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Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys

The Expert Group for Aid Studies

Invitation for proposals:

Evaluation of Swedish central government authorities' reform cooperation on the Western Balkans

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) is a government committee mandated to study the direction, governance and implementation of Sweden's official development assistance (ODA). The committee involves an Expert group of ten members, and a secretariat placed in Stockholm. The EBA engages researchers and other experts to carry out studies of relevance for policymakers and practitioners.

The EBA hereby invites proposals for an evaluation of the Swedish central government authorities' reform cooperation with the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia).

[Background, aim and questions](#)

More and more research has shown that so-called *quality of government* factors (control of corruption, the rule of law, administrative competence) have a strong positive impact on most standard measures of human well-being (such as infant mortality, life expectancy and child poverty) and that good quality of government is central for development.¹

Swedish central government authorities have since long been active in supporting the development of the technical and administrative capacity of the sister authorities in line with professional and EU standards for service and good government through various initiatives financed with Official Development Assistance through Sida's budget. This cooperation has been assessed in several evaluations and studies (see Background material below), but few (if any) of these studies have investigated the long-term results and effects in partner countries and/or related the results to the costs of the interventions.

The EBA would now like to inquire into the effectiveness of a set of these interventions in the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans is deemed suitable due to the relative importance of this type of Swedish support to the region, but also due to the importance of an increased quality of governance for future EU accession of these countries. As stated in a recent strategy presented by the European Commission in February 2018, the countries of the Western Balkans could join the EU as early as 2025. However, the "rule of law, (...) and governance must be strengthened significantly.

¹ See e.g. Rothstein and Tannenber (2015), "Making Development Work: The Quality of Government Approach", EBA report 2015:07.

Judicial reforms, the fight against corruption and organized crime, and public administration reform need to deliver real results and the functioning of democratic institutions needs to be seriously enhanced.”²

In a regional context, differences and similarities between countries, organizations and interventions will allow for comparisons and contrasting perspectives. An approach focusing on one specific region will make it possible to study the extent to which there has been a broader, or more holistic, perspective from the donor side, including efficient donor coordination (incl. the EU).

Swedish government authorities’ reform cooperation on the Western Balkans

One important component of Swedish reform cooperation in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans is Swedish authorities' capacity-building efforts with sister authorities. The long-term goal of these efforts is to bring countries closer to the EU and foster economic and social integration between the region and the EU.³

The Western Balkans is also one of the regions in which Swedish central government authorities have had the largest number of aid-financed capacity development initiatives during the last two decades. A preliminary list of interventions is presented in the table.

Swedish central authorities’ cooperation in the Western Balkan countries since 1998 (tentative list)			
<i>Authority</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Approx. Allocations MSEK 1998- 2018</i>
Statistics Sweden (SCB)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia	1999-2018	255
Swedish Police Authority (Polisenmyndigheten)	Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia	2002-2018	146
The Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority (Lantmäteriet)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, Kosovo	2006-2018	90
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro	2004-2018	66
The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket)	Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia	2003-2018	41
The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen)	Serbia and Albania	2004-2016	17
Swedish Chemicals Agency (Kemikalieinspektionen)	Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina	2006-2018	5

² <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/european-commission-lays-roadmap-western-balkans/> .

³ “The process of closer ties between the EU and the Western Balkans is being implemented within the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), which is the common EU policy framework for the Western Balkans. The aim of the SAP is to create the conditions for the countries of the Western Balkans to become members of the EU. This requires them, among other things, to comply with the Copenhagen criteria, which means extensive reforms in the partner countries” (Results strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020).

Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket)	Albania, Serbia, Kosovo	2014-2018	3
Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (Swedac)	Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro	2008-2016	2

Note: The list is not exhaustive and should be seen as preliminary. Only interventions financed via Sida included. Regional projects not included. Source: www.openaid.se and Sida. An Excel file with relevant contributions financed by Sida is available as a companion document at the tender portal.

Even though the ambition and purpose vary widely between initiatives, these interventions are often small in financial terms (and in terms of involved individuals on the Swedish side). For example, the total cost for the six largest projects in Serbia between 2013 and 2015 was 61.7 million SEK and in Albania 30.5 million SEK. Most interventions and projects are bilateral, but some are regional in scope.

The expected results for the Western Balkan under the current Swedish strategy (2015-2020) include:

- Enhanced capacity among institutions to continue economic integration with the EU
- More efficient public administration, with stronger administrative capacity to implement reforms for EU-integration
- Delivery of higher quality public services, based on principles of nondiscrimination and equal rights and with less corruption
- Partner countries increased compliance with EU regulations and international agreements on the environment, climate and energy
- More democratic and effective police forces

The future strategic direction for Swedish reform cooperation with the Western Balkans will be determined when the current strategy is to be renewed in 2020.

