

Dialogue Perspectives in Programme Support Evaluations



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Summary

Sida's Programme Support Group believes that dialogue is key where programme support is concerned, and that this applies to both budget and sector programme support. The group believes that "an ongoing dialogue about the problems and differences of opinion which may exist" is to be preferred over the IMF method of alternately approving and stopping disbursements. At the same time, the group confirms that this does impose "greater demands in terms of the dialogue being well thought-through, systematic and clear".¹

Sida INFO has commissioned this preliminary study with a view to developing the assumptions of the Programme Support Group.

Amazonas relationship management AB has conducted the study, which is based on a review of nine evaluations of programme support. The study is a so-called "desk study".

The results of analysing the dialogue perspective in these evaluations indicate that good dialogue is needed in four different dialogue processes. These processes are often parallel. First, dialogue among different actors in the partner country, second, dialogue between the partner country and the donors who are involved as financiers, third, dialogue among the various donors and, fourth, dialogue between, e.g. the headquarters and the embassy.

I: Dialogue in the partner country – Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	II. Dialogue between the country's government and the donor community – The country's government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	III. Dialogue among various donors – Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor – HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority
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Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

¹ Sida's Programme Support Group, Final Report, September 2003, page 9.

We see that, within each of these processes, there are certain dialogue perspectives that have affected the extent to which the target results of the programme support are achieved. In some cases the dialogue perspective stands out as a success factor, while in other cases in which the dialogue perspective is absent, it stands out as an impediment to high programme support goal achievement.

This study takes an in-depth look at what appear to be success factors for achieving good dialogue, and which in turn create the conditions for high result achievement. These success factors are presented within the framework of each of the four described processes in chapters:

7.1.2

7.2.2

7.3.2

7.4.2

However, we see in the evaluations that certain transboundary factors exist which appear to be conducive to good dialogue.² They are:

- A high capacity for dialogue and sensitivity to the perspectives of others among primary stakeholders such as project owners, financiers and project agents
- A decentralised structure
- Clear division of roles
- High level of insight into the cooperative arrangement
- Strong local ownership

The study concludes with thoughts as to how Sida can endeavour to proceed in developing the dialogue within programme support. This is described based on the possibilities of working internally (within and among Swedish administrative bodies), as well as externally with other financiers and parties in partner countries.

²In some cases, however, we see more of a correlation than a cause-and-effect relationship.

1. Introduction

Programme support can be said to have developed during the 1990s as a reaction to deficiencies within two other types of development cooperation: project support and the so-called structural adjustment programmes under the auspices of the IMF. There are numerous examples of instances in which donors have gone in and supported well-delimited projects in a partner country without coordinating their efforts with other donors. This has often led to divisiveness when donors have carried on parallel processes within the healthcare sector in a country, for example. The major structural adjustment programmes under the auspices of the IMF have been criticised for obstructing the dialogue between donors and partner countries. The practice of alternately disbursing money to a partner country, stopping the disbursements if that country fails to follow the agreement, and then later paying out more money even though the problems often have not been remedied has imparted a spasmodic quality to relations between donors and partner countries.³

Sida's Programme Support Group maintains that dialogue is key as far as development cooperation in the form of programme support is concerned. The group believes that this form of support offers an advantage over project support in that it enables a dialogue on fundamental issues in the development of a sector. This dialogue can refer to the need for reforms, target groups or budget priorities.⁴ This is something that is not possible in the context of project support at the grass roots level.

The Programme Support Group also stresses dialogue when comparing programme support cooperation with the IMF approach of alternately stopping and approving disbursements. For a long-term cooperative relationship, the group believes that "an ongoing dialogue about the problems and differences of opinion which may exist is better". At the same time, the group confirms that this does impose "greater demands in terms of the dialogue being well thought-out, systematic and clear".⁵

Programme support exists in two forms: budget support and sector programme support. Budget support is support for a country's government budget, while sector programme support is delimited support for a specified sector. Programme support is a relatively new type of develop-

³ Sida's Programme Support Group, page 9.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

ment cooperation. It takes a long time to design a reform programme that encompasses major resources and involves numerous actors. Fully realised programme support currently exists in just a few countries. In most cases, we find ourselves in the midst of a process that is moving toward programme support. We speak in such cases of programme support processes. These processes share the common trait in that a group of bilateral and multilateral donors are, together with the government of the partner country, designing a reform programme for either a sector or an entire country.

Sida's Programme Support Group describes programme support processes as a "dialogue about policy issues and about harmonising regulations, routines and working methods". When Sida participates in such a process, the group stresses the importance of clear action. "The demands on Sida to be clear increase in connection with the transition from direct bilateral contributions to coordinated contributions involving many donors as cooperative partners"⁶ This characterisation bears witness to the fact that programme support processes involve many different actors on a number of different levels. It imposes heavy demands in terms of coordination and cooperation. Dialogue is necessary if different stakeholders are to be able to communicate, and a dialogue perspective is probably a strategic issue.

Sida INFO has commissioned this preliminary study in an attempt to develop the Programme Support Group's assumption that programme support places "greater demands in terms of the dialogue being well thought-out, systematic and clear".⁷ The purpose of the study is to determine how the presence or absence of dialogue contributes to or impedes development cooperation in the form of programme support.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

2. Definitions of terms

The term “programme support”

In this preliminary study, we have chosen to use the definition of programme support used by Sida’s Programme Support Group. The group points out that, in Swedish terminology, there are two types of programme support, based on the purpose of the support:

- Budget support, or support for economic reforms/debt relief
- Sector programme support

“Programme support refers here to coordinated financial and/or professional support for a country’s poverty reduction strategies, or for an organisation. Programme support can also be limited to a specific policy area or sector, in which case it is referred to as sector programme support.”⁸

This preliminary study is a so-called “desk study”. The analysis in Chapter 7 is based on evaluations of both budget support and sector programme support initiatives. There are currently few fully developed instances of sector programme support in the world. The evaluations we have analysed are consequently evaluations of processes en route to becoming fully realised sector programme support. The term SWAp (Sector-wide approach) is used internationally with respect to these processes. To simplify matters for the reader, we have chosen to use the term “sector programme support” (SPS) to refer to both fully realised programmes and processes. SPS can encompass an entire sector or parts of a sector, or it can span multiple sectors within a society.

The term “dialogue”

Dialogue and communication are used synonymously in this preliminary study. We could just as well have used the term “communication perspective”, but have here preferred the shorter and thus more reader-friendly term “dialogue perspective”. “Dialogue” refers here primarily to verbal and written exchanges of facts and ideas. The dialogue is viewed as a tool in an ongoing process. In the context of strategic development cooperation, to which programme support pertains, the

⁸ Ibid, page 3.

dialogue perspective is often very closely aligned with the organisation perspective.

