

Sida Evaluations and Audits 2005

Lennart Peck
Katja Jassey
Lars Johansson



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

Sida Evaluations and Audits 2005

**Lennart Peck
Katja Jassey
Lars Johansson**

This publication can be downloaded from:
<http://www.sida.se/publications>

Authors: Lennart Peck, Katja Jassey, Lars Johansson.

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

UTV Working Paper 2006:4
Commissioned by Sida, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Date of Final Report: December 2006
Printed by Edita Communication AB, 2007
Art. no. SIDA33204en
ISBN 91-586-8269-4

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	5
2. General overview of evaluations undertaken 2005	6
3. UTV's evaluations and studies.....	9
3.1 Returning home: an evaluation of Sida's integrated area programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina	9
3.2 Turning policy into practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy	9
3.3 Sida's work with culture and media	10
3.4 Sida and the tsunami of 2004	10
4. Evaluations undertaken by Sida departments and embassies.....	11
4.1 General findings and conclusions according to Sida evaluation criteria	11
<i>Effectiveness</i>	12
<i>Impact</i>	12
<i>Relevance</i>	13
<i>Sustainability</i>	13
<i>Efficiency</i>	14
4.2 Results in relation to major Swedish development objectives	14
<i>Poverty</i>	15
<i>Democracy, good governance and human rights</i>	16
<i>Gender equality</i>	16
<i>Environment</i>	17
4.3 Sida's response to evaluation findings.....	17
5. Internal audit.....	19
5.1 Submitted audits 2005.....	19
<i>Sida's annual report 2004</i>	19
<i>Sida's bi-annual report 2005</i>	19
<i>Sida routines for on-line accounting at integrated embassies and for accounts at sections for development offices</i>	20
<i>Recruitment of Sida staff</i>	20
<i>Review of Sida's management and quality control of consultants' invoices</i>	20
5.2 Responses to earlier audits	20
Appendix 1. Sida evaluations 2005	21

Executive Summary

The Government's Letter of Instruction for 2005 requires that Sida submit a report regarding evaluations and audits undertaken during this year. This paper summarises conclusions and recommendations from 32 evaluations and 6 audits with Sida's management response (MR). Where the MR action plan has been implemented, it is reported here.¹

The majority of the evaluations undertaken in 2005 were evaluations of project support. In relation to the volume of support, Latin America and Eastern Europe accounted for more evaluations than Africa. Activities directed towards human rights, democracy, civil society, gender equality and post-conflict were evaluated more frequently than others.

Sida's Secretariat for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) were responsible for two of the evaluations published in 2005. Another 30 evaluations were commissioned by other Sida departments and Swedish embassies in partner countries.

Conclusions and recommendations in the latter group of evaluations were usually related to the specific project under review and so had limited relevance for other projects or areas.

The evaluations generally refer to OECD/DAC and Sida standard evaluation criteria: effectiveness, impact, relevance, efficiency and sustainability.

- In about half of the evaluations the level of *effectiveness* of the interventions was said to have been high.
- The analysis of the *impact* was usually limited to the immediate effects of an intervention, and, by OECD/DAC definitions, were strictly speaking outcome evaluations rather than impact evaluations. In approximately 50% of the reports the assessment was for most part positive.
- Relevance was discussed from different perspectives: in relation to stakeholder needs, priorities of Sida – and so on. Almost two thirds of the reports conclude that the evaluated projects was been high in one or several respects.
- Two thirds of the evaluations discuss *sustainability*. Three main themes can be discerned in the assessments: financial aspects of sustainability, sustainability and capacity building and the importance of staff continuity for sustainability.
- Though none of the evaluations include a more detailed *efficiency* analysis, about two thirds of them do comment to some extent on the relation between inputs/cost of inputs and results. The observations are quite mixed and only a handful of the assessments are clearly positive..

Most of the reports discuss results in relation to poverty reduction, but usually, not comprehensively. On a broader view of poverty reduction, most of the evaluated programmes were seen to be relevant. Provided that the programmes achieved their goals, most of them would have a potential to contribute to poverty reduction.

¹ When this report was written Management responses had been completed, or were about to be completed, for about half of the evaluations and all the audits. In most cases, the management response follows closely the recommendations made in the evaluation report.

According to Sida's internal auditors Sida's annual and bi-annual reports were satisfactory. Audits of accounting systems at embassies and section offices as well as an audit of recruitment of staff resulted in recommendations for improvement. The reports have been presented to Sida's Board, along with plans for remedial action.

1. Introduction

The Government's Letter of Instruction to Sida requires that Sida submits a report regarding evaluations and audits undertaken during 2005. The report shall include a summary of important conclusions and recommendations as well as an account of Sida's response to them.

This report is divided into four main sections. The first section gives an overview of the reviewed evaluations. The second section presents the evaluations undertaken by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) along with the management responses to these. The third section highlights main conclusions from evaluations commissioned by Sida departments and embassies, and comments on Sida's responses to these. The fourth section reports on audits undertaken by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit.

2. General overview of evaluations undertaken 2005

The Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) is responsible for publishing all Sida's evaluations in a printed series, as well as on Sida's home page, *www.Sida.se*, but is not responsible the quality of any other evaluations than those commissioned by the department itself. During 2005 a total of 34 evaluations were published, two of which had been commissioned by UTV. For a complete list please see Appendix 1.

While these evaluations concern all the sectors and regions where Sida is active, they should not be regarded as a representative sample of development cooperation support through Sida; there is no explicit aim that evaluations shall correspond to the sector and distribution of development aid.

Many of the evaluation in the sample concern projects in the areas of democracy, gender equality, human rights and post conflict (se table below). These are projects that receive large volumes of support. Relatively much attention was also given to projects in the area of natural resources and environment, and to a lesser extent, infrastructure and economic cooperation.

