EBA

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PUTTING PRIORITY INTO PRACTICE: SIDA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PLAN FOR GENDER INTEGRATION

Elin Bjarnegård and Fredrik Uggla

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Sida's Implementation of its Plan for Gender Integration

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Foreword by the EBA

In 2014 Sweden became the first country in the world to launch a feminist foreign policy with the ambition to apply "a systematic gender equality perspective throughout the whole foreign policy agenda". The Government has even issued a Handbook for the Feminist Foreign Policy (launched in 2018) that prescribes gender mainstreaming as a central strategy for the implementation of the feminist foreign policy.

Related to and parallel with this was the Government's aspiration to raise the ambition regarding integration of the gender perspective throughout Swedish agencies, including in Sweden's development cooperation. Thus, in 2015, Sida was one of 41 government agencies tasked with drawing up a plan to strengthen gender mainstreaming within the agency until 2018.

The present report is the final report of an on-going evaluation of Sida's work to implement their Plan for Gender Integration. Two interim reports are published in the EBA Working Paper series and are, as are all our reports, available for download at our homepage, www.eba.se. The authors, Elin Bjarnegård and Fredrik Uggla conclude that "Sida's work in [… gender integration] is often uneven and dependent on the commitment and competence of individual staff members […] The main shortcoming of the existing gender equality infrastructure is that it places few formal requirements on the members of staff. In combination with the decentralized structure of Sida at large, this has led to an uneven implementation […] in terms of substance and level of ambition". Twelve specific recommendations are formulated in the report regarding the place of gender in Sidas work, staff preparation, support for addressing gender issues and follow up and continuation of the plan.

The focus on mainstreaming issues is also articulated in the Government's Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (2016/17:60). It states that five perspectives shall be integrated in development cooperation: the rights perspective; the perspective of the poor on development; a conflict perspective; an environmental and climate perspective;

and a gender perspective. In our Annual Report for 2018, the EBA raised concern that more specific goals and priorities risk to result in weaker rather than stronger management signals ("the paradox of detail"). The EBA intends to continue to monitor how these horizontal criteria affect the clarity and impact of the Government's management of Swedish development cooperation.

It is my hope that this report will find its intended audience among a broad public interested in gender integration and gender mainstreaming, mainstreaming in general, women's rights and Swedish development cooperation.

The authors' work have been conducted in dialogue with a reference group chaired by Julia Schalk, member of the EBA. However, the authors are solely responsible for the content of the report.

Gothenburg, November 2018

Helena Lindholm

Sammanfattning

Denna rapport innehåller slutsatserna från utvärderingen av genomförandet av Sidas Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering. Denna plan, giltig sedan 2016, innehåller tio huvudmål vars främsta syfte är stärka jämställdhetsperspektivet i Sidas arbete, framförallt genom att öka andelen medel till insatser med jämställdhet som huvudfokus, samt genom ett allmänt stärkande av myndighetens rutiner för effektiv jämställdhetsintegrering. Planen kan alltså sägas utgöra ett typexempel på "mainstreaming" av jämställdhet, i det att specifika insatser för detta syfte kombineras med ett beaktande av jämställdhet i samtliga delar av verksamheten.[1]

Utvärderingen har genomförts som så kallad "följeforskning", vilket innebär att den har utförts parallellt med planens genomförande. I praktiken har detta inneburit att arbetet har genomförts i tre faser mellan slutet av 2016 och juni 2018. Under varje fas har fokusgruppsintervjuer, analys av dokument, samt intervjuer med specifika Sida-medarbetare genomförts. Därutöver genomfördes under 2017 besök i Myanmar och Zambia i syfte att erhålla ett perspektiv från Sidas fältverksamhet genom intervjuer med lokalt baserade Sida-anställda, partners och andra givare.

Utvärderingen har funnit att Sida har genomfört huvuddelen av de mål som uppställts i planen, och att beaktandet av jämställdhet utgör en betydande del av hur myndigheten uppfattas av såväl medarbetare som partners. Utvärderarna konstaterar emellertid också att Sidas insatser i detta avseende ofta är ojämna och beroende av engagemanget och kompetensen hos enskilda medarbetare.

Utvärderingens resultat är uppdelade i sex huvudområden.

I fråga om **organisationen och genomförandet av jämställdhetsarbete** på Sida konstateras att en övergripande jämställdhetsstruktur förelåg på myndigheten redan innan planen trädde i kraft. Planen specificerade inte heller vilka delar av denna struktur som

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[1.] Då planen inte använder begreppet "mainstreaming" och eftersom det finns olika definitioner av denna term, används nedan istället den bredare termen jämställdhetsintegrering, vilket alltså är den term som också återfinns i planens titel.

var i behov av förändring eller översyn. Planens huvudsakliga tillkortakommande var dock att den ställde få formella krav på myndighetens anställda. Tillsammans med Sidas decentraliserade organisation har detta lett till ett ojämnt genomförande både i termer av innehåll och ambitionsnivåer. Sida har emellertid nyligen tagit ett antal initiativ i syfte att ytterligare främja jämställdhetsarbetet. Även om denna utvärdering inte har kunnat bedöma effekterna av dessa förändringar (då det ännu är för tidigt för detta), visar de att Sida fortsätter att arbeta för att stärka sitt jämställdhetsarbete.

Sidas interna kultur och kompetens i förhållande till jämställdhet präglas av en tydlig dualism. Det är å ena sidan uppenbart att Sida och dess anställda besitter ett tydligt engagemang för jämställdhet, och att de anställda uttrycker påtaglig stolthet inför myndighetens arbete i detta avseende. Sidas partners bekräftar i allmänhet betydelsen av jämställdhet för Sida, och beskriver hur detta tema har varit ett ständigt inslag i dialog och strategiska diskussioner med företrädare för myndigheten. Å andra sidan tycks den starka ställningen för jämställdhet och acceptansen av dess betydelse för mänsklig utveckling inte alltid motsvaras av en tematisk kompetens hos Sidas medarbetare i dessa frågor. Även om medarbetarna uttrycker en hög tilltro till sin egen förmåga i detta avseende, finns det tecken på att detta är en övervärdering. Detta illustreras också av att medarbetarna inte alltid tydligt kan redogöra för hur de arbetar med jämställdhetsintegrering, utan ofta tycks se detta som något "instinktivt". Liknande poänger har förts fram av vissa av Sidas partners.

Existerande stödfunktioner tycks inte fullt ut kunna kompensera för sådana tillkortakommanden. De anställdas syn på interna stöddokument, externt rådgivningsstöd (en så kallad "helpdesk") och genderrådgivarnas arbete spänner från mycket positiva uppfattningar till negativa, och kritik uttrycks ofta i termer av irrelevans eller svårigheter att tillämpa erhållna råd i praktiken. Detta tycks vara en av anledningarna till att utnyttjandet av vissa av stödfunktionerna sker oregelbundet (t ex genderhelpdesken) eller sällan. Den ojämna spridningen av dessa funktioner i organisationen bidrar till detta; enbart vissa avdelningar har haft tillgång till helpdesken under perioden och de interna stöddokumenten för jämställdhetsfrågor finns enbart på engelska, vilket troligen har begränsat deras

användbarhet för fransk- eller spansktalande lokalanställd personal och partners.

Inte heller tycks Sida alltid förmå att möta personalens behov av **utbildning i jämställdhetsfrågor**, och myndigheten har inte anlagt ett övergripande perspektiv på dessa frågor. Viss personal både i fält och på huvudkontoret hävdar att de aldrig erhållit någon utbildning i jämställdhetsfrågor på myndigheten, och få säger sig ha genomgått någon specifik jämställdhetskurs under det senaste årtiondet. Istället tycks kunskapsöverföring i detta avseende på myndigheten främst ske genom praktisk träning på arbetsplatsen då mer kunniga eller erfarna medarbetare hjälper andra och därigenom överför sin konceptuella och praktiska kunskap till dem. Detta garanterar självfallet inte något sammanhållet myndighetsgemensamt perspektiv på dessa frågor.

Utvärderingens studie av **Sida faktiska verksamhet** bekräftar denna bild. Myndighetens medarbetare kan hänvisa till uppenbara framgångar i fråga om jämställdhetsintegrering, och dess partners bekräftar ofta betydelsen av myndighetens tydliga position i frågan. En systematisk genomgång av dokumentation från Sidas insatser visar också att frågor om kön och jämställdhet beaktas i så gott som samtliga insatser, och att andelen av Sidas stöd som går till projekt för vilka jämställdhet är ett huvudsyfte har ökat i enlighet med planens mål, samt att andelen av insatser vilka bygger på jämställdhetsanalys också har ökat.

Samtidigt genomförs jämställdhetsanalyser inte konsekvent, och mer genomarbetade analyser saknas ofta, även för de insatser för vilka jämställdhet är ett huvudsyfte. Den samlade bilden i fråga om jämställdhet och genomförande av jämställdhetsanalyser präglas därför av en ojämn behandling både i fråga om genomförande och innehåll. Detsamma gäller Sidas bidrag till strategiprocesser och -rapportering. Det saknas i detta avseende enhetlighet i fråga om hur jämställdhet beaktas, och även om ämnet är allmänt närvarande, så är behandlingen av det varken sammanhållet eller systematiskt. Det bör också noteras att denna ojämnhet i behandlingen av jämställdhetsfrågor har påtalats av flera tidigare utvärderingar av Sida's jämställdhetsarbete, som sammanställningen i appendix 1 visar.

Det ligger nära till hands att förklara sådana variationer avsaknaden av klart formulerade och bindande instruktioner för hur jämställdhet ska beaktas och jämställdhetsanalys genomföras. Men de tycks också vara följden av två andra orsaker vilka genomgående nämns av Sida-anställda som förklaringar till situationen; tidsbrist och betydelsen av den enskilda medarbetaren. Tidsbristen kommer sig i sin tur av mängden av prioriteringar och uppgifter utöver jämställdhet. Det är vanligt med klagomål på de krav som detta ställer på de anställdas tid, även om många också hävdar att jämställdhet trots allt är det tema som erhåller mest uppmärksamhet.

Det är även tydligt att trots det allmänna engagemanget för jämställdhet på Sida, beror det faktiska beaktandet av denna fråga i stor utsträckning på den enskilda medarbetarens och dess närmaste chefers inställning och kunskap. Den självständighet som därmed kommer att prägla arbetet kan förvisso ge goda resultat, vilket visas av de många exemplen på individer vars insatser har gjort en verklig skillnad för hur jämställdhet beaktas i Sidas och dess partners arbete. Nackdelen är dock att behandlingen i hög grad kommer att bero på enskilda medarbetare och riskerar att drabbas negativt om dessa slutar, vilket tillsammans med Sidas ovilja mot att i allt för hög grad styra sina partners och myndighetens preferens för att förlita sig till dessa partners egna system, kan utgöra en del av förklaringen till bristen på enhetlighet i behandlingen av jämställdhet, trots den betydelse som frågan har för myndigheten.

Det **faktiska genomförandet av planen** uppvisar liknande drag. Även om de flesta av dess mål har uppnåtts i förhållandevis stor utsträckning, är detta inte fallet för samtliga. De mer konkret formulerade målen – ökningen av insatser och medel till projekt för vilka jämställdhet är ett huvudsyfte, och upphöjandet av jämställdhet till en strategisk prioritering i Sidas målbild till exempel – har i stor utsträckning genomförts. Genomförandet av mer allmänt uttryckta mål uppvisar dock flera brister, i synnerhet vad gäller utvecklandet av rutiner, dialogstöd, kompetensutveckling och utvärdering. I dessa avseenden har planens mål inte alltid uppnåtts.

Utvärderingens **rekommendationer** avspeglar dessa slutsatser:

I fråga om **jämställdhetsarbetets plats på Sida** föreslås: (1) att klargöra kraven på Sidas medarbetare i detta avseende; (2) att

underlätta kopplingar mellan jämställdhet och övriga perspektiv och prioriteringar, och (3) att beakta hur Sidas decentraliserade arbetssätt och myndighetens respekt för dess partners system påverkar genomförandet av centralt beslutade mål i fråga om jämställdhet.

Vad gäller **medarbetarnas kompetens och stödfunktioner för jämställdhet** föreslås: (4) att kontinuerligt bedöma medarbetarnas utmaningar och behov i dessa frågor samt tillgodose dessa; (5) att till personalen förmedla behovet av fortlöpande kompetens-utveckling; (6) att införa en obligatorisk kurs i jämställdhetsanalys; (7) att säkerställa att verktyg och instrument för detta ändamål är tillgängliga för alla delar av organisationen; (8) att systematiskt uppmärksamma personalen på dessa verktyg, och; (9) att skapa instrument och stödfunktioner för att bistå partners arbete med jämställdhet och jämställdhetsanalys.

Med avseende på **uppföljning och fortsättning på planen** föreslås: (10) att tillgodose att samtliga av planens mål uppfylls, alternativt omformulera dessa; (11) att tydliggöra nivåer på förväntade resultat i förhållande till planens mål, och; (12) att överväga skapandet av en ny och mer ambitiös plan då den nuvarande upphör att gälla.

En sista **rekommendation är riktad till EBA**: (13) Att överväga att genomföra ytterligare studier av andra svenska tvärfrågor och perspektiv (framförallt miljö/klimat och konflikt).

Summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the implementation of Sida's Plan for gender integration (hereafter simply referred to as "the Plan"). The Plan came into force in 2016, and contains ten objectives designed to further gender integration in Sida's work, primarily by increasing the amount of funding to contributions with gender as their principal focus, but also by developing routines for more effective gender integration. The Plan can thereby be considered typical of a "mainstreaming" approach to gender equality, in that it combines specific efforts with attention to gender equality in all parts of the agency's work.[2]

The assessment has been performed as a continuous evaluation, undertaken in parallel to the implementation of the Plan. It has been performed in three stages between late 2016 and June 2018, each of which contained focus group interviews, analyses of key Sida documents, and specific interviews with Sida staff members. Field studies were performed in Myanmar and Zambia in order to obtain a perspective from Sida's field operations, and involved interviews with local Sida staff, partners and other donors.

The evaluation finds that Sida has implemented most of the Plan's objectives, and that attention to gender equality is indeed an important part of how the agency is viewed by its own staff and by partners. But it also notes that Sida's work in this regard is often uneven and dependent on the commitment and competence of individual staff members. More in particular, the evaluation's findings are divided into six main areas:

Concerning the **organisation and institutionalisation of gender equality work** at Sida, it is noted that Sida already had a comprehensive gender equality infrastructure in place when the Plan was adopted. The Plan did not specify which parts of this infrastructure that needed strenghtening or increased attention. The main shortcoming of the existing gender equality infrastructure is

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[2.] As the Plan does not use the concept "mainstreaming" and as there are several definitions of this term, the broader concept "gender integration" is used in this report, which is also the term employed in the title of the Plan.

that it places few formal requirements on staff members. In combination with Sida's decentralised structure, this has led to an uneven implementation of the Plan, both in terms of substance and level of ambition. However, Sida has recently launched certain initiatives to further gender integration, and is about to initiate others. While the present evaluation has not been able to assess the effects of these recent initiatives, their implementation demonstrates Sida's continued ambition to improve gender integration.

With regard to Sida's **internal culture and competence** in gender matters, the evaluation notes a marked duality. On the one hand, it is obvious that Sida and its staff are highly committed to gender equality, and that staff take particular pride in the agency's achievements in this regard. Likewise, partners generally confirm the prominent position that the theme has for Sida, noting that gender is a constant in dialogue and strategic discussions with its representatives. On the other hand, the attachment to gender as a crucial value in its own right, and as a necessary factor for development, is not always matched by the staff's gender competence. Although many Sida officers express a high degree of confidence regarding their knowledge in the area, there are also indications that this may be an over-valuation. When asked more specific questions about how they perform gender analyses in their daily work, staff often fail to provide clear answers, as they rather see this as an "instinctive" issue (in the words of one interviewee). The same point has been made by some of Sida's partners.

The support functions available do not seem to fully compensate for this situation. Staff views on internal guidelines, helpdesk support, and the work of Sida's gender advisors range from highly positive to negative. Criticisms often focus on issues of irrelevance or impracticality. Accordingly, some support functions seem to have been used irregularly (e.g. the Gender helpdesk) or rarely. The uneven spread of support functions has added to the problem. Only certain departments have had access to the Gender helpdesk during the period considered, and the documents of the Gender toolbox are only available in English, which may reduce its usefulness for French- and Spanish-speaking staff or partners.

Likewise, needs for staff **training on gender issues** do not always seem to be met, and Sida has not taken a comprehensive approach to raising competence. Quite a few staff members, both in the field and at headquarters, claim that they have never received any specific training on gender integration from the agency, or that the last such training took place more than a decade ago. Instead, transmission of gender competence seems to happen mostly through learning by doing. Certain staff members help others and thereby confer conceptual and practical knowledge to them. But there is little assurance that this represents any cohesive agency-wide perspective.

An examination of **Sida's actual work** reveals a similar picture. Sida staff can point to important achievements in the area of gender equality, and partners often confirm the importance of the agency's strong position. A systematic examination of Sida's contributions through relevant project documents shows that gender is indeed almost universally present. The amount of contributions having this theme as a main objective has increased in line with the stipulations of the Plan, as has the portion of contributions relying on an explicit gender analysis.

At the same time, gender analysis is still unevenly performed, and more thorough considerations are often absent, even in some contributions in which gender is the principal objective. The overall picture of gender and gender analysis is thus one of uneven treatment, in terms of performance and actual contents. A similar point can be made with regard to Sida's input to strategy processes and annual strategy reporting. There is little uniformity in how gender is integrated in those processes, and while the theme is generally present, the approaches are neither coherent nor systematic. It should be noted that this unevenness correponds to what several previous evaluations of Sida's gender work have found, as detailed in *Annex 1*.

It is tempting to connect such variations to the absence of clearly communicated and mandatory instructions on how to approach gender issues or perform gender analyses. But that factor appears to interact with two further explanations commonly given by Sida staff; lack of time, and dependence on individual staff members. Lack of

time is a result of the multitude of priorities and tasks, of which gender integration is only one. Staff often complain about the demands these priorities place on their time, even as they note that gender is possibly the one which is most consistently addressed.

Furthermore, it is evident that in spite of the general endorsement of gender equality at Sida, its effective integration seems to depend on the personal inclinations and competence of individual staff officers and their immediate superiors to a substantial degree. This freedom can often yield good results, as demonstrated by frequent examples of individuals who make a real difference in how gender is addressed and integrated in Sida's and its partners' work. The flipside is that integration becomes highly dependent on those persons, and may founder in their absence. In combination with Sida's stated preference for a non-prescriptive approach and reliance on partners' systems, this can explain, to some degree, the lack of uniformity in Sida's approach to gender equality and integration, in spite of the often declared prominence of these issues.

When turning to **the actual implementation of the Plan**, it is noted that most provisions have been implemented, but not all of them. The more concrete objectives – the increase in number of contributions and funding for projects that have gender as their principal objective, and the inclusion of gender as a priority in planning, for instance – have generally been met. But an assessment of the implementation of more intangible objectives, while seldom straight-forward, indicates several absences (for instance, in the improvement of routines including instruments for dialogue, competence development and evaluation) where implementation of the Plan has fallen short of intentions.

The **recommendations** to Sida reflect these findings:

With regard to **the place of gender in Sida's work**, the suggestions are (1) to clarify demands on Sida's staff in this regard; (2) to faciliate the combination of gender issues with other perspectives and priorities, and; (3) to consider how Sida's decentralised approach, in combination with a preference for non-

prescriptive approaches, affect implementation of centrally set objectives with regard to gender.

Concerning **staff preparation and support for gender integration**, the recommendations are (4) to continuously assess staff needs and challenges, while devising responses to these; (5) to communicate the need for continuous competence development among staff; (6) to introduce an obligatory course in gender analysis; (7) to ensure that tools and instruments are generally available in the organisation; (8) to increase staff awareness of tools and instruments, and; (9) to create instruments to support partners' work with gender integration.

As to the **follow-up and continuation of the Plan**, recommendations are (10) to ensure that all objectives are implemented, alternatively to re-formulate the Plan; (11) to attach levels of attainment to the goals of the Plan; and (12) to consider the development of a new Plan with a more ambitious approach once the present one expires.

A final **recommendation is directed at EBA**: (13) to consider the possibility of conducting studies, similar to the present one, on other Swedish priorities (i.e. environment/climate and the conflict perspective).

1.   Introduction

The present document constitutes the third and final report from an evaluation of Sida's (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) implementation of its Plan for gender integration (hereafter refered to as "the Plan").[3] Sida drew up this document in 2015 in response to a government instruction requiring forty government agencies to produce such plans in order to enhance their work with integrating gender equality.

The primary task of this evaluation is to assess how the Plan has been implemented by Sida, and to describe the changes to the agency's work and internal procedures that have resulted from it.

The evaluation was procured by the Expert Group for Aid Studies through an open tender process in mid-2016, and work began the same autumn. Since then, the evaluation has proceeded in three phases, with data collection being repeated over time in order to detect patterns and possible changes that can be attributed to the Plan. Data collection ended in June 2018, wherefore developments after that date are not taken into account.

The intended audience for the report primarily consists of staff at Sida and in other entities related to Swedish development cooperation whose task it is to ensure that gender aspects are effectively taken into account. Beyond this immediate target group, the evaluation will hopefully also be of interest to other development agencies promoting the same values, and to academics and practitioners working on issues of gender integration and development cooperation.

The evaluation takes a broad view of Sida's work with gender equality. Although the implementation of the Plan is the focus of the assignment, it is necessary to simultaneously address how Sida works with gender in general. An understanding of Sida's gender equality efforts is a prerequisite for assessing any changes in this regard. Also, the often nebulous character of the Plan's objectives

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[3.] Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering på Sida 2015–2018. Skrivelse, ärendenummer 15/001226. Sida 2015-11-02. Hereafter referred to as the Plan.

requires a broad perspective in order to assess its implementation. Moreover, the evaluation looks beyond this assessment in order to discuss possible reasons for Sida's actions and achievements with regard to gender equality. This broader view is, in turn, necessary for formulating the recommendations that conclude this study.

The evaluation does not assess Sida's overall effectiveness in contributing to gender equality, however. Focus is on internal processes and work, and the possible changes that have come about as a result of the Plan, rather than on the effects that these activities may ultimately have on respect for women's rights and gender equality in countries where Sida is active. While this limitation is natural given the focus on the implementation of the Plan, the reader should keep it in mind when reading conclusions and recommendations. (Furthermore, due to its internal character, the tenth goal of the Plan, which relates to how Sida considers gender and pluralism in its role as an employer, is not a focus of this evaluation.)

The contents of the report follow a sequential logic. After an introduction that outlines the evaluation methodology, the theoretical foundations of the assignment are presented, particularly in terms of how to conceptualise and understand gender mainstreaming (in this case referred to as gender integration) and its implementation. Subsequently, Sida's Plan for gender integration is addressed and situated in relation to the broader policy environment, and to Sida's established organisational gender equality infrastructure.

The following section addresses the agency's culture and competence regarding gender integration, i.e. how gender equality is seen and understood by the staff, their capacity to adequately integrate gender in their work, and their views on Sida's support in this regard.

The subsequent chapter deals with how gender is de facto considered and integrated. It assesses how Sida's staff and partners view the agency's work with gender integration. It also studies documents (both from partners and from Sida) from almost 150 specific contributions in order to see how gender aspects are addressed in practice, and to what extent gender analyses are

consistently performed. In addition, similar questions are directed to Sida's contributions to Swedish cooperation strategies, in the form of inputs to strategy formulation and strategy reporting.

In the eighth chapter, the previous description of Sida's work with regard to gender integration forms the basis for a more detailed consideration of the extent to which the Plan's specific objectives have been met.

Thereafter, the evaluation's main findings and conclusions are outlined in general terms and on more specific issues. This discussion gives rise to recommendations – primarily directed at Sida – that conclude the main part of the report.

Finally, annexes contain more elaborate discussions on methodological choices involved in the study, on the integration of gender in the geographic strategies for Swedish development cooperation, and on results of a multivariate analysis of gender integration in a set of Sida's contributions. Another annex details results of the many previous evaluations of how Sida works with gender, the main findings of which generally agree with the conclusions of the present study.

2.   Method

The method chosen for the present assignment is a 'continuous' or 'ongoing evaluation', performed in parallel to the process to be evaluated. Accordingly, the study was conducted in three phases between the end of 2016 and mid-2018. Both of the initial two phases were reported through working papers documenting findings and tentative conclusions. These papers subsequently formed the basis for a dialogue with Sida on the contents and focus of the evaluation.[4]

A continuous evaluation entails advantages as well as challenges.[5] One primary benefit is that it allows evaluators to follow a process over time. Evaluators can assess and compare different stages of implementation, which may provide a more valid and possibly more profound view of the implementation process. Likewise, a continuous interaction between evaluators and the object of evaluation can foster an enhanced understanding of the subject at hand.

But such interaction also places demands on the evaluators, as well as on their objects, in terms of time and resources. More fundamentally, the interaction may affect the performance and, subsequently, the findings of the evaluation. Hence, even as it has contained elements of a mutual learning experience,[6] the present evaluation has tried to keep its independence and preserve its neutrality and autonomy. Sida has been actively involved at crucial stages – e.g. during the selection of case study countries and interviewees, at joint seminars discussing previous reports, and by

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[4] Bjarnegård, Elin and Fredrik Uggla, "First report on the implementation of Sida's Plan for gender integration", EBA Working document, February 2017; Bjarnegård, Elin and Fredrik Uggla, "Second report on the implementation of Sida's Plan for gender integration, EBA Working document", April 2018.

[5] The use of a continuous evaluation method was specified in the original tender, and was thus a given in the assignment, rather than a deliberate choice by the researchers.