Aims and evaluation questions

The aim with this evaluation is twofold:

- (i) to gain an in-depth understanding of the long-term effects, sustainability⁴ and cost-effectiveness of Swedish government authorities capacity development initiatives in the Western Balkans**
(ii) to generate lessons to inform Swedish reform cooperation ahead.

The EBA expects the evaluation to deepen the knowledge and understanding of how to manage, develop and secure effective capacity development in the Western Balkan countries and to highlight lessons learned that may inform current Swedish reform cooperation as well as coming strategies and interventions.

The evaluation should concern investments and projects from the year 1998 onwards. Five evaluation questions should guide the evaluation:

1. Has the Swedish central government authorities' reform cooperation in the Western Balkan countries contributed to sustainable results in terms of capacity and effectiveness in the central public administrations of these countries? If so, why, in what way, and to what extent?

⁴ Sustainability here refers to the viability and longevity of achievements financed by development aid once financing is withdrawn.

2. To what extent have the efforts contributed in bringing the Western Balkan countries closer to the EU in terms of public sector capacity, efficiency, and adaptation to EU standards?
3. Have the results from these interventions been cost-effective?
4. Have the interventions been coordinated in an efficient way, regionally and in respective country, among Swedish actors as well as with other relevant actors (especially the EU)?
5. What lessons from the interventions can inform Swedish reform cooperation and capacity development cooperation ahead?

In relation to OECD/DAC and other evaluation criteria, the focus shall hence be on issues of impact, results and the sustainability of results (question 1 and 2); cost-effectiveness (question 3); and coherence, in terms of whether and to what extent the intervention is likely to maximize opportunities for synergy with, and mitigate interference from, the plans and actions of other actors⁵ (question 4).

The evaluation is expected to put Sweden's contributions in a wider context of development, including the other donors' engagement. The team will choose the period of study. It is not required to study the entire period of cooperation in the region (approx. 1998- 2018), but a long-term perspective is encouraged.

The main objective of the evaluation is to provide grounded and elaborate responses to the five questions above. However, tenderers are encouraged to let their expertise guide the choice of approach in answering the evaluation questions (including design of the analytical framework, methodological approach and delimitations). We hope that this open task will be attractive and encourage innovation in submitted proposals.

Who is this evaluation for? Target group(s)

The main target groups of the evaluation are persons involved in the reform cooperation at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), at central government authorities, at the Swedish missions in relevant countries, as well as persons at the MFA and Sida responsible for the renewal of the Swedish strategy for Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey after 2020.

General structure and conditions

The proposal shall include a detailed analytical framework for the study proposed. While it is up to the tenderer to choose study design, methods and delimitations (such as countries, authorities subject to study, projects etc.), choices should be clearly justified.

The proposal shall be written in English.

While there is no requirement for the main applicant to understand Swedish, the project team must secure the ability to use, analyse and understand documents written in Swedish.

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).

Tenderers are expected to disclose potential conflicts of interest among members in the evaluation team, and to provide a clear justification for the choice of including members that may be viewed as potentially partial.

⁵ See Caldecott (2017), *Aid Performance and Climate Change*.

A reference group will be set up for this study, consisting of experts in the field of study (members are designated by the EBA in dialogue with the authors). The task of the reference group is to provide support and advice to the author(s) throughout the course of the evaluation process in order to strengthen the quality of the report. While the reference group is thus required to contribute with comments and suggestions, it is within the evaluation team's purview to decide which ideas and suggestions they will consider, and the team is solely responsible for the content of the report. Members of the reference group will assess compliance with the ToR and submit a final assessment of the quality of the report to the EBA Committee as a basis for its decision to approve the final report for publication. The reference group will be chaired by one of the members of the EBA Committee.

Procurement procedure, budget and timetable

The maximum cost for this evaluation is set to SEK 1 250 000 excl. VAT (approximately EUR 110 000). Since the procurement is under the EU threshold value, applicable law is Chapter 19 of [the Swedish Public Procurement Act \(2016:1145\)](#).

The proposal should be no longer than 15 pages, including a presentation of the team, a detailed preliminary time table, allocation of time and functions within the team and budget (stated in SEK); excluding CVs and potential additional annexes.

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/skype/phone. The following timetable should be considered.

Timetable

Deadline for proposals	26 November 2018
Evaluation and selection of proposals by the EBA	27 November - December 2018
Decision by the EBA	December 2018/January 2019
Contract signed	December 2018/January 2019
Final report delivered (the latest date possible to suggest in proposal)	30 November 2019
Launching event	December 2019-January 2020

The proposal shall be registered at the tender portal Kommers Annons eLite www.kommersannons.se/elite, no later than 26 November 2018. Proposals shall be valid until 30 April 2019. Tenderers are advised to monitor the tender portal regularly, since it is not possible to guarantee reception of e-mails.

During the procurement process, the EBA is not permitted to discuss documentation, tenders, evaluation or other such matters with tenderers in a manner which favours or disfavors one or more tenderers.