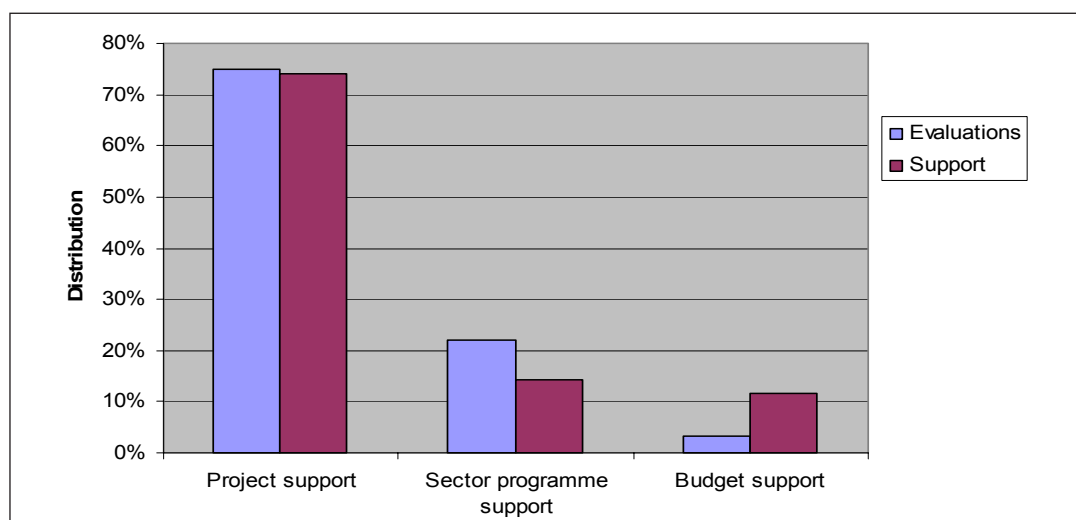
The table below shows evaluations per region and per sector.² The evaluations are indicated by their numbers in the Sida Evaluation series.

Number of evaluations per region and per sector

	Other	Europe + Russia	Latin America	Asia – ME	Africa	Number of evaluations
Democracy, human rights, gender equality and post conflict	27	9, 18	1, 3, 24, 25, 30		4, 14	10
Social development (health, education etc.)	21		26		5	3
NGO	2, 16, 32					3
Natural resources and environment		8, 15		6, 13, 34	12	6
Infrastructure, economic co-operation and urban development	22, 28, 29				7	4
Research			23	33	17	3
Budget support				10		1
Other	31		20			2
Number of evaluations	9	4	8	5	6	32

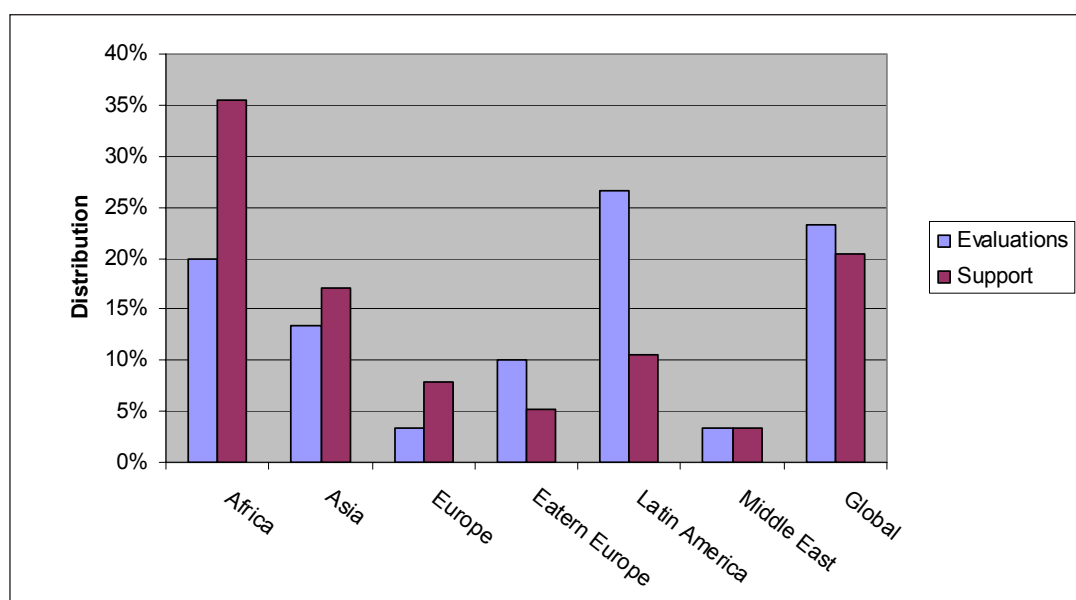
Most of the evaluations are concerned with project support; only one is an evaluation of budget support. However, during 2005 Sida has been involved in a larger international evaluation of budget support – to be published in 2006. The following diagram shows the distribution of the published evaluations 2005 and the actual disbursed support during the period 2001–2005.

² The table refers to evaluations in Sida's Evaluation series. Two in the series were translations of earlier evaluations. These have not been included..



Source, “Sida evaluation data worksheet” and data from Plus (Sida’s financial planning and follow up system).

There were relatively many evaluations of the collaboration with Latin American partners and partners in Eastern Europe, while comparatively few concerned cooperation with Africa.



Source, “Sida evaluation data worksheet” and data from Plus (Sida’s financial planning and follow up system).

In over half of the evaluations public sector organisations were responsible for the activities under review. In other cases Sida’s counterpart was an NGO or a research institution. There was no case of a private sector organisation being responsible for the evaluated activities (which is not to say that the private sector was never a major beneficiary of evaluated activities).

All the evaluation reports refer to one or several of Sida’s (and OECD/DAC’s) standard evaluation criteria: effectiveness, impact, relevance, efficiency and sustainability (see section 4 for an account of these criteria and their status in Sida). Most reports relate to the poverty reduction objective, but without being very specific. Crosscutting issues such as gender, human rights and the environment are discussed in evaluations of activities focussing on such issues, but they are not frequently discussed in other evaluations.

Roughly half of the evaluations were conducted at the end of a phase or end of the project, while 20% were mid-term reviews. The fact that hardly any of them were post-project evaluations has important implications for what they were able to report on impact and sustainability.

The average number of person-weeks for an evaluation was 12.4, including an average of 5.5 spent in the field. The average size of the evaluation team was 2.7. Forty percent of the evaluation teams included partner country/region representatives.³ Just over a third of the evaluators were women.

³ These figures do not include data for evaluations by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit. Their evaluations are generally more ambitious with larger teams and more time input.

3. UTV's evaluations and studies

Two evaluations were carried out by UTV in 2005, one on Sida's integrated area programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and one on Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy. Both were discussed at workshops and seminars at various stages of the process. This enabled interested parties from Sida and elsewhere, to discuss and comment on the evaluation design, the findings, as well as the conclusions and recommendations.