A dialogue can be characterised as good when it consists of an exchange of information that leads to an increased level of result achievement with respect to the overall goals of the programme support. Bad dialogue is when goals are not achieved due to the absence of or defects in such an information exchange.

The term “success factor”

We use the term “success factor” in the preliminary study to denote factors that contribute to good dialogue.

3. Principal and agent

This study was commissioned by Sida INFO's Group for Strategic Communication. The study was prepared by Amazonas relationship management AB during the period from May to November 2003.

4. Delimitation

This is a small preliminary study based on a limited number of evaluations of programme support. In other words, this preliminary study is based on secondary sources.

5. Selection

The selection process was carried out in cooperation with a representative from Sida's Methods Unit, and a person from Sida's Evaluation Secretariat, and in consultation with Sida/INFO. We also conducted an Internet search for supplemental evaluations in numerous databases.

Because programme support is a relatively new type of development cooperation, there was not a large number of evaluations from which to choose. A selection process has nevertheless been undertaken to a certain extent. The emphasis has been placed on case studies. We have strived to study evaluations which were as concrete as possible.

The evaluations we have selected exhibit a certain degree of spread in terms of the organisations that ordered them. We find evaluations ordered by bilateral donors, more specifically Sida and Norad, as well as evaluations ordered by multilateral donors, such as the World Bank and WHO. We have also studied an evaluation from the international educational institute Adea.

The selection also exhibits a degree of geographical spread, with the emphasis on African countries. The selection covers a number of different sectors, including health, education, water & sanitation, and roads.

The selection process yielded nine relevant evaluations. Four of them pertain to budget support, while the other five are SPS evaluations.

Evaluations broken down by ordering organisation:

Sida

- 99/17 Dollars, Dialogue and Development (An Evaluation of Swedish Programme Aid), 1999.
- 99/17:1 Development by default (Programme Aid to Bangladesh), 1999.
- 99/17:4 Debt, Dependence and Fragile Development (Programme Aid to Nicaragua), 1999.
- 99/17:7 Fostering high growth in a low-income country (Programme Aid to Vietnam), 1999.
- Sector-wide approaches in education: Implications for donor agencies and issues arising from case studies of Zambia and Mozambique, 2001.

Norad

- International experience with sector programme development co-operation in transportation (roads), energy and fisheries, 2003.

The World Bank

- Education and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa – A review of Sector-Wide approaches, 2001. WHO
- Sector-wide Approaches for Health Development: A Review of Experience, 2000.

Adea

- Preparation of the Education Sector Development Program in Ethiopia, by the Association of the Development of Education in Africa, 2000.

6. Conduct of the study

The preliminary study is based on a perusal and analysis of nine evaluations of budget support and SPS. These evaluations are broad analyses of programme support in various countries. Their authors did not proceed with the intention of studying development cooperation from a dialogue perspective, but most of the authors did include such perspectives in their evaluations. The dialogue perspectives in the evaluations have served as the basis for the analysis presented in Chapter 7 of this preliminary study

The preliminary study is based on secondary sources. We are aware of the problems inherent in this approach. While our aim has been to map and analyse the dialogue perspective within programme support, the evaluations upon which we have based our analysis have proceeded from a much broader starting point. The fact that an evaluation does not elucidate the dialogue among different actors who participated in the programme support need not entail that the dialogue perspective lacked significance. The reason might simply be that it was not the intent of the evaluations to study this particular area.

Although there are problems inherent in resorting to secondary sources, they are outweighed by the inherent advantages. This is a small preliminary study which aims to obtain an initial insight into the nature of the dialogue between various actors involved in programme support. In drawing an overall picture, it has been helpful to be able to weigh in information from a number of programme support projects from a large number of countries.

The approach we have chosen offers yet another advantage. It makes it possible to obtain an idea of the importance accorded dialogue in the evaluations.

The reading of the evaluations we have done was supplemented with a number of supplemental discussions with Sida staff members involved in budget support and SPS.

7. Analysis of the dialogue within programme support

This preliminary study is intended to describe and analyse the dialogue within programme support. Compared to clearly delimited project support for a country, budget support and SPS represent complex types of development cooperation. A large number of actors participate, large segments of the society are encompassed, and the work extends over long periods. Taken together, these factors contribute to making budget support and SPS difficult phenomena to describe. Dialogue is also a complex phenomenon. Consequently, describing and analysing dialogue within the context of programme support poses a challenge.

We have opted to sort and characterise the contents of the evaluations with respect to the dialogue within programme support in the form of four processes, which can very well take place parallel in time (see figure below).

I: Dialogue in the partner country – Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	II. Dialogue between the country's government and the donor community – The country's government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	III. Dialogue among various donors – Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor – HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority
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Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

The first dialogue process is the dialogue within a partner country, i.e. the dialogue surrounding the planning and implementation of the reform programme formulated jointly by the country's top level of government and the donor community. A large number of actors is often involved, i.e. the country's political leadership, public authorities ranging from the highest to the lowest levels, the civil society in the form of non-governmental organisations, and the end users. The donors participate as well. The second dialogue process is the dialogue between a partner country's top level of government and the donors, and it deals with how support is

to be structured, implemented and followed up. The third dialogue process is the dialogue among the various donors participating in a budget support/SPS project, and it pertains to how the support should be structured. The fourth dialogue process is the internal dialogue of a donor, e.g. between headquarters and embassy staff.

7.1 The dialogue in a partner country

Part I: Dialogue in the partner country – Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	Part II. Dialogue between the country's government and the donor community – The country's government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	Part III. Dialogue among various donors – Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	Part IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor – HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority
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Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

7.1.1 Summary – the dialogue in a partner country

The programme support that was most successful according to the evaluations in the source material was characterised by broad national embedment during both the planning and execution phases. If, for instance, a country's healthcare sector is to be reformed, a large number of actors must be involved. This includes everything from political bodies, public authorities, and the economy to non-governmental organisations and donor representatives. There are heavy demands in terms of coordination, for which dialogue is an essential condition.

Programme support is common in the context of government services such as healthcare and education, and it follows that reforms that are adopted centrally are implemented at the local level in practice. Judging from the evaluations on which this preliminary study is based, reform efforts work best when they are preceded by an extensive decentralisation of decision-making authority. This in turn demands good dialogue on many different levels. When the local public authorities are given free rein to structure the work, local stakeholder groups are given an opportunity to put their stamp on the reform efforts.