Questions shall be posted, on Thursday 15 November 2018 at the latest, on the Questions and Answers function on the tender portal Kommers Annons eLite, www.kommersannons.se/elite. Questions and answers to questions are published, anonymously and simultaneously, to anyone who have registered for the procurement.

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. (Weight: 65 per cent).
2. Experiences and qualifications of team members in the areas of 1) impact evaluations, evaluations and advanced studies of public policy interventions; 2) capacity development and public-sector reform in low and middle countries; 3) The western Balkan countries; and 4) international development cooperation/development assistance. (Weight: 20 per cent).
3. Cost. (Weight: 15 per cent).

See attached table for which factors will be considered under each of the three criteria. The assessment of each proposal will be based on the material submitted by the tenderer by the end of the bidding period.

Confidentiality

After the communication of the EBA's selection, all submitted proposals will become official documents, meaning that the Swedish principle of public access to official records applies. Sentences, sections or paragraphs in a document may be masked in the public version if "good reasons" (thorough motivations in terms of causing economic damage to the company) can be provided and deemed valid. The tenderers are fully responsible for making their claims of confidentiality.

Background material

Two Excel files with relevant contributions financed by Sida is available at the tender portal.

Results strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020 (available at: <https://www.regeringen.se/land--och-regionstrategier/2014/03/ud-14013/>),

A sample of previous Swedish studies and evaluations that assess or analyse development cooperation via Swedish central government authorities:⁶

- Carneiro et al (2016), Support to Capacity Development – Identifying Good Practice in Swedish Development Cooperation
- ESV (2012), Särredovisning av tjänsteexport – ett regeringsuppdrag
- Gustavsson (2010), Tjänsteexport: från bistånd till marknad, Score 2010
- Hydén et al (2015), Sida's Support to Public Administration and Institutional Capacity Development 2003-2015
- Markensten (2018), Swedish development support to Tax Systems, EBA Working Paper
- Riksrevisionen (2017), Sidafinansierad myndighetssamverkan - goda förutsättningar för biståndseffektivitet?
- Riksrevisionen (2011), Statliga myndigheters tjänsteexport
- Riksrevisionen (2009), Sidas stöd till utveckling av kapacitet i mottagarländernas statsförvaltning
- Sadev (2010), Svenska myndigheter som genomförare av Sidafinansierade insatser – en utvärdering av organisering, styrning och stöd
- SOU 2000:27, Export av statligt förvaltningskunnande

The Swedish Public Procurement Act (2016:1145) (available at: <http://www.konkurrensverket.se/en/publications-and-decisions/swedish-public-procurement-act/>)

⁶ See also: <https://www.sida.se/English/publications/publicationsearch/>

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 the direction, governance and implementation of Sweden's official development assistance with a specific focus on results and efficiency. The aim is to contribute to an efficient implementation of well-designed aid. The EBA focuses primarily on overarching issues within Swedish development assistance, not on individual projects. The EBA comprises an Expert group of ten members, and a secretariat placed in Stockholm.

In 2018 the Expert group consists of: Helena Lindholm (chair), Gun-Britt Andersson (vice chair), Arne Bigsten, Kim Forss, Torgny Holmgren, Eva Lithman, Johan Schaar, Julia Schalk, Fredrik Ugglå, Camilla Goldbeck Löwe and Lennart Peck (appointed expert, MFA).

Assessment criteria

Criteria	1. Quality of proposal in terms of design, methods and plan for implementation. (Weight: 65 per cent)	2. Experiences and qualifications of team members in the areas of interest. (Weight: 20 per cent)	3. Cost. (Weight: 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 to obtain a final grade (the sum of the weighted grades) between 0 and 5.		
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 questions in the invitation for proposals?* 2. Are proven and tested methods and forms of data collection to be used? 3. Are there any important limitations with the method? Which? 4. Have the approach and method(s) been described in a specific and transparent manner? 5. Will the study’s design enable conclusions that can be expected to form the basis of use, learning and reflection among the evaluation’s target groups? 6. Proportion of time (per cent) spent by the team collecting data in the Western Balkans 7. Level of innovation in design and method? <p>* An overall assessment that the evaluation is feasible to implement and that it can be implemented without any ethical breaches occurring is presupposed. While such an appraisal is required, it is not included as a separate sub-criterion.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project leader’s experience of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Impact evaluations, evaluations and advanced studies of public policy interventions b) Capacity development and public-sector reform in low and middle countries c) The western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) d) International development cooperation/development assistance 2. Complementarity of the team: Expertise in the team, beyond the project leader, that is particularly interesting in relation to the study and proposal (area a-d above)* 3. Academic merits of the project leader <p>* Sufficient language skills in relation to the needs of the assignment are required to be shown and are therefore not specified as a separate sub-criterion.</p>	<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