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Evaluation of the Implementation and the Results of the Swedish Strategies for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression (2009-2011 and 2012-2014)

Final Report

Sida

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAM	ActionAid Myanmar
AFP	Agence France Press
AN	Coded
BCN	Burma Centre Netherlands
Brown	Coded
CA	Coded
CAL	Coalition of African Lesbians
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CHRO	Chin Human Rights Organisation
CIVSAM	Sida Policy Unit for Support to Civil Society
CRD	Coded
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDOS	Denial Of Service
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DVB	Democratic Voice of Burma
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
FH	Coded
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GYLA	Georgian Young Lawyers Association
HQ	Headquarters
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HRD	Human Rights Defender
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICT4D	ICT for Development
IMS	International Media Support
INYHETER	Coded
IT	Information Technology
JCCE	Jordanian Center for Civic Education
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MSEK	Million Swedish kronor

NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
OD	Organisational Development
PAO	Party-Affiliated Organisation
RBA	Results-Based Approach
RBM	Results-Based Management
SEK	Swedish kronor
TOOL	Coded
ToR	Terms of Reference
UHAI	Akiba Uhaki/UHAI Foundation
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UPR	Universal Period Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WLP	Women's Learning Partnership

Preface

This report presents the evaluation of the *Implementation and the Results of the Swedish Strategies for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression,* commissioned by Sida's Department for Global Cooperation, Policy Unit for Support to Civil Society.

The evaluation takes stock of the Strategy's results during 2009 to mid-2013 and assesses the *effectiveness, relevance* and *sustainability* of the Strategy's implementation. It also assesses Sida's management of the Strategy's implementation.

The evaluation was undertaken between September to November 2013 by an independent evaluation team consisting of:
- Cecilia Ljungman (Team Leader)
- Annika Nilsson
- Henrik Alffram
- Jessica Rothman
- Nadia Masri-Pedersen

Quality assurance of the methodology and reports was provided by Ian Christoplos.

The evaluation was managed by Indevelop and implemented jointly with Tana Copenhagen, commissioned through Sida's Framework Agreement for Reviews and Evaluations with Indevelop. Sofia Orrebrink was the Evaluation Manager at Sida.

Executive Summary

This evaluation of the *Strategies for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression* 2009-2011 and 2012-2014 (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy") assesses the initiatives supported by the Strategy in relation to relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. It also assesses Sida's management of the Strategy's implementation. The evaluation was conducted from August 2013 to November 2013. In this period, visits were undertaken to Myanmar, Jordan, Egypt, and to organisational headquarters in Stockholm, Washington and New York. Over 100 informants were interviewed during the evaluation process and data was also gathered through an email survey. The different features of the initiatives supported between mid-2009 to mid-2013 were analysed and mapped.

The Swedish government launched the Strategy and assigned its implementation to Sida. The aim of the Strategy is to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression through support to change agents – including individuals, groups and civil society organisations. It seeks to complement Sweden's other development cooperation support for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

At the start, there was insufficient buy-in from Sida, which had been only superficially consulted in the Strategy's formulation. The implementation coincided with Sida's reorganisation and sharp staff cutbacks. It was not obvious how the Strategy should fit into the overall Swedish development cooperation framework – particularly since it potentially overlapped with a significant number of thematic and geographic strategies. This was made more difficult by the Strategy's imprecision and that a theory of change for the Strategy was never developed.

Nevertheless, Sida was able to build a sizable portfolio of initiatives, supported by the Strategy. Over a span of four years, the portfolio has grown to 130 initiatives to which MSEK 890 have been allocated. The average grant size is SEK 5.1 million. In line with the Strategy's initial short-term perspective, the median duration of the initiatives is 2.5 years. In total, change agents in 60 countries have been supported – either directly or via regional or global partners.

The range of types of partners in terms of formal status supported has been wide. Around half of the partners are CSOs. Multilateral organisations have been supported in only 10 initiatives, but the amount of funding has been comparatively large and, therefore, this type of partner absorbs one quarter of the funds spent. The other types of organisations include trade associations and unions; foundations, trusts and funds; cultural and media institutions; and, partisan or political organisations. Two-thirds of the funding is channelled through partners with headquarters in the north. This includes multilateral organisations, international non-governmental organisations, Swe-

dish organisations and exile organisations. The remainder of the funds are channelled to organisations based in countries that are eligible for Overseas Development Assistance or to regional organisations.

The most common target groups are i) journalists and media organisations; and, ii) civil society activists. Jointly, they make up around half of the funds spent. Other key target groups are cultural actors such as writers and theatre groups, digital activists, students/youth, and LGBT activists. Although grassroots communities and people living in poverty are rarely mentioned as secondary target groups or final beneficiaries in the project documents, a number of initiatives in the sample showed results that benefitted the grassroots level. Similarly, LGBT persons and ethnic minorities were not specified in the Strategy, but several of the sample initiatives specifically focus on these groups.

Relevance
With the exception of addressing religious freedom – which that was mentioned in the second strategy – the portfolio strongly reflects most of the priorities highlighted in the Strategy. Very high risk-taking is, however, not a feature, nor is support to religious communities, despite being spelt out in the Strategy. The Strategy's implicit approach is to affect change by spreading funds over as many geographical and thematic areas as possible. This may not be wasteful, but it is not a relevant approach for optimising results.

While more than half of the partners examined make an effort to bring women into their activities and have some basic understanding of the importance of gender equality, gender equality mainstreaming tends to be underdeveloped in many of the organisations. There are, nonetheless, at least a handful of examples of quality work being undertaken to promote women's rights. Very few partners have deliberately worked with a human rights-based approach in a consistent and systematic way.

Effectiveness
While the implementation of the Strategy is not fulfilling its overall potential (see below), the support has achieved respectable results on the ground. The analysis of over one-quarter of the initiatives funded by the Strategy offers evidence that change agents – including both activists and organisations – have been strengthened through enhanced awareness, skills, knowledge, technology and networks.

In relation to freedom of expression, capacities have been built in journalism, media ethics and technological skills. People in difficult environments have received opportunities to express themselves, and free expression has been defended in the legal realm. Information has been provided to citizens of countries with repressive regimes through the funding of media content and technological approaches to circumvent censorship.

In relation to democratisation, the support has promoted civic engagement, freedom of association, the rule of law, women's rights and non-discrimination. It has also

mobilised grassroots to claim rights and exercise voice; and has contributed to free and fair elections. Preventive protection in the virtual and physical realms has strengthened change agents by allowing them to conduct their work safely, without interference. Emergency protection (virtual and physical) support has helped activists in urgent need.

Contributing factors to the positive results have been: success in identifying partners with potential and not constituting too high of a risk. Most of the partners appear to be highly committed activists with good skills and networks. Several show evidence of proactive and innovative thinking. Sida's flexibility has allowed organisations to respond to changing circumstances and emerging opportunities.

Initiatives that were deemed less effective by the Evaluation Team focused on political parties or were isolated initiatives that were directly supported by Sida in countries where there is little Swedish presence.

Some of the results are impressive, but many of them constitute isolated islands in a sea of increased oppression. More could potentially have been achieved if regions/countries and themes were **strategically targeted** to optimise effects among the initiatives as well as with efforts supported by other Swedish strategies. While the portfolio strongly reflects most of the priorities highlighted in the Strategy, the Strategy's implicit approach, to affect change by spreading funds over as many geographical and thematic areas as possible, **will not optimise results**. For this to occur **there is a need to focus**, based on a set of priorities, so that critical mass, synergies and innovative and catalytic processes have a greater chance of being achieved.

Sustainability
Sustainability has not been a central feature of the Strategy. At one level, as long as there is repression, the need to support activists remains. Furthermore, important gains made can be thwarted rather quickly if regimes harden their stances.

Nevertheless, in a few cases the support has produced important outcomes that have a high level of sustainability – such as legislative results, election participation, and citizen empowerment – leading to tangible changes at community levels. Most support has been provided as project support, which is not conducive to institutional sustainability. In addition, when the support has strengthened organisational functions, a level of institutional sustainability has been achieved among partners.

Financial sustainability is generally low. Sida has often focused on supporting new and inexperienced organisations that, for various reasons, have had difficulty in receiving support from other donors. Nevertheless, there are a few positive examples of other donors or other Swedish appropriations stepping in after the funding from the Strategy ended. The partners' nature of work is such that most of them will continue to require funding from donors.

Management of the Strategy's implementation

The implementation of the Strategy has been well served by conscientious and dedicated staff (many whom have had short-term contracts); the development of appropriate guidelines and tools; fruitful collaboration within Sida; and, some supportive Embassies. Nevertheless, **the potential of the Strategy is not being fulfilled**. The implementation is largely reactive. Staff have been overloaded by administrative procedures that are not geared to a strategy such as this one. The portfolio of initiatives has been large and labour intensive and there has been constant pressure to disperse continually increasing funds. There have not been sufficient staffing resources to be at the forefront; respond to changing contexts; stake out strategic directions; and, connect partners, colleagues and other stakeholders. However, even if there were more resources to be more strategic, it is difficult to see what direction Sida could take with the Strategy being so "focused on being unfocused".

While there has been improvement over time, Sida's systems and resources are not well calibrated to the needs of this Strategy. The Strategy encourages increased risk-taking, innovation and engaging "new" partners – but Sida's systems cannot accommodate this well. At the same time, the systems for classification and handling of confidential information within Sida are cumbersome, technologically out of date and unclear. Moreover, there has been little consideration for the mix of the different modalities and type of support – resulting in an overly ambitious portfolio in relation to the staff resources available. The successes achieved in terms of implementation results have relied heavily on individual staff members' commitment and hard work. The price for this has been high in terms of frequent staff turn-over, loss of institutional memory and stress.

The use of calls for proposals was a departure from Sida's usual way of selecting initiatives. It gave Sida a range of new and sometimes innovative initiatives to select from. The way it was managed is, however, questionable from both a fairness and ethical perspective.

Meanwhile, proactive selection of initiatives has been infrequent. Rather, the Strategy has functioned reactively as a "gap filler" when other appropriations have lacked resources. This has undermined a strategic steering of the implementation.

In terms of volume, the emergency protection support to individual activists has not lived up the expectations. Sida's set-up and systems have not been conducive to dealing with such support and the demand has not been high. Sida's CSO partners with networks on the ground are better placed to make judgments and deal with the practicalities that this type of protection involves.

Sida has around 80 different partners involved in implementing the Strategy. Many of these require extensive dialogue and management support. Due to workloads and time constraints, monitoring and follow-up has often been superficial. Progress achieved has not been captured and used for learning and sharing. All partner relations have been affected by the high turnover of staff at Sida and many have experienced long

periods of infrequent communication. Partners in Myanmar express particular dissatisfaction with the weakened relations they now experience with Sida. However, at an overall level, partners highly appreciate Sida's professionalism and flexibility. This is further reflected in their strong interest in a much more active partnership with Sida. They encourage Sida to convene partners and take on a catalytic role.

According to partners, Sida is one of the only donors who support the ICT aspect of freedom of expression and democratisation. The partners maintain that Sweden has earned sufficient credibility and goodwill to be able to fill a leadership role in this area. Until now, however, Sida's interaction with other donors has been limited.

Sida's internal communication effort concerning the Strategy has been commensurate with the staffing resources of the Strategy Team, which has meant it has been ad hoc and inconsistent. There is much scope to improve communication about the Strategy within Sida and at the Embassies. As a result, potential synergies with geographic and thematic strategies have so far been missed. Over time, working relationships with MFA have improved; but there is much scope for the sharing of political and contextual analyses and information for mutual benefit. There is also a need to further clarify roles and relationships.

Recommendations 1 to 4 below are directed primarily at Sida's senior management. These actions are required whether Sida intends to further resource the Strategy implementation process (with the aim to optimise results) or not:

Recommendation 1: Sida's senior management should initiate a process with the aim to specify the Strategy's unique role and its added value in relation to Sida's other strategies for support. MFA should be consulted in this process.
Recommendation 2: Sida, in consultation with MFA, should define clear priorities and principles for selecting geographic focus areas.
Recommendation 3: Sida should continue to operate with a broad *possible* palate of themes, target groups and methods.
Recommendation 4: Sida's senior management should calibrate the ambitions of Strategy's implementation with staffing resources**.**

The following 3 recommendations are primarily directed at the Strategy Team and concern both the identification of initiatives and interaction with partners. They are relevant if Sida takes the decision to raise the ambitions to optimise results and thus resource the Strategy's implementation accordingly. Recommendation 8 is relevant regardless.

Recommendation 5: Sida's identification of initiatives and partners to support should be a proactive process.
Recommendation 6: Sida should continue to support initiatives at the global, regional and country levels.
Recommendation 7: Sida should consider engaging more systematically with partners.

<u>Recommendation 8:</u> Sida should consider outsourcing the emergency protection of individuals to CSOs with solid track records and networks.

The following recommendations relate to Sida's systems and are directed at Sida's management. Recommendation 10 is relevant whether Sida raises its Strategy implementation ambitions or not:

<u>Recommendation 9:</u> Sida should identify ways to better accommodate initiatives that involve high internal and external risk in its appraisal and management systems.

<u>Recommendation 10:</u> Sida's management should consider how it can make its system for managing confidential information more practical and technologically appropriate.

The following recommendations concern communication and interaction in Sweden and with other donors. They are crucial for the optimisation of results, but are also relevant in the case of a reduced Strategy implementation effort:

<u>Recommendation 11:</u> Sida should develop both a formal and the informal relationship with MFA to ensure a smooth exchange of information and to achieve synergies between development cooperation and diplomacy – without compromising the independent decision-making of Sida.

<u>Recommendation 12:</u> Sida should enhance its internal communication and interaction vis-à-vis the Strategy.

<u>Recommendation 13:</u> Sida should engage more with like-minded donors.

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

In 2009, the *Swedish government launched the Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression* (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy"). Sida was given the responsibility to implement the Strategy, which was followed by another similar strategy to cover 2012 to 2014.

The Strategy aims to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression by supporting "actors for change" – including individuals, groups and civil society organisations. The Strategy seeks to complement Sweden's other development cooperation support for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Sida decided that an evaluation of the Strategy's implementation be conducted in 2013.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR – included in Annex 1), the main objectives of the evaluation are three-fold:

i) To provide an **overview** of the supported initiatives by the strategies in order to assess the extent to which they are in line with the Strategy's objectives;

ii) To determine the extent to which the supported initiatives have **improved** the conditions for agents of change to work towards increased democratisation and freedom of expression; and if their work has **contributed** to diminishing various forms of vulnerability and oppression;[1] and,

iii) To provide **input to Sida** regarding what thematic areas and actors to focus on in the future.

The first objectives essentially concern determining the **relevance** of the initiatives that have been supported through the funds associated with the Strategy. To what extent is the support relevant to the Strategy's objective, focus and scope?

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[1] In the inception phase, this purpose was reworded to better capture the protection initiatives. This is discussed in Annex 4.

The second objective concerns the extent to which the support has contributed to **results** (positive/negative/foreseen/unforeseen effects) and to the goals set out in the strategy's objective (effectiveness).

The third objective focuses on providing Sida with useful insight on how it can better fulfil the strategy's aims. In other words: how can Sida **more effectively and efficiently** manage the support?

In addition to an overall mapping and analysis of the support,[2] the ToR's evaluation questions address relevance, effectiveness/impact, sustainability and Sida's management, coordination, and communication. The ToR also stipulate that the evaluation should provide recommendations on how to improve the support in the future and how to address shortcomings.

The evaluation does not concern assessing the Strategy *itself* (e.g. its relevance in relation to contributing to realisation of human rights and reduction of poverty). Rather, the evaluation centres on Sida's *task* of implementing the Strategy and the results achieved by the supported initiatives.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has been conducted in three phases. In the inception phase the evaluation team clarified the evaluation criteria, the questions and the scope of the evaluation; and undertook an initial overview of the portfolio. During the data collection phase (three weeks), visits were undertaken to Myanmar, Jordan and Egypt, and to organisational headquarters in Stockholm, Washington and New York. In the synthesis phase (less than two weeks), the collected data was analysed and synthesised and the draft report was prepared. The data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews (see Annex 3 for list of informants), documentation review (see Annex 2 for the bibliography), an email survey and a mapping of the characteristics of the initiatives supported (see Annex 6 for mapping results). A sample of 42 initiatives (32 partner organisations) of a total of 110 initiatives were examined and assessed in relation to the evaluation criteria. A full outline of the methodology is provided in Annex 4 and the evaluation framework is found in Annex 5.

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[2] This is included in Annex 7.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report has eight chapters. The subsequent chapter provides an overview of the Strategy, its objectives, its areas of focus, how it relates to other strategies and how it is interpreted in practice. Chapter 3 is an overview of the portfolio of initiatives supported by the Strategy. Chapter 4 analyses and assesses the relevance of the support. Chapter 5 assesses the effectiveness of the sample of initiatives examined by the evaluation team. Chapter 6 includes an assessment of sustainability. Chapter 7 looks at how Sida has managed the implementation of the Strategy. The final chapter includes overall conclusions and recommendations for Sida.

2 Strategy Overview

The Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2009 to 2011 was launched in 2009. The second Strategy, which closely resembles the first in content, was launched in 2012 and extends until 2014. Despite technically being defined as two strategies, for all intents and purposes, the second is a continuation of the first. Thus, for the purpose of this evaluation, the strategies are regarded as one.

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

The Strategy is guided by the overall Swedish policy for democratic development and human rights - *Change for Freedom 2010-2014*. This policy considers the special initiatives in support of democratisation and freedom of expression as core to its overall human rights support, since the enjoyment of civil and political rights "improves the chances of the poor to claim their economic, social and cultural rights" (p 8). The policy contains a specific section entitled "Actors for Democratisation" that is particularly relevant to the Strategy. It states that actors who are prepared to fight for democracy are critical for democratisation, thus making it "vital to begin by identifying drivers of change". It also highlights the importance of supporting civil society actors that can contribute to a vibrant and pluralist civil society. Likewise, the policy states that support, including protection, to defenders of human rights, is to be given priority. The policy also stresses that a human rights-based approach should be applied in all efforts, meaning that the principles of accountability, transparency, participation and non-discrimination should inform processes and focus of the support.

2.2 STRATEGY OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Strategy, to strengthen agents of change – primarily individuals and CSOs promoting democratisation and freedom of expression – has remained the same since 2009. However, the formulation was shortened from 15 lines to 3 lines in the 2012 version.[3] The 2009 formulation provides examples to clarify what that sup-

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[3] The current 2012 objective is to "strengthen conditions for the agents of change to work towards increased democratisation and freedom of expression. Activities are to contribute to reducing different forms of vulnerability and oppression."

port aims to do. It mentions providing increased possibilities for change agents to work towards:

- Free dissemination and obtainment of information and opinions
- Pluralism and freedom of thought
- Democratic and transparent decision-making processes
- Legislative changes that promote freedoms of association, press and internet access and the right to a just trial and other civil rights.

Both formulations contain a first part that focuses on *change agents* that are working to promote democratisation and freedom of expression by strengthening them (2009 version) or their conditions (2012 version). Both formulations contain a second part that concerns contributing to reducing "*different forms oppression*". In the first formulation, the latter is further clarified as the type of oppression that hampers people's ability to escape poverty and impedes a "just and sustainable global development". With this clarification, the goal would seem to have a long-term development perspective.

Meanwhile, the more recently formulated (and shorter) goal includes the term "vulnerability" along with oppression. The English version states that *activities*[4] supported by the strategy should "contribute to reducing different forms of *vulnerability and oppression*". However, in reality, the support to change agents often *increases* their vulnerability, through the heightened risk of detention and threats to their physical security.

The Strategy does not specifically mention offering protection to change agents as an objective, even though offering protection-related support has been, according to all concerned stakeholders interviewed, a goal from the start and is specifically stated in *Change for Freedom 2010-2014.*[5]

2.3 FOCUS

The Strategy can assist actors at the global, regional or national level. It can support organisations as well as individuals. It outlines a range of target groups, types of organisations, relevant themes and approaches and activities.

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[4] The Swedish version uses the term "verksamheten".

[5] It should be noted that offering emergency protection support does not necessarily strengthen a change agent. It concerns the human right to physical security. By addressing it, it cannot be inferred that the change agent can continue promoting freedom of expression or democratisation. In this respect it can be considered similar to humanitarian assistance.

There are several subtle differences between the older and newer Strategy. The main difference between the two Strategy versions is that the second is shorter and, thereby, also more general and wider in scope. The second version places greater emphasis on ICT and more clearly states that the Strategy can fund "long-term" initiatives. It also specifically mentions freedom of religion and that youth groups are potential targets.

Table 1: Themes, Target Groups, Methods and Activities as Stated in the Strategies

Relevant Target Groups[6]	Relevant Theme
• CSOs • Cultural actors • Human rights defenders • Journalists • Free and independent media (radio, TV, press, internet) • Politically active and party-affiliated organisations • Religious communities • Researchers • Trade unions • Women's rights groups • Youth associations (added in 2012) • Exile organisations working to support change agents at home	o Pluralism o Freedom of opinion and expression o Free, independent and professional press/media o Culture and free expression o Freedom of association o Freedom of religion o Access to the internet (freedom of information) o Right to fair hearing in court/the right to defence
Relevant Methods and Activities	
• Urgent measures to assist individuals and CS actors • Protection of exiled activists • Can entail increased risk taking • Innovative ICT approaches • Long-term and strategic activities to strengthen democratic development & freedom of expression • Costs for information dissemination; campaigns, training, legal activism, capacity building – including e.g. office costs, travel, meetings, internet and mobile phone costs	

2.4 COMPLEMENTING OTHER STRATEGIES

The initiatives supported by the Strategy should complement "other work" that concerns democratic development and human rights. Most of Sida's strategies address these issues, but especially:

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[6] LGBT persons, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities are not mentioned, despite these groups being generally oppressed and relevant to Sweden's policy. The Strategy is not explicit about giving rights-holders themselves a voice, but rather focuses on those working on their behalf.

- The Strategy for Capacity Development and Communication 2011-2013 (ICT4D Section), which aims at supporting strategic, innovative ICT efforts and capacity development, method development and networking among ICT actors. It supports ICT-solutions that promote human rights and democracy and mitigate corruption.
- The Strategy for Global Strategic Programmes aims at supporting global normative actors with a special focus on accountability and increased respect for freedom of expression. It supports e.g. human rights defenders, parliamentary organisations and civil society and non-discrimination of LGBT persons.
- The Strategy for Democracy Support works with politically affiliated organisations (PAOs) that in turn work with change agents in the political sphere.
- The strategies for Sida's category 4 countries essentially focus on democratisation and human rights – especially freedom of expression, freedom of association and free and fair elections.
- The regional strategies often take on issues that are sensitive at national levels – such as freedom of expression and the LGBT rights in Asia and Africa.

In practice, at least a handful of initiatives that have been supported have originally been identified, and sometimes prepared by, these other strategies and then moved to the Strategy because of the availability of funding (e.g. Make all Voices Count and support to the East African Journalist Association).

2.5 STRATEGY INTERPRETATION IN PRACTICE

In its implementation, Sida interprets the Strategy as centring on the strengthening change agents and their conditions. "Change agent", however, is not defined by the Strategy. Nor does the Strategy provide a theory of change to help understand what role such an actor plays in democratic development. Sida has not undertaken analysis to define what a change agent is, and it is generally understood as an "activist" or an activist organisation at the global, regional, national or grassroots level.[7]

Box 1: Characteristics of a Change Agent

There is no universal definition of what a change agent is. However, the characteristics identified by analysts and scholars include the following:

- Knowledgeable
- Innovative ideas
- Clear vision
- Persistence and determination
- Authority, credibility and leads by example
- Enjoys strong relationships based on trust and networks
- Can be in a position of power

[7] From the perspective of a human rights based approach, a change agent has to have effective strategies to influence duty-bearers (who are the formal change agents) for change to happen.

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As seen in section 2.2 above, the second part of the Strategy's objective is not clearly formulated. Understanding how the Strategy is interpreted by Sida is therefore critical. Discussions with informants reveal the following:

- The Strategy is regarded as having a very wide scope. It can support large and small actors and can span support at global, regional, country and grassroots levels.
- It is seen as being able to support innovative and riskier initiatives. This is interpreted as being able to support new actors (both new organisations and new partners for Sida), small actors and non-traditional actors with lower capacity to manage development assistance. It is also understood as being able to support initiatives that Embassies consider too risky to be involved in.
- The support can, but does not have to be, short-term.
- It can support "emergency initiatives", which basically entail protection-related support to individuals who are physically threatened as a result of their activism.
- It can support individuals. Beyond supporting individuals needing urgent protection, this is understood as being able to support activists or loose networks that do not have formal organisational structures or are not registered.

3 The Portfolio of Support

This chapter is a *summary of the portfolio mapping* undertaken by the evaluators which is included in full in Annex 6.

3.1 FINANCIAL SIZE AND DURATION

Over a span of four years, the portfolio has grown to 130 initiatives to which MSEK 890 have been allocated. During the period of review, the total expenditure amounted to SEK 569 729 405. Out of this, 17 initiatives focused on emergencies, where human rights defenders were provided with security measures (representing 0.8 percent of the expenditures) and 3 initiatives were evaluation consultancies.

Year	Budget MSEK	New (multi-year) allocations MSEK	Disbursed MSEK	Number of New Initiatives
2009 (mid)	100	154.1	61.6	11
2010	120	131.2	91.5	36
2011	150	49.0	115.6	12
2012	215	493.2	216,3	38
2013 (mid)	305	60.3	N/A	13
Total	*890*	*887.8*		*110*

The average grant size is SEK 5.1 million, while the median value is SEK 4 million. The smallest grant has been SEK 34,000 (participation at a Pride festival) and the largest has been MSEK 105 (Making All Voices Count – a joint project with DFID, USAID and the Omnydar Foundation).