[6] Brulin, Göran and Lennart Svensson. 2016. *Managing Sustainable Development Programmes: A Learning Approach*. Routledge. For an example, see Herz, Marcus and Josefin Aggestam. 2015. *Följeforskning: Frivillighet för delaktighet*. Malmö högskola.

contributing comments to a draft version of the current report.[7] The feedback and suggestions delivered on such occasions have contributed considerably to the evaluation. Yet, those inputs have primarily concerned the evaluation process. Sida has not influenced the evaluation's contents or findings directly.

The continuous character of the evaluation has primarily been used as a methodological approach akin to a panel study. Accordingly, the intention has been to track changes during the implementation period, rather than simply assessing the overall level of attention to gender equality and women's rights at Sida at one specific point in time. Repeated random samples from contributions and strategies have been collected, and analysed with additional material from repeated interviews with three focus groups: Sida officials, Sida's gender equality hub[8], and heads of units (three meetings with each group). In addition to repeated data of this kind, a range of individual interviews have been conducted with persons who represent specific insights or competences.

The team also visited the Swedish embassy in Lusaka in Zambia and the Development cooperation section in Yangon in Myanmar, two countries that were selected after consultations with Sida and with the reference group for the evaluation. During each field visit, the team conducted a focus group interview with Sida staff at the embassy, and with individual programme officers, heads of cooperation, and representatives of partner organisations, of which seven to ten had been selected for closer examination.

[7.] However, relations with Sida have at times been fraught during the evaluation process. Sida representatives publicly have expressed their lack of confidence in the evaluators' competence, and claimed that a previous working document from the evaluation contributed nothing to the agency (Statskontoret. 2018. *Översyn av Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys*, p. 60).

[8.] The focus groups with the gender equality hub have not had a panel character to the same extent as other focus groups. This is because the group discussions were scheduled to take place at three of the hub's weekly meetings, and different people from the hub were present at different meetings. The gender equality hub has thus been followed as an organisational function rather than as a set of individuals.

It should be noted that the choice on these countries and partners was not undertaken with the intention to evaluate these particular offices or their contributions. The field studies primarily served to obtain field and local perspectives on Sida's work with gender integration in general, and information on how field staff and partners perceived the agency's recent efforts to enhance gender integration in particular. Accordingly, the selection of countries was made to ensure a high degree of variation by selecting contrasting countries and a variety of projects and partners.

As is evident from the above, interview data has an important place in the evaluation. Three criteria have been used for the selection of interviewees. In the first place, persons who were supposed to represent general opinions at Sida (members of the two focus groups for staff members and heads of units) were selected randomly from the staff. Secondly, interviewees in the field (within Sida and partners) were chosen in discussions with Sida officers locally, with the intention to speak to persons with a specific responsibility for gender issues, and also to staff members representing a more general perspective. Finally, a large number of interviews were made with persons who, by virtue of their positions, were deemed to have particularly interesting views, knowledge and insights. For this latter group, Sida made several suggestions of possible interviewees candidates so that a broader range of perspectives would be included.

Interview data requires some ethical considerations. As a general rule, the team has tried to protect the anonymity of persons expressing specific views and opinions about Sida and its work, prefering not to attribute statements to particular individuals. This probably increases the likelihood of open and honest reflections, and the identity of interviewees is in most cases irrelevant. In certain cases, however, the position of a particular individual is important and relevant for statements made. In such cases, the need to provide such information precludes anonymity. Interviewees who have expressed concern about this have been given an option to correct statements and quotes prior to their inclusion in the report.

Likewise, the analysis has considered how the relative position of an interviewee might affect her or his answers. A person who

represents another donor agency may, for instance, have an interest in comparing that agency favourably to Sida. Likewise, the analysis has considered to which extent an interviewee has had direct access to processes under scrutiny. A staff officer's view of discussions at Sida's Steering Committee ("Ledningsgruppen") may, for instance, be based more on anecdotal evidence than on direct observation, and should consequently be treated with more caution than views held by a member of the same group.

As a result of these considerations, the team has taken care to ensure that factual statements are not based on singular interviews, but corroborated by other interviews or other kinds of data. Different sources have been juxtaposed in order to present a complete and reliable picture. When this has not been possible, it has been indicated in the report.

In addition to the interviews, the report draws on a range of written material from Sida. This includes documents dealing specifically with gender, as well as documents where the purpose was to assess to which extent and how gender was integrated. For that purpose, repeated samples of contribution and strategy documents have been collected and assessed. In total, the team has considered nearly 150 contributions, 25 geographic strategies with corresponding reporting, and over a dozen evaluation reports.

Together with the interviews, this material by far surpasses the amount of information considered by previous evaluations of gender integration at Sida. While it is impossible to have a perfect view of the entirety of Sida's operations, the material is sufficiently large to allow for an overview of Sida's work with gender equality in general, and of the implementation of the agency's Plan for gender integration in particular.

3. Theoretical perspectives

There are many different theories and frameworks to build on when studying gender aspects of development. No longer a marginalised field neither in research nor in practical development work, there is today a plethora of theories, studies, conceptual frameworks, strategies and lessons learned. The objective here is not to hold forth any particular framework, but rather to situate the subject matter and outline the general perspectives on which this study relies.

3.1 Gender and development

The origin of much of today's knowledge on how gender affects development, and vice versa, lies in the increased attention to the theme Women in Development (WID) from the 1970s onwards. At the time, development experts and researchers underlined that women were largely made invisible in development efforts, despite being the most vulnerable ones. Consequently, increased attention was given to women specifically by focusing on their productive roles. WID advocates rejected the view of women as passive beneficiaries of welfare programmes, and argued that women constitute an undervalued resource. This approach was influential for quite some time, but led to a focus on women in isolation, rather than on the gendered power relations in society.[9]

The move from WID to GAD – Gender and Development – reflected a growing realisation that gender inequalites can not be tackled by focusing on women only. The concept 'gender' was increasingly used, signalling a shift towards social roles and power relations. With this new focus came an emphasis on how development strategies may either cement or transform power structures in society. Increased attention was given to the diverse needs and interests represented among women. Instead of designing

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[9.] E.g. Boserup, Ester. 1970. *Women's Role in Economic Development.* New York: St Martin's Press*;* Razavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller. 1995. "From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse". UNRISD: Occasional paper 1; Beneria, Lourdes, Günseli Berik and Maria S. Floro. *Gender, Development, and Globalization – Economics as if all people mattered.* 2015. Routledge.

special programmes for women, there was more focus on tackling structural inequalies.

Gender and development is a large and diverse field today, but it builds on a few common insights and points of departure. Like feminism in general, it points at the artificial division between the public and the private sphere, and the myriad of ways in which the private affects opportunities in the public arena. This means that women's contributions are still often made invisible, that they do not "count". Conceptual strategies for better visibility include a specific focus not just on productive activities, but on reproductive activities. Attention to who carries out certain activities, and who has access to and control over needed resources, is a crucial first step to unveil gender inequalities.[10] Gender disaggregated data is an important tool that enables demonstration of existing inequalities.

A distinction is sometimes made between practical and strategic gender needs and interests. Practical gender needs are identified because of women's subordinated role in society. Addressing the former may alleviate women's situation and make life more comfortable, but it does not address the root causes of inequality. Strategic gender interests, on the other hand, can be identified by an analysis of women's subordinate role, and addressing them signifies a fundamental challenge to gender inequalities and their underlying power structures.[11]

Somewhat more recent, but yet established, trends in gender and development include a stronger emphasis on the role of men and boys as well as intersectionality approaches. Attention to men and boys is not to be confused with a step back to an unproblematised focus on men as a norm. Rather, it presents a feminist, critical view on men and masculinities, focusing on the importance that values and ideas about what it means to be a man have for the well-being

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[10] Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training.* London and New York: Routledge.

[11] Molyneux, Maxine. 1984. "Mobilisation without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua", *Critical Social Policy* 4; Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training.* London and New York: Routledge.

and relative power of women [12] Relatedly, intersectionality approaches call attention to the many identities and social positions that condition a person's opportunities and relative power: sex/gender, class, race/ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, etc. This serves as a reminder that gender analysis is about unveiling power structures, and those structures can not be fully comprehended without taking other structures into account.[13]

While the above is by necessity an extreme simplification of a rich and complex field, it nevertheless demonstrates that there are common, reliable denominators that form part of any gender analysis, whether conducted in academia or as practical development cooperation.

Gender analyses can and do look different and may follow different frameworks. In one way or another, however, analyses necessarily incorporate knowledge about inequalities between men and women. They break down the divide between the public and the private sphere by asking relevant questions about who is made visible and invisible, who has power, control and access, and who will benefit from interventions and who may not.

3.2   Gender mainstreaming

In 1995, the United Nations' World Conference for Women in Beijing adopted gender mainstreaming as a goal. Rather than focusing on gender equality as a separate issue, this overarching concept means that a gender perspective should be applied at every stage of the policy process (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) in order to efficiently promote equality between women

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[12] Cornwall, Andrea. 2000. "Missing Men? Reflections on Men, Masculinities and Gender in GAD", *IDS Bulletin* 31:2; Bjarnegård, Elin. 2013. *Gender, informal institutions and political recruitment. Explaining male dominance in parliamentary representation.* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Peacock, Dean, Gary Barker. 2014. "Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-based Violence". *Men and Masculinities* 17:5.

[13] See e.g. McCall, Leslie. 2008. "The Complexity of Intersectionality", in (eds) Grabham Emily, Davina Cooper, Jane Krishnadas, Didi Herman, *Intersectionality and Beyond: Law, Power and the Politics of Location.* Taylor & Francis.

and men. In the Swedish context, the most frequently used word is "jämställdhetsintegrering", which actually translates into gender equality integration.[14]

"Gender integration" and "gender mainstreaming" will be used interchangeably in this report. Gender mainstreaming will primarily be referred to in relation to general theories on gender mainstreaming. Gender integration will refer to the work that is studied at Sida, as it comes closer to the way the issue is presented in this context.

The origins of gender mainstreaming are found in feminist development work, and it remains particularly accentuated in global and transnational institutions and international cooperation.[15] The strategy has been introduced across the world, including in Sweden where it was adopted as the main strategy to achieve national gender equality goals. The following two decades would see a large literature emerge on the gains and challenges of mainstreaming. Some theories serve as starting points for the present evaluation.

At the basic level, Caroline Moser and Annelise Moser described gender mainstreaming as taking place in three stages: 1) adopting the terminology of gender equality and gender mainstreaming; 2) putting a gender mainstreaming policy into place; 3) implementing gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming policies generally consist of six key components: a dual strategy of mainstreaming gender combined with targeted actions for gender equality; increased competence and requirements around gender analyses; all staff are responsible for mainstreaming but ordinary staff members are also supported by

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[14.] See e.g. SCB. https://www.scb.se/statistik/OV/OV9999/2004A01/OV9999_2004A01_BR_02_X97OP0401.pdf or Regeringen https://www.scb.se/statistik/OV/OV9999/2004A01/OV9999_2004A01_BR_02_X97OP0401.pdf

[15.] Walby, Sylvia. 2005. "Introduction: Comparative Gender Mainstreaming in a Global Era". *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7:4:453-470.

gender specialists; gender training; support to women's decision-making and empowerment; monitoring and evaluation.[16]

It is often pointed out how important it is to see gender mainstreaming not as a practice implemented at one point in time, but as a constantly ongoing process. [17] Most development institutions have adopted a terminology of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, often in line with an official UN definition:

> *Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.[18]*

While most definitions adhere closely to this UN definition,[19] much research has demonstrated how these general aims of gender mainstreaming are so broad that they can encompass everything in terms of actual content: from transformative values and detailed instructions for change, to the instrumental use of "buzz words" that change very little in practice, but which render activities legitimate by the use of gender terminology.[20]

[16.] Moser, Caroline and Annalise Moser. 2005. "Gender mainstreaming since Beijing: A review of success and limitations in international institutions". *Gender & Development* 13:2:11-22.

[17.] Indeed, it has been suggested that it would be useful to increase the use of gender as a verb – rather than a noun – in order to emphasise that gender mainstreaming is about affecting a constantly ongoing process of 'gendering'.

[18.] UN Economic and Social Council for 1997. 1997. "Gender Mainstreaming". http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF.

[19.] Moser and Moser, op. cit., 2005.

[20.] See e.g. Verloo, Mieke. 2005. "Displacement and Empowerment: Reflections on the Concept and Practice of the Council of Europe Approach to Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality". *Social Politics* 12(3):344–365; Daly, Mary. 2005. "Gender Mainstreaming in Theory and Practice". *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12(3); Lombardo, Emanuela, Petra Meier, and

The adoption of a gender language does not imply that it is clear what a gender perspective means. Judith Squires indicates at least three different conceptualisations of gender mainstreaming.[21]

If gender mainstreaming focuses on the *difference* between men's and women's perspectives – that vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities are unevenly distributed among the sexes – the relevant strategy becomes a matter of consulting with and incorporating new and different actors, and previously marginalised voices.

Conversely, if gender mainstreaming is conceptualised as the achievement of *similarity* between men and women, it rather tends to be associated with strategies for broader inclusion, including an emphasis on equal rights for everyone.

When gender mainstreaming is seen as a *transformative* strategy, finally, it aims to fundamentally change gender roles in society by questioning policy norms through inclusive deliberations. This strategy requires going beyond women only, and problematises the gender roles of men, male practices, and institutions supporting male dominance.[22]

Thus, even where a language of gender equality and gender mainstreaming is adopted and accepted, a focus on the content and meaning can reveal important differences between approaches. Content-related differences are rarely expressed openly; indeed, they are often subconscious even to actors working with gender mainstreaming. But by studying problem formulations (explicit or

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Mieke Verloo. 2009. *The Discursive Politics of Gender Equality: Stretching, bending and policymaking.* London and New York: Routledge.

[21.] Squires, Judith. 2005. "Is Mainstreaming Transformative? Theorizing Mainstreaming in the Context of Diversity and Deliberation". *Social Politics* 12:3, 366-388; see also Callerstig, Ann-Charlott. 2014. *Making Equality work: Ambiguities, conflicts and change agents in the implementation of equality policies in public sector organisations.* Ph.D. thesis, Linköping University.

[22.] Bjarnegård, Elin. 2013. *Gender, informal institutions and political recruitment. Explaining male dominance in parliamentary representation.* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

implicit ones) it is possible to better understand how a problem is viewed, and why certain solutions are favoured over others.[23]

Even though gender equality language and policy adoption are ongoing processes in most development institutions, it is the implementation of gender mainstreaming that is often the least complete and most complicated stage.[24] For instance, a review of gender mainstreaming in fourteen international development institutions demonstrated that success was reliant on a number of key individuals. Making gender issues a responsibility of all staff sometimes diluted the impact. This was particularly the case when policy introduction was not followed up consistently and repeatedly with training and skills development.[25] Organisational culture runs deep and is not easily changed by formal policies, not even in highly bureaucratised organisations.[26]

Studying implementation thus means looking at changes in practices and behaviour brought about by reforms of formal documents (policies, guidelines, plans). The match between wording and descriptions found in the latter and actual informal behaviour and practices is key when assessing implementation.[27] Feminist institutionalism[28] has demonstrated how 'sticky' informal rules about gender can be, and how persistent practices informed by informal understandings about "how things are done around here" are.[29] Effective implementation means that formulations in strategic documents guide the practices of actors at all levels of an organisation; that support functions specifically designed to assist

[23.] Bacchi, Carol. 2009. *Analysing Policy. What's the problem represented to be?* Frenchs Forest: Pearson.

[24.] Callerstig 2014, op. cit.; Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009, op. cit.

[25.] Moser and Moser, op. cit., 2005.

[26.] Bjarnegård, Elin and Pär Zetterberg. 2016. "Political Parties and Gender Quota Implementation. The Role of Bureaucratized Candidate Selection Procedures". *Comparative Politics* 48:3, 393–417.

[27.] Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, op. cit., 2016.

[28.] See e.g. Krook, Mona Lena and Fiona Mackay. 2011. *Gender, Politics and Institutions. Towards a Feminist Institutionalism.* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[29.] Lowndes, Vivien. 2014. "How Are Things Done Around Here? Uncovering Institutional Rules and Their Gendered Effects", *Politics & Gender*, 10:4, 685–691.

changes are in place; that they are known, considered relevant and used by implementers.

A related distinction is that between the individual and organisational level.[30] Unless change takes place at both levels, increasing the responsibility and leeway afforded to staff members will make policy implementation vulnerable to changes in staff. Systematised routines and practices can ensure implementation across an organisation, but they may be less than efficient if individuals do not understand or agree with them, or if routines are not suited to the organisation's purposes in the first place. Among staff members, an individual consciousness is necessary of what gender equality is and implies, as are the knowledge and skills needed for implementation. If gender mainstreaming is to take place, changed routines and practices must seep down to everyone, and particular attention needs to be given to individuals who do not have gender equality as their main daily focus.

3.3   Summary

Moving ahead, these perspectives and theories will guide the analysis of the implementation of the Plan at Sida. The present study seeks an understanding of gender that has moved beyond Women in Development, and that is focusing on power structures and gendered roles affecting women, men and entire societies. A focus on men and boys as gendered beings is needed, and on intersectional understandings of power, identity, vulnerability and privilege. Hence, integrating gender into development means applying gender as an analytical category to distinguish inequalities and vulnerablilities created by social, cultural and political factors. It also means striving to reduce reduce inequalities through concrete actions.

When gender analyses are assessed, there are some fundamental concepts: public and private, gender disaggregated data, productive and reproductive activities, practical and strategic gender issues and needs. The core of a gender analysis is to define more precisely how

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[30.] Rao and Kelleher, 2005, op. cit., p. 60.

gender matters, and what the consequences of not acknowledging this could be. A minimal understanding of what constitutes a gender perspective is that it means *something*. Some real content and problematisation of gender relations should be connected to a gender analysis, so that it can, at the very least, be discerned what the underlying problem is perceived to be. The evaluation uses Squires as a point of departure in this regard, and distinguishes between difference, similarity and transformative approaches.

Gender mainstreaming perspectives are important for studying gender integration at Sida. It will be investigated to what extent the above understanding of gender permeates Sida – horizontally (at all units and departments, and in all stages of the policy process) as well as vertically (by all employees). Particular focus will be on staff members who do not have gender equality as their main focus. Research has pointed out that these individuals often need special attention in terms of training and skills development. The team will also investigate if there is a unified consciousness of what gender equality implies, and if there are routines and practices that help ensure implementation across the organisation.

Studying implementation, finally, means that the correspondence between changes in practices and behaviour brought about by the Plan will be in focus. The match between the wording and descriptions found in the Plan and actual behaviour and practices is a key factor in these assessments.

4.   The Plan for gender integration

This section presents the Plan for gender integration and connects it to existing mandates and parallel developments. Sida was one of 41 government agencies given the task of developing a plan for enhanced gender integration between 2016 and 2018. This was part of the Government's annual letter of appropriation 2015. The Plan[31] was delivered towards the end of 2015.

As the Plan notes, gender equality has been a prioritised theme in Swedish development cooperation since 1996 (and an integrated element of Sida's and its predecessors' work since 1983). The current document responds to the enhanced emphasis on this theme by the Swedish government, and represents a continuation and strengthening of Sida's efforts.[32]

4.1   Gender equality in Sida's mandate

- Existing regulations – such as Sweden's Policy for global development, the previous policy for gender equality work in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, and the Aid policy framework – are largely in line with the Plan.

- The fact that the Plan matches existing frameworks laid the foundation for an efficient implementation.

In order for implementation processes to work smoothly, it is important that changes are in line with existing regulations and practices. As to gender integration, the first essential step is to assess to what extent the Plan for gender integration can be seen as a natural continuation of previous government priorities and Sida practices, or whether there is a mismatch between the Plan and existing and prior frameworks.

[31.] Sida. "Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering på Sida", op. cit.

[32.] Ibid., pp. 4 and 1, respectively.

4.1.1 Before the Plan

Sweden's Policy for global development (adopted much earlier than the Plan) is based on two perspectives: a rights perspective anchored in international human rights conventions, and the perspective of the poor. Gender equality is frequently mentioned in the Policy for global development, and is also one of its eight central components.[33] The Plan for gender integration is, as such, in line with Swedish overall priorities.

As mentioned, gender equality has been a priority for decades. Gender integration was mentioned as an integral part of the policy for gender equality work in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, which was in place between 2005 and 2010.[34] That document affirmed Sweden's general priorities, and emphasised gender mainstreaming. Instructions for working with gender mainstreaming in general and in particular areas had thus been part of Sida's work well before the Plan.

Moreover, the document specified three basic components of, and instruments for, gender mainstreaming: targeted measures, integrated measures and dialogue. It also used gender theory, speaking the same language as the seminal work of Molyneux and Moser does, to specify that both practical needs and strategic interests of women will be highlighted.[35]

The subsequent Aid policy framework, seeking to provide a unified policy for Swedish development cooperation, also included gender equality and women's rights in several respects.[36] It noted that the absence of gender equality represents an obstacle to human

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[33.] Government of Sweden. "Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development". Government Bill 2002/03:122.

[34.] Government of Sweden. "On Equal Footing: Policy for gender equality and the rights and role of women in Sweden's international development cooperation 2010–2015". Government Offices of Sweden.

[35.] Molyneux, Maxine. 1984. "Mobilisation without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua", *Critical Social Policy* 4; Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training.* London and New York: Routledge.

[36.] Government of Sweden. "Aid Policy Framework: The direction of Swedish Aid", Government Communication 2013/4:131.

and social development. It stated that gender considerations are present in the rights-based approach found at the centre of Swedish aid policy.[37] Accordingly, the framework noted that "gender equality and the role of women in development are central elements and a starting point for all aid", and stressed "operational and normative work is to systematically integrate a distinct gender equality perspective, i.e. gender mainstreaming".

Policies and frameworks guiding Sida's work before the adoption of the Plan for gender integration have thus put an increased emphasis on gender integration for quite some time. In this sense, the foundation was laid for a successful implementation of the Plan as a natural next step.

4.2   The content of the Plan

- The Plan has three overarching aims: increasing the focus on gender equality as the principal objective of contributions; improving the quality of Sida's work and routines for gender mainstreaming; increasing ambitions regarding gender equality and equal opportunity work from an organisational and leadership point of view.

- The formulations in the Plan are by themselves often quite vague and generally fail to assign responsibilities, desired levels of achievement, or resources to specific tasks.

The overall objective of the Plan is to have an impact on gender equality in Sida's work, to focus on results and allow for follow-up by Sida, and also to ensure an open and inclusive culture of organisation and leadership.[38] The Plan underlines Sida's experience that contributions in which gender equality is the principal objective will yield the best results. In line with this, the first part of the Plan calls for raising the proportion of contributions that have gender

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[37.] Ibid., pp. 10 and 12.

[38.] "Svenskt utvecklingssamarbete har genomslag vad gäller jämställdhet, är uppföljningsbart och fokuserat på resultat för kvinnor, män, flickor och pojkar. Sida präglas av en jämställd, öppen och inkluderande organisations- och ledarkultur."

equality as their principal target, particularly in sectors in which gender equality has previously been less prominent (productive and non-social sectors). This may seem like a step away from gender integration and towards more targeted activities, but the Plan stresses that gender integration remains the main strategy. Furthermore, gender integration requires a context-specific gender analysis as a basis for subsequent actions, which can be divided into "integrated interventions", "targeted interventions" and "dialogue", respectively.[39]

The Plan points to challenges for an effective integration of gender integration in "steering, resources, implementation and follow-up", i.e. in a set of factors internal to the organisation.[40] It thus stresses the need to make gender integration a priority for planning, analysis and follow-up.

Finally, the Plan stipulates that Sida's high ambitions regarding its external work must be matched with a similar internal focus.

Thematically, the Plan is divided in three parts, corresponding to the points above:

1) Increasing the focus on gender equality as the principal objective generally, but with a specific prioritisation of environment/climate/resilience as well as in the productive sector. New forms of development finance[41] will be used strategically to further gender equality.

2) Improving the quality of Sida's work and routines for gender mainstreaming. This includes new ways of working, and a clarification of responsibilities and roles as well as a generally strengthened gender competence, partly through better advisory functions.

[39] Ibid., p. 7. See also Gender toolbox on gender mainstreaming. March 2015. Sida.

[40] Sida. "Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering", op. cit., p. 10.

[41] Sida. "Sidas arbete med utvecklingsfinansiering. 2015". Stockholm: Sida.

3) Increasing the ambitions regarding Sida's gender equality and equal opportunity work from an organisational and leadership point of view.

These themes are operationalised in ten concrete goals (see below). Several objectives are quite vaguely formulated. Typical formulations include "gender analysis permeates routines for strategy development and operationalisation" (goal six), and "responsibilities, roles and competences in the work for gender equality have been made clearer and strengthened" (goal eight). Types of analysis, routines, responsibilities, roles and comptetences – those essential details are not specified. This also implies that there are no specified resources mentioned in relation to any objective in the Plan.

However, in the following section of the Plan ("Implemention"), Sida is somewhat more specific regarding its undertaking and spells out areas or procedures for concrete action. For instance, goal number six is described as follows: "Gender analysis has been clarified in method support and is requested in strategy steering, and in commitees that assist decision-making." As this example shows, though, formulations are often also lacking in specificity and leave the operationalisation of the Plan to different implementing levels of the organisation.