In addition to these two evaluations, UTV published four "Sida Studies in Evaluation", which comprises methodologically oriented studies.

Below are the main findings of UTV's evaluations, and Sida's response to them. Because management response to the evaluation of Sida's support to culture and media published 2004 was in 2005, we include this here. A brief account is given of a study on Sida and the tsunami of 2004 (published in the Studies in Evaluation series) as the recommendations were significant and prompted a management response.

3.1 Returning home: an evaluation of Sida's integrated area programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Integrated Area Programmes in Bosnia received some 1.2 billion SEK in support from Sida between 1995 and 2005. This provided support for the reconstruction of 14,806 private dwellings, which allowed over 50,000 displaced persons to return to their homes.

In its evaluation of this support UTV brought together different techniques and data sources (for example, an anthropological case-study and a statistical survey of the attitudes and opinions of returnees). The result is a comprehensive study of the Integrated Area Programmes. A main conclusion is that the assisted self-help approach has indeed achieved a high degree of sustainable return – people have come home. But there were negative findings too. For instance, no indication was found that the programmes contributed to reconciliation across ethnic lines. Moreover, they reported many social and economic challenges, not least the need for employment opportunities.

In its management response Sida notes that the report is interesting in that it makes room for the perceptions and opinions of the intended beneficiaries. This gives the reader a deepened knowledge of certain aspects of the IAP programme. Sida agrees with most of the reflections. However, it is Sida's opinion that assessment of the programme's economic sustainability suffers from a misunderstanding of the programme's role under different periods of its implementation.

3.2 Turning policy into practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy

As the title suggests, the evaluation primarily focused on Sida's internal performance with regard to its implementation of the Swedish international response to HIV/AIDS (Investing for Future Generations: IFFG). IFFG outlines a strategy according to which implications of HIV/AIDS on development, as well as possible entry-points for working with prevention or mitigation, shall be considered as an issue in all sectors and areas of Swedish development co-operation. To what extent, then, has Sida been able to fulfil such expectations?

Although generally appreciative of Sida's work with regard to HIV/AIDS, the evaluation noted a number of short-comings: implementation of the policy had been slow, directives and goals unclear, responsibility

dispersed, and staff resources insufficient. On a more general level, the evaluation found that the sheer number of policies in Sida poses an obstacle to their implementation: administrators find themselves overwhelmed by the number and complexity of instructions.

This profusion of policy documents has been a cause for concern for some years and management has taken steps to consolidate the hierarchy of policy documents. A shorter version of the IFFG policy will be produced that better reflects today's concern and activities. Sida's Management Group has discussed the organisational placement of the HIV/AIDS secretariat and a decision is about to be taken. Knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS will be raised at Sida Stockholm and in the field through seminars and workshops. A help desk has been established at Lund University to provide support.

3.3 Sida's work with culture and media

During 2005 Sida management responded to the evaluation *Sida's work with culture and media* published in 2004. The aim of this evaluation was to assess how culture and media support related to the multidimensional poverty concept. The evaluation judged the support relevant to poverty reduction and most interventions successful. However, the effect would be greater if project designs were more focused on this aim. Often, projects lack a strategy and formulation of objectives explaining just how they are to contribute to poverty reduction. The evaluation recommended that Sida's culture and media policy be revised, and formulated separately as one policy for culture and one for media.

Sida management agrees that the policy for culture and media needs revision – it shall better reflect a multidimensional poverty perspective. Management does not agree that two separate policies are required: culture and media share common objectives and approaches, and Sida, as explained above, intends to limit proliferation of policy documents. With the intention to improve project design and management, LFA as a management tool will be systematically introduced to partner organisations and implemented in project management.

The evaluation also caught the attention of Swedish media and, for some weeks, debate about the role of cultural and media activities in the fight against poverty was heated.

3.4 Sida and the tsunami of 2004

The tsunami disaster in December 2004 tested crisis preparedness. This study shows how Sida responded and offers proposals for how to handle even larger and more complicated crises in the future. It focuses on Sida's headquarters in Stockholm and the Swedish sponsored activities in Sri Lanka. Sida was seen to be able to respond quickly to major disasters, but suggests that experience from this one should be used to identify weak points in Sida's organisation. The report identifies the need for guidelines for department head responsibilities – for example, when would it be proper to call in staff? A system for rapid emergency assessment and warning in tandem with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other core Swedish agencies would facilitate national coordination for complex emergencies. Furthermore, the report recommends that Sida develop systems for compiling and disseminating information on experiences from emergency situations. Debriefing should be an automatic function.

Sida management response agrees that the system for management's actions in emergency situations shall be improved with clarifications of role and responsibilities. This shall be part of management training. A guideline for debriefing is going to be developed. Sida is of the opinion that the division of responsibility in emergency situations is already satisfactory. Furthermore, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has recently developed an organisational structure, which includes Sida for emergency situations. No further action is therefore needed in this respect. Neither is a system for gathering and providing information on experiences from emergency situation called for. Such information can already be obtained from international sources.

4. Evaluations undertaken by Sida departments and embassies

The vast majority of evaluations in 2005 were commissioned not by UTV but by other Sida departments and by Swedish embassies in partner countries. Apart from those published in Sida's evaluation series, many other reviews and monitoring reports are produced. However, these are not taken up here.

Evaluation reports are written first and foremost for the responsible Sida departments and for the local partners or implementers. Typically, the main objective is to furnish information on which Sida can base a decision on future funding and/or to suggest improvements to the programme. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons are for the most part project specific and relevant primarily for the management of a particular activity.

As the evaluations concern such a diverse set of activities, summarising findings and conclusions is difficult. The following discussion is based on a set of criteria commonly regarded as applicable to most kind of interventions. The results reported in the evaluations are also analysed in relation to poverty reduction and related objectives of Swedish development cooperation policy.

4.1 General findings and conclusions according to Sida evaluation criteria

In order to assess the merit or value of an intervention, five evaluation criteria have been recommended by the OECD/DAC and adopted by Sida as standard yardsticks: relevance, impact, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency. The evaluation reports often refer to these, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly. However, far from all of these criteria are applied in all evaluations: they may not be judged relevant, or – considering the time frame – feasible. Also, judging by those reviewed here, the criteria have anyway been interpreted differently in different evaluations.

