



Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys

Stockholm 2016-12-16

The Expert Group for Aid Studies

Invitation for proposals: How important is ownership for aid effectiveness, and do Swedish development actors work in the right way?

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is a government committee with a mandate to analyse and evaluate Sweden's international development assistance with the purpose of improving it. In fulfilling this task, we engage researchers and other experts to carry out studies of relevance for policymakers and practitioners.

The EBA has decided to commission a study on the importance of ownership in international development cooperation and the approaches and methods used by Swedish development actors to strengthen ownership. We hereby invite researchers, analysts and evaluators to submit a proposal for such a study.

Background, aim and questions

There is a broad international consensus that 'country ownership' is important for the success of international development cooperation efforts. In the 2005 Paris Declaration, ownership was highlighted as one of five key principles for aid effectiveness. In Swedish international development cooperation, ownership has been considered a key element and is a recurring issue in policies and steering documents. In the early 2000s, a series of studies and evaluations were carried out focusing on ownership in Swedish development cooperation¹. Apart from the fact that ownership is often included in decentralised evaluations by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), there have been few substantive studies in recent years on aid effectiveness with a focus on Swedish efforts to ensure and strengthen ownership. At the same time, the conditions for international development cooperation have changed in the past 10–15 years with new international development actors, decreased importance of aid in relation to other financial flows, and the agreement on a global framework for development – the 2030 Agenda. In parallel to this, the thematic focus, choice of partners/countries and modalities of Swedish bilateral development cooperation have changed in favour of a focus on democracy, human rights, gender equality, climate,

¹ E.g. Molund, S., *Ownership in Focus*, Sida Studies in Evaluation, 00/5, 2000; Ostrom et al., *Aid, Incentives, and Sustainability*, Sida Studies in Evaluation 02/01, 2002; Weeks et al.; *Supporting Ownership: Swedish Development Cooperation with Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda*, Sida Evaluation 02/33, 2002; Edgren, G., *Donorship, Ownership and Partnership. Issues arising from Four Studies of Donor-Recipient Relations*, Sida Studies in Evaluation 03/03, 2003; Apthorpe et al, *KTS and Local Ownership: An Assessment of Sida's Contract Financed Technical Co-operation*, Sida Evaluation 03/09, Stockholm 2003.

capacity development, civil society, private sector development, multilateral channels and countries in conflict/post-conflict. Also, the way that Swedish strategies are developed has changed.

In light of these changes and the general understanding of the central role of ownership for effective aid, the EBA has decided to commission a study to analyse the importance of ownership, as well as Sweden's efforts to ensure and strengthen ownership. The overall aim of the study is to provide a thorough analysis of ownership and its significance for aid effectiveness, as well as a better understanding of how Sweden could/should relate to ownership given the changing conditions, the character of Swedish aid and the new global agendas.

The study should include a) an analysis of previous research and evaluations of the role of ownership for aid effectiveness, taking into account the changing conditions for development cooperation and aid; and b) an empirical analysis of how Swedish actors work on ownership. We foresee a study in two parts. Part 1 should primarily focus on analysing and synthesising relevant literature (research, studies and evaluations) with the purpose of providing a deeper understanding of ownership and establishing the foundation for an analytical framework that can guide the empirical work in part 2. Part 2, hence, will focus on the empirical analysis of how Swedish actors work on ownership and a more general assessment and discussion of how ownership is interpreted and strengthened within the current landscape of development cooperation and aid.

Ownership may be seen both as a prerequisite and as a goal to be achieved. In the study, ownership should be understood in a broad perspective and, besides government actors, also relate to other relevant partners, such as CSOs etc.

The study should focus on providing answers to the following questions:

Part 1: *When, how and why is 'ownership' important for aid effectiveness? What could/should donors do in order to ensure national and local ownership of development efforts financed by international aid?*

Examples of tentative underlying questions are : What does ownership actually mean? How important is ownership and why? How can we ensure and strengthen ownership? Does the answer differ depending on sector, modality, type of partner/organisation or geography?

Part 2: *Do Swedish actors engaged in international development cooperation (MFA, Sida, CSOs etc.) work in an effective way to ensure and strengthen national and local ownership of Swedish bilateral development cooperation? What could and should be done to further strengthen ownership in development efforts financed by Swedish actors?*

Examples of tentative underlying questions are: How has the principle of ownership been put into practice in Swedish international development cooperation and has this changed over time? What significance has ownership had in the steering, organisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Swedish aid? What characterises Swedish bilateral development cooperation and what would characterise bilateral support with a strong focus on ownership? What do we know about how Sweden works to ensure ownership from previous evaluations of Swedish development cooperation?

The authors are encouraged to elaborate on the underlying questions and to specify which of these questions they would like to include in their proposal. They should also specify how much time and resources they would like for each part of the study.

Implementation and methods

We foresee that the results from part 1 and part 2 should be reported in writing (in English) and be published in the EBA report series.

The contributors are given an open mandate with regard to implementation, focus and methods with the aim that they should let their expertise guide the choice of approach in answering the study questions. We hope that this open task will be attractive and encourage innovation in submitted proposals.

