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Working Paper Nr. 10

Secretariat for Analysis of
Swedish Development Assistance

A Perspective on SAREC's Evaluation System:

Policy and Performance

Olav Stokke
Stockholm, Juni 1994

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ecretariat for Analysis of Swedish Development Assistance

The Swedish government has appointed a committee with the task of analysing the results and effectiveness of Swedish development aid. A special Secretariat, SASDA, was set up on 1 March 1993 to carry out the work.

The Secretariat will work until the end of 1994 and will have as its main task to propose to Government suitable mechanisms for evaluations and policy analyses of Swedish aid. In its work SASDA will give priority to carrying out a set of of selected studies world-wide, at co ntry, sector and subject level and to studies of individual organisations to provide a basis for decisions on development co-operation in the future and to gain experience on how policy evaluations should be carried out. A major study concerns Sweden's co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe.

SASDA's point of departure is the aim of a better understanding of the mechanisms of development in order to enhance the results and increase the effectiveness of aid in achieving the five goals set by the Swedish parliament: increased resources, economic and social equality, economic and political independence, the democratic development of society, and the long-term management of natural resources and care of the environment.

The studies and analyses will be managed partly by the Secretariat's own staff and will include studies commissioned from different specialists in the committee's areas of priority.

The staff are :

Ambassador Claes Sandgren	Head of the Secretariat
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A PERSPECTIVE ON SAREC'S EVALUATION SYSTEM: POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

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An Evaluation prepared for SASDA, April 1994

The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo

ISSN 1104-697X
Regeringskansliets Reprocentral

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The task and scope

This review looks into SAREC's evaluation system and describes how it functions. This task has been approached along four main inroads: (1) the environments have been explored: the objectives set for Swedish development assistance in general and for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries in particular, and the way SAREC has interpreted and operationalised these objectives have been described; this applies also to the organisational structure of SAREC. From there, (2) the evaluation policy has been explored. Then, (3) the implementation has been studied, partly through a selection of nine cases drawn from all SAREC's programmes and sectors and partly through a series of interviews involving the secretariat and board of SAREC and a few persons outside with an intimate knowledge of how SAREC works. The emphasis has been on objectives and administrative aspects. In addition, (4) a quantitative review of more than one-third of the evaluation reports produced during 1986-93 has been carried out in order to present the main features of the evaluation reports.

2. Description: main findings

2.1 The main picture emerging is that of a highly decentralised organisation where the initiative and power reside with the single units, namely the research officers. The individual research officer, in most cases, strongly influences the selection of new projects to be funded (and the exclusion of others), prepares the project proposal, its follow-up and monitoring, and initiates and prepares the regular prolongations.

Furthermore, and in this context significant, he or she initiates and prepares the evaluation, formulates the terms of reference and in most cases picks the evaluators, receives the evaluation reports from the consultants and presents the findings and proposes how SAREC should respond to them. It approaches a tautology to conclude that such an organisation is extremely person-dependent.

The picture portrayed needs to be modified. A formal, hierarchical structure does exist, but except when large or controversial projects are up, its function is mainly to check and trim the system. The board and the SAREC leadership may and does at certain points introduce new issues and tasks, changes or terminates projects and may even initiate specific projects occasionally. When major projects are concerned, the interaction is not just formal.

2.2 There is no formal evaluation policy or formal guidelines for the evaluation of SAREC's varied activities. However, a quite consistent informal policy may be discerned. The main features of this policy are described.

2.3 The main functions evaluations serve in the present system are

(1) first and foremost to support administrative functions in a very limited sense (to provide a basis for the decision whether support should be continued or terminated, whether some changes or reorientations should be made, etc.):

(2) they also have a legitimating function.

2.4 The emphasis is on the **scientific quality** of the activities being scrutinised. Economic and organisational aspects are given less emphasis, if at all. For some activities, such a priority may be legitimate; for others (including, in particular, research capacity building) it may be questioned. Overall and meso-level objectives and cross-cutting issues are to a large extent neglected. It follows that the broader accountability function (vis-à-vis Government, Parliament, the general public) is only to a very limited extent satisfied. However, the country studies, in particular, have a potential to serve this function if their scope is extended to include also an evaluation of the SAREC country programme in the context provided.

3. Recommendations

3.1 How to address the structural problem identified

The structural problem identified (2.1) is an important one because so much influence is vested in the individual research officer; this problem was paradoxically increased by the administrative reform undertaken in the wake of the evaluation of SAREC ten years ago. The earlier, horizontal organisational structure was replaced by a hierarchical formal structure, where it no longer was legitimate for all to be concerned with whatever took place in the organisation.

To overcome this structural problem, at least two approaches may be suggested:

(a) To keep the present, decentralised administrative system, with adjustment measures to ensure that evaluation may serve the critical scrutiny function evaluations are expected to fill; or

(b) To establish a genuinely centralised, external system for appraisal, monitoring and evaluation.

Within the SAREC context, a reformist approach is recommended in order to maintain the valuable aspects of a decentralised organisation. Within this frame, alternative administrative reforms are suggested.

However, in order to meet external accountability concerns, this internal monitoring and evaluation geared, in the first place, towards SAREC's information needs related to the decision-making process, should be supplemented with more overall reviews of sectors and programmes, and the SAREC aid delivery system itself. Such a centralised, external body should also address cross-sectoral issues and issues that cross institutional borders, though not relieving SAREC for a responsibility of addressing cross-cutting issues.

3.2 Reforms

3.2.1 An evaluation policy should be formalised which sets out

(a) overall objectives for evaluations, where a distinction is drawn between the

various functions; and

(b) guidelines and norms, along with procedural matters.

3.2.2 A plan for evaluation, reflecting this policy, should be established and cover the following aspects at one level or the other:

(1) A rolling and comprehensive programme for evaluation (with a two or three year planning horizon) in order to ensure that, over time, all programmes and sectors would be evaluated.

(2) Larger programmes/projects should be regularly evaluated (4-6 year intervals).

(3) The main programmes (bilateral research cooperation, development research in Sweden, etc.) and the sector programmes should also be regularly evaluated.

If the present SAREC system of evaluation is maintained (with modifications) and a new institution is established to serve the accountability function, (1) and (2) should be the responsibility of SAREC, while (3) should be organised from the outside (in cooperation with SAREC).

3.2.3 More precise objectives and criteria for performance, adapted to highly different research environments, should be established.

3.2.4 Administrative adjustments may be called for. The responsibility for evaluation should be identified. Two alternatives may be considered:

(a) to give a senior staff member, with required insight in evaluation methods and experience in evaluation, a responsibility for the evaluation function; or

(b) to place the responsibility for evaluation with the Programme Director.

(c) The terms of reference, the selection of consultants, and the follow-up of evaluations should, as a matter of routine, be discussed in a forum consisting of the Programme Director, the Director of Administration and the heads of sections.

However, important as such formal norms and procedures are, the internalised norms matter even more: **it is important to ensure that evaluations are critical, independent and transparent** and adapted to the objectives set.

3.2.5 The scope should be broadened, and not be restricted to current projects and programmes.

(1) Cross-cutting issues should be focused at in accordance with the overall and meso-level objectives of SAREC.

(2) For the international and regional programmes, in addition to scientific quality, also the extent to which the result have been implemented at the national level of

developing countries should be scrutinised; it may also be relevant to assess the instrumentality of Swedish funding in pursuing reforms according to objectives set.

(3) Both scientific quality and organisational and economic aspects should be included in performance assessments. Another most important aspect in knowledge building is the system of knowledge accumulation.

(4) The aid delivery system itself (the aid agency and its various components) should not be excluded from critical scrutiny.

One way of ensuring that the overall and intermediate objectives, and the other aspects referred to above, are brought stronger to the fore may be to include a development generalist in the team. Also within the confines of SAREC evaluations, it might be a good idea to concentrate on somewhat larger operations than what has been the general pattern till now, involving a series of projects and a comparative perspective instead of focusing on single projects.

The present practise with evaluation of smaller projects may be substituted by a more systematic follow-up. Guidelines should be established for this monitoring (based on an adapted logframe approach) which should allow for occasional assistance by external specialists as is the case at present. Such a system would suffice for most of the smaller, bilateral projects.

However, some overall issues including, in particular, cross-cutting issues and issues that several institutions share part of the responsibility for, may probably be better taken care of - or supplemented - by an external organ. This applies also to the performance of the delivery system itself.

FOREWORD

It may look a bit pretentious to write a foreword to a small and unpretentious evaluation report. However, it may be functional to rid the main text from some organisational matters, and this foreword serves that function. It provides me also with an opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness to several people who shared with me their accumulated knowledge and insights related to the functioning of SAREC.

The background for this report is a series of evaluations commissioned by the Secretariat for Analysis of Swedish Development Assistance (SASDA), focusing on the various Swedish agencies through which aid money is channelled (SIDA, BITS, SAREC, Swedecorp - and the multilateral department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The terms of reference, as given in Appendix A of the contract (signed in February 1994), are the following (translated from Swedish; the original is enclosed as Appendix 1):

"The task is to describe and analyse SAREC's system for project assessment and evaluation. It includes SAREC's implementation of the bilateral research cooperation and its regional and international research programmes. The task constitutes a component of SASDA's analysis of the aid agencies' ability to learn of their experiences and to monitor and in a critical way scrutinize their own work in a systematic way, and should be considered against this background.

It is part of the task to give a description and analysis of the way SAREC is performing its work as far as project assessments and evaluations are concerned, which implies that a selection of project assessments and evaluations has to be reviewed. Two types of material have to be evaluated:

(a) assessments of current and finalised activities.

(b) project assessments and other sources on which decisions have been founded, which in turn constitute the basis for systematic project assessment and evaluation of the performance."

When reading hundreds of evaluation reports in the past, I have often wondered what is driving these evaluators confronted, as they usually are, with a formidable task which is to be solved within a very short time framework, often quite seriously impacting on the activity under review and with consequences both for those who are responsible for and dependent of the activity concerned. Of course, professional consultancy firms and evaluators are in the business, and the full answer may stop there. But other evaluators - particularly those at universities and research institutes - are differently placed. Still, more profane interests will always be involved; however, there are vital professional interests involved, too, related to the quality of the report which is delivered. And these may be countervailing; professional interests are not always best cultivated by taking on assignments with an ambitious level of ambition matched only by the tightness of the time framework, the normal setting for evaluations.

This evaluation constitutes no exception. My primary excuse for accepting the assignment was a curiosity to see what has happened to this unique aid agency although, by necessity,

it would be a cursory one. I have evaluated SAREC before (jointly with professors Carl Widstrand and Göran Hydén), looking at the full activity of SAREC after its first ten years in operation (Tio år med SAREC, Ds UD 1985:2). This time, the scrutiny is limited to its evaluation system. However, evaluation cannot be considered an isolated activity: it may provide insight into the core fabric of an institution. It provides information on how present and past operations are working and what the information collected is used for by whom and for which purpose: in the decisions and administration of current activities in general and the activity under review in particular, but also to what extent and how it is fed into the planning process involving new activities.

Of course, twenty days within a concentrated time frame (March-April, 1994) do not allow for a too deep penetration into the subject matter nor affluent time for reflection. The time available has been used partly in Stockholm (and Uppsala) for interviews with the SAREC leadership and staff members and with some core people in SAREC's immediate environments (March 21-23, April 11-14) and to participate in a seminar in Stockholm 23 March taking stock of a parallel evaluation by two World Bank consultants commissioned by SASDA to provide an overall scrutiny into the monitoring and evaluation system of the Swedish aid agencies. The remaining few days have been spent at my desk in Oslo and elsewhere, going through reports and written sources of relevance and writing out the report.

I have been fortunate to have a chance to draw on the insights and experience of others both inside and outside SAREC (list of interviewee). At SASDA, I am particularly indebted to Olle Edqvist, Senior Policy Analyst, for sharing his insights and providing advise. I am also indebted to Emma Öståker who has gone through a large proportion of SAREC evaluation reports in the period 1986-93 (exactly how large a proportion we did not know until after this review was concluded, simply because an overview of SAREC's evaluations during 1991-93 was not available) and prepared the statistical basis necessary for part of the analysis and also for her most efficient and cheerful assistance in collecting material and making arrangements for most of the interviews.

Having said this, I would like to state the obvious: I am alone responsible for the report and what is included of information and judgements, and also for its shortcomings, possible misrepresentations and errors. It is my hope that some of these shortcomings may be removed as a result of a hearing process, particularly involving SAREC, which the time schedule did not allow for before this early delivery.

Oslo, 25 April 1994.

Olav Stokke

1. INTRODUCTION

The noble art of evaluation seldom takes place in a vacuum. Usually an evaluation is designed to serve more or less specific purposes, which may affect the interests of various stakeholders differently - adversely for some, favourably for others. It may interfere in the internal power play within an organisation by strengthening one position and weakening another; the same may apply to external stakeholders as well. Those in control of the instrument may therefore be able to design and use it for purposes which serve their interests. Such vested interests are not necessary related to selfish gains; they may even be altruistic.

This particular evaluation is focusing on the evaluation system of SAREC, a quite unique aid agency, along with its Canadian counterpart (IDRC, with a somewhat different profile) the only one particularly designed with the purpose of forming and implementing research cooperation with developing countries.

In designing this evaluation, it is necessary first to clarify the **purpose** in order to decide what kind of information and insights we are to look for. This in turn will decide what kind of questions we are to address.

The terms of reference (TOR) give guidance in this regard and so does the setting in which the evaluation takes place, referred to in the TOR (Appendix 1). Let me briefly elaborate on the point of departure for the evaluation based on the tasks identified in the TOR.

The setting is considered important for the focus: it is supposed to provide insights which might be useful for the work of the government-appointed commission with the task of looking into the effectiveness of Swedish development cooperation (Dir. 1992:59). Given this context, I find that attention should be directed as much to aid effectiveness, even to its impact, as to administrative and economic efficiency aspects. The implication is that aspects with a bearing on the more fundamental questions have to be scrutinized, including those affecting the most crucial question of them all: does aid work vis-à-vis the overall objectives set?

I will start this review of SAREC's evaluation system by a brief description and discussion of the framework conditions emerging from such an overall perspective, with particular emphasis on the contextual constraints involved (Chapter 2). Although general in scope, such a broader perspective is necessary for a proper understanding of the use of the evaluation tool for its various purposes, particularly given the setting referred to above.

From there I will proceed by portraying the evaluation profile of SAREC (Chapter 3). It is necessary to identify the evaluation policy: at the formal level, does a coherent evaluation policy exist? If so, do the policy guidelines prescribe different norms for the various programmes and sectors?

The descriptive analysis in Chapter 3 will be pursued further in Chapter 4. To what extent has the formalised evaluation policy - if existing - been followed up? If not formalised, what have been the informal monitoring and evaluation policy and practice? To what extent have the main programmes and sectors been systematically evaluated during the period 1986-93?

It is equally important to find out in more detail what SAREC has given priority to in its evaluation work and the kind of function which evaluation serves in the organisation. The main questions addressed will be the following: who are usually initiating the evaluations? Who are formulating the TORs and suggesting the composition of the evaluation team? What is the role assigned to the staff members of SAREC in the actual evaluation process? Why are the evaluations initiated and what purposes were they primarily to serve? Who were supposed to be the main users of the information and recommendations emerging from the evaluation? In what ways were the reports disseminated and what use has been made of them? Was there a follow-up, and if so, at what level? In what way, if any, were the findings or recommendations filtered into the planning or decision processes and at what level?

A survey has been undertaken in order to portray a profile of the evaluation reports. For this, a large share (more than one-third) of the evaluation reports has been included. The specifics are identified in coding form, prepared by SASDA (Appendix 7). The results of this survey are presented in Chapter 5; however, the main findings are integrated into the previous chapter of the report, too.

In the concluding Chapter 6, I will return to the broader perspectives raised in Chapter 2, with specific reference to SAREC. The evaluations which have been carried out by SAREC during the period (1986-1993): to what extent have they provided a basis for assessing how well or bad the aid for research has fared vis-à-vis the overall objectives and norms set for Swedish aid in general or for Swedish research cooperation in particular - that is, focused on the accountability? And to what extent has the tool been deliberately used in order to assess performance at lower levels in the hierarchy of objectives, attuned to the needs of the sector desks concerned in monitoring and following up - that is, focused on improvements of the delivery system?

A brief note on the primary sources and methods used may be required. The method follows traditional patterns for a review with the time constraints given. Part of the analysis is based on a review of the basic documents governing the work of SAREC - including instructions and norms and policies set by the government and Parliament for Swedish aid in general and for SAREC and Swedish research cooperation in particular (Chapter 2). I am here drawing also on the academic literature on these aspects. For chapters 3-4, I am drawing on similar sources: basic documents on SAREC, including instructions by the government, budget propositions, and SAREC's own budgetary proposals as well as other presentations of the organisation.

In addition, nine evaluation reports were chosen for a more thorough scrutiny. The point of departure for this selection was that all the main programmes as well as the main sectors should be represented in the sample. For a list of the reports selected, see Appendix 2.

A desk study has been undertaken of the selected evaluation reports. Normally, an evaluation takes the objectives set for the activity as the point of departure with a view of assessing to what extent these objectives have been followed up and/or (if the project/programme has been concluded) what impact the project has had vis-à-vis these objectives.

I have therefore looked into the decision document for the project concerned (the Insatspromemoria, prepared by the SAREC administration for the Board) in order to identify

its main objectives; if the project has been running for several years, the normal pattern for SAREC projects, I have chosen the last Insatspromemoria before the evaluation in order to avoid the trap of objectives that have been changed during the project period. This investigation had two purposes: to assess how clearly the objectives and instruments of the project/programme have been formulated (which have a bearing on the possibility for assessing the performance); and to find out to what extent the terms of reference (TOR) set the evaluation consultant(s) on the right track. For a list of these pre-evaluation "Insatspromemoria", see Appendix 3. In some cases, the TOR for the evaluation was included in the report; however, for quite a few it became necessary to collect them separately.

The next steps have been to assess to what extent the consultant(s) has followed up such directions - and the extent to which this has been possible (again with reference to the objectives set for the programme/project); and to what extent and how SAREC has followed up the recommendations, if at all. For that purpose, the follow-up decision document ("Insatspromemoria") has been scrutinised (for a list, see Appendix 4).

This desk study has been followed up with a series of interviews. The SAREC leadership (Director-General and Director of Programmes) has been interviewed on the planning and evaluation policy and practice of SAREC; and the intermediate leadership (all heads of sections) has been interviewed in a more detailed way, as have a few of the Research Officers (ROs), in order to find out the policy and procedures followed by the various sections in terms of planning and evaluation. An open, structured interview was conducted with reference to the nine evaluations selected (see above) in order to follow the procedures in a specific way (for the form, see Appendix 5). Because of frequent changes, it was not possible to reach all Research Officers who had administered the evaluations selected; however, it is my impression that this only marginally affects the picture portrayed of the processes involved. The list of the SAREC people interviewed is given in Appendix 6. A protocol of the interviews (a 2-page summary of main points) is kept in the Consultant's archive (SAREC 1994) and numbered (not in the sequence given in Appendix 6).

The TOR of this review does not ask for policy recommendations; that task, obviously, is left to the Commission. However, sometimes an evaluation report provides more than what is asked for!

2. THE VISIBLE HAND: SOME MAJOR FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

The objectives set for aid are supposed to govern the implementation; they also constitute the obvious point of departure for evaluation. However, some objectives are given a long-term perspective, others are more immediate and they operate at many levels. There are also many stakeholders with vested interests both with regard to how aid is implemented and how it is evaluated. The aid implementing agency itself and its implementing sectors have vested interest in objectives to be focused at in an evaluation. At this level, stakeholders are assumed to give emphasis to improvements in the delivery system (emphasising objectives at the project level). A variety of stakeholders at the political level within the donor country have vested interests involved of a different kind: their main concern is assumed to be whether aid works, involving the control function (accountability) vis-à-vis, in particular, the overall objectives set for aid. At the recipient side, a similar picture emerges, but the objectives do not necessarily coincide with those at the donor side. Stakeholders who are differently placed would give emphasis to objectives at different levels in the hierarchy of objectives. It should, however, be added that objectives set for an aid activity are themselves not necessarily exempted from evaluation (Stokke, 1992a).

Given the setting of the present evaluation, alluded to in the introduction, let us first have a quick look at the overall objectives set for Swedish development assistance and then proceed to the objectives set particularly for the research cooperation with developing countries. The questions addressed are the following:

(1) What are the overall objectives set for Swedish development assistance?

(2) What are the overall objectives set for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries, and to what extent are these objectives coherent with the overall objectives set for Swedish aid?

(3) To what extent and how has SAREC interpreted and operationalised these overall objectives adapted to its various activities, and to what extent are these interpretations and operationalisations consistent with the overall objectives set for Swedish aid in general and those set for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries in particular?

I will end this chapter with a brief discussion of some of the constraints involved, both in implementing and evaluating aid, on the basis of the overall objectives set.

2.1 The overall objectives set for Swedish aid

The overall objectives set for Swedish aid, at the level of declaratory policy, show a high degree of continuity since the early 1960s, when they were first formulated (Prop. 1962:100), although they have been adapted to new development agendas and subject to different emphasis and interpretation as changes in the immediate political environments or in the more fundamental framework conditions have taken place (Stokke, 1978; Frühling (ed.), 1986).

They are repeated in the government's recent budget proposition (Prop. 1993/94:100, Bilaga 4:58), emphasising that Swedish aid should continue to have a long-term time perspective and

be based on mutual confidence. The basic objective of Swedish aid, namely to improve the living conditions of the poor peoples, remains as important today as before. "The Parliament has ... decided that the development assistance is to assist in facilitating:

- economic growth (resurstillväxt)
- economic and social distribution (utjämning)
- economic and political independence (självständighet)
- a democratic societal development (demokratisk samhällsutveckling), and
- a future-oriented administration of natural resources and concern for the environment."

These overall objectives are to be considered together, not as separate goals. In addition, a series of formalised guidelines are supposed to give direction to policy implementation. The government of the day, while paying tribute to the established objectives, adds its own colour and priority to the established norms and adapts the objectives to the current international agenda. In the budget proposition (ibid.:58-74), the government, inter alia, emphasised the importance of an enabling environment for aid to be effective, involving "good governance". Development assistance is considered to have, primarily, a mobilising and catalytic function; the emphasis, accordingly, is on real cooperation. And the responsibility for development efforts is placed with the recipient government.