Because programme support is often intended to build up or develop public services, the group of end users affected by the reform work is very large. A successful reform programme will consequently stand or fall based on whether those who are to use the service also know to ask for it. To achieve this, the dialogue with non-governmental organisations and end users is decisive. In the most successful instances of programme support, the end users are given opportunities to examine the activities by providing insight into and information about them. The end users thus have an opportunity to drive the development process forward.

The top political leadership of the partner country should be the project owner for programme support. This is to prevent interdepart-

mental rivalries from creating deadlocks in the reform process. A multitude of departments and public authorities from various sectors are often involved in a programme support initiative. The fact that the country's top political leaders sanction the reforms facilitates the dialogue among parties with divergent special interests.

In order for an SPS to have a local impact, the dialogue between the central and local levels must be functional within the public authority responsible for the sector. Having a large part of the decision-making authority reside at the local level is, as noted above, a strength. The dialogue between central and local public authorities is in many cases obstructed by a traditional, hierarchical decision-making apparatus. Consequently, reform processes are often administered in top-down fashion. Capacity development is often essential if the dialogue between the local and central levels is to function.

The change process which programme support sets in motion often involves multiple sectors within a society. It demands that links exist between different public authorities. Horizontal cooperation between different political bodies and authorities is traditionally rare within central government administrations. Such cooperation is at the same time often essential to successful programme support. Programme support cooperation should thus strive to create such a dialogue.

Donor representatives are also involved in the national processes surrounding programme support. It is important for the donors to offer guidance rather than going in and controlling the process of dialogue with the civil society, public authorities and politicians. Technical teams which impact a programme support initiative to educate or in some other way assist in the reform work should be sensitive to the national context, and act on the basis of a dialogue perspective.

7.1.2 Success factors – the dialogue in a partner country

In the analysed evaluations, the following factors have been found to be of importance to the dialogue in a partner country:

- (a) Broad national embedment during both the planning and execution phase
- (b) Decentralised decision-making
- (c) Dialogue with non-governmental organisations and end users
- (d) Partner country's top political leadership is the project owner
- (e) Dialogue between central and local levels within a public authority
- (f) Dialogue among different public authorities
- (g) Donor representatives provide guidance rather than control
- (h) Technical teams must have insight into the need for dialogue

(a) Broad national embedment during both the planning and execution phase

Analysis: One condition for a successful SPS appears to be that the approach chosen for reforming the sector must enjoy broad national support. Because a large number of parties are affected and impacted, a highly effective dialogue is needed to achieve this level of support. The parties need information, but they must also have opportunity to communicate with one another in order to be able to contribute to and influence

the programme support. This applies to both the planning and the practical execution of the reform work.

Example: The SPS initiatives that contributed to the reform of Ethiopia's education sector is one successful example where this approach has worked. The draft of the educational plan was discussed centrally, regionally and locally. The schools in the capital, Addis Ababa, were closed for one day so that the teachers could discuss the plan. A large number of non-governmental organisations and experts in the field of education took part.⁹

A less successful example is found in connection with the SPSs in six different countries in the healthcare field studied by WHO. A national dialogue was often absent here, and this was found to have had a very negative effect on the reform process: "...the need for a more meaningful co-ordination and co-operation between MoH, donors and NGOs in order to deal with a 'Frankenstein' health sector comprised of unconnected activities."¹⁰

(b) Decentralised decision-making

Analysis: SPS initiatives are common in the fields of healthcare and education, and it thus follows that the reforms decided upon by the government and the donor community must be implemented, in practice, at the local level. To judge from the evaluations on which this preliminary study is based, this is best realised via extensively decentralised decision-making. This also seems to be a necessary condition for good dialogue. When the local public authorities are given free rein to structure the work, local stakeholder groups are given an opportunity to put their stamp on the reform efforts.

Example: When Ethiopia's educational system was to be reformed, decentralised planning made it possible to customise regional education plans. The regional bodies were involved early on in the process. Rather than formulating a common education plan for the entire country, donors and the Ministry of Education gave the regions a chance to develop their own plans. It is worth noting that this approach was facilitated by an already decentralised federal structure.¹¹

An SPS within Ghana's health sector offers an example of a process where personnel at the district and local levels within the health authorities are directly involved in programme development. The personnel assigned to implement the decisions thus receive sufficient knowledge to be able to do their jobs within the new programme. In SPS initiatives in the health sectors of other countries, we find examples where the dialogue was entirely non-functional, or where not even all the staff at the headquarters were involved.¹²

(c) Dialogue with non-governmental organisations and end users

Analysis: In order to push the desired development in a sector forward, it is considered important for the civil society and end users to have information and insight into the reform process. This enables them to set

⁹ Adea, Preparation of the Education Sector Development program in Ethiopia, 2000, page 64.

¹⁰ WHO, Sector-wide approaches for health development, 2000, page 3.

¹¹ Adea, page 45.

¹² WHO, page 4.

requirements for their receiving the service that has been jointly decided upon by the public authorities and the donors.

Example: The success of the SPS for the health sector in Uganda is attributable to improved insight and information provided to end users and non-governmental organisations. The end users can hold the government accountable for absent or deficient healthcare. The dominant model is otherwise characterised in that the SPS is structured in fairly top-down fashion, with the support of the donor community.¹³ Information has also been gathered within the SPS in Uganda about how the poor view the healthcare offered by the state, and their experience of using it. The Ministry of Finance compiled the information, which was then ploughed back into the budget preparation process. Consequently, more emphasis was placed on clean water, safety issues affecting the poor, and equal loans to all districts so as to avoid creating inequities.¹⁴

(d) The partner country's top political leadership is the project owner

Analysis: An SPS should be sanctioned by a country's top political leadership. This is to prevent the efforts being obstructed by interdepartmental rivalries among the departments affected by the programme support.

Example: Coordination among the various ministries was facilitated when the programme became an expression of government policy rather than the policies of an individual minister or small group of public officials.¹⁵

(e) Dialogue between central and local levels within a public authority

Analysis: In order for an SPS to have local impact, the dialogue between the central and local levels within a public authority must be functional. Dialogue is often obstructed by traditional hierarchical thinking and a lack of capacity within the authority, primarily at the local level.