The EBA works with 'dual independence'. This means that the EBA independently defines what issues to explore and which studies to commission. The content and the conclusion of each report is, however, the responsibility of the author/s.

The proposal should include a detailed analytical framework for the study proposed. It is up to the authors to choose study design and methods, but the choices should be justified.

While there is no requirement for the main applicant to understand Swedish, the study team should include someone with the ability to use, analyse and understand documents written in Swedish.

For all studies, the EBA will set up a reference group (members are designated by the EBA in dialogue with the authors). The task of the group is to provide support and advice to the author(s) throughout the course of the working process. The overall purpose of the reference group is to strengthen the quality of the report. The group will be chaired by one of the EBA members.

Administration, budget and timetable

The project proposal should be no longer than 15 pages (excluding annexes, CVs etc.) and should, in addition to the proposal and a presentation of the team, include a budget and a detailed preliminary timetable. The maximum cost is SEK 1 200 000 (approximately USD 135 000). The timetable should include details regarding the time to be used by each member of the study team.

The budget should accommodate 3–5 meetings with the reference group. If the team resides outside Sweden, some of the meetings could be conducted via video link. The following preliminary timetable should be considered:

Deadline for proposals	15 February 2017
Evaluation of proposals	16 February – 13 March 2017
Proposals selected by the EBA	21–22 March 2017
Contract signed	April 2017
Final report delivered (the latest date possible to suggest in proposal)	1 November 2018

The proposal should be sent to markus.burman@gov.se

Possible questions shall be sent via e-mail to Markus Burman (markus.burman@gov.se).

All questions and answers will be published on the Kommers Annons website (www.kommersannons.se)

Selection of proposals

The following criteria will be used in the screening of proposals:

1. Quality of proposal in terms of design, methods and plan for implementation (weighting 60 per cent).
2. Experiences and qualifications of team members in the areas of 1) aid effectiveness and ownership; 2) international development cooperation, including policy, management, organisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and 3) Swedish development cooperation. Diversity in the composition of the evaluation group will be looked upon favourably (weighting 25 per cent).
3. Cost (weighting 15 per cent).

See attached table for which factors will be considered with respect to each of these criteria.

About the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is a government committee with a mandate to evaluate and analyse Sweden's international development assistance, in particular its execution, results and efficiency. The EBA's remit is to commission studies and arrange seminars on issues of relevance to the Swedish development sector. The expert group brings together a number of committee members who convene regularly to discuss and commission studies on development assistance.

The expert group consists of: Lars Heikensten (chair), Gun-Britt Andersson (vice chair), Kim Forss, Torgny Holmgren, Eva Lithman, Malin Mobjörk, Arne Bigsten, Julia Schalk and Lennart Peck (experts, MFA).

Assessment criteria

Criteria	1. Quality of proposal in terms of plan for implementation, study design and methods used (weighting 60 per cent).	2. Experiences and qualifications of team members in the areas of interest. Diversity in the composition of the study team will be looked upon favourably (weighting 25 per cent).	3. Cost (weighting 15 per cent).
Scale	Each criterion is graded on a scale of 0–5 (where 0 = not applicable, so effectively 1–5 is applied). Grade 5 = extraordinary or exceeds all expectations; grade 1 = sub-standard. Grade 3 = fair, reasonable, in line with what can be expected. Each criterion is then weighted (i.e. the grade is multiplied by the respective weighting) to obtain a final grade (the sum of the weighted grades of the criteria).		
Specifications (numbered in order of importance)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the study's design, i.e. approach, method, and implementation, make it possible to answer the EBA's questions? 2. Are proven and tested methods and forms of data collection to be used? 3. Have the method and approach been described in a specific and transparent manner? 4. Is the study possible and feasible in terms of implementation? 5. Are there any limitations with the method? 6. Level of innovation in design and method? 7. Will the study's design enable conclusions that can be expected to form the basis of use, learning and reflection among the EBA's target groups (primarily MFA and Sida)? 8. Can the study be implemented without any ethical breaches occurring? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project leader's experience of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Aid effectiveness and ownership b) International development cooperation (including policy, governance, organisation, implementation and follow-up/evaluation). c) Swedish international development cooperation 2. Expertise in the team, beyond the project leader, that is particularly interesting in relation to the study and proposal (<i>see specific areas above</i>) 3. Academic merits of the project leader 4. Team's composition and complementarity Diversity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Women/men in the team b) People with a background from a low/middle income country/recipient country c) Proportion of young and older people 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total price in SEK 2. Price/hour 3. Proportion of time (per cent) for project leader 4. Proportion of time (per cent) for Research assistant or junior employee
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		5. Language skills in relation to the needs of the assignment 6. Number of team members	
Proposal # 1			
Proposal # 2			
Proposal #3			
Conclusions			
Points and Weighted Points (1-5)			
Summed ranking:			

Each criterion (quality of method, team's expertise and price) is assessed according to a five-grade scale and is then weighted (60 per cent, 25 per cent, 15 per cent). A simple addition of these weighted points then gives the final point in an interval from 0 to 5. The material for all assessments is the material attached to the proposal.