Among the issues which the Swedish government considers of particular importance was the promotion of democracy and human rights - part of the good government package - emphasising the human development aspect. Also environmental aspects, the population issue, agriculture - along with cross-cutting issues like women and children - were highlighted (ibid.:64-74).

The government also committed itself to improve the effectiveness of aid, involving, inter alia, improvements in the Swedish capacity to assess framework conditions, the realism of objectives set and the priorities of the recipients. Among the modalities indicated were improvements in the governing and coordination of aid, a system for follow-up and control, and improvements in the efficiency of the administration (ibid.:63-4).

2.2 The overall objectives set for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries

In the ideal world, objectives set for a sectoral activity (research cooperation) would be derived from the overall objectives set for the total activity (development cooperation) and adapted to the specific conditions of the sector concerned. At the level of declaratory policy, this also applies: the overall objectives for Swedish aid govern also Swedish research cooperation with developing countries. How have they been adapted to the conditions prevailing within the specific field of development cooperation?

According to the government instruction issued for SAREC (SFS 1988:532; as revised in SFS 1992:271), its main task is "to promote research which may be conducive for the developing countries in their efforts to develop towards increasing self-determination and towards economic and social justice."

This overall objective equals the overall objective set for Swedish aid in its high level of generalisation; at this level it reflects the latter's general orientation, although it is less specific. The objective was interpreted, after the evaluation of SAREC in 1984-85 (Utrikesdepartementet, 1985), to imply that SAREC shall assist the developing countries in (SAREC, 1992:13-4):

> * building their own research capacity, in terms of good research milieus, training of their own researchers, methods for planning and prioritising of research, and distribution of resources for research;
>
> * providing financial and scientific resources with the purpose of producing research results within problem areas of importance for the developing countries and to transfer research results to the developing countries which would be of importance for their development; and
>
> * to establish scientific contacts and, when need arises, also scientific cooperation with both international and Swedish research institutions.

In the government's instruction of 1988 (SFS 1988:532, paragraph 2), SAREC is, in particular, assigned to the following tasks:

1. To promote research and follow (bevaka) research issues within areas of importance to developing countries and for the development cooperation,

2. administer issues related to the cooperation with and the ODA-financed support to developing countries within the field of development research as well as support of international research programmes oriented towards developing countries,

3. to distribute funds allocated for development research (u-landsforskning) in Sweden,

4. initiate research efforts within the area of development research (u-landsforskning).

The government, in its directive to SAREC, specifying the newly-established budgetary reporting system (Utrikesdepartementet, 1991:3-4), insists that SAREC's support to strengthen the developing countries' research capacity building and research should be guided by the overall objectives set for Swedish aid. It also gives emphasis to the poverty orientation in terms both of research focus ("poverty problems") and geographical distribution of resources ("the poorest countries"). In its response, SAREC recommended the government to reformulate the instruction for SAREC accordingly (SAREC, 1992:14).

In 1993, the government revised the objective set for SAREC (SFS 1993:1260). According to the new formula, SAREC's objective is to "strengthen the research capacity of developing countries and to promote research which may contribute towards a development in accordance with the objectives of Swedish foreign policy." The implications of the new formula may be far-reaching, since the reference shifted from the aid policy to the more general objectives of **the Swedish foreign policy**.

In its recent budget proposition (Prop. 1993/94:100, Bilaga 4:189), however, the government

provides an interpretation. It states that the overall objective of SAREC, as decided that year, "is to strengthen the research capacity of developing countries and to promote development-oriented research in accordance with the overall objectives for aid set by Parliament. Particular attention is to be devoted to research efforts oriented towards economic development, democratic government, human rights, population issues, environmental issues, the utilisation of natural resources and a sound environmental administration in developing countries."[1]

These overall objectives were specified in the formal budgetary direction to SAREC (STATSLIGGAREN 1993/94:52-53), where it is stated that SAREC's objectives for the three-year period 1993/94 - 1995/96, for the various programme areas, should be as follows:

> - with regard to bilateral research cooperation and support for research cooperation between developing countries, further develop its activities oriented towards support for universities in the poorest developing countries,
>
> - with regard to support for international research programmes, make efforts in order to ensure that the relevance to developing countries of the actual research is maintained;
>
> - with regard to support for special programmes, give particular priority to activities oriented towards environmental issues, natural resources, population issues and democracy and human rights;
>
> - with regard to support for Swedish development research (u-landsforskning), assist in long-term competence building, thereby contributing towards a continuously high relevancy from the perspective of developing countries.

It follows from the government instruction (SFS 1988:532, paragraph 2) that SAREC is supposed to combine two tasks: that of an **aid agency** and that of a **Swedish research council**. Obviously, such a double role is not free from conflicts, given the overall objective set for SAREC. This problem has been identified earlier and alternative organisational models have been offered (Utrikesdepartementet, 1985). The government has been explicit in its allocation policy, earmarking a budget framework for Swedish development research ("svensk ansökan), thus marking the distinction.[2] The double task is also alluded to in government policy documents, where the priority between the two objectives is given. Thus,

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[1] The government restated priorities set the year before (Prop. 1992/93:100, Bilaga 4:160), where the government stated that SAREC's support for research focusing on issues related to democracy and human rights should be increased - though within a reduced financial total framework (SAREC had asked for SEK 600 millions, an increase from SEK 425 millions; the government proposal was SEK 405 millions).
Later that year, the government, referring to the joint proposal by SAREC and SIDA which suggested new forms of assistance to the universities of the poorest developing countries (SAREC and SIDA, 1992), stated that this kind of support "should, according to the government, be given a very high priority in the subsequent years" (Prop. 1992/93:170, p. 87).

[2] See, for instance, the formal budgetary direction to SAREC for the financial year 1993/94 (STATSLIGGAREN 1993/94:41), where it is stated that "Maximum SEK 41 millions can be used in support for development research in Sweden, which includes the research chairs oriented towards issues related to developing countries, established on a temporary basis by SAREC, and the administrative costs involved; long-term support for research milieus; and support for individual research projects."

in Prop. 1992/93:1970 (p. 87), it is stated that

> "SAREC, in the first place, is an agency with objectives to fulfil within the area of development cooperation. It is for these tasks the agency has its main competence and it is for these tasks the administration is designed. In addition, SAREC has an important task to finance Swedish development research ("u-landsforskning").
>
> The specified extra resources allocated to SAREC for support to development research in Sweden, serve the primary purpose of developing and maintaining a Swedish resource basis for the development cooperation, the bilateral cooperation as well as that taking place through the international aid programmes.
>
> SAREC should, according to the government's opinion, also in the future serve an important task as a research council for Swedish research oriented towards developing countries. However, the main responsibility for knowledge and research with reference to developing countries and issues related to developing countries resides, as for other areas of main general interest, with the general system of education, namely the universities and the research-supporting bodies."

At the level of declared policy, therefore, it is fair to conclude that the overall objectives set for SAREC correspond well with the overall objectives set for Swedish aid. This has been the case all through; still, in the recent budget proposition, this coherence has been emphasised stronger than ever.

2.3 SAREC's interpretation of the objectives set

The overall objectives set for Swedish aid and the overall objectives set for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries have been operationalised by the SAREC administration to guide its activities. This relates to SAREC at large, and is found in a document entitled "Huvudpunkter i SARECs policy" (Main Aspects of SAREC's Policy), dated 28 January 1988 and revised 22 November 1989 (SAREC, 1989). In addition, some of the sections (though not all) have worked out policy papers for their areas (Rural Development and Environment; Health and Nutrition).

2.3.1 Objectives

The overall objective (SFS 1988:532, paragraph 1), is interpreted as

> * efforts in supporting the research capacity building in developing countries, and
>
> * support of research which may provide results of importance for developing countries,

which coincides well with the expressed directions of the government's policy papers, as are the additional tasks identified, namely to distribute allocations for development research in Sweden and initiate research efforts within development research.

Research capacity is defined as the ability to

> - independently identify and define research projects on important development problems;
>
> - plan and implement important research or to direct such research which cannot effectively be carried out with domestic technical, financial and human resources;
>
> - assess, select and adapt research results for local adaptation;
>
> - building up and maintaining attractive and well functioning research milieus, inter alia in order to avoid brain drain of researchers;
>
> - participate in and make use of international research; and
>
> - disseminate and implement research results.

The overall objectives for SAREC, as interpreted from its instruction above, are operationalised as follows: to assist developing countries in

> - building their own research capacity in terms of good research milieus, education of their own researchers, methods for planning and prioritising of research, and to allocate resources for this;
>
> - financial and scientific resources with the purpose of producing research results within areas of importance for the developing countries and to transfer to them research results which may be of importance for their development;
>
> - to establish scientific contacts and when necessary establish scientific cooperation with research institutions in Sweden and other countries.

Three different primary roles are identified for SAREC:

> * as an aid agency within the field of research,
>
> * as a research council in Sweden within the field of development research (u-landsområdet), and
>
> * as an international research council (with an increasing funding of research cooperation with middle-income countries and the research programme on HIV/AIDS and related diseases).

2.3.2 Overall guidelines

On this basis, overall guidelines are established for the various programmes. It is distinguished between the bilateral activities, where the capacity building objective usually is the dominant one, and the international research programmes, where the research result objective is the predominant, whereas the emphasis may vary as regards the regional

activities.

(1) Bilateral research cooperation

The guidelines, as set out, take the form of a commented description of past and present SAREC practice, elevating this to norm.

The research cooperation should be adapted to the various preconditions existing in the countries concerned. Where research assistance is channelled through national research councils (originally **the** SAREC strategy), it had to be representative and well run, viz. it had to have an overview of the research going on in the country, a mandate to prioritise and allocate resources for research, admission to such resources and the confidence of the research society. Where these conditions did not apply, other channels should be sought for direct research cooperation: ministries, universities and other research institutions. However, even in such instances, it might be neither possible nor desirable to work completely independently of existing research councils; only by basing the activities in central organs with a responsibility for planning and allocation of resources would make it possible to establish a long-term cooperation which may result in sustainable increases in the research capacity.

However, whatever model, SAREC should engage itself actively in surveying the research landscape of the countries concerned, including the institutional aspects involved, and be in active dialogue with the researchers/research society.

Also administrative concerns should be taken into consideration: direct agreements with a large number of institutions within a country, instead of a main agreement, would overburden the administrative capacity of SAREC.

More specific outlines are set for the cooperation with **poor developing countries**, where support could also be given for research libraries, scientific contacts and research administration, in addition to support for particular research milieus, institutional cooperation and projects, with the primary objective of research capacity building. The emphasis should be on direct research cooperation with selected research institutions which included the participation of Swedish researchers within the framework of institutional cooperation. Where preconditions for research cooperation do not exist, the support should be limited to selected institutional cooperation/projects within important themes.

The cooperation with **middle-income countries** should be dependent on specified criteria: a mutual interest within a particular topic between an institution in the country concerned and Sweden, and the topic should also be of relevance to other developing countries. The country concerned should, in principle, meet the local costs; SAREC's task was to finance the participation of Swedish researchers and costs related to the cooperation (travels etc.). The primary objective is to develop new knowledge through result-oriented research.

SAREC may also, though in a very restricted way, support **particular research projects** in countries where the agency has no formal contacts; this applies to research of high scientific quality with relevance to SAREC's general activities and with participation of Swedish institutions. Also in these cases, the primary objective is to develop new knowledge through

result-oriented research.

With particular reference to the **institutional cooperation**, it is stated that the cooperation should be requested, and the Swedish (or other) institution concerned should offer a particular competence. Other conditions included a mutual interest in long-term cooperation related to a research issue. Institutions suitable for this kind of cooperation would primarily, but not exclusively, be sought in Sweden.

(2) Regional research programmes

These programmes have to relate to different environments, much in the same way as the bilateral programmes. They are, in particular, designed for SAREC's support for research within the social sciences. The general objective includes both research capacity building (including research training), and maintenance and more result-oriented research.

(3) International programmes

The primary objective for SAREC's support for research within the international research programmes is to produce research results within problem areas of particular interest for developing countries. It is of particular importance to facilitate dissemination of research results and to put them into practical application. Impact studies of the programmes are seen as an instrument to this end. SAREC should also actively promote an orientation of their activities towards problems of importance to developing countries through the instruments of increased research cooperation with national institutions in developing countries, increased participation from developing countries in their governing and advisory organs, and evaluations.

(4) Swedish development research (u-landsforskning)

Within this field, SAREC's main function is a catalytic one. It shares the responsibility for development research with the universities and research councils. Its primary objectives within this programme are to:

- promote research of importance for developing countries, directly or in a long-term perspective,

- stimulate researchers at Swedish universities to engage themselves in developing countries,

- maintain and develop research capacity on developing countries at the universities, and

- increase the opportunities for research contacts with developing countries.

This programme has also a quantitative objective (since 1990, suggested by SAREC in its budget proposal for 1990/91, in which the also detailed use of the funds was suggested): maximum ten per cent of the total amount allocated.

2.3.3 Policies for particular areas

Efforts with the purpose of developing **policies also within the various sectors** started in 1985 within the sectors of health and nutrition and agriculture and environments. Policy papers have later been prepared for these sectors. The guidelines for research on bio-resources and rural resources and rural development were approved by SAREC's board in 1990 and subsequently published (SAREC, 1990). The guidelines for research within the health sector were approved by SAREC's board in 1992 and remain unpublished (SAREC, 1992b).

Country surveys, providing an overview of the research situation prevailing in the country concerned along with the research aid provided by other aid agencies, are seen as an instrument and a basis for SAREC's planning of future aid, particularly with reference to the bilateral aid programmes.

Since the mid 1980s, SAREC has selected **areas of particular initiatives**. Such areas are listed in the policy document, but no guidelines for the selection are given. The areas selected were originally the Latin America programme (initiated in the 1970s) and the women programme; more recent programme areas relate to forest and environment (initiated by the government in 1986), social science research in Africa (through PASS, initiated in 1987), reproductive health as a national complementary effort to WHO/HRP - initiated in 1987), energy research in Africa (initiated in 1986), bilateral research programmes on HIV/AIDS (initiated in 1986), marine research (under preparation, 1989), democracy and human rights (under preparation, 1989), support for libraries (1987), social research in Asia (under preparation, 1989), a research programme on HIV/AIDS and related diseases (government initiative, 1988), and medical research training in Central America (government initiative, 1987).

Basically, it is the SAREC policy to support individual research fellows; gradually, however, with the bilateral research aid, also various forms of **research training support** emerged, of which support for research training (MSc, PhD and special courses) within the framework of projects obtained support. Institutional cooperation may also include such a component. Another model is direct support for basic research training in developing countries, of the type applied in Ethiopia and through the WHO and CGIAR programmes where PhD education is supported.

Support for research education was to be increased and the policy established (for research education within medicine) has the following components:

- to support research training which forms a natural part of research projects and institutional cooperation,

- to support national research training programmes in developing countries,

- in very poor countries with which bilateral research cooperation is established, to support potential researchers through brief initial education,

- only in exceptional cases, to support research training which involves a long-term

stay in milieus in industrialised countries,

- on the basis of the need for special, short-term courses, to develop and finance a mechanism which could take care of the coordination of this activity at the national level in Sweden, and

- in no case support individual research fellows from developing countries.

Higher education, inclusive research, may be supported according to the following guidelines:

- Swedish support should not be designed as a particular fellowship programme in Sweden;

- support should aim at strengthening national programmes for higher education in developing countries, including support for the infrastructure of universities;

- SAREC's experiences from institutional cooperation should be drawn upon in a future, increased support for universities in developing countries; and

- SAREC should take full responsibility for support for research training and research within the framework of a more extensive support for universities in developing countries. SAREC welcomes cooperation with SIDA in this regard.

Also **documentation and libraries** should be given increased support, according to the following guidelines:

- Support for libraries should be an integral part of the support for research infrastructure;

- support for libraries should be part of the bilateral (or in some instances the regional) programmes;

- support for libraries includes both scientific journals and other literature, support for necessary equipment and higher education of librarians;

- scientific journals and other literature should be acquired from the same source in order to facilitate overview and enjoy the possibility of a reduced price. In a long-term perspective, the libraries should themselves take care of these matters.

- SAREC will make efforts in order to coordinate the support for libraries with other donors.

Guidelines are established for **support for scientific equipment**. According to these, the support should:

- be formed in a way to make it possible for the developing countries, with their own

competence, to take responsibility for and acquire, run and maintain their scientific equipment;

- be adapted to the local preconditions prevailing at the particular research environments in developing countries and implemented in direct cooperation with these;

- be provided with a long-term orientation and with a functional perspective in which the equipment is seen as a necessary component in a result-oriented research milieu rather than as an addition to a limited research project;

- in the first place to be integrated in the support for research milieus in developing countries, within the framework of the bilateral programmes and the forms of cooperation established between institutions in developing countries and Sweden. Occasionally, it may also be feasible to support activities which are of mutual interest and benefit for several research milieus;

- oriented in order to improve the procedures for acquiring equipment, education of technical personnel who would be able to use and maintain the equipment, and to maintain and strengthen local resources to run, repair and maintain scientific equipment in developing countries.

The **coordination with SIDA** and other donors is also dealt with. SAREC should complement aid from SIDA, which also in the future may be expected to fund and administer research which was necessary for the planning and implementation of development activities. SAREC should direct its support towards research with a more long-term perspective.

2.3.4 Some concluding observations

SAREC's administration has done its homework in terms of interpreting and operationalising the overall objectives set for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries - although not being equally precise (at the formal level) within all sectors. The guidelines for the various programmes differentiate the emphasis given to the objectives, as interpreted, for the various programme forms recipient environment in a most flexible way.

The overall objectives may have been interpreted differently, with different emphases; this applies to the way the objectives are interpreted, too. This might have been a good point, and worthy of an exploration, in a different setting; in the present setting it is almost irrelevant. What matters for the present evaluation is that the overall objectives have been interpreted and operationalised in a rational and logical way and that there is a good coherence between the various levels. Even if I had found the coherence weak according to established criteria, this would be of little relevance in the present context: what matters is that SAREC has established, within its area, policy objectives and guidelines for the implementation of the policy, and that the (formal) norms have been made transparent; the government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Parliament have all through had the possibility of correcting the course if deemed necessary.

2.4 Aid objectives and evaluation: the tricky issues

However, it is not always an easy task, or even possible, to relate any activity which makes sense in a development perspective to general overall objectives in a meaningful way. And an evaluation which takes overall objectives set for aid as the ideal against which aid implementation is to be assessed, may well be confronted with problems which are not easily overcome, including the following:

* The overall development objectives are often elusive, competing - even conflicting - with no clear priority established between them.
* To be effective, overall objectives must be operationalised and adapted to different environments and aid activities - which not always apply, although increasingly in recent years.
* A compartmentalised aid programme often leads to the compartmentalisation of objectives.
* And probably the most tricky of them all: there are also unstated aims which compete with development objectives (the hidden agendas).

In our present context, all these issues deserve attention. In addition, a lot of other factors tend complicate evaluations departing from the objectives set, not least the fact that the objectives originally set for an aid activity may change on the road and been adapted, for instance, to changes in the framework conditions; this, however, applies more to objectives at the intermediate or project level than to overall objectives. However, I will restrict my reflections here to the last two issues listed (for a discussion of the others, see Stokke, 1992a, and Berlage and Stokke, 1992).

2.4.1 Compartmentalising

The aid programme of a donor country is distributed through several different channels (multilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and recipient governments) and to a large number of sectors and cross-cutting activities, leading to a compartmentalising of aid. The challenge with which the aid implementing agency is confronted in this regard - to adapt these various activities to the overall objectives set for aid - is by no means an easy task; an evaluator is confronted with the same challenge, although the TOR usually relives her or him from the task by relating the investigation to more immediate objectives.

The effects of the compartmentalising deserve attention, and may partly explain why objectives, at the level of implementation, so seldom are derived from the overall aims set for aid. Within each unit, a separate culture exists or tends to emerge. This may be illustrated with reference to the multilateral systems; the UN and the World Bank constitute the major ones. Within these, and particularly within the UN system, a host of sub-systems exist, namely the various specialised agencies and special funds. The bilateral aid of a donor country is also compartmentalised, being channelled to different recipient systems (governments, NGOs) and provided to different sectors, for different purposes, and in different forms, administered by specialised administrative units of the aid agency.

This compartmentalisation affects the implementation of aid in terms of its orientation. The general orientation of an institution, or of a specialised, administrative unit, and its specific culture - that is, the predominant "world-view", values and interests of the unit - tend to govern the formulation of both general aims and more particular, project-related objectives set for aid being channelled through the system. The aims emerging within the various compartments of an aid agency will not necessarily or primarily reflect the general aims set for aid by the political authorities of the donor country. Exorcism in the form of policy statements insisting that the general aims set for aid should apply to all development assistance (a trade mark of Scandinavian aid) cannot mask the fact that the compartmentalisation of aid may also involve a compartmentalisation of objectives. The various compartments often represent different worlds.

The compartmentalisation of aid may imply a de-linking of objectives from the overall aims set for aid by the political authorities. This applies, in particular, to aid being channelled through organisations outside the aid agency, both multilaterally and bilaterally; however, it applies even to aid being administered by the different departments of the aid agency itself, provided for different purposes and in different forms. However, it applies more to some types and forms of aid than to others. The linkage with the overall aims is probably stronger for some of the bilateral aid forms at a middle level, being situated somewhere between programme aid and traditional project aid, viz. sectoral or area-oriented programmes (sector programmes for rural drinking water, women and child care, etc). At the project level, the link between the overall aims set and project objectives may be rather diffuse and indirect even in cases where efforts actually have been made to derive the objectives from the general aims. However, even here a distinction should be made between the different compartments - for projects within some sectors or areas, the link may be quite direct (aid targeted for specific purposes or social groups).

