

Review of Sida Support to Trade in Light of International Experience

**Pre-study for a possible evaluation
of Sida's trade-related assistance**

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACWL	Advisory Centre for WTO Law
AITIC	Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation
CB	Capacity Building
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EPOPA	Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa
GATT	General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade
IMPOD	Import Promotion Office for Products from Developing Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEC	Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation (at Sida)
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITPD	International Trade Policy Department
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDT	Special and Differential Treatment
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TBT	Technical Barrier to Trade
TCB	Trade Capacity Building
TRA	Trade Related Assistance
TRIPS	Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TRTA	Trade-Related Technical Assistance
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UTV	The Secretariat of Evaluation and Internal Audit (at Sida)
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. Executive Summary

The objective of this report is to set the stage for a possible evaluation of Sida's trade-related assistance (TRA) by providing a broad orientation of Sida's TRA from an international perspective and by discussing implications for a possible future evaluation.

The rich and the fast-growing economies have and are using trade as one of the instruments to grow and to reduce poverty. Trade has become one of the main features of globalisation driven by technological progress and the global division of labour. However, the trade performance of an economy depends on a variety of internal and external factors – trade is a horizontal issue.

International trade is governed by international trade negotiations, the dynamics of which influence international TRA efforts. WTO is the main forum, though regional and bilateral negotiations are equally and sometimes more important. In recent years, the complexity of the negotiations in terms of the depth of the issues, the areas covered and the negotiation fora involved has increased. At the same time, the participation of low and middle-income countries, often with low capacity, has become much more important. As a consequence, more attention has focused on providing trade-related assistance – TRA – to these countries.

The currently most important international process related to TRA is Aid for Trade. It is primarily a process within the WTO aimed at increasing trade-related support, enhancing its effectiveness and improving monitoring of delivery, though it is often used as the most recent TRA label. Aid for Trade puts greater emphasis on building productive capacity and infrastructure in recipient countries than previous TRA concepts did. This is a very broad agenda.

It is difficult to produce an exact definition of TRA since it is influenced by and changes with the dynamics of trade negotiations, the latest fashion in the aid industry, what is statistically possible to measure, the views of influential stakeholders and what is currently believed to be most needed to boost trade in developing countries.

Nevertheless, according to one (high) estimate, global TRA amounted to on average approximately USD 21 billion annually or a fifth of total ODA between 2002 and 2005. Trade policy and regulations made up 4 per cent, infrastructure 54 per cent and building productive capacity 43 per cent. The number of actors involved in TRA is large and includes international and regional organisations, specialised organisations, bilateral donors, NGOs and research organisations. At the same time, the “big money” is controlled by a small set of large donors (Japan, USA, IDA and EC; Sweden is the 12th largest TRA donor), while the beneficiary side is diverse and often has weak absorptive capacity.

Sida's annual disbursements of TRA increased from SEK 96 million to SEK 198 million between 2000 and 2006. The increase is mainly due to growth in general trade policy support, while areas such as Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures/Technical Barrier to Trade (SPS/TBT) and Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) are losing in relative importance. Total committed amounts increased from SEK 600 million (70 activities) as of December 2005 to SEK 834 million (98 activities) as of December 2006.

Sida does not have a large bilateral portfolio on TRA, instead the portfolio is dominated by contributions to international organisations and programmes and projects implemented by the Swedish resource base. In addition, The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a sum of money to disburse on TRA.

Until recently, Swedish TRA suffered from a number of weaknesses in terms of policy, priorities and resources. The situation has now improved. Trade seems to be higher up on both the Government's and Sida's agendas. Sida has recently produced a plan for its TRA and it has the potential to provide a practical framework for Sida's future TRA, even though an evaluation framework is lacking. In addition, Sida's trade team is set to grow to about 10 people. At the same time, the current practices of issuing annual guidelines attached to the letter of appropriation and setting fixed amounts for Sida's TRA may be questioned on aid effectiveness grounds.

There are now a number of evaluations on international TRA. Some of these are reviewed by OECD/DAC, the analysis of which provides a good basis for a possible evaluation of Sida's TRA. There is very little systematic information on the results of Sida's own TRA, even though a number of reviews and reports have been produced for individual contributions.

There are a number of evaluation issues that are worth exploring further in terms of experiences from areas related to trade, instruments used by Sida's TRA, documentation of Sida's TRA, the practice of fixing annual TRA targets for Sida as mentioned above, reporting of TRA, an evaluation framework for Sida's TRA plan and integration of trade into Sida's overall activities.

The conditions for a major evaluation across the board of the TRA portfolio present some challenges: the portfolio is diverse, there is a bulk of global contributions that Sida can only influence to a limited degree and there is a lack of systematic information on contributions and results. At the same time, there are strong demands to show that Sweden delivers on promises made of TRA delivery within the Aid for Trade process.

Indeed, adopting a forward-looking approach of more focused result-related activities as an alternative to an across-the-board evaluation would be a feasible option. Evaluation activities could focus on channels (e.g. on the Swedish resource base); sectors (e.g. Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures); integration of trade into Sida's overall activities; a monitoring and evaluation framework for Sida's TRA; the TRA of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; and the conceptual chain between trade, poverty reduction and TRA.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Sida has commissioned two pre-studies by independent consultants to prepare for a possible future evaluation of Sida's trade-related assistance (TRA). A first report was produced in August (Haarberg, 2007, not published). This, the second report, was produced in October by consultant Jens Andersson ("Trade-Related Assistance, Terms of Reference for pre-study", 07/09/2007).

On the issue of evaluating Sida's TRA, it should be stated from the start that such an effort is well overdue. As we will see below, most of the major actors of TRA have already conducted evaluations of one sort or another – sometimes several years ago. Sweden/Sida has been conspicuously absent from this discussion, in particular considering its high ambitions in terms of evaluations and aid effectiveness in other areas of international development cooperation.

The need to consider an evaluation of Swedish TRA was recognised as early as spring 2004 by a group of representatives from Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which was put together to strengthen Swedish TRA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2004). The reasons for Swedish inaction on this issue may include lack of capacity and the fact that Sida has a relatively limited bilateral TRA portfolio. In addition the link between trade (and the trade community) and development cooperation (and the development community) has been far from uncontroversial in Sweden. All of these issues will be highlighted below.

2.2 Objective

The overall objective of this report, as spelled out in the terms of reference, is to set the stage for a possible evaluation of Sida's trade-related assistance.

The specific objectives are to:

1. *Provide a broad orientation of Sida's TRA from an international perspective* by giving an overview of the support itself and the experiences from it, and by relating it to the international TRA and experience from that.
2. *Discuss possible implications for evaluation* by suggesting potential issues for further exploration and/or evaluation and briefly discussing conditions for evaluability.

2.3 Method

There is a slight variation in the application of the terms of reference for this second report compared with the first. According to the terms of reference for this study there is no requirement for extensive data or primary information collection, literature search or rounds of interviews with Sida staff and stakeholders. Instead, "(t)he basic sources of information will be Haarberg's report as well as the consultant's own knowledge and material gathered during previous studies and research." In addition, relevant Sida personnel should be contacted should the need arise. In practice, Sida personnel have not been extensively consulted and Haarberg's report has been used only occasionally.

An effort has been made to provide a problem-orientated and comparative overview of Sida's trade-related assistance as called for in the terms of reference. Due to time and methodological constraints, the observations contained in the report often take the form of the author's personal reflections based on

previous work. The aim has also been to stimulate debate on the issues at hand. The author does of course take full responsibility for the contents of the report.

It is worth noting that there is one weak aspect in the study: the voice, needs and demands of the partner countries. Instead the donor perspective predominates.

A draft of this study was presented at a seminar organised by Sida in October 2007, with representatives from Sida's Board, various departments at Sida, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, SADEV and the research community. The final version of this study has incorporated the main points from the discussion that took place.

2.4 Structure

The structure of the study is as follows. First, trade-related assistance is put in an international context as a factual background to the rest of the document. The relation between trade and development, trade negotiations, the evolution of TRA, its definition and the structure and actors of international TRA are all briefly reviewed. Chapter 4 takes a look at Sida's TRA portfolio in terms of evolution and content. The next chapter dwells on the soft sides of Sida's TRA, such as policies, management and the relation between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Chapter 6 contains mainly experiences from international evaluations and more general observations regarding international TRA, as result-related information on Sida's own TRA is generally lacking. Chapter 7 concludes by responding to the second objective of the study through a discussion on evaluation issues and the conditions for evaluability.

Each chapter is introduced by a short "road map" and rounded off by some brief concluding remarks. These conclusions do not constitute a summary of the chapters, but only highlight issues relevant for a potential future evaluation.

3. Trade-related Assistance in an International Context

This chapter aims to provide a background to the discussion on Sida's TRA from an international perspective by reviewing the link between trade and development, TRA's role in international trade negotiations, its evolution over the years, its definition, and the main actors of TRA.

3.1 Trade and Development

The link between trade and development in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction is controversial. The debate between free-traders and protectionists has been fierce, though it often centres on trade liberalisation rather than on trade as such. It is difficult to deny the importance of trade to a developing economy even if one opposes the foundations of the capitalist society. Pre-capitalist societies traded, and today, the rich and the fast-growing economies have and are using trade as one of the instruments to grow and to reduce poverty. Trade has become one of the main features of globalisation driven by technological progress and the global division of labour.¹

Nevertheless, the exact causal link between trade and development or between trade liberalisation and development is not clear and probably depends on country circumstances. In fact, countries have always tended to liberalise and protect their markets as it suits their economic development and vested interests. This is still very much valid today with, for example, the reluctance of the richest countries to open up their agricultural markets to developing country exports, and when they do, measures such as complicated rules of origin, strict sanitary requirements and domestic subsidies act as non-tariff barriers to trade.

Nothing guarantees a positive effect from liberalisation unless the economy is ready for it. On the contrary, quite severe structural adjustments may be necessary when an economy is opened up, and vulnerable groups may be hard hit unless protective measures are in place. Since the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980's, African countries have opened up their borders, but with few exceptions (such as cut flowers from Kenya) this has not resulted in increased or diversified exports and growth. Instead, deeper measures to improve governance, internal savings and the overall business climate of an economy are needed to benefit from trade liberalisation. This highlights one of the specific characteristics of trade (and TRA): it is very much a horizontal issue in that it cuts across other policy areas.

3.2 International Trade Negotiations and Trade-related Assistance

The other major specificity of TRA is that it is strongly linked to international trade negotiations, to the extent that TRA can be called a negotiations "chip". As such, the driving force is not primarily the development relevance of TRA, but rather the dynamics and deal-makings of negotiations. Countries recognise that the overall goal is free trade, but in practice this is achieved by offering reductions in exchange for concessions on the part of the negotiating partners. The process has clear mercantilist characteristics in that countries want to export while protecting the national markets. The outcome reflects the bargaining power of the participants more than the development needs of poor countries.²

¹ In the current wave of globalisation, world exports have grown tenfold to USD 10 trillion a year since the early 1960's, clearly outpacing global economic growth (World Bank, 2006).

² De Vylder (2007)

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is of course the main negotiating forum, though the regional (such as EU's Economic Partnership Agreements, EPA, with Africa) and the bilateral (such as the various negotiations by the US and China) negotiations are equally, and sometimes more, important. These can even have a greater impact on negotiation partners, in particular the poor ones, than multilateral negotiations. Here, however, the focus will be on the WTO in order not to complicate the presentation.