In line with the Strategy's initial short-term perspective, the median duration of the initiatives is 2.5 years. Seven initiatives stretch over four or more years, most of which have been extended to cover more than one agreement period. Among the long-term partners are the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), International Media Support (IMS), United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), Shalom, Akiba Uhaki/UHAI and East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders (EHAHRD), which have all received support since 2009 and for which support is still ongoing.

3.2 GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

Change agents in 29 different countries have received direct support. Fourteen of these countries are among the 25 least free, according to the combined rankings of Freedom House (press freedom, civil liberties and internet freedom, 2012) and Re-

porters without Borders (2013). Change agents at the country level have also been targeted indirectly though "global" and "regional" initiatives – 61 percent of the funding is provided for global initiatives and 22 percent is provided for regional initiatives, most of which constitute support to country level initiatives. In total, the portfolio includes activities in nearly 60 different countries.[8] Among these are 20 of the 25 lowest ranking countries in relation to freedom. Activities by five or more partners have been undertaken in Myanmar, Christine, Beneficial, Irrigate, Zitrus, and the sub-regions of East Africa, MENA and Central Asia.

3.3 TYPES OF PARTNERS

The range of types of partners in terms of formal status supported is wide.[9] Around half of the partners are CSOs and they receive just over 40 percent of the funding. Multilateral organisations have been supported in only 10 initiatives, but the amount of funding has been comparatively large and therefore this type of partner makes up one quarter of the funds spent. The other types of organisations include trade associations and unions (e.g. WAN and the Pan-African Lawyers Union); foundations, trusts and funds (such as UHAI and Burma Netherlands Centre - BCN); cultural and media institutions (such as theatre groups and exile news outlets); and partisan or political organisations. Each of these partner types makes up less than 12 percent of both the funds and the number of initiatives.

Two-thirds of the funding is channelled through partners with headquarters in the developed world. This includes multilateral organisations, international non-governmental organisations, Swedish organisations and exile organisations. The remainder of the funds are channelled to organisations based in countries that are eligible for ODA or to regional organisations. In terms of number of initiatives, partners based in a developing country are the single most common partner type (26 initiatives).

Three main modalities that have been used to the channel funds to change agents:
- The largest part of the funds (45 percent) has been channelled through partnership arrangements between a DAC-based organisation and one or several ODA country-based organisations.
- 36 percent has been channelled via intermediaries that are engaged in sub-granting – often through calls for proposals.

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[8] While it is possible to capture the funding which has been channelled exclusively to a single country or region, the data available does not make it possible to map the total amount of funds that have been destined each country – since some of it is channelled through global and regional initiatives and these budgets are not disaggregated.

[9] See Annex 6 for more detailed information and graphs.

- 19 percent of the funds have been channelled directly to implementing organisations in ODA countries.

In terms of the numbers of initiatives, intermediaries make up only 14 initiatives, while 45 initiatives (representing 40 percent of the projects) consist of direct support to implementing agencies – the most time-consuming of grantee relationships. Having a direct relationship with an implementing agency means that Sida has the full responsibility for dialogue, monitoring, problem solving, financial transactions and reporting. In indirect relationships this responsibility is shared with the intermediary partner.

The type of support provided is mostly project support focusing on a specific issue or output (in total 95 initiatives - making up 66 percent of the funding), due, in part, i.a. to the rather short expectation of the duration of the appropriation when it was initially launched. Core support (i.e. unearmarked funding, often used to finance governance structures, administrative running costs and capacity development) is given to 10 larger initiatives, making up 24 percent of the funding. The rest is programme funding (5 initiatives, 10 percent of funding), of broader and more long-term initiatives using a range of approaches to achieve outcomes.

3.4 THEMES AND TARGET GROUPS

Of nine different thematic areas identified,[10] the two most common are freedom of expression (34 percent of the funding) and democratic development (24 percent of the funding). The latter area includes initiatives to strengthen civil society, freedom of association, promoting rights-holder participation, holding duty-bearers to account, support to political parties and grassroots empowerment. Other thematic areas are included in the table below.

Table 2: Breakdown of the Strategy Portfolio by Thematic Area

Main theme	%	number
Freedom of expression	34%	35
Democratic development	24%	19
LGBT rights	9%	10
The rule of law	8%	6
ICT freedom and security	8%	10
Human rights general	8%	12
Cultural rights	3%	6
Women's rights	3%	6
Free and fair elections	2%	6

[10] Please see Annex 6 for information on how the themes were identified.

The distribution by financial amounts largely resembles the spread by number of initiatives. It should be noted, however, that ICT freedom and security (i.e. support to initiatives that promote and/or support internet access, provide digital security training) is a secondary theme for almost a third of the funds disbursed. Freedom of expression is the most common theme in every sub-region. However, at the global level, initiatives addressing ICT freedom and security are slightly more frequent.

In total, 10 main target groups have received support from the Strategy. The most common target groups are journalists & media organisations (27), civil society & human rights activists (25). Jointly they make up around half of the funds spent. Other key target groups are cultural actors such as writers and theatre groups; digital activists; students/youth; and, LGBT.

Decision-makers are the most common secondary target group in financial terms, along with civil society and human rights activists and women's rights activists. While youth and students make up the fifth largest target groups, a large part of the cultural and women's targeted groups also focus on youth. Likewise, a significant part of the media support specifically focuses on young people. Thus the proportion of initiatives that have a youth dimension is significant.

Although grassroots communities and people living in poverty are rarely mentioned as secondary target groups or final beneficiaries in the project documents, a number of initiatives in the sample showed results that benefitted the grassroots level. Similarly, LGBT persons and ethnic minorities were not specified in the Strategy, but several of the sample initiatives specifically focus on these groups.

The initiatives mostly target organisations or organisations and individuals. In at least 15 cases, partner organisations have specifically targeted individuals as change agents.

3.5 METHODS APPLIED

The initiatives supported apply a varied range of methods. These include *capacity development* (often trainings or conferences), *awareness-raising* of rights holders (often via printed material, media or performing arts), *advocacy* (e.g. lobbying of duty-bearers through reports and at international fora), *ICT* (e.g. provision of ICT tools, platforms and technical support), *research and documentation* (e.g. collecting and documenting evidence of HR violations), *networking* (e.g. facilitating experience exchange and learning among actors), *protection* (including physical/virtual and preventative/reactive e.g. safe houses/spaces, asylum, encryption programmes, alert systems), and *legal support/counselling* for individuals (e.g. legal support and support to persons detained or harassed). The majority of the initiatives use a combination of two to four of these different methods. The most common methods are enhancing capacity development and awareness-raising.

4 Relevance

This chapter analyses and assesses the relevance of the initiatives supported by the Strategy in relation to the Strategy's objectives, the context, gender equality and human rights principles.

4.1 RELEVANCE IN RELATION TO STRATEGY

Interviews and documentation suggest that, in its selection of initiatives, Sida has very deliberately tried to meet all the priorities set out in the Strategy. The calls for proposals gave Sida an opportunity to select from a large number of initiatives and to find combinations of initiatives that covered as many priorities as possible. Nevertheless, the applications received from this process did not always give Sida an opportunity to ensure that all priority areas were covered equally well or that the supported agents were the most effective in each context and theme. There is evidence in a few cases that Sida, therefore, identified suitable organisations for strategic/organisational support (see Section 0) to complement the portfolio. The Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) is an example of this.

As a result, the **portfolio strongly reflects most of the priorities highlighted in the Strategy**. Specifically:

- The initiatives in the portfolio are **spread broadly** across 29 countries directly and another 35 countries indirectly.
- Countries with a **democratic deficit** have been targeted with activities having taken place in 20 of the 25 least free countries.
- The portfolio has contained a **mix** of country level, regional (2 regions and 4 sub-regions) and global initiatives.
- A broad range of **relevant sub-thematic areas** have been covered that relate to freedom of expression and democratic development.
- In line with the main themes of the Strategy, journalists, media actors, civil society and human rights activists are the most common **target groups**. The initiatives have also supported a broad range of groups as specified in the Strategy, along with other groups – such as LGBT activists and ethnic minorities – which were not mentioned in the Strategy. The Strategy's implementation has not, however, involved supporting activists from **religious** communities as such, although religion has been a key dimension of the ethnic groups supported.
- The portfolio contains a significant **mix of types of organisations** (trade unions/associations, CSOs, multilaterals, media outlets, cultural institutions, funds/foundations, partisan organisations).
- A number of organisations supported are **new to Sida**. In the sample studied, about two-third of the partners had not previously received Sida support.

- ICT actors and **ICT** activities have been supported. This includes a number of **innovative** initiatives (these are further discussed in Chapter 5.2)
- Eleven **exile organisations** from four different countries have been supported.

The second strategy (2012-2014) mentions that the initiatives supported by the Strategy should address "restrictions of people's freedom and rights, including freedom of religion". While the implementation has addressed several rights and freedoms, freedom of religion has not been prominent. Supporting religious communities to promote freedom of religion is problematic for Sida since these groups tend to engage in missionary activities which would disqualify them from Swedish ODA. Proactive work by Sida to find organisations that promote protection and non-discrimination of people of all beliefs (including atheism) has not been undertaken. According to informants, part of the difficulty has been finding credible and impartial organisations who undertake quality work related to freedom of religion and belief in repressive environments.

Sida's support to regional organisations and networking was raised by several stakeholders (both at global and national levels) as highly relevant – all the while recognising that democratisation and human rights efforts must be owned and driven by local and national processes. They mentioned that many forms of activism are enhanced when actors collaborate across borders, sharing experience, inspiration and learning. In addition, it was pointed out that certain sensitive issues are best raised at a regional level to deflect attention from potentially vulnerable national activists. Furthermore, the regional solidarity and peer protection that is garnered through interaction was valued. Moreover, partners claimed that few donors were able/willing to support regional initiatives, making Sida's support more important.[11] Regarding the LGBT movement, for example, regional networks have played an important role in empowering and protecting national level organisations and activists. Regional level work is not an end in itself, but a means to strengthen national processes. Regional organisations are considered particularly relevant when they provide regular, long-term support that strengthens national actors.

A key characteristic of the Strategy is its stated intention to take risks. Sida's portfolio is generally relevant to the Strategy in this respect. While the support contains several low internal risk initiatives (e.g. UNESCO, National endowment for Democracy – NED), it contains a respectable number of riskier initiatives such as those of new organisations (e.g. AN), weaker organisations and CSOs developing innovative approaches (Meedan, WLP). Several organisations – particularly global and regional

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[11] On the other hand, Sweden's regional strategies are all about addressing these issues, raising the issue of the added value of the Strategy – apart from the funding.

level ones – work directly with partners in high risk environments (e.g. Chin Human Rights Organisation, CA, INYHETER, UHAI and Coalition of African Lesbians).

However, Sida's systems do not allow for much fiduciary risk-taking and the low level of staff resources has affected the Strategy Team's[12] ability to take on initiatives that require extra guidance and "hand-holding". In particular, Sida's procedures do not enable Sida to support informal groups at the beginning of their activism and individual activists with key competencies, which the Strategy opens up for. Thus, while the portfolio contains many more risky initiatives than may be usual for Sida – particularly with regard to external risks – arguably very few of the initiatives involve very high internal risk. An exception is the urgent protection support provided to individual activists.

4.1.1 Relevance to context and by contributing to broader processes

The evaluation found that the sample of country level initiatives supported by the Strategy, and examined by the evaluation, were completely in line with the respective geographic country strategies. In fact, in a couple of cases organisations were supported both from the Strategy and from the embassy. In other cases initiatives had been referred or recommended by the embassy. Since the country strategies are based on an analysis of the context, the support provided by the Strategy to partner countries can be presumed to be as relevant to the context. Second, the important results achieved by a large part of the initiatives examined (as detailed in Chapter 5) – in terms of the

> **Box 2: Optimal effects versus relevance to Strategy**
> The support to a human rights organisation in Nepal offers an illustrative example of being relevant to the Strategy vs. being relevant to obtaining the greatest potential results in the area of democratisation and freedom of expression.
> Sida has selected a Nepalese partner that has a solid reputation in its country, works with youth and operates at the grassroots level. By supporting it, Sida is strengthening a relevant actor in Nepal and has, at the same time, made the portfolio more relevant to the Strategy by diversifying its geographical spread and covering several of the specified priority areas.
> However, the question of whether supporting the democratisation effort in Nepal – a country that Sweden is otherwise not involved in – is relevant, was not central to the selection. The diversity it brought to the portfolio and the quality of the initiative took precedence. Nevertheless, it could be argued that supporting Nepal is relevant since the country is going through a particularly precarious period of history and there has been a pattern of civil strife erupting every decade.
> Because this support was identified reactively through the call for proposal process, another pertinent question was never asked: if Nepalese democratisation is to be supported, what are the best forms and channels in terms of greatest potential leverage? Judging from the Team's experience and recent civil society evaluations, the answer is not to fund a CSO directly, but rather enter into a co-funding agreements with the donors in country that have decades of experience with civil society, have built relevant capacities, are applying innovative modalities and are having measurable successes.

strengthening of change agents in the areas of democratisation and freedom of expression – would also suggest contextual relevance.

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[12] There is no official name in English for the group of programme officers in CIV/SAM who implement the Strategy. This evaluation has adopted this name to distinguish the group.

A pertinent question is whether the support is provided in a way that has optimal effect in the contexts it is given. Box 2 provides an example of how the approach that underlies the Strategy may not always be the optimal way of contributing to results.

The Strategy's implicit approach is to affect change by spreading funds widely over as many geographic and thematic areas as possible. This approach, sometimes used by foundations, makes sense if the idea is not to make any choices and not have any political priorities. It also makes sense if identifying very novel and innovative initiatives is the primary goal and one is prepared to accept high losses. This would be like providing 100 different grants with the aim of getting a handful of innovative solutions to, for instance, water purification at village level.

Sustainable social and political change and innovation is, however, a complex process that needs to be driven by the frustrations and hopes of women and men who organise for change[13] and find a leadership that can translate these aspirations into a language that is understood by people of power. For this to happen, sustained efforts are needed to facilitate and inspire local processes. Innovation is increasingly recognised as being best supported within systems, rather than through isolated projects. Spreading grants as widely as possible may not be a waste, but it will not necessarily feed into broader innovation processes and systems, even if the individual initiative is innovative. It can be questioned whether the current, rather scattered approach is relevant to optimally support the capacity of change agents to promote freedom of expression and democratisation. Opportunities may be missed for attaining critical mass, synergies and catalytic effects.

4.1.2   New actors and innovation

The Strategy has placed importance on initiatives being "new" and the portfolio lives up to this demand fairly well. The main justification for the call for proposal process (see Section 7.2) was in fact to identify new actors. According to stakeholders, "new" is often interpreted as small upstarts. Bringing in new ideas and actors is useful for any change process. At the same time, it must be recognised that societal change takes a long time, and innovative projects cannot be assumed to contribute to innovation processes. As seen in Box 1, a key characteristic of a change agent is persistence and determination. Commenting on the donor tendency to prefer the novel, one developing country informant stated:

Change takes time. It is a slow process. New agents are not necessarily better. They start from behind.

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[13] Reference FGM work in Nigeria.

Several of Sida's established international and regional partners[14] have a solid track record in finding and nurturing new actors through their networks. They would welcome Sida's encouragement to be innovative and draw on networks to identify partners that have new ideas.

4.1.3   Cultural agents

The second version of the Strategy specifically states that "based on Swedish experience in the area, the work of cultural groups for democratisation and freedom of expression should be enabled". Cultural activities can be a powerful way to support rights holders in *exercising* freedom of expression, which is particularly relevant in environments with decades of political repression. Cultural activity also strengthens creativity – a key resource for both empowerment and activism – that is thwarted in repressive environments. Indeed, Swedish studies show that in countries with a deficit of freedom, independent performing arts organisations tend to be progressive change agents that are effective in promoting freedom of expression, cultural liberty, dialogue, raising pertinent societal issues; and empowering women and youths.[15]

The portfolio includes several initiatives that involve cultural actors – there are 12 initiatives that directly or indirectly involve cultural activists from the performing arts (music and theatre) and literature (authors) sub-sectors.[16] The five performing arts organisations that have been supported are primarily geared towards using performing arts to raise awareness of human rights issues and principles. There is much evidence that using cultural activity as a means to communicate tends to be very effective. However, because this typically involves performing a *set* agenda for a specific purpose, it does not necessarily promote the creative and empowering act of exercising *free* expression.[17]

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[14] Some examples include FH, INYHETER and CRD.

[15] Ljungman, Cecilia M.; Rønning, Helge; Singh, Tejeshwar; Steen Pedersen, Henrik et al.; *Sida's Work with Culture and Media*, Sida Evaluation 04/38, October 2004; and Ljungman, Cecilia; June Tabaroff , with Nadia Masri-Pedersen *Uncovering the Power of Performing Arts An Evaluation of the Tamasi Programme*, Sida Evaluation 2012:15, September 2012.

[16] Seven initiatives concern protection and/or advocacy for free expression of cultural agents.

[17] An analogy to press freedom might be providing informative printed material about press freedom versus journalists exercising press freedom in print.

4.2 RELEVANCE IN RELATION TO GENDER EQUALITY AND HRBA

According to Swedish policy, gender equality and human rights principles should inform all development cooperation efforts. The evaluators have examined how partners (in the evaluation sample) work with these aspects.

4.2.1 Gender equality

The Strategy Team has often raised gender equality and gender mainstreaming in its dialogue with partners. At least half of partners examined in the sample have a quota approach to gender equality. This generally means aiming for 50 percent participation of women in training initiatives, conferences, working groups and in staff composition. These partners report results ranging from 20 to 60 percent women. The reason that is always given for not attaining 50 percent is low numbers of women applicants. A few partners indicate that they include "gender aspects" in trainings. There is little evidence of the partners analysing and addressing the causes of inequality.

> "*When we started we thought there were more pressing issues than gender. But the donors were pressing us about this issue and eventually we understood that it was important. Today we have about 40 percent female staff and we should according to our recruitment policy encourage women to apply.*"

A few partners admit that gender equality has not been a priority and is an area that needs improvement or do not seem to view gender equality as directly relevant.

> *We were asked if we could provide sex disaggregated data on the participants of our consultations. We could not.*

> **Box 3: Change Agents and HRBA** It would seem pertinent for Sida and its partners to deliberate more over the role of the change agent in the rights based approach and how to identify them among both rights holders and change agents.

A handful of partners are primarily focused on the issue women's rights. These partners base their work on contextual analyses of obstacles and power relations. While mainly targeting women, a couple of organisations examined in the sample also deliberately involve men in their programmes. Of the ones examined in the sample, the evaluation found their work to be highly relevant to addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.

4.2.2 Human Rights-Based Approach

In its appraisal process, Sida has assessed that the supported organisations work in line with human rights principles. Indeed, the partners appear to uphold principles of accountability to some extent; non-discrimination is addressed in at least a handful of initiatives examined in the sample, and participatory approaches are well developed by a few of the partners. On the other hand, participation and transparency are not principles that can be easily encompassed by the initiatives that are sensitive, and risk placing people in harm's way if communicated openly.

With some exceptions, partners generally do not have a solid grasp of what a human rights-based approach is. Quite a number were baffled by the question and typically

responded "*human rights is what we do - we work for freedom of expression*" or "*we include human rights in our trainings*". While most initiatives did indeed focus on promoting voice, empowering rights holders to speak freely and take action for change; in most cases the initiatives were not based on an explicit analysis of who has and does not have a voice (rights holders), why they do or do not have a voice and who can do something about it (duty bearers). Also, it was not understood that the human rights principles were about both content and processes in the programmes.

A few partners rejected a human rights-based approach, instead emphasising more of a needs focus:
— *Now we go more for a needs based approach. We do not have a written policy around this, but in reality we focus more on needs.*
— *We knew about HRBA but it was not so explicit in our interaction with Sida.*
— *We are only an intermediary, we do not engage with such matters.*

Others referred to the importance of independent media as an indication of a human rights-based approach (i.e. a focus on the principle of transparency):
— *We believe everyone has a right to be represented by the media, this is our overall goal. Most media is supported through our taxes and it should represent us and not manipulate us.*
— *We are the only electronic broadcaster that does not only think about making quick money and only broadcast entertainment.*

Among the partners in the sample, WLP and Action Aid have demonstrated the best practical understanding of both gender equality and the human rights-based approach.
> *Everything we do focuses on empowering people to claim their rights. We believe that the process is essential for both human rights and democracy. Our HRBA policy is a global policy which was developed at our Action Aid HQ.*

WLP stands out for its highly participatory organisational approach. This is illustrated by the participatory processes involved in preparing its training materials so that these attain a high quality, are anchored locally and contain relevant cases adapted to different contexts.

4.3 SUMMARY

The portfolio strongly reflects most of the priorities highlighted in the Strategy. Very high risk-taking is, however, not a feature, nor is support to religious communities. To enhance relevance to the current Strategy, Sida could consider more purposeful support to cultural agents that promote the act of exercising free expression, as opposed to only using cultural activities as a means of raising awareness.

The Strategy's implicit approach is to affect change by spreading funds over as many geographical and thematic areas as possible. This may not be wasteful, but it is not a relevant approach to optimising results. A more relevant approach to enhancing change agents' capacities, freedom of expression and democratisation would be *to*

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focus efforts based on priorities and entry points for innovation processes and systems. Critical mass, synergies and catalytic effects would then have a greater chance of being achieved.

While at least half of the partners make some effort to bring women into their activities and have some basic understanding of the importance of gender equality, gender equality mainstreaming tends to be underdeveloped in most of the organisations studied. There are, however, a few examples of quality work being undertaken to promote women's rights. Very few partners have deliberately worked with a human rights-based approach in a consistent and systematic way.

5 Effectiveness

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Most initiatives in the sample have enhanced the capacity of change agents (organisations and individuals). Since the goal of the Strategy is to strengthen change agents and their conditions, these efforts could logically be seen as outcomes in themselves. The evaluation has also gathered evidence of the results produced by the change agents themselves. Thus, the Evaluation Team has examined the effectiveness of the sample of initiatives in terms of outputs and outcomes in relation to four clusters of results:

- freedom of expression
- democratisation
- protection of change agents
- organisational development and networks of change agents

In most cases, reports, interviews and evaluations reveal a large range of outputs[18] and some outcomes[19], which cannot all be summarised in this section.[20] In some cases outcomes have not been achieved, often because time has been too short or methods have not been available to assess these. This Chapter provides an overall stocktaking of the types of results achieved and provides a few examples of each kind. It also outlines the initiatives for which the evaluation found clear indications of underachievement.

5.2 RESULTS IN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

While there are many overlaps, the outputs and outcomes identified in the sample organisations that contribute to freedom of expression can be roughly grouped into: i) promoting freedom of expression and media freedom; ii) supporting access to information; and iii) advancing internet freedom.

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[18] notably GYLA, NPA, JCCE, INYHETER, BCN, Freemuse

[19] notably CA, WLP, TOOL, ActionAid Myanmar, Shalom

[20] Informants and reports attribute outcomes to the Sida support, but it should be noted that most of the partners have other donors making sole attribution an issue in some cases.

The results presented below represent only a portion, or examples, of the results achieved by initiatives supported by the Strategy. Many results have been identified by the evaluation, but the space in this report is limited, and only allows a presentation of a sample of results.

5.2.1   Promoting freedom of expression and media freedom

We see freedom of expression as not only for 'media' or 'political freedom'. We fight for free expression in the 'social', 'cultural' and 'personal' areas. Women do not have the opportunity to express themselves. Their freedom is highly limited and they keep quiet. – WLP partner.

Freedom of expression underlies a greater part of the initiatives supported by the Strategy. The media-related organisations have been the most prominent among the sample in promoting freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information.

First, several initiatives have **enhanced capacity** in the area of journalism, media ethics and technological skills. For instance, UNESCO has developed a kit in Arabic and English on media and information literacy in collaboration with Cairo and Barcelona University. It is expected to be used in 50 universities in the region and will be available online once it is rolled out. INYHETER has undertaken the capacity development of its Central Asian partners in relation to news content development, audio production, online publishing and digital security. Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), Meedan, Brown and Mizzima have also worked to strengthen capacity in different ways.

Second, partners have produced innovative solutions in the area of **technological infrastructure**. For instance, since the printed press has come under increased pressure by the Sudanese government, INYHETER has supported a group of journalists to launch a new Sudanese online newspaper that can operate outside of the country's press restrictions. INYHETER has also made a Virtual Private Network (VPN) available to Usel journalists and human rights activists, so that they can bypass censorship and secure their online communications. Meanwhile, CA has devised a unique technological set-up that it used for an interactive web-cast meeting between journalists and the Tibetan spiritual leader Kirti Rinpoche that resulted in significant international media coverage.

Third, results have been achieved that relate to providing people with the **opportunity to express themselves**. For instance, UNESCO has helped give voice to the Syrian refugee community in Jordan by providing an information sharing and communication platform in the form of a one-hour bi-weekly, live radio programme. Meanwhile, DVB has started a debate programme, inviting different sides in Myanmar to voice their views. Meedan's work with citizen journalism and its "Checkdesk" platform has also contributed to people's freedom of expression as have Kubatana Trust in Zitrus. Of particular note is CA's work:
- On CA's website, mainland writers, journalists and others who face censorship by the authorities have been able to share information, contribute to debate and published 500 articles in CA's biweekly journal.

- Citizens have posted over 100 documents on CA's virtual bulletin relating to freedom of expression, illegal search and attention, petitions, police brutality, trials, a verdict, or rulings, censorship and surveillance. A few of these postings had wider effect, such as media attention to psychiatric incarceration of activists.
- Highlights of CA's ability to make activist voices heard internationally include 43 media interviews worldwide, 205 press and public requests for information and over 1000 media citations around the globe. Topics addressed included domestic policy reform, technological developments, citizen activism and the ongoing Tibetan crisis. For example, press work related to human rights defenders received 154 media "pick-ups" and 472 re-postings.