Example: It was determined that the dialogue between the central and local levels of the education authorities had to be improved in connection with the SPS for the education sector in Mozambique. The failure of this dialogue to function was attributed both to insufficient capacity at levels below the regional education authority, and to an old hierarchical decision-making apparatus which still persists.¹⁶

(f) Dialogue among different public authorities

Analysis: An SPS affects large segments of a society. Even when the work is concentrated on one sector, other sectors are often impacted. If, for instance a country is to reform its health sector, other authorities in the areas of finance and infrastructure will also be affected. Good cross-communication between different authorities is thus essential to the success of an SPS.

Example: WHO found that, with respect to SPS initiatives within the health sector, "an absence of lateral links can undermine the success of

¹³ Ibid, page 4, 23.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 12.

¹⁵ Ibid, page 4.

¹⁶ Riddell, Sector-wide approaches in education: Implication for donor agencies and issues arising from case studies of Zambia and Mozambique, 2001, page 30.

the programme”. In addition to the ministry of health, other ministries such as the ministry for local services and the ministry of finance handling the disbursement of the funds must also participate in the dialogue.¹⁷

(g) Donor representation in the partner country

Analysis: Donor presence in the partner country appears to be an almost essential condition for good policy dialogue.

Example: In an evaluation of eight country studies of Swedish programme support, Swedish influence on the policy dialogue was strongest in those cases where Sweden took the initiative on national discussions regarding policy issues. The most success was seen in countries where the donor country had major representation. Vietnam and Nicaragua offer the clearest examples of this.¹⁸

(h) Technical teams must have insight into the need for dialogue

Analysis: The donor group’s technical teams should emphasise partnership and cooperation.

Example: Within the SPS for Ethiopia’s education sector, three technical teams from the donor group contributed to improvements in the reform program. The team leader emphasised partnership and cooperation. The non-confrontational approach that characterised the team, with the emphasis on guidance rather than control, was described as being unique. The fact that they also made themselves available to the Ministry of Education was also unusual.¹⁹

7.2 The dialogue between a country’s government and the donor community

Part I: Dialogue in the partner country – Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	Part II. Dialogue between the country’s government and the donor community – The country’s government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	Part III. Dialogue among various donors – Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	Part IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor – HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority
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Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

¹⁷ WHO, page 4.

¹⁸ Sida, Dollars, Dialogue and Development – an evaluation of Swedish programme aid, 1999, page 118.

¹⁹ Adea, page 46.

7.2.1 Summary – the dialogue between a country’s government and the donor community

In the dialogue between the government and the donor community concerning how programme support should be structured, it is important for the local government to set the agenda and have the capacity to do so. The concept of the partner country occupying the driver’s seat for the process and escaping donor control is fundamental in the context of programme support. The partner country should thus be the driving force in the dialogue between donors, encouraging donor coordination. It is also important that the government not favour any donors, but rather treats them all the same.

The donors must for their part speak with one voice, and be sensitive to the political context in the partner country. They need to obtain reliable information from the government concerning the development of the sector so that they can assure themselves that their funds are being used in a positive way.

This cooperation is facilitated if the government and donors can formulate a common vision early on as to what the cooperation is to lead to. It is also important for the cooperation to be characterised by openness and trust. This can be facilitated via a broad common dialogue, even as early as the preparatory phase of the programme support.

7.2.2 Success factors – the dialogue between a country’s government and the donor community

The examples of dialogues between donors and a partner country that we found can be divided into three groups. First, there are examples that describe how *the donors act* in the dialogue with the country’s government. Second, there are examples that describe how the *partner country’s government acts* in the dialogue with the donors. Third, there are examples that include *the actions of both the government and the donors*.

- (a) The government sets the agenda and has the capacity to do so
- (b) The government encourages donor coordination
- (c) The government treats all donors the same
- (d) The donors speak with one voice
- (e) The donors are sensitive to the political context
- (f) Shared reliable information about the development of the sector
- (g) Vision shared by government and donors
- (h) Mutual openness and trust between government and donors
- (i) Broad common dialogue during the preparatory process

(a) The government sets the agenda and has the capacity to do so

Analysis: For programme support to be effective, the government of the partner country must take the initiative. The government formulates a new sector policy and the donors provide support for and advice on the work. This division of roles presumes that the government has sufficient capacity to lead the dialogue with the donors.

Example: The Ethiopian Ministry of Education was the driving force behind the development of the SPS for the country’s education sector. The SPS came into being on the government’s own initiative, without

pressure from the international donor community. The donors assisted with technical experts, but did not push forward their ideas as to what the content of the education programme should be. Despite a large number of external donors, ultimately as many as fifteen, the cooperation and coordination worked very well. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education is said to deserve much of the credit for this success. The Ministry of Education was well prepared, and had decided that the donors should coordinate their support through joint contributions, and actively opposed donors who wished to stray from this principle.²⁰

WHO has found that even the governments in the studied countries that are most dependent upon development assistance have been able to resist demands from donors. The processes that resulted in the SPS initiatives studied cannot be characterised as donor initiatives in which the government participated only as an unwilling party. Conflicting interests between donors and governments have sometimes forced compromises, but rather than the donors imposing strict requirements, their influence over reform efforts has pertained mainly to dialogue and support for policy analysis.²¹

Sweden did not expand further upon its programme support for Bangladesh during the 1990s. According to those who evaluated this programme support, the main reason for this was that Sweden was aware early on of the government's lack of commitment to development, and of the need for national consensus. The evaluators quote the head of the Swedish delegation at a donor meeting in 1993: "We know from other countries that such a commitment is of crucial importance. What is needed is a clear development agenda, defined through a process of national dialogue, on the basis of which a national consensus can be built. Such an agenda could also form the basis for a long-term contract between Bangladesh and the donor community."²²

Many of the problems encountered within the SPS for Mozambique's education sector were attributable to a lack of capacity on the part of the country's Ministry of Education: "...the capacity building required of the Ministry of decision making in an SWAp environment has been considerable. The concerns seem to relate in one way or another to this fundamental weakness."²³

(b) The government encourages donor coordination

Analysis: In the dialogue with the donors, the government should be eager for the donors to coordinate their efforts. The government must also actively oppose donors who wish to refrain from donor cooperation and enter into agreements with the government that circumvent such cooperation.

Example: In the SPS for the education sector in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education was well prepared and had decided that the donors should coordinate their support through joint contributions, and actively opposed donors who wished to stray from this principle.²⁴ Coordination

²⁰ Adea, page 45.

²¹ WHO, page 7.

²² Sida, Development by Default (Programme Aid to Bangladesh), 1999, page 22.

²³ Riddell, page 30.