The origin of WTO is the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that was signed in 1947 and still provides the basis of trade negotiations. Developing countries have been granted special benefits called special and differential treatment (SDT) since the mid-1950's. During the so called Uruguay Round (1986–1994) of trade negotiations, participation by developing countries in negotiations increased markedly from previously low levels. At the same time the number of areas included in the negotiations grew and the principle of a “single undertaking” was established. This meant that developing countries could no longer opt out of the parts of the agreement that they did not like. Consequently, the need to support the implementation of trade agreements and related adjustment was recognised during the Uruguay Round.

The Uruguay Round was the last in a series of negotiation rounds. Instead, WTO was established in 1995. In 1996, high-profile programmes of TRA, such as the Integrated Framework (see below), were initiated. Developing country participation in WTO grew and in 1999 the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle failed partly because developing countries demanded a greater voice in decision making. This, combined with the urgency for countries to stand together after the 11 September attacks in New York in 2001, contributed to putting development issues much more at the centre of international trade negotiations. The Doha Round (or euphemistically, and officially, the “Doha Development Agenda”) was launched at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001. It has experienced severe delays and is currently ongoing.

One of the areas in which progress has been achieved during DDA is TRA. In the first half of 2005, a number of high-level meetings, including the Spring Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, called for additional assistance to developing countries to expand their trade and ease the adjustment of their economies. In December the same year, the final declaration of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong invited the Director-General of the WTO “...to create a task force that shall provide recommendations on how to operationalize Aid for Trade.”³ Following intense deliberations and consultations, the Task Force issued its recommendations in July 2006.⁴

3.3 From Trade-related Technical Assistance to Aid for Trade

On the surface, the case for TRA is strong. Poorer countries need support to participate in trade negotiations and implement (costly) agreements, develop local institutional frameworks and policy and policy processes, develop the business climate and the export sector, construct the proper infrastructure and deal with trade-related structural adjustment. This will enhance their abilities to trade and allow them to grow, develop and reduce poverty. As we will see below, this is difficult to achieve in practice. Here we will only deal with the concept of TRA as such.

Trade-related assistance, as it is called in the terms of reference of this report, is just one of many labels that have been put on trade-related development cooperation.⁵ These have been influenced by the twists

³ WTO (2005), para 57

⁴ WTO (2006). It should be mentioned that Sweden has played a prominent role in the Aid for Trade process, in particular through WTO Ambassador Mia Horn of Rantzen, Chair of the Aid for Trade Task Force.

⁵ TRA will be used throughout this study as it is fairly neutral and broad and not associated with particular definitions or processes.

and turns of the current fashion in development cooperation and the fact that trade as a horizontal issue is inherently difficult to delineate and define. However, three main evolutionary steps can be identified as regards the concept of TRA:

- *Trade-related technical assistance (TRTA)*. Early on, much of the focus of TRA was on providing technical assistance to countries to allow them to negotiate agreements and implement the results. This is a rather narrow concept that implies a focus on short-term training and consultancy. Technical assistance as an instrument for development cooperation has been criticised for being donor-driven and ineffective.
- *Trade capacity building (TCB)*. Trade capacity building is the focus of the influential OECD/DAC guidelines published in 2001. They emphasise national trade policy making in developing countries and list a range of measures to increase the effectiveness of donor interventions. The guidelines' definition of trade capacity building was widely adopted. "Capacity building" centres on the capacity of the partner country and is thus more long-term and qualitative by nature than TRTA.
- *Aid for Trade*. Aid for Trade is a vague concept. It is primarily a process within the WTO aimed at increasing trade-related support, enhancing its effectiveness and improving monitoring of delivery, though it is often used as the most recent TRA label, thus replacing the old TCB. It is often not clear which side of the Aid for Trade coin is being addressed. In any case, Aid for Trade puts more emphasis on building productive capacity and infrastructure in recipient countries than TCB did, thus enlarging and deepening the TRA agenda further.⁶ This is a positive development, since the key constraints to trade by poorer countries is often their overall lack of competitiveness.⁷

3.4 Definitions of TRA

The main definition of TRA in use today is the one that has been developed for the so-called Doha Development Agenda Trade Capacity Building Database. It is a joint WTO/OECD effort that provides information on donor-funded, trade-related, technical assistance and capacity building (TRTA/CB) projects from 2001 to 2005 and part of 2006.⁸ For the purposes of data collection for the database, TRTA/CB is defined as activities that are intended to enhance the ability of the recipient country to:

- formulate and implement a trade development strategy and create an enabling environment for increasing the volume and value added to exports, diversifying export products and markets and increasing foreign investment to generate jobs and trade; or
- stimulate trade by domestic firms and encourage investment in trade-oriented industries; or
- participate in and benefit from the institutions, negotiations and processes that shape national trade policy and the rules and practices of international commerce.

This definition follows the one of the OECD/DAC guidelines very closely. On the basis of this definition, donors are supposed to pinpoint their trade-related activities and report them to the database, placing them in the following categories and sub-categories:

⁶ What exactly "building productive capacity" means is far from clear, but basically it focuses on the actual competitiveness of countries and on developing export products.

⁷ See, for example, IMF and World Bank (2007)

⁸ See <http://tcbdb.wto.org/index.aspx>

- *Trade policy and regulations* – support to aid effective participation by recipients in multilateral trade negotiations, analysis and implementation of multilateral trade agreements, trade policy mainstreaming and technical standards, trade facilitation including tariff structures and customs regimes, support to regional trade arrangements and human resources development in trade.
- *Trade development* – business development and activities aimed at improving the business climate, access to trade finance, and trade promotion in the productive sectors (agriculture, forestry, fishing, industry, mining, tourism, services), including at the institutional and enterprise level.

No specific data collection is being done for infrastructure, but data on transport, storage, communications and energy are extracted from the OECD's Creditor Reporting System and reported separately in the database.

The relevance for trade varies between the categories. Activities within trade policy and regulations are usually considered to be solely trade related, while trade development (and even more so infrastructure) activities generally have another major objective, e.g., agricultural development. In addition, in the trade development category some donors isolate the trade component, while others report the whole activity as trade-related. As a consequence, OECD/DAC advises against comparing the amounts of the three categories.⁹ In fact, there are major methodological challenges in determining which activities to report to the database, which lowers its reliability.

The Aid for Trade Task Force extends the scope of TRA. Six categories are identified:

- a) Trade policy and regulations
- b) Trade development
- c) Trade-related infrastructure, including physical infrastructure
- d) Building productive capacity
- e) Trade-related adjustment, including supporting developing countries to put in place accompanying measures that assist them to benefit from liberalized trade.
- f) Other trade-related needs

According to the Task Force report, categories a) and b) should follow the database report, while categories c), d), e) and f) should be “*reported as Aid for Trade when these activities have been explicitly identified as trade-related priorities in the recipient country's national development strategies, such as the PRSP*.”¹⁰ It is obvious that the Task Force has established an idealised and politically correct definition, without dealing with how the definition should be used and reported on in practice.

In May 2007 the WTO/OECD decided to remove the Trade Development category as reported in the WTO/OECD database and replace it with data on Building Productive Capacity from the Economic infrastructure and Production categories of regular OECD/DAC reporting starting in 2008. It was also suggested to add a Trade Development “marker” under Building Productive Capacity. However, a marker would not solve the underlying problem of distinguishing the trade component from other aspects of productive capacity. One way of solving this is to include all activities aimed at building productive capacity, whether or not they are trade-related. This is the approach taken in the recent mapping of global Aid for Trade done by OECD's Development Centre, which is quoted below.¹¹

⁹ OECD and WTO (2007)

¹⁰ WTO (2006)

¹¹ Andersson et al. (2007)

3.5 Structure and Actors of International TRA

TRA became highly fashionable in the trade community with the Doha Round, and consequently the number of actors involved in international TRA has grown rapidly. Surprisingly there is still no real international forum for discussions on best practice and other aspects of TRA. Until the Aid for Trade process was initiated such deliberations took place in an ad hoc fashion in the OECD/DAC, WTO, World Bank, Integrated Framework or at the initiative of bilateral donors and NGOs. A major leap in improving transparency of global TRA was made when the WTO/OECD database was set up and when TRA providers started publishing evaluations.

The Aid for Trade process was partly initiated to address the structural weakness of international TRA, to increase its effectiveness and to better monitor its delivery and results. WTO will be at the core of this process. A WTO-led monitoring framework has been established with three components:

- i. global tracking of aid-for-trade flows using the OECD Creditor Reporting System
- ii. donor reports based on self-assessments, and
- iii. recipient reports, also based on self-assessments.

All WTO countries (donors and partner countries alike) have received questionnaires for the self-assessment and to facilitate discussions at the first WTO Annual Review of Aid for Trade in November 2007.¹²

The annual “market” for Aid for Trade in the wide sense is very large: approximately USD 21 billion, which equals a fifth of total ODA. Trade policy and regulations makes up 4 per cent, infrastructure 54 per cent and building productive capacity 43 per cent. Table 1 shows the top global TRA donors in terms of volume.

¹² http://www.oecd.org/document/5/0,3343,en_2649_34665_39119685_1_1_1_1,00.html

Table 1 Top global TRA donors by volume
USD million in constant 2004 prices, 2002–2005 average

		Total Aid for Trade	% of total	Trade Policy and Regula- tions	Trade-related Infra-structure	Building Productive Capacity	Trust funds
1	Japan	4 899	23%	34	3 870	995	1
2	USA	3 284	16%	174	1 536	1 574	2
3	IDA	3 244	15%	52	1 725	1 467	1
4	EC	2 570	12%	377	1 238	954	1
5	Germany	1 134	5%	16	516	601	2
6	UK	697	3%	29	293	375	2
7	France	657	3%	11	326	320	1
8	Netherlands	526	3%	10	131	384	3
9	Denmark	379	2%	0	188	190	4
10	Spain	321	2%	1	194	126	0
11	Italy	218	1%	1	134	84	1
12	Sweden	206	1%	10	95	101	4
13	Norway	202	1%	3	74	125	5
14	Switzerland	202	1%	7	30	165	5
15	Belgium	201	1%	1	46	154	0
16	Canada	264	1%	26	34	204	3
17	Australia	146	1%	10	47	88	0
	Total	20 979	100%	804	11 247	8 928	46

Source: Adapted from Table 1, p. 24 in Andersson et al. (2007). The amounts are based on USD million in constant 2004 prices, 2002–2005 average. Note that contributions to trust funds are not included in the totals.

More than 40 multilateral agencies and donors report to the WTO/OECD database. The main categories of actors involved in TRA are the following:

- *Trade negotiators.* The negotiators deal with TRA as part of the negotiations, as has been pointed out above, but not always with development as the main aim. In general, low-income countries have very few people involved in negotiations, and communication with capitals is weak. In rich countries, the link between negotiators (that tend to promise TRA) and development practitioners (the ones in charge of foreign aid) is in the main weak.
- *Recipient countries.* Trade ministries are the main local counterparts to TRA. In general, they have weak capacity and are marginalised by more powerful ministries such as Finance ministries. In practice, trade policy is generally not a very high priority at country level. Efforts are made (not the least by donors) to engage sector ministries, NGOs, journalists and other stakeholders in TRA and trade policy.
- *International organisations.* The World Bank is by far the largest TRA donor in this category. WTO, International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are also important, more because of their global outreach and participation in the Integrated Framework than in terms of the volume of activities. Smaller Geneva-based organisations include Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC), Advisory Centre for WTO Law (ACWL) and South Centre.