Fourth, a couple of partners in the sample have worked to defend or promote freedom of expression in the **legal realm**. The Maharat Foundation in Lebanon has worked on legal reform and has succeeded in getting a number of its proposals accepted by the concerned parliamentary committee. In Georgia, the Georgian Young Lawyer's Association (GYLA) has defended journalists in different ways, including filing a lawsuit against the police in which seven journalists and media outlets demanded compensation for property damages and physical injuries.

5.2.2   Promoting access to information

In the sample, several of the initiatives relate to providing information via exiled media to citizens of countries with repressive regimes.[21] In addition to providing media content to keep the public informed, much of the Swedish support has funded technological approaches to promote people's access to information while circumventing censorship, examples of these results are:

- CA provides information on six interrelated web sites. All are blocked but can be and are accessed through a system of proxy sites.[22] Its most popular site – which presents in-depth analyses, current events commentaries and theoretical discussions on legal reforms and includes articles by writers, journalists, lawyers and others who are censored by the authorities – received over 220,000 unique visits during the funding period. Particularly heavy traffic on the site occurs when CA covers significant or sensitive domestic events that citizens desire independent information on.

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[21] This includes CA (who does not see itself as an exile organisation. Arguably though, its media efforts are "exiled" since they cannot operate freely in country), Brown, INYHETER, DVB and Mizzima. DVB and Mizzima were exile media outlets when they received funds from the Strategy. With the changing political climate in Myanmar, both are transitioning to becoming home-based independent media.
[22] CA's in-house engineers in collaboration with other technology experts have developed a system of biweekly proxy links that allows access to information, resources and communication platforms that are censored by the authorities.

- INYHETER has supported access to information to citizens of closed countries by providing uncensored internet access, including the provision of satellite connections, to activists in Irrigate Christine, Usel and Tula. It also supported the development an automated system of censorship circumvention and content delivery for a Chinese news and analysis aggregator (70,000 unique visitors on average per month).

- The exile media organisation Brown publishes news, feature stories, analysis, and opinions related to Usel on its website for country-based and external readers. Since April 2012, visitors to the site have more than doubled from under 5000 visitors to 10,000 to (up to 26,000 at times). To allow more citizens access to information, it has investigated how its site has been blocked and ways to address this.

- Meedan's Checkdesk is a platform for professional newsrooms across MENA to work with citizen journalists to validate, translate and contextualise social media content. It is an open source software solution and can be accessed by anyone, while at the same time being able to protect its users by allowing fake names and identities.

- The software developed by TOOL allows people to use the internet anonymously when seeking information. Every day there are around 1 million users globally, up from 200,000 users when Sida began funding the organisation. Statistics specific to Sida's support shows a steady increase of users during the project period as illustrated in the graph below:[23]

Directly connecting users from Iran

The Tor Project - https://metrics.torproject.org/
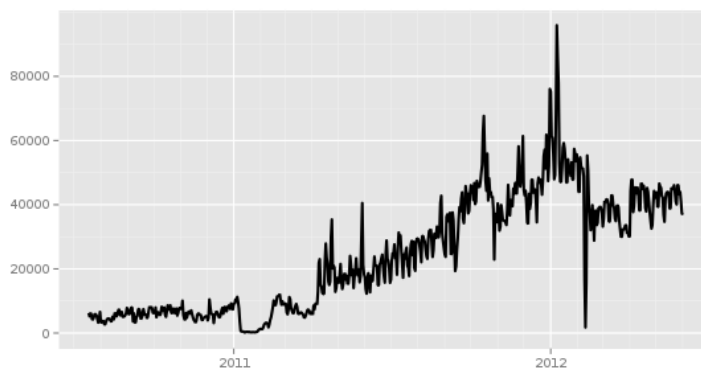
- INYHETER has provided and built important ICT infrastructure for its partners to promote information access. For instance, it provided support to the development of award-winning *FreeWeibo.com*,[24] a searchable database of

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[23] This graph is publicly available on the Internet.

[24] *FreeWeibo.com* was awarded Best Innovation by Deutsche Welle's Best Online Activism (Bobs) awards in May 2013.

censored content from the social networking platform *Weibo*, and a circumvention tool to access it.

- There has not been much focus on the legal aspects of access to information among the sample initiatives. Nevertheless, GYLA has provided legal assistance to journalists in 19 cases, which mostly related to access to information held by the authorities.

5.2.3 Promoting Internet freedom

Internet freedom is about having access to the global Internet as an open platform to innovate, learn, organise, and express oneself – free from undue interference or censorship. It also concerns the right to privacy. Almost a third of the sample has indirectly or directly promoted internet freedom. Results can be grouped as follows:

- **Training and awareness-raising:** FH, CA, INYHETER, AN, Meedan, Brown and TOOL have undertaken training, campaigns and conferences to make people aware of internet freedom issues, violations, how to remain anonymous or how to circumvent government blockages to access information.

- **Research and advocacy:** CA, INYHETER, AN and TOOL have or are undertaking research to support its awareness-raising, technology development and/or advocacy work in the area of internet freedom. For example, CA, has monitored and analysed domestic legislative and regulatory developments related to the Internet and information sharing. It has used these analyses in briefings for consultations with governments and UN treaty bodies.

- **Mobilisation at country level:** there are a couple of examples of partners mobilising to address internet freedom. For instance, FH's partner organisation in Myanmar has helped civil society issue a statement on internet freedom that was published in the media. It has also recently supported the establishment of an internet censorship monitoring group and promoted a multi-stakeholder dialogue on internet freedom. Meanwhile, in Jordan, UNESCO has initiated a network of lawyers to address the recent onslaught by the government on internet freedom.

5.3 RESULTS IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATISATION

In the evaluation sample, five main groups of results have been identified that relate to different aspects of democratic development. These include promoting democratic processes; the empowerment of the grassroots to claim rights and exercise voice; free and fair elections; equality and non-discrimination; and, human rights and the rule of law. These are discussed in the following sections.

5.3.1 Promoting democratic processes

More than a third of the sample produced outputs or outcomes related to different facets of promoting democratic process. The examples below can be roughly divided into results related to freedom of association, civic engagement and democratic governance.

Two notable and quite diverse examples of promoting **freedom of association** are the initiatives of National endowment for Democracy (NED) and WLP's partner in Jordan. NED has produced a comprehensive toolkit for defending civic space based on the experience in dozens of countries. The toolkit was put together over a period of a couple of years with input from 200 CSOs, and introduced through a series of global and regional consultations. According to NED, the toolkit – which is available online – is now being used in a number of countries. Not unexpectedly, greater success has been achieved when it has been applied along with a process of capacity building among civil society actors, which in turn has led to CSOs organising themselves. In the last year, this has occurred in Libya with support from the International Centre for Not-For-Profit Law and UNDP. In Myanmar, capacity building of CSOs has led to a loose network that has successfully worked with parliamentarians to table a revised law relating to civil society space.

Meanwhile, WLP's partner in Jordan has addressed the right to exercise freedom of assembly among women by supporting women to directly *experience* this freedom. Since women are rarely seen at public manifestations, women and youth are supported every few weeks in organising a march for causes they have commonly agreed upon. The aim is to develop a cadre of women and young people who feel comfortable making political demands and marching/protesting for different issues –with a particular view on the upcoming parliamentary elections.

In the area of **civic engagement,** the results of the sample initiatives relate to awareness raising and capacity building. Regarding awareness-raising, there is the example of GYLA that held over 150 round tables and seminars around Georgia that benefitted several thousand citizens. GYLA reports that the meetings raised public awareness on a range of topics. These have included constitutional reform; freedom of information; protection mechanisms for children's rights; administrative detention; social guarantees for disabled persons; and, political rights, election codes and budgetary process in local self-governance**.**

Meanwhile, in Myanmar, SHALOM aimed to build capacity to improve the quality and quantity of civic engagement in Burma's political process. It has targeted change agents that are members of CSOs and executive committees of select political parties. It says that training and awareness-raising have given people a platform for participating in the changes. While the evaluation has been limited in gathering direct evidence of outcomes from capacity building outputs, feedback provided by different trainees in the workshop evaluation suggest future agency among the trainees:

— *I am no longer afraid of getting involved in politics. I would like to engage in politics bravely. I have come to know the fact that everybody is equal before the law. The training gave me the courage to dispel fear. I would like to say that the training has guided me from darkness to light.*

— *By attending the training I came to realise the undesirability of corruption, our rights to liberty and self-determination. I have decided to teach the villagers about these.*

The Burmese partners of NPA and BCN strengthened capacity to specifically pro-mote the discourse on, and understanding of, decentralisation in Myanmar.[25] NPA reports that its partner has engaged in very close dialogue with the government on this topic. The CSO partners are increasingly discussing sub-national governance issues openly, including debates over the meaning of federalism, long considered too sensi-tive a topic for discussion.[26]

Meanwhile, the support to civic initiatives of the Youth Parliament in Pakistan (YPP) raises questions. According to reports, 60 trainers were trained and 96 trainings were held with groups of around 30 youth in each group (44% girls), using a European Coun-cil training tool (Compass) for human rights education. There is no reporting on the results of these trainings and they do not seem linked to any other processes or support systems. Other issues of concern include: the web-site is not updated; the auditor's re-port has remarks;[27] and, the project targets high level academic youth (inviting the "brightest" and most "brilliant" youth – that have the "minimum benchmark" for the training). In addition, there are a number of self-reported challenges. The YPP also re-ceives funds from the Strategy via the core support to UNDEF for project with similar purposes called "Youth Action for Democracy"[28].

Two initiatives have focused on **democratic governance** at the organisational level, but results have been mixed. Two Swedish party-affiliated organisations (PAO) have received support to promote participatory and transparent leadership and internal de-mocracy within parties in two African countries. One of the organisations trained 65,000 party members (about one-third were women); printed and distributed 81,000 manuals and 100 000 flyers. This led to improved organisational systems and a 10 percent increase in party membership. However, the party did not manage to develop a credible political platform that attracted voters. Monitoring reports indicate that inter-party threats and accusations took too much attention from the political work needed.

The other Swedish PAO trained 1,200 cadres in democratisation, devolution and po-tentials for social transformation. It also supported i.a. polling capacity, measures to enhance accountability, communication efforts and developed an internal strategy document for organisational reform process. Both the partner and an independent

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[25] After decades of centralised authoritarianism, decentralisation is considered profoundly important to the future peace and stability of the country.

[26] *Kim N. B. Ninh, Myanmar Country Representative for the Asia Foundation and Matthew Arnold, Asia Foundation, Bangkok. http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/10/02/in-myanmar-an-evolving-discourse-on-decentralisation/.*

[27] See auditor's report from 2011.

[28] http://www.youthparliament.org.pk/yad.html

evaluation held that outcomes are unknown, but are believed to have been limited. The partner indicated that it is difficult to support political factions from a distance and there is always a risk of doing harm rather than good. To keep abreast of the context and developments, a substantial part of the funding was used for Swedish staff travelling. Sida and the PAO mutually agreed not to renew the support.

5.3.2 Empowering grassroots to claim rights & exercise voice
If there is only change at the top level and not among the majority of the population, the change will be superficial. We believe that change cannot only be top-down. It must also come from the bottom. – A Burmese partner organisation

Among the evaluation sample, a number of change agents are working towards outputs and/or achieving outcomes in the area of empowering the grassroots in claiming their rights, exercising voice and freedom of assembly.[29] Below are different examples from MENA, Myanmar, Zitrus and Georgia.

i. MENA
The Jordan Centre for Civic education (JCCE) and WLP both work in highly conservative communities. According to informants, women in many cases have never left their homes, and do not know what a "meeting" is, let alone what "human rights" are. Potential female change agents are trained and asked to commit to subsequently passing on their knowledge to others in their communities. Both organisations tell of examples of personal development among trainees. According to informants, trainees improve their ability to express themselves, proactively seek help from lawyers and social workers and start to practice direct democracy. For instance, in the effort to change the mentality and legislation concerning women's inheritance rights, JCCE trainees have taken initiative to invite community leaders for discussion, approached judges for support and conducted surveys.

> *The fact that women are now working on something and inviting people to a meeting is something new to our community. They interact with a sheikh, who usually only talks to men – this hasn't happened before.* – JCCE partner

Similarly, a group of participants that attended a workshop run by WLP's partner in Port Said prepared a draft for the constitution that they then presented to the National Committee:
> *On the first day of training they said that it wasn't worth for them to discuss or partake in the discussion on the constitution. On the second day they felt motivated to influence it.*

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[29] This includes Savannah Trust, JCCE, WLP, GYLA, HimRights, Myanmar ActionAid, CHRO and UHAI

ii. Myanmar

ActionAid Myanmar's supported 100 HRDs/youth leaders from villages that they trained in mobilising their communities around democratic practices and human rights. When interviewed, 20 youth leaders reported that they had contributed to increasing social cohesion and agency in villages. For instance, they have managed to persuade women, who were previously never part of decision-making processes, to become more engaged. With the HRDs/youth leaders' support, villagers have organised themselves (e.g. education groups), asserted themselves in local government processes (village development plans); and in one village, citizens have started a campaign demanding electrification. This is said to be the first such campaign in the country.

iii. Zitrus

The 2012 evaluation of the Savannah Trust found that its Community Theatre for Development concept has created a platform for discussing topical issues related to human rights, governance, democracy and civic participation with local government leaders and other relevant people without fear. The evaluation also noted that the project has resulted in communities organising themselves and taking communal responsibility for voluntary general cleaning of common spaces and for repairing damaged roads.

iv. Georgia

GYLA has contributed to mobilising the grassroots by sending its teams on buses to conduct "mobile visits" to almost 200 communities. GYLA has subsequently assisted the communities by drafting letters to the municipality, arranging consultations with the authorities and requesting information from local government. Concrete outcomes of these visits have, in some cases, been recorded. For example, in one instance, failing kindergarten infrastructure was addressed; in a couple of villages streetlights were installed; school transportation was provided in one community and in another instance the community organised itself to protest against proposed construction of a hydropower plant.

v. East Africa

Through tailor-made coaching, grant-making and internships, UHAI has enabled LGBT groups in various countries in the region to form and build the capacity of local support groups. These groups have been able to provide safety and social networks and have engaged in awareness raising and advocacy.

5.3.3 Promoting free and fair elections

Among the sample of initiatives studied by the evaluation, there were results related to three ways of promoting free and fair elections in three countries.

- **Voter participation**: At least two of the organisations worked to promote voter participation. GYLA used its travelling legal services ("auto-tours") to reach nearly 200 Georgian communities in 2012 to inform about the new election regulations and promote election participation. Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) mobilised the people of Myanmar's Chin State through a network of clandestine activists that raised public awareness – despite threats,

coercion and intimidation by the junta-backed party. CHRO maintains that their efforts contributed to Chin people voting for their representatives and winning the majority of the contested seats.

- **Election monitoring:** In Myanmar, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and CHRO monitored the 2009 elections. CHRO's network of activists document-ed a range of election abuses by sending nearly 100 pictures of the elections, including pictures showing the actual voting and vote counting. The photos were picked up by the international press including AFP, Al Jazeera and the Bangkok Post.

- **Independent media coverage of elections:** The news organisation Mizzima trained reporters specifically for the elections and produced election related videos, photos and information. Some of this was picked up by the interna-tional media. According to Mizzima, the Swedish support leading up the elec-tion process provided it with the experience of large-scale live reporting, which will serve as a basis for the coverage and monitoring of the 2015 elec-tions. Meanwhile in Egypt, Meedan worked to have Checkdesk[30] ready in time for the presidential elections. In the peak months, 5,500 media reports were collated from a monthly average of over 1000 sources, reaching around 200,000 readers. Informants hold that Checkdesk promoted space for plural citizen engagement at a critical time in Egyptian political debate.

Not all efforts in the area of free and fair elections were successful. GYLA[31] filed a lawsuit over the constitutionality of paragraphs in Georgia's election code, which was rejected by the Georgian Constitutional Court – the only case GYLA has lost in this court as of June 2012.

5.3.4 Promoting equality and non-discrimination

Women don't have any awareness of their rights. If they are violently abused, they don't have an idea that this is wrong. – WLP partner on the importance of building capacity

Several of the partners in the sample have achieved outputs in building capacity of organisations and /or conducting advocacy that addresses equality and non-discrimination:

- **LGBT rights:** Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) and Akiba Uhaki/UHAI, Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)
- **Women's rights:** WLP, some of NPA's partners, some of BCN's partners, ActionAid Myanmar and JCCE

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[30] A platform developed to support Middle Eastern media partners to engage the region's growing digital generation in new media news gathering, corroboration and interpretation.

[31] Which otherwise has a solid record of pursuing cases at the European Court of Human Rights.

- **Ethnic and religious minority rights:** CA, INYHETER, CHRO, NPA and BCN
- **Rights of people with disabilities:** CA, GYLA

The capacity development efforts have focused on specifically imparting skills, providing information, raising awareness, building confidence and/or in different ways strengthening people of these groups. Notable outcomes that address gender equality and non-discrimination include the following:

- In Myanmar, BCN's partner has convened elected women politicians who have since become an informal network.
- According to WLP, a significant number of the successful female candidates in the local elections in Jordan and Kyrgyzstan had participated in WLP training in the past. In Sierra Leone, one of the trainees has become the Human Rights Commissioner.

Second, advocacy work has taken place at local (ActionAid Myanmar), national (e.g. JCCE and one of BCN's partners), regional (CAL) and international levels (CA). Significant advocacy outcomes that address gender equality and non-discrimination include the following:

- In 2012 three of the four recommendations advanced by CA in its parallel report and oral intervention were incorporated into the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- CAL was successful in advocating for the inclusion of LGBT issues to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders at the African Commission.
- The recent evaluation of WLP found that the organisation and its partners had contributed to successful law reforms in the area of women's rights in Jordan, Morocco and Algeria, Egypt.[32]

5.3.5 Promoting the rule of law

A few notable results have been achieved in the area of the rule of law. At the international level, the International Federation for Human Rights' (FIDH) work stands out. It has provided support to victims to participate in proceedings before the International Criminal Court (ICC). It has also submitted "communications" to the ICC Office of the Prosecutor in relation to crimes committed in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia and the Palestinian Territory, and published the guide *Victims' Rights before the International Criminal Court*, which is available in several languages.

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[32] Alexandra Pittman with Karine Lepillez. *Democracy and Women's Leadership: assessing Transformative Changes from Individual to the Collective Levels in Women's Learning Partnership*. 2013.

At the national level, Shalom, GYLA and FIDH have produced outcomes. Shalom has worked to increase legal awareness through capacity building of change agents (CSO leaders and key political party members). Shalom has brought cases to the attention of the National Human Rights Commission with the result that in some cases people have been able to retrieve land confiscated by the military. It, furthermore, convinced the Supreme Court to take cases, for the first time, of persons gone missing at the hands of the military. The Court ruled to have the persons in question released.

GYLA has produced a particularly prolific amount of outputs in this area. Apart from the hundreds of round tables and mobile visits to raise legal awareness, it has:
- Provided around 100,000 legal consultations to nearly 30,000 citizens;
- Prepared dozens of legal opinions on draft laws and amendments;
- Conducted strategic litigation in common courts, the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights;
- Defended protesters' rights to exercise peaceful assembly in court and defended people whose civil and political rights were undermined when they were interrogated by the Chamber of Control about their party affiliations.

Working in a number of countries, FIDH has provided legal support to human rights defenders facing arbitrary prosecution; monitored trials at the national level to ensure that they were genuine, independent, and conducted in accordance with international norms; and initiated dozens of proceedings before national tribunals, supporting victims – including the Extraordinary Chambers in Cambodia.

Among the sample, three organisations have contributed **outputs in relation to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) processes:**
- CA has conducted a training of trainers workshop of 17 activists on advocating to representatives of foreign Embassies. To give the activists hands-on experience, actual diplomats from foreign Embassies were invited to assist through role-playing so that the activists could try their new skills.
- Freemuse (which at the global level is acting as an adviser to the Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights) and its partners from the Strategy funded initiative are involved in the Egyptian UPR process with the support of Norwegian funds. For the first time, the right to cultural expression is being addressed in this process.
- In Georgia GYLA prepared the UPR report for the NGO coalition as well as an individual shadow report related to the human rights situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

> **Box 4 UPR Activism**
>
> In one country, an activist "was disappeared" because he/she requested information in relation to the UPR process. The activist was officially accused of asking for classified information, although it is fully within the norms of the UPR process to allow CSOs access to the government UPR report. The documentation of his/her work, in relation to the UPR process that led to his/her arrest, was smuggled out of the country to CA, which subsequently distributed this report to 29 governments. It exposes the government and gives UN member states solid data to use in relation to the process. Allegedly, one Security Council member specifically contacted CA to thank them and tell them that this data was invaluable.

- CAL has supported African LGBT organisations in contributing to UPR processes.

5.4 RESULTS IN PROTECTION

The results of the sample initiatives in relation to protection can be divided into two main categories. The first involves **protection in the virtual realm**. This strengthens change agents by allowing them to conduct their work safely, without interference. The second form involves **physical protection** and addresses the right to physical security. When provided with the aim to prevent physical insecurity, physical protection support can be said to strengthen change agents. When provided as an emergency intervention, it is more humanitarian in nature.

5.4.1   Protection on the Internet

More than a quarter of the sample partners have produced outputs and outcomes in relation to digital and internet safety. There are three main types of results: i) studies; ii) awareness-raising and capacity building; and, iii) helpdesks and defence in case of cyber attacks.

i.   Studies

At least a couple of the partners have researched how governments undertake surveillance and hinder the work of civil society organisations. For instance, INYHETER has conducted research on censorship in Central Asia to understand which techniques and strategies are being used to hamper free expression. This material has been shared with trusted partners.[33] Likewise, AN recently published a report on fake domain attacks.[34]

ii.   Capacity building

Examples of outputs in relation to training include training both individuals (HRDs) and organisations in mobile security and virtual security hygiene. In addition, educational material has been produced and USB drives with digital security materials and tools have been distributed.

In a few cases, partners have been able to show outcomes from the training. For instance, the website Feraganews, which received training from CRD, was able to withstand a DDOS attack as a direct result of the training received. Likewise, feedback from a FIDH member organisation in Belarus stated in FIDH's report that:

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[33] There would be scope to share the material further among Sida's other partners.

[34] A fake domain attack is when an adversary creates a similar looking website or fake social media profile with the intent to draw readership from the original website and display alternative content; create confusion amongst a targeted community; or, serve malware to compromise that target audience to the original website. An example is the fake BBC Farsi website that currently exists.

We learnt some information about the effective, secure use of new technologies and methods in the field of computer security and secure communication and data.... During the trial of Ales Bialiatski, it was proved that the files that were in his hard disk (confiscated by KGB) could not be opened because of the (encryption) system was to secure them. This was a positive result of the training.

TOOL also believes its training had effect:
We believe that the training in Tor that we provided before Mubarak's fall helped keep activists safe during those critical months. We worked with human rights organisations and showed them how to minimise their digital trail.

Other examples of outcomes concern the use of FH's self-training tools that have been developed by partners in four different countries to be contextually, linguistically and culturally relevant. In three weeks, the site in Beneficial had 3570 unique visitors and some of the Farsi self-training tool pages had up to 5800 views. The blog of a Tibetan Diaspora partner received up to 4300 views of educational YouTube videos on internet hygiene.

An unexpected outcome of FH's digital security work has been the sharing and interaction that has taken place organically among its partners from different countries. For instance, the partners in Beneficial and Irrigate shared strategies, while the Burmese found that the training approaches used amongst the Tibetans were relevant in Burma. Likewise, with the support of FH, the Burmese partner shared its experience of its own internet freedom forum with CSOs in other countries, to enable them to launch similar events and processes.

iii. Helpdesks and cyber defence
FH, TOOL and AN are running help desks that provide advice. Along with IN-YHETER, these partners can step in to defend organisations from different types of cyber-attacks. TOOL ran an online multi-lingual helpdesk (Arabic, Farsi, English) that received over 100 requests a month. In the first months of AN's first of three digital security helpdesks, 37 organisations contacted AN and received assistance (through email or by in-country visit when needed). Meanwhile, FH's digital emergency desk responded to 23 cases in Irrigate. According to FH, people were able to escape or mitigate an emergency situation and could resume their work.

5.4.2 Physical Protection
A handful of the initiatives studied in the sample involved physical protection (the right to life) of change agents – journalists, HRDs, LGBT and other activists. Organisations such as FIDH, CRD, CAL, UHAI and Freemuse have undertaken preventative activities. For instance, FIDH supported securing the physical offices of human rights organisations. Freemuse established networks to bring together human rights organisations, lawyers, musicians and other cultural activists in MENA, West Africa and Pakistan to improve the protection and safety of music creators who exercise their right to free expression. An online self-help manual was created, translated and disseminated. CAL has established safe houses. UHAI, FIDH, Freemuse and CAL have helped activists directly by temporarily relocating them.

Through requests from Swedish Embassies/MFA, the Strategy supported the physical protection of 17 activists directly, providing them with funds to take urgent refuge. In the interest of ensuring continued protection of these individuals, the evaluation has not been privy to the details of this support and the exact form it has taken. The evaluation is therefore not in a position to fully assess the content of this support.[35]

5.5 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKS

To strengthen change agents means of developing both individual capacities and the capacities of organisations and their networks. A number of organisations report that they have been able to strengthen their organisational capacity with Sida's support.[36]

WLP offers an example of organisational development (OD) at the global level. This organisation has invested significantly in ICT by developing an online learning portal that allows for participatory training in different languages. It reports that it has also developed the financial administration and monitoring and evaluation capacities of its partners.