The established patterns are reinforced by structural factors. An established distribution pattern is more often than not continued through the budgetary routines - a deviation may necessitate a justification. Policy planning and budgetary processes, coordinated by an administrative structure (the Ministry of Finance) with a leaning towards a holistic perspective on development may constitute an additional factor; it may be assumed that this perspective would have spin-offs for the administration of aid as well, resulting in a relaxed attitude towards demands for a rigid application of the overall aims to the whole spectrum of aid-supported activities. Nor does an aid agency operate in splendid isolation; it has, for instance, to adapt its aid programme to a recipient country (for state-to-state aid), to the prevailing needs (as defined by the recipient's political authorities), and also to the composition of the aid provided by other donors to the particular recipient. From the overall perspective of a ministry of finance, at both sides in an aid relationship, it may well seem more important to improve the infrastructure than supplying clean drinking water for poor people living in remote areas, even with poverty-alleviation as the stated, overriding objective set for the aid programme.

The discussion above has departed from the total aid programme of a donor. However, it has a bearing also for smaller and more specialised units responsible for sectoral aid; even within such smaller, more tightly organised units is aid distributed to a great variety of purposes within different sectors, to different regions and through a variety of aid channels - which may bode for compartmentalisation with the effects referred to.

These features also affect evaluation. Where the objectives set for the activity to be reviewed are not derived from the overall aims set for aid, the consequence of the most convenient choice (namely to depart from whatever objectives established at the project or programme level) may well be that the most important questions, from the perspective of stakeholders at the political level of the donor country, may remain unaddressed by the evaluation.

2.4.2 The hidden agendas

Things are not always exactly what they seem. This applies to the stated objectives set for aid, too. The administration of aid is almost everywhere the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Aid policy, almost by definition, is part of the foreign policy of the donor country - and moulded in external and domestic environments which vary from one country to another. Although manifest variations, all donor governments tend to pursue (selfish) interests and values in addition to the stated (mainly idealistic) development aims when forming and implementing their aid programmes. This applies, in particular, to objectives related to employment and business interests at home; the main powers tend to give priority to global, strategic concerns as well. As a policy often emerges as the result of alliances, a government may structure the aid programme in a way to ensure broad support from a multitude of (primarily domestic) stakeholders. Private sector economic interests of the donor country may, therefore, even be woven into the structure of the aid programme - we do not have to look outside our Scandinavian countries for illustrations.

A most fundamental question, therefore, might well be whether the stated development objectives are the real or most important ones. Some unstated objectives compete with the stated development aims and may influence the allocation of aid monies. Such objectives result, in particular, from the interests and values of the domestic environment in which the aid policy is formed (Stokke, 1989).

If this is the case, it may affect the composition and orientation of the aid programme as implemented by the aid agency. In our context, two perspectives become of particular relevance. The first relates to the implementation of aid: should the aid agency adapt to these hidden agendas (normative) or is it in actual practice adapting to them? There might be strong arguments in favour of such an adjustment; it might "legitimate" the aid vis-à-vis domestic interests involved (with an open or more tacit approval of the government) and thereby also ensure domestic support from critical groups of continued aid (these would, of course, not be the only relevant arguments: there are strong normative and instrumental arguments against such an adjustment, too). In the SAREC setting, such an adjustment would involve building alliances, in the first place, with the Swedish research community but even with export interests in relevant fields.

The second perspective relates to evaluation. If such an adjustment takes place, it would also affect the evaluation. The general question arising would be: how should evaluation of aid relate to such unstated objectives? Should they be treated as if they were non-existent? Or should they be brought out into the open and taken as a point of departure for evaluation; that is, should the terms of reference ask for an assessment - or an evaluation mission, independently of this assignment, make an assessment of the extent to which these expectations have been satisfied through ODA (most TORs include an "escape" clause, allowing the evaluator to bring forward issues of importance although they are not listed)?

Should the effect of such unstated, competing objectives on the attainment of the stated development objectives of aid, and their follow-up by the aid agency, be part of the evaluation? It is assumed that some competing objectives may impede an efficient fulfilment of the stated development aims by influencing and distorting the choice of inputs (type of resources, forms and channels of aid). The way aid tying affects aid effectiveness, reducing the value of aid to the recipients by, on average, 15-30 per cent, may illustrate the point (Kamphuis and Jepma, 1990).

However, when proceeding, I will stick to the stated objectives set for Swedish research cooperation with developing countries.

3. THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING AND EVALUATION POLICY

The evaluation system varies a lot from one donor country to another, and these variations often reflect differences in administrative traditions and culture. The evaluation function related to development assistance became increasingly institutionalised during the 1970s and 1980, usually as an integral part of aid administration; however, the model differed from one country to another, often reflecting variations in the aid-administrating system. It may be distinguished between three different patterns - centralised, integrated and dual systems - although one may add that in actual practice various combinations of these organisational patterns were used (Stokke, 1992a).

The Swedish aid administration is characterised by its specialisation with independent agencies in charge of separate parts of the aid programme; however, the bulk of bilateral aid is administered by SIDA. Here, an evaluation unit was built up within the planning secretariat of the Director-General. Consequently, the institutionalisation of the evaluation function became highly fragmented, reflecting a compartmentalised aid administration. Within SIDA, something close to the dual model referred to above came into existence, as also the operative units were provided with resources for monitoring and evaluation. In the Swedish evaluation system, also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken on an active role, with a particular focus on the aid delivery systems - main channels (agencies) and selected programme or policy areas. In addition, the State Auditors have all through been active in the field (Forss, 1992; Lewin, 1993; Riksrevisionsverket, 1988; Utrikesdepartementet, 1990).

3.1 The anatomy of SAREC: main structural features

The structure of an organisation matters for the way it works and affects priorities: the way it is organised to a large extent sets the agenda. In the ideal world, therefore, the structure is adapted to policy priorities, which come first; in the real world this sequence does not always apply. And once established, a structure tends to reinforce the priorities first arrived at. It follows that the anatomy of SAREC is not unimportant for the way it is organising its own evaluation system nor for the kind of issues focused at (or left out) in this connection. Let us therefore briefly portray the main features of the SAREC set-up.

Like most aid organisations, SAREC has a dual organisation, combining functional and geographical competence.

The "geographical" component is manifest in the organisation of its activities in major programmes:

* Bilateral research cooperation
* Regional research cooperation
* International research programmes
* Special initiatives
* Development research in Sweden

The lion's share of total aid is channelled through the international programmes and the bilateral research cooperation, which are about equal in size. The bilateral aid is coordinated at the country level (country programmes).

However, the balance clearly tips towards the functional side. The various activities (projects) are basically initiated, planned and implemented (as far as that applies) and monitored within SAREC's Programme Division which is organised according to functional lines with sections for

* Health and Nutrition
* Rural Development and Environment
* Natural Sciences, Technology and Industrialisation
* Social Sciences, and
* Development Research in Sweden

- the latter corresponding with the programme, but with a low-key manning (one secretary) (see Appendix 8 for an organisation chart of SAREC's secretariat).

3.2 The formal evaluation policy

A formal evaluation policy for an organisation is usually rooted in norms and guidelines: these may, however, be established at different levels (that of national politics (Parliament and Government), the relevant ministry, or that of the organisation itself, where one, in turn, may distinguish between the administration and the board of directors). Usually, such guidelines are established by the aid administration itself (aid agency or ministry), adapted to the needs as perceived.

The level at which the evaluation policy is formed may reflect variations in the emphasis given to the evaluation function at a particular point in time; it may, however, reflect administrative traditions as well. More important is it that it may reflect different emphasis of the various evaluation functions: if the policy (norms and guidelines) is established by the aid agency itself, it may be expected that the main focus will be on matters that may improve the delivery system (emphasis on efficiency). If the policy is established by Parliament, it may be expected that focus will be on accountability (emphasis on effectiveness as related to overall objectives).

The case of Norway, in the early 1980s, when Parliament took on an active role in forming the aid **evaluation** policy, may illustrate the latter point. Emphasis was on the effectiveness of aid with reference to the overall objectives set for Norwegian aid (very similar to the Swedish), with emphasis on poverty alleviation. The evaluation of all aid (including multilateral aid and aid through NGOs and the private sector) should be related to the overall objectives and objectives at lower levels derived from these. This should, according to Parliament, govern the major efforts of evaluation. Parliament also outlined a strategy to be followed, prescribing, inter alia, that all aid channels and aid forms should be evaluated; also the aid agency's implementation of aid should be critically scrutinised by independent evaluators. Only a few activities could be selected for evaluation each year; however, over the years, the various aid channels, recipient countries, aid forms and areas (sectors) should be evaluated as well as the different links in the aid chain. And particular focus should be directed towards the systems through which aid is provided (for a description and an assessment, also of the follow-up, see Stokke, 1992b).

In Sweden, norms and guidelines for evaluation have not been formalised at this level; as

noted above, guidelines have been formed, at agency level, by SIDA (Lewin, 1993). It should, however, be noted that the political authorities (government, Parliament) in recent years have increasingly paid attention to different forms of review and evaluation.

The most important manifestation in this regard is the new administrative budgetary design for planning and reporting, which gradually has been introduced in Swedish public administration during the early 1990s. According to this design, public agencies are expected to identify objectives for their general and more specific activities for a three-year period, along with indicators on which progress and attainment of these objectives can be measured. To a very large extent, the design is applying several of the main elements of the logframe method, which in various forms has been applied in aid monitoring and evaluation - and which the British government, in the early 1980s, with all the authority of Prime Minister Thatcher behind it, introduced to public administration in general, in the form of the so-called Financial Management Initiative, involving a clear statement of objectives and quantified and time-bound targets (Cracknell, 1992; Stokke, 1992a).

Although not necessarily included in the evaluation concept as conventionally defined, it meets the main requirements of a monitoring system: it requires a well functioning monitoring system! In addition, forming of clear objectives and targets, imperative both for aid implementation and evaluation but generally weakly developed, is set as an obligation which cannot be neglected if the design is to be followed up. However, this design is no substitute for monitoring or evaluation; it requires both, in particular an effective system of monitoring.

3.3 SAREC's evaluation policy

It emerges from the above that SAREC has no formalised evaluation policy set by Parliament or government. This does not imply that the political authorities have been totally passive in this regard; occasionally, the government has required evaluations to be undertaken of particular projects or programmes. In the recent budget proposition, this concern is emphasised both with regard to development assistance in general, including SAREC (Prop. 1993/94:100, Bilaga 4:74-77,85), and for SAREC in particular (ibid.:188-90).

SAREC has not established an evaluation policy of its own at a formal level.[3] Guidelines are formed for progress reporting from the projects which are funded (SAREC, 1991a).

Still, SAREC has an evaluation policy. In my interviews with the leadership of the agency, including the meso-level, and the research officers, the contours of a very consistent policy emerged. The main components of this policy were the following:

* The major activities which are funded should be evaluated after 5-6 years of operation. These evaluations are **external**, combining international experts with Swedish experts.

[3] This observation deserves an explanation: a formal document which is in active use today does not exist. However, a member of the SAREC Board refers to rules which were formalised after the evaluation of SAREC in 1984-85 (interview 13). For the purpose of this evaluation, I found no reason to explore this further; suffice the conclusion given

* Controversial activities should be evaluated (external).

* All major activities (programmes, projects) should be reviewed every second year, in connection with the renewal of agreements (usually two-year agreements); the review starts, therefore, one year after the agreement is signed. These reviews are basically **internal**, for the bilateral programmes carried out by the Research Officer (RO) who is thematically responsible in cooperation with the RO who is responsible for the country programme, often in consultation with - or relying upon - a separate review of the disciplinary performance (output and quality) by an expert consultant.

A formalised evaluation policy would include similar guidelines, but should be more elaborate and cover broader grounds.

4. THE EVALUATION PRACTICE: MAIN PATTERNS

4.1 Introduction: the task set

The descriptive analysis in Chapter 3 will be pursued further in this chapter; also in this chapter the analysis will be descriptive. The main problems posed are the following:

(1) To what extent has the evaluation policy been followed up? What has been the monitoring and evaluation practice? To what extent have the main programmes and sectors been systematically evaluated during the period 1986-93?

(2) What has SAREC given priority to in its evaluation work and what kind of function does evaluation serve in the organisation?

The main questions addressed were the following:

* Who are usually initiating the evaluations?
* Who are formulating the TORs and suggesting the composition of the evaluation team?
* What is the role assigned to the staff members of SAREC in the actual evaluation process?
* Why are the evaluations initiated and what purposes were they primarily to serve?
* Who were supposed to be the main users of the information and recommendations emerging from the evaluation?
* In what ways were the reports disseminated and what use has been made of them?
* Was there a follow-up and, if so, at what level?
* In what way, if any, were the findings or recommendations filtered into the planning or decision processes and at what level?

Traditional evaluation methods, adapted to the very short time budgeted for by SASDA, have been used in addressing these questions: a desk study of a selection of nine evaluation reports has been followed up by interviews which, in part, have been concentrated on the same sample of reports. In addition, a quantitative analysis of a sample consisting of a large share (more than one-third) of the evaluation reports produced during the period 1986-93 has been undertaken in order to portray "the typical SAREC evaluation".

During the period 1986-93, about 97 evaluations have been carried out. "About" in combination with an accurate figure needs an explanation: the figure is extracted from the overview provided by SAREC for the period 1976-91 (SAREC, 1992: Bilaga 4) combined with a list for the subsequent years produced by the SAREC secretariat on request (SAREC, 1994). However, some of the reports included do not qualify as evaluation reports according to conventional criteria. And one category of reports distinguishes itself, being country surveys. From this universe, nine evaluation reports were selected for scrutiny.

The criteria guiding the selection were the following:

* all programme categories should be covered,
* all sectors should be covered.

Another consideration was that the evaluation should be sufficiently old to give SAREC a chance of digesting the recommendations and to decide if the findings justified changes or adjustments involving policy, the administrative set-up or procedures, and to follow-up the recommendations - including the kind of follow-up which had a bearing on the planning of future activities. A utilitarian consideration made a focus on more recent evaluations feasible.

The following evaluations were selected (for specifications, see Appendix 2):

(1) TANZANIA. Development of Scientific Research and SAREC's Support 1977-1991 (1992). Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Country survey.

(2) SOCIAL SCIENCE IN AFRICA: The role of CODESRIA in Pan-African cooperation (1991). Programme: Regional research cooperation. Sector: Social Science and the Humanities.

(3) Review mission of the SAREC-supported Pakistani-Swedish medical research collaboration "Breast-feeding in a developing country" (1990). Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Health and Nutrition.

(4) Evaluation of some SAREC-supported research projects in Ethiopia. Master Degree Programmes (1990). Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Natural Sciences, Technology and Industrialisation.

(5) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (1991). Programme: International research programmes. Sector: Social Sciences and the Humanities.

(6) Indigenous nitrogen-fixing trees with potential for village afforestation in Tanzania (1991). Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Rural Development and Environment.

(7) Water use by forest plantations (1991). Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Rural Development and Environment.

(8) Materials for energy efficiency and solar energy application (1991). Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Natural Sciences, Technology and Industrialisation.

(9) Utvärdering av SARECs långsiktiga stöd till u-landsinriktade forskningsmiljöer (1992). Programme: Development Research in Sweden. Sector: all.

A desk study has been undertaken of the selected evaluation reports. Normally, an evaluation takes the objectives set for the activity as the point of departure with a view of assessing to what extent these objectives have been followed up and/or (if the project/programme has been concluded) what impact the project has had vis-à-vis these objectives.

This made it necessary to look into the decision document for the project concerned (the Insatspromemoria, prepared by the SAREC administration as the basis for the Board's

decision) in order to identify its main objectives; if the project has been running for several years, the normal pattern for SAREC projects, I have chosen the last Insatspromemoria before the evaluation in order to avoid the trap of objectives that have been changed during the project period (for some projects, several IPs have been scrutinised: for the list, see Appendix 3).

This review had two purposes: to assess how clearly the objectives and instruments of the project/programme had been formulated (which has a bearing on the possibility for assessing the performance); and to find out to what extent the terms of reference (TOR) set the evaluation consultant(s) on the right track. After all, although the evaluation report in itself is important, the way the evaluation tool is used constitutes an even more important aspect given the perspective of this evaluation; the administrative actions, therefore, matter the most: the kind of information which is requested and, the next step, the way this information is used - in short, to detect the main purpose of the evaluation.

The next steps, accordingly, have been to assess to what extent to which the consultant(s) has followed up such directions - and the extent this has been possible (again with reference to the objectives set for the programme/project); and to what extent and how SAREC has followed up the recommendations, if at all. For the latter purpose, the follow- up decision document ("Insatspromemoria") has been scrutinised (for a list, see Appendix 4).

This desk study has been followed up with a series of interviews. The SAREC leadership (Director-General and Director of Programmes) has been interviewed on the planning and evaluation policy and practice of SAREC; and the intermediate leadership (heads of sections) have all been interviewed in a more detailed way, as have a few of the Research Officers, in order to find out the policy and procedures followed by the various sections in terms of planning and evaluation.

Open, structured interviews were conducted with particular reference to the nine evaluations selected in order to follow the general procedures related to specific cases (for the form, see Appendix 5). Because of frequent changes, it was not possible to reach all Research Officers who had administered the evaluations selected; however, it is my impression that this only marginally affects the picture portrayed of the processes involved.

Another series of interviews supplement those with the SAREC secretariat: members of the Board, past and present, a few of the evaluation consultants (covering six of the nine evaluations), and a few other resource persons with insights in SAREC and the Swedish research and university system. However, there is a missing link: I have not interviewed any of the people responsible for the nine projects which have been evaluated (the list of people interviewed is given in Appendix 6). A protocol of the interviews (a summary, 2-3 pages, of main points in each interview) is written out and kept in the Consultant's archive (SAREC, 1994) and numbered, though not in the sequence given in Appendix 6.

In addition, a survey has been undertaken in order to portray a profile of SAREC's evaluation reports (Chapter 5). For this, a large share of the evaluation reports has been included (the list of the reports is provided). The coding form (prepared by SASDA) is enclosed in Appendix 7. Some of the parallel findings of that survey have been extracted and integrated in the present chapter, too.

4.2 The SAREC evaluations: policy and administrative patterns

Let us first have a look at the way evaluation is organised and at the policy governing evaluations at this level, involving the SAREC secretariat and board. The descriptive analysis here is based mainly on the series of interviews outlined above, although I also have drawn upon data emerging from the scrutiny of the nine cases referred to (and part of the interviews took one or more of these cases as the point of departure) and also included findings from the broader survey of evaluation reports.

The main features are extracted and reported at a non-quantified, aggregate level in order to portray general patterns. However, where the perspective is based only on a particular source or where the different sources provide conflicting perspectives, the sources are identified. However, the various sources portray a very similar picture.

The main questions addressed have been identified above. What features are emerging?

4.2.1 Who initiates the evaluations?

The initiative rests, with some exceptions, with the Research Officer (RO) who holds the direct responsibility for the implementation of the project to be evaluated, viz. the one with sectoral responsibility (the leadership at the intermediate level (heads of sections) hold the responsibility for individual projects, too - in addition to their leadership function; in this role they are included among the ROs).

However, unwritten norms governing the evaluation of larger or controversial projects (3.2.1) tend to influence the decision. At times, the SAREC administration also considers a reorientation of a programme; in such cases, the leadership is directly involved not only in a formal but in a real sense.

The evaluation of the country programme to Tanzania is a case in point. After the evaluation of SAREC in 1984-85, the support provided through the national research council was reduced; instead, support was provided to several smaller projects, many of which had emerged from "Svensk ansökan". This project portfolio was found administrative cumbersome and resource demanding; towards the end of the 1980s, SAREC had come to the conclusion that the country programme to Tanzania had to be reorganised. The main purpose of the evaluation, therefore, was to serve this function - establishing a basis for the SAREC secretariat to wind up the small projects and to concentrate its support (interview 4).

The Board of SAREC has never initiated evaluations; however, discrete signals have occationally been given. Thus, if board members have not been fully convinced of all aspects of the project proposal from the secretariat, it may happen that the proposal is accepted, but that an external evaluation is expected at the next crossroad (interviews 11 and 12; for a modification, see 4.3.5). As already noted, also the political authorities have occasionally requested evaluations.

Still, for most of the bilateral activities, the initiative resides to a large extent with the Research Officer (sector) in charge of the particular project/programme, in cooperation with the Research Officer responsible for the country programme concerned.

4.2.2 Who are preparing the terms of reference (TOR)?

The initiative rests with the Research Officer in charge of the implementation of the project to be evaluated even here. When major (or controversial) programmes are involved, however, the SAREC leadership (the Programme Director, in particular) is consulted in more than a formal sense; the same applies to the intermediate leadership (Head of Section). Similarly for the country studies, where the Research Officer responsible for the country programme occupies the driving seat. It should, however, be added that no one of the country studies includes a TOR; for the one included in the sample of nine evaluations selected for scrutiny, it was no easy treat to relocate the TOR, which indicates a certain degree of informality as far as these TORs are concerned.

For cross-cutting evaluations (rare animals; the evaluation of the long-term support for development research in Sweden is a case in point, probably the only one), several sections at the SAREC secretariat may be involved along with the leadership (Programme Director).

The TOR is usually discussed with the evaluation consultant(s). Also the other parties may be consulted, viz. those who are responsible for the programme concerned at the Swedish and the recipient side (at the recipient side, not necessarily the one who are responsible for the particular project concerned, but for the country programme, viz. the research council where this applies).

4.2.3 Who are selecting the evaluator(s)?

The typical SAREC evaluation team is low-cost and consists of 1-3 academically highly qualified persons (Table 5.3). Normally, the team consists of two academics - one international expert within the theme/discipline which is reviewed and one Swedish expert (for the bilateral projects, an additional concern when picking the experts is insights in the Third World research environment; this may lead to a Third World researcher in combination with a Northern disciplinary expert). The emphasis is on the (disciplinary) research (academic) reputation of the consultants. Bidding (restricted to Swedish consultants) has been used once; the one external evaluation of development research in Sweden which has been carried out.

The initiative rests with the Research Officer in charge of the implementation of the particular project to be evaluated also when it comes to the selection of consultant(s). If the project concerned is not among the larger or controversial ones, his or her pick is the final one. The formal decision rests with the Programme Director and also the Head of Section is involved. For the larger or controversial programmes, the SAREC leadership (Director-General and Programme Director) is often involved in more than a formal sense.