In practice, it is up to Sida's departments to formulate their own concrete objectives, including the assignation of responsibilities and desired levels of achievement. These objectives have often come to differ in ambition and conceptualisation, which may well have contributed to the uneven implementation of the Plan.[42]

Furthermore, the Plan does not contain any definition of what gender integration means in practice, and no explicit vision for how

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[42.] For instance, while the gender action plan for one unit simply states that it will "look into new forms for development financing" (Myanmar, Updated Action Plan Gender Equality 2016–2018), another action plan specifies this to "[p]rovide strategic support [to] embassies to ensure gender mainstreaming within new forms for developing financing such as guarantees and challenge funds (Gender Advisors Africa Dep)" (Africa Department, Final Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming 2016–2018).

gender equality should be addressed.[43] While gender analysis is emphasised, it is not spelt out what this implies and what level of competence and ambition is expected when performing an analysis.

The Plan's focus on a mixture of "targeted" and "integrated interventions" represents a continuation of a focus found in both the 2010–2015 policy and the Aid policy framework, i.e. on simultaneously stressing gender integration as a general goal and setting specific goals. (This focus had also been promoted in Sida's former policy for gender equality, approved in 2005.[44]) Still, the Plan could be viewed as a step forward, since it stipulates that the proportion of interventions having gender equality as a principal goal shall increase in all sectors.[45]

The Plan's demand for a "context-specific gender analysis" as a basis for Sida's work with gender integration in general and cooperations in particular[46] is also in line with similar requirements found in the 2010–2015 policy and in the Swedish foreign service's Action plan for Feminist foreign policy.[47] This requirement is not mentioned in the Aid policy framework, however. Generally though, the Plan appears to be in line with previous instructions in this respect as well as with the Government's policy.

In summary, while being in line with previous policies and action plans, Sida's Plan for gender integration is actually less concrete in many respects. It does not spell out a concrete perspective on gender integration, and says next to nothing about objectives in individual sectors. Likewise, its ten process-oriented goals are by themselves relatively diffuse, even though the Plan also contains further specification. Furthermore, the fact that the current plan does not contribute guidance also means that there is no explicit

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[43.] It should be noted that Sida's Toolbox for gender equality, contains further specifications. But this instrument seems to be rarely used and is partly unknown among programme officers.

[44.] Sida. 2005. "Promoting Gender Equality in Gender Cooperation", p. 7f.

[45.] Sida. "Plan för jämställdhetsintegrering", op. cit., goal 1.

[46.] Ibid., 6f.

[47.] "På lika villkor", op. cit., p. 21f.; Handlingsplanen, s. 16.

description or framework for how gender integration should be carried out in Swedish development cooperation.

4.3   Simultaneous developments

- There were parallel initiatives with the aim of furthering gender equality in development cooperation, including the Action plan for Feminist foreign policy and the Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

The elaboration of the Plan did not take place in isolation. It was one of many initiatives in the gender equality area relating to development cooperation. To what extent, then, have those initiatives been complementary, strengthening each other, rather than contradictory?

The Action plan for Feminist foreign policy adopted under the present Swedish government overlaps the implementation of the Plan for gender mainstreaming. The Action plan spells out a number of priorities related to most areas in which Sida is active, and outlines methods and possible approaches.[48]

The Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance[49] sets out the general direction of Swedish aid, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It emphasises gender aspects of these global agendas. It also reinforces Sweden's commitment to improve the agency and to further representation of women and girls. It states that Sweden should be a driving force when it comes to including men and boys in gender equality-related work.

In October 2017, the Government gave Sida the task to prepare a strategy for Sweden's development cooperation for global gender

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[48.] Government of Sweden. "Utrikesförvaltningens handlingsplan för en feministisk utrikespolitik 2015–2018 med fokusområden för 2016".

[49.] Government of Sweden. "Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance". Government Communication 2016/17:60.

equality and women's and girls' rights 2018–2022. The strategy was adopted in April 2018. It focuses specifically on global and regional conditions for gender equality and women's and girls' human rights by strengthening support to women's rights organisations, feminist movements, and gender equality research. It also seeks to increase access to and use of gender disaggregated statistics, and intends to strengthen method and capacity development for gender equality work.[50]

Although the development of a strategy for global gender equality was initially not part of the Plan, many Sida employees see the strategy, at least partly, as a result of discussions raised around the work on gender integration.

These simultaneous developments regarding gender integration in development cooperation have not in any way contradicted the Plan. Most guidelines should rather enhance the relevance of the Plan, and increase the likelihood of its implementation. In general terms, they emphasise the importance of gender equality as one of the perspectives that should be consistently considered and integrated in all areas. Strengthening the methods for how to achieve this is thus completely in line with the general direction of Swedish development cooperation.

These other documents sometimes also come up with concrete suggestions, such as the perspective of men and boys forming an integral part of gender equality work, something the Plan fails to provide. It is, however, notable that other perspectives are recognised and prioritised in several documents (primarily conflict sensitivity and environment/climate).

[50.] Government of Sweden. "Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete för global jämställdhet och kvinnors och flickors rättigheter 2018–2022."

4.4   The implementation of the Plan

- The Plan document was unknown to most of Sida's staff.

- The goals of the Plan were incorporated into Sida's normal processes for planning and reporting. This complicates the assessment of their implementation.

The present evaluation focuses on the implementation of the Plan. A few points of clarification of what this implies are in order. As will be noted below, interview and focus group material made it clear that the Plan itself was largely unknown to most of Sida's staff. There was never any official launch of the Plan at Sida, and the bulk of the Plan has not yet been translated into any language other than Swedish (a prerequisite for its availability to a substantial part of Sida's field staff, not to mention its partners).

> Q: "How much do you know about the Plan for gender integration?" NPO 1: "The mysterious one… I have never seen it." NPO 2: "It was presented at one point, but only in Swedish."[51]

Lack of knowledge about the Plan does not mean that it has not been implemented, however. Goals have been integrated into annual planning processes and into reforms of the contribution management system. Sida's staff are generally aware of these processes, but they may not realise that some directives are stemming from the Plan for gender integration.

4.5   Summary

This section has presented the Plan for gender integration and connected it to existing mandates and parallel developments. It is clear that the Plan matches existing regulations on aid policy and gender, and that a foundation for efficient implementation has been laid.

[51.] Interview with two national programme officers who both work with gender specifically at a Swedish embassy.

Formulations in the Plan are by themselves often quite vague. They generally fail to assign responsibilities, desired levels of achievement, or resources to specific tasks. As a document and as a focused ambition at Sida, the Plan was largely unknown among staff. Instead, its goals were incorporated into Sida's normal processes for planning and reporting. This makes it difficult to determine exactly which initiatives stem from the Plan, and which ones were already underway or would have been put forward anyway. There were, for example, parallell intitiatives that had the same aim of furthering gender equality in development cooperation, including the Action plan for Feminist foreign policy and the Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

5. Sida's organisational gender equality infrastructure

This chapter outlines how Sida is organised when it comes to gender equality, and describes the changes this gender equality infrastructure has undergone during the implementation of the Plan. It attempts to pinpoint the organisational changes, and assesses to what extent they are likely to be a direct or indirect result of the Plan.

Sida's gender equality work predated the Plan. The gender equality infrastructure – the organisational support structures to ensure relevant and efficient work in this regard – has developed both strategically (after formal decisions and instructions) and organically (developing good practices and institutionalising informal information sharing). Hence, it is not always easy to trace the precise origin of recent initiatives and organisational changes, and to determine whether they have come about as a result of the Plan.

There is no one place in which the gender equality infrastructure is described. The following attempt to clarify the structure builds on official and working documents, the contents of which has been verified through several interviews with Sida officers.

5.1 Sida's organisation and the implementation of the Plan

- Sida works in a decentralised manner, giving departments a far-reaching responsibility for the implementation of the Plan.

- Implementation of the Plan is uneven. Certain departments and units accomplish a lot, while others do less.

Sida's staff are stationed at the head office at Valhallavägen in Stockholm[52], at specialised units in Gotland and Härnösand, and in

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[52.] Sida is organised in eight departments, Internal Audit and Director-General's Office. Five departments work with implementing the development assistance

embassies and development cooperation sections abroad. Contribution management takes place both at the head office and in field missions. The agency seeks to integrate gender aspects in the ordinary structures, rather than having a thematic focus on gender equality per se. It is thus necessary to understand some essentials about Sida's structure as a whole, before it is possible to assess the gender equality infrastructure specifically.

Each department and unit has a responsibility to implement the Plan for gender integration, and to operationalise it in their own action plans. The implementation thus largely takes place at Sida's departments and units, as part of regular routines. How the Plan is implemented – in extent, form and content – therefore varies depending on the department and unit leadership and initiative.

Some departments, units and embassies have developed formal gender equality plans of their own to ensure a continued focus on gender integration when working with strategies and mid-term reviews. Such plans are, however, not required, but rather initiatives taken by these units. For instance, the Africa Department developed its own Action plan for gender equality 2016–2018.[53] Here, the Africa Department moves ahead and sets more ambitious goals than the agency at large. One exampe includes training: the Department establishes that every staff member should complete both the basic gender training and department-specific training at a specific point in time. Terms of Reference for gender focal points working in embassies in Africa (elaborated on below) constitute another example of how certain departments move ahead, clarify gender equality structures and increase their ambitions.[54]

(Africa Department, Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance, Department for Europe and Latin America, Department for Partnerships and Innovations, and Department for International Organisations and Policy Support). Three departments handle support, steering and control (Department for HR and Communication, Department for Management Support, and Department for Operational Support).

[53] Sida. "Beslut, Afrikaavdelningens handlingsplan för jämställdhet 2016–2018". 2016-07-11.

[54] Sida. "Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points at the Department for Africa and its embassies", Sida. 2018-01-18.

The Department for Asia, the Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance has, instead of a specific action plan, integrated parts of Sida's overall Plan for gender integration into its annual planning. It strives to integrate gender equality, environment and conflict perspectives in development cooperation, and will particularly focus on strengthening integration in productive sectors.[55]

The fact that implementation is conducted differently within departments, and that the team received limited or no documentation from certain departments, makes it difficult to assess to what extent the Plan for gender integration has been implemented across the agency. It has certainly not been *systematically* implemented – in the same manner, with the same instruments and with a joint vision for moving forward with gender integration. Furthermore, the decentralised way of working with gender integration allows certain departments and units to move ahead, possibly acting as role models for others. Conversely, certain departments may of course fall behind in such a model.

5.2 **Internal advisory functions**

- Internal advisory functions include two policy specialists on gender, gender equality advisors, gender equality focal points, the gender equality hub and the gender equality network.

- The functions of the Policy specialists, who are leading the work with gender at Sida, have not been sufficiently protected and prioritised by the leadership throughout the implementation period.

5.2.1 Policy specialists on gender equality

Sida has two *policy specialists on gender equality*: one Lead policy specialist (Verksföreträdare) and one Senior policy specialist (Ämnesföreträdare). Both are based at the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support and the Unit for

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[55.] Sida. "Verksamhetsplan för HUMASIEN 2018". 2017-12-04.

policy support. The Lead policy specialist has the main coordinating responsibility. These two specialists represent the thematic area of gender equality internally, within Sida, and externally.

Internally, the policy specialists coordinate the gender equality network and are responsible for integrating network activities in the broader organisation. Another main task is to produce and update analytical and methodological material and tools regarding gender equality (see below), and to ensure that everything is available to Sida employees and partners. Policy specialists are also generally responsible for contributing to learning processes related to gender equality. They should provide analyses in order to assess results of gender-related activitites, and they are also responsible for coordination with other thematic policy specialists at Sida.

Externally, the policy specialists represent Sida in issues related to gender equality in contacts with the Government, other agencies, and international organisations. They participate in advocacy and global dialogue in prioritised issues where gender- equality is in focus. They are also supposed to follow gender-related issues in research and media.[56]

The policy specialist positions have been part of the Sida gender equality infrastructure for quite some time, and were in place already when the Plan started to be implemented. These two specialists have an overarching responsibility for the implementation.

It is worth noting that there has been some rotation on these posts during the implementation period. The Lead policy specialist left in 2016, and was replaced by the Senior policy specialist. The position as Senior policy specialist remained vacant for four months in 2017. The new Lead policy specialist left her position after a short while in mid-2017.

There has thus been a lack of continuity, which may be unfortunate but not rare at Sida. People often move to new positions, and rotate between Stockholm and abroad. Yet, the fact

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[56.] Work descriptions in call for positions: Verksföreträdare (jämställdhet) till Enheten för tematiskt stöd samt Ämnesföreträdare (jämställdhet) till Enheten för tematiskt stöd, ref. 15/17.

that these strategically important positions were not filled immediately may have had an effect on Sida's continued attention to and ambition regarding gender integration. Many interviewees mention the crucial role of the policy advisors, but also comment that advisors have too many tasks on their plates and are overburdened. According to the Plan, the quality of Sida's work and routines for gender mainstreaming should be improved and strengthened. A sustained, or maybe increased, presence of policy advisors should have been ensured by Sida´s leadership.

In addition to policy advisors, there are special policy advisors for a couple of themes – women and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women's economic empowerment, for gender equality at Sida Partnership Forum, humanitarian assistance, and Women, Peace and Security. Each advisor serves a particular department. Accordingly, the latter post is based at the Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance. It is part of a strategy to increase gender integration in Sida's work in conflict contexts, and to strengthen women's participation and influence in peace processes. The advisor is also expected to work more efficiently with conflict prevention. This strategy is one way of supporting Sweden's national action plan for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. The Sida report on its support 2016–2017 specifically refers to the Plan for gender integration, and states that it has facilitated an overall increased focus on gender equality.[57]

5.2.2 Gender equality advisors and focal points for gender equality

There are five *gender equality advisors* in the regional departments at Sida headquarters: the Africa Department, the Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance, and the Department for Europe and Latin America. These staff members have advisory roles with regard to gender issues in their departments, and are also

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[57.] Sida. "Sidas stöd till Sveriges nationella handlingsplan för genomförande av FN:s säkerhetsrådsresolution om kvinnor, fred och säkerhet". 2016–2017.

supposed to support regional strategies. Gender equality advisors were in place well before the implementation of the Plan. Furthermore, there are programme managers and programme specialists who handle specific gender aspects at several other Sida's departments and units – such as the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support (four staff positions, including one on SRHR), the Humanitarian assistance unit (one), and Sida Partnership Forum in Härnösand (one).

In addition to the gender equality advisors in Sweden, there are *focal points for gender equality*, manned by Sida, in embassies and development cooperation sections.[58] They have an advisory role regarding gender equality, but they are also supposed to contribute context-specific know-how. They are often, but not always, locally employed national programme officers (NPOs) who fulfill this task as one among several others. The focal points for gender equality were part of Sida's gender equality infrastructure well before the implementation of the Plan.

Each department determines the exact roles and responsibilities of its gender focal points. For example, the Africa Department has written Terms of Reference (ToR) to specify the role of gender focal points (dated January 2018).[59] These ToRs clearly state that the department's plan for gender mainstreaming is to improve methods and routines through enhanced competence among staff and management. The tasks of gender focal points, as described in ToRs, are accordingly quite extensive and rather specific.[60] This is one

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[58.] There are also other focal points for gender equality at Sida headquarters, but they are responsible for specific gender equality issues or organisations working with gender equality (e.g. focal point for UN Women etc.).

[59.] Sida. "Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points at the Department for Africa and its embassies", Sida. 2018-01-18.

[60.] Ibid. According to the ToR, the gender focal points at the Africa Department are supposed to fulfill quite a few tasks. They should manage the embassies' gender equality plan in line with the Africa Department's plan for gender mainstreaming, provide advice to program officers in the contribution management process and support their dialogue with partners. They should also work with quality assurance of OECD-DAC gender equality policy markers, identify needs for capacity building, keep themselves updated on national trends in gender equality issues, exchange knowledge on global and regional trends through dialogue with the Lead Policy Specialist and gender equality advisors –

example of how the Plan for gender mainstreaming has been implemented within the organisation, and operationalised at different levels. In the Africa Department it has led to ambitious ToRs, but not all departments have worked in the same way. The Africa Department is generally considered the most determined one.

It is also worth noting that the ambitious ToRs have nothing to say about the content of gender equality expertise of the focal points, about theories, resources or documents that should guide their advice, and which direction they should take.

5.2.3   The gender equality hub and the gender equality network

The policy specialists, gender equality advisors and certain other staff members together make up the *gender equality hub* at Sida headquarters. The hub thus consists of about ten individuals. It is rare, though, that everyone is able to attend its weekly meetings, used for information sharing, planning and follow-up activities.

The policy specialists, the gender equality advisors and the focal points at various embassies also make up the broad *gender equality network* at Sida. About 85 people are listed as members (including those of the gender equality hub), and the network serves as a forum for internal coordination and capacity building. Information on new developments, resources or activities relating to gender equality are distributed internally. The network also seeks to meet online at least a few times a year. There are different types of meetings, and some may have more of a learning focus while others have more of an information character. The network also organises fewer but important physical meetings. During the implementation of the Plan the team noted one network meeting on women's political

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and participate in Sida's Gender network and in the Africa Department's regular meetings with gender focal points. They are also expected to organise and participate in relevant gender trainings, workshops and seminars, to work with partner organisations to review and improve their gender equality capacity, and to contribute to producing gender-related material, reports and analyses.

empowerment in Harare, and one meeting on gender and environment in Härnösand, both in 2016.

Provided the decentralisation of gender equality work at Sida, the gender equality hub and the gender equality network both have important roles to play when it comes to fostering a joint vision and cohesive approaches. They are also crucial for learning and capacity building across the board. The hub and the network are firmly institutionalised, and they were part of the gender equality infrastructure before the implementation of the Plan. But the level of involvement and participation in the network is varying as a result of priorities made at unit or individual levels. The team has heard of field units with a miminal participation in the network, for instance.

5.3   External support functions

- Sida had a framework agreement with a helpdesk for gender equality at the Nordic Consulting Group between 2015 and 2017. The contract was extended in 2018.[61]

- Only geographical departments had access to services of the helpdesk, and its assistance was limited in scope.

- There were no criteria for when the helpdesk should be contacted.

- The helpdesk agreement already existed when the Plan was adopted.

A number of departments at Sida had a framework agreement with a helpdesk for gender equality at the Nordic Consulting Group between 2015 and 2017. The aim was to provide methodological support to Sida and Swedish embassies to ensure adequate gender

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[61.] The helpdesk function in focus here relates to the contract that lasted between 2015 and 2017. The helpdesk contract was extended in 2018 and the helpdesk thus continues to provide support. A new helpdesk, covering the entire agency, is being procured, and a framework agreement for support on gender equality was concluded in June 2018. It has not been possible to collect material on these institutions and their performance as data collection for this report ended the same month.

integration. The helpdesk was also expected to facilitate learning and improve the skills and abilities of its users, aid managers, administrators and partners. The support could include analyses of various types of documents, and the Nordic Consulting Group used Sida's own documents on the subject as a starting point for its support.[62]

There were considerable limitations in the set-up of the helpdesk, however, and support was only available for the geographical departments at Sida. The helpdesk was also limited in another sense. It could not put in more than five days of work on each short-term assignment, thus preventing thorough and long-term assistance. Furthermore, there were seemingly no clear criteria for when the helpdesk should be contacted – it happened on a case-to-case basis (see below) rather irregularly.[63]

The helpdesk was already in place when the Plan was adopted. One representative states that the consultants on the helpdesk had failed to note any significant increase in demand attributable to the Plan.[64] To the extent that a difference was actually noted, it was likely due to an impression that certain embassies put a greater emphasis on these issues after the proclamation of a Feminist foreign policy.

For more long-term assignments related to gender or support to the departments not covered by the helpdesk, Sida staff have of course also separately procured consultancies. At the very end of the evaluation's data collection (in mid-June 2018), Sida unveiled a new framework agreement for services related to gender equality, to facilitate procurement of advisory services. While this may eventually contribute to more external support and advice being sought, the team has, for obvious reasons, not been able to assess those effects.

[62.] See https://ncgsw.se/project/global-gender-helpdesk-sida/

[63.] The regional office for Asia also has put into place a local expert helpdesk function to strengthen the gender equality work of regional partners (see further below).

[64.] Interview with staff at the Gender helpdesk.

5.4   Staff training and learning

• Sida has a training programme in place. It includes introduction days for new employees, training for national programme officers, the Sida Learning week, training for directors and for members of staff who are on their way to work in the field or who are returning.

• Specific gender training does not constitute a significant separate part of recently organised courses.

• Sida currently prioritises learning on the job and in interaction with experienced colleagues. The flipside of this is that learning becomes dependent on individual capacities. Furthermore, little basic knowledge is expected from staff members, fundamentals that could be consistently referred to and built upon.

• The basic course offerings have not changed as a result of the Plan, but there are ongoing processes to assess competence needs and promote Sida as a learning organisation.

The Unit for learning and organisational development at the Department for Human Resources and Communication conducts staff trainings – such as introduction days for new employees, introductory training for new national programme officers, the so-called Sida Learning week, and training for directors. Training is also available for members of staff who are heading for postings abroad. Looking at the most recent training programmes, it is not evident that gender aspects constitute an important part of those courses. Gender equality is not explicity mentioned as part of the programme.[65] One conceivable reason is that this issue is so firmly integrated into other topics that it does not requre a separate heading. For instance, the Multidimensional poverty analysis (MDPA, a topic for an entire day at the Sida Learning week) considers gender aspects.

[65.] The Sida Learning week has one seemingly optional lunch session on gender integration in private sector development programmes. There is, however, a full day of MDPA, in which gender aspects are said to be prominent.

In all kinds of organisations and processes, gender equality risks being forgotten, unless explicitly mentioned and brought to the forefront. At Sida, this could, for instance, happen in trainings and courses offered to new members of staff and national programme officers, since it is difficult to find any components specifically devoted to gender integration or analysis. These issues may be addressed as part of a more general discussion (for instance, regarding the MDPA), but it is unclear whether this is sufficient to explain the basic content of a gender perspective and gender analysis. (In the week-long national programme officers' training, MDPA and the "perspectives" is the subject of one entire day, and in the two-day course for new headquarter staff, MDPA – presumably including gender integration – is discussed during one hour.[66])

Other courses with a gender-specific focus are available to different categories of Sida staff, however. Departments and units also organise trainings of their own, in which they can be assisted by the Unit for learning and organisational development and the gender equality network. However, trainings are neither compulsory nor regularly held. For Sida as a whole, only one course of that kind was held in 2017 and none so far in 2018).

Many interviewees compare the current situation to an earlier programme of basic courses that all Sida staff members were expected to attend to. Today's approach to learning is more flexible, as learning by doing together with experienced mentors is perceived as a more "modern" view.[67] An obvious flipside is that this approach becomes highly dependent on the individual mentor's competence and views. It does not rely on any basic knowledge expected from everyone, something that may consistently be referred to and built upon.

In addition to formal trainings, regular events such as Development Talks and Roundtables have been carried out. More informal brown-bag lunches with people like Gary Barker,

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[66.] Sida. 2018. "Introduktionsdagar för nyanställda"; Sida. 2018; Introductory training for new national programme officers 2018.

[67.] Interview with staff at Sida's Unit for learning and organisational development.

presenting his groundbreaking work on men and masculinities in development, is another good example. Likewise, the Sida Partnership Forum in Härnösand offers courses to partners that often include gender equality.

The basic and regular course offerings have not changed as a result of the Plan for gender integration. There is, however, an ongoing assessment of competence needs at Sida. A survey looking at self-assessments of competence regarding gender equality has recently been carried out (commented on below).[68] Furthermore, a vision statement promoting Sida as a learning organisation is being developed, but it does not seem to be connected specifically to the Plan.[69]

5.5   Tools and document for support

- The Gender toolbox existed before the Plan, and it has been continuously updated. It has a useful content, but it is voluntary to use the toolbox. It remains unclear when it should be used and by whom.

- Considerable efforts have been made with quality assurance of the gender policy markers and with reforming the contribution management systems. This work can at least partly be attributed to the Plan. Supporting documents and helptexts produced for this purpose will likely be used as they relate to concrete processes.

- The Tool for multidimensional poverty analysis (MDPA) is a good example of gender integration, but is apparently unrelated to the Plan. It is difficult to assess any effects due to its recent appearance.

- Sida has adopted a Diversity and gender equality plan, a result of the Plan for gender integration.

[68.] Sida. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017".

[69.] Interview with a senior staff member at headquarters.

There are a number of support documents available to Sida staff, differing in terms of scope and status. Several documents are part of the so-called Gender toolbox, which contains information on several themes. It is not mandatory, though, to consult the documents or to use them at any point. In addition, Sida staff can rely on a number of help texts, checklists as well as a Statistical Handbook, which may be more commonly used due to their practical nature relating to contribution management. They are more technical, though, and do not go as in depth as the Gender toolbox does. There is also a new Tool for multidimensional poverty analysis, which integrates gender, and a Diversity and gender equality plan, developed by Sida. These written materials will be commented on below.

5.5.1   The Gender toolbox

Already before the Plan was being implemented, the Gender toolbox was part of the support functions developed by Sida and available to employees. It contains three different types of documents: tools, briefs and thematic overviews.

The tools are quite concrete summaries meant to facilitate the practical implementation of gender equality work. Seven different tools have been produced from 2015 onwards. Some core tools – *Gender Analysis*[70], *Gender Mainstreaming*[71], and *Gender in Humanitarian Assistance*[72] – were in place in March 2015, well before the implementation of the Plan.

The Gender Analysis tool is simple and ambitious. It manages to outline how to concretely carry out a gender analysis. It brings in some foundational aspects of gender theory, such as the distinction between sex and gender, gendered roles and responsibilities, productive and reproductive work, access and control over resources, practical and strategic needs, and intersectionality.

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[70] Sida. Tool: Gender Analysis. Principles and Elements. March 2015.

[71] Sida. Tool: Gender Mainstreaming. March 2015.

[72] Sida. Tool: Gender in Humanitarian Assistance. March 2015.