An example of organisational development at the regional level is UHAI, which has strengthened its organisational capacity to become an important regional hub for LGBT issues. With Sida's support, it has developed from a programme into an independent organisation; increased its funding base (from two to seven donors); expanded its sub-granting and OD support to organisations and groups in the region (45); and, developed a strategic plan for 2012 to15. The sub-grantees have improved their capacity to fundraise, work strategically, advocate for non-discrimination and document violations. Being part of a network has increased the well-being and protection of activists. A transparent and up-to date website exists.

At the grassroots level, JCCE has worked to strengthen the capacity of women's CBOs and provide them with sub-grants. The CBOs have learnt to write project proposals, monitor budgets and conduct advocacy campaigns. They have learnt to identify challenging issues in their society and mobilise people in order to raise awareness. As one of the beneficiaries, a director of a community organisation stated:

> *Our work was not organised. Learning how to choose a target group, learn how to manage a project and define a strategic focus, was all new to us.*

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[35] Section 7.2.3 discusses emergency protection support and Box 6 in Chapter 7 also addresses this type of support.

[36] This includes, for example, Brown, DVB, CA, WLP, CAL, INYHETER and UHAI.

The Strategy's support has also been fairly successful in strengthening formal and informal **networks** of change agents. For instance, the support to Freemuse's initiative strengthened change agents by providing them with access to a network that they previously did not have. It allowed for new contacts, exchange of information and it made the human rights organisations more aware of the culturally related violence and human rights violations taking place. Informants stated that, as a result, they have felt more protected because they know where to go for support if something happens.

Another example is WLP's partners, among which there are bilateral initiatives at different levels, including peer-to-peer support. UHAI has organised annual regional meetings – "Changing Faces" that have provided an opportunity for the East African LGBT and sex worker movements to take stock of progress made, create networks and explore new ideas for organising, and discuss questions pertinent to the movement.

5.6 SUMMARY

The analysis of over one-quarter of the initiatives funded by the Strategy offers evidence that change agents – including both activists and organisations – have been strengthened through enhanced awareness, skills, knowledge, technology and networks. This is reflected in the significant results achieved. In relation to freedom of expression, capacities have been built in the area of journalism, media ethics and technological skills. People in difficult environments have received opportunities to express themselves, and free expression has been defended in the legal realm. Information has been provided to citizens of countries with repressive regimes through both the funding of media content and technological approaches to circumvent censorship. In relation to democratisation, the support has promoted civic engagement, freedom of association, the rule of law, women's rights and non-discrimination. It has also mobilised grassroots to claim rights and exercise voice; and has contributed to free and fair elections. Preventive protection in the virtual and physical realms has strengthened change agents by allowing them to conduct their work safely, without interference. Emergency protection (virtual and physical) support has helped activists in urgent need.

Contributing factors to the positive results have been success in identifying partners with potential and not involving overly high risk. Most of the partners appear to be highly committed activists with good skills and networks. Several show evidence of proactive innovative thinking. Sida's flexibility (see Section 7.3) has allowed organisations to respond to changing circumstances and emerging opportunities. Organisations that have received programmatic or organisational support seem to have particularly benefitted in this way.

Those initiatives, among the sample studied, that were not as effective focused on political parties. The evidence also suggests that effectiveness may be limited when Sida directly supports isolated initiatives in countries where there is little Swedish presence.

6 Sustainability

This chapter presents observations, analysis and assessment of the sustainability of the initiatives supported by the Strategy.

Sustainability has not been a central feature of the Strategy. At one level, as long as there is repression, the need to support activists remains. Furthermore, important gains made can be thwarted rather quickly if regimes harden in their stances. Even in relatively free countries (e.g., South Africa), activists and watchdog organisations continue to have a critical role to play. However they tend to have minimal, if any, access to funding, except from foreign donors.

Nevertheless, in a few cases the support provided has produced important outcomes that have a high level of sustainability. Some of these are discussed in the previous chapter and include legislative results (WLP's work with gender equality legislation in MENA, results in Myanmar regarding freedom of association); election participation (CHRO); and citizen empowerment that has led to mobilisation and some tangible improvement for communities (Action Aid Myanmar, Savannah Trust, JCCE).

Most support has been provided as project support, which is not conducive to institutional sustainability. Even so, since project support has often included supporting and strengthening organisational functions, a level of institutional sustainability has been achieved among several partners.[37] Providing longer-term un-earmarked core support to more organisations could further enhance the institutional sustainability of change agents and also promote greater ownership.

A significant part of the support consists of capacity enhancement or training of individual change agents. The results of the training or the sustainability of efforts are seldom followed up. Other studies and evaluations suggest that training that is conducted as isolated events has limited outcomes and sustainability, since a lack of knowledge is, frequently, not the only obstacle to development and change. Capacity enhancing activities that are process-oriented and accompanied by coaching and follow-up are more likely to achieve results and be sustainable.[38] Cultural activities for

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[37] Examples are discussed in section 5.5 and include Brown, JCCE, WLP, CA, UHAI and CAL.

[38] Sida. *Manual for Capacity Development,* 2005; Merilee S. Grindle, Mary E. Hilderbrand, *Building sustainable capacity in the public sector: What can be done?* Public Administration and Development,

children and youth may also have reasonable sustainability by providing lasting inspiration and skills.[39]

Financial sustainability is generally low. Sida has often focused on supporting new and inexperienced organisations that, for various reasons, have had difficulty receiving support from other donors. Nevertheless, there are a few positive examples where other donors or other Swedish appropriations have stepped in after the funding from the Strategy ended.[40] The partners' nature of work is such that most of them will continue to require funding from donors.

While certain technological or capacity building support to the media can be sustainable, supporting the production of media content is generally not sustainable. It can be challenging for exiled media to fund content through other methods (as subscriptions and advertisements), especially if the target group is based in a repressive country. INYHETER, which supports several exile media outlets, is grappling with this difficulty. On the other hand, when the political climate changes, there is hope for sustainability. Exiled media outlets such as Mizzima and DVB, who have received donor support for decades, expect to become viable commercial media enterprises in the near future as they move their operations back to Myanmar.

The sustainability of the technological outputs – such as infrastructure (servers, VPN, etc.) for human rights and media organisations is sustainable in the medium-term, but will require continued technological advances as these have a shelf life. Likewise, while training, in general, of safe digital practices is sustainable at a basic level – particularly in terms of the awareness raised – this is partly dependent on how long technologies remain relevant. With the "cat and mouse game" of governments blocking, and activists circumventing and finding new ways to protect themselves, there will be a continual need to update and develop. An important determinant of technological sustainability is ensuring that the technology used is relevant to the infrastructure and needs in the context. The evaluation has not been able to gather sufficient field level data in this area.

Nov 2006; Rick James and Rebecca Wrigley, "Investigating the mystery of Capacity Building, Learning from the Praxis Programme", INTRAC 2006; Allan Kaplan, *The Developing of Capacity*, CDRA 1999; *Review of the Swedish support to HIV/AIDS programmes in South Africa*, Sida Decentralised Evaluations 2013:27.

[39] *Uncovering the Power of Performing Arts - An Evaluation of the Tamasi Programme*, Sida Evaluation 2012:15, September 2012.

[40] This includes for instance CRD's first initiative and the East African Journalists Association which later received support from Sida's regional appropriation.

7 Sida's Management of the Strategy's Implementation

This Chapter analyses and assesses Sida's management of the Strategy's implementation. The background to the Strategy's implementation within Sida, the staffing and overall management is discussed in the first section. The following section examines and then assesses the management in relation to selecting the forms, modalities and types of support. After this, findings in relation to follow-up and interaction with partners are presented. The subsequent sections address coordination and interaction within Sida, with Swedish representations, with MFA and with other donors; and how Sida has publicly communicated the Strategy.

7.1 BACKGROUND, STAFFING AND OVERALL MANAGEMENT

When the Strategy was adopted by the Swedish government in April 2009, two Sida staff members from the Policy Unit and the Unit for Support to Civil Society (CIVSAM) were assigned to develop the management guidelines and tools for the Strategy's implementation. Guidelines were drafted for how Sida would administer the Strategy;[41] procedures were prepared for the three forms of support (see section 7.2 below); and terms of reference were developed for the advisory committee that was established to help select initiatives – and included Sida's heads of units. An appraisal process, project management systems and selection criteria were also put in place. The function of implementation was placed within CIVSAM, since it was assumed that synergies with other CSO support could be achieved (synergies, however, did not materialise). Recently a decision has been taken to move the team to the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support from 2014 to ensure a more coherent approach to the government's overall strategy for democratisation and human rights.

By the end of 2009 and throughout the first Strategy period, a coordinator, a CIVSAM staff member and an assistant were tasked with assessing thousands of proposals, administering, managing and following up support to 50 initiatives. To manage the enormous workload, they relied on the goodwill of staff from other depart-

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[41] Inspiration was drawn from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which had tried and tested systems for what appeared to be similar purposes.

ments who participated in reference groups to assess proposals. The quantity of work was such that much of the reference group members' work extended outside working hours. Although these reference groups were, at first, an emergency solution, they turned out to provide valuable thematic expertise, and have remained as part of the appraisal system and have since been included in annual work plans.

Since the first strategy period (2009-2011), improvements have gradually been made to appraisal and project management. These included improved instructions for the advisory committee (initially it was recognised that the involvement in selection procedures was too intensive); a standardised matrix to evaluate proposals; a well-structured and detailed content format for the submission of proposals; and, updated guidelines. The Strategy initiatives have also been granted exemption from some parts of Sida's appraisal requirements. Unlike the first Strategy period, during which all appraisals were completely desk-based, there is now a budget for travel.

However, systems and resources are still not well calibrated to the needs of this Strategy. The appraisal process is too cumbersome – the limited appraisal granted by the waiver to Sida's contribution management system offers minimal respite.[42] The Strategy encourages increased risk-taking, innovation and engaging "new" partners, but Sida's systems are not compatible with this, since they demand a rigorous process that is not dissimilar to one used for large support to Swedish CS framework organisations. For example, getting the range of information required to appraise internal capacity and assess risks from new inexperienced partners working in repressive environments can entail time-consuming dialogue and logistically complicated communication due to security concerns. Sometimes, the documentation needed simply may not exist due to the newness of the organ-

Box 5: Confidential classification

There are two potential reasons for classifying initiatives as confidential: a) to protect Swedish government interests; and, b) to protect activists supported. The evaluation found that procedures for confidentiality are not clearly defined nor communicated. The actual guidelines are hard to come by and seem not to be updated with the latest technical advice – although Sida does have a working group that can provide staff with guidance. Sida staff have very few options to grade confidentiality.

Meanwhile, Sida's partners have a range of tools and procedures that are updated frequently as technologies develop and which they can apply depending on the level of sensitivity (e.g. choices of different types of encryption and communication alternatives).

Interviews and documents revealed that confidentiality is inconsistently applied and generally, but not always, overused. In some cases, classification has been decided only after the appraisal process, which means that the information could have potentially been picked up by adversaries.

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[42] The limited appraisal allows staff to skip over the gender equality analysis, an aspect the Strategy Team would rather include as this is considered one of the key areas of the Strategy. It does not address simplified processes for appraising internal/external risks; the results-based management capacity; and, internal control and governance systems. Furthermore, the simplified process only concerns the appraisal. Sida's management and follow up process for each initiative remains the same.

isation or due to security concerns.[43] The requirements regarding partners' systems and structures are such that desk officers either think twice before taking on a new partner or risky initiative, or spend considerable time and resources in guiding partners through the processes. Staff say that adequately engaging in risky and innovative projects is particularly difficult, given the overall work burden and stressful situation. Selecting safe and well-known partners that take less time and effort becomes an attractive alternative.

Due to the workloads and time constraints, priority is given to appraisals and reporting, while monitoring and follow-up has often been put on hold, or received superficial treatment. Progress achieved has not been captured and used for learning and sharing. The Strategy Team admits that the pressure is resulting in mistakes (so far minor) and there is concern for who will take responsibility if any initiative goes wrong (which has so far not happened, but is considered a realistic possibility by staff).

Another difficulty faced by the Strategy Team is that much of the work is sensitive. To begin with, it is a challenge for Sida to assess whether the level of sensitivity warrants confidential classification. Closer dialogue with MFA's geographic desks would be helpful for this, but Sida maintains that it has not had the resources or routines for such interaction. The confidential classification of a significant number of initiatives has affected efficiency in several ways. First, the storing and sharing of confidential documents and files is burdensome and time-consuming. Second, communication and interaction with the partner is more difficult. Third, interaction within the Strategy Team is made more complicated. Fourth, coordination and information-sharing with other parts of Sida; with MFA; and with the Embassies are affected, resulting in dialogue, knowledge and cooperation being undermined. Furthermore, staff maintain that Sida lacks confidentiality routines and has not been able to provide the necessary tools and equipment for safe communication.

The Strategy Team within CIVSAM increased in size by the second Strategy period,[44] but the size of the Team is still not proportionate to the tasks at hand.[45] With the threefold increase of the budget for 2014, the per capita budget workload will be vir-

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[43] E.g. auditing of certain activities may not be possible without compromising security.

[44] With significant recent additions since October 2013, the Team includes five permanent staff members (of which one works part-time) and six temporary staff members, (5 on short-term contracts and one employed on an hourly basis).

[45] In 2010, there were 2 staff members and 1 assistant managing MSEK 120. This would come to a staff/budget ratio of 1:40 MSEK. Right now there are 10.5 staff members for the 2014 budget of MSEK 450, resulting a staff ratio of 1:43 MSEK. On the other hand, the staff per initiative ratio is being reduced – but will not be brought down to the 7-10 initiatives per officer as is practice in, for instance the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support.

tually as heavy as at the beginning of the Strategy implementation. A doubling of staff has been requested for 2014. Furthermore, high turnover, caused by poor job security of the project positions and the highly stressed work environment, is a concern.

The critical understaffing and under-resourcing of the implementation of the Strategy is attributed to: i) the significant downsizing of Sida's entire organisation taking place during the Strategy's first years; and, ii) the system for staffing of units, which has not been linked to an assessment of the various tasks at hand.

7.2 FORMS, MODALITIES AND TYPES OF SUPPORT

In the first set of guidelines for the implementation of the Strategy that were prepared by Sida in consultation with MFA, three forms of support were outlined, based on the way the initiatives were to be identified (the new guidelines prepared in 2012 mention the three forms but only describe the appraisal process for the first two):

1. National, regional and/or global project/programme support *identified through calls for proposals*;
2. Support, including core support, to organisations *proactively identified by Sida/Embassies as particularly strategic* ("strategic/organisational support") in the effort to implement the Strategy;
3. *Demand-driven emergency support* at country level for individuals or groups in need of protection-related support.

7.2.1 Calls for Proposals Processes

Although issuing open calls for proposals is not common within Sida, in relation to this Strategy it was seen as an appropriate way to reach a range of actors who are new to Sida. Open calls have been issued three times since 2009. In total, roughly 40-46 percent of initiatives have come through the open calls for proposals. Sida has not had systems for the digital registration of applicants. This would have allowed initial electronic sorting of the proposals by established criteria and some of the unsuitable proposals could have been set aside from the start. It would also have allowed for a future searchable database of potential partners. Instead, every proposal had to be individually reviewed and assessed. Since the response was large in each case, the workload for the Strategy Team was overwhelming.

From the beginning, Sida was concerned about limiting the reach of the call for proposal to ensure a manageable response.[46] It was believed that this could be achieved

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[46] Sida "Protokoll: Samråd med UD om riktlinjer för Sidas hantering av regeringens särskilda satsning för demokratisering och yttrandefrihet 2009-2011, 7 september 2009", 15 september 2009.

by restricting advertising to the two largest Swedish dailies and on Sida's website. The limited experience in managing calls within Sida made it unprepared for the re-posting of its call on other sites, such as "Funds for NGOs". With this website's al-leged 250,000 unique visitors every month, from more than 150 countries around the world, the Sida call spread widely among the NGO community.

The first call for concept notes was intended to especially target new actors in repres-sive environments. However this may not have been entirely clear to all applicants as the grammar was faulty and language rather complicated.[47] This lack of clarity may have also contributed to the high number of proposals received.

Around 2,000 concept notes were received at the end of December 2009. Members of the reference group were working long hours to review the concept notes. By the end of March, 70 applicants were requested to submit a full proposal. Initial disburse-ments to the final 30 initiatives were completed nearly two years after the call was issued.

Nevertheless, Sida chose to revisit the call for proposal process in April 2012 – again going out very broadly with an open call that lacked clear selection criteria[48] – still without having an automated system of registration for applicants and this time even requesting *full* proposals. Over 1,500 proposals were received. In October the same year, a third call was issued that focused on ICT and resulted in over 900 proposals.[49]

In 2011, Sida also used a closed competitive process. After the Minister for Devel-opment Cooperation met with a number of ICT activists in February, MFA handed over 19 proposals, which it urged Sida to consider. Sida asked the organisations to submit concept notes within a month's time. Seven projects were subsequently cho-sen.

The calls for proposals theoretically promoted competition and Sida's introduction to new actors. However, it pitted small-scale CSOs in the south against regional actors and established international NGOs that had a different level of skills and resources, and could even visit Sida in Stockholm.[50] Second, of the *one percent* of the appli-cants that were selected from the first two calls, it appears that a significant number

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[47] Sida announced that the call was "to support actors for change where they operate with difficulty and where there is little room for political pluralism with the view of promoting a holistic approach to and embodying a pluralistic and non-discriminatory view of society (sic)."

[48] See call for Proposal Guidelines for Grant Applications (2012) and the call for proposal text.

[49] 600 of these were complete.

[50] Sida maintains that in the second and third call for proposals, southern small-scale CSOs were fa-vored, but this was not communicated publicly.

had advance knowledge of the call and had been encouraged by embassies or Sida headquarters to apply: among the sample initiative studied, *half* of the partners had been known to/former partners of Sida, calling into question the purpose of this approach.[51] Third, the calls for proposals did not specify selection criteria (except in the call for proposals for ICT initiatives in 2012). Fourth, neither the call for proposals nor the guidelines for applicants transparently stated what countries would be given priority; or that Sida aimed to have a spread of target groups, thematic areas and types of actors. This had to be gleaned from the Strategy. Furthermore, unlike calls for proposal processes of many other donors, ensuring that the processes were perceived to be transparent was not a priority.

Due in part to the fact that the call for proposals were poorly conceived, the response rate was overly large, meaning that thousands of organisations had spent significant effort preparing proposals. This amounted to a major cost for a large number of small institutions – both in financial terms and opportunity cost. The team has conservatively estimated that the resources spent on unsuccessful proposals in the second call for proposals alone amounted to the equivalent of 100 person *years*,[52] which can be considered a very inefficient use of resources.

7.2.2   Strategic Support

During the first year, all 11 initiatives (value of MSEK 130) were identified through the "strategic/organisational support" avenue.[53] Most of the initiatives were global in nature and almost half were three-year programmes and jointly amounted to over 80 percent of the total money allocated. Over 70 percent of the partners were ones that Sida had previously *not* supported and dubbed "new actors". Three of the eleven initiatives were related to the election process in Burma and two were LGBT initiatives in Africa.

Since then, roughly one-third of the portfolio's initiatives have come through the strategic avenue. If extensions of old initiatives were to be classified as "strategic", almost half of the initiatives would fall into this category.

The strategic avenue allows Sida to proactively identify initiatives. The Strategy Team has, however, not had the staff capacity necessary to work proactively; keep

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[51] These were all recommended to apply by Sida. A few received advice from Swedish Embassies on their proposals before they were submitted. According to Sida, all organisations may request advice from the Embassy or Sida.

[52] Since an organisation might on average spend at least 25 person-days on preparing a proposal (a winning proposal typically takes up to two person-months), the applicant input for the second proposal would amount to the equivalent of over 100 person years.

[53] I.e. support, including core support, to organisations *proactively identified by Sida/Embassies as particularly strategic* ("strategic/organisational support") in the effort to implement the Strategy.

abreast of developments, undertake analyses and contact organisations. Rather, Sida colleagues, MFA, Embassies and others have proactively proposed different initiatives. While this has been of some assistance to Strategy Team, not all proposals have been of a strategic nature in relation to the portfolio as a whole. It has been challenging for the Strategy Team to justify any rejection of a proposal given the broad scope of the Strategy and the pressure to spend the allocated funds. Indeed, the opportunity to spend a significant volume of the Strategy resources has, at times, been factored into choices.

The evaluation has uncovered a few examples of the Strategy funds being used as a "gap filling" mechanism when funds are short in other appropriations. The MSEK 105 support to Make all Voices Count, for instance, was appraised by ICT4D but ended up on the Strategy appropriation when it was clear that it had more funds available. The support to some organisations in Myanmar and Zitrus was funded by the Strategy instead of the country or regional strategies for budgetary reasons. The core support to DVB (which Sida had previously supported for many years), the Extraordinary Chambers in Court of Cambodia (MSEK 28) and IMS (MSEK 21) also ended up being supported by the Strategy due to a lack of available funds in other appropriations. Similarly, the LGBT initiatives in Africa were not moved to the appropriation managed by Regional HIV/AIDS team in Lusaka because the Strategy had more resources.

> **Box 6: Providing Emergency Protection**
> Interviews with staff concerning the Strategy's emergency assistance found that the provision of this type of support requires:
> - Analysis of the security situation of the individual (and the family) and the type of protection needed, which requires in-depth knowledge of the local political situation and the role played by the activist.
> - Analysis of the possible alternatives at hand, which requires negotiating with possible recipient countries, asylum arrangements to a country, passports, etc.
> - Organisation and payment of the practical travelling arrangements
> - Resettlement support, including finding meaningful work, access to psychosocial support etc., which requires a network in the recipient country that can welcome and support the activist and his/her family.
>
> Discussions with Sida's partners which provide emergency protection echo the above. They also highlight the importance of extensive networks, the ability to respond quickly, flexibility, creativity and nibble administration. These are characteristics that are not typical to bureaucracies. The only potential comparative advantage of governments in implementing this form of support, according to stakeholders, is when they can grant asylum.

Gap filling has nevertheless not compromised the relevance of the support since the Strategy offers such a broad range of possibilities. It has also ensured a level of complementarity (or rather overlap) with other appropriations and helped the Strategy Team spend the funds. It has, however, undermined a strategic steering of the Strategy implementation.

7.2.3   Emergency Protection Support

Since 2009, 17 individuals have been assisted with emergency protection support, representing 0.8 percent of the expenditure. This is much below the expectations held by MFA when the Strategy was drafted. At the time, it was believed that this would be a large portion of the support. One limitation has been that the support cannot involve asylum in Sweden. Second, neither Sida in Stockholm nor most Embassies

have had the capacity and routine needed to undertake the necessary analysis, appraisal and administration. Nevertheless, there are examples of Embassies that have had the knowledge, structure and resources to implement this form of support.

We were in great need of emergency assistance. But it did not work. The embassy was closed for the weekend, we could not reach anyone. – Partner organisation.

Sida informants and other stakeholders interviewed have unanimously maintained that Sida in Stockholm is not well placed to provide emergency protection support (see Box 6). They suggest that organisations with global networks and unofficial channels would be better at assisting individuals in need of emergency support. Some of Sida's partners already have procedures for, and experience in, this area.[54]

7.2.4   Modalities and type of support

The mapping of the support has revealed that 18 percent of the funding (45 initiatives) was provided directly to a country or regional implementing partner. This type of support typically requires closer dialogue and monitoring. Thirty-seven percent was channelled through large and trusted intermediaries (14 initiatives) and 45 percent through a partnership arrangement between an international/Swedish organisation and one or several country-level organisations (51 initiatives). The mapping also showed that 76 percent of the funds were provided for project and programme support, which also tends to require more resources for monitoring and follow-up than core support (24 percent). Considering the limited staff resources, the selection of modalities seems overly ambitious:

We have chosen modalities as if we were twice as many staff.

In their appraisals, Sida staff have, to some extent, considered modalities in relation to: i) the initiative's ability to reach the kind of change agents in mind (innovation, risk taking, human rights defenders, etc.); and, ii) the change agents ability to make a difference. However, there has been no overall strategic perspective on the mix of the different modalities. This has likewise been missing in relation to type of support (core support versus project/programme support). More strategic use of core support to key organisations might have enhanced relevance. It could have allowed selected partners to be able to flexibly address issues as they arise. This is particularly important in this sphere of work where environments can change swiftly. Regular strategic dialogue with core-funded partners might allow Sida and the partners to jointly set key priorities related to certain themes, target groups, types of countries and innovation.

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[54] e.g. Freemuse, FH, CRD

7.3 FOLLOW-UP AND INTERACTION WITH PARTNERS

Sida has around 80 different partners involved in implementing the Strategy. This is a large number of partners, particularly given the number of programme officers concerned with the support.

For most partners interviewed, the time from when the application was submitted to when the first funds were transferred was more than six months, typically nine months to a year, and in a couple of cases more. This had impact on planning processes, requiring juggling and changes. Often, contracts have had to be extended since the implementation was shortened by the delays. This has added extra administrative burdens to Sida and the partners.