Occasionally, those directly responsible for the project to be evaluated, in Sweden and the recipient side, are also consulted before the final decision at the SAREC secretariat; when this takes place, however, it is more of a formality - the real selection rests with SAREC. The board never discusses the TOR; only in exceptional cases are the composition of the evaluation team discussed.

4.2.4 What are the main reasons for undertaking the evaluations?

The unwritten norms referred to above (3.2.1) influence the decision to undertake an evaluation: after 5-6 years major projects are expected to be evaluated as a matter of routine. Several other reasons have already been indicated: the SAREC administration may consider a reorientation of a project or even a country programme (as in the case of Tanzania); the Board - in rare cases also the Ministry - may have signalled that an evaluation might be appropriate before the decision on continued funding is taken; or the project may be controversial for a variety of reasons.

At the implementing level, the SAREC secretariat, the main reason for undertaking an evaluation is related to the project cycle of the particular project: most projects are based on agreements for a 2-3 year period and after two periods an evaluation is usually due before the decision whether to continue or not is taken. If there is a feeling that a project is in some sort of trouble, an evaluation may be initiated at an earlier stage in order to identify the problems involved and bring the project on tracks again. Occasionally, an evaluation is also used to solve personnel problems (a leadership crisis, etc.); in other cases it is used as an axe - to end projects.

4.2.5 Who were supposed to be the main users and for what purposes?

The picture emerging from the interviews, the way the evaluations have been organised and the issues addressed is crystal clear: the evaluations are organised and designed in order to provide the SAREC secretariat - and in turn the Board - with information which might facilitate the administrative decision-making process related to the further funding of ongoing projects/programmes. Also other aspects related to the administration of the various projects matter: how to make the various activities more efficient, getting them on tracks.

The main user of the evaluation, accordingly, is the same Research Officer - often the very same person, too - who is initiating and organising the evaluation. And the most immediate use of it is to prepare the decision paper (Insatspromemoria) to be presented for the Board as a basis for the decision on whether the funding should be continued or not and in which ways; often, this is the only use which is made of the evaluation report, too.

4.2.6 The role of the SAREC staff in the evaluation

Usually, SAREC evaluations are external evaluations. This is documented by the survey data presented below (Table 5.3) and also in the more limited sample selected for in-depth scrutiny.

However, also the SAREC staff have been involved in what SAREC has listed as evaluations; this applies, in particular, to the programme for development research in Sweden ("Svensk ansökan") where three out of the four evaluations so far undertaken may be characterised as internal (if they really qualify as evaluations; documentation would probably be a more appropriate term). Also other reports listed as evaluations are authored by members of the SAREC staff; this applies, inter alia, to some of the country surveys (Thornström, 1986; Vilas and Ganuza, 1987; Göhl and Thanh Ha, 1990; Ståhl, 1990). Even reports by the project leadership have been included among the evaluations (Egziabher,

1991).

The role of the SAREC staff in the actual evaluation process as far as the external evaluations are concerned calls for special attention. As noted, the evaluation consultant(s) is consulted when the TOR is formulated (in the final stage); for most programmes (the international programmes may constitute an exception), this consultation is almost exclusively carried out by the Research Officer in charge of the programme or project to be evaluated.

This Research Officer is usually the only one from the SAREC secretariat who keeps contact with the evaluation team during the process. Practice varies (also with the personalities of the peoples involved on both sides); however, my impression is that the expectations as to what should come out of the particular evaluation are made quite clear as is the freedom of the evaluators, within the confines of the TOR. This Research Officer may also be present during "field visits" to the project site; the role is primarily to facilitate contacts between the evaluators and the project staff. The evaluators also report to this Research Officer in the final stage of the evaluation and occasionally also after the report is delivered.

4.2.7 What happened to the evaluation reports?

Usually, very little happened to the evaluation report after the delivery except the administrative follow-up which has already been related. None of the nine evaluation reports included in the sample was subject to a hearing process; they were, however, distributed to the most concerned milieus for their information. In some cases, several of the milieus did, however, respond (the report on development research in Sweden is a case in point).

SAREC has held a low-key dissemination profile. In no case has SAREC invited to a press conference; only in exceptional cases has a press release with the main findings of the report been prepared and distributed. There are no routines for distributing the reports to the political authorities - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) or Parliament. The SAREC board is informed through the follow-up decision paper (Insatspromemoria) - interested board members may obtain the report, too, upon request. The MFA is, therefore, indirectly informed through its representative on the SAREC board. The same low profile is kept within the SAREC secretariat itself - it is exceptional that an evaluation gives rise to a staff seminar (it once happened, the evaluation of six projects in Tanzania and the country survey did the trick). The reporting to the board is always indirect, through the decision paper. In no case has the board found an evaluation report so interesting, provoking or important that the consultant(s) has been invited to report directly - in a formal or informal setting - and provided the board members a chance of entering into a dialogue on themes of particular interest. Nor have evaluation reports constituted the basis for policy discussions within the board.

Most evaluation reports are not published at all, not even mimeographed with a cover; however, some are published in a series - SAREC Documentation - which in addition to reports also includes a few evaluations. The country surveys are published in this series.

The primary use of the evaluation is identified above (4.2.5): it serves as the basis for the next decision paper (Insatspromemoria) prepared for the SAREC board; in this way, it may influence the future fate of the project or programme and those who are dependent on the

funding - in Sweden and at the recipient side. The country surveys serve a similar function: to facilitate the planning and decision process at the secretariat, in particular for the Research Officer with the responsibility for the country programme and those in charge of the sectors: the research landscape of the country concerned is surveyed and the activities of other aid agencies, bilateral and multilateral, are mapped - thus facilitating the identification of strategic fields for funding.

4.2.8 A preliminary conclusion

The features described above lead to a clear main conclusion: the SAREC evaluations serve almost exclusively as a tool for the SAREC administration - secretariat and board. Its primary function is to serve as an input in the decision process: whether the funding should be continued or not and, if continued, in what form. This conclusion will be elaborated further below.

4.3 The SAREC evaluations: the case studies

In Chapter 2, the objectives set for Swedish development cooperation in general and for research cooperation with developing countries in particular were outlined as a point of departure for the scrutiny of the evaluation practice. The way SAREC has interpreted and operationalised these objectives and the strategies and guidelines for their implementation were also described in some detail. To what extent have objectives at these various levels governed the evaluation practice?

The answer is sought by looking into the nine evaluation reports selected for this purpose, identified above. Important as the evaluation report itself is in this regard, the contextual factors may be even more important: the way objectives are set in the policy documents on which agreements are based, the instructions given by SAREC to guide the evaluation work (the TOR) and the follow-up by SAREC. The basis for this study is outlined above; however, its scope does not allow a further penetration into the subject matter where the documents referred to did not provide a basis for clear answers.

Although the evaluation reports and other documents referred to (see Appendixes 2-4) constitute the main basis for the study reported in this section, I have also drawn upon data emerging from the interviews and the more extensive survey of the evaluation reports. The main findings will be briefly reported, case by case.

4.3.1 The Tanzanian bilateral programme: three cases

Tanzania constitutes a special case in many regards: for decades it has been the country to which the Nordic countries have concentrated a large share of their bilateral aid; it is also a country where the development crisis, in the 1980s, became most visible for Nordic eyes.

The political, economic and social environment for research, and hence the material conditions, deteriorated dramatically in the 1980s, which raises the most crucial - and difficult - issue regarding research support on the agenda: under what conditions should research aid be provided?

For SAREC, Tanzania also constituted a special case. After the external evaluation of SAREC in 1984-85 (not a SAREC-commissioned evaluation, although included in the list), funding through the research council (UTAFITI) came to an end and SAREC had no other centrally situated Tanzanian partner through which the funding could be channelled. This resulted in a host of small projects, almost all emerging from projects earlier financed through "Svensk ansökan", but jointly run with a Tanzanian research institution.

The evaluation itself differs from most other SAREC evaluations in its organisation: it is oriented towards the (bilateral) country programme (those projects which had not recently been evaluated) and cuts across sectoral divisions within SAREC. Also the selection of consultant is somewhat special: a development generalist (with several specialities) who was given the opportunity to pick the specialists within the areas concerned.

The main function of the evaluation was evident both from the decision documents ahead of the evaluation and from the TOR: to clear the way for decisions on a restructured country programme which should be more concentrated and administratively less demanding.

Three of the six projects included in the evaluation were included in the sample of nine, listed as 6-8 (for references to the projects, TORs and decision documents before and after the evaluations, see Appendixes 2-4). To what extent were the project objectives related to overall objectives and intermediate objectives and what kind of objectives did the evaluation, and the follow-up of the evaluation, focus at?

The objectives set for all three projects are general and vague in the decision documents ahead of the evaluation (1988, 1990) - the possibility is, of course, that they are made clearer in earlier documents. No references are made to the overall objectives set for Swedish aid; hardly no references are made to any of SAREC's overall objectives, except in an indirect way (capacity building). The project objectives were very general ("increase production" (project 6), "describe a tropical rain-forest's life cycle" (project 7)). As formulated, they give a poor basis for an evaluation.

The terms of reference (TOR) for the evaluations, however, take a broader perspective. The overall perspective is made clear: to provide SAREC with background information to make decisions on the future research cooperation with Tanzania. It is also to assess the scientific quality of the projects, the development relevance of the findings, the impact of research findings on development policy and practice, and their contribution to the strengthening of the research capacity in Tanzania and Sweden. No further criteria are given; I am making this point against the background that SAREC has not formulated general guidelines which may help when conclusions must follow descriptions (does the "production" of one MSc candidate strengthen the research capacity in Tanzania?).

An additional TOR is given for project 8, which is very extensive and covers most aspects a funding agency might like to know about; it is specific with regard to SAREC's objectives: capacity building and research of high relevance to the development in Tanzania, explicitly including research training in various forms (the scope, nature and quality of the research training at the MSc and PhD levels). The project should be assessed against these two objectives. It also included the obligation of a verbal presentation to the Tanzanian project leaders before leaving Tanzania.

The evaluation follows up these quite demanding requests, given the additional task of operationalising the criteria involved. The consultant, explicitly, assesses the performance of the various projects within a broader development context, and not within the more limited project confines only, adding (quite critical) assessments of their sustainability. And SAREC got what probably was hoped for more than anything else: the advice to phase out the funding of small, administratively cumbersome projects.

SAREC did not hesitate to follow up this recommendation: the decision was firmly based on the preliminary reporting of the consultant (decision document, 1991). For two of the projects, references were made to the more limited (and very general) project objectives, which SAREC claimed had been attained (projects 6 and 7; for the latter, competence building was also implied - a MSc candidate). For the third (project 8), the reference to SAREC's overall objectives was made explicit, with a positive conclusion.

4.3.2 Social Science in Africa: CODESRIA revisited

CODESRIA, organised in 1973, has received support from SAREC since SAREC was established a couple of years later, and had been evaluated two times previously, last time in 1985 (together with Ford Foundation and IDRC). It is a major regional programme in SAREC's setting, and was therefore up for a "regular" evaluation. However, the support was not totally uncontroversial in the SAREC board. Still, from the secretariat, the primary (and only) objective was to test whether the support was provided in a most sensible way and find out whether the recommendations of the previous evaluation had been followed up. The cooperation was considered a going concern, which might be adjusted but not terminated (interviews 3 and 16). For years, SAREC has been CODESRIA's main source of support, mainly core support on unconditional terms: most of CODESRIA's general activities - administration, publications, support of working groups - have been dependent on the financial support from SAREC.

In the first decision document after the evaluation in the mid 1980s (1985), SAREC maintained its support at the previous level and adapted a wait-and-see attitude to future cooperation, making it dependent on reforms in line with the recommendations from the evaluation. It wanted to consider future support to CODESRIA within the broader framework of regional support to Africa (the Africa programme).

The main problématique involved (organisational efficiency, etc. aside), as seen from SAREC, was the following: if the donor's interest is to build and strengthen research capacity at the national level, how can a Pan-African organisation like CODESRIA best support such efforts? The problem was identified, but not explored further. This was as close as the decision document came to more overall objectives and objectives at lower levels as well.

The terms of reference for the new evaluation (listed as 2 in Appendix 2) identify a detailed description of how CODESRIA works and use SAREC funds as the primary motive for the evaluation, viz. to find out to what extent suggested reform proposals contained in the previous evaluation had been followed up. The scientific quality of research publications ("with consideration of the overall research context for social sciences in Africa as regards political, economic and social conditions") should be assessed, as should its impact in

maintaining and building up research capacity, the distribution of its research results and to what extent it had stimulated the development debate. Thus, although the emphasis was on organisational matters, scientific quality, competence building and dissemination of research stand out as key-words which relate to the overall objectives set for SAREC. However, the main problématique identified in 1985 was not carried further.

The consultants came out strongly in favour of continued, generous core support to CODESRIA, based on ex post reporting rather than ex ante conditionality, as before. It had an exceedingly important role to play: if the organisation did not exist, it would have to be invented.

The role and activities were related to the overall objectives set for Swedish aid: its support of the African social science research community had always aimed at promoting indignisation, to defend academic freedom and the free flow of ideas; it has been increasingly active in issues related to democracy; its pluralistic character (strongly questioned earlier) had gradually improved. And the consultants also answered the main problématique raised in 1985 (but not included in the TOR) related to one of SAREC's two overall objectives in the same positive vein: in contrast to several other networking activities in Africa, which have tended to distance senior researchers from their national settings by the formation of well-funded "islands", CODESRIA's working groups were made up of researchers at the existing, national institutions, whose research and teaching capacity was strengthened, and CODESRIA's grant programmes followed the same patterns. The heavy involvement of junior researchers in the working groups implied that a strong element of training in research was carried out, too. In short: the organisation had helped to improve both the quality and quantity of African social science research. Also the dissemination of research was focused at (considered to be weak) and the quality (the second overall SAREC objective) - the publications were found to be of mixed quality.

SAREC followed up the recommendations with continued support for a new two-year period - slightly increased in financial terms and in the same form as previously: core support and support for a fellowship programme administered by CODESRIA. The decision document (1990) made a reference to the contribution to independent research which the SAREC contribution facilitated; no reference was made to the performance vis-à-vis the other overall objectives set for Swedish aid or the meso-level objectives (SAREC's overall objectives) which emerged from the description in the evaluation (the consultants did not explicitely refer to these objectives, thus making the relationships explicit). These objectives, by the same token, were not set as explicit objectives for the future support.

4.3.3 Breast-feeding in Pakistan: institutional cooperation

This project emerged as a continuation of a project under "Svensk ansökan" on breast-feeding and diarrhoeal diseases which started in the mid 1970s. The cooperation established between the Swedish researchers (involving two Swedish institutions, at St. Göran's Hospital, Stockholm and the University of Gothenburg, respectively) and the research milieu to which they were attached in Lahore, Pakistan (King Edward Medical College) became included in the bilateral programme in 1981 under institutional cooperation. The entrance was narrow, particularly because of policy constraints at the Swedish side: Pakistan did not belong to the programme countries selected for bilateral development cooperation. This constraint

continued to influence decision-making on the project at SAREC: at no time was it obvious that the support should be continued.

In the first decision document (1981), emphasis was given to the fact that an earlier application had been recommended by the Pakistani authorities (the Medical Research Council); that breast-feading had an important value from a nutrition perspective and also as a protection against infections (diarrhoeal diseases); and that the project represented research efforts both within bio-medical and socio-epidemiological aspects of a broader problem area of general relevance and of local interest to Pakistan as well. Sustainability aspects were also implied: support for the Pakistani institution both from the government and internationally (WHO). It was emphasised that the project deals with health problems of great importance for developing countries and that it might produce research results of practical value.

However, the five objectives set out for the project were all project specific without explicit reference to the broader objectives set for Swedish aid in general or for SAREC's aid in particular. Within the project confines, however, they gave general direction to the project but no quantified targets. But then, a two-year planning period is not the most conducive framework for setting long-term objectives, although longer-term financing might be expected.

Later decision documents (1983, 1985 and 1987) did not bring major changes in the objectives or in the justification of the project to the fore (in 1985, the project was evaluated by three Swedish consultants (specialists who covered separate aspects and reported separately), focusing on the laboratory, the scientific quality of the output, the research milieu and organisational matters).

The TOR for the evaluation (listed as 3 in Appendix 2) referred to the SAREC overall objectives (support to research capacity building and to research of relevance to developing countries), emphasising, however, that in this particular case the support was justified by its potential for yelding research results of general interest to developing countries and by its interesting approach in research training, relevant also to other SAREC-supported projects. Reference was made to the latest allocation in 1987 (covering a four-year period), which supposedly should be the last one, but the TOR is not crystal clear on whether final means final. The evaluators are asked to review performance in terms of both scientific results and research training, but also to assess "needs and forms for possible additional SAREC support" to the project, thus inviting a basis for a farewell toast. In addition, the evaluators got more specified instructions for their work.

The evaluation report found the collaborative research project a well-functioning model for research capability strengthening and research training. It also assessed its relevance (in a Pakistani and development country context) and its scientific quality in positive terms. The research cooperation and the capacity strengthening were also assessed, again with positive marks: the project had created a skilled manpower in a Pakistani setting while keeping them in the country and within the project, maintaining the national perspective in interest and research undertaking. And the invitation, in the TOR, to provide a basis for a continuation was followed up: the achievements so far had been satisfactory and the project holds a lot of promise for the future (continued SAREC support up to 1994-95).

This recommendation was followed up in later decision documents, first with an extra allocation for 1990/91 and an interim allocation for 1991/92 pending an application for another three-year period. When this arrived, continued support for this (final) period was proposed - SEK 9 million, compared with SEK 13 million during the eleven preceding years - in order to complete an extensive field study which had been planned for years. This proposal relied heavily on the assessments and recommendation of the evaluation (decision documents 1991, 1992).

An epilogue should, however, be added. In 1992, more than two years after the evaluation, policy guidelines for the funding of health research in the 1990s were adopted by the board (SAREC, 1992b). In these, diarrhoeal diseases appeared prominently among the problem areas of high priority.

4.3.4 The master degree programme in Ethiopia

The School of Graduate Studies at the University of Addis Ababa was established in 1978 with the objective to initiate and develop graduate programmes within the university in order to produce expertise in the fields of science and technology, agriculture, medicine and social sciences in Ethiopia. The SAREC support for this programme started the following year. In the SAREC decision documents, the support is termed research capacity building; it might with equal right be termed support for higher education. This makes the relationship between research training, research and higher education, which I will return to, a pertinent issue even from the perspective of SAREC's actual research funding for years.

In the 1986 decision document, the programme is briefly presented with reference to the output - till then 3 000 MA degrees within several disciplines; time was found ripe for a concentration of the funding to a few disciplines and good candidates and to link this programme to the only new project proposed that year, a PhD programme (not included in the evaluation). No further objectives or justifications are offered for the support. The implicit objective, obviously, is competence building. The 1988 decision document adds nothing of relevance except, perhaps, that the MSc- programme was to be aligned to institutions which were active in research - and the announcement of a special, new effort in order to develop research capacity at the medical faculties in Ethiopia. This priority was anchored in the new-established guidelines for funding of health research.

In glaring contrast to the implicit, vague and general objects set out in the decision documents referred to, the TOR for this evaluation (listed as 4 in Appendix 2) is strikingly clear and specific in this regard.[4] The consultant is reminded that the main object for the research support is to assist in research capacity building and strengthening in Ethiopia, promote research work of high relevance to Ethiopia, and to promote research cooperation between Ethiopian and Swedish institutions. Included in the research project, as defined, were also training of Ethiopian scientists in new research techniques, introduction in the state-of-the-art in their disciplines, etc. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess how

[4] Obviously, the TOR is worked out with a view to be applied for the evaluation of a series of SAREC-supported projects in Ethiopia at that time, eleven in all. Although very specific, it is not particularly project specific as regards the MSc-programme; it does, however, reflect a standardised approach. As a consequence, all requests included do not apply to the specific evaluation.

far the research project, given the existing constraints, has met SAREC's main objectives as stated.

The consultant was asked to assess the scientific quality, the relevance to the country's scientific and technological development, the relevance to the country's general development, the contribution to the creating and strengthening of the research capacity within the country, with particular attention to (i) research training at the Master's and Doctorate Degree levels built into the project, (ii) the fostering of the ability to identify and define research problems and plan and execute projects, and (iii) the building up of laboratory and library infrastructure.

There are more specific requests, too; and, like some of the above, all do not apply equally well to the MSc programme.

The evaluation report provides a descriptive overview of the programme at the various university departments involved, underlining that SAREC's contribution to the total financial costs, although minor, serves a useful function by covering foreign exchange which is needed for purchases of spare parts and minor pieces of equipment. Other observations are equally prosaic (and useful), and the general conclusion fits into a general pattern: a solid and useful programme worthy of continued support. This assessment is not, however, related to the objectives as identified in the TOR but (probably) based on traditional criteria, such as output, organisational aspects, etc. The extent to which such assessments are balanced against the particular, quite un-enabling Ethiopian environment is not made clear.

The SAREC follow-up? Business as usual. In the follow-up decision paper (1990), nothing new happened to the objectives or to the justification of the programme. There was an approving evaluation report.

4.3.5 United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

UNRISD was established in 1963 and SAREC has supported the research activities of this institute since 1975, when SAREC was started; this support has mainly been core support. The support to UNRISD - like the support to other major international programmes - tends to get a more or less permanent character. Evaluations, therefore, serve a controlling role (accountability) in addition to be an administrative tool for adjusting the course if deemed necessary.

UNRISD - as the name tells - has the task to carry out research on social aspects of societal development, strategies for social progress and the interaction of social and economic aspects. Within this broad overall objective, the institute has concentrated its work on problems related to poverty and poor people's situation. Development strategies and policy alternatives which may benefit poor and exposed groups have also been focal points. It also aims at, in its research work, to build up research capacity within the social sciences in the developing countries.