- *Multilateral programmes.* The Integrated Framework is the most high-profile TRA programme to date. It is a joint effort by, among others, the large international organisations mentioned under the previous point to mainstream trade into the development strategies of LDCs and deliver TRA in a coordinated manner. Results so far have been modest and the programme has recently been revamped for the second time. Another effort that focuses more on technical assistance is Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP) run by WTO, UNCTAD and ITC.
- *Specialised organisations.* Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are the largest TRA providers in this category. Other relevant specialised organisations with limited TRA include International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Customs Organization and World Intellectual Property Organization.
- *Regional organisations.* The regional banks were late starters and are now increasing their trade-related expertise. African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank are all large providers of support to productive capacity and infrastructure. Organisations such as Organization of American States, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa also have trade-related activities. Important actors and recipients of support are also the various sub-regional organisations, such as Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and African Regional Standards Organisation.
- *Bilateral donors.* As can be seen from the table above, the largest overall donors are also the largest ones in terms of Aid for Trade. Japan is the largest Aid for Trade donor by far, mainly because of massive support to infrastructure in Asia. EC follows (if defined as a bilateral donor) and is the main donor to trade policy and regulations, ahead of the US. Sweden is a mid-sized donor in terms of total Aid for Trade, in twelfth place. Sweden is a large donor to trade policy and regulations and a relatively small one to building productive capacity. At the same time, Sweden is the third largest contributor to trust funds, which tend to be supported more by small donors. Overall, Sweden has one of the lowest shares of Aid for Trade of all donors (less than 10 per cent of total aid).
- *NGOs and research networks.* A range of international and regional non-governmental actors are involved in TRA. Most of these receive funding from donors, including from Sida. The most well-known is perhaps the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, which is a central source of information on trade negotiations. Others include European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty (ILEAP), Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS), Latin American Trade Network, Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI), Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (TRALAC) and Economic and Social Research Foundation in Tanzania.

3.6 Conclusions

Trade is a concept that can signify many things and it is an issue that cuts horizontally across other areas of development and economic policy. Consequently, TRA (or whatever it is labelled) is inherently hard to define. The definition is influenced by and changes with the dynamics of trade negotiations, the latest fashion in the aid industry, what is statistically possible to measure, the views of influential stakeholders and what is currently believed to be needed most to boost trade in developing countries.

The future of TRA will be shaped by the Aid for Trade process currently underway in the WTO context. It applies a broad definition to TRA, and an important component is the development of a monitoring framework for international TRA efforts.

The status of “Trade development” as an independent TRA category is likely to change in the near future.

A large number of donors and organisations are involved in TRA. At the same time, the “big money” is controlled by a small number of large donors. The beneficiary end is heterogeneous and sometimes quite weak in terms of capacity.

4. Composition of Sida's Trade-Related Assistance Portfolio

This chapter will present Sida's trade-related assistance portfolio from a statistical and activity perspective. A section on TRA by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also been included. The "softer" side of TRA, i.e., policies and management, is presented in the next chapter.

There are some methodological challenges in presenting the status and evolution of Sida's TRA portfolio:

- The same problems of scope and definition as encountered in the context of the WTO/OECD database are found here. In particular, as was highlighted above, it is difficult to identify and assess the trade component of trade development activities. In addition, definitions and scope have changed over time. Sida's reporting system (PLUS) has been adapted over time (as has OECD/DAC's statistics) to more clearly include trade policy and regulations, but this is difficult to do for trade development. By and large, Sida's classification of TRA follows that of the WTO/OECD database.
- The collection and reporting of Sida's TRA have not been done in a consistent and regular manner over time. One reason is that it is a very resource-demanding and manual process to assemble the portfolio.
- In the actual presentation of data, great care must be taken to be clear about what kinds of activities are included: commitments or disbursements, current or discounted amounts and so on.
- There are two sources available: the standardised WTO/OECD database to which Sweden reports, but which only contains data on annual commitments, and Sida's own list of activities that includes information on disbursements.
- Infrastructure and wider building productive capacity activities are excluded from the following, as these categories are outside the usual realm of thematic trade evaluations.

4.1 Evolution of the TRA Portfolio

Based on information from Sida, the annual disbursements of TRA increased from SEK 97 million to SEK 208 million between 2000 and 2006, as shown in Table 2.¹³ The increase is mainly due to growth in general trade policy support, while areas such as Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures/Technical Barrier to Trade (SPS/TBT) and Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) are losing in relative importance. Total committed amounts increased from SEK 600 million (70 activities) as of December 2005 to SEK 833 million (95 activities) as of December 2006.

¹³ The figures on Sida's TRA portfolio 2006 differ from those published in Sida (2007b), because they come from raw background data to that publication, which allows for analysis at greater levels of detail.

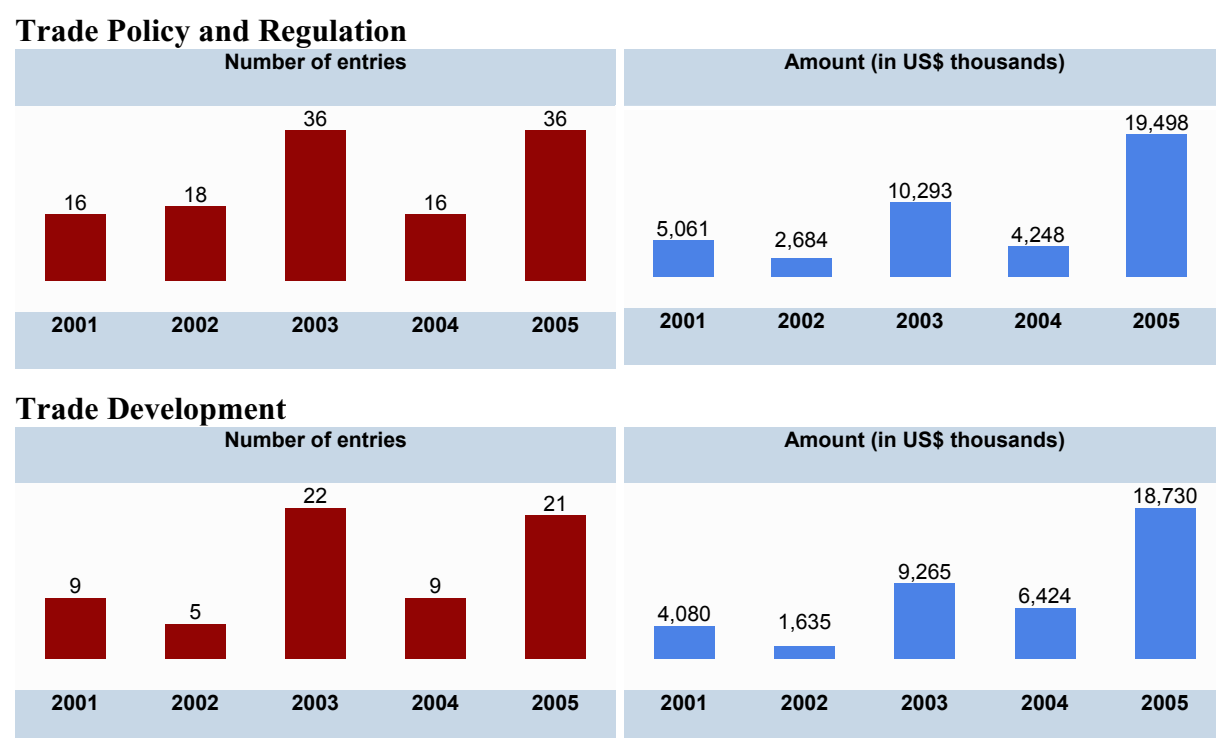
Table 2 Sida's TRA portfolio 2000–6
Million SEK

	2000	2001	2002	2005	2006 (prel)
Total disbursements	97	126	128	160	208
Trade policy	40	41	57		117
General trade policy support	7	9	19		77
SPS/TBT	19	14	14		16
TRIPS	7	8	13		12
Environment	5	8	9		12
Services	0	3	3		0
Other	1	0,4	1		0
Trade development	57	85	70		91

Source: Sida (2003), Sida (2006) and unpublished background data for Sida (2007b).

The data on commitments from the WTO/OECD database in Figure 1 confirm the increase, even though there seems to have been a slump in commitments in 2004. Overall, contributions to trade policy and regulations have been increasing more rapidly than trade development, which is also a stated objective in Sida's policy for trade-related development cooperation.¹⁴

Figure 1 Evolution of Sida's support to Trade Policy and Regulation Trade Development 2001–7
Number of entries and committed USD million



Source: Haarberg (2007) based on the WTO/OECD database. The data do not include contributions to trust funds.

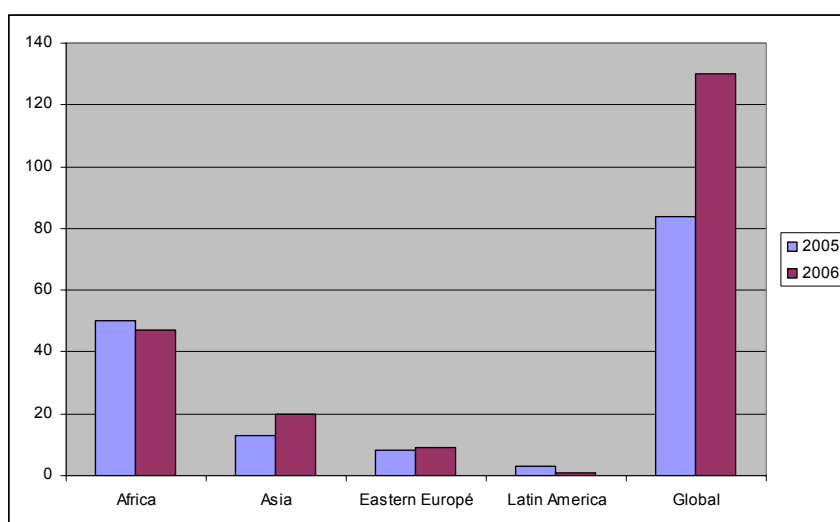
¹⁴ Sida (2005)

4.2 Sida's Current TRA Portfolio

The geographical distribution of Sida's current, active TRA portfolio is presented in Figure 2. The most interesting point is the very high share of global and, to some extent, regional activities. This is most marked for trade policy and regulations. Africa is the largest recipient region. It should be pointed out, however, that a global programme such as the Integrated Framework mainly benefits Africa. The predominance of global programmes is more an illustration of a choice of channel than of the end-beneficiary. This has important implications for any evaluation efforts, since the effectiveness of contributions to global programmes can, to a limited extent, be influenced by Sida.

As can be seen in Table 3, Tanzania is the largest destination of bilateral TRA followed by Uganda and Ukraine.

Figure 2 Geographical distribution of total disbursements for 2005 and 2006
SEK million



Source: Sida (2007b)

Table 3: Country distribution of total bilateral commitments as of December 2006
SEK million

Country	Amount
Tanzania	41
Uganda	35
Ukraine	23
China	14
Vietnam	10
Palestine	6
Belarus	5
Timor-Leste	4
Russia	3
South Africa	3
Mongolia	2
Total	146

Source: Unpublished background data Sida (2007b)

Trade Policy and Regulations

In the trade policy and regulations category, Sida had an active portfolio of 43 contributions as of December 2006. Total commitments were SEK 468 million. In 2006, SEK 117 million was disbursed and SEK 131 million was committed. The distribution between sub-sectors and activities are as follows:¹⁵

SPS/TBT (7% of total commitments)

Global contributions to the International Organisation for Standardisation, World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Standards and Trade Development Facility, and regional support to the African Organization for Standardization.

