and start building up (communication) capacities that will be required for this process.

3.1 Planning communication in a project

The process of analysing and planning communication in relation to a project or programme should include the following activities:

- a) Analysis and mapping of present and potential key stakeholders for the project/programme.
- b) Identification of communication needs, constraints or gaps between the various stakeholders involved.
- c) Has communication or information activities been accounted for or included in the planning by the project owner or any other stakeholder?
- d) If existing communication meets the identified needs, there may be no need for additional communication planning supported by Sida.
- e) If the present communication is not sufficient for achieving the overall goals, Sida should make suggestions on how to include and/or improve communication. These suggestions could include the following:
 - Creation of a forum for co-ordination and dialogue between key stakeholders.
 - Make key stakeholders aware of present deficiencies in communication, i.e. communication needs that have not been identified or targeted previously.
 - Propose a seminar in communication with external technical support (consultant or expert in communication).
 - Propose the *elaboration of a project/programme-specific communication plan*.
 - Estimate and set aside financial and human resources in the project/programme budget for communication activities (e.g. specified in the project document).
 - Offer further capacity building in communication.
 - Seek support from Sida/INFO or from Sida's communication officer and/or seek support from an external consultant in communication.

3.2 Signing of agreement

There are certain aspects of communication that should be considered in connection with the signing of an agreement.

- Obtain good visibility for the project/programme
- Promote transparency
- Increase participation
- Increase public support and awareness

3.3 Agreement phase

- a) Make sure that communication aspects are always included in the monitoring and follow-up of the contribution. This is particularly important in monitoring reports and reviews etcetera.
- b) *If a communication plan does exist* and communication problems occur, Sida has to make the project owner aware of these problems and discuss how they best can be managed (in joint review meetings etcetera).
- c) *When a communication plan does not exist* and communication problems occur, Sida should recommend the project owner to prepare a *project-specific communication plan*, possibly with support from the embassy's (Sida's) communication officer, Sida/INFO or an external communication consultant.
- d) Make sure that the results and important lessons learned, expressed in monitoring reports etcetera. are communicated to key stakeholders in order to create awareness, knowledge and support for the project.

3.4 Retrospective follow-up

- a) Make sure that communication aspects are included in all retrospective follow-up and ex-post evaluations of the contribution.
- b) Disseminate the results and important lessons learned to all key stakeholders: co-operating partner(s), project owner(s), other donors, key target groups, civil society, press/media and other stakeholders.
- c) Communicate Sida's management responses to concerned parties and key stakeholders.
- d) Plan for how the results and lessons learned best can be used in future support and contributions to the particular project/programme or sector.

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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