More than half of the partners interviewed, particularly at the international level, expressed a high overall appreciation for Sida's flexibility, friendliness, professionalism and understanding:

— *Sida is very friendly, flexible and accommodating. The staff is professional.*
— *They have a good understanding of the work we do and the challenges we face.*
— *They are flexible. (When timetables change), a communication with Sida beforehand is enough to get a new budget line number for us to use.*
— *They let us get on with our work. They do not hover over us and try to (micro) manage.*
— *There has never been any agenda driving. It's just been Sida's true ambition of democratisation and freedom of expression.*
— *Sida is exceptional and better than all other donors we have.*

A few partners found Sida's requirements relatively demanding, but fair and useful. A handful mentioned that they had interacted with Sida more intensely in the appraisal phase. This was valued and regarded as supportive:
— *Sida required us to work on our logframe... This was relatively tough, but the experience in the end was good for us. We liked that Sida saw our learning as a positive thing, rather than seeing our missing capacity as a weakness.*
— *Sida is very strict, but they give and take. I feel they care and that they believe we can live up to the responsibility.*
— *The proposal writing and logframe requirements from Sida were a challenge. It forced us to really think hard. In hindsight this requirement was very good for us.*
— *I have never met a donor as scared about corruption as Sida.*

Almost all partners commented on the high turnover of staff. A significant number mentioned having had four different programme officers, which has meant that the partners have had to re-explain their initiatives several times.
— *The turnover of staff has affected our interaction.*
— *I cannot even count the number of managers we have had.*
— *The amount of internal turnover at Sida has been inefficient, having to bring new people up to speed on the project. It has been burdensome.*

The long periods of infrequent communication from Sida were a concern for the majority of partners interviewed. Partners wanted a sense of Sida's planned priorities to be able to know how their own plans might fit in. At least four partners had not succeeded in having new proposals approved, but did not know why. After a long silence, one partner had suddenly been informed that Sida wanted to extend the partnership, but felt that they had not had the chance to get a sense of what Sida's priorities were and the direction it was taking. The Strategy Team are aware of this but staff turnover and shortages have affected how they can engage.

More than half of the partners in Myanmar expressed dissatisfaction with the weakened relations with Sida. The partners had previously had very close relations with Sida staff in the region. Sida was considered unique among donors in that it knew civil society issues in Myanmar well, and understood the current window of opportunity.
— *Sida is now too slow and not part of the process.*
— *There is no dialogue anymore.*
— *Sida Stockholm is not interested in the content of our programme. Sida is now only interested in knowing how the money is being spent.*
— *Sida needs someone who can look at strategic issues and not only be a fund manager.*
— *Rapidly changing contexts require donors to be flexible and accept that programmes can be changed.*

Partners at both global and country levels want a much more active partnership with Sida. They believe that there were several areas of mutual concern and interest. One mentioned how they face some of the same challenges as Sida in its own partnerships (in particular the sustainability of supporting organisations that produce media content was raised).
— *We would appreciate a more hands-on approach by Sida in our engagement. At times it has been very quiet. Is it because of lack of capacity? Why are they not reacting to updates? We have lots of ideas and new thoughts that we would like to share with them. We miss regular exchange…we would be happy to report more regularly to have a greater exchange with Sida. This is not a criticism of the individuals at Sida who we are impressed by, in terms of knowledge and insight. We want an opportunity to talk to them.*

They also would like Sida to bring partners together, facilitate networks, and to take on a catalytic role. Several had identified areas where they would like to collaborate with other Sida partners. They felt that Sida was well positioned to bring its partners together.

In relation to ICT and human rights, the concerned partners saw a clear role for Sida:
— *There is an important opportunity for Sida to play a role internationally in supporting internet freedom. Sweden is ahead of the game when it comes to internet freedom and supporting human rights and ICT. No one else is really doing this. Furthermore, Sweden has credibility. It is wired and has a strong human rights record. It promotes gender equality and access to rights internationally. The government has a high level of transparency.*

A few informants found that the Strategy Team's ICT capacity was insufficient. When a programme officer started to grasp the area and started to become proficient, they tended to leave the Team. ICT partners felt that the dialogue with Sida was sometimes made difficult because of this.

A couple of partners perceived rivalries and disconnect between MFA and Sida. One partner, who felt they had a clear role at ICT-related conferences/meetings held in Sweden, was told by Sida that they did not have influence over invitations.
— *There appears to be a disconnect in Sweden.*

With regards to confidentiality, it was not clear to several partners why their support was classified/unclassified. More often than not, partner organisations expressed that they do not want their reports classified and feel they are the best judges of sensitivity in relation to the protection of their stakeholders. They feel that transparent support from Sweden would be an advantage and would facilitate relations with other Sida partners and Embassies.[55] A couple have referred to the text in the Strategy that reads "the Government firmly believes that states have... a moral responsibility to support individuals, groups and organisations exposed to great risk in their efforts to protect and promote respect for human rights."

At the country level, some of the partners interviewed had received good support or enjoyed dialogue with the embassy. In one case, the partner expressed the important credibility the organisation and its cause gained from this.[56]

7.3.1   Monitoring and reporting results

Monitoring and reporting on results is a weakness of a considerable number of the organisations that receive support from the Strategy (as in many other Sida strategies). Reports from partners are uneven – ranging from highly descriptive and activity-oriented to an effort to outline outputs and outcomes. Some interviews revealed that understanding of the Sida requirements and the concepts of output, outcome and impact was not always clear. Several partners have required support from Sida regarding reporting on results, which is time-consuming for Sida staff. As mentioned above, it has not been possible for the Strategy Team to prioritise follow-up and monitoring issues. Due to the staff limitation, assessments of new proposals have been the main priority.

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[55] A representative from one organisation met with a Swedish ambassador who repeatedly insisted that the organisation apply to the Strategy for funds. This became awkward since the representative felt he could not tell the ambassador that he already received support due to the confidential label. He was also concerned that the Ambassador might be testing his ability to manage confidentiality.

[56] NED has conducted a survey that revealed that CSOs want more political support from the diplomatic representatives of donor countries. CSOs also consider themselves the best judges of whether interacting with a donor government at country level would taint their reputation or not.

7.4 COORDINATION AND INTERACTION WITHIN SIDA AND WITH SWEDISH REPRESENTATIONS

Sida had very limited input in the formulation of the Strategy when it was developed. This – along with the political basis of the Strategy and the level of involvement of the Minister – affected Sida's initial ownership of the Strategy.

Coordination has worked well within Sida within the smallish circle who have been directly affected and involved in reference groups or the advisory group. However, overall, other Sida staff do not have a good understanding of the Strategy. This is partly because the Strategy Team has not been able to spend time on reaching out within the organisation and the image problem that Strategy has had within Sida – being perceived as a short-term political initiative by the Minster without importance for Sida's long-term objectives. With some exceptions, Sida managers at HQ and Embassies have not recognised the usefulness of the Strategy as a complement. This has also, perhaps, been seen as a reason for the inadequate staffing and the uneven use of it.

The level of communication between Sida and the Embassies regarding the Strategy has varied. Special communiqués have been sent to Embassies with information on calls. Increasingly, embassy inputs have been sought on applications but feedback to the Embassies on actual the selection has been weak. However, there has been no consistent effort to communicate and establish a format for dialogue. The interaction has also been affected by the confidential classification of almost a third of the initiatives.

7.5 RELATIONS WITH MFA

The notes from the regular annual Strategy meetings between MFA and Sida and the annual Strategy reports indicate that, at times, the relationship has been tense. There have also been several strong "suggestions" from MFA regarding support to specific change agents and initiatives. Over time, however, working relations improved as it became clear that this was not a temporary political initiative by the Minister, but a long-term Swedish engagement that required sustainable and sufficient systems and resources for its implementation. Apart from regular formal meetings, informal meetings between Sida and MFA have increased. Nevertheless, there is room for im-

provement. In particular, Sida's interactions with MFA's geographic desks[57] are limited and there is much scope for the sharing of political and contextual analyses and information for mutual benefit. There is also a need to further clarify relationships at HQ level regarding procedures for regular dialogue and the handling of proposals that may emerge from MFA desks and networks.

7.6 DONOR COORDINATION

The Strategy does not refer to the aid effectiveness agenda and the waiver to the contribution management rule grants exception to alignment for the Strategy initiatives. Nevertheless, the first Strategy version and the first set of guidelines state that donor consultation should be aimed for. While Sida has contacted, during appraisal processes, other donors to obtain references for new partners, donor interaction has otherwise been limited (e.g. contacts with the European Commission's European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights to exchange experience and coordinated core support with Norway and Denmark to IMS).

Nevertheless, interviews and reports reveal that there has been a desire for more donor consultation. There have been three main barriers to closer coordination:
- Sida has not had the human resources to identify like-minded donors and opportunities for collaboration and exchange.
- Much of Sida's support is confidential (as is the support of other donors), making interaction difficult.
- The Strategy's broad focus, its emphasis on new actors and its earlier interpretation of supporting short-term initiatives renders finding points of common donor interest more difficult.

According to Sida's partners, Sida is one of the only donors supporting the ICT aspect of freedom of expression and democratisation. The United States has played a leading role but has lost some credibility in view of the recent surveillance scandals. Meanwhile, the partners maintain that Sweden has earned credibility and goodwill to be able to fill a leadership role in this area.

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[57] Staff at UD/FMR believe that knowledge of the Strategy within the Ministry is low. Four random checks by the Team of knowledge of the Strategy among MFA staff showed that only one had heard of it but knew little about it. Of these officials, 2 had worked with development related work during the strategy period, 1 worked with human rights and 1 worked with project export.

7.7 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Modest communication activities have been undertaken to spread information about the Strategy to potential grantees in three main ways:

- **Sida website:** Posting calls for proposals on the Sida website has been a straightforward and simple way to communicate the Strategy. It has had a far greater spread than anticipated (see Section 7.2.1 above) and has thereby been the most effective means of communicating the Strategy.
- **Swedish Embassies:** Sida's management have, at least three times, communicated broadly to relevant Embassies to inform about the Strategy, who are eligible to apply for funds and the calls for proposal process. Some Embassies (for instance in Bangkok) have been proactive in letting potential partners know about the Strategy. In addition, staff members from CIVSAM, while on mission, have taken the time to raise awareness among Embassy of Sweden staff (particularly national employees) concerning the Strategy.
- **Special events:** Sida has used events such as the conference *Net Activism, Empowerment and Emancipation in MENA* held in October 2011 and the two Stockholm Internet Forums (2012 and 2013) to inform potential grantees about the Strategy and its priorities. The use of streaming, social media and micro-blogging at these events has led Sida to conclude, in its reports, that thousands of potential change agents received information.

Sida staff acknowledge that comprehensive efforts to systematically and regularly communicate the Strategy to a broad range of potential grantees has not taken place. The main reason has been a lack of staff and resources.

The Strategy indirectly raises the issue of public communication of the Strategy to a broader audience by pointing out that information about the Strategy's implementation can expose individuals. The Team uncovered examples of public communication about the Strategy's implementation, which are included in Annex 6.[58] It shows that Sida's information department has used events such as the Arab Spring and the October 2011 Conference to raise awareness about the Strategy and the types of initiatives it supports. However, the Swedish mainstream media have mainly published material on the Strategy when politicians have made reference to it.
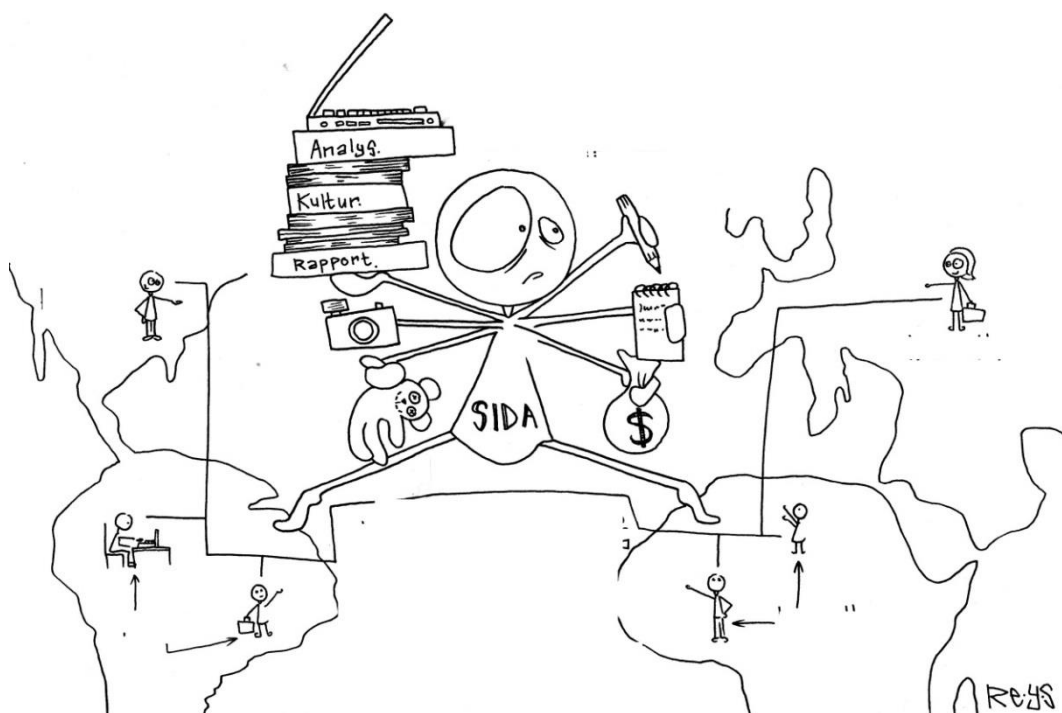
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[58] As per the inception meeting with Sida, this evaluation has focused on analysing Sida's communication with potential stakeholders rather than on its work to communicate the Strategy within Sweden Therefore, this evaluation has not undertaken a systematic examination of Sida's effort to spread knowledge of the Strategy.

7.8 SUMMARY

The implementation of the Strategy has been well served by conscientious and dedicated staff (more than half of whom have had short-term contracts); the development of appropriate guidelines and tools; fruitful collaboration within Sida; and, some supportive Embassies. Nevertheless, the potential of the Strategy is not being fulfilled. The implementation is largely reactive and undermined by limited staff resources and overly restrictive administrative procedures. There have been insufficient staffing resources to be at the forefront; respond to changing contexts; stake out strategic directions; and, connect partners, colleagues and other stakeholders.

While there has been improvement over time, Sida's systems and resources are not well calibrated to the needs of this Strategy. The Strategy encourages increased risk-taking, innovation and engaging "new" partners; but Sida's systems cannot accommodate this well. At the same time, compared to its partners', the systems for confidential classification within Sida are cumbersome, technologically out of date and unclear – resulting in inefficiencies and reducing the overall effectiveness of the Strategy. Moreover, there has been no overall strategic perspective and little consideration for the mix of the different modalities and type of support, thus resulting in an overly ambitious portfolio in relation to the staff resources available. The successes achieved in terms of implementation results have relied heavily on individual staff members' commitment and hard work. The price for this has been high in terms of frequent staff turn-over, loss of institutional memory and stress.

The use of calls for proposals was a departure from Sida's usual method of selecting initiatives. It enabled Sida to reactively select from a range of new and sometimes innovative initiatives. However, since Sida was inexperienced with calls, the pro-

cesses were ill-conceived. Sida was totally unprepared for the broad reach of the world-wide web and was inundated with proposals. It did not have a basic technological setup to allow for sorting and searching among the proposals, and burdened the already-stretched team and undermined professionalism. Moreover, the way that it was managed is questionable from a fairness, and transparency perspective. It also implied a major cost for a large number of small institutions in the south. The fact that a sizable number of actors that had gained advanced knowledge of the call from Sida and/or Embassies ended up getting support, i) begs the question how new and risky some of the partners really were; and ii) suggests that these might have been viewed favourably from the start and could therefore just as well have received strategic support instead.

The proactive approach to selecting initiatives, made possible through the strategic/organisational form of support, has not been used infrequently. This form of support has, in several cases, functioned reactively as a "gap filler" when other appropriations have lacked resources and has thus undermined a strategic steering of the Strategy implementation.

In terms of volume, the emergency protection support to individual activists has not lived up to expectations. Sida's set-up and systems have not been conducive to dealing with such support and the demand has not been high. Sida's CSO partners with networks on the ground are better placed to make judgments and deal with practicalities that this type of protection involves.

The Strategy's mix of three modalities – direct support to southern organisations; support via intermediaries and north-south/regional CSO partnerships – has been reasonable in relation to the Strategy objectives, but not commensurate with the staffing level within the Strategy Team. Decision-making has been weak in relation to modalities and the type of support (project/programme/core) to best meet the Strategy objectives with an optimal use of available human resources.

Sida has around 80 different partners involved in implementing the Strategy. A large number of these have involved labour intensive partnerships. Due to workloads and time constraints, monitoring and follow-up have often been superficial. Progress achieved has not been captured and used for learning and sharing. All partner relations have been affected by the high turnover of staff and most have experienced long periods of infrequent communication. Partners in Myanmar express particular dissatisfaction with the weakened relations they now experience with Sida. However, at an overall level, partners highly appreciate Sida's professionalism and flexibility. This is furthermore reflected in their strong interest in a much more active partnership with Sida. There is a demand for Sida to convene partners and take on a catalytic role.

According to partners, Sida is one of the only donors supporting the ICT aspect of freedom of expression and democratisation. The partners maintain that Sweden has earned sufficient credibility and goodwill to be able to fill a leadership role in this area. Until now, however, Sida's interaction with other donors has been limited.

Sida's internal communication effort concerning the Strategy has been commensurate with the staffing resources of the Strategy Team, which has resulted in it being ad hoc and inconsistent. There is much scope to improve communication about the Strategy within Sida and at the Embassies. As a result, potential synergies with other strategies have so far been missed.

Over time, working relationships with MFA have improved; but there is much scope for the sharing of political and contextual analyses and information for mutual benefit. There is also a need to further clarify roles and relationships.

8 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

The Implementation of the Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression has **not been an easy process**. From the start, there was insufficient buy-in from Sida, which had been only superficially consulted in the Strategy's formulation. The implementation coincided with Sida's reorganisation and sharp staff cutbacks. It was not obvious how the Strategy should fit into the overall Swedish development cooperation framework – particularly since it potentially overlapped with a significant number of thematic and geographic strategies. This was made more difficult by the Strategy's imprecision. The Strategy intended to: i) strengthen change agents, (but never defined the characteristics of a change agent, having rather listed a wide range of actors) and, ii) provide urgent protection-related support to activists (but never clearly spelt this out as a goal). A theory of change for the Strategy was never developed.

While the Strategy implementation is not fulfilling its overall potential, the support has **achieved respectable results on the ground**. The analysis of over one-quarter of the initiatives funded by the Strategy offers evidence that change agents – including both activists and organisations – have been strengthened through enhanced awareness, skills, knowledge, technology and networks.

Some factors that have contributed to the positive results are **success in identifying partners with potential** and not accepting *too* high internal risk. Most of the partners appear to be highly committed activists with good skills and networks. Several show evidence of proactive, innovative thinking. In addition, Sida's flexibility has allowed organisations to respond to changing circumstances and emerging opportunities. The dedication and professionalism of Sida's Strategy Team (and of other supportive co-workers at Sida) have also been central to these achievements.

Some of the results are impressive, but many of them constitute isolated islands in a sea of increased oppression. More could potentially have been achieved if regions/countries and themes were **strategically targeted** to optimise effects among the initiatives, as well as with efforts supported by other Swedish strategies. While the portfolio of 110 initiatives examined by this evaluation strongly reflects most of the priorities highlighted in the Strategy, the Strategy's implicit approach to affect change by spreading funds over as many geographical and thematic areas as possible, **will not optimise results**. For this to occur, **there is a need to focus** on a set of priorities that are based so that critical mass, synergies and innovative and catalytic processes have a greater chance of being achieved.

Insufficient staff resources have also **undermined the ability to optimise results**. Staff have been overloaded by administrative procedures that are not geared to a

Strategy such as this one; a large and labour intensive portfolio of initiatives; cumbersome confidentiality routines; and constant pressure to disperse continually increasing funds. It has been virtually impossible for the Strategy Team to respond to political shifts and thematic trends and provide timely support to new informal groups of activists. There has not been sufficient capacity left over to stake out strategic direction; keep abreast of developing situations and emerging actors; respond to changing contexts; proactively engage with, connect and convene partners; take initiatives with other donors; and communicate with colleagues involved in adjacent strategies to promote synergies. However, even if there were more resources to be more strategic, it is difficult to see what direction Sida could take with the Strategy being so "focused on being unfocused".

The evaluation has 13 recommendations relating to five areas. These are presented below.

8.1 DEFINING STRATEGIC DIRECTION, PRIORITISATION AND FOCUS

The following recommendations are directed primarily at Sida's senior management. These actions are required whether Sida intends to further resource the Strategy implementation process (with the aim of optimising results) or not.

Recommendation 1: Sida's senior management should initiate a process with the aim of specifying the Strategy's unique role and its added value in relation to Sida's other strategies for support. MFA should be consulted in this process.
For the Strategy to attain its full potential and avoid being used as a fallback fund, Sida should:
1. Initiate a dialogue with MFA to achieve a common understanding regarding the *theory of change* for the Strategy and what characterises a *change agent*.
2. Determine the Strategy's unique features, specific role and added value vis-à-vis the relevant thematic and geographic Swedish strategies which also have specific objectives related to freedom of expression and democratisation. These unique features could be to:
   - Complement other strategies with *quick funding* for emerging opportunities or emergencies (with much less requirements on preparations).
   - Complement other strategies to *take risks* with new, small, unknown groups, organisations, individuals or ideas and serve as an *incubator* for these until they have matured and can be handed over to other geographic or thematic strategies (or have played their role).
   - Facilitate *innovation* by bringing together relevant actors working in new ways to achieve common aims.
   - Take on *sensitive initiatives* that neither Embassies nor regional Sida offices can take on.

- Support initiatives in regions and countries *where Sweden is withdrawing* its bilateral development cooperation support or *engages in selective co-operation*.
- Assist other strategies *to link national, regional and global efforts* in the fight for civil and political rights.

3. Revise the Strategy implementation guidelines in line with the decisions taken above. The guidelines will also need to consider that closer cooperation with the other strategies will be required to ensure complementarity and added value.

Recommendation 2: Sida, in consultation with MFA, should define clear priorities and principles for selecting geographic focus areas. Narrowing the *geographic focus* should be undertaken in consultation with MFA. The factors that need to be taken into account would include, but are not limited to:

- the level of repression (in relation to civil and political freedom, press freedom *and* internet freedom);
- the opportunities for change agents to have any effect;
- access to solid information, good networks and partners;
- Sweden's presence, credibility, political position to make a difference and its interests;
- the advantages and synergies that could be achieved by clustering support to specific countries and sub-regions.

The Strategy implementation guidelines should be revised to reflect the defined priorities and principles.

Recommendation 3: Sida should continue to operate with a broad *possible* palate of themes, target groups and methods. However, the opportunity and ability to effectively strengthen change agents should steer the selection of themes, target groups and methods, rather than covering a wide range as an end in itself. When making choices on themes, target groups and methods to support, Sida should consider the following:

- The specific context and priority needs as identified through analyses and strategic mapping (see recommendation 5), including approaches calibrated to be effective in the local context;[59]
- Approaches that can contribute to accountability, transparency, participation and non-discrimination;
- Swedish comparative advantage and experience (for instance, press freedom, ICT freedom, non- discrimination/equality of e.g. women's rights, LGBT

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[59] In difficult contexts, cultural expression and socio-economic rights can, for example, offer means for change agents to effectively mobilise rights-holders without head-on confrontation with prevailing power structures.

rights[60] and exercising free expression through culture as well as using culture as a means to raise awareness);

- The possibility of creating a critical mass of initiatives with similar themes/methods within the portfolio;
- The possibility of the initiative being more effectively handled within another thematic or geographic strategy.[61]

8.2 RESOURCING THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTA-TION

Recommendation 4: Sida's senior management must calibrate the Strategy implementation ambitions with staffing resources.

The ambition to fulfil the Strategy's potential and maximise effects requires a significant increase in staff resources to accommodate the workload that is associated with a proactive identification and selection process and the management of initiatives that involve more risk, higher confidentiality and less experienced partners than in most programming.[62]

Since the management workload increases with initiatives that involve more risk, higher confidentiality, smaller contributions and greater inexperience of the partner; Sida needs to adjust its portfolio composition and staffing to its implementation ambitions. Even if staff resources are increased, Sida will still need to disperse significant funds through international/regional intermediary institutions, large INGOs and multilateral organisations. Another option to help maintain an acceptable project-to-staff ratio would be to consider delegating a portion of funds (along with responsibility) to certain units/Embassies.

If staffing resources cannot be made available, the current implementation set-up cannot go on as is – particularly with the prospect of an increased budget in 2014. Ambitions must be lowered. Reductions in the number of partners must be made in a responsible way (which in itself will require resources) and funds would need to be redirected towards international/regional organisations and intermediary institutions.

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[60] Strategy does not specify LGBT, ethnic or minority rights – although these are addressed by its implementation. Future revisions of the Strategy may consider text referring to non-discrimination to capture these aspects.

[61] For instance, according to the findings of this evaluation, support to political parties was not successful and might have been better managed by the strategy specifically focused on this.

[62] The 7-10 initiatives per officer as is practice in the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support would seem reasonable. While the Strategy Team has increased its size significantly during the evaluation process, the ratio of initiatives per staff member is still on the high side.

The Strategy Team would mainly engage at the international level, supporting more conventional human rights initiatives and giving up control and the potential to proactively respond.

8.3 INITIATIVE IDENTIFICATION AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

This set of recommendations concerns both the identification of initiatives and interaction with partners. With the exception of recommendation 8 – which is relevant regardless – this set of recommendations is relevant if Sida takes the decision to raise the ambitions to optimise results and thus resource the Strategy's implementation accordingly. They are primarily directed at the Strategy Team.

Recommendation 5: Sida's identification of initiatives and partners to support should be a proactive process. Until now, Sida has primarily used reactive approaches – such as calls for proposals – to identify initiatives. If there is a commitment to shift up a gear or two, Sida should proactively identify potential partners at the country, regional and global levels in line with: i) the Strategy's role and added value (recommendation 2); and ii) defined geographic priorities and principles (recommendation 3). This would require that the Strategy Team have the resources to:

- Undertake relevant geographic, thematic and rights-based analyses and strategic mapping of change agents.
- Keep abreast of relevant geographic and thematic developments and emerging actors.
- Participate at relevant thematic events and fora at global and regional levels.
- Undertake consultations with key international partner organisations (that have country-level networks) to follow new developments and trends.