The Gender Mainstreaming tool primarily builds on policy documents, and clearly outlines the three different strategies for mainstreaming gender. Gender equality in humanitarian assistance draws on existing knowledge about how natural disasters and conflicts impact women, girls, men and boys differently, and provides advice on how to work with gender mainstreaming in such contexts. The availability of those tools could thus support the implementation of the Plan.

Additions during the Plan's implementation phase include tools on Gender Equality in the Education Sector[73], Gender Equality Policy Marker[74], How Sida works with Gender Equality[75], and Gender in Research Cooperation[76].

The tool How Sida works with Gender Equality directly refers to the Plan and its three goals. It outlines Sida's model for gender mainstreaming, with a mandatory gender analysis that will lead to targeted interventions, integration or dialogue. The tool also mentions Sida's gender equality network and the Gender toolbox. It specifies how equality is integrated in Sida's assessments of contributions (in Trac), and underlines that gender advisors in geographical departments should give technical assistance. Although it refers to the Plan, it is notable that all of the structures mentioned here were in place well before the adoption of the Plan.

The Tool on the Gender Equality Policy Marker is a very specific description of the OECD-DAC categorisations of gender equality focus. It also supports the work with quality assurance of the application of policy markers, that was conducted as part of the implementation of the Plan.

The twelve "briefs" highlight areas of special interest for gender issues in development cooperation (Gender and Educational

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[73.] Sida. Tool: Gender Equality in the Education Sector. June 2017.

[74.] Sida. Tool: Gender Equality Policy Marker. February 2016.

[75.] Sida. Tool: How Sida works with Gender Equality. May 2017.

[76.] Sida. Tool: Questions to Integrate a Gender Perspective into Research Cooperation. August 2016.

attainment[77]; Gender and Corruption[78]; Gender and Environment[79]; Gender and ICT[80]; Women, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene[81]; Women and Land Rights[82]; Women and Food Security[83]; Gender Based Violence and Education[84]; Women, Peace and Security[85]; Gender, Urban Infrastructure and International Finance Institutions[86]). There are also two focused briefs on "hot issues", (Women's Organisations and the Engagement of Men[87], and Gender Equality and Gender Equity[88]).

Most briefs were produced in March 2015, but the two "hot issues" and two ordinary briefs were added later. These documents go somewhat more in depth into an issue than the tools do, and build on reports and to some extent on research. They provide good overviews of topics, but they are organised in different ways and seem to have somewhat different purposes. It is not clear how "hot issues" differ from regular briefs. It is also somewhat unclear if the purpose of the briefs is to provide an overview of exisiting knowledge, to provide links to organisations and resources for increased learning, or to state Sida's position on certain issues. For instance, in the brief on Women's Organisations and the Engagement of Men[89] Sida's position is very much the starting point of the questions raised, but this is not as clearly stated in some of

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[77.] Sida. Brief: Gender and Educational Attainment. August 2017.

[78.] Sida. Brief: Gender and Corruption. March 2015.

[79.] Sida. Brief: Gender and Environment. March 2016.

[80.] Sida. Brief: Gender and ICT. March 2015.

[81.] Sida. Brief: Women, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. March 2015.

[82.] Sida: Brief: Women and Land Rights. March 2015.

[83.] Sida. Brief: Women and Food Security. March 2015.

[84.] Sida. Brief: Gender-Based Violence and Education. March 2015.

[85.] Sida. Brief: Women, Peace and Security. March 2015.

[86.] Sida: Brief: Gender, Urban Infrastructure and International Financial Institutions. May 2017.

[87.] Sida. Brief: Hot Issue: Women's Organizations and the Engagement of Men. November 2016.

[88.] Sida. Brief: Hot Issue: Gender Equality and Gender Equity. November 2016.

[89.] Sida. Brief: Hot Issue: Women's Organizations and the Engagement of Men. November 2016.

the other briefs. The one on Gender and Corruption[90] is much more knowledge-oriented. It does cite some important research, but lacks references to the most relevant research in the field. For instance, an unpublished working paper based on European data is referred to, although there is plenty of peer-reviewed, published research on gender and corruption based on data from developing countries, including some research on the role of men and masculinities in corruption.

The Gender toolbox contains only two thematic overviews so far, and they are longer and dig more deeply into a specific theme. They focus on Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment[91] and "Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence[92]. The overviews define the issue at hand and outline particular expressions, so that the issue can be more easily identified. They also elaborate on potential entry points, on different strategies to address the issue, on the scope of Sida's work in relation to the issue, and, importantly, on Sida priorities. As such they could be very useful for contextualising what gender integration may imply in relation to particular aspects of gender equality.

With regard to the usefulness of different sets of documents, the purpose of the concrete tools is straightforward. They are also the most uniform ones in layout and scope, and can easily be applied to everyday practical work. The purpose of the briefs is less clear. There is certainly a need for such overviews, not least considering the heavy workload of Sida staff. But it is not clear to what extent they summarise knowledge based on research and/or policy reports, or whether they summarise Sida's standpoints.

Only two published thematic overviews are available, both from 2015. They outline expressions of and priorities with regard to women's economic empowerment and gender-based violence in a concrete manner while going somewhat more in depth than the concrete tools do. This seems like a relevant format that also

[90.] Sida. Brief: Gender and Corruption. March 2015.

[91 .] Sida. Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment: Scope for Sida's Engagement. 2015.

[92.] Sida. Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence: Expressions and Strategies. 2015.

stipulates the necessary content of gender equality work. But it is unclear why there are only two briefs published on the website, and why no new thematic overview has been produced since 2015.

The role of the Gender toolbox in relation to Sida's procedures has not changed during the implementation. None of the readily available documents serve as mandatory instructions at any stage of the gender integration process. The toolbox exists as a resource for those who identify a need, but it does not give any instructions or formal directives.

5.5.2 Supporting material for contribution management

In terms of written support for specific processes, a number of documents have been revised or produced in relation to Sida's *contribution management.* Considerable efforts have been made to improve how the OECD-DAC policy markers for gender integration are used in Sida's contribution classification and management.[93] Indeed, the gender equality policy markers are integral to the Plan – its two first goals call for an increase in the number of contributions with gender equality as their principal objective (this will be discussed below). During the period of implementation, OECD-DAC added definitions to the policy marker, and Sida has followed up on efforts to ensure a consistent application. A quite ambitious checklist has, for instance, been produced, which represents a minimum standard of what should be considered when reviewing gender equality in Sida's appraisals. The current status of this document is not clear.

The questions included in the checklist are relevant and in line with issues raised in the gender analysis tool. The intersectionality issue is raised only insofar as it asks about "other relevant parameters" – but not about how different identities intersect. It

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[93.] See http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-mar ker.htm for more information.

also makes reference to available assistance, including the Gender helpdesk, the Gender toolbox and the gender advisors.[94]

The policy markers are defined in the tool Gender Equality Policy Marker, published in early 2016.[95] This document specifies what is meant by gender equality being a principal objective, a significant objective or a non-relevant one. The subsequently revised definition of the policy marker was then incorporated into Sida's Statistical Handbook, and guidelines for categorising a contribution were developed and disseminated within the agency.

Simultaneously, Sida's system for contribution management – Trac – has undergone a transformation. As part of this change, there is less 'box-ticking' for gender equality, and more room for analyses of cases in which gender integration is motivated and discussed in relation to a particular project. For each thematic area, including gender equality, there are manuals, or help texts.[96] These texts correspond largely to the toolbox documents on how to perform a gender analysis, and are thus in line with previous work. However, it is sometimes unclear which aspects from the toolbox are carried over to help texts and which are not. There are references to practical and strategic needs, for instance, but not to productive and reproductive work nor to the distinction between access and control. Furthermore, the help texts do not contain references on how to work with more advanced gender analyses, such as including power perspectives on men/boys/masculinities, and intersectionality issues.

This new system for contribution management was launched in March 2018, and will be continuously updated and improved upon. Due to its late introduction, the team has not been able to systematically study any effects of these recent changes. But it is a reform of an important system that has a potential to steer contribution management towards integrating gender more efficiently. The reform of Trac should therefore be seen as

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[94.] Sida. "Checklist for Gender Equality in Contribution Appraisals". 2017-01-18.

[95.] Sida. Tool: Gender Equality Policy Marker. February 2016.

[96.] Sida. "Helptexts in a normal contribution", Trac 7.0, p. 20–21.

strengthening and potentially improving existing structures for gender integration in contribution management.

5.5.3 Analytical tool for Multidimensional poverty analysis

Another recently published support material that deserves mention is Sida's new analytical tool for Multidimensional poverty analysis (MDPA), launched in 2017.[97] The conceptual and preparatory work with the MDPA had been ongoing since at least 2015. While it can not be directly attributed to the implementation of the Plan for gender integration (it is rather related to Agenda 2030 with its emphasis on ending poverty for all), it is nevertheless an example of integration in progress.

The MDPA takes as a point of departure that poverty is not only about lack of resources. It puts the question "who?" at the center of analysis in order to assess the situation for different groups. It asks questions about who lacks resources, power and control, including over their own bodies and over agendas for decision-making. It also combines the "who?" with gender symbols in the model, so as to not forget to ask about both men and women. The model seeks to integrate the five perspectives that Sida prioritises: poor people's perspectives, the rights perspective, conflict, environment, and gender, all in order to reach a holistic view.

The Chief economist, who was responsible for developing the MDPA, has weekly meetings with the policy specialists for gender, yet another example of gender integration at work.[98] She also perceives that policy advisors representing other themes are prioritising gender to a large extent. During the work with the MDPA, she claims, there was a constant push to integrate gender issues, and the MDPA seeks ways to conduct gender analyses that reach beyond looking at gender disaggregated data.[99]

[97.] Sida. "Dimensions of poverty. Sida's Conceptual Framework." Sida 2017.

[98.] Interview with Chief Economist Susanna Gable.

[99.] Ibid.

As the MDPA was recently launched it is too early to evaluate effects. It is, however, an example of gender integration that at the very least coincides with the implementation of the Plan, so the increasing use of the MDPA may well strengthen gender integration at Sida.

5.5.4 Diversity and gender equality plan

Finally, considerable work has been done to improve and guarantee quality regarding how Sida as an employer addresses and works with gender equality issues. These efforts have also resulted in written documentation. An analysis has been carried out, which showed that Sida has more female than male employees, and somewhat fewer members born outside of Sweden than other government agencies. Based on this, a diversity and gender equality plan has been adopted for 2017– 2019.[100] This document was developed during 2016, and can be directly attributed to a stipulation in the Plan.

The diversity and general equality plan contains an assessment of the situation and sets certain goals for enhancement. One goal is that Sida will strive for increased diversity in the organisation and among its staff. Another one is that the agency will have an open and inclusive culture without discrimination or harassment. The recruitment procedures and processes for promotion will be improved, and the communication will ensure an integrated diversity and gender equality perspective.

The diversity and gender equality plan will be followed up by departments and units as part of yearly reporting processes. In contrast to the Plan for gender integration, this plan clearly pinpoints the responsible actor or unit for each goal. The part of the Plan for gender integration that looks at Sida as an employer is thus largely fulfilled through this new intiative, as it puts increased attention to, and stipulates, procedures for Sida's ongoing work with gender equality and diversity issues also as an employer.

[100.] Sida. "Sidas mångfalds- och jämställdhetsplan 2017–2019". Sida.

5.6   Summary

Sida already had a fairly comprehensive gender equality infrastructure in place when the Plan was adopted. The latter did not specify which parts of this infrastructure would need strengthening or increased attention.

As shown above, the institutional architecture is rather ambitious. There are policy specialists leading the gender equality work and gender equality advisors at different departments. Together, they are organised into the headquarter gender equality hub. There are also gender focal points at Swedish embassies where these focal points, together with the hub, constitute a gender network. Support functions are in place in terms of a Gender toolbox, help texts for contribution management, a Gender helpdesk, and gender courses.

The main flaw is that much of the infrastructure is not part of required structures used by ordinary members of staff. There are few requirements for taking courses or for demonstrating use of the Gender toolbox, and seemingly no set criteria for when the Gender helpdesk should be contacted (furthermore, that support function was not available to all departments during the time of the evaluation). Part of this variation may be history in the near future, as contribution management reforms seem to spell out increased requirements for gender expertise.

However, at the present, most people who do not have gender equality as their main focus are rarely using the Gender toolbox or the helpdesk. Most have not been encouraged to take a gender course for several years. This is remarkable, particularly in comparison to the high demand for basic gender competence voiced by members of staff in interviews and focus groups.

There are indications that the gender infrastructure at Sida may need to be protected and prioritised to a higher extent than it has been during the implementation period. This is particularly important in an organisation with high rotation of staff. Key positions at the agency have been left unfilled for months, even in a case when the vacancy was announced well in advance.

The goals of the Plan in terms of improving the quality and structures supporting work with gender integration have thus been accomplished to some degree, particularly in connection to contribution management. What is more, chances are that they will be further strengthened, and it seems that the reform of the contribution management system has taken place as part of the implementation of the Plan.

It is not so easy, however, to identify greater ambitions regarding what a gender analysis should contain. The help texts for Trac are less comprehensive than those of the tools in the Gender toolbox. They do, however, have a different status in everyday work than the toolbox documents. As such they may reflect a more realistic vision of what constitutes a "good enough" gender analysis for every member of the staff.

6. Sida's internal culture and knowledge regarding gender equality

In this chapter, the perspective is shifted from Sida's formal organisation and gender equality infrastructure to informal aspects of the agency's work with the same issues. One of the main challenges with gender mainstreaming is to ensure that it makes sense to everyone in an organisation – particularly to those who are neither experts nor primarily responsible for this issue. This chapter assesses to what extent the gender infrastructure is recognised, considered relevant and used by Sida's staff. It also describes how staff members view, understand and work with gender as part of their daily routines.

6.1 General observations regarding gender and the Plan

- There is a generally high level of commitment to gender equality among Sida staff.

- There is little sense of actual changes in this regard over the last few years.

Commitment to gender equality and women's rights is very strong at Sida. Although the team has encountered anecdotal statements about certain persons giving less attention to these issues, those instances would be rare exceptions. Most interviewees stress how integral such convictions are to Sida's officers, and use expressions such as "it is our backbone", "it's part our DNA", "it is in the walls".

The overwhelming impression is thus that Sida staff are highly committed to gender equality, and that they constantly promote this value in discussions and dialogues. This embrace of gender equality seems to reflect an understanding of gender rights as human rights, and stresses the importance of the former for development in

general. Considerable pride is expressed among Sida staff with regard to the high profile that Sweden has achieved with its Feminist foreign policy.[101]

There is little to suggest, however, that the emphasis on gender equality and women's rights represents a recent change that can be attributed to the Plan. As was noted above, Sida has promoted gender equality for decades. To the extent that some interviewees remember more internal resistance during earlier periods, the abandonment of such positions seems to be the result of a more constant development in this direction, rather than something that can be attributed to the Plan specifically.

Instead, it is striking how little knowledge there is about the Plan as such as well as about its contents – at least beyond the frequent realisation that the emphasis on contributions in which gender is a principal objective comes from this document. Indeed, the content of the Plan does not seem to have been communicated in a very clear fashion neither to Sida's staff nor to its partners; one representative of the helpdesk for gender issues claims, for instance, not to have received the document.[102] This may be natural, given that it spells out a plan of action to be implemented through ordinary internal processes (such as the annual planning and reporting in departments and units). But, it is difficult not to see this as a missed opportunity to communicate to staff and partners the raised ambitions and new expectations that Sida has had with regard gender equality.

[101.] Interviews with managers in the field and in Stockholm, as well as in one of the focus groups.

[102.] Interview with evaluators.

6.2 Staff views of Sida's approach to gender integration and the support functions

- Integrating different priorities and perspectives, with limited time and a heavy workload, is generally seen as a challenge.

- Staff views on support functions exhibit considerable variation, and more critical views were often expressed in field interviews.

- In spite of the general embrace of gender equality as a value and a goal, full integration of these equality issues still seems to depend on the availability of competent and interested individual members of staff.

The general embrace of gender equality does not preclude more critical positions among Sida's own staff regarding how the theme is addressed. In schematic terms, criticism tends to fall into three interrelated categories: concerns about the lack of time for proper integration of gender considerations; demands for increased support for properly performed gender integration; and criticism of how gender is addressed at Sida, including the lack of a more elaborate or advanced treatment of the theme.

In the first place, staff officers frequently express concerns regarding the many perspectives to be considered and integrated in dialogues, strategy development and contribution management.[103] More specifically, the point is sometimes made that more support is needed on how to jointly consider those perspectives. Conversely, however, several interviewees have claimed that among these different perspectives (including poverty, rights, environment, conflict), gender and women's rights is possibly the most fully integrated one. Likewise, there is also appreciation for the recently (autumn of 2017) introduced Multidimensional poverty analysis tool (see above), which several staff members see as helpful for

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[103.] Interview with Head of unit, Stockholm, and frequent comments in focus groups at headquarters.

integrating different perspectives, particularly with regard to the development and operationalisation of strategies.[104]

As to support functions for gender integration (in particular the gender advisors, the gender network, the toolbox, and the helpdesk), there are highly divergent views. Several interviewees appreciate the advice and easy accessibility of those functions. Others are critical, and underline their lack of adaptation to context. Some claim that these support functions are not relevant to the specific case or context for which help is needed, while others claim that the dissemination of information from the network has not always been effective and properly communicated. Such critical comments were particularly expressed during field interviews.[105] Field sources from different locations and regions also claim that they have received insufficient attention from Sida's gender advisors and other support functions.[106]

> *There was a time when we asked for someone from Stockholm to do a training of all staff, but they answered that 'You have [name of a national programme officer] there, she can do the training'. But it is not the same thing, everyone has their own standards.*[107]

The issue of the Gender helpdesk indicates another complication. The helpdesk was set up to serve the geographical departments only, which meant that other departments did not have any access to this expertise. To this day, considerable confusion surrounds the question of whether the helpdesk has been available

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[104.] Comments in two focus groups (phase 3) in Stockholm.

[105.] Such points were expressed in both field study countries with regard to the Gender helpdesk, and in one country in particular with regard to the gender network.

[106.] The same point is expressed in an internal Sida document, which shows that field units are more critical regarding the availability of support for gender integration. (Sida, Sida. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017", op. cit.)

[107.] Interview with national programme officers in one of the case study countries. Note that the officer, mentioned in this quote, claimed not to have received any gender training from Sida. It should also be noted that complaints of refused requests for on-place training have come from embassies in some of the absolutely largest recipient countries of Swedish development cooperation.

to the entire agency (it has not), and even a senior manager in a department not covered by the helpdesk expressed the erroneous belief that the helpdesk did cover this department.[108] In the wake of such uncertainty, the team has heard staff officers voice concerns about being deprived of possible services from a helpdesk.[109] The same point is expressed in an internal document on competence mapping for gender integration.[110]

While it is frequently noted that internal support functions could make up for the absence of a helpdesk in certain departments, some staff members express reluctance to ask colleagues for help, rather than engaging a consultant. Instead, some staff members choose to direct their questions to other thematic helpdesks (for instance, the helpdesks for health and conflict) than to the gender one. The broad competence of the former means that they can often assist in gender-related assessments as well.

Available data from the Gender helpdesk reveal an uneven employment of its services even within departments that do have access to it. Hence, in 2016 the helpdesk received requests for help from 28 geographic entities, but several key countries (e.g. Ethiopia, Cambodia, Bolivia, Zambia) did not request any help at all. Twelve teams/entities made only one request, which may indicate that the experience of employing the helpdesk does not always lead to new requests.[111]

[108.] Interview with the head of one of Sida's largest departments. The same interviewee claimed, however, that as the department had plenty of gender expertise among its own staff, helpdesk advice has not been needed to the same extent. This view was contradicted in an interview with one of the officers at the same department who expressed concerns about the absence of such a function, and who told of how this had led the officer to not undertake a certain assessment.

[109.] Comments in an individual interview at headquarters and in one focus group.

[110.] Sida. 2017. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017", op. cit., last page.

[111.] Nordic Consulting Group. 2016. "1st Annual report for the Global Gender Help Function to AFRICA, HUMASIA and EUROLATIN, Dec. 2015–Nov. 2016".

Interestingly enough, one interviewee at the Gender helpdesk also expresses some criticism of its contributions. According to that person, it often becomes a simple gap-filling measure aimed more at formulations in project documents than at issues of partners' competence and capabilities, in spite of the greater relevance of the latter.[112] The same person also claims that a more relevant function would be to coach Sida staff members and help to build internal capacity at Sida regarding these issues, not least because of the impression that discussions about gender at the agency tend to be rather weak.[113]

Finally, critical voices are raised about how gender issues are approached at Sida. Concerns frequently include the allegedly too strong focus on "ones" or "twos" (values on the gender policy marker), to the detriment of more substantive discussions.[114] Indeed, that focus may have been an unintended consequence of the Plan and its goal formulations, which stress that interventions having gender equality as a principal goal (i.e. "twos") should increase.

> *Now it feels as if we are [mostly] talking about the gender markers. But we will be blown off course if the most important thing is whether [a contribution] becomes a 'one' or a 'two'. It is a lot about 'ones' and 'twos'.*[115]

> *I think that it is great to use indicators for follow-up, but not to steer by indicators. At the present, there is steering on indicators. It easily becomes a discussion about a statistical measurement rather than about the effects of what we do."*[116]

Relatedly, various staff members demand a clearer expression of what is "good enough" when it comes to gender equality.[117] It

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[112.] Ibid., interview with a representative from the helpdesk.

[113.] Ibid.

[114.] Interviews and focus groups with staff and managers at headquarters.

[115.] Member of focus group for programme officers, phase 2.

[116.] Interview with a person in a senior management position.

[117.] Expressions in focus groups with staff officers.

should be noted, however, that some of these points were raised before the quality assessment of policy markers and the introduction of the updated system for contribution management, which have taken place since mid-2017, and which may have solved some of these concerns. Still, critical statements in this regard were heard during the last round of interviews in May 2018.

The above point bears relation to a very common claim – that the extent to which gender is considered, and what this consideration entails, is to a very large extent determined by the competence and interest of one staff member and her/his immediate superiors.

> *[Gender integration] always depend on individuals, who the boss is, and how strong bearers of Sida's issues and priorities they are.[118]*

The dependence on certain individuals is somewhat surprising, given the equally frequent statement that Sida, as a whole and in general, takes gender equality very seriously. If that is indeed so, it seems remarkable that personal inclinations and capabilities of individual staff members would matter so much. However, throughout the evaluation the team has found ample evidence suggesting that the effective integration of gender equality concerns actually does depend on individuals, for instance among several interviewees who say that attention to gender decreases when the position of gender advisor or local focal point for gender becomes vacant for a period of time.[119] The varying quality of gender assessments and analysis in Sida material points in the same direction, as will be discussed below. Apparently, the overall commitment to gender equality is not by itself strong enough to ensure that actual and full integration can be assumed unless specialised staff support functions are in place, or in the face of a lack of interest or competence from the most immediately concerned staff.

[118.] Interview with the director of a unit at headquarters.

[119.] Interviews with staff members and unit director at headquarters.

6.3 Competence for gender issues and analysis at Sida

- The high degree of commitment to gender equality is not fully matched by staff competences.

- Few Sida officers at headquarters or in the field have attended specialised courses on gender equality/integration during the last decade. Some have never participated in such trainings.

- Some interviewees claim that gender is a theme that can be integrated in an "instinctive" way. A lack of systematic approaches is reflected in the material assessed.

An internal survey performed by Sida in late 2017 concluded that around half of its officers claimed some kind of gender competence (a figure that increased to almost 60 per cent for the operative departments).[120] In practice, this means that most units would have at least one member who has competence in this regard. This is demonstrated by the fact that the same survey showed that an overwhelming majority of Sida's heads of units (over 90 per cent) said that their entities had sufficient knowledge to address and integrate gender.

However, the view of Sida staff as highly competent regarding gender issues is disputed. The agency's gender policy specialist claims that the scores in the survey were "unbelievably high"[121], and suggests that they do not reflect the real competence level. Likewise, a person with a good general view of available competences notes that the overwhelming majority of Sida staff members may have a general knowledge about gender issues, but that they are not actual gender experts,[122] which in turn indicates a need for support functions to secure a full treatment of the issue.

[120.] Sida. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017", op. cit., p. 2.

[121.] Interview with evaluators.

[122.] This interviewee, who is head of the unit that handles secondments, tells, for instance, of the difficulty in finding Sida staff who can be seconded to positions

Similar views were heard among heads of unit in the competence mapping. They tended to estimate that their units had sufficient knowledge on gender, but they also demanded increased support on the issue in the form of regular internal training, access to specialist advice, clear directives, coaching, and strengthened capacities for follow-up and dialogue.[123]

There is thus a tension between the confidence expressed by a considerable portion of Sida staff in their own competence regarding gender issues, and the same competence as assessed by others.

Similarly, team interviews at Sida often encountered a contrast between the assurance with which programme officers state that gender is a consistent high priority, and their often more hesitant answers to questions about what it entails in practice and how gender is addressed in their daily work. Integration primarily seems to be interpreted as an increased attention to gender issues, and a raised level of ambition when it comes to channelling resources to projects and programmes that benefit women. Beyond that, most officers are unable to outline any particular strategy, method or tool they personally use to ensure that gender is a systematically integrated part of their work. Nor are they able to describe how gender mainstreaming is conducted within Sida in general, or how it may be different or similar to mainstreaming in other organisations.

It is possible that the lack of expert knowledge about gender and integration that several sources claim to perceive in Sida has something to do with how this knowledge is transmitted internally. As was seen above, Sida offers little to its employees in the form of required, formalised courses on gender and how to integrate this theme. The theme is reportedly integrated in the week-long course for national programme officers and the two-day introduction for new employees, but gender does not feature as a special theme in

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in international organisations as gender experts, in spite of the frequent demands in this regard.