Evaluation Criteria

- *Effectiveness*
The extent to which a development intervention has achieved its objectives, taking their relative importance into account.
- *Impact*
The totality of the effects of a development intervention, positive and negative, intended and unintended.
- *Relevance*
The extent to which a development intervention conforms to the need and priorities of target groups and the policies of the recipient country and donors
- *Sustainability*
The continuation or longevity of benefits from a development intervention after the cessation of development assistance.
- *Efficiency*
The extent to which the costs of a development intervention can be justified by its results, taking alternatives into account.

Sida's Evaluation Policy states that these questions should always be considered when Sida initiates an evaluation. They are not compulsory, but none of them should be set aside without a tentative assessment of their bearing on the evaluation.

Source: "Looking back moving forward – Sida evaluation manual", Sida 2004.

Effectiveness

In about half of the evaluations, the level of effectiveness of the interventions is, by and large, said to have been high. Reference is then usually made to the achievement of output, less commonly to outcome and only rarely to final impact. Even though there is a certain tendency to assume that overall objectives are fulfilled, it should be recalled that effectiveness at output level is no guarantee for effectiveness at the levels of outcome or impact. For example, a project with a capacity strengthening component may reach training targets, but if then trained staff moved on to other jobs, the expected outcome would not be reached. So, the project was effective in output, but, as it turned out, less so in terms of outcome and impact.

About a third of the reports conclude that effectiveness was poor or mixed, for example, that some project goals had been fulfilled while others not. In a few reports, the evaluators point out that in order to evaluate, the original objectives must be clearly defined.

Impact

The analyses of impact are usually limited to the immediate effects of an intervention. Impact at a societal level, what might be defined as development impact, is often difficult to ascertain, both for theoretical and practical reasons. Overall, when it comes to impact in terms of reduced poverty and inequalities etc. the assessment made in the reports are often conjectural and mainly ‘theory-based’. In many cases there is a shortage of evidence for more precise assessments.

For example, *in what difference has it made? Review of the Development Cooperation Programme between the South African Police Service and the Swedish National Police Board (05/14)* the evaluators are able to verify an impact in terms of improved staff and human management, but the evaluators also highlight the difficulty of corroborating any linkages between this and the declining crime rates, the decreased number of escapes from police custody, the reduction of attacks on police etc. that has taken place after the initiation of this programme. The evaluation *Programa “Acceso” en el sector de salud de Honduras (05/26)* on the other hand, states that the intervention has led to institutional capacity building resulting in improved access to health services and, ultimately, in improved health.

Keeping in mind that the impact assessments may refer to different things – immediate outcome in some cases and more distant effects in others – about half of the reports make a generally positive assessment of impact. In the other half, the general assessment is neither very positive nor negative, often pointing at some positive achievements but less than could reasonably have been expected. A couple of evaluations come to the conclusion that there has been no or very low impact. This is the case for some of the environment projects, for example *Phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances in the Solvent Sector in China (05/06)*, *District Heating Projects in Latvia and Russia (05/08)* and *Swedish EPA’s Cooperation with Environmental Authorities in North West Russia and Transboundary Water Issues (05/15)*.

Side effects are rarely discussed. However, there are a few evaluations that point at unexpected positive impacts. For example, in the farmer group empowerment project in Zambia (05/12) the evaluator notes how the farmers have taken up the issue of HIV/AIDS. Another example is the health programme in Honduras (05/26) which was found to have generated ideas for local development projects outside the health sector as such.

In one report the potential risk for negative side effects is identified, *General or Selective Intervention? Sida’s Partnership Programmes in Chile and South Africa (05/22)*. The evaluators here note the potential risk for market disturbances inherent in the project set-up.

Relevance

A general observation is that reports discuss relevance from diverse perspectives: stakeholder needs and priorities, national policies and strategies, technical solutions chosen, policies and priorities of Sida, how the activity fits with those of other donors, etc. Taking this into account, almost two thirds of the reports assess relevance favourably. The projects “fulfil a need”, are “pertinent”, or “appreciated” by the stakeholders.

For the remaining third, assessments are mixed. It is not uncommon that projects have several components of which some, but not others, are deemed relevant. In other cases the evaluators consider a project to match Swedish objectives whereas the actual design of the project is not considered to be fully appropriate for attaining these objectives. Generally speaking, the relevance of the interventions tends to be given a high ranking as far as development objectives are concerned but not always for strategies and activities. For example in the evaluation of the support to *El Apoyo Institucional a la Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia (05/03)* it was noted that whilst the initiatives were consistent with Swedish country objectives they were not fully in harmony with the existing strategic plan and macro processes. In *Swedish EPA's Cooperation with Environmental Authorities in North West Russia and Transboundary Water Issues (05/15)* it is unclear why the priority areas selected were judged those best suited to help fulfil the development objectives.

Only one project, the Sida's Partnership Programmes in Chile and South Africa (05/22), was found to be in more or less direct contradiction with a Sida policy (this was the policy for Private Sector development as well as other guiding documents on the subject matter).

Sustainability

Two thirds of the evaluations discuss sustainability. Some deal only with project and programme sustainability whilst others discuss the longer term effects of the interventions. Of the reports that assess sustainability, the balance is fairly equal between those presenting a mainly positive, a mixed/medium and a mainly negative assessment. As most evaluations relate to on going or recently terminated projects, they mainly discuss the prospects of future sustainability and factors contributing to, or against, this.

Main themes that can be discerned from the evaluations include finances, capacity building and dependency of staff. The question of local financing and if it will be possible to substitute aid funds with other sources is the most frequent issue. *Sida's Exchange Programme – Evaluation of its Pilot Phase (05/02)*, *Tranversalización del Enfoque de Género para el Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer: Apoyo de Asdi al Instituto Nacional de la Mujer (INAM) en Honduras (05/30)* and several other projects were all noted to be heavily dependent on Sida funding. In a few cases, the evaluations point at great dependence on Sida funding without necessarily presenting this as a problem.

Conclusions regarding capacity building usually indicate that the local partner has been strengthened, which enhanced its potential for sustainability. In *What difference has it made? Review of the Development Cooperation Programme between the South African Police Service and the Swedish National Police Board the co-operation with the South African police (05/14)* the emphasis on human resource management is, for example, said to have contributed to systems which will outlast the project.

The evaluations sometimes comment on the dependency on having staff (usually long-term advisers) specifically assigned to the project, such as in the *Swedish support to Urban Development and Housing in South Africa (05/07)* and the *Road Safety Project (05/29)*.