²⁴ Adea, page 45–46.

was achieved by means such as an annual reporting meeting between the donors and the Ministry of Education; meetings were also held regularly during the year in a steering committee.²⁵

WHO's evaluation of SPS initiatives for the health sectors of various countries bears witness to the fact that governments, even if they are dubious about separate donor meetings, still perceive the value in such meetings in terms of keeping the reform process focussed on a limited agenda.²⁶

(c) The government treats all donors the same

Analysis: The dialogue between the government and the donor community is facilitated if the government does not favour any donors, but rather treats them all the same.

Example: Within the SPS for the education sector in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education favoured the World Bank in the policy dialogue throughout the entire preparatory phase. The other bilateral donors felt excluded.²⁷

(d) The donors speak with one voice

Analysis: The donors coordinate their involvement in a partner country in order to send clear signals and facilitate the reform process for the country's government.

Example: Donors often send conflicting messages to a partner country. The 1994–1996 cooperation with Nicaragua exemplifies this. The bilateral donors turned the macroeconomic conditions over to the IMF and the World Bank, and concentrated themselves on other issues. When the IMF and WB wanted to withdraw their support because Nicaragua was not living up to the conditions that had been set, the bilaterals wanted to continue providing support so as to avoid exacerbating the political instability in the country.²⁸

Donor cooperation can sometimes appear to be working at first glance. However, such is not always necessarily the case, as was shown in the evaluation of the SPS for the education sectors in Zambia and Mozambique. "On the surface, donor co-ordination in both the case study countries looks smooth. Regular meetings are held, information is shared, and progress is being made toward the fulfilment of the objectives of the respective plans. However, this 'co-operation hides inconsistencies in the approaches taken by the different agencies and the problems that this causes for the ministries. For instance, in 2001, the Ministry of Education in Maputo received 23 independent donor missions!"²⁹

(e) Donor sensitivity to the political context

Analysis: One condition for the government being able to take the driver's seat in the dialogue with the donors is that the latter must exhibit sensitivity to the political process in the country in which an SPS is to be carried out.

²⁵ Ibid, page 48.

²⁶ WHO, page 6.

²⁷ Adea, page 48.

²⁸ Sida, Dept, dependance and fragile developement – programme aid to Nicaragua, 1999, page 66.

²⁹ Riddell, page 19, 33–34.

Example: The eight country studies of Swedish programme support show that the donors often overestimated their own importance, rather than trying to understand and adapt themselves to the political dynamic in the partner country. Conversely, in Uganda the donors showed patience and supported the process of restoring the economy rather than insisting on rapid institutional reforms. This fostered trust on the part of both the government and the society at large, which at a later stage accelerated their acceptance of the reforms that subsequently followed.³⁰

According to the WHO study of SPS initiatives for health sectors, the governments of Ethiopia and Tanzania found that the donors were often in a hurry to advance a policy which was in line with their own ideas and priorities.³¹

(f) Shared reliable information about the development of the sector

Analysis: In the context of programme support, the government of the partner country is given free rein to prepare a reform programme for a sector. The donors refrain from micromanaging the ways in which the financial resources they contribute are to be used. This requires that the donors trust the government. The government must provide the donors with reliable information about how the reform efforts are progressing.

Example: It is reported in WHO's analysis of SPS initiatives for health sectors in six countries that shared reporting systems were created for information about successes and setbacks. The donors must trust these systems in order for them to be effective. The systems are underdeveloped, and a great deal needs to be done before the donors will have confidence in them as primary information sources about how the sector is functioning.³²

The same WHO study confirms that greater trust between donors and the government is needed in order for budget support to become the dominant source of financing for reform efforts. In the absence of trust, the cautious donors will revert to a program-based approach for transferring funds, which imposes a heavy administrative burden on the affected ministry.³³

In the case of the SPS for education in Zambia & Mozambique, donors explicitly demanded better overall information on the development of the education sector and the economy.³⁴

(g) Vision shared by government and donors

Analysis: If the government and donors succeed together in forging a common vision of what their cooperation is to lead to, their continued cooperation will be facilitated.

Example: A basic path had been mapped out for a national health policy in the context of cooperation on an SPS for Ghana's health sector, thus making it easier to be able to resolve the conflicts and disputes that arose during the course of the journey.³⁵

³⁰ Sida, Dollars, dialogue and development – an evaluation of Swedish programme aid, 1999, page xv, 163.

³¹ WHO, page 5.

³² Ibid, page viii.

³³ Ibid, page 29.

³⁴ Riddell, page 19.

³⁵ The World Bank, page 9.

(h) Openness and trust between government and donors

Analysis: Mutual trust is essential for the cooperation to work; the donors put a large share of the responsibility on the recipient. Openness is incredibly important to building and maintaining trust.

Example: In the case of the SPS for Ghana, the donors and the country's government succeeded in building mutual trust. Conversely, an example of the opposite situation is seen in connection with the SPS for Zambia.³⁶

(i) Common dialogue during the preparatory process

Analysis: A broad dialogue during the preparatory process, in which everyone can communicate and impact the work, appears to be important if the reform process is to be successful once it actually gets under way.

Example: The cooperation during the planning phase of the SPS for Ethiopia is described as being exceptional. The key to this success was good leadership and a collegial working method. All the parties were given the background information, and offered opportunity to give their opinions on the terms of reference.³⁷

7.3 The dialogue among various donors

Part I: Dialogue in the partner country	Part II. Dialogue between the country's government and the donor community	Part III. Dialogue among various donors	Part IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor
– Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	– The country's government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	– Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	– HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority

Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

7.3.1 Summary – the dialogue among various donors

The donors should have a common vision as to what the programme support will lead to. The division of roles among the donors should be clarified early on. To prevent special interests on the part of individual donors from impeding the cooperation, the donor selected to coordinate the work should have a limited personal interest in the programme support, i.e. it should be a donor who is contributing a minor portion of the budget for the programme support.

To facilitate coordination in the partner country, the donors should make their decisions at the same level. The authority to make decisions

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Adea, page 54.

should reside at the HQ or embassy level. Closed groupings should be avoided among the donors who participate in programme support, and replaced by an openness to discussing policy issues. The donors should strive to achieve a common vision with respect to how capacity should be expanded in the partner country. A lack of such commonality is described as a common source of conflicts. Cooperation at the country level can be facilitated through an international dialogue on harmonised donor cooperation.

The donors who participate in programme support can elevate one another's competence by sharing their respective expert know-how.