TRIPS (13%)

Funding of courses offered by Sida's international training programme and support to South Centre for a TRIPS programme.

Trade and environment (5%)

Global contributions to International Institute for Sustainable Development and UNEP, two regional contributions to East Africa (through International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements and Kenya National Cleaner Production Centre) and a KTS in China.

Trade education/training (33%)

Funding of courses run by Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment. Support to Economic Community of West African States in trade negotiations and to an FAO project on fisheries in West Africa. Approximately SEK 100 million has been committed to the recently established Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA), a collaboration between ESAMI based in Arusha, Tanzania, and the University of Lund.¹⁶

Other trade policy and regulations (42%)

By far the largest amount, SEK 129 million, has been committed to supporting the Integrated Framework between 2004 and 2008. The rest consists mainly of core funding to ILEAP ICTSD and ITC¹⁷, and project funding to UNCTAD (World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies), International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (organic farming), South Centre (LDC centre) and International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (subsidies). There is some regional support to Africa through JITAP and the trade panel of the African Union. The only bilateral project is on rules of origin in Vietnam.

Trade Development

According to the documentation at hand, Sida had an active trade development portfolio of 52 contributions as of December 2006. Total commitments were SEK 366 million. In 2006, SEK 91 million was disbursed and SEK 104 million was committed. There are currently discussions underway internationally and within Sida/INEC on how to categorise trade development activities. Most of the activities are classified as "business support services" and the trade component of the activities varies. There is substantial participation from the Swedish resource base. The following list includes most of the contributions:

¹⁵ This section accounts for most but not all Sida's trade policy and regulations activities.

¹⁶ See http://www.trapca.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=129

¹⁷ ITC contributions are later categorised as trade development by Sida, which is probably the right place for this contribution.

- Core and project (Vietnam) funding to ITC
- A number of private sector related projects with relatively low trade components in the Balkans and Asia implemented by the World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC).
- Support to the International Organisations of Standardisation.
- A global trade promotion programme aimed mainly at enhancing developing country exports to the Swedish market contracted out to the Association of Swedish Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The programme includes institutional development components.
- Institutional development of local chambers of commerce performed by Swedish chambers of commerce in Ethiopia, Palestine, Russia, Tanzania, Ukraine and Uganda.
- Global and regional projects implemented by the International Council of Swedish Industry
- Sector development projects in South Africa (furniture), Uganda (beef) and regionally in East Africa (EPOPA). Here, support could be added to eco-production in Zambia and clean production in Bolivia as well as support to private sector development in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Uganda
- Various projects in Ukraine, the most prominent being Business Development Centres (BDC's) at Ukrainian universities implemented by Mälardalen University
- Other contributions such as support to information activities performed by Swedish NGOs Forum Syd and LO/TCO¹⁸, import guarantees through the Association of Swedish Chambers of Commerce and Industry and a couple of international training programmes on issues such as management and organic agriculture

Two other sets of activities, Malonda and the so called Start programmes, were previously counted as trade development, but are now part of Sida's private sector portfolio.¹⁹

4.3 The Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs also has funds to support TRA activities. The amount was SEK 45 million for 2007, stable since 2006, but up from SEK 5 million in 1997. In 2006, the largest disbursement (SEK 16 million) was to the trust fund for technical assistance at the WTO. Other annual core contributions were ACWL, AITIC and Open Trade Gate Sweden (see below). Project-related contributions included support to EPA negotiations to African, Caribbean and Pacific States, investment-related contributions to UNCTAD, support to the Aid for Trade process and work on corporate social responsibility. The division of labour between Sida and the Ministry is explored in the next chapter.

4.4 Conclusions

Sida's definition of TRA closely follows that of the WTO/OECD database.

Sida does not have a large bilateral portfolio on TRA, instead the portfolio is dominated by contributions to international organisations and programmes and projects implemented by the Swedish resource base.

¹⁸ LO (Landsorganisationen) and TCO (Tjänstemännens centralorganisation) are major Swedish blue- and white-collar trade unions.

¹⁹ Malonda provides support to the private sector related to agriculture in the Niassa region in Mozambique. The so-called StartSyd and StartÖst are managed by NUTEK on behalf of Sida and give Swedish companies access to financial assistance to establish themselves in countries selected by Sida.

The exact content of Sida's TRA portfolio has not been fully consistent over the years. If an evaluation is to be made it is therefore important to clearly determine which contributions and period in time should be covered by the evaluation effort.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a sum of money to disburse on TRA.

5. Policies and Management of Sida's Trade-Related Assistance

This chapter gives an overview of Swedish policies, management and Swedish actors of relevance to Sida's TRA.

5.1 Policies and Guiding Documents

Like every other sector of Sida, its TRA is guided by Sweden's Policy for Global Development and its objectives and perspectives. The goal of Sida's Policy for Trade-Related Development Cooperation is to *“assist developing countries to integrate into the world economy in a way that makes it possible for them to benefit from trade to promote sustainable, poverty-reducing growth.”*²⁰

In the Government's Budget Bill for 2007, trade was singled out as one of the priority areas for Swedish development cooperation. In the Budget Bill for 2008, trade is not one of the three thematic priorities listed for the rest of the election period (democracy and human rights, gender and environment).²¹ Trade is instead highlighted as an “important process” from the previous year and *“[t]he Government will continue to promote long-term Swedish involvement in trade-related development cooperation...”* (p. 56) Exploring what this means in practice is beyond the scope of this study.

Sida's letter of appropriation for 2007 explicitly states that Sida's TRA disbursements shall not be lower than SEK 270 million – a substantial increase compared with 2006.²² More detail on the content is given in the guidelines for trade-related development that are annexed to Sida's letter of appropriation.²³ The Government specifically instructs Sida to integrate trade into overall development cooperation, focus on trade facilitation and SPS/TBT in its TRA and support developing country needs in terms of trade development, strengthening the supply side and participation in trade negotiations. In addition, Sida is instructed to produce a plan for its trade-related development cooperation and how it intends to strengthen the integration of trade into its overall development cooperation activities.

The plan was finalised in May 2007, as requested, and gives the clearest indication so far as to the focus of Sida's future TRA.²⁴ Sub-Saharan Africa is to be the focus region. At bilateral level, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique are the countries with most potential for Sida's TRA. The substantive focus areas will be:

- a) *Trade in agricultural products*, with a specific focus on sanitary and phytosanitary standards and technical barriers to trade
- b) *Power trading*, essentially cross-border electricity
- c) *Transaction costs*, comprising trade facilitation and transport
- d) *Trade development*, the exact focus of which is to be explored further
- e) *Research, training and policy processes*, such as support to the Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa

²⁰ Sida (2005)

²¹ Government of Sweden (2006a) and (2007)

²² Government of Sweden (2006b)

²³ Government of Sweden (2006c)

²⁴ Sida (2007a)

EU recently adopted a strategy on Aid for Trade.²⁵ In it the Commission and the member states commit to a number of actions relating to the quantity and quality of Aid for Trade. In particular, EU commits collectively to increase spending on TRA – defined as trade policy and regulations and trade development – to EUR 2 billion annually by 2010. Approximately 50% of the increase will be available to ACP countries.

The strategy also underscores the importance of monitoring and evaluation of Aid for Trade. In particular, EU will contribute to the development of shared quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring and evaluating impacts of AfT and exchange information and draw joint conclusions on monitoring and evaluation results.

5.2 Managing Swedish TRA

The relationship between the trade and development communities and between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is key to understanding the twists and turns of Swedish TRA. Sometimes the issues are of a sensitive nature. No deeper information gathering to explore this issue has been done for this study. Instead the following observations build on the experience and earlier work of the author and are aimed at giving a first insight into the issues involved.

Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The two main actors involved in managing Swedish TRA are the Trade Team at Sida/INEC/Market and the International Trade Policy Department (ITPD) at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Sida's Trade Team is the focal point for Sida's TRA; it plans and implements the activities in the area. It administers most of the contributions within trade policy and regulations, while many of the trade development contributions are the responsibility of other departments at Sida. The trade team also responds to various requests from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on trade policy issues, e.g., Aid for Trade. The ITPD is the central expert section on trade policy in the Government Offices. In particular, the department is responsible for trade-related support to developing countries. Both the Trade Team and the ITPD manage TRA funds, as should be clear from the above.²⁶

These two units are pushing the trade agenda in their respective organisations. According to Sida's trade team there is currently a rather large interest in trade within Sida.

However, getting there has not been straight forward. Since the failed, large-scale industrialisation efforts and the criticised structural adjustment programmes of the 1980's, development cooperation has very much focused on social sectors. This is apparent both from the first generation PRSPs and the global distribution of aid between sectors. As has been seen above, Sweden is no exception. On the contrary, it can even be said, without being too controversial, that, at least until recently, there has been scepticism to growth in general and trade in particular at Sida. Instead, Sida's focus has been on social and rights issues. The social focus is perfectly understandable from a poverty perspective, but needs to be balanced by an understanding of the economic side of development. Economic growth is vital to create jobs and accumulate resources to reduce aid dependency.

In addition, Sida's trade activities have been somewhat alien to the organisation. As is pointed out in Sida's recent plan for trade-related development cooperation, Sida's trade activities originate, to some extent, from the Import Promotion Office for Products from Developing Countries (IMPOD), which

²⁵ EU (2007)

²⁶ Swedish overseas representations and embassies also have a vital role in TRA; the embassies in regional and bilateral TRA (even though bilateral TRA is limited) and the Geneva and Brussels representations as regards trade negotiations related to TRA and Aid for Trade. This aspect is not explored further in this study.

focused on promoting imports from developing countries into Sweden.²⁷ In 1991, IMPOD was integrated into SwedeCorp, which had a broader mandate to strengthen industry, investment and trade in developing countries. In 1995, SwedeCorp was included into the “new” Sida and INEC.²⁸ With the increase in trade policy activities, such expertise has been recruited externally. The external character of the Trade Team and the resistance to the “technical” and “economical” trade issues within the rest of Sida may have contributed to the rather slow and difficult integration of trade issues within Sida’s overall activities. Another factor has been the lack of human resources within the Trade Team.

Over the years, this situation has provoked frustration and mistrust within the trade department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The department is responsible for the commitments Sweden makes in international trade negotiations, but implementation is mainly in the hands of Sida. A complicating factor is that within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, relations with Sida are in the hands of other departments, which are more interested in overall development issues than in trade.

These tensions most certainly contributed to the proposal by the then Minister of Trade to set up a Swedish institute for trade capacity building. The issue was investigated but came to nothing.²⁹ More interestingly, a process was set in motion to address the structural weaknesses of the internal management of Swedish TRA. These shortcomings contributed not only to weakening the trade aspect of Swedish overall development cooperation and lowering the quality of project management, but also to Sweden being rather invisible in the international discussions on TRA. The main areas that needed to be addressed were identified in a special project in 2004 that included participants from Sida and various parts of the Ministry.³⁰ These are listed below together with an informal assessment of what has happened since.

Formulation of overall objectives and priorities of Swedish TRA

There is still no long-term strategy for Swedish TRA. However, a number of clarifications have been made. Sida developed a policy for trade-related development cooperation in 2005, even though it is more an overall statement of known facts than a practical guiding document.³¹ Instead, the recent Sida plan of TRA has that potential, in particular in conjunction with the recent concentration efforts of the Government.