[123.] Sida. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017", op. cit., p. 4.

these courses (as anti-corruption does, for instance). Instead, it is either addressed during sessions on all of the Swedish thematic perspectives or as part of the Multidimensional poverty analysis – with the obvious risk of giving insufficient attention to the gender theme as discussed above.[124] A specialised course on the theme for some 25 staff members was arranged in early 2017, but was cancelled the following year.[125]

In fact, most Sida staff members interviewed claim not to have attended any specialised training on the subject recently. Estimates of when they last attended a specific training on gender issues tend to land around 10 or 15 years ago, and some more recently hired staff claim that they have never been subject to such training.[126] Instead, knowledge about gender issues seems to be transferred between staff members in a mostly oral tradition,[127] based on joint work on strategies and contributions.

Contrary to what is stated in the Plan, there is today no central planning of competence development at Sida. The identification of needs and initiatives in this respect is delegated to individual units or departments. Likewise, staff members involved in competence development express their scepticism towards formal courses, and note that a more integrated and organic approach to learning may

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[124.] E.g. Sida. 2018. "Introductory training for new National Program Officers 2018", draft programme.

[125.] Interview with a gender specialist at Sida. As Sida has over 750 staff members, this rate of training should mean that more people are entering the agency each year than are participating in specialised gender trainings. The portion of internally trained staff members could consequently be expected to decrease over time.

[126.] It is particularly notable that complaints about the lack of training have come from officers working at a department with an internal plan supposed to guarantee that every staff member is regularly trained on issues related to gender equality. (Comments from staff officers both at headquarters and in the field. However, it seems that a local training was recently held at least for one of the mentioned field officers).

[127.] An interesting example of non-oral transmission is a national programme officer who, in the absence of a written document, claims to send an old (2005) Sida policy for gender integration to partners.

work better than specialised courses.[128] At its training centre in Härnösand, Sida continues to offer regular courses on gender for its partners twice a year, based on the practical experiences and material such as the Gender toolbox and the Multidimensional poverty analysis.[129] But such courses are not offered to Sida's own staff.

The fact that most Sida officers do not seem to have received any specific training on gender issues during the last decade might also have something to do with the fact that gender is sometimes seen as having an "instinctive" character (in the words of one interviewee), which may render formal trainings less interesting. This may also explain why a majority of the staff members interviewed claim neither to know very much about Sida's Gender toolbox, nor to use it. An overly positive view of one's existing competence, and a possible underestimation of what is needed for an effective gender analysis, may limit interest in attending trainings, using available tools, or procuring additional support on the issue.[130]

But even if gender integration has an instinctive character according to some Swedish staff members,[131] that does not seem to be the case for national programme officers interviewed for this study. They frequently express uncertainty as to what is demanded of them in this regard.[132] In the words of one national programme officer: "When you come to Sida, the knowledge that you come with is the knowledge that you go out with. [But] we need training."[133]

[128.] Interview, staff at Sida's Unit for learning and organisational development.

[129.] Interview, staff member at Härnösand.

[130.] Sida. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017", op. cit.

[131.] Indeed, the term "instinctive" was only used spontaneously in one interview (a staff officer at headquarters). Anyway, the team believes that it well captures similar points that have been differently expressed during other interviews. One telling example is the quote from an officer at headquarters who claims that gender is often "taken for granted".

[132.] This point was expressed by national programme officers in both of the field study country.

[133.] Interview with an national programme officer in one of Sweden's largest donor countries. In this case, however, it seems that a training was actually undertaken during the next few months after the team's visit.

Some more recently hired Swedish employees voice similar concerns, and claim that, as they are not gender experts and have not undergone any training, they can not determine what is expected of them.[134]

6.4 Summary

As seen above, Sida's high ambitions with regard to gender equality are matched by the views held by its staff. They are generally highly committed to gender equality and women's rights, seeing it as a natural and undisputable priority in Swedish development cooperation. Yet, staff competence and support functions do not always seem to correspond to these levels of attention.

Even if there is no visible change in Sida's attention to gender equality in this regard directly attributable to the Plan, this does not mean that change is not happening at all, however. Changes in everyday work may take some time, and as some formal revisions were introduced quite late during the implementation of the Plan (for instance, the revision of the contribution management system Trac), so their full effects may not be apparent yet. As seen above, some interviewees point to recent innovations such as the Multidimensional poverty analysis in this regard. There are also other concrete mechanisms mentioned as improvements: changes to the gender policy marker, and the increasingly prominent position of gender equality in strategies that guide Sida's work (see below). And some interviewees talk about a greater clarity regarding gender equality that has come into the agency during the last six months.[135] Even though such claims are not expressed by a majority of interviewees – they rather tend to view the theme as relatively static – this shows that elements of dynamism may indeed be present.

To what extent, then, are these findings reflected in Sida's partnerships and contributions?

[134.] Staff officers at headquarters in interview.

[135.] Focus group with heads of units, phase 3, and interview with staff at Humanitarian unit.

7. How gender equality is addressed in Sida's work

Due to the range of Sida's outputs (ranging from dialogues with local partners and participation in discussions in global forums, to contribution management and support to partners), one cannot, within the scope of the present assignment, realistically hope to capture all of the agency's actions and the changes they have led to in how gender equality is addressed and integrated.

In order to get as full a picture as possible, however, this evaluation has juxtaposed interview data from Sida and its partners with an assessment of almost 150 contributions drawn from three stages of implementation of the Plan (one before, one in the beginning and one at a late stage). In addition, Sida's inputs to the strategies that guide Swedish development cooperation, both in the form of contribution to their development and in the annual reporting, have been assessed.[136]

7.1 Sida's work as seen by Sida staff and partners

- Sida staff perceive that the agency's influence regarding gender equality occurs both in actual contributions and in relation to a broader dialogue with partners, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, international organisations, and other donors.

- Partners see Sida as giving constant emphasis to this theme, and as having a real vocation to further gender equality and women's rights.

[136.] Such data must be approached with some caution, however, as these strategies are formally the products of the Swedish government, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for their final formulation. Still, given Sida's role in their production, and given the fact that the Plan sets goals related to the development of these documents, their inclusion in the present assessment is justified.

- Some partners can provide examples of projects where Sida's insistence on gender has produced real changes.

- In spite of Sida's professed non-prescriptive approach, some partners express a desire for more concrete advice from the agency on how to perform gender mainstreaming.

In accordance to their expressed commitment to gender equality, Sida staff members are generally proud of the agency's actual achievements in this regard. They note that Sida has an important role in furthering these values at the global and the local level. When asked to be more specific, staff members often tend to refer to the broad influence Sida has on international processes, donor groups, and on Swedish positions vis-à-vis different entities of the UN system and international financial institutions. They do this just as often as they refer to Sida's actual impact on individual projects and programmes.

Ultimately, Sida's staff primarily respond to the objectives set in the strategies, which guide the agency's work, combined with formulations in its annual planning document (and the plans of each department). In practice, this means that gender will only be one consideration among others, and as has been noted above, most staff members claim to juggle these demands under more or less constant time pressure, trying to seek a balance and to give a "good enough" treatment to each of them. Yet, among this variety of demands gender is often seen as the most commonly present and constantly mainstreamed perspective.[137]

For field staff and for certain functions at headquarters that coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the prominence of gender issues has been further advanced by the Feminist foreign policy promoted by the current Swedish government. The general view is that this has brought the Ministry in line with Sida on the issue, allowing for more joint actions and coordination vis-à-vis multilateral institutions for instance.[138]

[137.] A point expressed by managers both in the field and at headquarters.

[138.] Ibid.

The main hurdles mentioned by Sida's staff are the context and partners, who are sometimes described as not understanding the value of gender integration in their projects. Staff in both Myanmar and Zambia underline that one of their most important tasks in trying to improve gender integration, is to work with the values and attitudes of partners. This is also in line with how Sida generally views its role in relation to partners. The agency clearly believes in a non-prescriptive approach, in which partners' systems and approaches should take precedence. In practice, this leads Sida to abstain from giving partners outright directives or instructions even on issues representing core Sida values, such as gender equality and women's rights. Instead, Sida prefers to respect partner's own systems, and strives to enhance rather than replace them if necessary.

> *We [Sida's staff] could all be gender experts, but we would not still have results on the ground, unless we get the partners to work well with this.*[139]

This view is seconded by Sida's partners. The majority of them hold forth Sida as a model donor, praising its flexibility and partnership approach. Partners also generally recognise Sida's commitment to gender equality, and confirm that this is a priority that is constantly advanced by Sida's representatives.[140] Indeed, the focus on gender is sometimes contrasted with Sida's otherwise generally flexible and respectful approach; if there is one single issue on which Sida officers seem to place strong demands on partners, it is on gender.[141]

The emphasis on gender equality is so strong that partners and other stakeholders have come to anticipate and expect those positions from Sida representatives.[142] The team has also found considerable appreciation of this position, and several partners note that Sida is more consistent than certain other donors – particularly

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[139.] Statement by the head of development cooperation at an embassy in one of Sweden's partner countries.

[140.] Interviews with Sida's partners in Myanmar and Zambia.

[141.] This view was particularly expressed in Myanmar.

[142.] Field interview, Zambia.

in Myanmar. To quote one Sida partner: "Others might say 'yes, it is important, but not in this case'. But Sweden is not like that."[143] Moreover, several partners indicate that Sida's emphasis on gender equality has had a real effect on their work. One local partner says:

> *It excites me a lot, because you see such a shift [in the inclusion of women], and you would not have seen this if we had not been pushed by Sida.*[144]

Likewise, some partners claim that Sida's position has been important for keeping focus on gender issues, even in situations when attention risks turning to other issues.

Sida staff often stress personal interest and commitment as explanations for the level of attention given to gender issues, but few partners seem to perceive any such individual differences among the Swedish representatives they encounter, as they note that with regard to gender issues, attention is a constant, rather than a variable. It should also be noted that many partners are unaware of the absence of specific Sida instructions on gender. They generally interpret the actions of the programme officers as adhering to a detailed official policy on how to perform mainstreaming or gender integration. Relatedly, no partner claims to have noticed any recent change in Sida's emphasis on gender equality that could be attributable to the Plan.

The one issue on which partners sometimes criticise Sida's work with gender relates to a sometimes perceived absence of concrete advice on how to further gender mainstreaming.[145] Even as Sida staff emphasise gender as a value, partners are rarely, if ever, told how they should incorporate these considerations into projects, and some partners ask for some form of template or guideline regarding how to address gender in a project; for their own capacity building

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[143.] Field interview, Myanmar. Yet, the same person also notes that other Nordic countries and Canada are similar in this respect.

[144.] Interview in Myanmar.

[145.] It should be noted however, that even though the team emphasised its independence from Sida, answers in this regard, and the generally very positive view expressed, may have been coloured by a belief that the team's represented Sida in some way.

if nothing else.[146] Likewise, some partners emphasise the need for training, guidelines and capacity building from Sida, at times suggesting that Sida should bring its partners together more often so that they can learn from each other.[147]

In general terms, though, demands from partners for more hands-on support do not match Sida's non-prescriptive approach. One of Sida's regional teams has, nonetheless, recently instituted a special, regionally located, helpdesk charged with helping partners to address gender issues.[148]

When asked to compare Sida to other donors, a difference was found between the two countries where field studies were performed. Partners in Zambia were less likely than partners in Myanmar to view Sida as outstanding in relation to other donors in terms of commitment to gender equality. That Sida is seen as more of a gender equality champion in Myanmar than in Zambia needs to be put into context, however. The long history of donor cooperation with Zambia may indicate that collaboration has reached a stage where gender issues are emphasised by most donors. But in Myanmar, development cooperation on this scale is something new, and many donors are still forming their programmes in the face of acute political and social situations. Research on gender mainstreaming indicate that gender is likely to be forgotten when other issues are seen as more important. If that is the case in Myanmar, Sida might be exceptional in *not* forgetting about gender even in times of crisis. Thus, the commitment to gender equality may be just as strong in Sida in Zambia as in

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[146.] This point was raised during interviews in both Zambia and Myanmar, often coupled to the argument that Sida possesses a lot of competence on the issue. It should be noted that certain partners in both countries seem to have received more of such instructions however – a difference that may depend on the individual programme officers in charge.

[147.] These points were raised in interviews with some Sida partners in Myanmar and Zambia.

[148.] This helpdesk was established by the regional team for Asia.

Myanmar, but this is more of an exception in Myanmar and closer to a donor norm in Zambia.[149]

The interpretation above finds some support among interviewed representatives of other donors in Myanmar and Zambia. Even though there is general recognition of Sida's important role in the gender area, interviewees in Zambia did not find Sida's position as exceptional – and one representative of a like-minded country even regretted that Sweden did not use its leadership of the donor group to advance gender issues to a larger extent.[150] Such criticism was not voiced in Myanmar, but a like-minded donor there was also reluctant to describe Sida's approach to gender as highly special. It is, however, impossible to say whether these statements are to some degree informed by professional competition.

7.2 Analysis of Sida's contributions

- The funding and number of contributions with gender as their principal objective have increased considerably, both in general and in the productive, environmental and non-social sectors.

- The performance of gender analysis in Sida's assessments has increased since the Plan was enacted.

- Even though the amount of project documents referring to gender has increased, there is still considerable variation as to whether, and how, gender is integrated in such documents.

- Sida's own decisions and appraisals also vary significantly in terms of how gender is addressed.

- Thorough gender analyses remain exceptions in project documents and appraisals, and are sometimes not even

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[149.] Furthermore, a considerable degree of the praise expressed during partner interviews in Myanmar concerns one individual programme officer at Sida. This officer has clearly made it a priority to work consistently with gender equality for an extended period of time and throughout political changes in the country.

[150.] Interview with a likeminded donor in one of the field study countries.

present in contributions with gender as the principal objective.

One important part of the present assessment of how Sida works with regard to gender integration consists in a detailed analysis of documents from almost 150 contributions. The team has studied the project documents as well as Sida's decisions and appraisals in order to discern how gender equality issues have been addressed, and whether any discernible change over time can be detected. The total number of contributions have been separated into three samples: one first random sample of some 45 contributions that were active already on December 31, 2015 (before the implementation of the Plan, which came into effect on January 1, 2016); a second random sample with over-sampling of contributions from the humanitarian, environmental and productive sectors from March 2016 to April 2017;[151] and a third similarly constructed sample with contributions from December 2017 to March 2018.

By juxtaposing three relatively small samples, one cannot aspire to pick up more fine-grained changes, as this would have required larger samples. Yet, any major changes between these periods should be visible. Furthermore, even if identified quantitative changes are not statistically significant, the analysis of documents from such a large number of contributions still gives considerable qualitative knowledge about the projects and programmes that Sida supports, the way they are written and assessed, and any qualitiative changes in these regards.

Sida's own reporting on the totality of its projects shows an increasing number of projects having gender as their principal objective, thus demonstrating that these goals of the Plan are being

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[151.] The team randomly selected these contributions too, but with an oversampling of contributions from sectors that were highlighted in the Plan, i.e. productive and humanitarian sectors. This oversampling was carried out to ensure that there would be a large enough number of cases to say something about potential differences in these prioritised areas as compared to other areas. Since the initial random selection yielded some contributions that were clearly irrelevant (e.g. internal Sida activities or procurement matters), these were replaced with a second batch of contributions, randomly selected as before.

met. [152] The study of contributions from different phases of implementation verifies this (see below). There is a steadily increasing number of contributions between the three phases in which gender is the principal objective – both in the general sample and in the subsample from the productive, environmental and non-social sectors.

Table 1: Gender integration in Sida's contributions, December 2017–March 2018, percentages.

Policy marker	Total contributions	Weighted by sum	Hum/prod	Hum/prod weighted
Principal objective	21 (10)	31	17 (4)	10
Significant objective	54 (26)	48	50 (12)	74
Not an objective	25 (12)	22	33 (8)	15
Total	48			

As can be seen in *Table 1*, a considerable amount of contributions from the last period have gender as their principal objective. When weighted as to their relative financial size (the size of the contribution divided by the total sum of contributions in the sample), the prominence of contributions having gender as their principal objective is even more marked. Over 30 per cent of the funds in the sample are assigned to contributions that score a "two" on the gender marker.

In the subset from the humanitarian and productive sectors, the portion of contributions with gender as a principal or significant objective is lower, both in absolute and in weighted terms (as can also be seen in Table 1.

It should be remembered that the objective of the Plan was not that a fixed portion of contributions should go to projects that had

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[152] · Sida. "Delredovisning av jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter (JIM-uppdraget) 2015–2017".

gender as a principal objective. The Plan only stated that this share should increase. When comparing with the two previous samples, it is indeed possible to confirm that such an increase has taken place, as is evident in *Graph 1*:

Graph 1: Percentage of contributions in which gender is …
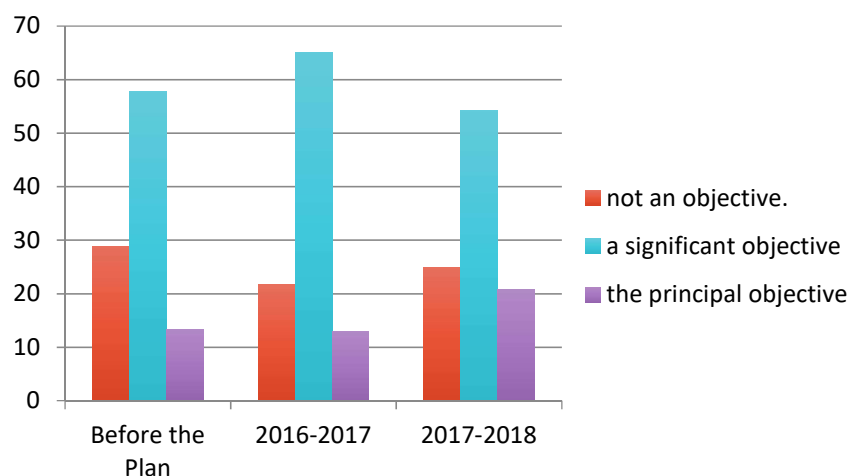
The graph shows that the increase has happened in the third wave, and that it has partly come at the expense of contributions for which gender is a significant objective.

The above tendency is even more evident when contributions in the sample are weighted according to their relative financial weight in each wave. As can be seen in *Graph 2*, this operation shows a dramatic increase in the amount of funds that goes to contributions having gender as a principal objective, but it is coupled to an almost equally dramatic increase in the amount going to contributions in which gender is not an objective.

It may be that part of this increase is a result of clearer criteria for what should count as having gender as a significant objective.

But if this figure is representative of the totality of Sida's contributions, it is indeed an impressive amount.[153]

Graph 2: Percentage of contributions weighted according to financial size, in which gender is…
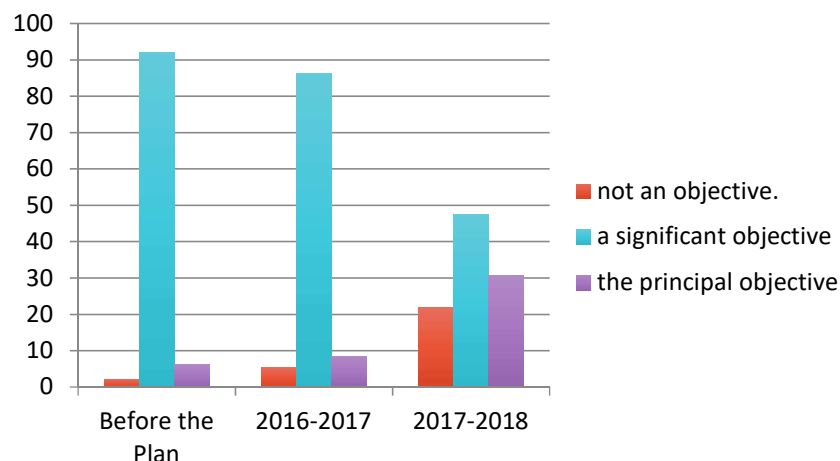
The Plan also contains a specific goal related to the environmental, climate, and productive sectors, in which gender should be given special emphasis. *Graph 3* shows a marked increase in the number of contributions in this subsample that has gender as a significant or a principal goal. The figures should be interpreted with caution, however, given the small size of the subsample.

[153.] However, it should be noted that at least some of this increase could be explained by a change in Sida's internal coding system. Whereas contributions previously could only have one principal objective, they can have several now. This means that the total number of "twos" should have increased. It would for instance have mattered regarding humanitarian contributions, as these could previously not formally be coded as having gender as their principal objective, but can be so now. Today it is possible.

Graph 3: Percentage of contributions in the productive, environmental, climate and non-social sectors in which gender is …
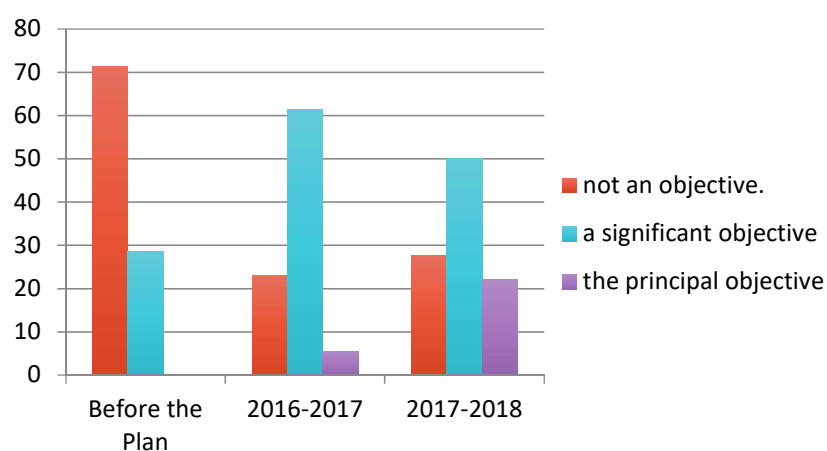
Likewise, the Plan sets as a goal that gender should be integrated in humanitarian contributions. In this regard, there has actually been a decline since the Plan came into effect. The share of humanitarian contributions in the samples that have gender as a significant or principal objective has gone from 80 per cent before the Plan to 100 in the second wave, and has then dropped to 57 per cent in the last wave. However, the small size of this subsample makes interpretation difficult. This is also compounded by the somewhat difficult application of the gender marker to this particular sector, in which the humanitarian imperative (to assist the most needy, regardless of gender) may complicate more targeted approaches.[154]

[154.] Interview with staff at Sida's Unit for humanitarian support.

7.2.1 Proposals

The increases seen above are based on Sida's own classification of the agency's contributions. Turning to actual programme documents, some of the same increases are found. Thus, in the third phase, two out of forty project/programme proposals that the team had access to failed to mention gender in any meaningful way (in one of them, the theme was indeed mentioned but only as part of an enumeration). The 95 per cent inclusion that this implies is a further increase compared to previous periods, as 72 and 85 per cent mentioned the theme prior to the Plan and in 2016–2017, respectively. There is thus a marked increase over time, which coincides with the Plan's period of implementation. It would seem that the prospective partners of Sida have realised the need to address the issue of gender if an application is to be successful.

Remarkably, however, the one project that entirely fails to mention gender during the last period was coded as having the theme as a principal objective (and the one which only made brief mention of the theme stated it as a significant objective) – indicating that gender blindness does not seem to preclude the assignation of a "two" on the gender marker.[155]

Likewise, only 26 of the 38 project documents in the third wave that explicitly mention gender include elements of an actual gender analysis (as opposed to simply mentioning women or gender equality). This does represent a majority (68 per cent), but it is slimmer than previously (prior to the Plan the figure stood at 72 percent, and for the second wave at 79 per cent). The small sample makes it difficult to draw conclusions, but it should nevertheless be noted that gender analyses, just as in previous periods, are still often

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[155.] It should be noted that a number of portfolio analyses conducted at Sida have shown a similar problem in the inadequate application of the gender marker. That this problem persists, even after efforts (see above) to conduct quality assurance of the gender marker, indicates that it is difficult to tackle. (See e.g. Lesley Abdela. 2016. "Brief portfolio analysis and review of the regional strategy for Sweden's Cooperation MENA 2016–2020"; Sida (Stina Lundström). 2017. "Gender Mainstreaming and Environment and Climate Mainstreaming – Portfolio analysis".)

absent in applications presented to Sida (even though the team has applied an extremely generous application of the term).

However, in all contributions (from all periods) having gender as a principal objective bar one (the above mentioned project) elements of a gender analysis are present in project documents. The same can not be said for contributions having gender as a significant objective. Several among them lack any visible elements of gender analysis in spite of the often stated necessity of performing such analyses in order to be able to effectively integrate gender. Furthermore, while the portion of contributions having gender as a significant objective and containing elements of a gender analysis increased from 47 to 76 per cent in the period immediately after the approval of the Plan, it subsequently fell back to 65 per cent. But in the productive, environmental and non-social sectors, there has been a marked increase of gender analyses. Those analyses were completely absent in the (three) appraisals available before the Plan, but after its enactment gender assessments were made in 75 (6) and 71 (10) per cent of the appraisals, respectively.

As during previous phases, it is difficult to trace a clear vision of gender in the proposals. The present analysis has used a simple approach and asked to what extent the documents clearly state what the problem is, and what the fundamental strategy for solving it is. A basic operationalisation of Squires' three approaches – similarity, difference and transformation – has been employed. If an actual problem has been described as one where women are seen as different compared to men (more vulnerable or having other interests) this has been coded as *difference*. If the problem is described as men and women not having the same rights and abilities, although they should be treated equally, it has been coded as *similarity*.

The intention of separating approaches based on difference from those of similarity is not primarily to enquire into the different conceptions of gender that Sida demonstrates. Rather, the aim is to determine the degree of consistency and variation displayed in Sida's assessments, which could indicate the existance of a common idea of gender among projects supported by the agency. Similarly, documents where root causes of gender inequalities are adressed

with the aim of changing them, rather than just alleviating symptoms, have been coded as *transformative*.

