

Preparations prior to decision on Swedish multi-bi financing

About one third of Sweden's aid through multilateral organizations is of the multi-bi type. Multi-bi aid is an increasing aid modality which has proven some weaknesses. For example the modality's efficiency and relevance have been questioned. The evaluation identifies areas where there is potential to improve and leaves recommendations for improvement and it aims at contributing to increased learning within affected areas of the Foreign Service.

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Two of the twelve initiatives examined deemed to be good

High turnover of staff and inadequate procedures for documentation make it more difficult to obtain continuity

The weaknesses and problems the evaluation has noted primarily refer to the multi-specific and general procedures of the missions abroad for preparing and deciding on initiatives. The evaluation focuses on the initiatives in Mozambique and Cambodia during the period 2003-2011, but it may also be of more general significance.

The assessment is provided in three levels: good, acceptable and non-acceptable. It has been based on criteria for choosing the focus of aid, implementers and volumes of aid. For the majority of initiatives, the quality of preparations at a general level deemed to be acceptable. The overall quality of the preparations in two of the twelve initiatives examined deemed to be good.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The analysis concludes in thirteen points that indicate shortcomings in both the assumptions provided for good assessment and the quality of these assessments as such.

The evaluation indicates deficiencies in both conditions required to make good assessments as well as in the quality of the assessments as such.

For example when hiring expertise, effectiveness and difficulties in prior assessment of how cost effective a programme is. The assessment of sustainability is often arbitrary.

A high turnover of staff at the embassies coupled with inadequate procedures for documentation and transfer of personnel rotation make it more difficult to get continuity in the work.

UN:s own level of funding programmes is often as low as 20 %. This results in UN engage much time in approaching other parties to secure financing while neither UN, Sweden nor other potential financiers know about whether or not the programme can be implemented.

Strategies for phasing are throughout missing, although several of the programmes have focused on finding partners at various levels in the partner country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Six recommendations are submitted on the basis of the analysis. Collectively, these may lead to an increase in the quality of both proactive preparation and of more traditional assessments of programmes and proposed projects. The recommendations are:

- I The FMA and SIDA should work towards increasing the MOs' own levels of funding of programmes and proposed projects, or funding being guaranteed in advance.
- II The MFA should clarify for the missions abroad and SIDA that the requirement for quality assurance takes priority over decisions on country frameworks and special initiatives.
- III SIDA should clarify the guidelines for documentation and archiving at the missions abroad in consultation with the units affected within the MFA, review the forms of foreign posting and also review the varieties of handovers when replacing personnel, in consultation with the missions abroad.
- IV The Government and SIDA should ensure that the necessary resources are made available to enable the recruitment of correct and adequate competence at the missions abroad, so that these can develop the quality of proactive preparation in cooperation with SIDA.
- V In the guidelines for assessment work, SIDA should describe in greater detail how the assessment of proposals should be carried out in practice so that better quality can be achieved.
- VI SIDA should instruct missions abroad to establish a date by which programme proposals should be received and for missions abroad to clarify to external stakeholders at the same time what formal requirements there are for proposals submitted and against which criteria the proposals will be assessed.

SOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

This SADEV Evaluation Brief is based on the report *Sveriges samarbetsstrategi med Serbien 2009 - 2012 Styrning och Resultat*, SADEV Report 2011:2. This and other SADEV publications are available at www.sadev.se.