On the government side, trade was singled out as one of the priority areas for Swedish development cooperation in 2007 (but not as clearly in 2008). In addition, the letter of appropriation has been amended (see next point).

Clearer instructions for Sida’s TRA, e.g., through letters of appropriation and country strategies

Sida’s letter of appropriation has been amended in two ways. First, the minimum amount Sida should disburse to TRA in a given year is included (SEK 270 million for 2007) and, second, “guidelines” for trade-related development are attached. Both measures are quite extraordinary and must be seen as a major success for the “trade side” within the Ministry. Both measures are also potentially damaging in terms of aid effectiveness. They appear as supply-driven, politically motivated and short-sighted. They put the emphasis on quantity and preparation of new contributions, instead of on quality and follow-up. It would be better to agree on long-term priorities than disbursement levels. Perhaps the recent plan of TRA can be a starting point.

²⁷ Sida (2007a)

²⁸ Parts of the trade-promoting activity were moved to the Association of Swedish Chambers of Commerce as a Sida-funded programme.

²⁹ See Andersson (2003) and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2005)

³⁰ Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2004)

³¹ Sida (2005)

In terms of Sweden's country strategies, trade-related issues did, at least until recently, not fare very well.³² Changes may have taken place of late, but further analysis has been beyond the scope of this study.

Clearer division of labour between the various Swedish actors relevant to TRA, including improved participation in international programmes and fora

The guidelines mentioned above contain two positive points. First, they put emphasis on the importance of integrating trade into overall development cooperation, and, second, they include a tentative clarification of the division of labour between Sida and the Ministry.

On the first point, it should be underlined that this has been a major issue in international discussions on TRA. "Mainstreaming" trade into development cooperation has been seen as the panacea for improving TRA effectiveness, though it is unclear what this actually means. "Integration" of trade is a better and less ambitious concept and is clearly the way forward. Trade has long been treated separately, but as has become increasingly clear, it has to be dealt with as part of the overall growth agenda. The affinities with other sectors, such as private sector development and agriculture are obvious. Here work is underway within Sida/INEC, and the recent plan deals at length with this issue. It is currently unclear what implications the overall concentration processes, in terms of countries and sectors, will have on the potential to integrate trade into Swedish development cooperation.

On the second point, the guidelines state that the Government Office should handle short-term negotiation-related contributions, contributions with political impact and contributions related to processes in which the Government Office participates. A basic principle is that core support should be provided by Sida or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (not both as was actually the case for a while) and that Sida should increasingly handle such contributions.

It seems that Sida would be better suited to manage all TRA, as it has the instruments to do so. At the same time, Sida's rules and regulations are quite burdensome at times, while the Ministry can be more flexible and quick but has limited resources in terms of follow-up on the effectiveness of its contributions.

Sweden (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida) has dedicated substantial resources to participate in the international discussion on Aid for Trade and Integrated Framework. Sweden has even taken the lead to some extent. The Sida plan also shows that there is a growing awareness of the importance of focusing Swedish advocacy resources on the most relevant international programmes and fora in order to increase Sweden's impact. The question now is how this should be linked to activities at country level; so far the involvement of Swedish embassies in TRA has been low.

More structured cooperation between the actors to exploit synergies

The guidelines state that a dialogue on the implementation of TRA between Sida's management and the Government Office should be held twice a year and that there should be a continued dialogue at lower levels in order to coordinate Swedish efforts, enhance continuity and increase coherence between various types of support. How this works in practice at present is beyond the scope of this study.

Increased resources and competence

Sida's trade team has grown and now includes eight people. It aims to have ten people in the near future. Whether this is appropriate is again beyond the scope of this study. As a comparison, Sida's PSD team consists of four people. At the Ministry, one person is responsible for the TRA portfolio and Aid for Trade as a policy area.

³² Andersson (2004)

Other Swedish Actors

Several other actors participate in one way or another in the formulation and implementation of Swedish TRA. TRA covers a range of specialised areas, and in each of these areas there are Swedish agencies or organisations that can be said to constitute the Swedish “resource base” for TRA.³³ The bulk of Sida’s bilateral TRA is implemented by Swedish agencies and organisations, such as the National Board of Trade (which also hosts Open Trade Gate Sweden³⁴), Swedish Patent and Registration Office, Swedish Customs, International Council of Swedish Industry, chambers of commerce, Forum Syd and LO/TCO.

5.3 Conclusions

Overall, there seems to have been clear progress in strengthening the management of Swedish TRA in terms of policies, priorities and resources.

The question remains whether issuing annual guidelines attached to the letter of appropriation and setting fixed amounts for Sida’s TRA really promotes aid effectiveness.

EU has committed to increase spending on TRA – defined as trade policy and regulations and trade development – to EUR 2 billion annually by 2010

Sida’s recent trade plan has the potential to provide a practical framework for Sida’s future TRA. It should be complemented by an evaluation framework.

The status of the current integration of trade into Sida’s overall activities has not been explored in this study, but it has previously been rather weak.

There are a number of Swedish actors that can be said to constitute the Swedish TRA resource base. Their past and future role in shaping Swedish TRA would be worth exploring further.

³³ There are overall efforts at the Government Office and Sida to structure and develop the participation of this resource base in Swedish development cooperation, and a number of reports have been produced on the topic, but a deeper analysis has been beyond the scope of this study.

³⁴ A one-stop-information centre for developing countries regarding trade rules and regulations in Sweden.

6. Sida's and International Experience from Evaluations

A couple of years ago, when TRA was first put high on the international trade and development agenda, there was hardly any information on good practices and the effectiveness of TRA. This has now changed for the benefit of all the stakeholders involved. As has been mentioned above, Sida has unfortunately been quite absent in this respect. This chapter reviews the lessons from both Sida's and international evaluations.

6.1 Sida's Evaluations of Relevance to TRA

There are only three formal evaluations directly relevant to Sida's TRA: on the development of a national quality infrastructure in Namibia, on Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa (EPOPA) and on the Start programmes.³⁵ The latter is now part of Sida's private sector development portfolio. In addition, there are a number of reviews and reports being produced for individual contributions, such as for the contributions to international training programmes in TRIPS, the Palestinian chamber of commerce and the trade promotion programme of the Swedish Association of Chambers of Commerce.³⁶

Some evaluation efforts have also been made in sectors related to trade – which are of particular importance in view of the broadening definition of TRA in the Aid for Trade context, e.g., on private sector development.³⁷

Project managers have knowledge of their own projects and their results, but it is currently not possible to get a broader historical or aggregated overview of the result-related information for various contributions. According to Sida staff this is due to the lack of a functioning project management system and the project managers' reliance on personal archives. In particular, there is frustration about the recently introduced E-doc system.³⁸

The need to at least investigate the possibility of evaluating Sida's TRA and disseminate the result in order to contribute to the development of international best practice was emphasised already in 2004 if not earlier.³⁹ The Budget Bill for 2008 mentions the importance of follow-up and evaluation of international TRA efforts.⁴⁰ Sida's recent plan for TRA is, however, completely silent on the issues of follow-up and evaluation.

The new Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV) is currently evaluating the activities of Swedfund. This seems to be a first step towards looking deeper into Swedish development cooperation within the area of private sector development. A first report is expected in February 2008.

6.2 International Evaluations

One of the key issues of the terms of reference is a presentation of the main lessons from the international experience of TRA. As has been pointed out several times above, there is now a wealth of evaluations in the area. Organisations and programmes that have recently been evaluated in relation to TRA

³⁵ See Sjöberg (2002), Forss and Lundström (2004) and BDO Consulting Group (2005) respectively

³⁶ See Becker Consulting (2003), BDO Consulting Group (2005) and Goppers (2007) respectively.

³⁷ Danielsson (2003)

³⁸ Haarberg (2007)

³⁹ Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2004)

⁴⁰ Government of Sweden (2007), p. 7

include Integrated Framework, Jitap, UNCTAD, WTO, World Bank, ITC, EC, DFID and USA. As also mentioned in the terms of reference, OECD/DAC has produced a review of ten evaluations.⁴¹ The review is quite critical and concludes that:

“...the evaluations show that despite some positive results, further improvements are required, in particular in aid programming, donor harmonisation and donor-recipient partnerships, to enhance the effectiveness of trade-related assistance.” (OECD, 2007a, p. 15)

The review finds that half of the evaluations note that the assistance has increased the overall understanding and knowledge of trade-related issues. Determining development effectiveness and long-term impact is more difficult, however, because of the lack of clear and measurable objectives and indicators and attribution problems (the extent to which micro-level activities can be attributed to changes at macro-level). This is particularly the case for “trade development” programmes.

According to the review there are two pre-conditions for success: the existence of a favourable domestic business environment and a political will to use trade as an engine for development. In addition, factors such as governance, market access and international competitiveness also influence effectiveness and impact. As a consequence, understanding initial conditions and addressing issues related to but beyond trade are important to enhance the impact of contributions.

The following weaknesses were identified in most evaluations:

- *Unsystematic or incomplete needs assessments* that are not prioritised nor based on consultations with all relevant stakeholders.
- *Weak project management*, project governance structures and consultations with partner country stakeholders that sometimes caused delays and decreased ownership and effectiveness.
- *Fragmented trade-related assistance* with insufficient synergies to broader development assistance programmes.
- *Weak explicit linkages to poverty reduction* in programme documents.
- *Insufficient donor coordination* and complementarity at headquarters and field level to ensure synergies between activities.
- *Inadequate internal communications and donor expertise* on trade-related matters, in particular at field level, where staff often lack knowledge of the relation between trade and poverty reduction and are not sufficiently involved in programme planning.

OECD/DAC presents a number of recommendations to improve TRA, such as better stakeholder consultations with more explicit links to poverty reduction, managing for results, enhancing the sustainability of contributions through, for example, long-term interventions targeting local institutions, improving donor coordination and harmonisation and building trade capacity within donor organisations.

The picture of international TRA efforts painted by OECD/DAC in the review is rather bleak. It is beyond the scope of this study to dwell on each point above. However, the overall observations of the review are very much consistent with what had emerged beforehand in international discussions and work with programmes such as the Integrated Framework. It is hard to opine on the extent to which the effectiveness of TRA is lower than in other areas of development assistance. It would not be surprising if it was the case, as international best practice in development cooperation seems to trickle down quite slowly to TRA, perhaps because of its quite recent rise as an area of international aid and its politicised nature.

⁴¹ OECD (2007a). The following is basically a summary of the executive summary of the document.

There is no systematic information on Sida's TRA that could give an indication as to how it would score on the points mentioned above. Nevertheless, some observations are in order. Sida works to a large extent through multilateral organisation and programmes, which tend to suffer from the weaknesses above. It is therefore important for Sida to participate in processes and discussions on the overall policy framework and management of these organisations and programmes. Moreover, Sida tends to work with and support local institutions and stakeholders, which could be advantageous from a sustainability point of view. This could also be the case when using the Swedish resource base, since it usually consists of well-established Swedish organisations and agencies working with similar counterparts in partner countries. Such support, however, may present challenges in terms of project management, links to poverty reduction and sustainability if the initial efforts are not followed up.

The OECD/DAC review (Annex 1) also pinpoints some of the methodological difficulties of evaluating TRA:

- *Problem of identifying TRA activities* because of a lack of a clear definition, accurate inventory and the difficulty of extracting the trade component from broader programmes. The DAC guidelines and the WTO/OECD database have alleviated the task, but further work on definition is warranted.
- *Difficulty of assessing results* of a diversity of trade-related activities against various intermediary objectives (e.g., negotiation capacity and productive and export capacity)
- *Complexity of assessing the effectiveness and impact of micro-level activities at macro-level* (i.e., on the beneficiary's overall trade capacities and performance) due to attribution and time lag problems, the lack of baseline data and the difficulty of assessing often intangible, institutional or policy-making capacities.