When it comes to the sustainability of impact the discussions are somewhat speculative as the future is difficult to predict. However, one of the few ex-post evaluations reviewed, *Phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances in the Solvent Sector in China (05/06)* came to the conclusion that the effects of the project had not

been sustainable. And this project had earlier, upon completion, been assessed positively – which testifies to the difficulties in assessing sustainability. Another example where the issue of sustainability was put into question was the evaluation of *Gender Projects in Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Ukraine: Projects Implemented by Språngbrädan (05/09)*. Although the activities had been found to be relevant in terms of the needs of the immediate stakeholders, the capacity and awareness that these stakeholders had gained had not translated into significant action and so the likelihood of sustained change was limited.

Efficiency

About two thirds of the reports comment, in some way, on the relation between input and results, though none of them include a detailed efficiency analysis. Reasons for this include that it is difficult to assign a value to output and outcomes, and also that there is a lack of basis for meaningful comparisons.

The evaluations also differ in what they relate costs to. Many of the evaluations discuss costs per output. For example in the evaluation of *Programa de Capacitación en Economía para Funcionarios de la República de Cuba (05/20)* the evaluators note that the training of Cuban economists was lower than that for many similar programmes. Other evaluations where efficiency is discussed in terms of output in relation to costs are *Integrating Natural Resource Management Capacity in Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Thailand (05/13)* and *The Swedish Environment Secretariat for Asia (05/34)*.

Swedish EPA's Cooperation with Environmental Authorities in North West Russia and Transboundary Water Issues (05/15) attempts to discuss different aspects of efficiency, noting that for this programme, the review of the administrative and financial management aspects came out well. However, if the concept of efficiency was to be broadened and include the generated results and effects, the assessment would have been less favourable.

A number of evaluations refer neither to output nor results but base their conclusions on a perception of different processes noting for example that a project appears well managed; the reporter then assumes that efficiency is high.

Almost half of the evaluations commenting efficiency are quite critical. For example, *Institutional Sustainability and Capacity Development within Sida Financed Road Safety Projects (05/29)* notes that scarce resources were possibly spread too thinly. In *El Apoyo Institucional a la Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia (05/03)* the evaluators reason that the dispersion and compartmentalization of the projects might have had a negative effect on how the resources are used. *Phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances in the Solvent Sector in China (05/06)* points at the high cost of international experts.

Only a handful of evaluations make clearly positive comments on efficiency. These include the evaluation of *Programa de Capacitación en Economía para Funcionarios de la República de Cuba (05/20)* and *Fortalecimiento de iniciativas populares de la sociedad civil por la paz en Colombia, 2002–2005: Apoyo de Asdi al programa de Consejería de Proyectos (PCS) (05/24)*, which both noted that there had been considerable effects for relatively little money.

4.2 Results in relation to major Swedish development objectives

Below follows a discussion on the evaluation findings with respect to the overarching objective of poverty reduction as well as four of the central component elements in the Policy for Global Development. Aspects related to the other central component elements appeared almost solely in evaluations where the programme was sector specific to economic development, social development, conflict and so forth and will therefore not be discussed here.

Poverty

Poverty was generally not defined or discussed by the evaluators in the same detail or terms of explanation used in Sida's Perspectives on Poverty or the Policy for Global Development. In most of the evaluations the concept of poverty was used without defining what this entailed in the specific context, so the conclusions below must be taken as tentative.

Most programmes evaluated were ranked as relevant, usually with reference to a problem or situation that could be related to poverty in a broader sense. This would indicate that most of the programmes were judged to have the potential to contribute positively to poverty reduction provided they were successful. However, analyses of the linkages between the actual programmes and poverty in the surrounding society are few and far apart. Based on the documentation in the evaluations it is therefore only possible to assume that most of the interventions have had a positive impact on poverty reduction.⁴

In a number of the programmes a more visible and tangible link to poverty reduction is made through the inclusion of target groups that are defined as, for example, grassroots (*The News Agency "Agencia Informativa Pulsar", 05/01*), urban poor, female-headed households, people living with HIV/AIDS (*Swedish Support to Urban Development and Housing in South Africa, 05/07*) small-scale farmer groups (*The Farmer Group Empowerment Component of the Land Management and Conservation Farming Programme in Zambia, 05/12*) and child soldiers (*Desmovilización y Reintegración de Niños Soldados en Colombia, 05/25*). The results of this targeting in terms of poverty reduction are difficult to assess and range from high relevance in relation to the target group's needs but unsuccessful implementation, (05/01) to highly successful programme less relevant in terms of disaggregating the target groups or reaching them all (05/07).

Programa "Acceso" en el sector de salud de Honduras (05/26) appears however to have had a direct impact on poor people's access to health services. The programme has contributed to increased access to these services, and the outcome is a reduction in morbidity and mortality from common diseases. One of many contributing factors here is the emphasis on outreach activities as well as the inclusion of communities in the planning and implementation of services.

Evaluation Approaches to Parliamentary Strengthening (05/27) covers a whole portfolio of support given to strengthen parliaments. This evaluation stands out as one of the few to discuss an alternative scenario given a stronger poverty reduction objective. The evaluators take note of the fact that most of the support has been 'event-driven' rather than 'objective-driven'. This has in turn had negative implications for the poverty reduction potential of the support. The evaluators state that the choice of partners (primarily international non-governmental organisations and the UNDP) as well as the emphasis on short-term interventions, such as, for example, conferences, along with programmes targeting administrative capacity, is not necessarily the most effective when it comes to dealing with poverty. It is suggested that greater attention should be paid to locally based partners who are able to understand and work with problems of a political nature in the relevant context rather than dealing primarily with problems of administration. It is also noted that there are comparatively fewer programmes that specifically target parliamentary involvement in poverty reduction efforts (for example budget processes or Poverty Reduction Strategies) than those that target gender equality, human rights and conflict mitigation.

The evaluation of *Institutional Sustainability and Capacity Development within Sida financed Road Safety Projects (05/29)* is another evaluation where poverty in a broad sense is highlighted as being pertinent to the pro-

⁴ There are a number of possible reasons for why the evaluators have not gone into details regarding poverty: the focus of the evaluation may have been on management and implementation issues, the time frame may not have permitted it or there may have been a lack of consideration to poverty in the project from the very beginning, making an evaluation of poverty impact difficult.

gramme in question, but where the programme activities' design in relation to this objective is questioned. The evaluators state that the cost of road accidents is greater than total global development aid, and that the brunt of these are within developing countries which only have 32% of all motor vehicles but over 75% of all accidents. Pedestrians are often victims and they are often poor. The evaluators note that a programme on road safety will have great benefits not only in terms of reducing costs at national level but also for the individuals who are the victims of these accidents. However, the evaluators conclude the programme has failed to address poverty aspects strategically and systematically.