7.3.2 Success factors – the dialogue among various donors

In the analysed evaluations, the following factors have been identified as being of importance with respect to this dialogue:

- (a) Common vision as to what the programme support will lead to
- (b) Distribution of roles clarified early on
- (c) Choice of coordinator with limited personal interest but sufficient capacity
- (d) Decisions made at same level among the various donors (HQ or embassy)
- (e) Avoid closed groupings
- (f) Openness to discussing policy issues
- (g) Shared views on building capacity
- (h) International dialogue on formalised donor cooperation
- (i) Exchange of expert know-how in the partner country

(a) Common vision as to what the programme support will lead to

Analysis: The pervasive changes that the reformation of a sector entails presume that the donors share a common vision.

Example: Based on two country studies of the education sectors in Zambia and Mozambique, it was found that “a combined effort is needed to integrate the donors in this vision to ensure that macro-economic budget support, sector-wide support, and projects all contribute to sustainable government systems that are capable of delivering the goals of the educational policy, and not just ticking off boxes on donors' logframes”.³⁸

When a sector programme for the road sector in a number of sub-Saharan countries was launched in 1989 and 1990, the donors avoided working in parallel by narrowly defining what was to be done via a joint action programme, which was known as a “code of conduct”. One of the basic principles was that of building only infrastructure which could be maintained by the country itself.³⁹

³⁸ Riddell, page 27

³⁹ Norad, International experience with sector programme development cooperation in transportation (roads), energy and fisheries, page 25.

(b) Distribution of roles clarified early on

Analysis: The distribution of roles among the various donors should be clarified early on.

Example: One of the success factors in the success of the SPS for the education sector in Ethiopia was the fact that the role of each donor was stated early on.⁴⁰

(c) Choice of coordinator with limited private interest but sufficient capacity

Analysis: The donor assigned to coordinate and intermediate among the various donors plays a key role. Donors prefer that the work be led by a donor with a limited personal agenda, preferably one who has a small financial interest but also possesses strong expertise regarding the initiative per se. It is important that the coordinator chosen have sufficient capacity to be able to do the job.

Example: WHO performed well in its role as coordinator for the donors who took part in SPS initiatives in Uganda and Cambodia.⁴¹ In another evaluation, the World Bank indicated that they consider it a problem for them to be a candidate for a leading role without their necessarily possessing the capacity to coordinate the various donors involved. This is particularly so in cases where the World Bank lacks sufficient personnel in a partner country.⁴²

(d) Decisions made at the same level among the various donors (HQ or embassy)

Analysis: Donor coordination is facilitated when the donors who are participating in a programme support initiative make decisions at the same level within their respective organisations.

Example: The negotiations and decision-making processes among the donors who participated in the SPS in Zambia and Mozambique were obstructed because some of the donors had entirely decentralised the responsibility for decision-making, while decision-making authority resided centrally among other donors. The Netherlands had entirely decentralised operations, while Japanese Jica has a highly centralised organisation.⁴³

One of the evaluations in the source material includes a survey in which bilateral and multilateral donors describe the decision-making apparatus within their own organisations.⁴⁴

- Austria: Country-based personnel are autonomous. HQ follows up on the operations in order to monitor policy issues.
- Cida: Centralised decision-making. A few officials with expert knowledge in the field of education in the partner country.
- Danida: New policy of delegating to the embassy to a greater extent once a project document has been approved.
- Dfid: Decentralisation to in-country offices: HQ approval is required only for larger sums. Once an approved country strategy is in place, Dfid personnel in the country are authorized to speak with the government.

⁴⁰ Adea, page 53.

⁴¹ WHO, page 6.

⁴² Riddell, page 19.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Riddell, page 16–17. The information is from 2001; individual donors may have undergone reorganisation since then. The survey still provides a picture of how decision-making levels impact donor cooperation.

- EC: The country-based delegation is dependent upon receiving policy guidelines from HQ. Most of the country-sector personnel lack the capacity to make decisions.
- Finland: Centralised decision-making.
- JICA: MFA has ultimate responsibility for the project, not JICA. Information gathering occurs at the country level, but Tokyo makes the decisions. Country-based personnel lack the authority to speak independently.
- The Netherlands: Responsibility delegated to embassies. Embassies draw up annual plans and budgets: HQ formulates an overall policy, but it is up to the embassies to carry out SPS.
- Norad: The regional departments at HQ contribute an overview of the sector and a macro perspective, while the policy department identifies obstacles. The country-based personnel are given full responsibility. Close cooperation between technical departments at HQ and the embassies.
- Sida: The embassy provides HQ with the documentary basis for decision-making. The project committees must approve the work within the sector departments. The sector departments receive guidelines from the regional departments.⁴⁵
- Unicef: Highly decentralised. The country office has the authority to work independently within the framework of guidelines provided by the Board of Directors.
- Usaid: Highly decentralised. Projects are approved by HQ, but decisions on how to approach and carry out programmes are country-based. Strategic goals are established in negotiation with the Africa office, and the work is then carried out in the partner country.
- The World Bank: The work is usually administered from HQ. Ethiopia is the sole exception.

(e) (f) Avoid closed groupings

Analysis: Closed groupings must be avoided in order to enable a large number of donors to act in concert vis-à-vis a country's government within the framework of an SPS.

Example: In the education sector SPS in Zambia & Mozambique, certain donors reported being excluded from the group of “like-minded” donors, among which were Sweden and The Netherlands.⁴⁶

(g) Openness to discussing policy issues

Analysis: Openness among various donors to discussing policy issues is of major importance to the cooperation within a programme support project. This is particularly important in cases where opinions on policy issues differ among the donors:

⁴⁵ Decisions regarding disbursements are made by Sida's Director General.

⁴⁶ Riddell, page 16–17.

Example: The dispute between Sida and the World Bank with respect to Vietnam is an example of this. A Scandinavian attitude toward tax-funded health systems collided with an American tradition of private healthcare. Another example is the development of healthcare reforms in Tanzania. There were conflicts early on, but they were resolved through a number of market-oriented pilot projects.⁴⁷

In a summary of eight country studies of Swedish programme support, the evaluators found that the group of like-minded donors should have been able to do better as a forum for policy dialogue. For example, a request from Norway to obtain Sweden's economics studies was denied. A joint effort to evaluate import support in Tanzania, which was never carried out, provides another example. Certain successes can be found nonetheless. For example, the like-minded group was behind the confrontation with the IMF in Mozambique in October 1995. During the 1980s in Nicaragua, the group put a stop to American citizens being given priority with respect to compensation for confiscated real property.⁴⁸

(g) Shared views on building capacity

Analysis: Shared views on how the process of building capacity within a sector should proceed, and who should finance and lead the efforts.