Here the parallel with Sida is clear; these are issues Sida/UTV is already struggling with when investigating the evaluability of Sida's TRA.

Discussions are now underway at the OECD on further work for evaluating Aid for Trade. The OECD notes that "...evaluative efforts in health, education and other social programmes is both broader and deeper than that for any of the programmes that fall under the aid-for-trade rubric." (OECD, 2007, p. 4-5) Moreover, OECD argues that because of the breadth of Aid for Trade, "...a programme of work on evaluation ... should likely be deep rather than broad. It would be better to select evaluation themes pertaining to selected programme types, rather than work in an across-the-board manner that would almost certainly lead to superficial conclusions." (idem, p. 8)

6.3 Other Observations

Two specificities of TRA have already been mentioned above: its horizontal nature and the link to trade negotiations. The previous section reviewed lessons from evaluations. There are some additional observations that may contribute to give a fuller picture of TRA. These observations are most valid for trade-policy-related assistance and to some extent trade development. It is very hard to generalise if the wider Aid for Trade agenda (incl. infrastructure, agriculture, etc.) is taken into account.

Conflict of Interest

Trade policy is a key component of the economic policy of a country. Rich countries are both donors and negotiating counterparts. As a consequence, there is a breeding ground for a conflict of interest in that aid may become based on the commercial or trade policy interests of the donor country rather than the development needs of the poorer partner country. There is not much systematic research on this topic, but it highlights the importance of trust and a neutral stance in terms of TRA provision.⁴²

⁴² See also Solignac-Lecomte (2003)

Mainstreaming

As mentioned above, “mainstreaming” trade into development policy and cooperation has been one of the catch phrases for improving TRA. There are indications that at least until recently, trade has not been well integrated into either the development policy of partner countries or the activities of donor agencies. This is reflected in, for example, the fact that the trade component in first-generation PRSPs was weak⁴³ and in the absence of trade in Swedish country strategies mentioned above. Sida/UTV’s work on mainstreaming is relevant in this context, even though trade should not be mainstreamed into every aspect of development cooperation as is the case with, for example, gender and environment. In any case, at Sida mainstreaming has primarily been hampered by issues related to its international organisation, such as an overload of policies and guidelines and lack of systems for follow-up and learning.⁴⁴

Ownership

The issue of mainstreaming is very much related to the issue of ownership of the targeted stakeholders at country level. This is a key issue for all areas of development cooperation and was touched upon in the previous section. Here the key point is that there is sometimes a disconnection between trade negotiators in Geneva and elsewhere and the political and economic realities in capitals. Negotiators may argue for more TRA, but in-country there are more pressing priorities in terms of education and other issues. Trade ministries are also notoriously weak compared with, for example, ministries of finance. In addition, the ill-conceived approach of some TRA does not improve the situation.

Demand Versus Needs

Demands and needs are both inherently hard to gauge, in particular in the poorest countries, where so much needs to be done. As is clear from the last point, the demands in Geneva do not always correspond to the priorities at country level. These priorities are also very much influenced by donors and their pre-conceived mental models. The needs assessments of the Integrated Framework, with very similar format for different countries and produced by the World Bank, are a case in point

The following passage in Sida’s recent TRA plan is interesting in this respect:

“Sida’s trade-related development cooperation will be based on the demands and needs of the developing countries. Demands can be expressed by public institutions as well as industry and civil society. Needs refer to contributions required to create the conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives. It is not uncommon that demands and needs differ, particularly because poor people often lack a voice. This requires that Sida makes an overall appraisal of demands and needs in our analysis.” (Sida, 2007, p. 7)

It is apparent that at the end of the day, Sida decides on demands and needs, which is a good illustration of the logic of development cooperation at large.

Lagging in Terms of Best Practice

As was hinted at in the previous section, TRA tends to lag in terms of international best practice related to development cooperation, e.g., in terms of instruments and processes and the Paris Agenda. There has been a tendency to reinvent the wheel during the evolution of TRA. There are a number of reasons for this: the link to trade negotiations, the predominance of trade professionals and the quite recent appearance of trade as a separate sector. Moreover, as the trade agenda has become broader and deeper, there has been a tendency to deal with related sectors (such as infrastructure) without due regard for the fact that these sectors are subject to quite different dynamics and institutional set-ups. With the Aid for Trade

⁴³ Hewitt and Gillson (2003)

⁴⁴ Ugglå (2007)

process there is now a more firm institutional framework for TRA. What this will do to TRA in practice remains to be seen.

6.4 Conclusions

Systematic information on the results of Sida's TRA is conspicuously lacking, making an evaluation effort well overdue.

Sida's recent plan for TRA is completely silent on the issues of follow-up and evaluation.

The OECD/DAC review of international TRA evaluations provides a good basis for a possible evaluation of Sida's TRA.⁴⁵ Discussions are now underway at the OECD on further work for evaluating Aid for Trade – OECD/DAC advocates a deep rather than broad approach.

The effectiveness of international TRA is negatively affected by a number of points. Since TRA is so closely linked to trade negotiations it easily gets supply driven and disregards (or at least lags) best practice in other areas of development cooperation.

Nevertheless, integrating trade issues into overall development cooperation would benefit both trade and development.

⁴⁵ It should be mentioned that the author of this study is slightly biased since he participated as a research assistant in the OECD/DAC review.

7. Evaluation Issues and Evaluability of Sida's TRA

This chapter aims to address the last two points of the terms of reference, i.e., potential issues for further exploration and the evaluability of TRA. The chapter does not attempt to summarise the above discussion.

7.1 Evaluation Issues

There are some issues that are worth exploring further:

- *Areas related to trade.* Since the Aid for Trade agenda is now very broad, it could be interesting to review experiences and evaluations from areas related to trade such as infrastructure, private sector development and agriculture. This would enrich the understanding of the trade group, which is at present very much focused on trade policy issues, but struggling to reach out to other areas.
- *Instruments.* One characteristic of Swedish TRA is the choice of instruments. First, Sweden is a strong supporter of multilateral organisations and programmes. Second, much of the support is implemented by the Swedish resource base. Sida's TRA plan talks about increasing the bilateral component of Swedish TRA, while restricting global contributions. What will this mean in terms of development effectiveness and changing approaches?
- *Documentation.* There is little systematic documentation on Sida's TRA: very few formal Sida evaluations, no systematic overview of project follow-up documents and ad hoc presentation on the TRA portfolio over the years. Reasons include a weak overall policy and management framework of Swedish TRA, weak management systems, weak integration of TRA into Sida's overall activities and small bilateral portfolio. It could be useful to collect and analyse the results-related information that is available. At the same time, systems must be set up that ensure that monitoring and evaluation are dealt with more consistently than they have been until now.
- *Steering.* The trade sector seems fairly unique at present in that annual disbursements are specified in and guidelines are attached to Sida's letter of appropriation. This is probably explained by the need to deliver on promises in the WTO context. However, this would seem sub-optimal in terms of steering Sida and promoting aid effectiveness (risk of disbursement-driven reaction and jealousy from other sectors). What is the rationale behind these practices, will they continue and are there alternative approaches?
- *Reporting.* The issue of reporting is related to the previous point. There are many demands on reporting on TRA, apart from those associated with general transparency and accountability of aid. There are additional demands from politicians, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and EU to show to what extent Sweden and Sida deliver on the promises of Aid for Trade made in Geneva and Brussels. What are the specific requirements for quantitative and qualitative reporting that would fulfil the needs of various stakeholders? Two ways forward are to improve Sida's internal TRA statistics and to develop annual reporting on TRA and related activities.
- *Sida's plan.* There is no evaluation framework included in Sida's recent TRA plan. This is a major lacuna and quite contradictory considering that that kind of framework is required for Sida-financed contributions.

- *Integration of trade.* A particular challenge is to assess the extent to which trade is integrated into Sida's overall activities. At the same time, this is a key issue to increase the effectiveness of both TRA and aid in other areas and synergies between sectors and could warrant further study. This could build on Sida/UTV's work on mainstreaming.

7.2 Conditions for Evaluability

As has already been mentioned above, the effort to look at the evaluability of Sida's TRA is welcome. It would provide valuable lessons and learning possibilities for Swedish TRA. It would also add to the existing international body of knowledge on best practice for TRA. However, the Aid for Trade process in Geneva imposes an approach that goes further than a mere static evaluation of past activities – there is a need to develop methods for the future to respond to the demands for accountability of delivering on promises of increased Aid for Trade coming from the developing countries in Geneva and the EU in Brussels. For all of these reasons, there seemed to be a general agreement by the stakeholders present at the October Sida seminar that some kind of evaluation effort was needed.

However, this study in general and OECD/DAC's experience in particular show that the conditions for a major evaluation across the board of the TRA portfolio present some challenges: the portfolio is diverse, there is a bulk of global contributions that Sida can only influence to a limited degree and there is a lack of systematic information on contributions and results.

Instead, as OECD/DAC also suggests, it is quite possible to consider a smorgasbord of more focused result-related activities as an alternative to an across-the-board evaluation. Such a selective approach has the potential to be more comprehensive and forward-looking, while at the same time opening up for deeper analysis of the issues at hand. Based on the analysis of this study and the discussion at the Sida seminar, the following potential components can be identified:

1. *Channels.* Channel-specific evaluations would be feasible and interesting to conduct, both for Sida internally and to enhance the international knowledge base. The following areas or a combination of them could be considered for evaluation:
 - a. *Support to international organisations,* its effectiveness and criteria for support. Such an effort could also feed into ongoing efforts by the Swedish Government to produce a strategy for multilateral organisations.
 - b. *Support to international NGOs,* its effectiveness and criteria for support. There is currently a lack of good evaluation material internationally in this area.
 - c. *Support through Swedish organisations and agencies* to gauge if they are effective instrument as opposed to short-term TA with consultants. This could also feed into current discussions on how to engage the Swedish resource base in development cooperation.
2. *Sectors.* Support to SPS/TBT would seem the most interesting one, as there should be some contributions to study and it is a future focus area. Can any best practice and lessons for the future be identified?
3. *Integration of trade into Sida's overall activities.* This could involve studies of country strategies, policies, contributions and "attitudes" of managers and personnel. It could build on Sida/UTV's work on mainstreaming.

4. *Monitoring and evaluation framework.* More generally, there is a need to complement Sida's TRA plan and include an evaluatory framework and benchmark for future evaluation. This should include collecting and systematising information on contributions and results in a much more systematic fashion. This framework needs to take into account (and could feed into) the current monitoring framework of Aid for Trade within WTO and EU.

The framework could incorporate, as an important element, a monitoring matrix with the same structure as the Logical Framework Analysis matrices normally used by Sida. It should be based on the recent Sida plan and include overall objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators. Activities and impact should be tracked and both quantitative and qualitative indicators included. An interesting aspect is how to measure the integration of trade into Sida's overall activities. A related issue is how to design regular Sida reporting on activities and results.

5. *Ministry for Foreign Affairs.* It would be timely to evaluate the TRA activities of the Ministry as this has never been done.
6. *Trade and aid.* In spite of the fact that there is extensive literature on the link between trade and various aspects of development, this literature is often rather theoretical and the link to donor-funded aid activities is weak. There may be merit in undertaking some work on the exact chain of events between trade and poverty in a Sida-specific context as suggested at the October workshop.⁴⁶ Such an effort could have the merit of framing the trade discourse in Sida language and activities and show step by step how TRA may have an impact on poverty.