Calls for proposals should be used very sparingly, be narrowly focused (i.e. thematically and/or geographically) and should not involve national-level and international NGOs competing against each other. Sida should also gear itself technologically and be prepared to transparently account for selections made. To obtain quality proposals of innovative initiatives through calls at the country level, Sida needs to be innovative itself.[63] There are experienced experts who are specialised in these types of systems and processes that Sida can turn to.

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[63] For instance, Sida could procure assistance to prepare youtube videos on how to apply; translate the call into more language free from development jargon; and make examples of past winning applications available have been used successfully. Such approaches have been proven successful in country-level call for proposal processes.

Recommendation 6: Sida should continue to support initiatives at the global, regional and country levels.

Country level: if the proposed initiatives can complement the country strategy support by being of particularly high risk, innovativeness and/or sensitivity, the Strategy should fund initiatives in cooperation countries. Unless there are strong reasons, as a general rule, the Strategy should avoid *directly* funding initiatives in non-cooperation countries. In these cases, regional or international organisations (including other donors) with relevant connections and contextual knowledge should be the preferred modality.

Regional and global levels: although democratisation and human rights efforts must be owned and driven nationally, supporting global and regional actors is an important component in the effort to strengthen country level change agents. Important technological and methodological innovation and development often takes place at the global level. Global and regional actors are strong in documentation, lobbying of intergovernmental structure and can facilitate networking and offer protection. Regional and global initiatives can enhance national level activism by enabling collaboration across borders; facilitating the sharing of experience, inspiration and learning; and garnering solidarity and deflecting attention from potentially vulnerable national-level activists. As channels, global and regional organisations offer the advantage of being able to absorb greater funding amounts and are often well placed to identify change agents in countries where Sida has less in-depth knowledge of the context. Moreover, these organisations can sometimes target initiatives that involve much greater risk than those directly targeted by Sida.

Recommendation 7: Sida should consider engaging more systematically with partners. At a minimum, Sida needs to be able to engage in regular dialogue with its partners. Different types of partners will require different types of interaction – with smaller and more inexperienced partners needing more technical support and "handholding" while the relationship with more established international organisations might consist of dialogue on developments in terms of policy direction, contexts and methodological approaches. In its partner interactions, Sida should also consider:
- Playing a more catalytic role by promoting collaboration and synergies among its partners.
- Providing support to strengthen partners' capacities in gender equality mainstreaming and human rights-based approaches.
- Provide partners with support to develop results management skills and introducing partners to outcome mapping.
- Convening the partners to, for instance, share thematic, geographic or methodological approaches.
- Promoting its partners coming together in already existing thematic platforms.

Recommendation 8: Sida should consider outsourcing the emergency protection of individuals to CSOs with solid track records and networks.

8.4 SIDA SYSTEMS

The following recommendations, concerning Sida's systems, are directed at Sida's management. Recommendation 10 is relevant whether Sida raises its Strategy implementation ambitions or not.

Recommendation 9: **Sida should identify ways to better accommodate initiatives that involve high internal and external risk in its appraisal and management systems**. The Strategy specifically refers to the possibility of taking risks in its implementation. However, Sida's systems demand rigorous and time-consuming processes to minimise risks. This means that the Strategy cannot easily reach its target groups – i.e. change agents with more limited experience of cooperation project management working in high risk environments. Nor can the Strategy properly complement other cooperation strategies that require tighter risk control. Alternative means to appraise organisations could involve visits and references from trusted partners. Sida could also examine the possibility of disbursing a portion of the appropriation through a significantly more simplified appraisal and management process, thus allowing for explicit risk-taking that is described and analysed upfront in the decision memo. Sida could also consider developing working guidelines to support desk officers in mitigating risks during implementation. If there is no way to efficiently manage high risk initiatives, the ambition to support them needs to be lowered.

Recommendation 10: **Sida's management should consider how it can make its system for managing confidential information more practical and technologically appropriate.** While the evaluation team realises that Sida is bound by government rules and procedures, there may be scope to develop more practical guidelines for when and how to classify information with key partners. Sida could also learn from partners' tools and guidelines for easy communication in relation to classified information. Applying a scale of differentiated levels of classification would be appropriate.

8.5 COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION WITH STRATEGY STAKEHOLDERS

The following recommendations concern communication and interaction in Sweden and with other donors. They are crucial for the optimisation of results, but are also relevant, to a lesser degree, in the case of a reduced Strategy implementation effort.

Recommendation 11: **Sida should develop both the formal and the informal relationship with MFA to ensure a smooth exchange of information and to achieve synergies between development cooperation and diplomacy – without compromising the independent decisions of Sida.** This could mean establishing formal MoUs with certain Embassies and units and arranging more regular informal meeting opportunities.

Recommendation 12: **Sida should enhance internal communication and interaction vis-à-vis the Strategy.** Better knowledge of the Strategy within Sida can make its implementation more effective.

- Relevant colleagues who are engaged with other cooperation strategies should be involved in the upcoming process of determining the future direction of the Strategy implementation (see recommendation 1 and 3) to ensure that its future implementation provides added value, complementarity and fills potential gaps.[64]
- Information material that includes the aims, focus, target groups and unique features of the Strategy and examples of initiatives funded to date should be prepared to enhance knowledge of the Strategy within the organisation and at Embassies.
- The ongoing implementation process of the Strategy should more systematically involve colleagues working with other relevant thematic/geographic strategies.

Recommendation 13: **Sida should engage more with like-minded donors.** To identify who to engage with, Sida would benefit from cooperation with like-minded donors (bilateral donors, multilateral donors and foundations) who are working in this field. Sida should consider playing a lead role among donors in the area of human rights and ICT.

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[64] As an example, it could be agreed that the Strategy complement the ICT4D Strategy by addressing the protection of civil and political rights; while ICT4D Strategy focuses on realising social and economic rights.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the implementation and results of the Swedish Strategies for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2009 -2011 and 2012-2014

1 Background

Sida works according to directives of the Swedish Parliament and Government to reduce poverty in the world. The overall goal of Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to making it possible for poor people to improve their living conditions.

In 2009, the Swedish Government decided on a Strategy for special initiatives for democratisation and freedom of expression to be implemented by Sida during the period 2009–2011. Hereafter referred to as the Strategy.

The Strategy aimed to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression through support to change agents – including individuals, groups and civil society organisations. It sought to complement the Swedish government's other development cooperation support for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Strategy was followed by the now on-going Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2012-2014.

By the end of the strategy period Sida decided that an overview should be carried during 2013. Today approximately 100 interventions get support through the strategy. The interventions are located all over the world with a focus on countries where the democracy and freedom of expression are limited.

2 Evaluation Objectives and Scope

The main objectives of the evaluation are:

i)   to provide an overview of the supported initiatives within the strategies in order to assess to what extent they are in line with the strategy objectives and

ii)   if the supported initiatives have improved the conditions for agents of change to work towards increased democratisation and freedom of expression; and if their work has contributed to diminish various forms of vulnerability and oppression;

iii) to serve as an input to Sida on which thematic areas and actors to focus on in the future support in the on –going and future strategies.

In addition, the findings from the evaluation will be used when communicating the current Strategy for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression.

3 Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for this overview are Sida's civil society unit (CIVSAM) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The secondary stakeholders are other Sida departments and cooperation partners who have received/receives support through the Strategy for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2009 -2012 and 2012-2014.

4 Evaluation Questions

1. Which actors have received support through the strategies? Considerations shall be made regarding types of actors/organisations/agencies, thematic areas of work, methods and geographical representation, and other if relevant.

2. To what extent are (have) the supported actors (been) relevant in relation to the context where the supported projects are implemented?

3. To what extent and how have the supported actors contributed to positive/negative/unforeseen outcomes and possible impact? If positive outcomes/impact, are these achieved, are (have) these (been) effective (i.e. of reaching its objectives) in relation to the Strategy's objective and focus? If possible, are there results on impact level?

4. To what extent and how are (have) the supported actors´ work are designed and implemented to be (been) sustainable in relation to the Strategy's objective and focus?

5. How has Sida handled and coordinated the Strategy within Sida, and informed about, the Strategy internally and externally?

5 Recommendation and Lessons Learned

The evaluation shall include in:

- A presentation of findings, including visual presentation of statistics.

- A discussion of conclusions, recommendations and lesson learned related to the evaluation objectives and questions, including how to address shortcomings.

- Recommendations to Sida for future design of the support through the strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2012-2014.

The overview is primarily expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in future design of support through the Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2012-2014.

6 Methodology

Appropriate methodology and methods for the evaluation, including which contributions to be included in the evaluation and a plan to visit field activities will be worked out in detail, after discussion with Sida, during the Inception Phase by the Evaluation Team and be documented in an Inception Report Sida. The inception report shall include: a detailed description of the method, further elaboration of overview questions in addition to a detailed work and time plan. The inception report should be presented to, discussed with and approved by Sida.

7 Work plan and Reporting

1. Initial meeting with Sida.

2. Study the background documents and material provided by Sida, see below.

3. Present and discuss inception report with Sida.

4. Evaluation phase with interviews of relevant stakeholders at Sida and MFA, further reading of reports and assessments.

5. Interviews with Sida partners supported under the Strategy.

6. Filed visits, with a participatory approach, to at least one possible two regions; MENA and South East Asia.

7. Submission of draft report of maximum of 30 pages, excluding annexes. The methodology used should be described and explained in the draft report. Any limitations shall be made explicit and their consequences discussed.

8. Presentation of report for relevant Sida staff working with the strategy.

9. Submission of final report of a maximum 30 pages. The methodology used should be described and explained in the final report. Any limitations shall be made explicit and their consequences discussed.

10. Presentation of the report for a wider group of stakeholders such as Sida staff not working directly with the strategy, MFA staff and if relevant at this stage, Sida partners.

When preparing the inception, draft and final report, the evaluation team should adhere to the terminology of the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results – Based Management as far as possible and the Sida Evaluation Manual.

The methodology used should be described and explained in the inception and final report. Discussions regarding field visits and selected contributions for review should be held with Sida during the inception phase.

Any limitations shall be made explicit and their consequences of the outcome of the evaluation, should be discussed in the reports.

The inception, draft and final reports should be written in English.The final report shall be professionally proofread.

In the proposal for carrying out this evaluation, an overall draft time and work plan should be presented including planned delivery dates (please see the time schedule above) for the reports, field visits and the presentation of the report.

Upon signing of the contract with the consultant, time and budget for the evaluation will be approved by Sida. The Evaluation Team shall present a draft inception report to Sida for discussion and approval. The final inception report should be approved by Sida, and will serve as a guiding document for the rest of the evaluation.

Subject to decision by Sida, the final report might be published in the series *Sida Evaluation.*

8 Resources and Timing

The assignment should start in August or earlier. The inception report should be presented in August, the first draft of the report submitted in October and the final report in November. The final report shall be submitted within two weeks of receiving comments by Sida on the draft report. It estimated that the evaluation will take approximately 20 weeks in total (for the whole evaluation team).

9 Evaluation Team Qualifications and Proposal

Required competences of the team members are:

I.   Academic degrees in Development, Social science, Political science, Democracy, Human Rights and/or other relevant areas.

II. Professional experience in working and/or evaluating of in the area of Human Rights, Democracy, ICT and/or freedom of expression.

III. Minimum 10 years of experience of evaluation of international development work, particularly in areas of or related to democracy, human rights and civil society.

IV. All team members must be fully professionally proficient in English.

The competencies of the individual team members should be complimentary, and can include both senior and junior consultants. The Evaluation Team should use a participatory approach and have a gender balance. The Team Leader should have thorough experience of Swedish Development Cooperation including civil society issues and documented experience of conducting evaluations.

Due to the sensitive nature of some of supported projects/programmes in the Strategy a Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality is to be signed by the evaluation team.

The evaluation team must be independent of the evaluated activities and no stake in the outcome of the report

Curriculum Vitae <u>must</u> contain full description of the team members' theoretical qualifications and professional work experience. The CV <u>must</u> be signed by the persons proposed.

Tenderers must submit two written specifications of previously performed similar projects by the proposed persons. The specifications <u>must</u> contain information according to the annexed form "Reference for Project Performed by an Individual", Appendix 2.1, and relate to projects performed and concluded within the past three years.

The proposal <u>must</u> include:

a) A description in the form of Curriculum Vitae for the personnel who is/are to participate in the performance of the project. The CV <u>must</u> contain a full description of the person's or persons' theoretical qualifications and professional work experience.

b) The working methods employed in order to complete the assignment and secure the quality of the completed work; use a participatory approach and if possible a gender based team including local consultants;

c) State the total cost of the assignment, specified as fee per hour for each category of personnel, any reimbursable costs, any other costs and any discounts (all types of costs in SEK and exclusive of VAT);

d) A proposal for time and working schedules according to the Assignment.

10 References

References:
Strategy for Special Initiatives for democratisation and freedom of expression, 2009 - 2012.

Strategy for special initiatives for democratisation and freedom of expression, 2012–2014
http://www.sida.se/Global/Partners/The%20Civil%20Society/call%20for%20proposals%20120907/Strategy%20for%20special%20initiatives%20for%20democratisation%20and%20freedom%20of%20expression%20sept%202012_ENG.pdf

The Policy for Democratic Development and Human Rights in Swedish Development Cooperation, 2010-2014
http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/14/32/33/14dceded.pdf

ICTs for Democracy, Sida, 2009

http://sidapublications.citat.se/interface/frmoptimaker3.asp?doctype=3&order=create date%20DESC&departmentid=298&topheight=55&headerheight=23&fotheight=0&l eftframewidth=300&width=820&stylesheet=sida.css&frameout=0&language=14&lo gin=True&username=sida2&password=sida2

Freedom from Oppression – Government Communication on Swedish Democracy Support, 2009
http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/11/62/71/5013cca7.pdf

Guidelines for grant applicants and information of contributions supported (provided by Sida)

Other relevant documents as provided by Sida. Contact person for this is Sofia Orre-brink, sofia.orrebrink@sida.se

Annex 2 – List of Documents Consulted

1. 110 electronic project files including applications, assessment memos and reports

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17. Kristoff, Nicholas & Wudunn, Sheryl. *"Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide",* 2009.

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Annex 3 – List of Informants

	Sida and MFA	
Name	**Organisation**	**Position**
1. **Andrade, Lucy**	Sida	Strategy Team
2. **Arnqvist, Maria**	Sida	Strategy Team
3. **Alksäter, Kestin**	Sida	Strategy Team
4. **Belcastro, Helen**	Sida	Formerly Strategy Team
5. **Bermsjö, Louise**	Sida	Staff Member, Global Programmes
6. **Bjuremalm, Helena**	Formerly Sida, Currently IDEA	
7. **Brundin, Thomas**	Ministry for Foreign Affairs	FMR
8. **Dung Ho, My**	Sida	Strategy Team
9. **Hedström, Jon**	Sida	Formerly Strategy Team
10. **Ferdriksson, Lisa**	Sida	Formerly Strategy Team
11. **Hallonsten, Pia**	Sida	
12. **Håstad, Elsa**	Sida	Head of Department
13. **Ingelstam, Lena**	Sida	Head of Department
14. **Karlberg, Jens**	Sida	ICT4D
15. **Karltun, Stina**	Sida	
16. **Lindström, Ylva**	Sida	Former Team Leader, Strategy Team
17. **Nordqvist, Johan**	Sida	Staff, Responsible for PAO Strategy
18. **Norrby, Charlotta**	Sida	Head of Unit
19. **Olsson, Kerstin M**	Sida	
20. **Orrebrink, Sofia**	Sida	Team Leader, Strategy Team
21. **Otto, Michael**	Sida	Strategy Team
22. **Rieem, Ewa**	Sida	Expert on Confidentiality Issues
23. **Seydlitz, Karin**	Ministry for Foreign Affairs	FMR
24. **Wahlström, Louise**	Sida	Strategy Team
	Global	
25. **AB**	CA	Staff member
26. **AL**	TOOL	Executive Director
27. **BE**	CRD	Programme Director, SEA
28. **BS**	AN	Executive Director

29. Cavanagh, Dawn	Coalition of African Lesbians, South Africa	
30. DB	FH	Director
31. Detiger, Erik	Philanthropia, Funds for NGOs	Director, NY Office
32. Francesca Silvani	INYHETER	Director of Programmes
33. Højberg, Jesper	IMS	Executive Director
34. Jonen, Ryota	National Endowment for Democracy	Senior Manager, World Movement for Democracy
35. LC	CA	Staff member
36. Majek, Benjamin	OHCHR	
37. MH	INYHETER	Executive Director
38. MM	CRD	Programme Officer
39. NE	INYHETER	Project Director
40. Rasmussen, Finn	IMS	Director of Development
41. Rigö, Annika	KIC	
42. Sameer Zuhad	Funds for NGOs	CEO
43. Sundström, Annika	Olof Palme International Centre	
44. SW	CA	Executive Director

SEA

45. Aung Zaw Win	Maggin Development Consultancy Group	Chairman
46. Chamtha Kyaw	Pandita	Executive Director
47. Choyee Su Thai	Action Aid	Officer
48. Devale, Róisín	NPA	Programme Manager
49. Ei Mo Ko	Action Aid	Programme Associate
50. Ekman, Bengt	Sida	Formerly responsible for Burma at Swedish Embassy in Bangkok
51. Fleming, Rachel	CHRO	Advocacy Director
52. Htaike Htaike Aung	MIDO	Programme Manager
53. Indregard, Andreas	NPA	Country Director
54. Khin Lay	Triangle Women Support Group	Director
55. Khin Maung Win	DVB Multimedia Group	Deputy Executive Director
56. Kunst, Saskia	BCN	
57. Lian Bawi Thang	CHRO	Country Programme Coordinator
58. Ma Shwe Shwe Sein	Pan Tee Ain	Director
59. Ma Thazin	Myanmar Minerva Education Center	
60. Mang Hre Lian	Chinaland Post	Chief Editor
61. Mon Mon Myat	HDMO	Director

62. Nang Raw	Shalom Foundation	Programme Manager
63. Naw Htee Ku Raw	Action Aid	Programme Officer
64. Ni Ni Myint	Action Aid	Partnership Development Coordinator
65. Pyai Nyein Kyaw	Action Aid	Partnership Development Coordinator
66. Sa Myat	Action Aid	Activista
67. Sai Oo	Action Aid	Project Coordinator
68. Salai Ceu Bik Thawng	China National Party	General Secretary
69. Saw Lin Htet	Action Aid	Training Coordinator
70. Say Ka Paw	Action Aid	Head of Finance
71. Scarlet Orr	Action Aid	Programme Team Coordinator
72. Shihab Uddin Ahmad	Action Aid	Country Director
73. Shunn Lei Swe Yee	Pandita	Fundraising & Partnership Development Officer
74. Soe Mying	Mizzima Media	Editor In-Chief/Managing Director
75. Tauhib Ibne Farid	Action Aid	Programme Manager
76. Thar Zin Oo	Action Aid	Activista Coordinator
77. Thawz Za Khal	Pan Tee Ain	Deputy Director
78. Thin Yu Mon	CHRO	Programme Director
79. Toe Zaw Latt	DVB Multimedia Group	Bureau Chief
80. Za Uk Ling	CHRO	Programme Director
81. Zin Wint Yee	Action Aid	Documentation & Communications Officer

MENA

82. Abazar Hamid	Freemuse (Egypt)	Beneficiary of Freemuse and Musician
83. Ahmad Zaatari	Freemuse (Jordan)	Beneficiary of Freemuse and Network Coordinator
84. Asma Khader	Women's Learning Partnership (Jordan)	President of Sisterhood is Global Institute (partners of WLP)
85. Courtney Radsch	UNESCO (France)	Senior Programme Officer
86. Dina el Hawary	Meedan (Egypt)	Regional Meedan Programme Coordinator
87. Ed Bice	Meedan (USA)	CEO
88. Faliha Alkbelat	Women's Learning Partnership	Beneficiary of Sisterhood is Global Institute (Director of Community Association)
89. Fatemah Farag	Meedan (Egypt)	Director of Welad El Balad

		(Partners of Meedan)
90. Hana Ramadan	Women's Learning Partnership	Finances, Webpage and Social Media Responsible
91. Hassan Hussein	Embassy of Sweden, Cairo	Regional Programme Manager
92. Jon Hedenström	Embassy of Sweden, Cairo	First Secretary
93. Lina Ejeilat	Meedan (Jordan)	Editor in Chief of 7iber.com
94. Mahnaz Afkhami	Women's Learning Partnership (USA)	President of Women's Learning Partnership
95. Mariam Abuadas	Meedan (Jordan)	Operations Responsible
96. Marie Korpe	Freemuse	Director
97. Marie Korpe	Freemuse (Denmark)	Former Executive Director
98. Marius Lukosiunas	UNESCO (Egypt)	Advisor for Communication and Information
99. Mona Alami	Jordanian Center for Civic Education	Executive Director
100.Mufeeda Zawahre	Jordanian Center for Civic Education	Beneficiary of JCCE (Director of Community Association)
101.Munir Idiabes	Women's Learning Partnership	Executive Director of Sisterhood is Global Institute
102.Nadia Khamees	Women's Learning Partnership	Personnel Responsible and Training Coordinator
103.Naglaa Kadry	Women's Learning Partnership	Coordinator
104.Noha Daoud	Meedan (Egypt)	Quality Control & Technical Development
105.Ole Reitov	Freemuse (Denmark)	Programme Manager
106.Rana Abu El Sundus	Women's Learning Partnership	Community Coordinator
107.Roula Mikhael	Maharat Foundation (Lebanon)	Director
108.Sawsan Zaideh	Meedan (Jordan)	Web Team and Responsible for Meedan Project
109.Sylvie Coudray	UNESCO (France)	Chief of Section for Freedom of Expression

Annex 4 – Methodology

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation has been conducted in three phases (between September to December 2013). In the inception phase the evaluation team clarified the evaluation criteria, the questions and the scope of the evaluation, and undertook an initial overview of the portfolio. During the data collection phase (three weeks), visits were undertaken to Myanmar, Jordan and Egypt, and to organisational headquarters in Stockholm, Washington and New York. In the synthesis phase (less than two weeks), the collected data was analysed and synthesised and the draft report was prepared. Three meetings were held with Sida during the evaluation process. These included an initial briefing meeting; an inception presentation and discussion; and, a preliminary findings and conclusions meeting.

APPROACH

The evaluation has been conducted in line with Sida's Evaluation Guidelines and the OECD/DAC standard evaluation criteria, focusing on three criteria specified in the terms of reference – namely relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The overall evaluation framework is at the end of this methodology presentation.

Relevance
Relevance has primarily been examined in relation to three aspects: i) the extent to which the supported initiatives are in line with the strategy objectives and priorities; ii) to what extent the support is relevant in relation to the contexts in which it is implemented; and iii) the extent to which the support is relevant to Sweden's overall objective for development cooperation – in particular in relation to gender equality and human rights-based approach.

Effectiveness
The ToR stipulated that effectiveness be assessed in relation to the extent to which the support has contributed to the goals set out in the Strategy's objectives. However, the objective in both versions of the Strategy lacks clarity and is formulated in way that challenges evaluability. To begin with, the 2009 Strategy focuses on strengthening the agents *themselves*, while the 2012 Strategy talks of strengthening *conditions* for change agents. The Evaluation Team found that different formulations imply different evaluation perspectives:

- The first would require examining the extent to which the change agents have been strengthened by e.g. resources, improved tools, capacity development and /or networks. Indeed, the preliminary review of the support suggested that much of the support intends to strengthen change agents in these ways.

- The strengthening of *conditions* for change agents would entail assessing the extent to which the support has improved the environment(s) in which the change agent operates. This is much more difficult to bring about and measure, and is less in line with the actual nature of most of the support provided.

Assessing the second part of the 2012 objective presented additional challenges. Measuring the extent that the support is "reducing vulnerability" was troublesome because the support could potentially both increase and decrease the vulnerability of change agents. Therefore, it was concluded that the objective, as formulated in the 2012 Strategy, would not provide the optimal basis for the Team's assessment.[65]

Given the lack of clarity and evaluability challenges associated with the Strategy objective, during the inception phase the Evaluation Team suggested a reformulation of the second evaluation aim in the ToR (which echoed the Strategy's formulation – "if the supported initiatives have improved the conditions for agents of change to work towards increased democratisation and freedom of expression; and if their work has contributed to diminish various forms of vulnerability and oppression") – to "*if the support initiatives have strengthened the ability of change agents to work towards increased democratisation and freedom of expression and provided protection to change agents when they have been imminently threatened*".

As a consequence, the Evaluation Team analysed effectiveness in terms of:
- the extent to which the support has strengthened change agents (individuals and organisations) to promote increased democratisation and freedom of expression;
- whether the support to protection of change agents has been successful and to what extent this has strengthened them.

It assessed outputs and outcomes of the sample of initiatives in relation to four clusters of results:
- freedom of expression
- democratisation
- protection of change agents
- organisational development and networks of change agents

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[65] Meanwhile, the 2009 formulation does not use the word "vulnerability" and does not capture the support that has been to individuals, groups and organisations that are exposed to great risks in their efforts to protect and promote respect for human rights.

Sustainability

Sustainability has been assessed in relation to the lasting effects of the results (outputs and outcomes) achieved through the support of the Strategy. Financial, technological and institutional sustainability have been examined.

MAPPING

A **database,** including the initiatives supported by the Strategy, was created in the inception phase. Initiatives were categorised based on a summative judgement of the information provided in assessment memos, applications, narrative reports, interviews and the classification in the PLUS system.

Using the database, a detailed **mapping** of the 110 contributions in the portfolio was undertaken, which can be found in Annex 5. The mapping shows the duration, size, geographic distribution, type of partner and target group (secondary and primary), modality, theme (main and secondary) and method used to promote change. The database provided a wealth of data, which provided the basis for developing the sample selection criteria.