A majority of proposals contain elements of all three approaches (similarity, difference and transformation). This means that it is almost impossible to discern a clear idea about gender integration and what it hopes to achieve. In total, mentions of gender equality as similarity-based are about as common as the ones based on difference. Transformation only features in half as many proposals, indicating that while there is little consensus in this regard (and given the diversity of partners and working contexts, consensus would be surprising), treatment of the issue is skewed away from more transformative approaches.

7.2.2   Sida's appraisals

In Sida's appraisal documents from the last wave, gender is mentioned in all but one of those accessed by the team, irrespective of policy marker for gender equality. This represents a slight increase compared to the already high figures for 2016–2017, and a larger increase in relation to the situation prior to the Plan (among the contributions in, three assessments failed to mention gender, in the second wave two did). To the extent that changes to Sida's appraisal and assessment system can be attributed to the Plan, it is possible that it has had an effect in this regard. The new appraisal system was, however, implemented only towards the end of the Plan's period in force.

But a simple mention does not guarantee any deeper consideration. Indeed, 20 (54 per cent) of the most recent appraisal documents that mention gender actually fail to perform anything resembling a gender analysis. The portion of assessments that contains a gender analysis (46 per cent) is thus closer to the pre-Plan level (36 per cent) than to the level at the second phase (58 per cent).

One could conclude that the presence of gender analysis has increased since the enactment of the Plan, but such an increase is still tentative and far from universal. Furthermore, even for two contributions in the last phase that have been classified as having

gender as a principal objective, there is nothing that can realistically be labelled a gender analysis in Sida's appraisal. In previous phases, no appraisal for a project with gender as a principal objective failed to contain elements of a gender analysis.[156]

Likewise, just as in the applications, there is little evidence of a particular approach to gender issues. Sixteen of the appraisals emphasise gender as similarity, while 17 emphasise differences between men and women, and 7 include elements of a more transformative approach. (Again, such references are not mutually exclusive. A proposal may contain elements of several approaches.) As in the proposals from Sida's partners, the overall picture is principally one of diversity and frequent lack of clarity on how to approach gender. This is not surprising, given the lack of central suggestions and the absence of training mentioned by many staff officers. Nevertheless, it reveals something about the coherence of Sida's approaches.

When it comes to assessments of projects in the productive, environmental and non-social sectors, the share of gender analyses in appraisal documents increased dramatically after the enactment of the Plan, from 20 to 64 per cent. Since then, the figure has slipped back to 38 per cent. Once again, though, the limited sample size should lead to considerable caution. In the humanitarian sector, the amount of gender analyses has actually decreased slightly after the enactment of the Plan, but the small sample size makes analysis very risky.

7.2.3 Summary of the study of contributions

In sum, the analysis demonstrates an apparent increase in the mention and analysis of gender in the totality of proposals and appraisals for most sectors since the Plan came into effect. This increase is particularly clear, however, when it comes to the simple

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[156.] For the contributions that have gender as a significant objective, the picture is similar to the totality; the portion of assessments containing elements of a gender analysis has risen from 28 per cent before the Plan to 60 in the second wave, before going down to 42 per cent.

mentioning of gender. When more demanding criteria (i.e. the presence of a gender analysis) are applied, the picture becomes less clear-cut. Even though there seems to have been an increase of gender analysis since the Plan came into force, the trend often resembles an inverted "J", as the frequency with which gender analysis is conducted seems to have declined somewhat between the second and third waves.

Hence, the simple mention of gender in a proposal or appraisal does not guarantee any particular treatment of the issue. As shown above, gender analyses are sometimes performed and sometimes not. Several analyses in both project documents and appraisals are in fact anything but thorough assessments, containing only a couple of unsystematic references to gender data, and there are considerable differences in how they approach gender. Furthermore, even in the latest sample of projects, approved after the recent revisions to the Statistics Handbook (performed between the second and third waves), the gender marker is not an automatic badge of quality. Even projects that have gender as their principal objective have been found wanting in this regard.

This point is not new. To the contrary, portfolio analyses (both internally performed and made by external consultants) of Sida-supported projects in one area or sector, have quite consistently found shortcomings when it comes to the integration of gender and women's rights.[157] Most such analyses note that while gender is often present in projects, there is considerable variation in how the issue is addressed. Furthermore, such analyses tend to show a considerable share of "gender-blind" interventions that lack attention to gender aspects entirely, even though they may originally have been labelled as "one" or "two".[158]

[157.] Henny Andersen. 2015. "Gender Review as Basis for the Regional Strategy of Asia, 2016–2020"; Henny Andersen. 2015. "Analysis on Swedish Support to Gender Equality in Cambodia"; Sofia Dohmen (Sida). 2015. "Gender Review Myanmar 2015"; Lesley Abdela. 2016. "Brief portfolio analysis and review of the regional strategy for Sweden's Cooperation MENA 2016–2020"; Alexandra Håkansson Smith. 2016. "Gender Portfolio Analysis: Kosovo"; Sophie Fryk. 2016. "Women's Economic Empowerment – Portfolio Analysis".

[158.] Ibid.

7.3   A multivariate analysis

This diversity may, however, mask more profound systematic differences. One could imagine that different departments would integrate gender to different degrees (the Africa Department has, for instance, made a more sustained effort to address gender through contributions and in staff training). And projects that are relatively larger in financial terms might be more prone to undertake proper gender analyses. Finally, one could expect that gender analysis would become more frequent in the latter waves than among contributions from the time before the Plan.

In order to test the relative weight of these propositions, a statistical analysis was performed on the entire sample (i.e. from all three waves) in the form of a series of logistical regressions, which take as their dependent variables the performance of a gender analysis – either in the project documents or in Sida's assessment of the same projects. For possible explanatory variables, the analysis included the total agreed contribution: whether the involved partner was Swedish or not; dummy variables for each Sida departments; whether the contribution was from the humanitarian or the productive sectors; and whether the contribution was from before or after the Plan came into force.

Interestingly, most of these explanatory variables fail to reach conventional levels of statistical significance, which means that they do not have any detectable effect on whether a gender analysis is made or not. Neither sum, nor responsible department, nor nationality of partner seem to matter for the performance of a gender analysis in applications or assessments.

There is one notable exception. Contributions from after the Plan came into force are more likely to contain elements of gender analysis both in their applications and – at a reduced level of statistical significance (.90) – in their assessments (see *Annex 3* for details of the relevant equations).

This might be a spurious effect, though, that picks up an effect from a general tendency to consider gender to a larger extent over time. To test for this possibility a control for the year of decision

was introduced. Doing so, the effect on applications disappears, but the effect on the inclusion of gender analysis in Sida's assessment remains significant (still at the .90 level) and positive. This lends additional support to the view that the Plan had a real effect in this regard.

These findings should be interpreted with some caution. The Plan actually says very little about the performance of gender analysis (and it should also be remembered that the team has applied a very generous definition of what constitutes a gender analysis). Furthermore, interesting as this finding is, gender analyses are still irregularly performed at Sida, both in terms of frequency and content. The finding may also to a certain extent be the result of a higher degree of integration of gender analyses among contributions of the second sample, with such analyses becoming less frequent in the third and last sample.

7.4   Analysis of cooperation strategies

Strategies guide Sida's work. Although these documents are the products of the Swedish government, not Sida, the agency is instrumental in providing inputs to them, and contributes reports on their implementation. Accordingly, Sida's contributions in this regard feature among the goals set by the Plan, through the objective "Gender analysis permeates strategy development and operationalisation".

Annex 4 offers a general view of Swedish geographic cooperation strategies from before and after the Plan. Even though there is still no uniform treatment of gender, and though certain sectors lack goals that refer to the theme, there are also some positive changes over time – notable when it comes to the presence of themes related to gender and women's rights, and with regard to methods for ensuring gender equality. In the latter case, it is not clear, however, that they will improve Sida's gender equality work. While it is possible that the strategies' formulations clearly indicate the importance of addressing such themes, several statements that do address women's rights and gender analysis contain more or less identical formulations, whose connection to the contextual analysis

is often less than evident. Similarly, there is little in the geographic strategies to indicate a gender analysis, and few signs of adapting more innovative approaches to gender integration (by stressing men's involvement or intersectional perspectives for instance). Some strategies stand out, though, in this regard.

In the following, focus is primarily on Sida's positions vis-à-vis those documents, present both in inputs to their development and in its reporting on the strategies.

7.4.1 Analysis of Sida's inputs to strategy development

- Gender is generally more present in Sida's suggestions than in the final documents.

- There are important differences in how gender is addressed in proposals.

- Although gender considerations are sometimes highly prominent in Sida's inputs, they contain little documented gender analysis of a more profound kind.

- Some of Sida's inputs contain more innovative approaches in this regard.

In spite of their importance, the strategies' stipulations can not be directly attributed to Sida as an organisation. Rather, the strategies are products of the Swedish government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs specifically. While Sida normally provides input to these processes, this is taken into account to a varying degree. (In one of the cases considered in the annex, the Cuba strategy, Sida claims not to have provided any input of this kind.[159]) For this reason, the team has instead studied Sida's input to the development of recent cooperation strategies.[160]

[159.] Communication from Sida to Fredrik Uggla, September 27, 2017.

[160.] In practice, this has meant to study cooperation strategies which have come into force after June 2016. In one of these cases (Mali), though, Sida's input seems

In the first place, it should be noted that Sida's inputs do not appear to follow any set model. The agency's suggestions differ as to whether they propose goals related to gender equality in all sectors (which is the case in six out of ten cases) or only in some (four out of ten). And in contrast to the standard formulations that ultimately find their way into the final strategies, there is little coherence among Sida's propositions. Different inputs come up with singular solutions – such as joining the gender and environmental priorities (proposal for the Regional Strategy Asia 2016–2021), or creating a specific goal area called "Women's security and the prevention of violence" (Guatemala 2016–2020). Another approach is represented by the new strategy for Myanmar (2018–2022) in which gender equality is consistently and constantly stressed as the main overarching goal for Swedish development cooperation.

These differences are consistent with a remark made by a field interviewee who noted, in relation to having participated in a recent strategy process, that these processes occur "in a vacuum" as no established instructions were available for such work until recently.[161] It should also be noted that references to the Plan are entirely absent in these documents.

Even so, most documents prepared by Sida contain relatively similar elements of gender analysis.[162] They provide some gender disaggregated data and and gives attention to themes related to women's situation in particular. In some proposals, data are grouped into a separate gender analysis (e.g. Colombia 2016–2020), but most of them do not provide any analysis that covers all sectors. Rather,

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to have been drafted in 2014, but the strategy was not approved until 2016. Similarly, most of the work on the Latin American strategies appears to have been done in 2015.

[161.] Interview with the head for development cooperation in one of the field study countries. But the same person also expresses appreciation for the support from Sida headquarters for the process.

[162.] The exception is the Regional Strategy for Asia. One can not completely rule out, though, that there may be additional documents/appendices to that document, which the team has not had access to. Indeed, the available document for Asia is considerably shorter than documents on the other strategies, which could indicate the existence of appendices or similar.

references to women's situation are made in different sections, and most documents contain one or two longer paragraphs addressing issues directly related to gender equality in a somewhat more profound manner. Themes such as masculinities and/or the convergence of gender and other grounds for discrimination in an intersectional approach, are seldom addressed in a systematic and coherent fashion. (But the strategy for Guatemala 2016–2020 is an exception, as it proposes a particular focus on indigenous women.)

Finally, it should be noted that Sida's proposals are often more far-reaching and innovative than the final strategies, but this could be because the latter tend to be much shorter documents.[163]

As just noted, there have been a lack of instructions on how to prepare strategy inputs. Such a document is now available, but there is little in it to suggest that gender analysis will be strengthened. Indeed, the document makes only one explicit reference to gender equality (by noting that gender equality is one of the three perspectives which shall be integrated into Swedish development cooperation), but has nothing to say about gender analysis, or the need to pay more detailed attention to the situation for different genders.[164]

7.4.2   Analysis of Sida's strategy reporting

- There is little evidence of any qualitative change in how Sida reports on gender with regard to strategy implementation.
- Although there is a set format, reports differ as to how much, and how, they approach gender aspects, and how much they rely on gender analysis.
- Differences between reports seem to persist over time.

[163.] Furthermore, Sida's inputs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs generally build on a number of background studies and documents, which could well include separate gender analyses.

[164.] "Riktlinjer för strategier inom svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och humanitärt bistånd", op. cit., p. 2.

Apart from assessing actual strategies, the team has considered three turns of Sida's annual reporting from ten countries for which strategies were considered – from 2016, 2017, and 2018 – all covering the previous years.

These reports addressed the theme of gender equality in various ways, both in descriptions of contexts, analyses and results reporting. The main variation is not over time, however, but rather between countries. Hence, even though there is a set format for such reporting, how it is used seems to be rather idiosyncratic. Even so, none of the reports contains any coherent analysis of the general situation with regard to gender issues in the country or region discussed. Existing analyses are performed on individual sectors, with a correspondingly limited focus, even though they can often be fact-based and highly relevant. Furthermore, reports differ as to whether all sectors include a discussion on gender, or if discussions are limited to certain sectors only. A majority of the reports belongs to the latter category (for exceptions of the former kind, see the reports on Somalia and Bolivia, both from 2017). Moreover, the use of gender-disaggregated statistics is uneven, and some do not contain any such data at all.

Likewise, most analyses are relatively superficial, and limited to brief descriptions of contexts or specific results. Indeed, in a few cases, even the reporting on goals directly related to gender equality (such as the prevention of gender-based violence) fails to present any gender-relevant considerations.[165]

When it comes to explicit discussions concerning learning, innovation and adaptation related to gender equality and women's rights, only a few examples have been found (for instance, the Bolivia report for 2016 suggests that more work should deal with masculinities, and for 2017 such activities are reported from both Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). In general, though, more advanced or coherent discussions on how to address gender are absent, even as two reports from 2017 contain separate

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[165.] Sida. 2016. "Strategy Report on Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey", p. 7.

sections discussing how the different perspectives have been addressed.

It is difficult to detect regional differences in the reporting. The exception in this regard concerns the strategies for Africa from 2016. They uniformly contain passages detailing the number of contributions with gender as their main focus/integrated focus, something that may be traced back to the Plan (and the actions that the Africa Department would subsequently take to fulfill its objectives), even though it is never mentioned in connection to such exercises, or anywhere else in the reports for that matter. Such reporting is not, however, accompanied by any more profound analysis of challenges in the local context, and disappears the following year.

Apart from such brief discussions on the performance of the local portfolio in terms of gender markers in some strategies covering 2016, it is difficult to see any significant differences between the 2015 reports and the ones produced after the Plan's approval. A most generous count would indicate that four out of ten reports improved over the first year of the Plan's implementation (while one possibly regressed). But some reports seem to fall back the following year, and provide less of gender-relevant data and elaborate discussions on the theme.

Overall, there are few signs of fundamental changes or trends in the material relating to cooperation strategies between the two phases. While there have been improvements, the variations between countries are still larger than variations over time. In the absence of other explanations, it would seem that this unevenness is the result of a lack of clear instructions on strategy development and reporting, as well as uncertainty regarding how to address gender equality in these processes. Instead, reports seem to follow a relatively set patterns that vary between countries. This may be explained by the strategy that they are reporting on, or seen as evidence of an element of path dependency with previous reports becoming templates for latter ones in the absence of other kinds of instructions.

7.5   Summary

Sida's actual contributions to gender equality and women's rights assume many forms; ranging from dialogue at multilateral institutions, over efforts to ensure inclusion of the theme in projects and programmes supported, to contributions relating to the development and follow-up of Sweden's strategies for development cooperation.

In general, partners have a very positive view of Sida's inputs. They note that the agency often stands out due to the constant weight that it attaches to the subject of gender equality and women's rights, and due to its often practical approach to these issues (even though Sida's non-prescriptive approach sometimes appears to preclude a more active engagement in partners' work).

However, the review of project documents shows that Sida's approach to gender integration and gender analysis is inconsistent. There is considerable variation regarding when, and how, these themes are addressed. While the amount of projects in which gender is the principal objective, and in which gender analysis is performed, has increased in line with the Plan, there are also indications of an "inverted J-curve" in the latter respect, and gender analysis is still far from universally performed in Sida's contributions.

Something similar can be found in Sida documents related to Swedish cooperation strategies. Gender is generally present in Sida's inputs to their development and in the agency's its reporting, but its contributions are far from uniform and do not seem to reflect any clear conception of gender equality and integration.

There is thus a high degree of correspondence between what the team has found in project and cooperation documents and its findings above relating to Sida's internal culture. There is certainly a high degree of expressed commitment to gender equality. But this does not mean that there is any coherence in how the theme is treated and included in Sida's work, neither in the methods used nor in how the theme is conceptualized.

8. Implementation of the Plan

As noted above, the Plan for gender integration at Sida is a relatively short and often vague document. It is not commonly known among the staff, neither at headquarters nor in the field. The document does contain a number of goals, however, and these goals will now be addressed in turn with reference to the findings and discussions above.

8.1 Increased focus on gender equality as a principal objective and the integration of gender equality in certain areas

• The four goals in this area have generally been well complied with.

This area contains four goals related to Sida's contributions, and the extent to which these have gender as a principal or significant objective.

With regard to the first goal ("Increase of funding going to contributions having gender as a principal focus in all sectors"), there is firm evidence that it has been achieved. Sida's own assessment show an increase between 2015 to 2017, from 16 to 20 per cent of total funding going to initiatives that have gender equality as the main target.[166] The same assessment shows that only 10 per cent of funds went to contributions in which gender was neither a main nor an integrated target. The present analysis seconds these findings, although it finds the extremes (no integration of gender and gender as a principal objective) to be even more prominent.

Sida's own figures also show that gender is more frequently integrated as a main target than environmental or conflict

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[166] · Sida. "Delredovisning av jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter (JIM-uppdraget) 2015–2017", p. 5.

considerations. This reflects the frequently expressed opinion that gender, in spite of possible problems with integrating it, still holds a privileged position among the perspectives that Sida consistently integrates into its work.[167]

While impressive, the above figures need to be put into perspective. As repeated portfolio analyses have shown (see above), the definition of what counts as a significant and as an integrated goal is not always easy to determine, and Sida has over time had to change its calculations in this regard.[168] The findings above also reveal that not even projects in the highest category (which have gender as their principal objective) necessarily offer an adequate treatment of the theme. In response to this, Sida has tried to develop clearer instructions, taking into account a new definition put forward by the OECD-DAC. Even so, problems persist.

In sum, available data strongly suggest that Sida has indeed fulfilled the first objective of the Plan, as the amount of funding and contributions having gender as their principal objective has increased. Further stipulations of the Plan, that increases shall be based on a context-specific analysis, are seemingly met by the process of strategy operationalisation and follow-up conducted by individual units.

There is also evidence that the second goal ("A special prioritisation of gender in contributions in the sectors of environment, climate/resilience and non-social sectors") has been fulfilled to an increasing degree, as shown by Sida's reporting and supported by the above findings.[169] However, it is not clear that

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[167] · Sida. "Delredovisning av jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter (JIM-uppdraget) 2015–2017", p. 5. Environment and conflict were the main targets in 14 and 8 per cent of the total contribution in 2017, respectively.

[168.] For instance, the 2016 portfolio overview stated that 20 per cent of total funds went to contributions having gender as their principal objective – not 18 per cent as Sida would later claim in its JIM reporting (cf. Sida. 2017. "Gender Equality: Mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights").

[169.] It should be noted that this goal is administratively complicated. It implies that strategies must specify gender-related goals for these specific sectors in order to enable Sida officers to comply with both simultaneously, as contributions were for a long time only supposed to have one principal objective. This complicated

additional stipulations related to this goal – indicating the importance of gender analysis, competence development and evaluation for these sectors – have been completely fulfilled. There has been a marked increase in gender analysis in proposals from these areas since the Plan came into force, but around half of Sida's assessments related to the same sectors still lack such analyses.

With regard to goal number three ("Gender equality is integrated in Sida's humanitarian contributions"), evidence shows that this objective has been complied with. According to Sida's figures, 94 per cent of total funds to humanitarian projects had gender as an integrated goal in 2017.[170] In this regard, it should be noted that the Plan explicitly excluded the humanitarian sector from having to increase the number of contributions with gender as the principal objective due to the impossibility of assigning two principal objectives to a contribution (a disposition that has subsequently been changed).[171] As noted above, the present assessment does not completely corroborate Sida's data, as it registered a slight recent decrease in the number of humanitarian projects with gender as an explicit objective. The very small sample makes every interpretation difficult, however.

For the fourth goal, ("New forms of financing for development are used strategically to advance gender equality"), the unspecific formulation makes it difficult to ascertain whether the goal has been fully met or not. According to Sida's reporting, "special efforts" related to the provision of loans and guarantees have been made to further gender equality.[172] Similarly, the relevant head of unit estimates that 7 or 8 of a total of 40 guarantees extended have gender as a principal objective, i.e. roughly the same portion as for Sida's contributions in general.[173] The head of unit notes, however, that, in spite of several meetings and discussions, there seems to be

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the assignment of this designation in sectors having principal objectives unrelated to gender.

[170] Sida. "Delredovisning av jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter (JIM-uppdraget) 2015–2017", p. 6.

[171] Ibid., p. 6f.

[172] Ibid., p. 6.

[173] Interview with Head of unit.

little sustained, systematic action vis-à-vis institutions such as the Gender helpdesk or attempts to amend the Gender toolbox in this regard. The head of unit also notes that possibilities in this regard are ultimately dependent on the interest and demand of the entities responsible for specific strategies, and that it is hard to see any notable change in the interest for using this instrument to advance gender equality.[174]

8.2 Enhanced quality in Sida's methods of work, and routines for the integration of gender

- Sida has addressed some of these goals in a less than systematic fashion. Some dispositions in the Plan seem to lack clear structures of implementation, and others have not been implemented at all.

Goals in this area are generally more vaguely formulated than the previous ones. They have also not been complied with to the same extent, even though the majority has been addressed in an adequate fashion. Preparatory work has been done for some targets, but without having resulted in instruments or measures being adopted. Regarding other targets, no one seems to take responsibility for their implementation.

The fifth goal ("Gender is a strategic priority for Sida") has evidently been complied with as gender equality is indeed one of Sida's thematic priorities, incorporated into the goal formulations for 2018 ("målbilden"), and included in the instructions for annual planning.[175]

The sixth goal ("Gender analysis permeates routines for strategy development") relates to strategies adopted by the Swedish government, and presumably to Sida's role in their formulation. There has been a real change regarding how gender is integrated into

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[174.] Ibid.
[175] · Sida. "Delredovisning av jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter (JIM-uppdraget) 2015–2017".

the strategies that guide Sida's work, but it is unclear whether this can be attributed to the Plan. Even today there is considerable variation as to how, and to what extent, gender analysis is performed in Sida's inputs to their development and in Sida's reports on each strategy. The differences could be attributed to an absence of clear instructions on strategy development, as discussed above.

Such instructions are in place today. They state that development cooperation should be based on three thematic priorities (of which gender is one and that follow-up of strategies should consider "the five perspectives".[176] Beyond those brief references, neither gender analysis nor women's situation receive any particular mention. This absence, combined with the variation regarding how and how often gender analysis is performed in such contributions, makes it difficult to assert that this goal has been completely fulfilled.

The seventh goal ("Gender analysis permeates routines for appraisal, follow-up and results") relates more directly to Sida's system for contribution management. Hence, it constitutes a more qualitatively formulated target than the count of gender as a significant or integrated goal. As the discussion relating to Trac, Sida's appraisal system, has shown, an element of gender analysis is a requirement for approval, and for some staff officers the statements in this regard constitute the most clearly expressed instructions on how to approach the issue.[177] However, what is included in those analyses can differ significantly, and inclusion is by itself not a guarantee for quality, as discussed above.

Another stipulation – that gender should be considered in relevant deecentralised evaluations performed by Sida's units – has seeemingly not led to to any particular action (beyond, reportedly, the inclusion of some examples of evaluation questions relating to gender in Sida's model Terms of Reference).[178] An examination of recent relevant evaluations shows that several of them are still wanting in this respect. In the nine evaluations published so far

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[176.] "Riktlinjer för strategier inom svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och humanitärt bistånd", op. cit.
[177.] Comments in the focus group with staff officers.
[178.] Interview, policy advisor on gender.

during 2018, the Terms of Reference (mostly written in mid- or late 2017) for three evaluations lack specific questions relating to gender equality, even though that would have been relevant for all nine of them.[179] In only one of the nine Terms of Reference does the proposed methodology address how to capture results relating to gender equality.[180] Likewise, only one Terms of Reference requires a gender-balanced team of evaluators.

In the actual evaluation reports, there is accordingly significant variation as to how gender is addressed. It is a relatively prominent theme in a majority of them. But in others gender equality is mentioned only in passing and without any developed analysis.[181] Notably, there is little to suggest that the actual subject of an evaluation could explain this difference.

Goal number 8 ("Responsibilities, roles and competence in Sida's work with gender have been made clearer and strengthened") has been partly implemented. On the one hand, reporting and planning procedures have incorporated aspects of the Plan (particularly the increase of funding assigned to contributions having gender as a principal objective). On the other hand, there are few signs of a determined and unified effort to clarify and strengthen roles and responsibilities in this area, or signs of new functions or institutions created as a result of the Plan.

In relation to this goal, the Plan also stresses Sida's annual plan for competence. However, such plans are no longer developed, and issues relating to competence development are instead integrated into Sida's decentralised annual planning processes. Thus, the system for learning and competence development becomes

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[179.] Christoplos, Ian et al. 2018. *Evaluation of Afrobarometer's Regional Programme 2011–2017*, Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2018:6; Topsøe-Jensen, Bente et al. 2018. *Evaluation of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation*, Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2018:4; Tvedten, Inge et al. 2018. *Evaluation of the Sida supported research capacity and higher education development program in Rwanda, 2013-2017*, Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2018:3.