⁴⁶ Oral intervention by Sida board member Ari Kokko, 18 October 2007

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Appendix 1. Terms of Reference

Trade-Related Assistance Terms of Reference for pre-study⁴⁷

Background

During spring 2007 Sida commissioned a pre-study for an evaluation of Sida's trade-related assistance. A rough draft report has been produced (Haarberg, August 2007). The report is not fully satisfactory to Sida, however, and it has been decided that Sida will commission a new study that is expected to result in a publishable report. Haarberg's report will be an important input to the new study however.

The Task

The terms of reference, "Trade-Related Assistance – Review of Sida Support in Light of International Experience" (dated 14/03/2007 and attached), is largely the terms of reference for the current assignment, the exceptions being that the current study does not include extensive collection of data and primary information. The consultant is not expected to do extensive rounds of interviews with staff and Sida or with other stakeholders. However, where there is a need for clarification and additional information, the consultant shall contact the relevant personnel. No extensive literature search is required either. The basic sources of information will be Haarberg's report and the consultant's own knowledge and material gathered during previous studies and research.

Time and Resources

The time and resources of the attached terms of reference are not valid for this assignment. It is estimated that the task will require a maximum of five days, which includes producing a draft report that will be commented by Sida and thereafter the delivery of a final report. The draft report shall be delivered no later than 1 October 2007. Sida will provide comments no later than 8 October. The final report shall be delivered on 12 October.

Trade-Related Assistance – Review of Sida Support in Light of International Experience⁴⁸ Draft Terms of Reference for a Pre-study for Evaluation

Growing Importance of Trade-Related Assistance

Support for trade-related assistance (TRA) has been on the donor agenda for quite some time. In recent years, it has attracted increased attention in light of developments within international trade: increased "globalisation" and a growing role of developing countries in globalisation, in terms of economic growth and trade; stronger voicing by developing countries of their interests in international trade negotiations; and agreements during the current Doha Round of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to help, in particular, the least-developed countries to better benefit from trade.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The ToR is written by Lars Johansson and dated 07/09/2007.

⁴⁸ The original ToR was written by Gun Eriksson Skoog and dated 14/03/2007

⁴⁹ As expressed, for instance, in the so-called "Aid for Trade Recommendations" (World Trade Organization, 2006).

The Swedish Government recognises the importance of trade-related aid and stresses its role for Sida by highlighting “trade and development” as one of several prioritised areas for Sida during 2007,⁵⁰ and requiring specific reporting on Sida’s work within the area. According to the Government Letter of Appropriation for 2007, Sida shall present a plan for its continued work with TRA based on existing government guidelines for TRA⁵¹ by 31 May as well as account for how the integration of trade issues into Sida’s regular development cooperation has been reinforced.⁵²

In light of the international developments and government priorities, Sida has developed its work with TRA during recent years. In 2005, a new policy for the support was adopted, replacing the previous one from 1999. This suggests that Sida support has been going on for some time and that a conscious and strategic approach may have been applied to TRA. To date, TRA through Sida is divided into two main categories based on definitions used in the Joint WTO/OECD Database:⁵³ a) trade policy and regulation and b) trade development, which in December 2005 appear to have accounted for about half of Sida’s TRA portfolio each.⁵⁴ According to Sida’s policy for TRA, however, increased focus shall be given to trade policy and regulation – motivated by a growing demand for that kind of support – particularly to the poorest developing countries. The overall aim of Sida’s trade-related support is to “assist developing countries to integrate into the world economy in a way that makes it possible for them to benefit from trade to promote sustainable, poverty-reducing growth.”⁵⁵ In the recent government guidelines, applicable for 2007, the Government appears to be widening the scope for Sida TRA to also include “reinforcement of the supply side, including trade-related infrastructure”.⁵⁶

By December 2005, Sida had a TRA portfolio of about 600 million SEK distributed over some 70 interventions. In 2005, about 160 million SEK was disbursed, and for 2006, a 30 per cent increase was signalled.⁵⁷ In the Government Letter of Appropriation for 2007, at least 270 million is earmarked for TRA.⁵⁸ While the volume is still moderate in relative financial terms – the latter figure only corresponds to about 1.7 per cent of Sida’s total aid budget for 2007 – the figures suggest a substantial increase during the most recent years. Moreover, in absolute terms, Sida’s TRA portfolio was significant already in 2005 and is bound for a substantial increase. Since the support is deemed politically important, it may be expected to grow further in magnitude and importance in the future. In light of its political importance, the rapidly growing volumes and the international developments, it may also become all the more strategically important for Sida.

However, no overall evaluation of Sida’s trade support has been conducted to date, although evaluations of individual Sida-supported trade projects have been conducted over the years. There is certainly a general need to ensure that TRA is effective and that lessons that can be learnt from past experience are incorporated into its future development. Given that Sida’s TRA seems to be undergoing rapid change and development, both in contents and magnitude, an evaluation that helps Sida develop its support to ensure the achievement of its contribution to sustainable results in partner countries may be useful.

⁵⁰ Swedish Government (2006a), p. 10

⁵¹ Swedish Government (2006b)

⁵² “Enligt Regleringsbrev för Sida 2007 ska Sida senast 31 maj redovisa en plan för det fortsatta arbetet med handelsrelaterat bistånd, där riktlinjerna för handelsrelaterat bistånd ska utgöra grund för planen. Sida ska även redogöra för hur integreringen av handelsfrågorna i det reguljära biståndet har stärkts. Efter samråd med regeringskansliet ska planen genomföras under 2007, och fortsatt dialog ska ske mellan Sida och regeringskansliet om insatser inom det handelsrelaterade biståndsområdet i enlighet med riktlinjerna för dessa.” (Swedish Government, 2006a, p.13)

⁵³ See, for example, Swedish Government (2006b, p. 1).

⁵⁴ Sida (2006)

⁵⁵ Sida (2005), p. 6

⁵⁶ “[S]tärkning av utbudssidan, inklusive, handelsrelaterad infrastruktur” (Swedish Government 2006b, p. 1).

⁵⁷ Sida (2006)

⁵⁸ But now applying to the broader definition of TRA, including supply-side support, as it appears. (Swedish Government, 2006a, p. 26)

Against this background, Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) planned to initiate a process for exploring the potential for evaluation of Sida's TRA in 2008. The idea was suggested to Sida's Board of Directors, which found the issue of particular interest and asked UTV to commence the process already during 2007. Hence, UTV has decided to initiate a pre-study for evaluation of Sida TRA as a first step towards a possible evaluation of Sida's trade-related assistance.

Pre-Study for Evaluation of Sida's TRA from an International Perspective

In order to identify central issues for inquiry and the focus of a possible evaluation, thus ensuring its usefulness, the current "state of affairs" needs to be established and serve as a starting point. To set the stage for an evaluation, we thus need an overall picture of Sida's trade support and the accumulated experiences in this area. Such an orientation also encompasses locating Sida's TRA in its context, which largely implies linking it to related developments in Sweden and, in particular, internationally. Apart from a description of the support, a possible evaluation may want to take its starting point not only in Sida's own past experience, but also in the international experience, in terms of knowledge based on the practice of other donors and any lessons learnt for effective "Aid for Trade".

UTV therefore commissions a review of Sida's TRA in light of international experience from related support. Given recent international developments, TRA seems to have attracted increased attention, also among other donors, bilateral as well as multilateral. Several of them have recently made thematic evaluations of their support.⁵⁹ An important part of this pre-study should be to identify lessons learnt from these evaluations that may be relevant for Swedish TRA. A review of ten recent thematic donor evaluations of TRA has in fact already been conducted by the OECD/DAC⁶⁰ in a 2006 study of trade for aid.⁶¹

Purpose of the Pre-Study

Against this background and in order to help set the stage for a possible evaluation, the purpose of the pre-study is to

1) Provide a broad orientation of Sida's TRA from an international perspective, by giving an *overview of the support itself and the experiences from it, and by relating it to the international TRA and experience* from that.

The purpose, based on observations made through this comparative description, is also to

2) Discuss possible implications for evaluation by suggesting potential issues *for further exploration and/or evaluation and briefly discussing conditions for evaluability*.

Audience

By providing an overview of Sida's TRA and discussing implications for evaluation, the pre-study shall serve as input into the decision about a possible future thematic evaluation of Sida's TRA as well as its focus and design. This implies that it is primarily meant to be used by the UTV and Sida's Board of Directors in their proposal and in taking the decision, as well as by the different stakeholders concerned which may participate in such an evaluation process in one way or another. These stakeholders include Sida's division INEC/Market, the departments for international trade policy (UD-IH) and for develop-

⁵⁹ One recent study has been carried out as part of an evaluation program on the 3 Cs (coordination, complementarity and coherence) of the Maastricht Treaty carried out by the EUHES and chaired by Sweden (Sida/UTV). This evaluation explores issues related to coordination and complementarity of trade-related aid from EU member states and the EC.

⁶⁰ The ten evaluations were all published (or dated) between 2002 and 2006 and some included several case studies. They concern what is referred to as trade-related technical assistance and capacity development programmes (TRTA/CB). See also Annex D in OECD (2006).

⁶¹ OECD (2006)

ment (cooperation) policy (UD-UP) at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and possibly others. They will all be invited to participate in discussions about the findings of the pre-study and, depending on its focus, of a possible subsequent evaluation.

Focus, Delimitation and Level of Ambition

The focus and major part of the pre-study will be on the comparative descriptive task and hence fulfilment of the first purpose. With respect to the second purpose, the focus shall be on identifying potential evaluation issues, and only to a lesser extent on the evaluability implications. However, the more precise focus, relative importance and effort devoted to the different sub-tasks of the pre-study (presented below) will partly depend on the availability of information and associated difficulties – as well as on how these tasks can be coordinated with related descriptive tasks undertaken by Sida's department INEC/Market – and will therefore be further specified and possibly modified during the study process itself. This is likely to imply relatively greater effort and focus on the comparative description of experiences from evaluation (by Sida and internationally) than on the TRA as such.

Since the pre-study is to offer guidance for a possible future evaluation, it is important that the overview of the TRA and its experience is not purely descriptive, but that it is a problem-oriented description. By problem-oriented we mean a critical and inquiring approach to description and comparison from the perspective of seeking potential issues for further inquiry and evaluation.

The scope of the pre-study is to offer a broad orientation of Sida's TRA and experiences from an international perspective. Hence its coverage of Sida support and experiences as well as international TRA experiences shall be broad and of an overview nature, leaving detailed or deeper exploration aside.⁶² This implies, for example, that reference to the international experience shall be based mainly on the previously mentioned OECD review of Trade for Aid.⁶³ It also means that the quantitative and qualitative description of Sida support shall be based on already compiled and accessible data and other information, and not on in depth examination of individual project documents.⁶⁴

As regards implications for evaluation, the ambition is not to obtain complete coverage of all potential evaluation issues that may arise, but to focus on major or critical ones that emerge from the analysis. Similarly, evaluability issues shall only be discussed on the basis of the data used and the observations made, and thus not assessed in depth.

Given the uncertainties about the availability and accessibility of information regarding Sida's TRA and experience from that; the level of ambition in terms of detail and depth of analysis will be decided during the process of the pre-study itself – by the consultant in agreement with UTV. Moreover, to avoid overlap with descriptive tasks undertaken by INEC/Market, the pre-study will probably partly depend on what they produce, which in turn may have implications for the pre-study and be beyond the control of the consultant. The information uncertainties further imply that there is a need to adapt a flexible approach to the implementation of the tasks below.