Democracy, good governance and human rights

Where discussions on possible impact on poverty reduction were vague and of a somewhat general nature, the issues related to democracy, good governance and human rights were more clearly stated in objectives and related activities.

Components related to democracy, most often in terms of involvement and/or strengthening of civil society or the planning and service delivery capacity of public services could be noted in a wide range of programmes, for example *The News Agency "Agencia Informativa Púlsar"* (05/01), *Sida's Exchange Programme* (05/02), *Swedish Support to Urban Development and Housing in South Africa* (05/07), *Gender Projects in Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Ukraine: Projects Implemented by Språngbrädan* (05/09), and *The Farmer Group Empowerment (FGE) Component of the Land Management and Conservation Farming Programme in Zambia* (05/12).

Furthermore, specific components that explicitly involved awareness raising or creating an environment where human rights were recognised could also be found in such different programmes as (05/14) *What difference has it made? Review of the Development Cooperation Programme between the South African Police Service and the Swedish National Police Board* and (05/27) *Approaches to Parliamentary Strengthening: A Review of Sida's Support to Parliaments*.

It is not possible to state that support for democracy, good governance or human rights has been more or less successful than initiatives with other objectives. But judging by the evaluations published during 2005, it appears that these topics have been taken into consideration in a greater number of programmes than some of the other traditional so called cross-cutting issues. This could imply that there is a greater diversity of programmes or development initiatives that allow for the inclusion of – say – an angle of democratic development than, for example, management.

Gender equality

Two of the evaluated programmes were specifically targeting gender equality: *Gender Projects in Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Ukraine: Projects Implemented by Språngbrädan* (05/09) and *Tranversalización del Enfoque de Género para el Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer: Apoyo de Asdi al Instituto Nacional de la Mujer (INAM) en Honduras* (05/30). These two programmes had different approaches. In Honduras the programme aims at mainstreaming gender and implementing the National Policy for Women and the Plan of Equal Opportunities through the National Institute for Women. According to the evaluation it has reached important and strategic results in the five sectors of the policy: health, violence against women, economy and poverty, education and communication, and social and political participation. The ownership is high as both the policy and plan are nationally grounded and the implementing partner is a national body. The projects implemented by Språngbrädan are, on the other hand, based on the experiences and methods of the Swedish consultants and do not include activities at national level. It can be noted that the projects have mainly tried to establish networks of, for example, female politicians or female business entrepreneurs (and in one case a men's group) in order to empower the members of these networks. This has been successful at individual level but the evaluation cannot establish if it has trans-

lated into action that would have an impact at a more structural level. None of the evaluations discuss links to poverty reduction in any depth and in the case of Språngbrädan, the immediate target group is better-off women which seems to indicate an assumption that women, poor and rich, share the same agenda.

Besides the two evaluations mentioned above, gender issues could be found in a wide range of programmes which would suggest that awareness of gender and the necessity to include this dimension has been relatively successful in terms of mainstreaming. However, it is difficult to discern a pattern of where, when, how and why the programmes have been successful in terms of more equitable gender relations. The evaluations seldom present an in-depth discussion of the issue. Also, without reference to social, political or economic context that explain what gender inequality looks like in the surrounding society it becomes difficult to draw any conclusions as regards the relevance of chosen activities for men and women and how much they have contributed to change.

Environment

Five of the evaluations reviewed concern environmental programmes. In none of the other evaluations was it possible to find a discussion regarding environmental impacts or aspects of the programme. Some of the evaluations concerning environmental programmes touched upon the issue of global common goods (explicitly or implicitly): they took up such concerns as green house gases, ozone depletion and pollution of the sea.

The objectives of the environmental programmes are generally assessed as highly relevant by the evaluators. There was however some question about how the goals were translated into strategies, and finally activities to achieve these objectives. This means that despite the high relevance of the objectives, the assessments of these programmes did not turn out equally favourably. Two of the programmes had very low impact, results were somewhat mixed in the other two, and only one programme was assessed as quite successful.

Ownership of the collaborating partner along with an understanding of the local institutional and cultural context stood out as a make or break factor in terms of successful implementation and possible impact of the environmental programmes.

4.3 Sida's response to evaluation findings⁵

Before discussing Sida's response to the evaluations, it may be useful to bear in mind that these responses are often initiated by departments and field units. They are usually intended to serve as an input in the project and programme planning cycle. When a new phase is being considered, Sida and the counterpart both need to know how things went and what can be done better. The focus of the evaluation, including choice of questions to be addressed, evaluation design and methods, will depend on who commissions the evaluation and for what purpose.

As noted above, most of the evaluations are project evaluations and the recommendations are typically project and programme specific. It is hence difficult to summarise the recommendations in any meaningful way. They include recommendations to revise the project objectives, include more stakeholders, change the management structure, add/remove components and so on. Recommendations are often of an operational and management character, and frequently imply a redesign of projects to make them more focused on main project objectives.

⁵ How partner organisations, consultants and other stakeholders have responded to the evaluations is not part of this review.

In the following, the response to 28 of the 30 evaluations produced by Sida departments is discussed⁶ A formal management response (MR) is available for 11 of these evaluations. For another 5 evaluations the intention is to produce a MR, but as yet this has not been concluded. In 12 cases there is no plan to produce a formal MR document.⁷ In most cases the evaluations have been considered useful and important inputs into the project and programme planning cycle regardless of whether a formal MR document has been produced or not.

The MRs reviewed seem generally to go along with the recommendations of the evaluations, but not always. The format and the quality of the MRs varies substantially between different Sida departments. A recent review of Sida's MR system found implementation of the system to be slow and uneven.⁸ In some cases an action plan specifies dates and a person or unit as responsible for each action, in others the MR is vague, basically restating the recommendations from the evaluations.