The overall objectives and the overall strategy chosen coincide well with one of the overall objectives set for Swedish development cooperation, probably the one which originally was **the** objective, and with one of SAREC's overall objectives (research capacity building) as

well. The Scandinavian governments (along with a few others, including the Netherlands) have all through provided the financial basis for UNRISD - SAREC alone about one-third of the total budget (and the lion's share of the core budget). Core support - the most difficult to obtain for any organisation - seems logical if the aims set for the funding agency and the recipient organisation coincide; it is a trade mark of SAREC's support even in cases where this coincidence is not so obvious as in the case of UNRISD. It follows that an active participation in the governing body of the organisation along with ex post evaluations stand out as a sensible strategy for a concerned funding agency.

In 1982, UNRISD was evaluated (jointly by DANIDA and SAREC); the assessment of the scientific quality of its research programme was, by and large, positive. In 1987, as a follow-up of a request by the board of SAREC, two (international) consultants were asked to assess the quality of the output from three of the five programmes (before they had been completed). In the decision document (1987), the secretariat reports that the outcome was mainly positive, although methodical weaknesses, slow output and a very mixed quality for some of the programmes also were reported; in the following decision paper (1988), however, the assessment was much sharper, based on the same evidence: during recent years, UNRISD has showed a weak performance, contrary to its performance during the 1960s and 1970s. However, important changes were taking place in the organisation, involving a review of the research programmes and a new leadership. Continued support at about the same level (in SEK) as before was proposed for a three-year period, when a new evaluation was to take place. The decision documents in 1986 and 1987 focused almost exclusively on quality aspects related to the research output and organisational matters; this was also the main focus of the 1988 decision document, but here also assessments of the orientation of the research were made (relevance).

The SAREC-commissioned evaluation in 1987 had kindled warning lights and the follow-up by the board of SAREC (it did not follow the secretariat's proposal of continued funding for a new two-year period at the established level; the grant was reduced and provided for one year only in anticipation of reforms) induced reforms in the organisation (new director; new Chairman - Keith Griffin, one of the two SAREC evaluators; and a restructured, partly new research programme). The up-coming evaluation, therefore, was to serve the traditional function of SAREC' evaluations: to establish a basis for the decision on further funding. This was emphasised in the 1988 decision document which indicated that SAREC, if UNRISD had not succeeded to live up to expectations by 1991, should consider to terminate its support. What, then, was the guidance given to the evaluators?

In the TOR for the evaluation, the background for the evaluation (1988 version) is given. The focus is almost exclusively on organisational matters although one point, the selection of problem areas for research, also opens up for an assessment of the relevance of the research areas vis-à-vis the objectives set for the organisation.

The evaluation (listed as 5 in Appendix 2), however, gives emphasis to the relevancy aspect when going through the research programmes of UNRISD one for one, describing its main orientation and adding comments on its general relevance, how the research is organised and run and in what way the research results have been disseminated, claiming also that the quality of the output has been judged although not included in the TOR. And the conclusion was enthusiastically positive on all scores: UNRISD was found to be "an extremely well

organized research outfit, staffed with highly qualified, motivated and perceptive researchers. The administrative staff is equally good, supporting the work of researchers with an infrastructure and a work ethic which could be an envy of many organizations." Local scholars and institutions are engaged to do field work, thus UNRISD helps strengthening local research capacity building. The relevance of the programmes is deemed high - in essence, UNRISD's work is concerned with poverty, equality and discrimination, and these are investigated in a range of research themes that embrace social institutions and processes within and across various societies. The only missing dimension was, not unexpectedly, human rights (one of the two consultants was directing the Integrated Human Rights Programme at the Department of Sociology of Law, University of Lund). Among the few improvements suggested was the recommendation that UNRISD might link up with the Human Rights Programme in Lund for mutual benefits!

The overall observation is that the team addressed the right kind of questions although the TOR was not particularly helpful in directing them on these tracks, nor did SAREC provide them with sufficient time for this kind of assignment.

The follow up? The only logical one if the assessments of the consultants are accepted, which they were (decision document 1991): increased support for a new three-year period.

4.3.6 Development research in Sweden: The long-term support of Swedish research milieus

SAREC has all through had the additional task of serving as a research council with a responsibility of supporting Swedish development research. Up till recently, however, the performance has not been evaluated, although a large proportion of the SAREC budget has been channelled for this purpose, on average about ten per cent. The evaluation of SAREC in 1984-85 commented briefly also on this part of SAREC's activities although not invited to do so; at that time the SAREC secretariat had made an inventory of the research support under "Svensk ansökan (1984). The picture portrayed was a critical one: a fragile, fragmented research milieu - the support had gone to small, individual projects of a few years' duration and the researchers were marginal in their ordinary, disciplinary milieus.

The evaluation (Utrikesdepartementet, 1985) offered a series of reform proposals, where the main emphasis was on the strengthening of some promising research milieus and the integration of Swedish development research into the ordinary Swedish institutions of higher education and research, particularly the universities and the research councils. Long-term commitments in a transitional period were recommended; since the responsibility for education and research also in this field primarily rests with the ministry of education, the research councils and the universities themselves, the expectation was that they would take over after an interim period - and that this expectation should be made clear from the beginning: the SAREC support (ODA) for strengthening capacity building and research of relevance to developing countries in Sweden should have a catalytic effect and serve as an initial support to Swedish institutions and milieus which themselves were determined to engage in development research and increasingly use their ordinary budgets for this purpose.

During 1985, SAREC held a series of consultations with the Swedish development research milieus, the consultative groups for "Svensk ansökan", and the research councils, and these

institutions were also invited to comment on the recommendations in the 1984-85 evaluation (idea document, 1985, 1986). The government followed up the main recommendations of the evaluation immediately; the present system should be replaced by more long-term support to a number of research institutions aiming at long-term knowledge-building. Several efforts were anticipated: funding of doctoral education, temporary research chairs, research equipment, a programme for visiting researchers from developing countries, etc. (Prop. 1985/86:100).

This was followed up by the board of SAREC in February, 1986, distinguishing between three types of support for development research in Sweden: (1) long-term support for selected research milieus, (2) open applications (as previously), and (3) contributions to project planning and meetings. The more specific objectives and guidelines for this programme were set out in the 1986 decision document and decided on by the SAREC board in April that year. The objectives set were the following: (1) to promote research which directly or in a long-term perspective may be of value to developing countries or researchers from developing countries, (2) to stimulate Swedish researchers to take an interest in developing countries and to take account of their problems in their research, (3) to maintain and develop development research capacity at Swedish universities and other institutes of higher education, and (4) increase the possibilities for establishing research contacts between research institutions in Sweden and developing countries.

The new element, long-term support, along the lines indicated (also support for publications) had as an explicit precondition that the universities themselves took part of the responsibilities and costs involved, that the efforts were coordinated with the research councils and the support should be of 3-6 year duration. The research chairs were to be temporary only (three plus three years).

The main criteria included the following: (1) relevance for developing countries and for development cooperation, (2) involving the type of research milieus to be supported: (a) high scientific quality and openness towards knowledge emerging from other disciplines, (b) an integrated research training/education, (c) a well-developed research competence to be maintained and developed, and (d) that the university is interested in competence building within the area and committing itself to this and meeting part of the costs.

The TOR for the evaluation (listed as 9 in Appendix 2) relates to these objectives and guidelines, although it opens up for the possibility of continued support: the evaluation was limited to the eleven institutions which first received long-term support (ten more had been added), and the purpose for the evaluation was to provide a basis for decision on continued support after six years.

The following questions were to be addressed against the objectives and guidelines set for this particular support: to what extent had the support strengthened the milieus in terms of recruitment and scientific production? more thematically integrated programmes? to syntheses of research projects? What have been the effects of the demand that the institutions themselves should contribute to the costs and how should this demand be followed-up to give better effects? The sustainability of the efforts should also be addressed and the possible effects if the support was terminated after six years.

Several other questions which should be addressed also had a follow-up of the support in mind: was there a need for concentrating future support to a smaller number of milieus? What kind of changes in the long-term support should be undertaken? Would alternative forms of support be more effective vis-à-vis the objectives set? And, very important given the fact that a substantial proportion of ODA-funded research support to Swedish research institutions is channelled through the programme for bilateral research cooperation (SAREC) and through SIDA's bilateral programmes, due regard should be given even this support when analysing the particular long-term support to Swedish research milieus.

The consultants have themselves interpreted the TOR by establishing more specific criteria for the assessments, focusing on relevance, attainment of objectives set (although not in quantitative terms), productivity, and sustainability and in addition on the more practical aspects involved in the support. It transpires from these interpretations, and also from the recommendations, that there is a need for more specific criteria both for the implementation of a programme like this and also for its evaluation. The TOR, however, sets the consultants on the right tracks and the consultants address the most important questions, explicitly related to the project-specific objectives which, in this case, also relate to the overall objectives set for SAREC within this particular programme.

In their recommendations, even the objectives set are challenged: they recommend that the relevancy criterion be toned down and more emphasis given to capacity building and quality. Other recommendations apply to the structure and implementation of the programme. In the context of the present evaluation the recommendations concerning criteria for assessment, adapted objectives set (need to be more specific) and to the particular situation of the research milieu concerned and the phase in which it finds itself, call for special attention. As does the recommendation with regard to SAREC's own involvement: the direction of the research activities by the SAREC research officers should be reduced to a minimum - a very strong signal from the Swedish research community concerned, brought back by a consultancy firm dependent on SAREC for future assignments!

The general conclusion of the evaluation? This type of support should be continued and provided on longer terms (3+3+3 years, with hard assessments every third year). In view of the objective of more interdisciplinary research, always alluded to in research policy documents but highly elusive in practice, the finding that interdisciplinary research has been stimulated calls for special attention.

The SAREC board, in its first meeting after the report was available, found that support to research milieus should not be provided for more than six years but for exceptional cases, and the secretariat recommended accordingly in the follow-up decision document (1992); however, an alternative proposal was also offered in which the support was given a nine-year time frame in accordance with the recommendation of the consultants. No changes were recommended as far as the criteria for assessment were concerned. And the secretariat found the observation concerning the interference by the SAREC research officers totally unjustified: the contributions were untied core support for the research milieus concerned. In November 1992, the board decided that applications for long-term support should not be invited for the following year; the decision was justified with SAREC's unclear future budgetary situation. It also decided that this type of support should not be provided for more than six years.

4.3.7 Tanzania: country survey

Since 1986, ten country surveys have been made; all have been published in SAREC's documentation series and are therefore generally available for those interested. Although they broadly speaking have the same objective, viz. to give an outline of the research situation prevailing in the programme country concerned, they are of different kinds and also with a different ambition level. Several are quite descriptive in their approach while others are more analytical, some also containing elements of evaluation. Their main purpose is to provide an overview in order to facilitate SAREC's selection of areas where support might be necessary and useful. Several of them are written, fully or in part, by SAREC staff members. They provide no evaluation of SAREC's country programmes. For some main characteristics of these reviews, see below (5.10). The one selected has set the ambition level higher than most of the rest.

The country survey of Tanzania (included as 1 in Appendix 2) is somewhat particular in so far as it is a follow-up of the evaluation of a series of single projects with SAREC support in Tanzania undertaken by the same consultant and carried out at a stage when SAREC is considering a major reorganisation and concentration of its research support to Tanzania (for a brief presentation, see 4.3.1 above). The setting is presented there, based on the decision documents and interviews, and there is no need for a repetition here.

In the TOR for this survey, the purpose is twofold: (1) to assess the research environment in Tanzania in order to provide SAREC's board with the necessary background information for making decisions on future research cooperation in the 1990s, and (2) to produce a report on the research situation in Tanzania for an international audience. The study, accordingly, should contain a description of the research system, an analysis of its functioning and an assessment of how SAREC best could support further development of scientific research. More specific guidance is provided concerning the aspects to be covered: higher education, the research system, national and external research funding, manpower in research and science, and science and research policy.

To make the point explicit: no references are made to SAREC's past performance in Tanzania and how its country programme fits into the Tanzanian research landscape, relates to other Swedish aid to Tanzania, or to other foreign aid for that matter, or how it relates to the overall objectives set for Swedish aid in general or Swedish research cooperation with developing countries in particular. Its primary purpose is explicitly stated: to serve SAREC's decision-making on future aid to Tanzania.

The evaluation addresses the questions posed in the TOR in an extensive way, combining detailed description with analysis. The situation in which higher education, research training and research find themselves in Tanzania is described and analysed in the context of Tanzania's overall economic and political situation. The evaluation goes beyond what is requested in the TOR by also discussing some basic research issues related to the Tanzanian situation. The research structures within and outside the universities are mapped; the recruitment to and conditions of the research career, including the gender problem, are described and discussed; this applies to the research funding by the government and external aid agencies including SAREC, too; and the science and research policy and research priorities are briefly discussed. Lessons learned, developmental and operational lessons, are

identified and discussed. And the consultant offers a number of general policy recommendations in addition to more specific and practically oriented recommendations. It is a comprehensive overview, interesting to read. And the main conclusion? Research in Tanzania under the present conditions is extremely difficult, but not without strays of hope.

A fundamental question related to research funding is the following: what minimum standards should an aid agency set as far as the enabling environment is concerned as a condition for providing aid with the purpose of promoting research capacity building or research relevant for the development of the country concerned? This question might well be raised in the Tanzanian context - and indirectly the consultant has addressed it by recommending further research funding by SAREC. In a context where poor countries are identified as the primary target group, and particularly when Tanzania is involved, one of the most long-standing partners and the main recipient of Swedish aid, the question may seem as irrelevant as it is difficult to answer. Do such minimum standards at all exist? If not, it certainly affects the criteria against which performance is to be measured, involving both quality and competence building. It may be difficult to imagine a situation where an assessment would not come out with positive marks.

The first phase of the follow-up of the country survey is already described (4.3.1). In 1991, it was decided to phase out the old, small projects and to concentrate future research funding to Tanzania. The second phase came in 1992; the funding increased substantially. The 1992 decision document relied, in part, on the descriptions of the country survey, extracting what counted in favour of continued support, including the conclusion which emerged after the description of a highly un-enabling environment: "it is still possible to do research in Tanzania ... there are researchers who try to do research - sometimes with excellent results - in spite of the adverse conditions."

4.3.8 A preliminary conclusion

A very clear conclusion emerges from the case studies included in this survey, reinforcing the main conclusion reported above on the basis of the interviews (4.2.8): the evaluations serve almost exclusively as an instrument for the SAREC administration - secretariat and board - as an input in the decision-making process.

There is another important conclusion, too: in the sample included, a large proportion of the evaluations relates the performance to one or more of the overall objectives set for SAREC (meso-level objectives); a few even relate the performance to one or more overall objectives set for Swedish development cooperation, too. This applies more to the actual evaluations than it does to the TORs provided by SAREC: in several cases, the consultants have broadened the perspective. However, there is also a case with the opposite outcome, where a very detailed and specific TOR, including the meso-level objectives set for aid, has been neglected by the consultant; but then there was little in the decision documents to tag on to, and the follow-up decision document did not add anything for the evaluation to come.

This main finding, however, does not coincide with the main finding of the survey of the much broader sample of evaluation reports in the following chapter, namely that a large share of the evaluations do not relate assessments to overall or meso-level objectives or to objectives at all (5.7). The difference may, in part, be explained by a clear bias towards the

social sciences as far as the consultants commissioned for the evaluations included in our sample are concerned (in seven out of nine cases; the background of the consultants was not included among the criteria set for the selection); even when projects involving natural sciences, technology and agriculture were evaluated, this happened to be carried out by consultants with a social science cum development generalist background who, in many cases, broadened the TOR to include overall development aspects.

5. A PROFILE OF SAREC'S EVALUATION REPORTS: SOME MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS EMERGING FROM A QUANTITATIVE REVIEW

5.1 Introduction

The particular perspective on SAREC's **evaluation reports** in this chapter emerges as an integral part of the broader evaluation effort commissioned by SASDA which includes also SIDA, BITS, Swedecorp and the multilateral department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In order to obtain an overall, condensed perspective of the evaluations carried out within these different aid agencies which also might offer an opportunity for comparison between them, SASDA prepared a special framework with the view of extracting some main characteristics of the evaluation reports. This chapter reports the outcome of this exercise as far as SAREC is concerned, while the outcome for the other agencies is reported in separate reports. No efforts are made here to add a comparative perspective.

The focus is directed towards the following aspects of the evaluation reports: the main characteristics of the object for evaluation (the total funding of the project or programme, for how long the funding has taken place, etc.); the type of evaluation (who initiated it, type of report, and timing and costs of the evaluation); characteristics of the evaluation team (size, gender, mix internal/external and Swedes/foreigners and level of competence); formal characteristics of the evaluation report(s); the evaluation methods and technics and methods for data collection; the evaluation report's analysis of project determinants (objectives); type of analyses made in the report (with particular reference to formal methods); assessment of sustainability; and whether quantitative indicators (inputs and outputs) have been measured. The framework also aimed at several other aspects, such as the coverage of cross-cutting issues and other checkpoints, including to what extent there was a discussion of broader lessons learned, and whether there was a discussion of the validity and reliability of the results obtained, which in part would reflect the methodology applied. The details of the framework are found in Appendix 7 (SASDA Data Worksheet for Evaluations).

SAREC's funding, as already described, is organised in several programmes (for bilateral research cooperation; regional research cooperation; international research programmes; special initiatives; and development research in Sweden) and within different sectors (Social Sciences and the Humanities; Natural Sciences, Technology and Industrialisation; Rural Development and Environment; and Health and Nutrition). The evaluations selected for this review were selected at random among the reports appearing in the list of evaluations 1976-91, included in the appendix of SAREC (1993), covering the period 1986-91, and a few more recent evaluations (a complete list did not exist). The only criterion laid down for this selection was that all programmes and all sectors should be included in the sample.

The sample consists of 28 evaluation reports. The activities which these reports focuses on are distributed on the various programmes as follows:

* seven reports deal with activities within the international research programmes,

* nine reports deal with activities within the regional cooperation programmes,

* nine reports deal with activities within the programme for bilateral cooperation,

* two reports deal with Swedish development research ("svensk ansökan"), while

* one report deals with SAREC´s model for bilateral cooperation.

The activities which have been subject to evaluation in the 28 reports included, cover a wide range; still, the sample does not represent a complete "snapshot" of the total SAREC portfolio. Some areas which have been funded have not been included; there is no report on direct bilateral cooperation with countries in Latin America. Since this review aims at portraying the structural patterns and scope of the evaluation reports, not their subject matter, it is assumed that this will not affect the outcome. The evaluation reports included are listed at the end (Section 5.12).

In addition, a total of ten country studies were also run through the same scrutiny (listed in section 5.12). However, since they are not evaluations of aid projects but analyses of national systems through which research funding is channelled, the framework designed for the review does only to some extent apply. They are therefore not included in the statistical survey which follows and were analysed separately.

A few brief notes are due concerning the method used. Although the common denominator for the various activities administered by the various agencies concerned is development assistance, the activities being administered vary widely both within the agencies and between them. This affects the evaluations, too; the individual evaluation has to adapt to the topic to be reviewed. A framework designed for a broad spectrum of activities, naturally, will not fit equally well for all. This applies to activities within an agency; in this case, the indicators selected and the questions posed probably fit less to certain of the activities administered by SAREC (where some of them have been skipped by the Coder for this reason) than for the activities of the other agencies. Still, most indicators are of a general nature and may be applied for an analysis of SAREC´s evaluation reports as well.

In the instruction for coding, the indicators selected are defined and several concepts have also been clarified in the footnotes (Appendix 7). Still, the judgement in the many concrete situations where a decision has to be taken, is to a very large extent left to the Coder on the basis of the quite broad concepts and definitions given (in some instances, the decision is left to the subjective assessment of the Coder without a formal guidance; however, the basis for the decisions is made transparent in the comments). The value of the analysis will, therefore, to some extent be dependent on the pre-familiarity with aid evaluation in general and SAREC in particular.

As is the case for most quantitative analyses of the kind, the picture portrayed will be a mechanical one. The definitions given in the instruction and the alternatives to be chosen among by the Coder will impact decisively on the outcome - there is little room for small explanatory notes which in some instances may be most revealing, characteristic of qualitative analysis.

However, having stated this, it should also be emphasised that the review portrays a useful perspective on the evaluations being commissioned by SAREC. It supplements the survey of SAREC's evaluation policy, presented in earlier chapters of this report, which also focuses on some of the same aspects.

It also establishes a basis for comparison between the agencies, with the small warning note already given with regard to the different activities involved.

The results are reported statistically in a series of tables. Some of the assumptions, on which coding decisions have been taken, along with some explanatory notes, are also reported under some of the sub-headings in order to provide the setting of the information given in the tables.

5.2 The projects/programmes which have been evaluated: main characteristics

What characterises the activities (projects/programmes) included in the sample?

Table 5.1 *Characteristics of the projects which have been evaluated*

Total size MSEK	<1 0 %	1-10 11 %	10-50 19 %	> 50 33 %	unknown 37 %
Length of support years	< 2 0 %	2-5 14 %	5-10 33 %	>10 46 %	unknown 7 %
Evaluated earlier	yes 43 %	no 36 %	unknown 21 %		

Most of the activities which have been evaluated have been organised in projects or programmes of one kind or another (for convenience referred to as projects). As noted, these activities cover a wide variety of activities and are selected from the main programmes and covering all four sectors. Most of the funding is directed towards public or semi-private recipients.

In a surprisingly high proportion of the evaluation reports, the total funding is simply not provided; this applies, in particular, for the regional and bilateral programmes. For the remaining, the majority is found in the highest category, that is above SEK 50 million; it is primarily the projects within the international and regional programmes which create this high-cost profile, no project drawn from the bilateral programme (where the amount is provided) is included in this category.

Most activities evaluated have a time span of five years or more; this is true for all programmes in the sample. Few projects have been evaluated during the first initial years of support. The majority of the projects have been subject to previous evaluation, usually one.

5.3 Type of evaluation: initiated by whom, timing and costs, etc.

Who initiated the evaluation? And at what time in the project cycle was the evaluation undertaken?