[180.] Kruse, Stein-Erik, et al. 2018. *Mid-term Evaluation of Swedish government funded Civil Society Support through the AGIR II Programme in Mozambique 2014–2020*. Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2018:8. The Terms of Reference for this evaluation mention the need to capture disaggregated data.

[181.] Christoplos et al., op. cit.; Topsøe-Jensen et al., op. cit.

fragmented, and the responsibility for the goal becomes unclear, with negative results for overall gender competence as discussed above.

Goal number 9 ("Gender is prioritised in Sida's dialogue with partners") presents a dual picture. On the one hand, one stipulation in the Plan – development of support for dialogues in Sweden and abroad – has not been implemented. According to the gender policy specialist at Sida, this instrument was developed but never actually launched, possibly because focus shifted to the Multidimensional poverty analysis and to new processes for contribution management.

On the other hand, interviews and evidence from the field studies show that gender has a constant presence in Sida's dialogues with partners, which indicates that the goal has nevertheless been fulfilled to an important extent. Likewise, and in marked contrast to the agency's reluctance to offer standardised trainings on gender analysis and gender integration for its own staff, Sida's training centre in Härnösand is regularly giving such courses to Sida's partners, in accordance with statements in the Plan.[182] Hence, goal number 9 is at least partly fulfilled.

8.3   Raised ambitions with regard to Sida's work with equality and diversity as an organisation and as an employer

• In this regard, the one goal formulated by the Plan has been fulfilled.

The tenth and final goal concerns the development of an assessment of challenges faced by the agency in its internal work for equality and diversity. A plan to make corrections should be developed in a participatory fashion. Sida's reporting related to the Plan gives some examples of how this has been performed, and it seems evident that

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[182.] Interview with staff in Härnösand.

the goal has been achieved to a substantial extent.[183] The quite brief plan for integrating these aspects presents a clear picture of activities, results and responsibilities (see above under section 5.5.4).[184]

8.4   Summary

As seen in *Table 2*, several, or most, Plan objectives have been fulfilled as intended, or nearly so. But some rather concrete stipulations appear to have been disregarded. Moreover, it is difficult to make a unified assessment of the more vaguely formulated goals, as these achieve concretion only in the action plans of individual units and departments, and then with little uniformity. Furthermore, certain goals that demand action at a central level (e.g. developing a dialogue tool for gender or ensuring that "gender analysis permeates routines for strategy development") have seemingly been left aside in this model of implementation.

Above all, the implementation of the Plan does not suggest any sustained comprehensive effort to attain all targets. Efforts have often varied, in terms of attention to individual objectives, but also because formulation of concrete actions is delegated to lower organisational levels, without any uniformity in conceptualisation or desired levels of achievement.[185] Similarly, it is notable that interviewees and focus groups participants generally fail to identify any general direct effect from the Plan on how gender is integrated in their work, beyond such stipulations that have been transferred

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[183.] "Riktlinjer för strategier inom svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och humanitärt bistånd", op. cit.

[184.] Sida. 2016. "Sidas mångfalds- och jämställdhetsplan 2017–2019".

[185.] It should be noted that Sida, when reporting to the Swedish government on the implementation of the Plan, does not mention concrete measures stipulated in the Plan that have not been implemented (e.g. the dialogue tool or the consideration of gender in all relevant decentralised evaluations). (Sida. 2018. "Delredovisning av jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter (JIM uppdraget) 2015–2017".) Furthermore, for certain goals, reporting mostly consists of examples of actions, rather than of a comprehensive discussion of the degree of attainment.

through annual plans and other documents developed by individual departments and units.

Table 2: Summary of compliance with the Plan's ten goals.[186]

Goal:	Compliance:
1. Increase of funding going to contributions having gender as a principal focus in all sectors	Full compliance
2. Special prioritisation of gender in contributions in the sectors of environment, climate/resilience and non-social sectors	Close to full compliance
3. Gender equality is integrated in Sida's humanitarian contributions	Very close to full compliance
4. New forms of financing for development are used strategically to advance gender equality	Full compliance (?)
5. Gender is a strategic priority for Sida	Full compliance
6. Gender analysis permeates routines for strategy development	Partial compliance
7. Gender analysis permeates routines for appraisal, follow-up and results	Partial compliance
8. Responsibilities, roles and competence in Sida's work with gender have been made clearer and strengthened	Low to partial degree of compliance (?)
9. Gender is prioritised in Sida's dialogue with partners.	Close to full complicance.
10. Raised ambitions with regard to Sida's work with equality and diversity as an organisation and as an employer.	Full complicance.

[186.] Question marks indicate areas in which the estimation is particularly uncertain, due to an absence of clearly formulated targets in the Plan.

9. Conclusions

9.1 General observations

The truth is, gender equality is almost a victim of its own success. Everybody takes it for granted.[187]

The point of departure for this ongoing evaluation was to investigate the implementation of a Plan for gender integration in an organisation that has prioritised this issue for decades. This entails certain challenges. It is difficult to discern which changes and reforms emanate from the Plan itself, and which ones are part of other processes. Moreover, it means that expectations are high. If an organisation with an already high profile is tasked with further strenghtening structures and raising its ambitions, high-quality gender integration efforts should be expected in formal documents, frameworks and infrastructures as well as in informal cultures, understandings and practices throughout the organisation.

The following conclusions and recommendations should be read bearing this in mind: Sida starts from a relatively strong position regarding gender integration, and expectations will be high on what can be achieved when ambitions are raised one step further.

In this section, the above findings are related to theories of gender mainstreaming in order to increse the general relevance of the study. Sida had largely passed the two intial steps of the mainstreaming process (gender terminology being widely used and elaboration of a formal plan) prior to the Plan, so the present report is primarily concerned with the third step: implementation.[188] This step is often described as being the most challenging one and as a constantly ongoing and never completed endeavour.[189] The present study was therefore not designed to reach a conclusion, stating whether gender integration has been fully achieved or not. Instead, the evaluation has studied implementation as continuous changes

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[187.] Interview, staff at headquarters working with agency-wide processes.

[188.] Moser and Moser. 2005.

[189.] E.g. Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo, 2009; Callerstig 2014.

structures, practices and behaviour brought about by a formal instruction for renewal, such as the Plan.

One first question thus concerns whether the Plan's aims for gender integration match the organisation's way of functioning at large, or whether they are designed in a way that risks placing them at odds with ongoing work.[190] In that regard, it was an evident advantage for the implementation of the Plan that gender integration was already a an established practice with strong internal support at Sida, and the team has not encountered any explicit opposition to it. This means that the new objectives outlined in the Plan largely fit with existing terminology and procedures.

But the very fact that gender integration has been so firmly established at Sida apparently sometimes causes the Plan to be sidelined with the argument that its provisions are already implemented in practice. Many staff members are not aware of the Plan, or think that it largely represents what Sida is already doing well. Such a relaxed approach has been facilitated by the vagueness of many of the Plan's aims, and by the fact that the Plan failed to include clear mechanisms of accountability.

Research on gender mainstreaming almost unanimously agrees that one of the greatest hurdles to efficient implementation is that the use of gendered terminology can render various activitites legitimate without fundamentally changing systems, structures, behaviour and practices in an organisation. When "everyone" is responsible for integrating gender, it also carries risks of diluting responsibility and devaluing professional gender expertise.[191] Moser and Moser note that a combined strategy is often useful, whereby all staff have a responsibility for mainstreaming gender, but individual staff members are supported by gender specialists and by requirements concerning gender analyses, and where increased competence is ensured through gender training. This indicates how important it is to strengthen the gender infrastructure through clear requirements and specialised advisors, and to increase the staff's competence to review and carry out gender analyses. Unless

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[190.] Rao and Kelleher, 2005.

[191.] See e.g. Verloo, 2005; Daly, 2005; Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo, 2009.

individual consciousness is generally achieved, the implementation of mainstreaming will be vulnerable to changes in staff.[192]

A second question concerns to what extent the aims in the Plan are reflected in actual changes in structures and responsibilities at an organisational level, and at the individual level, i.e. affecting staff behaviour and everyday practices.[193] For this reason the present evaluation has not only striven to describe and assess activities directly relating to gender integration at Sida, but has also focused on the views and practices of those staff members who do not have a specific responsibility for gender issues, but who are anyhow expected to integrate gender into everyday work. Most of the focus groups, interviews and analyses of contributions undertaken in this assignment have served this purpose.

The findings largely echo the results of Moser and Moser when they reviewed gender mainstreaming in fourteen international development organisations over ten years ago. They found a strong reliance on key individuals, and vulnerability to changes in staff. They also saw that making gender issues a responsibility of all staff sometimes diluted their impact. This happened particularly when policy introduction was not followed up consistently and repeatedly with training and skills development.[194]

The present evaluation has considered both the organisational and the individual level, noting that while there is an ambitious and appropriate gender equality infrastructure in place, it needs a higher status and priority if it is to reach its full potential. This would mean to ensure that everyone gets in contact with its components and understand their use and relevance. This is particulary important in an entity as decentralised as Sida, where it is not is not always clear where the responsibility ultimately lies. In such a situation, implementation risks becoming uneven, as departments give different emphasis to the stipulations of the Plan, while functions available to one entity may well be absent for another one.

[192.] Moser and Moser, 2005.

[193.] Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, 2016; Rao and Kelleher, 2005.

[194.] Moser and Moser, op. cit., 2005.

Similarly, at the individual level, it is on the one hand clearly the case that Sida has many gender experts. On the other hand, it is less evident that the agency makes the most of this in-house expertise and that it ensures that staff members use the resources available. At the present, there is no required basic gender training, and no mandatory instructions to use the core tools available in the Gender toolbox at any stage of the working processes. Accordingly, gender analyses are often absent both from project descriptions and from Sida's own assessments.

With regard to the *content* of gender integration, the present assessment started out by pinpointing some general theoretical trends in the field of Gender and Development. It also outlined the core elements of gender analysis. The views of Sida's gender experts as well as views found in written material (such as the Gender toolbox and the Tool for multidimensional poverty analysis) largely reflect the development in the field. Transformative approaches[195] and a reshaping of power structures[196], often associated with the move from Women in Development to Gender aspects of development, are discursively emphasised in documents and interviews. There are also activities, tools and entire programmes associated with men and masculinities and intersectionality approaches. The recently launched Multidimensional poverty analysis tool is, indeed, built on an intersectionality analysis.

Sida's strong commitment to gender equality issues is also recognised by partners and to some extent by other donors. Sida is seen as giving consistent priority to gender equality, in contrast to many other donors. But this consistency is expressed as a long-term phenomenon, and cooperation partners have generally not discerned any recent changes in this regard. Similarly, while gender is consistently mentioned as a priority, it is less clear what this prioritisation entails in practice and how it will be approached. Basic aspects of gender analyses are often missing: distinctions between productive and reproductive activities[197], and between practical and

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[195.] Cf. Squires, 2005.

[196.] E.g Razavi and Miller, 1995.

[197.] Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training.* London and New York: Routledge.

strategic gender needs[198], or analyses answering relevant questions about who is made visible, who has power, control and access, and who will benefit from an intervention (and the reverse).

In sum, Sida deserves due credit for its commitment and efforts to promote integration. The strong formal organisational commitment to gender equality is also mirrored in individual answers throughout the agency. The present analysis nevertheless reveals that there is scope for improvement. Although a formal infrastructre and useful documents exist, too little emphasis is put on how this infrastrucure can influence actual behaviour and working practices among all committed staff members.

> *When it comes to gender, there is the view that we are very good [at this], but we [actually] have a long way to go.[199]*

9.2   Specific observations

The general observations above are reflected in a number of findings concerning specific aspects of Sida's work.

First, the priority put on gender equality has not been matched by a clear and uniform understanding of what this emphasis means in practice. In interviews, few clear formulations are spontaneously offered about what gender equality means in development cooperation, and what constitutes an adequate level of gender integration. Quality assurance follow-ups have also revealed inconsistencies in the application of gender policy markers, indicating that it is not self-evident how to apply these.[200]

Yet, supporting documents do exist, and they quite clearly specify how gender mainstreaming should be carried out, as well as

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[198.] Molyneux, Maxine. 1984. "Mobilisation without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua", *Critical Social Policy* 4; Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training.* London and New York: Routledge.

[199.] Remark in one of the focus groups (staff officers).

[200.] E.g. Sida (Stina Lundström). 2017. "Gender Mainstreaming and Environment and Climate Mainstreaming – Portfolio analysis".

how the gender equality policy markers are defined. [201] The definition of policy markers has been specified in Sida's Statistical Handbook.

The uneven treatment of gender and frequent lack of gender analysis in contribution management is thus a seemingly unnecessary example of when knowledge that is formalised into guidelines has not been universally applied. While Sida often implies that this unevenness is a natural result of adapting to context and to partners' priorities, it is still remarkable that the agency's own recommendations for how to carry out a gender analysis[202] are not more visible in actual contribution management. General but concrete and relevant guidelines for gender analysis exist, along with instructions that a "gender analysis must be **conducted prior to any** intervention, regardless of sector or area of intervention"[203] and statements that it is "(t)he responsibility of the Sida officer […] to make sure a gender analysis is being done, and to make use of trained gender experts"[204]. Unfortunately, these guidelines are often disregarded.

Secondly, the lack of knowledge regarding specific documents and stipulations in the Gender toolbox reflects a more substantial problem: the lack of knowledge and insufficient use of the ambitious gender equality infrastructure and the support functions available, both among individual officers and at management level. The problem is compounded by the fact that use of certain support functions is limited because of formal rules, or because of non-translation of guides into other languages than English.

Similarly, Sida offers regular courses on gender equality for its partners, and thus has ample experience in organising such training. As commented on above, there are also several gender experts at

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[201.] E.g. the Gender toolbox documents from March 2015: *Gender Mainstreaming* and *Gender Analysis – Principles and Elements*, Sida and the Gender toolbox from February 2016: *Gender Equality Policy Marker*, Sida.

[202.] As described in the Gender toolbox from March 2015: *Gender Analysis – Principles and Elements*, Sida.

[203.] As described in the Gender toolbox from March 2015: *Gender Mainstreaming,* Sida (bold emphasis in the original).

[204.] Sida. *"Gender Analysis"*, op. cit., p. 2.

Sida who should be able to share their competence. However, Sida does not prioritise formal courses as part of the competence development of its own staff, and few staff members have participated in specialised gender equality courses recently. There are thus few formal and open arenas where the brief and rather basic knowledge communicated through the Gender toolbox can be applied, discussed and deepened. This is remarkable, particularly considering the high demand for basic gender competence that members of staff have voiced in interviews and focus groups.

Thirdly, the present analysis has found that when efficient implementation of goals connected to gender integration does take place, it is often due to individual efforts from committed staff members, rather than due to agency-wide efforts or requirements. But this may lead to a vulnerability to changes in staff. Furthermore, it means that the extent to which gender is addressed will depend on lower-level decisions and/or personal inclinations and interests. For instance, the fact that the Africa Department has set particularly ambitious goals with regard to gender equality seems to have more to do with efforts of individual staff members at that department, than with Sida having strategically prioritised gender integration in Africa as compared to other continents. Again, that differences develop within the organisation due to personal inclinations or specific decisions at unit/department level indicates that the view of Sida as an organisation with gender as "part of its DNA" (a commonly used metaphor) is only true on a relatively superficial level. Thorough gender integration requires committed and competent staff members and directors, and these may not always be at hand.

Similarly, Sida's non-presciptive approach (not giving partners clear instructions on what is expected in terms of gender analysis or integration of gender and women's rights) means that actual formulation of these issues largely escapes Sida. In spite of high ambitions, the agency thus ultimately becomes dependent on partners' capacities for actual integration of gender considerations into the projects and programmes that it funds.

Finally, while most of the Plan has been adequately implemented and certain departments have even gone further than that, it must

be pointed out that other objectives of the Plan have not been implemented at all. Likewise, the positive trend that certain interviewees perceive with regard to attention to gender at Sida over the last year, is mitigated by others who see a basically static situation. The overall impression is thus one of uneven implementation of Sida's high ambitions.

The above conclusions resonate to a high degree with the findings of previous evaluations of Sida's work with gender integration (see *Annex 1*). Like the present evaluation, those assessments noted a high degree of general commitment and emphasis on the theme, but they also found that attention to these issues tend to be uneven and frequently constrained. [205] The foremost challenge for the agency thus remains to ensure a consistently high attention to gender equality in its organisation and operations. The following recommendations are formulated with this in mind.

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[205] Similar points have been made in several internal analyses and studies conducted by Sida in recent years. (E.g. Henny Andersen. 2015. "Gender Review as Basis for the Regional Strategy of Asia, 2016–2020"; Henny Andersen. 2015. "Analysis on Swedish Support to Gender Equality in Cambodia"; Sofia Dohmen (Sida). 2015. "Gender Review Myanmar 2015"; Lesley Abdela. 2016. "Brief portfolio analysis and review of the regional strategy for Sweden's Cooperation MENA 2016–2020"; Alexandra Håkansson Smith. 2016. "Gender Portfolio Analysis: Kosovo"; Sophie Fryk. 2016. "Women's Economic Empowerment – Portfolio Analysis". A recent evaluation of the so-called JIM initiative, of which the Plan is one example, also finds that interest among staff and management is an important determinant of success. (Statskontoret. 2018. "Utvärdering av regeringens utvecklingsprogram för jämställdhetsintegrering i myndigheter: Delrapport".)

10.   Recommendations

Sida's work with gender integration presents a dual picture. On the one hand, the prominent position of gender considerations and the general acceptance of the importance of gender integration among its staff are notable. On the other hand, there is evidently scope for further improvement. As shown above, attention to gender, while generally high, varies and is subject to limiting factors such as time, competence and support. Effective gender integration appears to be dependent on personal committment and interest to a relatively high degree.

It should be noted that the mainstreaming approach favoured by Sida, in which attainment of Sida's goals in this area becomes a responsibility for each and every member, places high demands on the agency with regard to availability of training, instruction and support. In order to address those needs and further enhance gender integration at Sida, the following pages will spell out a number of recommendations in three areas: the place of gender in Sida's work; staff preparation and support; and follow-up and continuation.

In fact, Sida has recently introduced changes and reforms that will possibly satisfy some of these suggestions (e.g. the launch of the Multidimensional poverty analysis, and the recently conducted mapping of staff competence in the gender area). There may therefore be a certain overlap between the recommendations below and processes that are already ongoing at Sida. The reason for putting forward these recommendations anyhow, is that the evaluation has not been able to assess the impact of such changes, due to their recent or future introduction. In those cases, the recommendations should primarily be read as reminders to continuously assess the effectiveness of such instruments and institutions.

10.1   The place of gender in Sida's work

• Clarify demands on Sida staff.

A recurring theme in the team's discussions with Sida staff has been the multitude of perspectives and priorities, and the lack of time devoted to each one. While such problems are possibly unavoidable due to the sheer number of priorities, several interviewees have asked for a clearer measure or instruction as to what constitutes a sufficient treatment of specific issues. For gender equality, the clearest indication in that regard seems to be encapsulated in the crude gender marker. A clearer and more elaborate instruction would help staff to address gender issues by indicating what is required, not least in terms of gender analysis.

• Facilitate the combination of different perspectives and priorities.

Likewise, the issue of combining different perspectives has featured in interviews. Recently introduced instruments such as the Multidimensional poverty analysis and the coming "strategy maps", which are supposed to outline objectives with more clarity, may constitute answers to such queries. But synergies and trade-offs will have to be continuously considered at Sida in light of the limited staff time available, which is possibly the main constraint when it comes to a more thorough approach to gender integration.

• Consider how Sida's general approach affects implementation of central goals.

Relatedly, there may also be a need to discuss how the currently highly decentralised system of responsibility affects the implementation of uniform directives. As has been repeatedly observed, implementation and attention to gender is uneven at Sida. Even as rigid uniformity would be undesirable, differences such as the ones encountered above should be the result of considerate deliberations, rather than due to chance or personal inclinations, as is now sometimes the case. Similarly, the limitations inherent in relying on partners' capacities for addressing and implementing gender consideration should be a subject for discussions and

possible revisions at the agency, including the systematic introduction of methods to enhance partner capacity (see below).

10.2 Staff preparation and support for addressing gender issues

While the former points relate to the attention to gender, a separate set of recommendations deal with the ability of staff members to effectively address such issues.

• Continuously assess staff needs and challenges, while devising responses to these.

Sida should systematically assess, and address, staff needs and challenges in the area of gender integration to a larger extent. While this has partly been done in the so-called competence mapping, the team believes that more could be done in order to find out what staff need, and adapt competence development and support systems accordingly. In this regard, particular attention should be given to the national programme officers in Sida's field offices, as they cannot be expected to have the same understanding of what a Swedish position on gender equality implies as sent-out staff who may have spent many years at Swedish agencies and organisations. Some representatives from this group claim that aspects of gender integration remain implicit, which is an indication that this group would benefit from increased attention and explicit instructions from Sida with regard to gender integration. Furthermore, a broader survey of how staff in general view gender and its integration may be relevant to detect possible differences in views, as well as other relevant issues that may affect treatment of these themes.

• Communicate the need for continuous competence development.

It is possible that a precondition for convincing staff to use existing guidelines and support systems is a recognition that there is still room for improvement at Sida even in this regard. The current high self-assessment may limit staff interest in measures that could

improve performance further.[206] There is no reason to overstate limitations or challenges, but Sida should try to communicate to staff that gender integration is a continuously evolving area, in which periodic additional training is likely to be needed.

• Introduce an obligatory course in gender analysis.

In spite of the crucial importance of gender analysis as a basis for effective gender integration, the review of Sida documents shows that such analyses are often absent or lacking in specification. Accordingly, Sida should ensure a sufficient level of competence among its staff to perform such analyses. The agency's rather off-hand approach to staff training may need to be reconsidered. Training should be seen as an instrument to achieve more coherence in gender integration. Furthermore, increased attention and support might eventually also translate into the more concrete advice from Sida that many partners ask for.

• Ensure that tools and instruments are generally available in the organisation.

As discussed above, staff sentiments of pride in Sida's achievements and prominent position regarding women's rights and gender are frequently mixed with more critical assessments of the support offered for these issues. Indeed, in the course of the evaluation the team has encountered the absence of translations of key documents into relevant languages, found that the Gender helpdesk has not served the entire organisation, and heard of how an individual entity may choose not to participate in the gender network, to mention just three illustrations of how unevenly support functions are working. Sida should establish systems to ensure that those functions are uniformly and easily available across the organisation. Not doing so, is a virtual guarantee for uneven, or deficient, attention to gender integration. It should be noted, however, that Sida has taken steps in this direction recently, as with the ongoing procurement of a new helpdesk for gender to cover the entire agency.

[206.] Sida. "Kartläggning av Sidas jämställdhetskompetens hösten 2017".

- Increase staff awareness of tools and instruments.

Related to the previous point, it is crucial that available support functions are communicated to staff, and that every effort is made to ensure their employment. This is generally not the case at the present. In some respects formulations of what staff are expected to do are altogether absent (as with the dialogue support tool, outlined in the Plan but never created). Hence, Sida needs to make sure that there are available guidelines specifying what staff are expected to do, and it should systematically spread knowledge on the instruments to achieve this in the organisation. Doing so may well require further launching events, as well as continous emphasis on the instruments at hand.

- Create instruments to support partners.

Due to Sida's non-prescriptive approach, effective integration of gender in projects and programmes supported by the agency will ultimately depend on the competence and capacities of its partners. Partners sometimes ask for support in their work with gender integration, but Sida is not always able to respond to these. But potentially important innovations are available in this regard; for instance, the helpdesk for partners created by the Regional team in Asia, or joint meetings with several partners to allow for exchange of experiences, lessons learned and discussions on gender integration (as done in in Guatemala for instance). Sida should ensure that information about those innovations is broadly spread at the agency. It should also consider the possibility of evaluating such instruments, and implement them on a general scale in case they are proven effective in enhancing partner capacity and gender integration.

10.3   Follow-up and continuation of the Plan

- Ensure that all objectives in the Plan are implemented, or reformulate the Plan.
- Attach levels of attainment to the goals of the Plan.

Finally, it would seem that Sida needs to ensure effective implementation of all targets set in the Plan. While most objectives have been implemented to the letter, this is not always the case. Certain objectives have been all but disregarded, and others have only been partly implemented. Furthermore, even for the more tangible goals – such as increasing the amount of contributions for which gender is a principal objective – there may be a need to continuously assess whether they have been effectively implemented as both the present study and several other analyses reveal possible limitations and deficiencies such as a common absence of gender analysis. Hence, Sida should clearly spell out responsibilities, routines, and safeguards to guide implementation. Sida should also, in relevant cases, spell out clear goals coupled to desired levels of attainment, something which is lacking in the current Plan.

• Consider the development of a new plan with a more ambitious approach.

Finally, as the current Plan is nearing the end of its implementation period, there is reason to consider a new plan for gender integration. While some may see this as a superfluous project given that gender is already a priority for Sida, one should rather see a document of this kind as a prerequisite for Sida to remain at the forefront of gender integration in development cooperation.

A new plan should not necessarily focus on further raising the number of contributions which have gender as a principal objective. It should rather strive to ensure that Sida maintains its intellectual leadership when it comes to addressing gender conceptually and practically. The document should include clearer specifications on how to work with these issues, and draw on examples of innovative approaches from the current portfolio. Furthermore, it should be coupled to other priority areas, and demonstrate possible synergies and/or provide guidance when it comes to potential trade-offs.