SAMPLE SELECTION

It was assessed that reviewing 110 initiatives was not manageable within the timeframe. Thus, the Evaluation Team applied purposeful sampling (including *intensity sampling* of information rich cases and *variation sampling* of different types of support). Selection criteria for the sampling included the following parameters:

- Geographic spread of the initiatives
- Mix of geographic location of the organisations
- Mix of organisation types
- Mix of modalities
- Mix of themes
- Mix of target groups
- Mix of methods

Since the ToR have a strong focus on uncovering results produced by the Strategy's support, intensity sampling was selected to allow for the gathering of more in-depth data in a few areas. Thus, the sample included a few "clusters" of themes and countries to allow for comparison. It also includes a few organisations that have been supported over a longer period of time.

Certain initiatives, through large intermediaries, were actively not selected because they undertake such a diverse set of activities that covering them in this evaluation would be highly time-consuming in relation to the resources provided. It was brought up in the inception report that these initiatives warrant separate evaluations.

The sample included a mix of global, regional and national initiatives. The ToR mentioned MENA and SEA as regions of interest due to a focus of initiatives supported and the emerging contexts. The countries selected for desk-based and remote interviews were Zitrus and East Africa. In the MENA region only two countries receive direct support to local organisations (the other MENA countries receive support which is channelled through organisations in the north) and, of the two, Jordan was selected. The second country selected in MENA was Egypt, due to it having the highest concentration of initiatives in the region. The sampling for the desk studies was based on the considerable support that is made to East Africa. The two countries, Kenya and Zitrus, were selected due to their differences; one is a programme country, the other is not; one is partly free, the other is not; and some of the initiatives in each country are similar.

Of the 110 initiatives in the portfolio, 42 initiatives (32 organisations)[66] were selected to examine further. This selection represents around 50 percent of the funds allocated and 40 percent of the initiatives supported. The sample closely reflects the spread of the portfolio in relation to most categories and variables. However, there are certain areas that the sample does not capture. These include initiatives that are from the Americas; undertaken by academic institutions; target decision-makers as a primary target group (but it does cover several organisations that targets decision-makers as a secondary group) – which are all categories containing very few initiatives. Most of the sample consists of initiatives between 1 MSEK and 10 MSEK.

The specific initiatives that were selected for the sample included (note that some initiatives are confidential and therefore not specified by name below):

African Desk Study
Akiba Uhaki/UHAI (3 initiatives)
Coalition of African Lesbians
KIC
Savanna Trust
Olof Palme International Centre

Myanmar Field Study

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[66] 44 initiatives were identified for the sample in the inception phase. The composition changed somewhat and was reduced to 42 initiatives. SR and EHAHRD (three initiatives) were dropped from the sample when repeated emails were unanswered. IMS was dropped after several unsuccessful attempts to reach its partner in MENA. FIDH was included because it has been recently evaluated. TOOL was included upon Sida's request.

AAM
BCN (2 initiatives)
CHRO
DVB
FH
Mizzima
NED
NPA (2 initiatives)
Pandita
Shalom

MENA Field Study
Freemuse
iMeedan
JCCE
Maharat Foundation
UNESCO
WLP (2 initiatives)

Global /other Desk Study
AN
Brown (3 initiatives)
CA (2 initiatives)
Civil Rigfhts Defenders
FH
FIDH
Georgian Young Lawyers Association (2 initiatives)
HimRights
INYHETER
NED
Women´s Learning Partnership for Democracy (2 initiatives)
Youth Parliament of Pakistan (2 initiatives)

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection used a variety of methods, the main sources of information being interviews (face-to-face and remote) and document and internet site reviews.

Field and HQ visits
The evaluation team conducted field visits to Myanmar, Egypt and Jordan where interviews took place with partner organisations, non-stakeholders and with the Embassy of Sweden (in Egypt). In Myanmar one group discussion was held with 20 of AAM's community level change agents. Interviews – mostly face-to-face were conducted with partner organisation HQs in the US and Sweden (11 organisations) and Sida and MFA staff.

Semi-structured interviews
109 persons have been interviewed (see Annex 3), ranging from Sida staff, Sida partners, change agents, and MFA staff. Some non-stakeholders of the Strategy have also been interviewed to ensure that a few non-biased views were heard. These included resource persons and sector experts. A standardised interview guide was developed for the different categories of informants. As all team members conducted interviews, a standardised template to record interview data was developed. A specific format was also created to record examples of outputs and outcomes identified.

Survey
Sida programme officers who had or were currently working with the Strategy responded to an email survey with eight questions organised around strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The original intention was to have a SWOT workshop with the Strategy Team, but it proved impossible to find a three-hour slot due to the extensive workload of the Strategy Team. The evaluation team adapted to using an email survey which provided useful data.

Study of documentation
A wealth of documents was examined (see Annex 2), including applications and progress reports (from partner organisations), Sida assessment memos and travel reports for 110 initiatives. In addition, other evaluations, Sida's reporting to MFA, publications from Freedom House and other organisations, MFA policies and other resource documents were studied.

Websites
A number of websites were referred to, not only those belonging to the partner organisations, but also online media resources that provided contextual information. Examples include the websites of Reporters without Borders, Funds for NGOs and Open Aid.

LIMITATIONS

This evaluation covers a vast number of initiatives which are global, regional and national, covering most of the world's continents. The initiatives are different in terms of modalities, themes, target groups and sectors. The large volume, spread and variation have been a challenge to evaluate.

Although the methodology used for this evaluation was ambitious, it still had its limitations. The first limitation is that the conclusions drawn are sample-based, since the whole portfolio could not be examined in-depth. Findings on results are mostly based on informant interviews and self-reporting. Although triangulation was made to the extent possible, verification of the results achieved has been medium to low, due to the limited time and resources to undertake the evaluation. Findings on results are

mostly based on informant interviews and self-reporting, which could mostly not be verified. Only a few direct end-beneficiaries were interviewed.

Another major limitation is the calendar time allocated to the evaluation. The evaluation was driven by a deadline which limited the timeline. More calendar time would have allowed for better validation and triangulation, which would have strengthened the analysis. We believe that in spite of these limitations, the evaluation is evidence based and that the findings and conclusions are useful.

Annex 5 – Evaluation Framework

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources
Relevance		
To what degree are the actors supported (potential) drivers of change? On what basis has Sida selected the initiatives?	• The extent to which the actors supported are among the target groups specified by the Strategy. • The extent to which the support addresses thematic/target group needs in relation to FoE and CP rights as identified by situation analyses (Swedish, Freedom House or other). • The extent to which protection support is relevant to the prevailing level of risk and insecurity. • The extent to which the modality for the support is relevant to the context/Sida's capacity.	• Interviews with Sida • Interviews with grantees (field and HQ) • Interview with resource persons (specialists, other donors, etc) • Review of desk study sample documents • Study of some country relevant situation analyses
To what extent is there *coherence* between country/regional strategies and the Strategy support? How and to what extent does the Strategy support *complement* other Swedish support to human rights, democracy and freedom of expression and *add value* to the overall Swedish effort to promote human rights and democracy?	• The extent to which there is coherence between strategies. • The extent to which there is overlap/complementarity between strategy support and other support at country level • Evidence of synergetic effects with other Swedish support to human rights, democracy and FoE.	• Desk studies of specific geographical/thematic strategies studies • Interviews with Sida – CIVSAM and others • Field-level country studies • Special desk studies of Kenya & Zitrus
Effectiveness – Results		
To what extent are the Strategy initiatives effective in terms of: • Strengthening change agents to promote increased de-	• Evidence of achieving desired results reported by grantees. • Evidence of strengthened resources (human, networks, financial, material and/or technical) and professionalism of change	Field visits Key document review of desk study sample Interviews at HQs

mocratisation and freedom of expression. • Contributing to the protection of change agents.	agents. • Evidence of strengthened agency of change agents. • Evidence of change agents being protected	
To what extent do grantees present results at outcome level (and impact *if possible*) as compared to those anticipated in the programme documents, applications and reports.	Nature of outcome results achieved Nature of outcome results not achieved Evidence of multiplier effects	Field visits Key document review of desk study sample Interviews at HQs
To what extent is there evidence of grantees conducting advocacy that has contributed to greater freedom of expression and/or democracy?	Evidence of advocacy processes driven by grantees that contribute to changes in behaviours, actions and relations.	Field visits Key document review of desk study sample Interviews at HQs
Sustainability		
To what extent has the support aimed at strengthening change agents been sustainable?	• The extent to which capacity built will be retained. • The extent to which the grantees have the financial and technical (ICT) capacity to maintain benefits achieved.	Field visits Key document review of desk study sample Interviews at HQs
Organisational Effectiveness		
To what extent is Sida's management of the Strategy effective (i.e. geared to meet the objectives in the Strategy)?	• The different ways and criteria used to select initiatives and their respective strengths and shortcomings. • The opportunities and challenges for CIVSAM's management. • The extent to which Sida staff are aware of the strategy • The extent to which the strategy is coordinated within Sida. • The extent to which Embassies are aware of the strategy. • The extent to which Sida communicates the Strategy to potential partners.	SWOT workshop with CIVSAM Interviews with other Sida departments Interviews with grantees Interviews with embassy staff (field and country case studies)

Annex 6 – Mapping of the Portfolio

The following represents a mapping of the portfolio of initiatives supported by the Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression. Sida's statistical system, PLUS, identifies 130 initiatives during the period of review (2009-mid 2013) with a total expenditure of half a billion Swedish kronor (SEK 569 729 405). Out of this, 17 initiatives focused on providing urgent assistance to threatened activists (representing 0.8 percent of the expenditures) and 3 initiatives were evaluation consultancies (0.24 percent of the expenditures). The following sections analyses the remaining 110[67] initiatives in relation to a range of variables such as financial size; duration; thematic and target group distribution; and type of channels, organisations, modalities and methods used.

1. Methodology

The evaluation team found that Sida's own categorisation of its contributions (the PLUS system) was not detailed enough and was not completely reliable to use as the basis for the mapping exercise. Therefore, the evaluators identified a set of categories and sub-categories (listed below) that take departure in the categories and sub-categories mentioned in the Strategy and those actually found in the portfolio. The evaluation team classified each initiative based on a summative judgement of information provided in assessment memos, applications, narrative reports, interviews and the classification in the PLUS system.

1. **Financial size**
2. **Duration**
3. **Geographic region/countries targeted**
4. **Type of agreement partner**
   o Academic institution
   o Cultural institution (writers, performing arts)
   o Foundation/Fund/Trust
   o Media institution
   o Multilateral organisation

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[67] 17 initiatives are extensions and not new projects. The Team has counted them as separate initiatives in the statistical analyses, as they have different ID numbers from the former support.

- o Political party-affiliated organisation
- o Trade union, trade association or federation
- o Other

5. **Origin of agreement partner**
   - o Exile organisation
   - o International organisation (with HQs mainly in ODA country)
   - o ODA country organisation
   - o Regional organisation
   - o Swedish organisation

6. **Type of channel**
   - o Direct – direct support to organisations in developing countries
   - o Partnership – support to organisations in developing countries through a partnership arrangement with northern or international organisations
   - o Intermediary – funds are channelled to an organisation that primarily sub-grants the funds to organisations working in developing countries.

7. **Theme** (main theme and secondary themes)
   - o Democratic development – e.g. freedom of association, civic engagement, democratic governance
   - o Free and fair elections – e.g. election monitoring, voter education
   - o Freedom of expression – e.g. journalistic capacity building, media content development
   - o Human rights (general) – defending and advocating for human rights
   - o ICT freedom and security – advocacy for internet access, digital security work
   - o LGBT rights
   - o The rule of law – e.g. to lawyers associations, extraordinary chamber in the court
   - o Women's rights

8. **Target groups** (main and secondary)
   - o Civil society and human rights activists – including special interest organisations, s (not LGBT) and political activists
   - o Cultural activists – e.g. writers, musicians, performing artists
   - o Decision-makers – e.g. politicians, inter-governmental bodies, UN member states
   - o Digital activists –activists who primarily operate in the cyber realm (e.g. bloggers) and ii) activists who specifically advocate and raise awareness about internet freedom and internet privacy concerns.
   - o Grassroots communities
   - o LGBT activists
   - o Students and youth
   - o Wide range/unspecific – e.g. the "general public"
   - o Women rights activists (but not CAL)

9. **Methods used to promote change** (main method and secondary methods)

- o   Advocacy – focusing on duty-bearers
- o   Awareness-raising – focusing on rights-holders
- o   Capacity building – e.g. training, mentoring, coaching
- o   ICT – e.g. internet-based training platforms, web-based activities
- o   Networking
- o   Protection and counselling – including physical and virtual protection; Legal and psychosocial counselling; legal defence, helpline
- o   Research

10. **Type of support**
- o   Core support – funding which is not earmarked for particular projects or programmes, but rather used in support of governance, administration, capacity development and general implementation of the organisational vision and strategies
- o   Programme support – funding which is given to a broader strategic area of operation often with an outcome level aim
- o   Project support – funding which is given to a particular initiative often aiming at an output level aim

2. Financial Size and Duration

The average grant size is SEK 5.1 million, while the median value is SEK 4 million. The table below shows the distribution of the total number of initiatives.

Range of expenditure SEK	Number of initiatives total
Less than 500 000	12
0,5 – 1 million	8
1-2 million	18
2-3 million	19
3-4 million	11
4-5 million	11
5-6 million	8
6-7 million	6
7-10 million	5
10-20 million	6
More than 20 million	6

Since the Strategy is relatively new and no initiatives began until late 2009, the duration of the initiatives tends to be short, with a median of 2.5 years. Seven projects have a duration of four or more years. Among the long-term partners are WAN, IMS, UNDEF, Shalom, Akiba Uhaki/UHAI and East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders, which all received support in 2009 that is still on-going. Seventeen initiatives have been extended to cover more than one agreement period and will develop into longer-term relationships.

The portfolio has grown substantially over time, from MSEK 62 in 2009 to MSEK 216 in 2012. The statistics for 2013 refer to only part of the year, since this evaluation was undertaken mid-year. Expenditures are typically recorded after 4–6 months. Therefore the figures for 2013 below are incomplete.
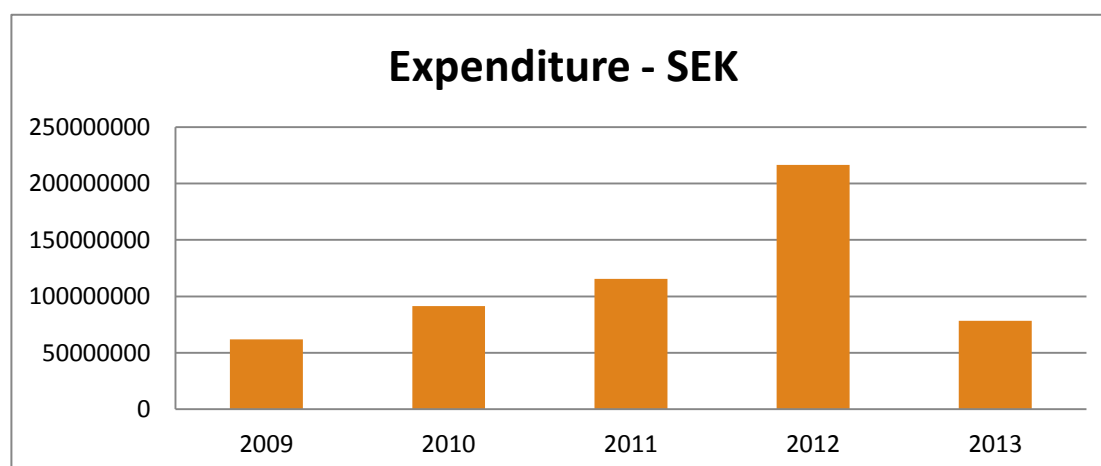
The number of initiatives has also grown steadily.

Year	Total initiatives in portfolio with expenditures	New initiatives added
2009	11	11
2010	41	34
2011	53	14
2012	54	38
2013	20	13

3.   Where is the money going?

The bulk of the funding is provided to global initiatives, targeting change agents in more than one sub-region – a total of 42 percent of the funding. The set of countries targeted in these global arrangements are generally not ranked among the "worst of the worst" 7 countries in regards to civil and political rights but most target the 47 countries deemed as Not Free according to Freedom House.

This mapping has attempted to unpack these global initiatives. While it is often possible to find out what countries are targeted, it has not been possible to map the total amount of funds that have been destined to a specific country – since the budgets are not disaggregated. For some countries, funding comes through a range of channels (such as one or several intermediary organisations), sometimes supporting up to a

dozen initiatives. Nevertheless, it is possible to capture the amount of funding which has been channelled directly to a single country or region.

In total, change agents in 29 different countries have received *direct* support from Sida.[68] Another 31 have received support indirectly from the Strategy. The individual countries that have received the most direct funds from the Strategy are three countries in the Asia-Pacific region – of which one is Cambodia, which received a single grant of SEK 28 million channelled through the UN for support to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (one of the 47 "Not Free" countries). While funding has indeed targeted un-free or partly free countries, the Sida support does not directly target the worst countries or those with deteriorating human rights grading. The region that is most in most regression, according to Freedom House, is Eurasia; but is a quite a small recipient of direct Sida support. Also, countries like Laos and Ethiopia, receive rather little attention – even indirectly despite being among the worst by Freedom House's ranking.

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[68] Some countries have been coded in the table of geographic distribution.

Key regional findings:
Middle East and North Africa
In a region notable for sectarian polarisation, civil strife, and repressive autocracies, freedom scored some grudging but nonetheless impressive gains in 2012. **Gains:** Tunisia maintained dramatic improvements from the previous year, and Libya and Egypt both moved from Not Free to Partly Free. **Declines:** Syria suffered by far the worst repercussions from the Arab Spring. Declines were also seen in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.

Sub-Saharan Africa
In recent years, sub-Saharan Africa has ranked as the world's most politically volatile region, with major democratic breakthroughs in some countries, and coups, civil strife, and authoritarian crackdowns in others. While the region saw several significant gains, especially in West Africa, civil conflicts and the emergence of violent Islamist groups prevented an overall upgrade for political freedom. **Gains:** Three countries moved from Partly Free to Free: Lesotho, Sierra Leone, and Senegal. Côte d'Ivoire moved from Not Free to Partly Free. Guinea and Malawi also showed gains. **Declines:** Mali suffered one of the greatest single-year declines in the history of *Freedom in the World*, dropping precipitously from Free to Not Free, and Guinea-Bissau's status declined from Partly Free to Not Free. Declines were also seen in the Central African Republic, The Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Madagascar, South Africa, and Uganda.

Central and Eastern Europe/Eurasia
The return of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency ushered in a new period of accelerated repression. With Russia setting the tone, Eurasia (consisting of the countries of the former Soviet Union minus the Baltic states) now rivals the Middle East as one of the most repressive areas on the globe. Indeed, Eurasia is in many respects the world's least free subregion, given the entrenchment of autocrats in most of its 12 countries. **Gains:** Improvements were seen in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia, as well as in the disputed territories of Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, the latter of which moved from Not Free to Partly Free. **Declines:** Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine all had notable declines.

Asia-Pacific
For years ranked among the world's most repressive regimes, Burma continued to push ahead with a process of democratic reform that was launched in 2010. While it remains a Not Free country, it registered improvements that brought it ahead of China in both its political rights and civil liberties ratings. **Gains:** Improvements were seen in Burma, Bhutan, Indian Kashmir, Mongolia, and Tonga. **Declines:** The most serious declines in the Asia-Pacific region for 2012 took place in the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Americas
As the year ended, Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez was in a Cuban hospital attempting to recover from surgery for an undisclosed form of cancer. For over a decade, Chávez has been a significant figure in regional politics and has aspired, with less success, to a leading role on the global stage. His re-election in 2012 was ensured by the massive abuse of state resources. **Gains:** The region of the Americas saw no substantial improvements. **Declines:** Ecuador, Paraguay, and Suriname suffered notable declines.

Freedom House 2013

East Africa and other Sub-Saharan countries receive 22% of the funding (mostly as regional initiatives). The larger projects tend to have a global focus, but many of the Sub-Saharan African initiatives are typically larger in size. Projects in Eurasia are generally smaller in terms of funding.

The Asia Pacific region has received the greatest number of <u>direct</u> grants to local organisations based in partner countries (8 initiatives). The Asia Pacific region also received support via DAC country-based organisations (20 initiatives). In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) partner country-based organisations are targeted <u>directly</u> by 4 percent of the funding (6 initiatives), in addition to 8 regional MENA initiatives supported via DAC country-based organisations. Countries in these two regions are also included in a number of the global initiatives.
The graphs below show where the money is going, by volume of funds, and number of initiatives:

Geographical distribution 2009-2013
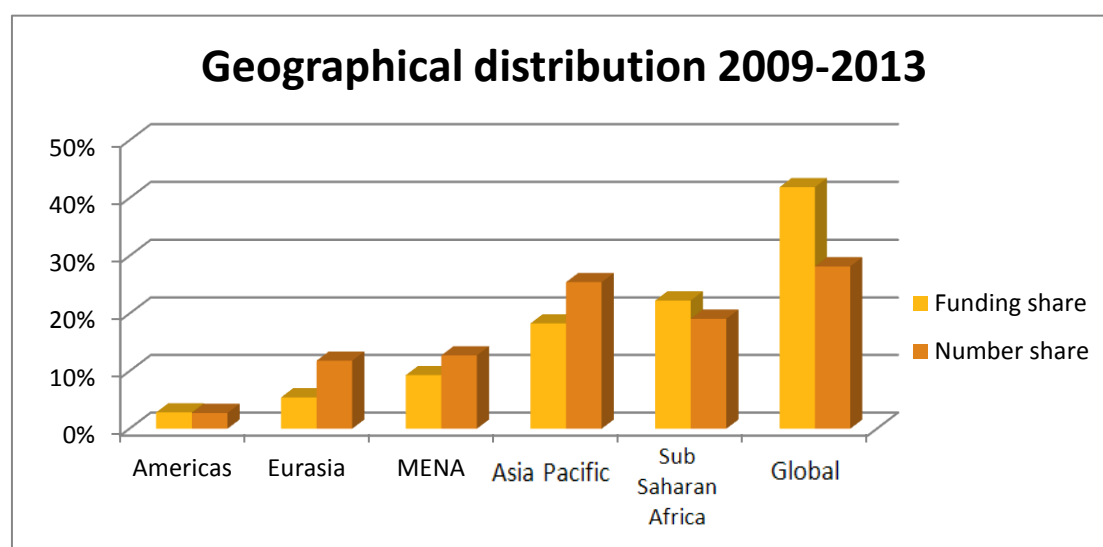
The tables below show the geographical distribution of the *direct* support by Sida country categories and Freedom House categories:

Distribution by Sida Country Categories		
Country category	No. of initiatives	Share of funding
1. Long term cooperation	4	5,6%
2. Conflict/post-conflict	6	1,6%
3. European reform	1	0,4%
4. Alt. forms of democracy	4	1,8%
5. Selective Cooperation	1	0,6%
6. Phasing out	1	0,8%
7. Regional	18	22,0%
8. Other countries	12	6,5%
9. Global	63	60,6%

Distribution by Freedom House Categories		
Region	Number of initiatives	Share of funding
Americas	3	2,8%
Asia Pacific	28	18,3%
Eurasia	13	5,4%
global	31	41,9%
MENA	14	9,3%
Sub Saharan Africa	21	22,3%

Geographical distribution of funding - % of SEK
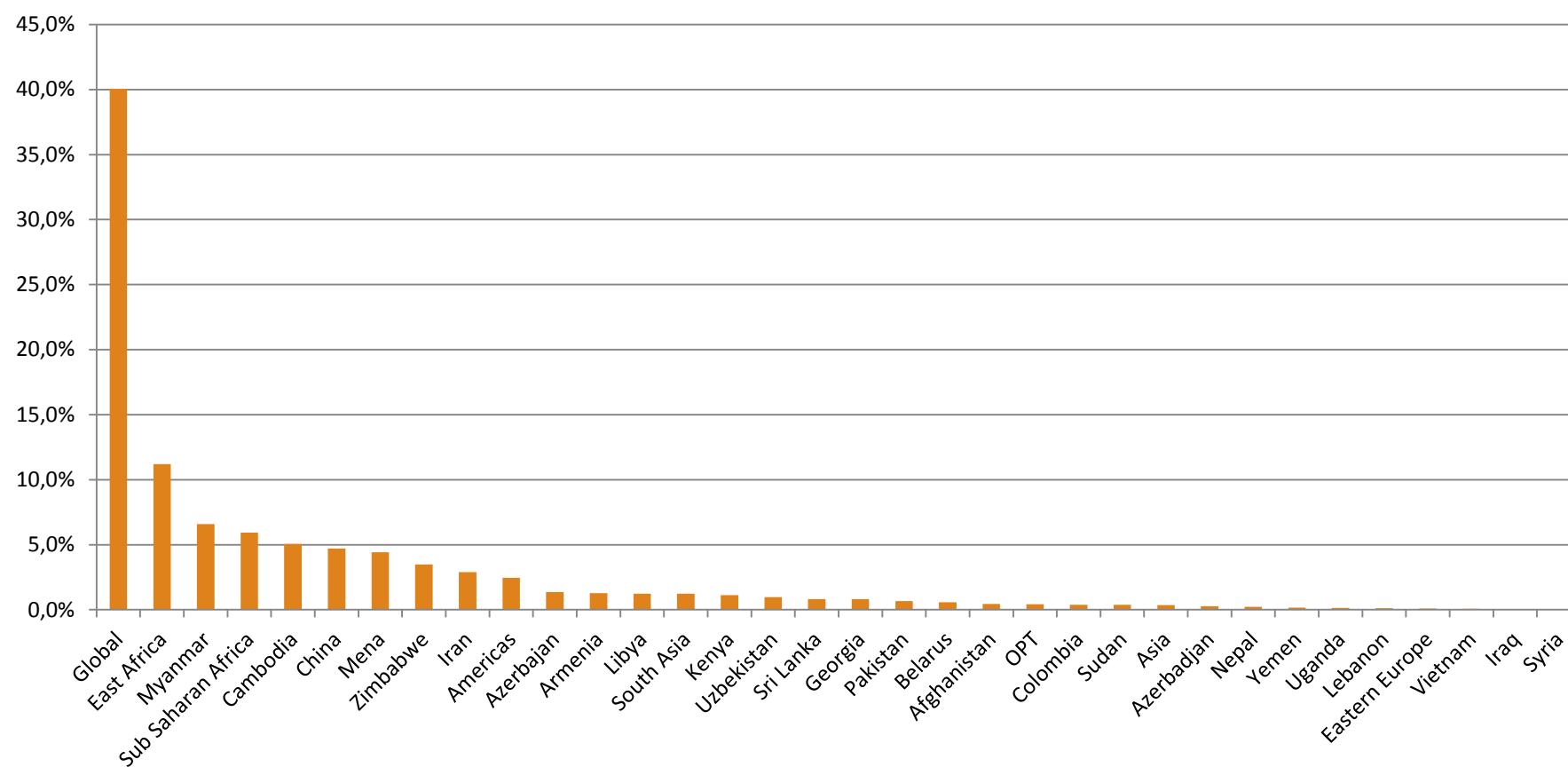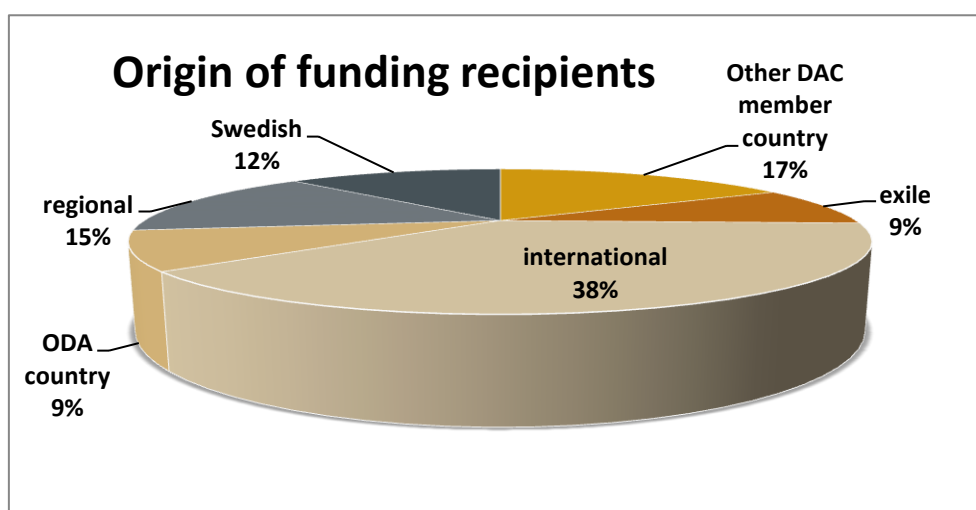
4. Type of Modalities Used

By examining the applications, the evaluation Team has categorised the Sida partners according to origin/location of head office. Half of the support is channelled via DAC country-based or international organisations. Of this support, Swedish and US-based organisations dominate, making up almost one-third of the total initiatives supported by the Strategy. The remaining half of the support is channelled to three types of ODA country organisations: i) those based in developing countries or Eurasia (26 initiatives and thereby the largest single category); ii) regional organisations based in Africa, Latin America or Asia; and iii) exile organisations that typically have their administrative base in Europe or the United States.