A management response is, despite occasional shortcomings, most often used as an instrument to operationalise recommendations from the evaluation. In some cases MRs imply that policies and guidelines will be changed, with important potential impacts on the direction of future projects and programmes. Examples are the ongoing revision of Sida's communication policy, motivated by the *Utvärdering av Sidas informationslag: Sidas temasatsningar (05/31)* and the revision of the guidelines for *Sida's exchange programme, motivated by the evaluation Sida's exchange programme – evaluations of its pilot phase 2002–2004 (05/02)*. In other cases the implications of the MRs will be more narrowly project specific. A number of actions specified in MRs to the evaluations carried out during 2005 have already been taken, and a number of processes initiated.

6 For the remaining two there was no readily available information as this report was being produced.

7 After an evaluation a MR is mandatory. In the a recent study of Sida's MR system five reasons were identified why MRs were not produced: the status of, and support for, the MR system at the management level is not high; the documents regulating the system are not perceived as entirely clear; personal factors such as experience, commitment, prioritisation, and rotation of personnel; lack of time and, if the evaluation contains no significant findings, management response is not called for. Sida's management response system, Sida Studies in Evaluation (06/01).

8 Sida's management response system, Sida Studies in Evaluation (06/01).

5. Internal audit

Sida's Internal Audit is an independent unit intended to assist Sida's Board in achieving its objectives by performing internal audits of risk management, control and governance processes. An audit plan is prepared by the Internal Audit and decided upon by Sida's Board each year. Before the audit plan is presented to the Board it is submitted to the Swedish National State Audit Office for comments. Results of the audits are reported back to Sida's Board, which then decides on actions to be taken.

The internal auditors produced two assessment memoranda and six audit reports during 2005. Two reports from previous years have been translated into English and published. In addition, the internal auditors have provided advice on a demand to Sida departments and Swedish integrated embassies.

5.1 Submitted audits 2005

An audit is concluded as it is delivered to the Director General of Sida in connection with the annual reporting. During 2005 the internal auditors have concluded the following audits.

- Annual report 2004,
- Bi-annual report for 2005
- Sida routines for on-line accounting at integrated embassies,
- Sida routines for accounts at sections for development offices (SDC)
- Recruitment of Sida staff
- Review of Sida's management and quality control of consultants' invoices

Sida's annual report 2004

The internal auditors have reviewed Sida's annual report for 2004 and assessed to what extent it complies with the external and internal requirements regarding end of year accounting procedures as well as the demands set out in the letter of instruction. Furthermore, the section pertaining to reporting of results as well as finances has been reviewed in order to assess if Sida has taken into consideration the viewpoints expressed from the National Audit Office at previous reviews. During the exercise the Department for Finance and Corporate Development (EVU) was informed of observations made.

The review was reported to the Board of Sida on February 14, 2005. The observations were not of a character that demanded any decisions to be taken by the Board. However, The National Audit Office in the memorandum of revision delivered to Sida has made a number of comments, mainly regarding the reporting of results.

Sida's bi-annual report 2005

The internal auditors have also reviewed Sida's bi-annual report for 2005. In exactly the same way as for 2004, they assessed to what extent it complies with the external and internal requirements regarding end of year accounting procedures as well as the demands set out in the letter of instruction.

The review was reported to the Board of Sida on October 10, 2005. Again, the observations did not require decisions by the Board.

Sida routines for on-line accounting at integrated embassies and for accounts at sections for development offices

During 2005 two audits concerning the procedures for accounting at the Embassies and the Sections for Development Cooperation (henceforth, field offices) were performed *Sidas rutiner för direktbokföring vid utlandsmyndigheterna (05/01)* and *Sidas rutiner för bokföring vid sektionskontoren (05/02)*. The purpose of the audits was to assess the quality and appropriateness of Sida's routines for accounting at the field offices and assess the quality and safety of the execution of the on-line accounting.

The Internal Audit's conclusion is that the significant risks that have been identified are satisfactorily handled thanks to the high quality of Sida's instructions, while there is some scope for improvement of compliance. In the beginning of 2006 Sida's Management discussed response to the audit. Sida notes that owing to the distribution of administrative responsibilities at the field units and the ongoing integration some of the recommendations concern the Ministry for Foreign Affairs rather than Sida. Sida's guidelines will be updated, but considers the instructions to be clear.

Recruitment of Sida staff

The Internal Audit has also looked at Sida's process for recruiting personnel (Rekrytering av Sida-personal, 05/03). A number of problems were identified through case studies, interviews and focus group discussions. The audit provides proposals for improving transparency and efficiency in the recruitment process. Sida is currently working out a new process for recruitment that, at the time of the audit, had not been implemented. The new process will meet the demand for transparency and quality. Sida also suggests how the process can be made more efficient – for example, by reducing the number of participants called to interview.

Review of Sida's management and quality control of consultants' invoices

In the audit report on Sida's management of consultants' invoices (*Hantering och kvalitet av Sidas konsultfakturer, 05/06*) the Internal Audit's main conclusion is that Sida has appropriate routines to ensure quality in the administration of the invoices. The Sida's Board will respond to this report during 2006.

5.2 Responses to earlier audits

During 2005, Sida's Board has also responded to two Internal Audit reports from 2004.

The first concerns results-based management (*Resultatstyrning inom Sida, 04/06*). The Board notes that the changes in international development cooperation with stronger partner country ownership made new demands on how to measure results. Sida agrees that it is important to participate in methodological development work at an international level. Furthermore, the Board agrees that the country strategies and plans should include clear goals and results indicators and that the internal guidance and processes should be supportive of a results-based approach. However, Sida observes that results-based management should also take into account the partner countries' needs concerning strategies, systems and results indicators. Sida has set up a project group to work out a framework for Sida's results-based management.

The other audit concerns the so called field vision and its implications for management (*Fältvisionens konsekvenser för styrningen inom Sida, 04/07*). First, Sida notes that in order to make a comprehensive assessment of the implementation and consequences of the field vision the Internal Audit should have included IT and other aspects of communication. It is recommended that Sida explores what an increased field representation would entail for those parts of Sida not yet part of the implementation. The Board's response is to review ways of furthering field-orientation to include Sida's research cooperation, humanitarian assistance, support to Swedish NGOs and multilateral support. Furthermore, a programme to ensure quality in the field has been implemented. Roles and planning procedures have been reviewed and clarified. Sida agrees with the importance of considering cost implications of the envisaged changes.