Example: Disagreement as to how capacity within the education sector should be expanded is probably the most difficult remaining unresolved problem in the context of the SPS for Ethiopia's education sector. There is disagreement as to whether this is desirable and, if so, the extent to which TA, study trips, etc. should be used to build capacity. There are also disputes as to how the expansion should be financed and who should lead the effort.⁴⁹

(h) International dialogue on harmonised donor cooperation

Analysis: Different routines on the part of donors impede joint efforts within an SPS.

Example: Sida point out that individuals at the embassy level create local variations in donor cooperation. There is a need to harmonise procedures with respect to, e.g. how financial reporting should occur. The Finnish development authority has identified inadequate routines among local personnel as a bottleneck. They welcome donors working together to build capacity. The Netherlands Ministry of Development also views the harmonisation of the efforts of different donors as a key factor in streamlining donor cooperation.⁵⁰

(i) Exchange of expert know-how in the partner country

Analysis: Bilateral donors can learn from one another in the partner country.

Example: Ireland Aid is requesting that donors make greater use of one another's expert know-how in the partner country. Cooperation could occur in connection with staff development, for example.⁵¹

⁴⁷ WHO, page 6.

⁴⁸ Sida, Dollars, dialogue and development – an evaluation of Swedish programme aid, 1999, pages 66–67.

⁴⁹ Adea, page 50.

⁵⁰ Riddell, pages 3–6.

⁵¹ Ibid.

7.4 The dialogue within bilateral and multilateral donors

Part I: Dialogue in the partner country – Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	Part II. Dialogue between the country's government and the donor community – The country's government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	Part III. Dialogue among various donors – Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	Part IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor – HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority
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Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

7.4.1 Summary – the dialogue among various bilateral and multilateral donors

It is fundamental to donor cooperation on programme support that the same message goes out from a donor's HQ as from its country-based staff.

The Ministry of Finance has major influence over Swedish participation in budget support. According to a summary evaluation of Swedish programme support from 1999, there is disagreement as to how programme support should be structured. The Ministry of Finance is more closely aligned with the IMF's policy than are MFA and Sida. A considered dialogue is needed to balance these two perspectives.

As opposed to minor project support, budget support has a political dimension. The summary evaluation of eight country studies of Swedish programme support from 1999 found that Sida and the Ministry of Finance agree that MFA is too political, an assertion which is at the same time denied by both Sida and MFA. A clarification of the political positions is necessary when there are conflicting interests at work.

The division of responsibility and labour at the HQ of a development agency should be organised in a manner that enables international donor cooperation. An employee of the Canadian development agency Cida indicated in one of the evaluations that the agency's organisation hinders participation in international donor debate regarding programme support. Employees with specialised expertise concerning various societal sectors are locked into their work in regional departments, and thus have little opportunity to take part in an international dialogue.

7.4.2 Success factors – the dialogue among various bilateral and multilateral donors

The following factors were found to be important to this dialogue in the evaluated analyses:

- Coordination of HQ- and country-based personnel
- Dialogue on policy issues between Sida/MFA and the Ministry of Finance (pertains to budget support)
- Clarification of political position
- Division of responsibility at HQ which enables international donor cooperation

(a) Coordination of HQ- and country-based personnel

Analysis: To facilitate donor cooperation, the personnel at a donor's HQ should coordinate their efforts with the country-based personnel, and vice versa. This will ensure that the personnel at different levels within the organisation will be sending the same message to other donors.

Example: Norad points out that donors are often in agreement on policy issues at the HQ level, but that opinions often diverge in the partner country. A representative from the EC says that agreements between HQs are discussed very little at the country level. "Codes of conduct" and action plans are cited as examples where HQs withhold information. Unicef confirms that cooperation at the HQ level does not necessarily lead to cooperation at the country level. Usaid believes that there are differences between cooperation at the HQ level and at the country level. Initiatives to coordinate financial resources and programmes always come from the HQ level.⁵²

(b) Dialogue on policy issues between Sida/MFA and the Ministry of Finance (pertains to budget support)

Analysis: Dialogue on policy issues between Sida/MFA and the Ministry of Finance regarding conditions for disbursing budget support.

Example: Programme support is characterised by both MFA and the Ministry of Finance as being more involved than is the norm for other development cooperation. Employees at Sida and MFA indicate that they are often of the same mind regarding the conditions to which disbursements are subject. Disagreements can however arise with the Ministry of Finance, which adheres more strongly to the IMF line. This has consequences, since the financial world has a strong influence on Sweden's input in the policy dialogue insofar as the Ministry of Finance is Sweden's representative in the IFI board room, and also leads the Swedish delegation to the Club of Paris.⁵³

(c) Clarifying political positions

Analysis: The political position with respect to budget support can conflict with practical considerations among officials within a development agency.

Example: The summary evaluation of eight country studies of Swedish programme support found that Sida and the Ministry of Finance are in agreement that MFA is too political, an assertion which is at the same time denied by both Sida and MFA.⁵⁴

(d) Division of responsibility within HQ which enables international donor cooperation

Analysis: The division of responsibility at a development agency's HQ should be structured to enable international donor cooperation.

Example: One of the employees at the Canadian development agency, Cida, views the division of responsibility within the agency as an obstacle to international donor cooperation. Cida has been invited to

⁵² Riddell, page 15.

⁵³ Sida, Dollars, Dialogue and Development – an evaluation of Swedish programme aid, 1999, page xiii.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

play an active role in the cooperation with other donors, but lacks the resources to participate. Cida has only one half-time resource working specifically with SPS. Individuals with specialized expertise in various sectors are deployed with regional departments, and it is difficult for them to participate in SPS discussions.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Riddell, page 14.

8. Conclusions

The descriptions of dialogue in the evaluations pertain mostly to the dialogue in partner countries, followed by the dialogue between the country's government and the donor community, among various donors and, lastly, the dialogue within a donor. This may be because it is indeed the donors who have commissioned these evaluations. The impression derived from reading the evaluations is that the dialogues between and within various donor countries constitute an area in which relatively little research has been done.