Table 5.2 *Type of evaluation report*

Evaluation initiated by...	SAREC 86 %	SAREC/other 11 %	other 3 %	
Type of report	review 14 %	review/eval. 7 %	evaluation 79 %	research 0 %
Timing of evaluation	mid-term 96 %	completion 4 %	ex-post 0 %	
Cost of evaluation	low 50 %	medium 32 %	high 7 %	unknown 11 %
Part of project	yes 0 %	no 0 %	unknown 100 %	

Almost all evaluations have been initiated by SAREC itself, in some instances in cooperation with other agencies. And almost without exception, they are carried out before the project is completed (mid-term). The reasons for undertaking the evaluation are not always given; however, in most cases the reason is to provide information about the projects before the decision about future support is taken. No impact studies (ex-post evaluations) have been undertaken. And the majority of the evaluations are low-cost according to the definition used, that is, the study takes less than three man-months and does not involve more than one trip outside Sweden. Only seven per cent of the evaluation reports qualify for the "high-cost" definition used, namely a study which takes more than eight man-months and involves about three journeys outside Sweden. In the evaluation reports there were no indications as to whether the evaluations were undertaken according to plans and agreements, or not.

5.4 The composition of the evaluation team

What does the "typical" evaluation team look like?

Table 5.3 *The evaluation team*

Team size	1 43 %	2 25 %	3 18 %	4 or more 14 %
Gender	women 9 %	men 91 %		
Character of team	internal Swedish 3.5 %	internal foreign 0 %	internal Swed./for. 7 %	int./ext. 3.5 %
	external Swedish 11 %	external foreign 50 %	external Swed./for. 18 %	unknown 7 %
Expertise sector	PhD/Prof. 86 %	other 0 %	unknown 14 %	

The "typical" evaluation team has 1-3 members, with a generally low representation of women. It is very uncommon for SAREC to have staff members or members of the project participate in the evaluation although a few of the reports included in the sample are prepared by the SAREC staff or even the project staff. Furthermore, it is very unusual that someone from the recipient country participates in the evaluation team. The majority of the evaluations are carried out by external foreign experts. Most evaluations contain components of peer-review of research activities. This may explain the high percentage of PhDs and professors in the evaluation teams. It has not been possible to assess whether these experts within their disciplines also command expertise in evaluation methodology; the probability is that this is taken for granted and rightly so for judgements concerning disciplinary performance.

5.5 The evaluation reports: formal characteristics

What kind of reports does the team produce?

Table 5.4 *The evaluation report*

Report language	Swedish 11 %	English 89 %
Terms of reference incl.	yes 54 %	no 46 %
Work-plan incl.	yes 21 %	no 79 %
Summary incl.	yes 68 %	no 32 %
Recommendations incl.	yes 93 %	no 7 %
Actionable by donor	yes 86 %	no 14 %
Actionable by beneficiary	yes 36 %	no 64 %

Most of the evaluation reports follow the traditional format of evaluation reports; however, some features should be highlighted. The majority of the reports are written in English; what might be surprising for an organisation like SAREC, however, is that not all reports appear in English (possibly with the exception of those dealing with Swedish development research, although even these would carry a broader interest). In a few cases (regional programmes in Latin America), there are special editions in Spanish. Often the terms of reference (TOR) is not included. This calls for special attention; it simply breaks with traditional conventions in the trade. The person at SAREC who is administrating the evaluation is seldom referred to in the report.

Does the report include a plan for the work? Most reports include a short plan of the work, that is, the gathering of information, visits abroad, meetings and discussions with people connected with the "project", etc. However, a more strict definition is applied here: such a plan should present in detail who is going to do what, how it is going to be done, where and at what time. Applying this definition, few of the evaluation reports can be said to include a plan for work.

More that thirty per cent of the reports are without a summary; however, even here a strict definition is used: summaries which only contain conclusions or recommendations are not counted.

Finally, recommendations tend to be more directed towards the donor agency than towards the beneficiary. And the "typical" recommendation to SAREC is that the funding should be continued at the same level and in the same form as before, the support should be provided for several years at a time, and be flexible and untied. In some cases, the recommendations are not directed to anyone in particular; such recommendations take the form of a general discussion of how to improve the project.

5.6 Methodology and techniques: analysis and data collection

How do the evaluators approach their task? Systematic in terms of using approaches bordering to research methodology, or is it more of an ad hoc approach?

Table 5.5 *Methodology and techniques*

Methodological issues addressed	adequate 0 %	limited 39 %	no 61 %
Agency documents used	yes 54 %	no 46 %	
Other documents used	yes 71 %	no 29 %	
Interviews	yes 75 %	no 25 %	
Guides	yes 11 %	no 89 %	

Extensive discussions of methodological proceedings in the evaluation reports are rare animals; in this sense, the reports in the sample do not deviate from the common trend, particularly involving "low-cost" evaluations (for larger programmes and "high-cost" evaluations, expectations may be raised). The task is seldom approached along the lines of formal research methodology or formal evaluation techniques. A strict definition is applied when assessing how well methodological issues are addressed: an "adequate" approach would include an extensive discussion of the methodological problems involved, a "theory" and a systematic presentation of the method used as well as a discussion of the validity and the reliability of results. Such an approach would border to research methodology.

Not a single evaluation report included in the sample satisfies these criteria. Only a couple of the reports discuss reliability of results; in these, however, there is no discussion of the validity. In most reports there is no discussion on methodological issues; however, occasionally such issues are dealt with in an arbitrary fashion: the way the evaluation is carried out is presented in general terms related to a brief work-plan, or a methodological framework is briefly presented. The evaluators are never presenting hypotheses and assumptions about what results they will get.

The findings above are revealing; probably they give a fair description of the state of affairs, too. However, without an interpretive note, they may portray a quite unfair picture of the work of the consultants involved. After all, most of the evaluations are low-cost undertakings. And who can expect a Rolls Royce delivered when ordering and paying for a bicycle? This general comment applies to several of the expectations transpiring from the type of questions asked to the sample in several of the subsequent sections as well.

Most reports have made extensive use of documents from the agency and other sources. Still, it is quite astounding that no use has been made of SAREC documents in almost half of the evaluation reports; hopefully (and most probably), it is the references which are lacking! This neglect of formal rules is also manifest in the fact that almost one-third of the evaluation reports has no bibliographical references.

Another traditional evaluation technique, to visit the "project" and interview the people directly involved in the project activities, has been extensively used. Members of the SAREC staff have often been interviewed; however, other donor agencies are rarely contacted for interviews. It is hard to assess the performance of this part of the evaluations, that is, if it is adequate or limited, since more than 40 per cent of the evaluations lack references to those being interviewed. It is quite possible that guidelines and interview protocols have been used by the evaluators; however, the reports carry almost no visible sign of it: only in three reports were there any references to such proceedings.

5.7 The objectives: the departure of analysis?

Evaluations are usually expected to assess performance against objectives set. However, a general observation is that this is not always done. One reason may be that the objectives and indicators are too vague to measure achievement of objectives. Furthermore, targets may not always be specified in the project documents which, in turn, makes it difficult for the evaluator to assess fulfilment of objectives.

Returning to the sample, to what extent were the main objectives discussed in the evaluation reports?

Table 5.6 *Analysis of objectives*

Achievement of develop. objective	yes 0 %	no 100 %	
Achievement of immed. objective	adequate 14 %	limited 64 %	no 22 %
Key assumptions	adequate 3.5 %	limited 10.5 %	no 86 %

The development objectives referred to in the first place are the overall, long-term objectives set for Swedish development cooperation; economic growth, social justice, political and economic independence, democracy, and environment. **Not a single one of the evaluation reports in the sample relates to these overall objectives.**

At the meso-level, a set of objectives is established for the Swedish research cooperation with developing countries, viz. to promote the build-up of research capacity in developing countries and to promote research results of relevance to developing countries. These are termed immediate objectives in spite of the fact that they are broad and vaguely formulated, like the overall objectives. It is expected that more specific objectives and targets are set for the individual projects. To what extent do the evaluation reports relate to the objectives set at these levels?

In approximately half of the reports dealing with activities within the international programmes and the bilateral programmes, there are references to more specified objectives; however, in most evaluation reports, there is no further reference to objectives at other levels.

An adequate analysis of achievement of objectives should, according to the definition applied here, include an extensive discussion of outputs and results, and the results should be explicitly related to the objectives. If this definition is applied, only a few reports qualify (14 per cent), which is a surprisingly low proportion. The achievement of immediate objectives is usually discussed in a quite arbitrary way; in most reports it is treated only indirectly. Usually, different indicators related to the fulfilment of objectives are discussed extensively; for example, the reports focus on the research capacity, viz. the general conditions and the academic standard which apply in the country concerned, the access to literature, equipment and material for research etc. However, in the analyses, these findings are seldom explicitly related to aid objectives.

The achievement of an objective is usually based on implicit or explicit assumptions about causal relations between actions and effects, viz. the project is based on a "theory". An adequate discussion of key assumptions, as defined in this context, should include a presentation of *how* certain actions will cause the desired effects and *why* they will do it. In most evaluation reports, there is no such discussion.

5.8 Type of analysis

What kind of analysis is made in the evaluation reports? The focus is on the methodology used in the evaluations, as seen from the approaches in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 *Type of analysis made*

	adequate	limited	no
Need for project	0 %	18 %	82 %
Compar. with/ without project	0 %	0 %	100 %
Expenditure	32 %	32 %	36 %
Benefit	61 %	36 %	3 %
Effectiveness	7 %	50 %	43 %

Efficiency	0 %	14 %	86 %
Sustainability	0 %	4 %	96 %
Monitoring	3 %	11 %	86 %

A general discussion of the need for funding does take place in most reports. However, the discussion, in most reports, is quite superficial; the need for funding of research activities is established by reference to indicators implying how bad the prevailing conditions for research are in the country concerned. It is quite surprising that the country's need for the particular project concerned seldom is addressed. And no report contains a hypothetical discussion on what would have happened if the project had not been funded. However, two reports make a comparison of the projects concerned with similar projects in other countries. **In combination, these two findings call for particular attention.**

It would be expected that any evaluation report would include an examination of expenditures, the size of the budget and the way the budget had been used. An adequate analysis, as defined here, should include these aspects. **It is quite surprising that in more than two-thirds of the reports, this does not apply; in 36 per cent of the reports, these issues have not even been touched.**

The benefits of the project have been treated much more extensively. In several cases, this constituted the major focus of the report.

The effectiveness of the project, viz. to what extent the objectives set have been attained, and whether the activities have been carried out in the right way, has been treated in a superficial way, if at all. The efficiency of the projects, viz. the relation between costs and benefits, has been very rarely discussed. **Both these findings call for special attention**. In the few reports which contained a discussion of efficiency, it was mainly based on qualitative assessments. More elaborate techniques, such as cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis, have not been applied.

The sustainability of the project, in terms of survival in the longer term on its own, is unusually not dealt with in the evaluation reports. Although the research arena differs from most other arenas (in most counties, research depends on public grants, although the market increasingly applies even here), it is quite surprising that this problématique is left almost untouched. However, the viability of the projects, viz. the lack of financial support from local governments, the possibility of getting support from other donors, and the importance of further SAREC support for the projects' continuation, have been implicitly discussed in several of the reports.

SAREC's way of monitoring its projects does not seem to be an important concern in the evaluations. Although monitoring reports, ideally, should constitute building blocks for evaluations - and evaluators in practice also often will rely on such work - only in a few reports was there any discussion or references to the monitoring of the project concerned.

5.9 Measured in the evaluation

To what extent were quantitative measures used in an adequate way in the evaluation?

Table 5.8 *Measures*

Inputs	yes 61 %	no 39 %
Outputs	yes 75 %	no 25 %

In the majority of the reports, quantitative measures of inputs and outputs were given; however, in almost 40 per cent of the reports, quantitative measures of input were lacking. Inputs were mainly measured in economic terms, while the quantitative measures of outputs focused on the number of students examined at different levels (usually post-graduate and doctorate studies), the number of publications and reports resulting from the project, seminars, workshops and conferences etc.

The reports also made use of quantitative measures to describe the prevailing conditions for research, viz. the number of researchers in different areas, the number of university teachers, the percentage of qualified personnel at the universities, the percentage of foreign personnel, the percentage of women researchers etc.

The quality of the output (the research results) was assessed in almost two-thirds of the reports. Usually, peer-review of research activities and results was used. Occasionally also quantitative measures were used in estimating the quality, viz. indicators such as references in prestigious scientific journals, scientific distinctions, acknowledgements by independent experts, sales figures for research reports, etc.

5.10 Main characteristics of the country reviews

In addition to the 28 evaluation reports scrutinised in the previous sections, ten country reviews were also reviewed. However, these reports were not included in the statistical survey. Six of the reports were plain reviews; four, however, contained elements of evaluation.

The general focus of the country reviews is on the prevailing situation and conditions for research in the country concerned. The general economic and social conditions are described, as is the specific situation as far as research is concerned: the academic climate, incentives for researchers, education and training, the number of researchers, financial and material resources, foreign personnel, etc. Furthermore, the review focuses on the quality and relevance of the research, the dissemination of research results and contacts between researchers. Gender issues were touched upon in a few cases, but other cross-cutting issues were not treated.

The "typical" team for the country review consists of one man with a PhD or being an expert consultant in development issues. The review is usually external, viz. the consultant is not connected to SAREC.

The reports are in English, include no terms of reference (TOR) or a work-plan. In eight reports, there were a summary of findings and conclusions. Five reports included

recommendations of a general character aimed at SAREC.

None of the reviews contained a methodological discussion or pre-set hypotheses. Documents were used extensively, mainly from outside SAREC, and also interviews were extensively relied upon. Five (half) of the country studies included a discussion of expenditures and benefits. Inputs and outputs were measured.

What may come as a surprise, though, is that even in these country surveys, general or meso-level objectives for Swedish aid and their attainment were not discussed at all. However, departing from the general orientation of most country studies, where there was no focus at all on Swedish research funding, this may seem an unfair expectation. But again, this omission - given the type of analysis - gives rise to surprise, too: one would have expected that the TOR would have included a request for this type of assessment, too (but, as already noted, the TORs are not included). The majority of the reports included a general discussion on the country's need of assistance in order to build up a research capacity and to produce relevant research results.

5.11 Summing up: the "typical" evaluation report

The purpose of this review was to characterise SAREC's evaluation reports with regard to the format, focus and scope of analysis, etc.

The "typical" evaluation report is initiated by SAREC, low-cost and carried out when the project is still going on. The evaluation is external, the team consists of 1-3 members, mainly (non-Swedish) men who are well qualified in the research area concerned.

The report is in English. However, there are several formal neglects; the terms of reference (TOR) is not always included and a work-plan is rarely found. In most cases the evaluation report contains some sort of summary and usually there are recommendations, primarily directed to the donor agency (SAREC).

Methodological issues are addressed in a superficial way, if at all. The emphasis is on documents and interviews.

Crucial issues are treated superficially: the attainment of objectives is seldom explicitly treated and key assumptions are rarely discussed at all. The focus is on benefits and output; expenditures and inputs are often neglected. The efficiency of the project and its sustainability (viability) are treated superficially, and its monitoring is hardly mentioned.

The report usually provides an extensive analytical description of the state of affairs and research conditions, including both general aspects (economic and social conditions) and more research-specific conditions (such as the research infrastructure and the human research capacity, viz. organisational structures, training of researchers, research incentives, financial resources, equipment, materials, research administration, etc.) in the country concerned. The process of selecting areas for research funding and the orientation of this funding is explored: often the relevance of the project, viz. the scientific relevance and the relevance to the recipient country's development, are explored. The implementation of the project and the way

the Swedish support is functioning are assessed, as is the scientific quality of the research output. Also the impact of research on specific activities and on decision-making is often assessed. However, although gender issues may appear, the report hardly touches upon other cross-cutting issues.

The report is by and large of a quite good quality; however, certain aspects, including some crucial ones, are more or less neglected.

5.12 The reports included in the sample

(1) Evaluations of activities within the international research programmes

1. Svenskt stöd 1977-1987 till internationell jordbruksforskning genom CGIAR. (1987)

2. SAREC-financed research projects executed by the Technology Division of UNCTAD. Evaluation Report (1987) and publication: Technology Transfer and Technology Policy Issues. Evaluation of SAREC-supported Projects at UNCTAD's Technology Division. (1990)

3. SIDA/SAREC/WHO Primary Health Care Collaboration 1980-1989. (1989)

4. The impact of SAREC-funded rural employment policy research at the World Employment Programme. (1992)

5. IFS: A Small Organization with a Large Mission. External Evaluation of the International Foundation for Science. (1993)

6. The International Science Programs of Uppsala University. Evaluation Report. (1993)

7. Swedish Support to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). (1993-94)

(2) Evaluations of activities within regional research cooperation

1. CODESRIA Evaluation Report. (1985)

2. Strategies for the Future of Africa. An Evaluation. (1989)

3. SAREC's Latin America Programme. An Evaluation 1990. (1990)

4. Social Science in Africa: The Role of CODESRIA in Pan-African Cooperation. (1990)

5. An Evaluation of SAREC's Support to three Women's Research Institutions in Latin America. (1992)

6. Evaluation of the African Energy Policy Network - AFREPREN. (1993)

7. SAREC Library Support Programme. Evaluation and Review. Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tanzania. (1993)

8. SAPES Trust the First Five Years. (1993)

9. Urban Origins in Eastern Africa. An Evaluation of a SAREC Project. (1993)

(3) Evaluations of activities within bilateral research cooperation

1. An Evaluation of the Agricultural Development Ngamiland Project, Botswana. (1988)

2. Evaluation of the SAREC/NARESA Water Buffalo Research Program in Sri Lanka 1983-1988. (1988)

3. Evaluation of some SAREC-supported research projects in Ethiopia. Master Degree Programmes in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Civil- and Electrical Engineering, and Geography. (1990)

4. Evaluation of SAREC-supported health research projects in Ethiopia. (1990)

5. Review mission of the SAREC-supported Pakistani-Swedish medical research collaboration "Breast-feeding in a developing country". (1990)

6. Evaluation of The Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS) and The Centre for African Studies (CEA) at the Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique. (1990)

7. The Ethiopian Flora Project. (1991)

8. Forging the Links: Evaluation of SAREC's support to research development in Engineering and Sciences in Mozambique. (1991)

9. Indo-Swedish Collaborative Research Programme on Cruciferous Oilseeds 1977-1991. (1992)

(4) Evaluations of activities within development research in Sweden

1. SARECs stöd till svensk U-landsforskning via "Svensk ansökan" 1976-1983. (1984)

2. SARECs stöd till svensk u-landsforskning 1976-1988. (1990)

(5) Evaluation of SAREC

1. An Evaluation of the Bilateral Institutional Research Co-operation Supported by SAREC. (1990)

(6) Country reviews

1. Sri Lanka. Development of scientific research and SAREC's support 1976-1986. (1986)

2. Research Environment in Zimbabwe. A Study of the State and Conditions of Experimental Research in the Agricultural, Engineering, Life and Physical Sciences in Zimbabwe.(1987)

3. Research Environment in Zambia. A Study of the State and Conditions of Experimental Research in the Agricultural, Engineering, Life and Physical Sciences in Zambia.(1987)

4. Research Environment in Botswana. A Study of the State and Conditions of Experimental Research in the Agricultural, Engineering, Life and Physical Sciences in Botswana. (1987)

5. Research Environment in Tanzania. A Study of the State and Conditions of Experimental Research in the Agricultural, Engineering, Life and Physical Sciences in Tanzania. (1987)

6. Nicaragua. I. Scientific research in a revolutionary setting. The case of Nicaragua. II. Scientific cooperation between Sweden and Nicaragua. (1987)

7. Ethiopia. Development of scientific and technological research and SAREC support 1979-1988. (1989)

8. Vietnam. Development of scientific research and SAREC's support 1976-1989. (1990)

9. Costa Rica. Development of scientific and technological research. (1991)

10. Tanzania. Development of Scientific Research and SAREC's Support 1977-1991. (1992)

6. SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 A decentralised structure

In the previous chapters, the focus has been on SAREC as an organisation; the way the evaluation function has been organised and used has served as a key indicator in this regard. What kind of an organisation is emerging if this particular indicator is taken as the point of departure?

When I last time had the privilege to look at SAREC some ten years ago, the organisational structure was horizontal with decisions - seemingly - emerging as collective decisions from a staff meeting. However, things are not always what they seem to be; efficiency considerations aside, a seemingly horizontal organisation may disguise decision-making by the very few, depending on other general or specific factors. One of the positive aspects of a horizontal organisation is the transparency involved - all are kept informed on what is going on, what is going fine and what is going not so fine; it also promotes a concern for what happens - all have a say also on matters outside "own" area. However, there is a matter of scale; a system which may function well for an organisation of 5-10 members may be disastrous for an organisation of 50-100 members. Ten years ago we found that SAREC had reached a stage where a more structured organisation was called for; in the following years, the secretariat was reorganised in the way we know it today, involving a thematic structure which also is hierarchical.

What I have "found" this time, however, is a highly decentralised structure as far as the de facto decisions are concerned. In the present system, the single Research Officer is the core person in the process leading to selection of new projects (which also involves sorting out projects which are not funded); he or she implements and follows up (monitors) the projects, decides when the time is ripe for an evaluation and formulates the terms of reference and picks the evaluators, is the one to which they report and the one who interprets the findings and suggests the follow-up.

This, of course, is a stylised picture which needs to be modified, and which is modified in the previous chapters.

First of all, not many new projects are started and - particularly within the international programme - most projects are going concerns. Recently, several of the new funding enterprises have been initiated from outside the organisation (the special efforts, involving AIDS, etc.). In other programmes, such as the bilateral and regional programmes, the initiatives also come from outside to a large extent; SAREC's main role is a responsive one.

This also applies to "Svensk ansökan", where the competence of the Swedish research community within the various areas is relied upon - committees are appointed for the various themes along the sectoral division of SAREC, and the sections serve as the secretariat. However, with the set of criteria applied - and the SAREC secretariat as the main interpreter of the relevancy criterion - the Research Officer sitting in for the section (along with the Programme Director) carries no small influence on the outcome.

In the implementation, a double system is involved - one Research Officer is responsible for the particular project (the project belongs to a sector, and the residual power is vested here) and another is responsible for the country programme (for the bilateral programme). For the bilateral projects, the country programmes serve as an umbrella and decide the cycle (two-year agreements). This implies a coordination among the two - and the rest of the organisation is in no way left in the dark!