Appendix 1. Sida evaluations 2005

- 05/01 The News Agency “Agencia Informativa Púlsar”: Project 2001–2003**
Victor van Oeyen
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/02 Sida’s Exchange Programme – Evaluation of its Pilot Phase 2002–2004**
Peter Winai
Department for Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management
- 05/03 El Apoyo Institucional a la Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia 2003–2004**
Kimberly Inksater, Carmen Beatriz Ruiz
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/04 Regional Training Programme in Environment Journalism and Communication in the Eastern African Region**
Gustav Böklin
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/05 Sida Support to Teacher Education in Tanzania 1997–2002**
Valdy Lindhe, Kristina Malmberg, Elisei Basil Temu
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/06 Phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances in the Solvent Sector in China**
Darrel Staley, Ann Jennervik
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation
- 05/07 Swedish Support to Urban Development and Housing in South Africa**
Steve Topham, Ingrid Obery, Hans Hede
Department for Africa
- 05/08 District Heating Projects in Latvia and Russia**
Anders Grettve, Tord Holmström, Christofer Hök,
Karl-Erik Ramström
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation
- 05/09 Gender Projects in Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Ukraine: Projects Implemented by Språngbrådan**
Thomas Bjørnkilde, Karin Attström, Alexandra Wynn
Department for Europe
- 05/10 The World Bank Programs “Emergency Services Support Project” (ESSP) and “Reform Trust Fund”: West Bank and Gaza**
Carl-Johan Belfrage
Department for Asia
- 05/11⁹ Political Parties and Democracy Assistance: An overview of the support provided by Swedish party associated organisations for democracy development in developing countries in central and eastern Europe**
Magnus Öhman, Shirin Ahlbäck Öberg, Barry Holmström, Helena Wockelberg, Viktoria Åberg
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/12 The Farmer Group Empowerment (FGE) Component of the Land Management and Conservation Farming Programme in Zambia**
Patrick M. Chibbamulilo
Department for Africa

9 This is a translation of Sida Evaluation 04/31 from 2004 and is not discussed in this present report.

- 05/13 Integrating Natural Resource Management Capacity in Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam**
Bo Tegnäs, Tara N. Bhattarai, Upik R. Wasrin
Department for Natural Resources and Environment
- 05/14 What difference has it made? Review of the Development Cooperation Programme between the South African Police Service and the Swedish National Police Board**
Finn Hedvall, Busisiwe Mazibuko
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/15 Swedish EPA's Cooperation with Environmental Authorities in North West Russia and Transboundary Water Issues, 1999–2004**
Lars Rylander, Johan Willert
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation
- 05/16 Partnership Evaluation of Forum Syd 2001–2003**
Åsa Köningson, Lennart Köningson, Bo Andreasson, Jens Larsen, Charlotte Mathiassen, Eva Sennemark, Gertrude Hermanssen
Department for Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management
- 05/17 Sida Supported ICT Project at Makerere University in Uganda**
Alan Greenberg, Gerrit Versluis
Department for Research Co-operation
- 05/18 Returning Home: An Evaluation of Sida's Integrated Area Programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina**
Melita Cukur, Kjell Magnusson, Joakim Molander, Hans Skotte
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/19 Povratak kuci: Procjena Sidinih programa integralnog pristupa regiji u Bosni i Hercegovini**
Melita Cukur, Kjell Magnusson, Joakim Molander, Hans Skotte
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/20 Programa de Capacitación en Economía para Funcionarios de la República de Cuba**
Guillermo García Huidobro, Stefan de Vylder
Department for Latin America
- 05/21 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: Main report**
Ulrich Vogel, Anne Skjelmerud, Pol Jansegers, Kim Forss
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/21:1 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: A Review of Country Strategies and Organisational Arrangements**
Anne Skjelmerud, Pol Jansegers, Ulrich Vogel
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/21:2 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: Concept Paper**
Ulrich Vogel, Kim Forss, Anne Skjelmerud, Pol Jansegers
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/21:3 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: Bangladesh**
Anne Skjelmerud
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/21:4 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: Ethiopia**
Pol Jansegers
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

- 05/21:5 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: Ukraine**
Ulrich Vogel
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/21:6 Turning Policy into Practice: Sida's implementation of the Swedish HIV/AIDS strategy: Zambia**
Pol Jansegers
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 05/22 General or Selective Intervention? An evaluation of Sida's Partnership Programmes in Chile and South Africa**
Börje Svensson
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation
- 05/23 Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) an Evaluation**
Rodrigo Arocena, Eric Hershberg, Rosemary Thorp
Department for Research Co-operation
- 05/24 Fortalecimiento de iniciativas populares de la sociedad civil por la paz en Colombia, 2002–2005: Apoyo de Asdi al programa de Consejería de Proyectos (PCS)**
Nils Boesen, Bente Østergaard Madsen
Department for Latin America
- 05/25 Desmovilización y Reintegración de Niños Soldados, en Colombia: Apoyo de Asdi a UNICEF, 2003–2004**
Jaime Jesús
Department for Latin America, Department for Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management
- 05/26 Programa “Acceso” en el sector de salud de Honduras**
Nils Öström, Leticia Velásquez, Sergio Rottenschweiler
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/27 Approaches to Parliamentary Strengthening: A Review of Sida's Support to Parliaments**
K. Scott Hubli, Martin Schmidt
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 05/28 Building Issues Equal Rights to Good Advice: Studies on Construction and Urban Planning in Developing Countries**
Karl Heli, Gabriel Marín, Elisabeth Murcia, Brhanu Mussa, Keerthi Ranasinghe
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation
- 05/29 Institutional Sustainability and Capacity Development within Sida Financed Road Safety Projects**
Peter Elsenaar, Åke Sahlin
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation
- 05/30 Transversalización del Enfoque de Género para el Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer: Apoyo de Asdi al Instituto Nacional de la Mujer (INAM) en Honduras**
Department for Latin America
- 05/31 Utvärdering av Sidas informationsanslag: Sidas temasatsningar**
Sven Windahl, Else Fabricius, Pär Windahl
Information Department
- 05/32 Partnerskapsutvärdering av PMU-Interlife**
Anders Ingelstam, Håkan Jarskog, Cecilia Karlstedt, Lennart Peck
Department for Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations, Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management

05/33 Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET)

Carla Risseuw, Ghanshyam Shah, Lennart Wohlgemuth
Department for Research Co-operation

05/34 The Swedish Environment Secretariat for Asia (SENSA)

Mats Denninger, Bo Tengnäs
Department for Natural Resources and Environment



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>