Type of organisation by origin	Number
DAC member country organisation (with agenda mainly in DAC country)	20
Exile organisation	16
International organisation (with agenda mainly in ODA country)	20
ODA country organisation	26
Regional organisation	13
Swedish organisation	15

When examining how funding is disbursed according to these categories, international organisations strongly dominate. Substantial amounts (25% of funding) are channelled through the UN system (mainly UNDEF and UNESCO). In total, support via international and northern organisations makes up 67% of the financial support. Direct partnership with locally based organisations takes 9% of the funding. This may seem like a small share, but because of the oppressive contexts in countries it is often more effective to work via regional and global networks.

Origin of funding recipients

Swedish 12%
Other DAC member country 17%
exile 9%
international 38%
regional 15%
ODA country 9%

To obtain an initial picture of the formal status of the organisations supported, the Evaluation Team has examined the applications and project documents of the partners. The distribution by type of organisation (formal status) shows that NGOs receive 42 percent of the funds but make up 60 percent of the initiatives (66 initiatives). This means that contributions to CSOs are generally small, while still requiring the

same amount of administration as the much larger contributions to, for instance, multilateral organisations.

Type of organisation	Share of funding	Number of initiatives
NGO	42%	66
Multilateral organisation	25%	10
Union/Federation	11%	10
Foundation/Fund/Trust	10%	8
Media institution	4%	6
Academic institution	3%	4
Political party organisation	3%	2
Cultural institution	2%	2
Other	1%	2

The Evaluation Team has classified initiatives according to the type of channel, based on the information available in the project proposals, appraisals and reports. A large portion of the funds (45%) is channelled through partnership arrangements between a DAC-based organisation and one or several ODA country-based organisations. Likewise, a significant portion of the funds (37%) is channelled via intermediaries that are engaged in sub-granting – often through calls for proposals. A total of 18 percent of the funds directly support organisations in ODA countries without going via intermediaries or partners in DAC countries.
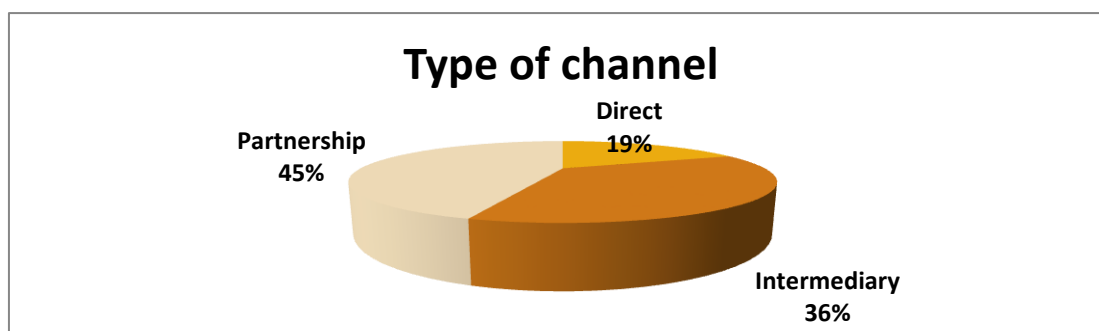
Type of channel

Partnership 45%

Direct 19%

Intermediary 36%

In terms of the numbers of initiatives, intermediaries make up only 14 initiatives, while 45 initiatives (representing 40% of the projects) consist of direct support to implementing agencies – the most time-consuming of grantee relationships. The large sums channelled via the multilateral intermediaries have a considerable effect on the overall picture.
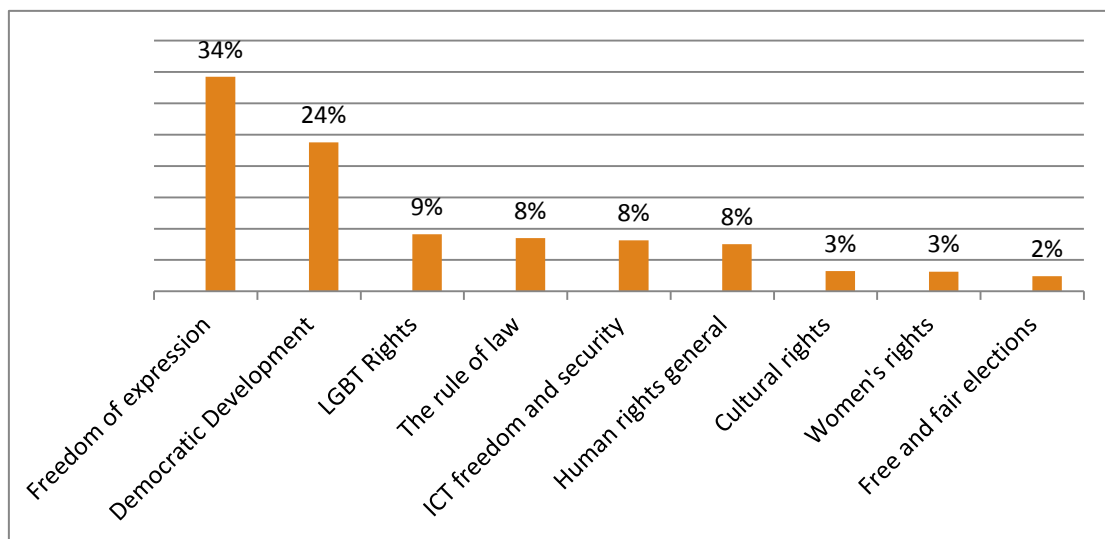
Type of channel	Share of funding	Number
Direct	18 %	45
Intermediary	37 %	14
Partnership	45 %	51

The type of support provided is mostly project support (in total 95 initiatives), due to the rather short expectation of the duration of the appropriation when it was initially launched (please refer to the definitions of types of support in the introduction). The categorisation is based on an analysis of the info in project memos and data available from the PLUS system.
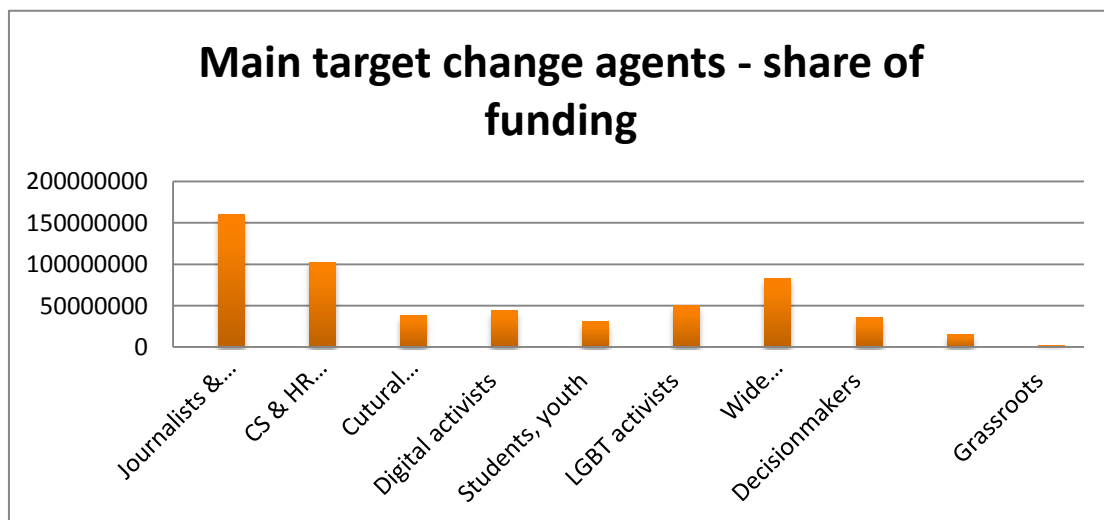
Type of support - share of funding

- Special program support 10%
- Budget support to multilaterals 7%
- Core support 17%
- Project support 66%
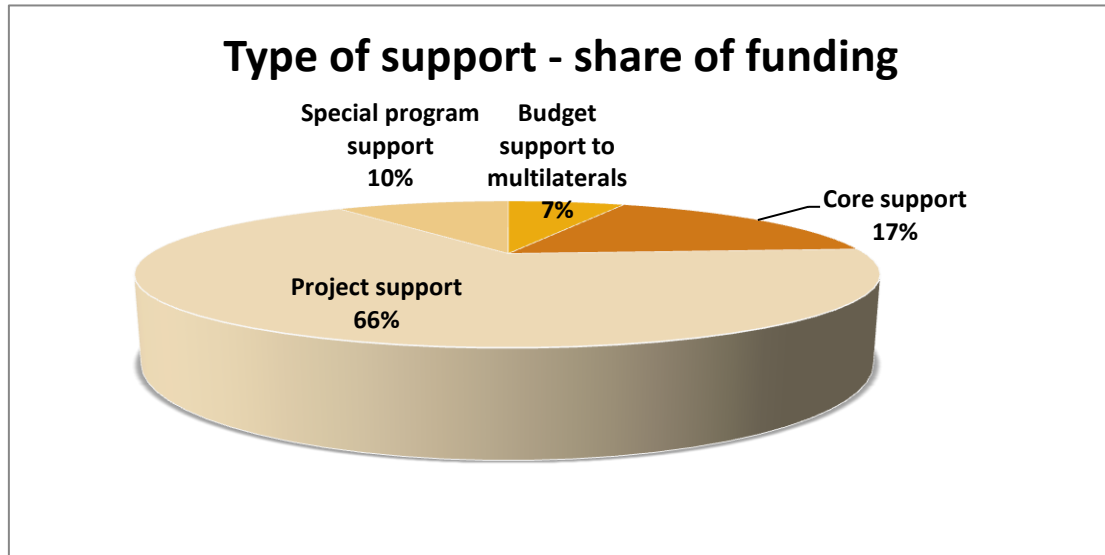
5. What is the money used for?

The Evaluation Team identified the main themes addressed by the initiatives using project memos, interviews and comparing them with the data in the PLUS system (which offers only a very rough classification). It found that the two main thematic areas funded are freedom of expression (34%) and democratic development (24%). Other major themes are LGBT rights, ICT freedom, general human rights (not specifying any particular rights) and the rule of law. (For definitions of themes, please refer to introduction above).

Theme	Percentage
Freedom of expression	34%
Democratic Development	24%
LGBT Rights	9%
The rule of law	8%
ICT freedom and security	8%
Human rights general	8%
Cultural rights	3%
Women's rights	3%
Free and fair elections	2%

The distribution by financial volume largely resembles the spread by number of initiatives. It should be noted, however, that ICT freedom and security (as defined in the introduction) is the secondary theme for almost a quarter of the funds disbursed. An analysis by sub-region shows that freedom of expression is the most common theme everywhere – except in global programmes where ICT freedom and security is slightly more frequent. Furthermore, in the Asia Pacific sub-region as well as the global initiatives, support focusing on promoting democratic development is almost as common as freedom of expression as a theme.

The Evaluation Team has identified the most common primary target "change agents". Some change agents are targeted to provide tools and voice to other groups (journalists, cultural activists, digital activists), while others are targeted to strengthen their own voice (women and LGBT activist). Many of the initiatives have a range of target groups (e.g. cultural activists targeting youth, women, communities or digital activists helping media or human rights activists[69] to operate). The diagram below isolates the *primary* target group:

Main target change agents - share of funding

200000000	
150000000	
100000000	
50000000	
0	Journalists &... / CS & HR... / Cutural... / Digital activists / Students, youth / LGBT activists / Wide... / Decisionmakers / Grassroots

In terms of the number of initiatives, support that targets cultural activists, digital activists, youth and LGBT activists are frequent. However, these projects are typically small, financially. Vulnerable groups and people living in poverty (grassroots communities) are rarely mentioned as primary target groups, but are reached by many initiatives as secondary target groups.

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[69] HR general activists are all human rights organisations or activists working for a range of human rights – not specifically focusing on a particular right or group.

Main target group	Funds spent	Number
Journalists & media activists	160259082	27
Civil society and human rights activists	102926926	25
Cultural activists	38737140	13
Digital activists	44272266	11
Students and youth	30858570	9
LGBT activists	50055295	8
Wide range/unspecific	83281165	6
Decision makers	35530000	5
Women rights activists	15150000	4
Grassroots communities	2706000	2

Decision makers are the most common secondary target group in financial terms, along with general SC&HR defenders and women's rights activists. 15 % of the funding goes to broadly defined target groups (e.g. the general public, listeners in the world) or undefined (when channelled via big intermediaries).

Civil society and human rights activists are the most common target group in all sub-regions, except Eurasia, where journalists and media activists are by far the most common. Likewise, global projects mainly target journalists and media, which is otherwise the second most common target group in other sub-regions.

The Team also identified the extent to which organisations and/or individual human rights defenders[70] were targeted.

The share of the funding largely corresponds to the number of initiatives as shown below.

Type of target group	Number
Individuals & Organisations	49
Individuals	16
Not applicable or clearly mentioned	9
Organisations	36

Type of target groups - share of funding
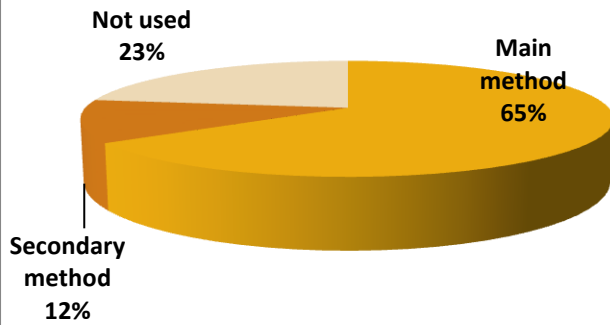
Organisations 34%
Individuals 14%
Both 46%
N/A 6%
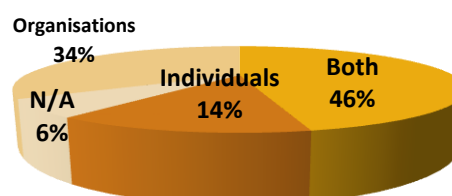
[70] The Strategy allows Sida to support work and protection of both organisations and individuals, e.g. IT specialists, leaders of activists groups, whistle blowers etc.
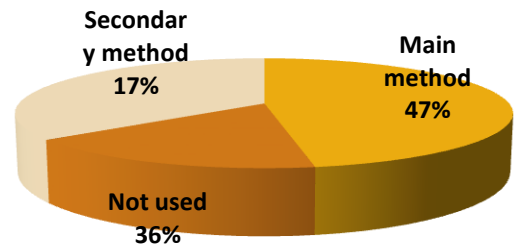
6. Methods Used

When examining the methods used, the evaluators have considered the number of initiatives rather than the share of the funding. Most projects use a combination of 2-4 methods. Ten percent of the projects use only one method (often awareness raising or training). Training/capacity enhancing is the most commonly employed method. This is followed by awareness-raising and ICT.
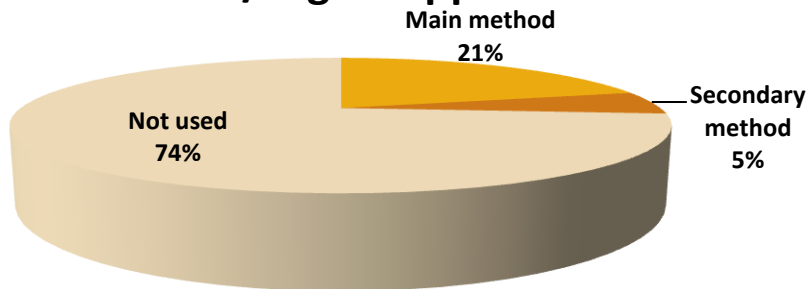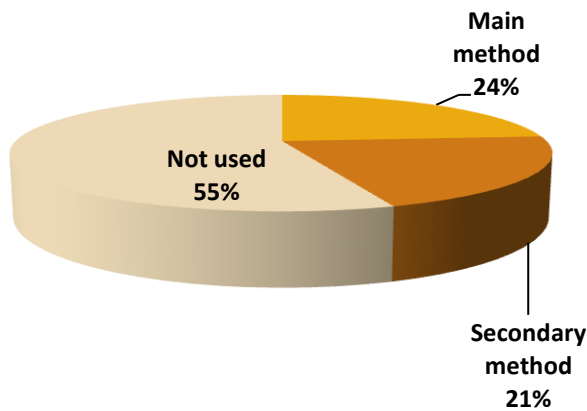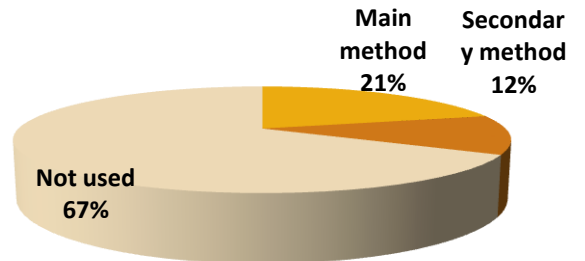
Capacity building

Not used 23%
Main method 65%
Secondary method 12%

Awareness raising

Secondary method 17%
Main method 47%
Not used 36%

Protection/Counselling /Legal Support

Main method 21%
Secondary method 5%
Not used 74%

Advocacy

Main method 24%

Not used 55%

Secondary method 21%

Research and documentation

Main method 21%

Secondary method 12%

Not used 67%

ICT

Not used 56%

Main method 33%
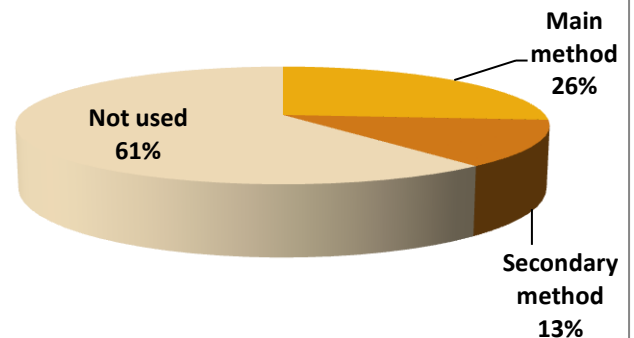
Secondary method 11%

Networking

Main method 26%

Not used 61%

Secondary method 13%
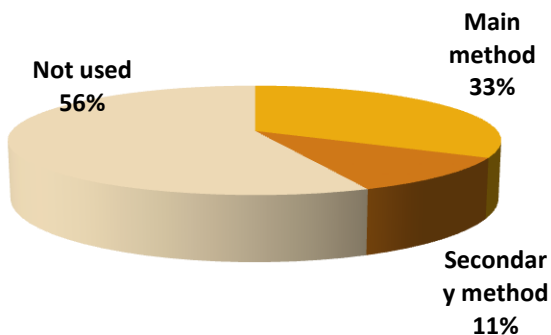
Sub-regional difference in use of methods

There are some pertinent differences among the use of methods in the different sub-regions:

- **ICT** is most commonly used as a main method in Eurasia (54% of projects) and Global projects (45%), while Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia Pacific have very few, in the Asia-Pacific region only 15% of projects use ICT as a method.
- **Protection/counselling** is mainly used in Sub Saharan Africa (28% of projects), Eurasia and Global initiatives (around 23% of projects).
- **Applied research** is most commonly used in Sub Saharan Africa (38% of projects) and Eurasia (31 % of projects). For support to Eastern European countries specifically, research is even more common (50% of projects).
- **Networking** is a common method used in Sub-Saharan Africa (43% of projects) and Eurasia (38% of projects).

- **Awareness-raising** is the most common method in the Americas, where all the projects have this as the main method. In Eurasia and MENA more than half of the projects have awareness-raising as the main method. It seems that this approach is more often chosen in sensitive contexts and issues, where mobilising public opinion is considered important.
- **Advocacy** is generally less commonly used, particularly in MENA and Eurasia. Meanwhile, 33 percent of the Sub Saharan Africa projects use advocacy as a main method. Global and Asia Pacific initiatives use it to some extent.

Annex 7 – Public Communication of the Strategy

- Sida itself has produced half a dozen posts on its website that discuss the Strategy, particularly in relation to upcoming calls for proposals. In 2011 it also featured what the Strategy concretely supported in the Middle East.

- Sida's annual reports have covered the Strategy.

- Sida's General Manager, Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, mentioned the Strategy in an article in the tabloid *Expressen* which discussed a conference for Internet activists held in Stockholm in October 2011. http://www.expressen.se/debatt/charlotte-petri-gornitzka-sa-skyddar-sida-nataktivisterna/ . The Conference also led to a detailed article about the Strategy in the daily Dagens Nyheter. http://www.dn.se/nyheter/politik/hemligt-svenskt-stod-ska-falla-diktatorer?rm=print

- The last two annual reports on the Strategy are available to the public electronically from the Amazon Web Services.

- The Swedish government's website has featured the Strategy to a similar degree that Sida has.

- There are at least a handful of news articles on the Strategy:

  o One was written in connection with unrest in Egypt in the Spring of 2011 (it featured several organisations that receive support); http://www.metro.se/metro-teknik/sa-stoder-sida-det-egyptiska-upproret/Objkbb!26858/,

  o Världen Idag wrote in connection with the new Strategy formulation in 2012 that the Strategy http://www.varldenidag.se/nyhet/2012/04/05/Regeringen-satsar-pa-religionsfrihet/, could be used to support groups, including faith-based NGos, who promote religious freedom;

  o Several articles were published as a result of the Prime Minister mentioning of Sweden's commitment to this area on August 30, 2013. http://www.bt.se/nyheter/bistandssatsning-pa-demokrati(3917772).gm, http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/bistandssatsning-pa-demokrati_8471634.svd, http://www.gp.se/nyheter/sverige/1.1974335-bistandssatsning-pa-demokrati,

- Sweden's support to TOOL has, according to Sida, been discussed by Sida on Swedish television (inception meeting with Sida).

Evaluation of the Implementation and the Results of the Swedish Strategies for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression (2009-2011 and 2012-2014)

The aim of Sweden's Strategy for Special Initiatives for Democratisation and Freedom of Expression 2009-2011 and 2012-2014 is to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression through support to change agents. Implemented by Sida, it seeks to complement Sweden's other development cooperation support for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This evaluation provides evidence that the portfolio of projects supported by the Strategy strongly reflects most of its priorities and has achieved respectable and sometimes impressive results. The Strategy's implementation, however, is not fulfilling its overall potential. Sida's systems and resources have not been well calibrated to the needs of this Strategy. More could have been achieved through a strategic, proactive and collaborative approach.