In the monitoring process, however, the Research Officer (sector) is the core person. The regular visits to the project sites and the conversations taking place are part of the preparation of the next decision document; at times, the Programme Officer considers herself/himself as a disciplinary expert in the area concerned, in other cases external experts are relied upon for an assessment of the qualitative aspects, while the Programme Officer assesses the other aspects. A reporting system (annual) from the project/programme leadership constitutes an important basis for this monitoring. Also here, the monitoring may take place jointly with the Research Officer carrying the responsibility of the country programme (for the bilateral programmes).

The Research Officer (sector, in consultation with the one responsible for the country) is the core person also in the evaluation process, although the timing is regulated somewhat by the unwritten norms in the organisation, and less when the large or controversial programmes are concerned, where also the leadership steps actively in. Still, it is the Research Officer responsible for the implementation of the project who also formulates the TOR and picks the evaluation consultants and follows up the evaluation. The formal structures, of course, are there and at times they are not only formal.

6.2 The main function of SAREC's evaluations: an administrative tool

As noted, evaluations may serve many different functions. The evaluations organised by SAREC are explicitly oriented as a management tool; its first (and often the only) justification is to serve as a basis for the preparation of the following decision document for the board involving the decision whether the project should receive continued support and eventually in what way. In some instances, the evaluation has been used in order to sort out or even solve a problem. It also happens that the tool is used as an axe, to terminate the funding of a certain project or to pave the way for a restructured country programme (the Tanzanian case); the opposite, however, is the most common pattern: it serves to legitimatise continued support.

This has created a problem, as perceived from the leadership of SAREC (secretariat and board alike), in a situation with budget cuts combined with pressure (mainly self-imposed, but not exclusively so) to take on new activities. In this situation, enthusiastic evaluations, reporting a splendid performance which deserves continued and more extensive support with a longer planning horizon are not at all helpful; the board has to make cuts against the recommendations of the evaluation, not with its blessings, which is a lot easier. If the message reported in the evaluations can be trusted, and I feel that in most cases it can, then the SAREC leadership is up against a luxury problem.

6.3 Accountability: the missing link

Still, there are also other functions which evaluation may and should fill. The most important one is the accountability function: to find out whether aid works according to the objectives set. This function may relate to different audiences: the agency itself and its board need this kind of information. But when accountability is referred to in the present context, it is the wider audience which matter, viz. SAREC's accountability vis-à-vis the government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Parliament and the general public.

To serve this function in an effective way, certain preconditions have to be met. First of all, the most important questions have to be addressed (the effectiveness of aid vis-à-vis the objectives set; for the political authorities, this implies the overall objectives set for aid). And the evaluators have to be trusted, viz. they have to be impartial and have integrity, which often is associated with external evaluators; however, external consultants may not necessarily be independent or impartial. Transparency is another precondition, often associated with the publication of the reports. It follows that different standards apply for internal and external accountability.

6.3.1 Internal accountability

Let me first briefly comment on the internal accountability. The monitoring and evaluation system described may be very effective as an administrative tool, institutional learning aside (will be commented upon later). The monitoring is carried out by the very person who is to use the information, with the assistance of disciplinary expertise when this is found necessary or useful; for obvious reasons, this comment relates to the system and not to the actual performance. The same applies to the evaluations with the difference that the actual job is done by trusted outsiders according to instructions by the person in charge of the implementation: the probability is that he or she will ask for information which may be helpful in implementing the research funding, and this information may be brought to direct use.

However, there are other aspects, too. It approaches a tautology to maintain that this system works well when it works and is highly dependent on the integrity and competence of the peoples who inhabit the system. From an accountability point of view, the system (arguing from a structural perspective) may easily be manipulated. To types of temptations may be sketched to illustrate the point:

(1) In a tight cooperation over years, involving friendly relations between the two parties in the cooperation at the personal level (and many SAREC relations have attained this quality), it may be tempting to pick consultants with a positive leaning to the activities which are supported in order to secure a basis for a recommendation of continued support. Evaluation should, almost by definition, be critical in order to create a basis for further improvements; it may be less functional in such a setting, and outright destructive if the activities are in need of reform. In the latter case, even the Research Officer at SAREC has a shared responsibility, and therefore a vested interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

(2) In a situation with budget cuts and little room for new projects, a critical evaluation may easily imply that the axe falls. This may even involve that the established balance between

the sectors is affected and consequently imply a temptation similar to the one indicated in (1).

Add the inclination which always will there: we all need and enjoy a boost, even when it is not deserved, and tend to avoid critical scrutiny. It should not come as a surprise that in none of the TORs I have seen there has been a request to look critically at how the cooperation has been handled by the SAREC secretariat; however, SAREC is no special case - the same applies to most aid agencies.

If the present system is maintained (with the present, limited function: as a basis for SAREC's decision-making), viz. that efficiency (when that applies) is prioritised for accountability, some reforms would be called for involving, as a minimum, a formalised evaluation policy and guideline where the red warning lights are lit.

However, formalised norms are not necessarily what counts the most, although they help and constitute a necessary framework. What really counts is that norms are internalised in the culture of the organisation. And probably also that some overall, external evaluations which meet wider accountability criteria, are undertaken.

6.3.2 Accountability vis-à-vis the outside

The present evaluation system includes elements which satisfy demands to accountability from the outside: in several evaluations, the performance has been related to meso-level objectives, (top) international and Swedish external experts have been commissioned to carry out the evaluations, and a few have also been published. However, most have been small, low-cost evaluations with a quite narrow perspective; few have caught general interest, not even constituted a basis for discussions on policy issues on the board of SAREC.

Given the present scope of the SAREC evaluations, there seems to be a need for broadening the evaluations. Evaluations with such a broader perspective, which also serve the wider accountability function, may be organised from within SAREC, but not through the present system. However, from an accountability perspective it will be better organised from the outside in close collaboration with SAREC.

Just to indicate issues and perspectives which evade the attention in the present system, and could be better handled by a system outside SAREC:

(1) Intra-agency: cross-cutting issues. The present, decentralised system favours sector-specific evaluations.

(2) Inter-agency: inter-related issues. In the present system, where each agency tends to avoid any intrusion in neighbouring territories, such issues tend to be neglected. This involves, in particular, the common ground between SAREC and SIDA, but some common ground exists even between SAREC and BITS. The relationship between higher education, research training and research is a case in point; the relations between the material infrastructure and research another; there are many more.

(3) The more resource-demanding evaluation tasks, which might constitute a too heavy

burden for the budget of SAREC. There is an organisational dimension which might be improved and facilitate more resource-demanding efforts: a more extensive inter-agency cooperation, nationally and internationally.

Thus, in addition to the current, project-specific evaluations, **a comparative dimension** could be added, related to sector programmes (involving many countries), aid programmes, and country programmes - and not necessarily limited to SAREC-funded projects only.

(4) The way the agencies themselves work should not be excluded from scrutiny. This is what always happens with agency-driven evaluations; SAREC, with its particular limited and self-use oriented perspective as far as evaluations are concerned, is in no way an exceptional case. A critical scrutiny of the aid agencies engaged in research cooperation with developing countries (and this is not limited to IDRC and SAREC; SIDA and other bilateral and multilateral aid agencies are also active in this field) from the perspective of the users (in the Third World and at home) might add new perspectives and provide new information of equal value both to the agencies themselves and to politicians whose task it is to provide overall guidance to these agencies and who carry the ultimate responsibility for their work.

6.4 "Technical" observations: a tentative agenda for further improvements

Technical arrangements very often have far-reaching political, social and economic implications and should be considered in such a perspective. This section therefore subsumes structural aspects with obvious policy implications with more technical aspects where these aspects are not so obvious. The purpose is more to identify problems than to provide ready-cut solutions to these problems.

6.4.1 Emphasis on qualitative aspects: disciplinary bias

A major finding emerging from the survey of a large proportion of the evaluations (Chapter 5) is that overall and intermediate-level objectives to a large extent are neglected as a point of departure for the evaluations; more than that, even project objectives seem to play a minor role. The main emphasis is on qualitative aspects within a quite limited, disciplinary framework. Why is this so? My answers to this question should be considered as tentative and exploratory.

(1) Objectives and indicators are weakly developed. One obvious answer is that the objectives set for the projects in the decision documents often are weakly developed. The objectives set for the single projects are seldom explicitly derived from the overall objectives set for aid or the intermediate levels set for SAREC's research funding; the decision paper is brief and business-like, with emphasis on the practical matters involved. What is equally important, even at the project level, the decision document often tends to avoid precise, time-fixed targets (and indicators) in quantitative terms.

This, of course, is no easy treat, especially not in this particular field where the effects often are hidden in the future, and given a short-term planning period (usually two years).

Therefore, even if the TOR should be very clear on this point, which happens, the most fundamental basis is missing or weakly developed: clear-cut objectives and time-fixed targets.

Of equal importance: the meso-level objectives are given in general terms, but no more specific criteria which might guide the assessment (guidelines, norms) have been developed in a formal sense, leaving the field wide open for very general, impressionistic judgements on the part of the consultant which may involve widely different standards from one case to the other or to a withdrawal (a tacit refusal to address the important issues involved). What are the criteria for research capacity building, given the particular political, cultural and economic setting of a developing country?

(2) A structural-based, disciplinary bias. This point is even more explorative than the former. However, the structural organisation of SAREC probably tends to reinforce a disciplinary preoccupation, which in turn leads to a focus on qualitative aspects rather than the broader (and a lot more difficult and evasive) development objectives. Evaluations may therefore be oriented towards performance in terms of quality of the output and organisational matters which may affect this performance positively or negatively rather than the broader policy issues involved; hence the reliance on experts with expertise in assessing disciplinary performance, but not necessarily equally well prepared for the broader issues involved, nor with a passion for the economic aspects involved.

Such mechanisms may be explained both from the perspectives of convenience and power - in terms of keeping control of matters within the area of responsibility. Thematic alliances constitute sub-structures along the lines of the sectoral division, reinforcing these dividing lines, with possible consequences also for the orientation of evaluations.

Members of the SAREC board are included in such informal alliances. The board consists of members who, in part, represent the Swedish research community, drawn from the various thematic areas in which the SAREC secretariat is organised, partly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA, and partly from the political environment (representing main political parties) - all prominent within their respective areas. The proceedings take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

In this setting, the opinion of the members representing the research community, outstanding experts within their fields, counts heavily for the outcome of proposals coming from the secretariat within "their" sector. These members are often integrated even at the preparatory stage, when the project proposals are prepared (a sectoral Research Officer keeps close contact with "his or her" member of the board), which both forges alliances and creates a commitment to see the proposals safely through the board. Board members also participate in field visits, particularly involving projects within their professional area of expertise. This active involvement brings disciplinary-based considerations heavily into the decision-making process and may also facilitate a bias towards scientific quality when performance is to be assessed.

6.4.2 Does SAREC learn from evaluations?

I am not able to answer this question, only to provide some fragments of an answer. The question relates to a learning system, and the SAREC evaluations relate, in the first place, to a Research Officer in charge of the implementation of a projects. Learning, therefore, becomes person-related - little use is made of an average evaluation report after the follow-up decision document is written. Still, in a system with a large degree of continuity, the learning

effects should not be totally written off. There exists no system for processing or synthesising of evaluation results within the organisation.

The question posed has a wider bearing: evaluation itself may imply competence building (although of marginal importance if the task is narrowly defined). To what extent does the present evaluation policy contribute to strengthen the competence basis in SAREC's immediate environments - which SAREC could rely on in the future? The recruitment patterns do not seem to put too strong an emphasis on such considerations, although Swedish experts are relied upon to some extent and also some Third World experts.

6.5 Recommendations

Any reform should, as its first precaution, take account of the valuable aspects of the present system, which include a competent, dedicated and concerned staff willing to take on responsibility. A few reforms may still be due; some have already been spelled out in the above.

6.5.1 The accountability deficit

The most fundamental weakness of the present evaluation system is identified in 6.3 above: the accountability deficit, and particularly the neglect of the larger, cross-cutting issues, is quite evident. An overall evaluation policy should address such issues. However, they may probably be better addressed from outside SAREC than from inside; if tackled from the inside, it might require the institutionalisation of an evaluation function within the SAREC secretariat.

6.5.2 A formal evaluation policy and a plan for evaluation

There is a need of a formal evaluation policy. Important components already exist in the SAREC culture (Chapter 3.3); however, they are not formalised. These components should be part of a formal policy which sets out

(a) overall objectives for evaluations, where a distinction is drawn between the various functions; and

(b) guidelines and norms, along with procedural matters.

It is not always possible to address different questions with the same method. It should, therefore, be differentiated between the various objectives which are to be attained by use of the evaluation instrument, and the evaluation instrument should be designed and institutionalised accordingly. The main distinction referred to in (a) is that between evaluation as

(i) primarily a management tool; to serve the needs of the agency to improve its delivery system (to get a project on the rails, improve efficiency, etc.). As such, it is best placed within the aid implementing agency itself. It serves, by and large, the same functions as monitoring, but in a more systematic way and usually adding an external, more independent perspective. Although the main purpose is more or less

the same there is a difference in scope; and

(ii) primarily serving an accountability objective. Accountability concerns are equally shared by the SAREC leadership and the political organs (Government, Parliament). In order to fill this function, the more fundamental questions have to be addressed, namely to what extent aid works according to the overall objectives set (the effectiveness of aid). The accountability function is best filled with a certain distance to the aid implementation level of the organisation.

Also the recipient side has legitimate stakes involved in evaluations which should be satisfied. In most aid agencies, recipients are by and large neglected; their role, at best, a formal one - being consulted about the plans after most in fact is decided. It is my impression that this aspect is particularly weak as far as SAREC is concerned; this follows of the primary objective of SAREC evaluations already identified: to serve as a management tool for SAREC's own decision-making. With an extended scope, as recommended, recipient's involvement must be much deeper and real.

This evaluation policy should not, however, be formed in a vacuum. The scope of the evaluation system and its main function have to be decided first, and this decision will depend on what additional systems for evaluation exist; these questions are addressed by the government-appointed Commission presently at work.

If the outcome of this process would be a new institution with the task of addressing cross-agency and cross-sectoral issues along with a concern for the more overall objectives set for Swedish development cooperation, a division of labour and coordination with the SAREC secretariat will be necessary. As noted, these tasks are not dealt with in SAREC's present evaluation system; however, if a new institution designed for such tasks is not established, they should be attended to by SAREC.

If SAREC should take on these tasks, however, its evaluation system has to be reorganised. Its present, highly decentralised decision-making structure, with no specialised institution to plan and organise evaluation, is not particularly well fit to take on such tasks. In addition, considerations related to accountability would make it more feasible to place such functions with an external institution.

In the present interregnum, suggestions for an elaborate evaluation policy for SAREC will, almost by definition, be firmly anchored in thin air. However, whatever future division of labour, the following aspects should be covered at one level or the other:

(1) A rolling and comprehensive programme for evaluation (with a two or three year planning horizon) in order to ensure that, over time, all programmes and sectors would be evaluated.

(2) Larger programmes/projects should be regularly evaluated (4-6 year intervals).

(3) The main programmes (bilateral research cooperation, development research in Sweden, etc.) and the sector programmes should also be regularly evaluated.

If the present SAREC system of evaluation is maintained (with modifications) and a new institution is established to serve the accountability function, (1) and (2) should be the responsibility of SAREC, while (3) should be organised from the outside (in cooperation with SAREC).

6.5.3 More precise objectives and criteria for performance

Nothing is more sharply exposed by evaluation than vague and diffuse objectives. The objectives traditionally constitute the norms against which performance is to be assessed; for the evaluators, these norms cannot be formulated in too precise terms - there will always be this kind of complaints. This, however, does not imply that such complaints are unjustified or can be neglected. In the case of SAREC, there are a lot more that can be done, particularly in the interface between the meso-level objectives and the project level: down to that level, SAREC has done an excellent job in interpreting and operationalising objectives and has also differentiated between the various types of activities in this regard. The last linkages to the projects are, however, often missing or not made explicit.

What really is missing, however, are formal, agreed criteria on which the most important assessments should be based. Admittedly, this is no easy treat, given the highly different research environments SAREC has to relate to. Some efforts in clarifying the many dilemmas involved - and some general norms to guide the poor evaluators - may, however, make a world of difference.

6.5.4 Administrative adjustments

Some adjustments in the administrative setting may be called for. The responsibility for evaluation should be identified.

Two alternatives may be considered:

(a) to give one senior staff member, with required insight in evaluation methods and experience in evaluation, a responsibility for the evaluation function.
In order to ensure a certain amount of independence, it may be considered whether this Research Officer should report directly to the board of SAREC (this body takes the formal decision in all projects which involve more than SEK 1.5 million); or

(b) to use the existing, formal structure and place the responsibility for evaluation with the Programme Director.

(c) It might be useful and play an integrative role in the organisation if the terms of reference, the selection of consultants, and the follow up of evaluations as a matter of routine were to be discussed in a forum consisting of the Programme Director, the Director of Administration and the heads of sections.
For more important evaluations ("important" not necessarily only in terms of the scale of the project), the consultant (team leader) may be invited to report to this forum (observations of interest which not necessarily are included in the report).

However, although such formal procedures may serve an important function, the internalised

culture matters even more: **it is important to ensure that evaluations are critical, independent and transparent** and adapted to the various objectives set.

6.5.5 Broadened scope

Within the SAREC setting, the scope of evaluations - which at present primarily serves a management function, should be broadened.

(1) The focus should not be restricted to current projects and programmes. Cross-cutting issues should be focused at in accordance with the overall and meso-level objectives of SAREC (the gender aspect, research capacity building may illustrate the point).

(2) For the international and regional programmes, it may - from a Swedish policy perspective (objectives) - be relevant, in addition to their scientific performance, also to scrutinize the extent to which the results have been implemented at the national level of developing countries; it may even be relevant to assess the instrumentality of Swedish funding in pursuing reforms according to objectives set for Swedish aid.

(3) Both scientific quality and organisational and economic aspects should be included in performance assessments. Another most important aspect in knowledge building, often neglected both in the planning, implementation and evaluation, is the system of knowledge accumulation - equally important in an aid funding agency as in a research organisation (a project which scores well on traditional criteria, but fails on this, makes a poor contribution to capacity building).

(4) The aid delivery system itself (the aid agency and its various components) should not be excluded from critical scrutiny.

One way of ensuring that the overall and intermediate objectives, and the other aspects referred to above, are brought stronger to the fore - in addition to asking for it (the TOR) - may be to include a development generalist in the team. Also within the confines of SAREC evaluations, it might be a good idea to concentrate on somewhat larger operations than what has been the general pattern till now, involving a series of projects and a comparative perspective instead of focusing on single projects.

The present practise with evaluation of smaller projects may be substituted by a more systematic follow-up. Guidelines should be established for this monitoring (based on an adapted logframe approach) which should allow for occasional assistance by external specialists as is the case at present. Such a system would suffice for most of the smaller, bilateral projects.

As noted over again: most of the points referred to above may be realised within SAREC's own evaluation system, as improved and adapted. However, some overall issues including, in particular, cross-cutting issues and issues that several institutions share part of the responsibility for, may probably be better taken care of - or supplemented - by an external organ. This applies also to the performance of the delivery system itself.

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Utrikesdepartementet, 1990, Bra beslut. Om effektivitet och utvärdering i biståndet. Ds 1990:63. Stockholm.

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APPENDIXES

1. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation.
2. The list of the evaluation reports selected for analysis and a list of the Terms of References (TORs) which were not included in these reports.
3. The decision documents (Insatspromemoria) for the activities which were evaluated in the reports selected for analysis.
4. The decision documents (Insatspromemoria) for the follow-up of the evaluation reports of the activities which were selected for analysis.
5. The open interview form directing interviews with SAREC's research officers and part of the interviews with the heads of sections.
6. List of persons interviewed.
7. SASDA date worksheet for evaluations.
8. SAREC, organisation chart.

APPENDIX 1

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation

SARECs system för utvärderingar och projektbedömning

Uppdraget syftar till att beskriva och analysera SARECs system för projektbedömning och utvärderingar. Det omfattar myndighetens verksamhet med bilateralt forskningssamarbete samt regionala och internationella forskningsprogram. Uppdraget är en komponent i SAUs analys av biståndsorganisationernas förmåga att lära av egna erfarenheter samt att systematiskt följa och självkritiskt granska sitt arbete och bör ses mot denna bakgrund (se också nedan).

I uppdraget ingår att göra en beskrivning och analys av organisationens arbetssätt vad gäller projektbedömningar och utvärderingar, vilket innefattar att göra en genomgång av ett urval projektutvärderingar samt projektbedömningar. Två typer av material bör granskas:

a) utvärderingar av pågående och avslutade insatser;

b) projektbedömningar och annat beslutsunderlag, vilket lägger grunden för en systematisk projektbedömning och resultatvärdering.

Bakgrund

Uppdraget utgår från på en tes om utvärderingars roll i en organisations arbete. Denna tes kan kort formuleras som att en organisations förmåga att lära av egna utvärderingar av genomförda uppgifter fungerar väl endast under vissa förutsättningar. En viktig sådan förutsättning är att organisationen redan vid initieringen av ett nytt projekt gör det tydligt vilka mål och kriterier som kännetecknar framgång i projektet och därmed hur graden av framgång eller misslyckande skall kunna avgöras. Detta underlag bör göras tydligt i planeringsprocessen, inklusive projektbedömningar och beslutsunderlag. Med denna utgångspunkt kan sedan en reell kontroll göras av arbetet både under gång och efter avslutande genom utvärderingar, där de ursprungliga föreställningarna om mål, kriterier och värderingar ställs mot verksamhetens resultat (inklusive ändrade mål om så behövs). Detta sätt att arbeta med utvärderingar kan ge organisationen en systematisk återföring av erfarenheter i en process som kan karakteriseras av substantiellt lärande. Mot detta står utvärderingar använda som mera formella, ytliga instrument för verksamhetsuppföljning och -kontroll i processer som karakteriseras av mer eller mindre symboliskt lärande. För referenser och utförligare kommentar hänvisas till Bra Beslut (Ds 1990:63), sid 89-97.

APPENDIX 2

(1) The list of the evaluation reports selected for analysis

1. TANZANIA. Development of Scientific Research and SAREC's Support 1977-1991, by Carl Widstrand. Stockholm: SAREC Documentation/Reseach Surveys. 1992.

   Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Country survey.

2. SOCIAL SCIENCE IN AFRICA: The role of CODESRIA in Pan-African cooperation, by Stefan de Vylder and Anders Hjort af Ornäs. Stockholm: SAREC DOCUMENTATION/Evaluations 1991:1.

   Programme: Regional research cooperation. Sector: Social Science and the Humanities.

3. Review mission of the SAREC-supported Pakistani-Swedish medical research collaboration "Breast-feeding in a developing country", by Lars Åke Persson, Per Juto and Dilip Ma[illegible]alanabis. Unpublished (mimeo). January 1990.

   Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Health and Nutrition.

4. Evaluation of some SAREC-supported research projects in Ethiopia. Master Degree Programmes in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Civil and Electrical Engineering and Geography, by Silas Gustafsson. Unpublished (mimeo) and undated (1990).

   Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Natural Sciences, Technology and Industrialisation.

5. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD): A follow-up and an assessment of the research programme, by Peter Anyang' Nyong'o and Håkan Hydén. Unpublished (mimeo), dated 1991-11-12.

   Programme: International research programmes. Sector: Social Sciences and the Humanities.

6. Indigenous nitrogen-fixing trees with potential for village afforestation in Tanzania, by Carl Widstrand (with Sven Nilsson), in Carl Widstrand, Six SAREC Projects in Tanzania, dated April/May 1991.

   Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Rural Development and Environment.

7. Water use by forest plantations, by Carl Widstrand (with Sven Nilsson), in Carl Widstrand, Six SAREC Projects in Tanzania, dated April/May 1991.

   Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Rural Development and Environment.

8. Materials for energy efficiency and solar energy application, by Carl Widstrand (with Ron Howson), in Carl Widstrand, Six SAREC Projects in Tanzania, dated April/May 1991.

   Programme: Bilateral research cooperation. Sector: Natural Sciences, Technology and Industrialisation.

9. Utvärdering av SARECs långsiktiga stöd till u-landsinriktade forskningsmiljöer, by Anders Hjort af Ornäs, Jan Valdelin, Stefan de Vylder and Lennart Peck, Interconsult Sweden AB, dated July, 1992 (mimeo).

   Programme: Development Research in Sweden. Sectors: all.

(2) A list of the Terms of References (TORs) which were not included in these reports

For the evaluation listed as 1:

SAREC, Beslut av sekretariatet, Beslut nummer 237/1990, S/1.22, 2 TAN 02, föredragande: Michael Ståhl, beslutande: forskningschefen Bo Bengtsson, Anlitande av Digamma International Development Consultants för sammanställning av en översikt av forskningssituationen i Tanzania.

For the evaluation listed as 3:

SAREC, Beslut av sekretariatet, Beslut nummer 367/1989, 1989-11-01, S/ 2 PAK 12, föredragande: Lennart Freij, beslutande: Rolf Carlman, programchef, utvärdering av medicinsk samarbetsproject mellan institutioner i Pakistan och Sverige, "Breast-feeding in a developing country". (A five-point, condensed summary is included in the evaluation report, p. 3, under the heading "Background".)

For the evaluation listed as 4:

Ethiopian-Swedish Research Cooperation under ESTC-SAREC Research Cooperation Agreement. Draft Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Research Projects under the above Agreement. SAREC M R Bhagavan 1989-12-05.

For the evaluation listed as 5:

Terms of Reference for follow up and assessment of UNRISD's research programme. 4.12 UNRISD. SAREC Secretariatet, Jan-Olof Lundberg 1991-09-03.

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SAREC, M Ståhl, 1990-08-09, Terms of Reference for the evaluation of Six SAREC-supported Research Projects in Tanzania (appendix to letter addressed to Digamma International, dated 1990-08-21 and signed by Rolf Calmar. Director of Programmes).

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SAREC, M Ståhl, 1990-08-09, Terms of Reference for the evaluation of Six SAREC-supported Research Projects in Tanzania (appendix to letter addressed to Digamma International, dated 1990-08-21 and signed by Rolf Calmar. Director of Programmes).

APPENDIX 3

The decision documents (Insatspromemoria) for the activities which were evaluated in the reports selected for analysis

1. For the evaluation report listed as 1:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Bo Göhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania, Insatspromemoria, 1988-10-20, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1988:5, S/O.33.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Michael Ståhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1990/91 - 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1990-08-06, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:4, O.33. 2 TAN 01.

2. For the evaluation report listed as 2:

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Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, Sekretariatet, Enrique Ganuza,Insatspromemoria 1985 10 03, Stöd till afrikanska samhällsvetenskapliga rådet - CODESRIA, Punkt 11, Styrelsen 1985: 9.49 SAREC/1.1 CODESRIA.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Göran Hedebro, Insatspromemoria 1990-12-17, Fortsatt stöd till samhällsvetenskaplig forskning i Afrika, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:6, S/0.33, S/3.10 Pass.

3. For the evaluation report listed as 3:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, L.Freij/IW, Insatspromemoria 1981 08 05, Stöd till samarbetsprojekt mellan medicinska institutioner i Sverige og Pakistan inom forskningsområdet amning och diarré-sjukdomar, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1981: 9.49/u-forsk. 1.PAK.01.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, L.Freij/etb, Insats PM 1983 07 28, Fortsatt stöd till forskningssamarbete mellan medicinska institutioner i Pakistan och Sverige inom forskningsområdet amning och diarresjukdomar, Punkt 6, Styrelsen 1983:4. 9.49 u-forsk/ 1.4.15 0.02.

Leif Gothefors, 85 09 13 (to Lennart Freij), Yttrande över ansökan om fortsatt stöd till medicinsk samarbetsprojekt mellan pakistanska och svenska institutioner.

Lennart Hammarström, 85 09 04 (to Lennart Freij), Utvärdering av immunologiska aspekter på projektet "Breast-feeding in a developing country"

Roland Möllby, 1985-09-30 (to SAREC, Lennart Freij), Utlåtande, Ansökan: "Breast-feeding in a developing country"...

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, I. Freij, Fortsatt stöd till medicinsk forskningssamarbete mellan institutioner i Pakistan och Sverige, Insatspromemoria, 1987 05 21, Punkt 5, Styrelsen 1987:3, 9.49 SAREC/0.02.

For the evaluation report listed as 4:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, M Bhagavan/sa, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Etiopien, Insatspromemoria, 1986 08 12, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1986:5, 9.49 SAREC/ 0.02.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, M Bhagavan, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Etiopien, Insatspromemoria, 1988-05-20, Punkt 2, Styrelsen 1988:3, S/0.31.

For the evaluation report listed as 5:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Göran Hedebro, Fortsatt stöd till FNs institut för forskning om social utveckling: UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development), Insatspromemoria, 1986 11 12, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1986:7, 9.49 SAREC/ 0.02.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Göran Hedebro, Fortsatt stöd till FNs institut för forskning om social utveckling; UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development), Insatspromemoria, 1987 11 27, Punkt 6, Styrelsen 1987:6, 9.49 SAREC/ 0.02.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Michael Ståhl, Stöd till UNRISD, Insatspromemoria, 1988-11-25, Punkt 5, Styrelsen 1988:6, S/O.33.

For the evaluation report listed as 6:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Bo Göhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania, Insatspromemoria, 1988-10-20, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1988:5, S/O.33.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Michael Ståhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1990/91 - 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1990-08-06, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:4, O.33. 2 TAN 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 7:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Bo Göhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania, Insatspromemoria, 1988-10-20, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1988:5, S/O.33.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Michael Ståhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1990/91 - 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1990-08-06, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:4, O.33. 2 TAN 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 8:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Bo Göhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania, Insatspromemoria, 1988-10-20, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1988:5, S/O.33.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Michael Ståhl, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1990/91 - 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1990-08-06, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:4, O.33. 2 TAN 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 9:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, M Kihlberg/ka, SARECs stöd till svensk u-landsforskning via "Svensk ansökan" - programmets utveckling de närmaste åren, IDÉPM 1985 05 10, Punkt 9, Styrelsen 1985:2, 9.49 u-forsk/ 0.02.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, M Kihlberg/sa, SARECs stöd till svensk u-landsforskning - planering för ett förandrat program, Idépromemoria 1986 02 03, Punkt 7b, Styrelsen 1986:1, 9.49 SAREC/ 0.02.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, M Kihlberg/sa, SARECs stöd till svensk u-landsforskning - ett mer långsiktigt program, INSATSPM 1986 03 21, Punkt 5, Styrelsen 1986:2, 9.49 SAREC/ 0.02.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, Protokoll, 1986 04 21, Sammanträde med styrelsen för u-landsforskning, SAREC, Styrelsen 2986:2, 9.49/SAREC/0.02.

SARECs stöd till svensk u-landsforskning 1976-1988 (Gunilla Andrae and Mats Kihlberg), SAREC, april 1990.

APPENDIX 4

The decision documents (Insatspromemoria) for the follow-up of the evaluation reports of the activities which were selected for analysis

For the evaluation report listed as 1:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Per Arne Ströberg, Insatspromemoria, Reviderad 1992-06-18. Fortsatt stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1992:3, 0.33, BIL-TAN-SH-F.

For the evaluation report listed as 2:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Göran Hedebro, Insatspromemoria, 1990-12-17, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:6, S/0.33, S/3.10 PASS.

For the evaluation report listed as 3:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Lennart Freij, Fortsatt stöd till medicinsk forskningssamarbete mellan institutioner i Pakistan och Sverige, Insatspromemoria, 1991-05-21, Punkt 8, Styrelsen 1991:3, 0.33.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Lennart Freij, Fortsatt stöd till medicinsk forskningssamarbete mellan institutioner i Pakistan och Sverige, Insatspromemoria, 1992-04-09, Punkt 3, Styrelsen 1992:3, BIL-PAK-HN-01-B.

For the evaluation report listed as 4:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, M Bhagavan, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Etiopien, Insatspromemoria, 1990-05-22, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1990:3, S/0.33, S/2 ETI 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 5:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Per Arne Ströberg, Fortsatt stöd till FNs institut för forskning om social utveckling; UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development), Insatspromemoria, 1991-11-27, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1991:6, S/O.33, S/O.33.

For the evaluation report listed as 6:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Jan Olof Lundberg, Dtöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1991-05-15, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1991:3, S/O.33, S/2 TAN 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 7:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Jan Olof Lundberg, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1991-05-15, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1991:3, S/O.33, S/2 TAN 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 8:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, Jan Olof Lundberg, Stöd till forskningssamarbete med Tanzania 1991/92, Insatspromemoria, 1991-05-15, Punkt 4, Styrelsen 1991:3, S/O.33, S/2 TAN 01.

For the evaluation report listed as 9:

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, sekretariatet, A Kolsmyr/M Kihlberg, Utlysning av anslag till svensk u-landsforskning, Insatspromemoria, 12 oktober 1992, Reviderad 92-10-29, Punkt 7, Styrelsen 1992:5, 0.33, SWE-A.

Styrelsen för u-landsforskning, Protokoll, 1992-11-11, Styrelsen 1992:5, S/0.33.

APPENDIX 5

Open form for interviews with the officers at SAREC with the responsibility of administering the evaluation[5]

1. Who took the initiative to have the project evaluated?

Sectoral desk?
Regional office?
Section for special studies?
Division of administration?
Director-General of SAREC?
Others (who?)
From outside SAREC (who?)

2. Who composed the evaluation team?

Proposals from/in consultation with whom?

Sectoral desk?
Regional office?
Section for special studies?
Division of administration?
Director-General of SAREC?
Others (who?)
From outside SAREC (who?)

3. Who prepared the TOR?

Proposals from/in consultation with whom?

Sectoral desk?
Regional office?
Section for special studies?
Division of administration?
Director-General of SAREC?
Others (who?)
From outside SAREC (who?)
Partner in development?
Team leader/team

[5] This form has also been used for part of the interviews with the heads of sections in cases where they have been the ones who administered the project concerned.

4. What was the main reason for undertaking this particular evaluation?

Decision whether to continue or not?
A particular problem involving implementation?
Establishing a basis for a policy shift? In that case: policy shift at what level (SAREC Adm/Board, MFA/Government)?
Other reason (specify)

5. Who was supposed to be the main user of the information brought forward by the evaluation report?
And for what purpose?

Sectoral desk?
Regional office?
Section for special studies?
Division of administration?
Director-General of SAREC?
Board of SAREC?
MFR/government
Parliament
Project management at the recipient side
Recipient administration
Others (Who?)

6. What was the role of SAREC staff in the evaluation?

7. What happened to the evaluation report after it was delivered?

7.1 Who were asked to comment on its findings and main recommendations (formal hearing, in writing)?

7.2 Was a press release issued?
A summary prepared and circulated (to whom?)
Presented in a staff seminar at SAREC?

7.3 Was it presented to MFA (in what way: in the mail? with recommendations?)
In what way, if at all, where the findings presented to Parliament?

7.4 Was the report presented to the Board of SAREC? In what form - with suggestions from SAREC (Administration - A) for a follow-up?

7.5 What came out of the SAREC (B) meeting?

* Considered as an information and discussed in general or specific terms?
* Formal decisions on policy? administrative follow up? policy recommendations to the MFA?
* Informal policy follow up (by Director-General, Chairperson of SAREC (B))?

7.6 What came out of the SAREC (A) handling?

* Implementation level: sector desk? administrative desk?
* SAREC future planning (how? which manifestations?)

8. Anything else which you find might be of interest related to this particular evaluation - during its full cycle - from its initiating to its follow-up?

Observation points:
Find out if the procedure followed is unique for this particular evaluation or representative for the procedures followed within the particular sector or in general.

Find out the involvement of the desk officer in the preparation, the implementation and follow-up of the evaluation.

Find out how the learning process functions and how the evaluation is integrated in this process (personal and institutional levels).

APPENDIX 6

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

At SAREC:

Tom Alberts, Research Officer, Social Sciences and the Humanities, SAREC

Malur Bhagavan, Head of Section, Natural Sciences and Techonology, SAREC

Lennart Frey, Head of Section, Health and Nutrition, SAREC

Johan Holmberg, Programme Director, SAREC

Mats Kihlberg, Research Officer, Documentation and Research, SAREC

Jan-Olof Lundberg, Programme Officer, Rural Development and Environment, SAREC

Ann Stödberg, Head of Section, Social Sciences and the Humanities, SAREC

Carl-Gustav Thornström, Head of Section, Rural Development and Environment, SAREC

Anders Wijkman, Director-General, SAREC

Board of SAREC:

Daniel Tarschys, MP, Chairman, Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Chairman, Board of SAREC

Lennart Båge, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SASDA:

Mårten Carlsson, Rector, Agricultural University, Ullstuna, Member, Board of SASDA.

Enrique Ganuza, Senior Policy Analyst, SASDA

Evaluation Consultants

Anders Hjort af Ornäs, EPOS, Uppsala
Carl Widstrand, Ottawa (Canada)

Others:

Johnny Andersson, Director, University of Uppsala, previously a member of the SAREC Board for a number of years.

Lars-Erik Edqvist, Pro-Rector, Agricultural University, Ulltuna and member of one of the committees for "Svensk ansøkan".

APPENDIX 7. SASDA DATA WORKSHEET FOR EVALUATIONS (final version)

This form is used as a support for the scrutiny of evaluations of development aid agencies. Please tick off all questions, also when the questions are not relevant.

The evaluation report below has been assessed by:

Date for assessment:

1. Basic evaluation information

Agency	SIDA	BITS	SAREC	Swedecorp	UD

Other agency/organisation and country of headquarters

Evaluation report title:

Evaluation report number or designation:

Report date (year):

Evaluation team leader	Not reported	Name:
Institution of the team leader	Not reported	Name, country
Agency manager of the evaluation task	Not reported	Name:

2. Characteristics of the evaluation object (mark only **one** alternative answer to these questions)

Type (donor perspective):	*project*[6]	sector, program[7]	organisation[8]	country	other	
Region:	Africa	Asia	Latin America	Middle East	Europe	other
Total size of project/programme[9]:	<1 Mkr	1-10 Mkr	10-50 Mkr	>50 Mkr	unknown	
Length of project[10]:	<2 yrs	2-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	>10 yrs		
Evaluated earlier:	several times	once	no	unknown		
Product (beneficiary perspective):	Agriculture[11]	Industry	Infrastructure	Health	Education	Services
	Public administr.[12]	Democracy, HR[13]	Disaster relief	Swedish NGO[14]	Cross-cutting i.	General, not relevant
Aid channel (responsible ag.):	Multilateral	Bilateral	NGO	Commercial[15]	Other	
Receiver:	Public sector	Private	Semi-privat, mixed			

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6 Including evaluations of a set of projects of similar kind but not explicitly forming a sector programme as seen from the donor agency point of view.

7 Evaluations of several different activities making up a sector programme of the agency.

8 Support to an organisation where the purpose of the acitivity is to support the whole organisation. Support to public administration reform (förvaltningsbistånd) is listed under "Sector, program".

9 Classify the project /programme according to ackumulated costs for the project/programme from its first beginning (including preparatory and previous activities of closely related character and with similar objectives and organisational set-up).

10 Same as footnote 2 above

11 Including rural development, veterinary and forestry development

12 Including policy advice. "Public" is interpreted in a broad sense to include, central, regional and local public and semi-public organisations, parastatal bodies and organisations which are dominated by public ownership or control.

13 HR - human rights, humanitarian aid but not support to refugees.

14 'Support to Swedish non-governmental organisations for various aid activities where theyalso contribute with own funds.

15 Private or semi-private organisation in charge of the transfer of resources and the carrying out of the work.

3. The evaluation process

Type of evaluation	study, review	evaluation	research
Timing of evaluation	mid-term[16]	end of project	ex-post
Cost of evaluation[17]	low	medium	high
According to original agreement[18]	yes	no	unknown

4. The evaluation team (assessment of team composition and competence as reported or spelled out in terms of reference)

Size:	total	women	
Agency/donor present	yes	no	unknown
Beneficiary country present	yes	no	unknown
Sector expert competence present	yes	no	unknown
Evaluation expert competence present	yes	no	unknown

16 Mid-term evaluation is evaluation which is undertaken before the project has been terminated (including evaluation when there is no decision yet on termination).

17 Low = Less than three manmonths and one journey outside Europe (corresponding to less than 400000 kr at present price level) ; High = More than eight manmonths and three journeys (corresponding to more than approx 1 Mkr).

18 Marked "yes" if there has been a formal agreement on evaluation with the beneficiary och executing organisation at the commencement of the project or of current project phase.

5. Characteristics of the evaluation report(s)

Report language	Swedish	English	Benficiary country language	
Terms of reference included	yes	no		
Report on work plan included	yes	no		
Summary language	Swedish	English	Beneficiary country languge	no summary
Recommendations included	yes	no		
Recommendations actionable by donor	yes	no		
Recommendations actionable by beneficiary	yes	no		

6. Presentation of evaluation methodology and assumptions

Methodology issues are addressed[19]	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Hypothesis and assumptions of the evaluation team are made explicit	yes	no		
Formal techniques used (e. g. CBA, ERR etc)	yes	no		

19 Assessment of how well the methodological problems of the evaluation task have been addressed.

7. Methodology for data collection (assesment of to what extent the various methods for data collection listed below have been used in relation to the evaluation tasks)

Agency documents used[20]	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Use of other documents[21]	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Agency personnel interviewed[22]	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Project staff interviewed	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Beneficiary interviewed	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Other donor interviewed	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Interview protocols or guides	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Direct observation of project work	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Observation data instruments	adequate	limited	no	not relevant

8. Analysis of main project determinants (assessment of to what extent the main determinants listed below have been discussed in the report)

Development objective achieved[23]	adequate	limited	no
Immediate objective achieved[24]	adequate	limited	no
Key project assumptions examined[25]	adequate	limited	no

20 Adequate use includes specific references to earlier evaluations and relevant project and country documents at headquarter.

21 Including relevant reports from other agencies, research reports and similar material.

22 Both at agency headquarter and local agency representatives.

23 General donor objectives (e g economic growth, disaster mitigation).

24 As spelled out in project initiation documents

25 Referring to explicit or implicit assumptions about casual relations between various actions and effects, about context, about economic conditions, actors and their interests etc.

9. Analysis made in the report *(assessment of to what extent the different types of analysis listed below have been carried out in the evaluation)*

Country's need for the project	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Comparisons with/without the project	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Project expenditures analysis	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Project benefits analysis	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Assessment of effectiveness[26]	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Assessment of efficiency[27]	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Discussion of agency's monitoring	adequate	limited	no	not relevant

10. Sustainability of project. (assessment ot what extent the following issues have been addressed in the evaluation)

Sustainability of project/programme after agency withdrawal	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Alternative financing of project/programme after agency withdrawal	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Availability of foreign exchange for sustainability	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Degree of financing of project/programme from earned revenues	adequate	limited	no	not relevant
Commitment of host country/local management for sustainability	adequate	limited	no	not relevant

11. Measured in the evaluation (assessment of the treatment of quantitative measures, normally economic):

Inputs:	adequate	limited	no
Outputs:	adequate	limited	no

26 To what extent desired objectives have been achieved.

27 Relations between costs and benefits, inner efficiency

12. Cross-cutting issues (assessment of the treatment of additional issues of general character, as gender, environment etc.)

Gender issues	adequate	limited	no
Environment	adequate	limited	no
Human rights	adequate	limited	no
Democracy	adequate	limited	no
Market economy[28]	adequate	limited	no

13. Is there a discussion of broader lessons learned?	adequate	limited	no
14. Discussion of validity of results[29]	adequate	limited	no
15. Discussion of reliability of results	adequate	limited	no
16. Summary impression, overall quality	excellent	adequate	inadequate

(Excellent: systematic, thorough and insightful

Adequate: competent professional work although with significant limitations

Inadequate: extensive and important limitations)

28 May for example involve discussion of marketing conditions, prices, exchange rate effects, and institutional and organisational problems affecting the marketing conditions.

29 A discussion of to what extent the measured and analysed variables really measure the decisive and relevant aspects of the project objectives. An adequate discussion should analyse alternative variables and should question the results.

SAREC Secretariat Organization