Good dialogue is necessary in all four parts of the figure below if budget support or an SPS is to be successful. For example, if the dialogue between the headquarters and the embassy staff with respect to an individual donor is not working, then that donor cannot be clear in the dialogue with other donors. This in turn impedes coordination between the donor community and representatives from the partner country. On the other hand, if the dialogue within the public authority responsible for the sector to be reformed is not functioning, then it does not matter whether the donor community and the country's political leadership are acting in mutual agreement. One thus cannot say that the dialogue within one sphere is more important than the dialogue within another.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that it is difficult to set a lower limit on where the programme support per se ends and other national processes take over. How far into the actual enterprise within a sector can one say that one is still in the realm of development cooperation and budget support? When does the work make the transition to becoming the partner country's enterprise? Dialogue is of course needed at all levels, including within the actual sector activities, but a good deal of this need falls outside the framework of the dialogue conducted within the actual programme support per se. It is thus with good reason that the evaluations, to a large extent, elucidate mainly those relationships to which the multilateral and bilateral donors are party.

Part I: Dialogue in the partner country – Vertical within public authorities – Horizontal among various public authorities – The civil society – The end users – The general public – Donors	Part II. Dialogue between the country's government and the donor community – The country's government – Multilateral and bilateral donors	Part III. Dialogue among various donors – Multilateral donors – Bilateral donors	Part IV. Dialog within a bilateral or multilateral donor – HQ and embassy – MFA and development authority – MF and development authority
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Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

Dialogue processes within the framework of programme support

Despite the fact that the source material for this study spans multiple sectors, and the fact that the evaluations were themselves conducted at different levels of abstraction, we can see that the evaluators have chosen to comment on the dialogue perspective in certain areas. In some cases, the dialogue perspective is identified as a success factor, while in other cases it is identified by its absence as an obstacle to high goal fulfilment in connection with programme support.

This study has taken an in-depth look at which factors are viewed as success factors for achieving good dialogue, which in turn creates healthy conditions for high result achievement. We see in the evaluations that there are certain factors that appear to be conducive to good dialogue.⁵⁶ They are:

- high dialogue capacity and sensitivity to the perspectives of others on the part of principal stakeholders such as project owners, financiers and project agents
- A decentralised structure
- A clear division of roles
- A high degree of insight into the cooperation
- Strong local ownership

We can also see that there is a difference in the evaluations from 1999 regarding Swedish programme support⁵⁷ and other evaluations conducted in 2000 and thereafter. The difference is that the former evaluations give the impression that the cooperation between donors and partner countries is characterised by the donor country's desire to influence the partner country to a large extent. In the latter evaluations, the emphasis is more on dialogue, and there is greater sensitivity on the part of the donors to the views of the partner country. The recent evaluations from 2000 and thereafter pertain mainly to sector programme support, while the former evaluations are concerned with budget support. We do not know whether this difference is attributable to the time factor, the type of cooperation, or the perspectives of the evaluators.

⁵⁶ However, in certain cases we see more of a correlation than a clear cause-and-effect relationship.

⁵⁷ Dollars, Dialogue and Development – an evaluation of Swedish programme aid, 1999

9. How Sida can proceed to develop the dialogue within programme support

Sida can sometimes be the party which promotes the dialogue perspective in connection with programme support, but in many cases Sida should not be the promoting party. The ownership should reside with the project owner, and with the party in the driver's seat for the programme support. The government of a partner country in which programme support is undertaken is, in its capacity as project owner, often the most important stakeholder. In fact, the basic idea behind programme support is that of helping the government in the partner country to occupy the driver's seat. The efforts made in terms of dialogue perspective must contribute to this end.

However, Sida can be the party which points out the importance of preparing and implementing programme support with a well thought-through plan for how the dialogue is to be conducted with important stakeholders. Sida can also be the party that puts the dialogue issue on the agenda. Sida staff must be skilled in justifying why this perspective is important. Sida staff should also be able to demonstrate the opportunities and cost-effectiveness inherent in working explicitly with dialogue issues in a cooperative context.

If the project owner and other financiers find dialogue issues important, then the project owner should assume responsibility for seeing to it that the dialogue perspective is developed based on the problem analysis for which the project owner is responsible. This analysis should naturally be conducted with input from other stakeholders of importance to the programme. Even if Sida does not own the analysis, Sida can at this stage offer expertise and resources to support the project owner in analysing and planning the dialogue perspective. This means that the dialogue perspective is important both internally and externally within the programme support framework

Internally

One important method of developing the dialogue perspective is for programme officers and managers to strengthen their own insight into the importance of developed dialogue, and of increasing their understanding of how they can work to develop and plan the dialogue. The need for discussion about *why* the dialogue perspective is important cannot be underestimated.

Another important method is to continue to work with the separate internal dialogues between domestic authorities, embassies, MFA and other authorities and administrations. This becomes an issue of trust if Sida desires to act as the party promoting dialogue issues.

Appropriate activities for implementing these methods include:

- Continued cooperation between Sida's Programme Support Group and INFO
- Continued cooperation between METOD and INFO
- Strengthening personal dialogue competency among programme officers and supervisors within Sida. Cooperation between PEO and INFO should continue in order to achieve this.
- Working actively to sustain and develop the dialog perspective elements in Sida at Work among Sida's programme officers and supervisors, both at HQ and in the field.
- Offering courses for programme officers in working with "Sida's Guidelines for Planned Communication"
- Gathering and systematising Sida's own experiences in terms of what a developed dialogue perspective has contributed to programme support as a cooperative form. (For example, from pilot cases in the field.)
- Attempting to move from the abstract to the concrete with respect to how programme officers can work to develop the dialogue perspective within the framework of programme support.
- Seeking, in cooperation between Sida and MFA, to harmonise outgoing messages and clarify dialogue roles within the framework of each of the ongoing or planned programme support initiatives. Given the increasing number of fully delegated embassies, this could become even more important in the future.
- Using the results of this study to demonstrate the role of the dialogue in programme support.

Externally

It may be desirable to apply two methods for working externally with dialogue issues. The first involves increased dialogue with other donors regarding dialog perspectives in the context of programme support, e.g. at the March 2004 meeting with the World Bank et al. in Stockholm.

Second, Sida can attempt to develop the dialogue perspective in a Pilot Project. Sida INFO should conduct more in-depth discussions with affected sector and regional departments and embassies to study the possibility of cooperating with some programme support project owner to offer to develop the programme's dialogue perspective. Such a pilot project should initially be characterised by a large measure of sensitivity on the part of Sida. The initial goal must be to define where the need for working with a planned dialogue is greatest, i.e. where a planned dialogue could have the greatest positive impact.

Prior to such a project, it is important for Sida to decide what Sida's position is to be toward supporting analysis, planning and implementa-

tion to develop the dialogue in the four different portions of the communication process described in this study. Sida must ponder whether they are as interested in becoming involved in the problems (identified by the project owner and other stakeholders) listed in part I as in those listed in part III (see figure above in Chapter 8.).

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Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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