Major Tasks for a Consultant

The general task is thus to *provide a problem-oriented and comparative overview of Sida's TRA and experience from that, in light of international TRA and experience, and identify potential areas for evaluation emerging from that.*

⁶² If detailed information is considered important for reference, it may be deferred to appendices.

⁶³ Major reviews – which may or may not be included in the review by OECD and which may be worth looking at – have been made by EU, WTO and ITC.

⁶⁴ Quantitative data to be reported to the OECD/DAC database and a portfolio analysis for 2006 remain to be compiled, but will be prepared by INEC/Market during the coming months.

In order to fulfil the purpose of the pre-study, the major specific tasks of a consultant are thus to:⁶⁵

- 1 Provide a problem-oriented and comparative overview picture of Sida's TRA, on the basis of a review of existing documentation and statistics as well as selected conversations, including
 - a) *How it is defined and delimited*, both in relation to international TRA categories and discussions, and in relation to the context of related Sida support, Swedish TRA provided by other actors and their respective roles,⁶⁶ and related policy areas, notably trade policy.
 - b) *What the support consists of*, hence its contents in terms of composition⁶⁷ and volume – both current status and change over time – *how it is provided*, hence major instruments/forms of support, and *by what it is guided*, in terms of its purposes, existing policies and guidelines, etc. – and *how its "design" relates to the international experience*, as reflected in the OECD review.
 - c) Discuss, based on the above, any *potential implications for evaluation* (such as difficulties, inconsistencies or lack of clarity) and, briefly, the *kind of information* about Sida's TRA *that is, or is not, available, its accessibility and quality*.
- 2 Review Sida's own evaluations (and related studies)⁶⁸ of its TRA to give a summary picture of the documented experience from Sida's TRA, concerning
 - a) *Findings*, in terms of performance/results achieved with respect to the five evaluation criteria;⁶⁹ lessons learnt about supporting TRA; major strengths and weaknesses, problems and challenges of the support; and any other major findings reflecting the experience of Sida's TRA.
 - b) How Sida's experience compares with the international experience, in terms of observations, conclusions, lessons learnt, major weaknesses, etc. identified by the review of evaluations in the OECD study on Aid for Trade (and possibly other important evaluations).⁷⁰
 - c) Brief discussion, based on the above, of the kind of documented information/knowledge about Sida's TRA experience that is available, its accessibility and quality – and what is still lacking.
- 3 Offer a presentation of the main lessons from the international experience of TRA, as reflected in the major findings of the OECD study, in particular its review of thematic evaluations⁷¹ – as a point of reference for the description of Sida support and experience, but also in its own right,⁷² and, as indicated by tasks 1 and 2 above, present Sida's TRA and experiences in view of the international TRA and experiences as reflected in the OECD study – hence make a comparative (and problem-oriented) description.

⁶⁵ Note that neither the order of conducting the study nor the order of presenting the results in the report need to correspond to the order of the tasks as it is presented here.

⁶⁶ Notably the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MoFA), mainly the departments for international trade policy (UD-IH) and for development (cooperation) policy (UD-UP). Other government agencies receiving funds to carry out TRA include the Swedish Board of Commerce (Kommerskollegium). There may also be others.

⁶⁷ For instance, its distribution at different levels – global, regional and national (of different types of TRA, such as standards, trade facilitation, trade promotion, etc.).

⁶⁸ There may be evaluations published in the series Sida Evaluations and unpublished evaluations, as well as other reviews and reports of the experience from Sida-supported activities.

⁶⁹ According to Sida's evaluation manual (Sida, 2004).

⁷⁰ Cf. Appendix for selected highlights.

⁷¹ This may require a review of not only the OECD study as such, but also of the separate study that conducted the review of the evaluations and that served as an input into the OECD study itself.

⁷² For a summary of selected highlights, see the appendix.

- 4 Identify and critically discuss potential issues that may be of particular interest to know more about, hence for further exploration and/or evaluation,⁷³ based on the findings of the comparative and problem-oriented description, for example
 - Major discrepancies between Sida's TRA and experience and international TRA experience
 - Actual or potential problems or weaknesses
 - Major challenges or expected demands for future developments
 - Areas in need of further policy or methods development
 - Particular knowledge gaps or learning needs
 - Prevailing lack of clarity or inconsistencies, etc.
- 5 Provide a brief discussion on the conditions for evaluability of Sida's TRA on the basis of the findings, notably in terms of the kind of information available, its accessibility and quality, and potential analytical or other methodological implications.

Terms and Conditions

Data Collection

The overview of Sida's TRA shall be based on a review of existing and accessible documentation and statistics, as well as conversations – primarily with Sida staff, but complemented with staff at the MoFA and possibly others. The focus on a problem-oriented description of Sida's TRA and experience suggests a need for conversations with different stakeholders involved to get their inputs into potential problem areas and thus evaluation issues. The picture given of the documented experience of Sida's TRA shall draw on a review of Sida's own evaluations and related accessible studies, possibly complemented by views held by Sida and MoFA staff.⁷⁴ The basic, but not necessarily only, source of review of the international TRA and experience shall be the previously mentioned OECD study, and possibly reports produced in the preparation of that report. It is the responsibility of the consultant to collect existing data, organise visits and book time for conversations, etc.

Reporting

First of all, preliminary conclusions concerning the 1st purpose of the pre-study shall be documented and presented at Sida. Thereafter, a complete draft report concerning the entire task shall be provided for comment and discussion. After revisions have been made, accommodating comments from UTV and stakeholders, a final report, including an executive summary shall be delivered. The final report may also need to be presented at a workshop (see below).

The character of the report shall be one of providing an orientation and overview of the support and experiences – Sida's as well as international – and a critical discussion of the central issues identified through the comparative description. It is also important that the report is easily accessible to the reader – both in language and format. This means that the report itself (main report) should be fairly short, 15–20 pages, while elaborated descriptive or analytical parts are deferred to appendices. A short executive summary, of 1–2 pages, shall present the main concluding points. The report shall be delivered in a Word for Windows compatible format and may be published by UTV.

⁷³ A guiding question may be: To what extent and in what respects does Sida's TRA and experience correspond to the lessons learnt from international experience of TRA?

⁷⁴ But then it must be made clear that these are individual views, not based on documented analysis.

Roles

The pre-study is commissioned and owned by UTV. However, during the pre-study process, UTV will work in close cooperation with staff at Sida's department INEC/Market to keep it well informed, involve it in reflection and dialogue about the issues studied and facilitate its learning from the findings, and to get its expertise knowledge and views. Moreover, since INEC/Market is currently preparing a report to the Government on Sida's TRA, close cooperation is necessary to avoid duplication and overlap, in particular for data collection and description of Sida's TRA. UTV will also offer other stakeholders opportunities to participate in the process, although to a lesser extent during the pre-study phase than during a possible subsequent evaluation.

It is important that the consultant works in the same open spirit in relation to all Sida staff concerned, while retaining a strong sense of integrity and being clear about the UTV's ultimate ownership of the process. It is also important that the consultant maintains an open dialogue with UTV during the process and informs UTV about contingencies with major implications for the work and its outcome. The consultant's integrity further means that any necessary assessments made of Sida's TRA and how it compares with international experience shall be made by the consultant – and not be those of Sida.

Time and Resources

The task is estimated to require a total of six man weeks, which includes producing a draft and final report with an executive summary, and making two to four visits to Stockholm: one or two for collection of information at Sida and MoFA including conversations with selected stakeholders and informants, and one or two for the presentation of the preliminary conclusions and the draft report.

Hence, the resource needs are estimated to be: Data collection and analysis, drawing, documentation and presentation of the preliminary conclusions concerning the 1st purpose, including 2–3 visits
3 weeks

Analysis and conclusions about implications for evaluation (2nd purpose) and drafting of the complete report (both purposes) 2 weeks

Possible presentation of draft report, revision, completion of final report, including executive summary
1 week

The consultant may also be required to present the final report and participate in a workshop on the topic during autumn 2007. This task will then be regulated in an amendment to the contract for the pre-study.

Preliminary time plan

Contracting of consultant and initiation of study	mid-March
Data collection and analysis, drawing and documenting preliminary conclusions concerning 1st purpose, including 1–2 visits	March–April
Presentation of preliminary conclusions 1st purpose, including 1 visit	late April
Analysis and conclusions on implications for evaluation (2nd purpose) and drafting of complete report (both purposes)	1st half of May
Delivery of complete Draft Report	mid-May
Presentation of Draft Report, including 1 visit	late May (week 21)
Revision and completion of Final Report, including Ex. Sum.	early Jun
Delivery of Final Report	mid-June

Appendix

Selected Highlights from the OECD Study

At the request of WTO, the OECD study asked the following questions about DAC members' Aid for Trade: (p. 11)

- 1 How much aid do donors actually provide in support of trade?
- 2 How effective are these programmes?
- 3 How can Aid for Trade be turned into an effective tool for helping developing countries, particularly LDCs, to fully benefit from trade liberalisation and WTO agreements?

An overall conclusion is that whereas the aid volume is not the issue, effectiveness needs to be improved – implying for instance that Aid for Trade will face much of the same challenges inherent to all aid delivery. A review of recent thematic evaluations of Aid for Trade programmes “highlight, in particular, the absence of a results-based design in most projects and the poor use of monitoring and evaluation tools”. (p. 14)⁷⁵

The study reviews ten recent thematic evaluations by bilateral donors and multilateral organisations of trade-related technical assistance and capacity development programmes (TRTA/CB). The major findings are: (Appendix D, p. 83)

- 1 It is difficult to determine the effectiveness or longer-term impact of programmes, as programme documents do not have clearly defined and measurable goals and (outcome and impact) indicators. Hence the direct impact on sustained export performance is difficult to substantiate – when it was possible, the impact varied considerably.
- 2 Programmes have increased partner country understanding of the importance of trade for development and poverty reduction; raised awareness and knowledge of trade policy matters (including WTO-related issues); and strengthened national dialogue on these issues. Whereas these capacities are prerequisites for successfully developing more challenging and necessary trade capacities, they are

⁷⁵ Given the current international, Government and Sida focus on results, a particularly useful issue for a subsequent evaluation to explore/evaluate could be how well Sida's TRA is “managed for results”.

not translated into sustainable impact when programmes are implemented under unfavourable domestic policy or regulatory environments.

- 3 Two pre-conditions for success are hence a) the existence of a favourable domestic business environment and b) political will and leadership to use trade as an engine for development, by implications, understanding of existing internal and external conditions before commencing programmes.

The major weaknesses identified by most evaluations are: (Appendix D, pp. 84-86)

- 1 Unsystematic or incomplete needs assessments
- 2 Weak project management and project governance structures
- 3 Fragmented interventions with insufficient synergies to broader development assistance programmes
- 4 Weak explicit linkages to poverty reduction
- 5 Insufficient donor coordination and complementarity at head quarters and field level
- 6 Inadequate internal communications and expertise on trade-related matters

Based on evaluations of past trade-capacity building programmes, three main priority areas for improvement have proved particularly difficult to tackle in the past: (OECD, p. 59)

- 1 Establishing a national dialogue to formulate and implement trade policy
- 2 Mainstreaming trade policy into national economic development and external assistance strategies
- 3 Aligning Aid for Trade with aid effectiveness principles

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