Moreover, such a strategy should specify clearer goals and responsibilities (e.g. for competence development and quality assessments of contributions) than the present one, thereby

allowing for systematic and constant follow-up of its implementation.

10.4 Specific recommendation to EBA

- Consider the possibility of conducting similar studies on other Swedish priorities (i.e. environment/climate and the conflict perspective).

The present report presents findings on Sida's implementation of one of the three "thematic perspectives" for Swedish development cooperation. But in order to properly estimate the relative attention given to gender equality and women's rights, it would be necessary to compare it with Sida's handling of these other priorities (not least because it is often noted that gender integration is the one issue which receives most attention, in spite of the unevenness and shortcomings noted above).

For this reason, as well as for the purpose of assessing the attention other key issues are receiving, EBA should consider conducting similar studies of those themes (primarily conflict and environment/climate). Replication studies of that kind could also determine to what extent findings of the present report are specific to the theme of gender integration, or whether they represent a general tendency regarding how Sida attends to prioritised areas and thematic perspectives.

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11.2 Focus groups and Interviews

11.2.1 Focus groups in Sweden

11.2.1.1 Group 1: Programme officers

Ann-Sofe Andersson
Sofie Berghald
Göran Haag
Eva Smedberg
Åsa Wallton

11.2.1.2   Group 2: Heads of unit

Magnus Cedergren

Kerstin Cissi Jonsson

Erik Korsgren

Ann-Marie Oltorp

Anders Rönquist

Petra Smitmanis Dry

11.2.1.3   Group 3: Gender equality hub

The focus groups with the gender equality hub have not had a panel character to the same extent as other focus groups. This is because it is an existing function at Sida, and the team has followed the function rather than individual staff members. The focus group discussions have taken place at three of the hub's weekly meetings, attended by different people each time.

11.2.2 Interviews in Sweden

Andersson, Karin Anette, Sustainable development, Africa department, January 19, 2017.

Bobjer, Charlotte, Gender advisor, EuroLatin, November 29, 2016.

Collins Falk, Anna, Gender advisor, August 16, 2017, June 20, 2018, September 28, 2017.

Danielsson, Christina, Head of unit for Eastern Europe and Thematic support. June 18, 2018.

Eldén, Åsa, Gender advisor, January 2017, November 29, 2016.

Elmberger, Susanne, Sida Partnership Forum, June 26, 2018.

Francis, Jonathan, Unit for strategy reporting, June 13, 2018.

Gable, Susanne, Chief economist, June 18, 2018.

Haag, Göran, Programme officer, May 24, 2018.

Hulterström, Karolina, Analyst, March 21, 2017.

Irstad, Evelina, Unit for internal learning and competence, June 21, 2018.

Lindblad, Karin, Head of unit for loans and guarantees, June 13, 2018.

Lundström, Tomas, Programme officer, Myanmar, January 20, 2017.

Magnusson, Hans, Head of department for Asia and humanitarian affairs, June 29, 2018.

Mikhail, Susanne, acting Head of unit for humanitarian support, June 28, 2018.

Miranda, Carolina, Unit for internal learning and competence, June 21, 2018.

Molander, Joakim, Chief evaluation officer, November 28, 2016.

Narrowe, Elisabeth, Unit for humanitarian affairs, June 15, 2018.

Núñes Sörensen, Eva, Head of Sida's secondment programme, June 13, 2018.

Olander, Sven, Responsible for Tracs, Division for management support, June 18, 2018.

Rahm, Anna, Head of unit for contribution management, Division for management support, June 18, 2018.

Rönqvist, Anders, Head of multilateral unit, January 12, 2017.

Sharp, Cecilia, Head of INTEM department, June 15, 2018.

Smedberg, Eva, June 27, 2017.

Svedberg, Barbro, Advisor for women, peace and security, June 14, 2018.

Taarup Nordlund, Anja, Sida's helpdesk, September 6, 2017.

Tegborg, Maria, Unit for internal learning and competence, June 21, 2018.

Wallton, Åsa, Peace and security, June 14, 2018.

Zinn, Katarina, Focal point for UNDP, June 14, 2018.

Åberg, Mats, INTEM, June 14, 2018.

Öste, Pia, Focal point for UN Women, June 18, 2018.

11.2.3 Interviews and group Interviews in Myanmar (September 11–15, 2017 + later follow-up)

Hnin Phyu Htun, Ei, National programme officer, Embassy of Sweden

Lundström, Tomas, Programme officer

Stödberg, Ann, Head of development cooperation.

Tropp, Maria, Programme officer

Åkerlund, Anna, Programme officer

Armstrong, Elisabeth, Director Paung Sie Facility

Bik, Hre, 3MDG

Dellnäs, Anki, UNDP

Ginzburg, Oren, 3MDG

Gofers, Taniele, 3MDG

Ibne Farid, Tauhid, Action Aid

Ishikawa, Kaori, Deputy representative, UNFPA

Jackson, Janet E., Representative UNFPA

Lalmuani, Action Aid

Lin Htet, Saw, Action Aid

Min Htike, Myo, Programme manager, IMS/Fojo

Nyi Nyi, Thiha, 3MDG

Ocleasd, Orlen, Action Aid

Rajander, Silja, Embassy of Finland

Sin Mya, Swe, 3MDG

Truong, Thuytien, 3MDG

Tydeman, Liz, Swedish Burma Committee

Uddin Ahamad, Shihad, Action Aid

11.2.4 Interviews and group Interviews in Zambia (May 8–12, 2017 + later follow-up)

Brumér, Cecilia, Programme officer, Embassy of Sweden

Lysén, Annika, Embassy of Sweden

Macauley, Diana, Embassy of Sweden, regional team for SRHR

Mateo-Phiri, Pezo, National programme officer, Embassy of Sweden

Mwendapole Muchemwa, Audrey, National programme officer, Embassy of Sweden

Mwondela, Malala, National programme officer , Embassy of Sweden

Newa, Zoole, National programme officer, Embassy of Sweden

Sundelin, Dag, Embassy of Sweden, regional team for SRHR

Sverkén, Karin, Head of development cooperation

Wiking, David, Head of development cooperation

Chibambula, Mary S., Care

Chokwe, Chilufya, NGO Coordinating Council

Goes, Arend, SNV

Harvey, Danny, Country Director for Concern

Makashinyi, Shope, UNDP

Manda, Mandy, National Legal Aid Clinic for Women

McCrum, Clare, DFID

Mumba, Kennedy, Chief Social Welfare Officer, Ministry of Community Development

Musinga, Abi, iDE

Mwamba Banda, Emelda, NGO Coordinating Council

Mwiche, Angel, Ministry of Health

Ngulube, Emmanuel, GBV and gender advisor, USAID

Obbie, Musama, Principal planner, bilateral and multilateral support, Ministry of Community Development

Ross, Sally, Auditor General's office

Annex 1: Findings from previous evaluations

Sida's gender policies have been subject to several previous evaluations. In 2002, a first evaluation of gender mainstreaming (the Action Programme) studied how the theme had been included in the development of country strategies, and to which extent the organisation's contributions had produced changes in gender equality.[207]

The evaluation found marked differences between the strategies studied. But even as they revealed a high level of ambition with regard to the issue, the evaluators found the general absence of gender results analysis and gender equality evaluation "striking".[208] While appreciative of Sida's dialogue at policy and project level, the evaluators found this to be lacking in specificity, and called for clearer goals to be set.[209] Finally, the inclusion of gender equality goals could visibly improve interventions. Conversely, even if interventions lacking such goals could have a positive effect on the situation for women, they were as likely to miss opportunities in this regard and fail to address more fundamental aspects of gender relations.[210]

In sum, the 2002 evaluation found that Sida's Action Programme for gender equality had raised the visibility of the theme at Sida, but

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[207.] Mikkelsen, Birtha, Ted Freeman and Bonnie Keller et al. 2002, "Mainstreaming Gender Equality: Sida's support for the promotion of gender equality in partner countries". Sida evaluation 02/01, p. v.

[208.] Ibid., p. 18. The evaluation stated that "while gender analysis in the sense of a detailed situation analysis of the conditions of women and girls in relation to those of men and boys has been available during the country strategy process in each country, it is not clear that this gender analysis has informed the process in a material way. The very multi-dimensional nature of country strategy documents may limit the extent that any one dimension, no matter how important, is made explicit in the document itself … operational constraints and competing demands for space and attention from other goals and priorities have limited the impact of gender analysis on the final country strategy documents".

[209.] Ibid., p. 24f.

[210.] Ibid., p. 34f.

it was more sceptical as to whether the ambitions for mainstreaming had been achieved. While they found staff commitment to the issue as well as stakeholders' capacity to be high, the evaluators also noted that: "Rather than a coherent and integrated mainstreaming process, most interventions exhibited the presence of only a few mainstreaming elements, and in general showed only embryonic evidence of working with gender mainstreaming processes." [211] Here, the evaluators stressed the fundamental role of gender analysis in the process, and recommended Sida to enhance gender training, monitoring and internal learning.[212] They also called for a clear definition of the gender equality goal, and for the establishment of minimum requirements for mainstreaming.[213]

Subsequently, an evaluation performed in 2010 painted a generally positive view of Sida's gender-related work, and saw some advances in relation to the (2002) evaluation:

> *The gender policy is effective and is reflected in country programmes, although not necessarily in all projects/programmes. Gender analysis is generally carried out at the national level and tends to inform planning and implementation to some extent, but has less in influence on programme choices.[214]*

The 2010 evaluation noted that several challenges remained. Apart from the fact that gender considerations were not included in all programmes or projects, the evaluation found problems associated with a lack of indicators and mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring, which limited learning around the issue. Furthermore, the treatment of gender was substantially better at the "front-end" of an intervention, according to the evaluators, than at the stage of monitoring, evaluation and possible feedback. In this

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[211.] Mikkelsen et al. 2002, op. cit.: xii.

[212.] Ibid.

[213.] Ibid., p. xiv f.

[214.] Byron, Gabriela, Charlotta Örnemark et al. 2010. "Gender Equality in Swedish Development Cooperation". Sida Evaluation 2010: 1.

regard, the absence of indicators relating to more fundamental gender relations was noted.[215]

The authors also noted that the lack of staff resources hampered implementation. In a rather damning indictment of Sida's approach, they stated that "all staff are expected to address [gender issues] in their programmes; and few have the time or advanced expertise to do so" (Byron et al. 2010:13). Even though the evaluation did not note the same problems with gender analysis as the previous one had seen, the evaluators also found country strategies to be wanting in this respect.[216] Likewise, they emphasised the need for a "clear gender strategy" attached to each country programme.[217]

The contributions examined in depth revealed positive results on gender equality, but assessment was hampered by the lack of gender indicators.[218] In general, the evaluators found that the inclusion of gender depended much on the incentives and interest of individual staff members, and on the weight given to the theme by their superiors. At the implementation stage, contextual factors, and in particular the position of local partners, were shown to be of importance.

Similar points have been raised in two thematic evaluations of gender equality in Sida's work. While an evaluation of gender approaches in agricultural programmes found a number of positive benefits for women, it also noted that Sida's work had fallen short of an effective mainstreaming perspective:[219] "Equity does not

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[215.] Ibid., p. 13f.

[216.] Of one strategy, it noted, for instance, that it "contained only scattered references to women and gender equality, and included gender as a theme for dialogue, without specifying how this was to take place". Ibid., p. 44.

[217.] Ibid., p. 14.

[218.] Ibid., p. 67ff.

[219.] Farnworth, Cathy Rozel. 2010. "Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes: A Study of Sida-supported Programmes". (Sida Evaluation 2010:3), p. 15. The evaluation noted the following: "Whilst all programmes initiated activities directed to involving women, in no programme was gender mainstreamed across all components. In no programme did gender equity form a leading goal, and no programme prepared a coherent gender mainstreaming strategy aimed at implementing gender equity as a means of achieving better

mean that people are treated equally, rather, it suggests that special location-specific mechanisms need to be devised to help overcome historic gender disadvantage". [220] Hence, failing to adapt a mainstreaming perspective will make such transformative approaches less likely, and that will have negative effects on specific and general development goals.

Similarly, even as a recent evaluation of Sida's efforts to use dialogue tools to promote gender equality as positive towards their results and effectiveness, it also notes that such activities need to be coordinated and combined with other interventions.[221] Moreover, the evaluation contained a number of recommendations to enhance Sida's work in this regard. The authors addressed, for example, the absence of methods for follow-up, guidance from Sida headquarters, staff capacity for dialogue in general and on gender issues in particular, and the lack of clear dialogue plans.[222]

In sum, then, a number of themes keep recurring in the evaluations. While generally appreciative of Sida's ambitions and commitment to the theme, they indicate shortcomings both in relation to support offered to staff officers, mechanisms for analysis and follow-up, and with regard to specifying an ambition that addresses the fundamental reasons for persistent gender inequality. These are themes that have been discussed in the present evaluation as well.

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agricultural outcomes."

[220.] Ibid., p. 15.

[221.] Peebles, Dana, Jonas Lövkrona, and Nadine Jubb. 2015. "Evaluation of Policy Dialogue as an instrument: the case of Gender Equality". (Sida Evaluation 2015:1), p. 69.

[222.] Ibid., p. 16ff.

Annex 2: Results from the multivariate analysis

Simply counting the frequency with which gender analysis is present in contributions may lead to erroneous conclusions, as it may obscure effects of hidden or unobserved variables. For instance, if samples contain an uneven amount of contributions from different departments, and if there are systematic differences regarding to which extent gender analyses are performed in different departments, then one may confound an effect from responsible unit for a temporal effect (i.e. from different samples).

In order to separate different effects in this regard, a multivariate regression has been performed. This allows for the determination of the relative effects of particular explanatory variables. More specifically, due to the binary nature of the dependent variables (i.e. the existence of elements of a gender analysis or not), binary logistic regressions are calculated, which allows for an estimation of how the presence of a particular dependent variable affects the probability of a gender analysis being performed.

A number of possible explanatory variables are included: the year in which the contribution began; the amount of funds agreed in the contribution; dummy variables for Sida's different departments; whether Sida's partner for a contribution was a Swedish entity or not; whether the contribution belonged to the humanitarian or the productive/non-social sectors or not; and whether the contribution came from before or after the Plan came into force. These variables could all be hypothesised to affect the likelihood of a gender analysis being performed (again, it should be remembered that the criteria for what counts as a gender analysis are very generous).

The following tables present results of these regressions for whether gender is mentioned in the proposals of partners and in Sida's appraisals, and whether the same documents contain elements of a gender analysis.

Table 1: Mention of gender in proposals.

	B	S.E.	Significance	Exp. (B)
Amount of contribution	,000	,000	,317	1,000
Swedish partner?	-,674	,767	,379	,509
Humanitarian sector	19,565	8859,580	,998	314114769,452
Productive sector	-,847	,759	,265	,429
Afra	1,600	1,423	,261	4,955
HumAsia	1,079	1,573	,493	2,941
EuroLatin	1,010	1,426	,479	2,746
INTEM	1,145	1,481	,440	3,142
Partner	,972	1,651	,556	2,643
Year	,060	,175	,734	1,061
After Plan	1,828	1,081	,091+	6,220
Constant	-120,487	352,675	,733	,000
Pseudo R2 (Nagelkerke)	.274			

(+) = significant at the .90 level.

As is seen in *Table 1*, whether a proposal was prepared after the Plan came into effect made a difference on the probability of containing references to the term gender, although at a weak level of significance (.90 per cent probability). None of the other variables had any detectable effect on this probability.

No such effect was visible in the appraisals, however. None of the above variables had any detectable effect on whether an appraisal contained references to gender or not (maybe because of the near-ubiquity of such references in Sida documents). Likewise, there was no significant effect from any of the above variables on whether the proposal contained elements of a gender analysis or not.

However, as *Table 2* demonstrates, when it comes to gender analyses being present in Sida's appraisals, there is indeed a statistically significant effect from the Plan on the probability of inclusion in Sida's appraisals. There are also effects from a contribution undertaken at the EuroLatin department or, slightly less significant, at the Africa one. But none of those effects reach conventional levels of statistical significance. They just barely miss

the .90 limit of probability, which constitutes a low threshold. Many scholars would not even accept this limit, but would claim .95 as a lower level. That would make the effect from the Plan statistically insignificant.

Table 2: Presence of elements of gender analysis in Sida's appraisals.

	B	S.E.	Significance	Exp. (B)
Amount of contribution	,000	,000	,153	1,000
Swedish partner?	-,245	,514	,634	,783
Humanitarian sector	-,505	,683	,460	,604
Productive sector	-,431	,501	,389	,650
Afra	1,888	1,210	,119	6,609
HumAsia	1,644	1,224	,179	5,177
EuroLatin	2,027	1,240	,102	7,590
INTEM	1,370	1,268	,280	3,935
Partner	1,264	1,409	,370	3,538
Year	-,150	,140	,285	,861
After Plan	1,458	790	,065+	4,295
Constant	299,545	282,137	,288	1,232E+130
Pseudo R2 (Nagelkerke)	.124			

(+) = significant at the .90 level.

Annex 3: Gender in Swedish cooperation strategies

During the first phase of evaluation, the team studied ten cooperation strategies that had been randomly selected among the ones operational prior to the implementation of the Plan.

The examination showed a fragmentary pattern. No strategy completely lacked attention to gender equality and women's rights, and in several strategies these themes featured prominently. But there were also considerable differences as to how the theme was addressed. In part, these differences may stem from the different formats used for strategies, but they also seem to reflect a relatively flexible, or loose, approach to gender integration.

Juxtaposing these documents with a batch of eleven strategies that have come into force since June 2016 reveals some variation.[223] Among the latter documents, gender is generally included among the objectives. All but one introduce gender as a subtheme within other goal areas (thematic sectors); only one (Iraq 2017–2021) gives the theme status as a separate goal area. In the rest, gender and women's rights are always mentioned in the democracy and human rights sector, and often also in the sectors of Peace and Security, and Health – in those cases where these sectors are included in the strategy. But specific goals relating to gender equality and women's rights are less common in the productive and, particularly, the environmental sectors, where several strategies fail to set such objectives (e.g. Regional Asia 2016–2021; Regional Sub-Saharan Africa 2016–2021; Mali 2016–2020). Even so, five out of nine strategies specify goals relating to gender and women's rights in all sectors, something that was not the case in the previous phase. Only

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[223]. I.e. the strategies for Africa South of Sahara (Regional), Asia (Regional), Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Iraq, Mali, and Zimbabwe. The time delay was introduced to ensure that Sida's input to these policies would have dated from after the Plan came into force. (Admittedly, in some cases, Sida's input was presented in mid-January 2016, but the team has nevertheless chosen to include those strategies.)

one of the strategies considered (Uganda 2014–2018) stipulated such goals for all sectors.

The latest batch of strategies shows an increased attention to gender in their formulations of sectors and goals. Whereas only 21 per cent of goals formulated at the sector level contained references to gender or women's rights in the first phase, the figure has risen to 34 per cent in recent strategies. Similarly, whereas a quarter (25 per cent) of the concrete goals within each sector included such references in the previous set, over a third (36 per cent) did so among the latter ones. Those figures are not trivial. Even as gender and women's rights are almost always mentioned in the discussions under each sector, the sector goals are important for guiding strategic discussions and reporting.[224]

When it comes to gender analysis, however, the short format of all new strategies means that any analysis of this kind is by necessity sketchy. Even so, there is some variation between the strategies in the sample. At one end of the scale is one strategy in which such an analysis is completely absent (Cuba 2016–2020). This is an exception, however, as is another strategy that only mentions women's situation as part of enumerations of affected groups (Colombia 2016–2020). It is more common that cooperation strategies provide some particular information on the situation of women, at least in certain areas (e.g. Bolivia 2016–2020, Zimbabwe 2017–2021, and Regional Sub-Saharan Africa 2016–2021).

Finally, there are strategies that contain more extensive discussions on the situation for women in different areas (Guatemala 2016–2020, Iraq 2017–2021), sometimes including men's roles in the analysis as well, even if only in the briefest of terms (Guatemala 2016–2020). No document, however, contains a

[224.] However, the above figures have to be seen in a long-term perspective. It is notable that none of the pre-2011 strategies in the sample (there are four) included a reference to gender or women's rights in the sector formulations, and that only one specified sector goals related to these themes. If earlier strategies are discounted, the remaining strategies from the period 2012–2015 contain references to gender and women's rights in 28 per cent of the sector formulations, and in 31.4 per cent of the specified sector goals. This means that the increase in recent strategies seems more in line with longer-term trends, rather than being the effect of a discrete attempt to increase its presence.

more profound, separate and specific gender analysis. In that respect, it is difficult to discern any difference compared to the situation in the previous sample of strategies.

Interestingly, there is considerably less variation among strategies when it comes to methods and concrete actions to be taken. In this regard, gender issues are much more present in the new sample of strategies than in the previous one. Whereas the previous group exhibited great variation in this regard, the new strategies uniformly state that women's rights and gender equality shall be given a prominent place in Swedish development cooperation. Indeed, most new strategies use the same formulations, making references to the rights perspective, and to the need to integrate different priorities, and including the ubiquitous sentence: "Gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls are both goals in themselves and a prerequisite and a means for achieving sustainable global development."

The result of using such a standard statement, however, is that while the strategies are remarkably consistent in the high degree of attention and importance that they confer to women's rights and gender equality, this carbon-copy approach means that such statements do not always appear to be connected to the situation in the country as presented in the contextual analysis. Discussions on methods and measures are mainly declarations of intent in relation to different groups, among which women and girls are but two. Only some of the strategies offer more elaborate, if still brief, discussions containing more innovative approaches, such as the ones for Iraq (2017–2021) and Guatemala (2016–2020), which both specify that men and boys are potentially important agents of change for gender equality.

In sum, positive changes are apparent in the cooperation strategies over time when it comes to themes related to gender and women's rights and with regard to methods. In the latter case, it is not clear, however, that these will improve Sida's work with gender equality. While one may argue that the strategies' formulations clearly indicate the importance of those themes, there is little evidence that the wording is derived from a gender analysis. Furthermore, several statements that do address the themes of

women's rights and gender analysis contain more or less identical formulations, whose connection to the contextual analysis is often less than evident.

Annex 4: Selection of sources and interpretation of results

The present report is a mixed-method study. It contains elements of text analysis, statistical analysis, and different forms of focus groups and interviews. Moreover, by relating its results to findings in previous evaluations of the same theme, it has elements of a metastudy. These different sources and approaches are combined for cross-validation and in order to provide a comprehensive perspective on gender integration at Sida.

With regard to the selection of exact sources, different principles have been followed. Members of the focus groups for staff officers and heads of unit were randomly selected from their respective groups. For the gender network, a principle of self-selection was employed, however, as individuals chose whether to participate or not in the focus group discussions that were held during regular group meetings.

The selection of field study countries was done with reference to several variables. One important consideration was to find two countries that would maximise the variation on a number of potentially key background variables (e.g. region, history of Sida engagement, main sector). The fact that findings are similar in the selected countries, Myanmar and Zambia, despite these differences, indicates that they indeed reflect a general situation at Sida.

It should also be noted that Sida was involved in the selection of the two field study countries. The agency provided comments on the potential pool from which Myanmar and Zambia were drawn, and it also had a say in the final selection, which ultimately depended on the interest and availability of local Sida staff. The team does not see this as a problem, however, as the aim was not to evaluate these country programmes themselves, but rather to obtain examples of how Sida works with issues related to gender issues and women's rights in different settings.

Similarly, Sida staff were instrumental in suggesting interviewees in each field study case, both among partners and among embassy staff. The team tried to ascertain that it would meet with a variety of partners in terms of programme size, length of cooperation with Sida, sector, and likelihood of prioritising gender issues, but was obviously highly dependent on Sida for this information. This may have introduced a positive bias in the study, something the reader should be aware of.

Sida also contributed extensively to the selection of interviewees in Stockholm. It suggested a range of staff members to be interviewed, adding to the ones already selected by the team. Sida's contribution in this regard was valuable due to the agency's insider knowledge it has about who is able to contribute what information. The team does not believe this has posed a major problem for the impartiality of the evaluation, as the interviews were subsequently corroborated by juxtaposing their statements with other data sources.

For the text analysis of Sida's contribution documents and strategy inputs and reporting, the documents (contributions, countries/regions) chosen were selected randomly. The exceptions relate to the analysis of certain strategies (see separate annex) and evaluations (see under 8.2), when the entire population was used, due to its small size. For contributions, the team drew random samples based on lists of relevant projects/programmes and a random number calculator from the internet. As initial selections included several contributions that were not proper development projects/programmes, complementary selection of replacement contributions were drawn in order to ensure that the units were comparable.

By selecting 3 times 50 contributions, the team obtained data on close to 150 contributions (with certain exclusions, primarily due to unavailable data). It is a relatively small number for statistical analysis. But it is fully possible to perform comparisons and regressions on such figures, even though the small sample size makes it difficult to pick up very minor changes. The reader should be aware of this.

In all, the evaluation has accessed a very large material. While it is difficult to completely capture such a broad theme as Sida's work with gender integration, the team feels confident that its approach, and the fact that different sources generally show the same results and that they support rather than contradict each other, indicates a high reliability of its findings — notwithstanding the positive bias that may have been present in several sources due to Sida's involvement in their selection and the relatively small focus groups. The combination of sources should ensure that the arguments carry a high degree of validity, that they address the issues at hand, and that they are not overly influenced by individual cases, staff members or contributions.

That said, however, it is important to remember that there are most likely a number of exceptions to the picture presented, in the form of units or offices that perform better or worse than Sida in general. Yet, the assignment has been to perform a study of how Sida works with gender integration and women's rights in general. That has forced the team to place its discussion at a level of abstraction that does not allow any discussion of exceptions and special cases. Even so, this picture can hopefully serve as a standard against which future studies of individual cases can be measured.

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