

Review of Sida's Field Vision

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Sida Evaluation 06/21

Department for Latin America

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1. Executive Summary

This review is commissioned by Sida's Field Unit. The purpose is to assess the current status of the field vision, based on the work initiated in 1999 and formally decided on in July 2004. The review should recommend how to further improve Sidas field orientation.

The review is based on interviews at Sida HQ, at four embassies, phone interviews with managers in the field and questionnaires for the field and HQ.

Several earlier studies and reports exist – the internal audit report from December 2004 and the AFRA capacity study were particularly useful. These raise issues on how to widen the field orientation, on the steering processes, on the use of development cooperation strategies in a harmonized setting.

The capacity study tried to find a rational base for allocating resources to the field organization. It did not succeed.

Only some 30–35% of all development cooperation through Sida is covered by decentralized decision making by fully delegated embassies but the number of decisions and the amounts committed by these embassies are growing. However, there are still many activities that could be more field oriented. A defined objective for what Sida wants to achieve in expanding the vision is required.

The present study focuses on the role and steering mechanisms of the field vision, the resource issue, the impact of the Paris declaration and the PDG for the field orientation.

There is still no uniform perception of the field vision at Sida. The documents are not familiar to all Sida staff. The field refers to the need for a changed mindset within the organization as a whole.

Roles have changed over the years – basically in accordance with decision 87/04. There is still a discussion of the tasks of the regional departments when all the basic functions are delegated to the field. The role of regional departments when Joint Assistance Strategies (JAS) are more common will have to change. The role of sector departments is quite clear. But the field complains about reduced support from sector departments and that the sequencing of this support is a problem. Sector departments (SD) on the other hand have an increasing workload. The normative role of SDs vis a vis the field is sometimes in competition with its advisory role. Some embassies argue for a stronger commitment from SDs. Country-context and sector-specific competence is judged as important. The issue is raised of how to balance country and sector competence in a decentralized organization. SDs see little risk of diluting sector competence through decentralized decision making.

Many people at HQ and the field are dissatisfied with the present operational planning system – especially the resource issue. The mechanism for allocation of short term resource reinforcement is viewed as a lot of work, hardly worth while. Nobody questions the need for a mechanism for approval of the programme portfolio and delegation of decision-making powers through the country plan; however, a more flexible approach for supplying resources is requested by the field. The country-plan needs to be a living document as a mechanism of follow up of decisions and commitments made.

To implement the Paris declaration embassies will have to use their resources differently. The new agenda requires that more time is spent on harmonization, which will give few immediate results. There is a feeling that expectations from HQ on the field are too high and unrealistic; HQ finds it hard to understand the difficulties of putting harmonization into effect. There are also very wide variations between different countries. There is a need within Sida to learn from its own experiences as well as from other donors e.g. the handling of budget support in a harmonized setting. For an efficient approach to JAS processes there is a need for rethinking how these should be organized. A clear coordination between Sida and MFA is required and the guidelines for the cooperation strategy work may need revision.

The staff at delegated embassies has to be highly qualified and expectations on them will be higher as harmonization progresses. Competence development for both Swedish and NPO staff needs to be improved and adapted to new demands. NPOs play a key role usually acting with full responsibilities as program officers. The synergies between Swedish and local knowledge could be further developed. Sida needs to develop new models for more flexible postings to the embassies. Future aid arrangements will demand new competencies, such as more advanced dialogue abilities.

There is no attempt here to assess effectiveness of the field vision. This has not been possible. The overall view is that quality of aid has improved but at an increased cost. The partner countries have appreciated the decentralized working of Sweden. It facilitates cooperation and dialogue. The Europe department has its own approach to the field orientation. They mention savings of administrative resources as important.

Sida has different approaches to using regional offices in the field: on the one hand the HIV/AIDS secretariat in Lusaka, on the other, individuals with specialized tasks. There is a need to review how, when and where a regional approach will be more efficient than the bilateral.

Further work with the vision will, on the one hand be to widen the field orientation to new areas like regional programs, humanitarian aid etc, and on the other, how the harmonization demands of the Paris declaration will influence the way the field is organized. There is also a need to take into account how the reduced number of countries supported by Sweden through concentration, as well as how the more common use of harmonized delegated cooperation, will influence the future use of resources.

Some key recommendations of the report:

- The Field Vision (FV) should be better known by everyone
- The FV needs to be revitalized and cover other areas than the country directed regional budget, such as humanitarian, research and regional programs
- The FV should be seen as a way of thinking, a mindset that needs to permeate the whole organization, an important task for Sida management.
- The need for country-specific knowledge in different parts of Sida has to be further analyzed by sector and regional departments. The issue should be brought up in a future organizational review of Sida.
- Heads of Development cooperation of non delegated embassies often have the same responsibility, informally, as their colleagues at fully delegated embassies. This creates uncertainty – both for him/her and for HQ. Sida should as soon as possible give these offices full delegation.
- The regional approach to field orientation needs further study; could the HIV/aids secretariat in Lusaka be a model? The principles for creating and maintaining regional posts in various areas should again be looked into. Regionalization of sector competence or creation of regional resource centers are other areas for further study.
- The operational planning system does not meet the requirements of an efficient resource allocation mechanism to the field. New principles to meet the needs of the field have to be developed. Transparent and explicit principles of allocating staff to the field are required. The idea of the flexible field, making a mix of short and long term contracts in the field possible, has to be revitalized. Measures have to be initiated to make that possible. Personnel and recruitment policies may need revision to manage this aspect.
- NPO s constitutes 40% of staffing in the field. Because of their key role further work is needed on roles, responsibilities, competence development and career possibilities. The field and HQ have to work together in a formalized way on these issues.

- The Paris declaration. There is a need to develop principles for how Sweden shall play its role in highly decentralized programming of Joint Assistance Strategies, JAS. The gap between HQ and the field in understanding of the Paris declaration has to be eliminated.
- The experience of the field organization is not properly used, feed back between management in the field and HQ has to improve and new mechanisms created.
- There is a need for a new mechanism in Sida to follow and guide the further implementation of Sida's field orientation.

Section 15 of the report gives a summary of lessons learned, conclusions and detailed recommendations and may be read as a direct complement to this executive summary.

2. Background and Purpose of the Study

This review was commissioned by the Sida Field Unit (FU) based on a task given by the Director General's decision 87/04 July 2004. This decision is the normative document of how the field vision should be implemented and specifies a number of tasks to different actors in Sida. One of them was: "That FU by late 2005 present a report with a few cases on the effects and experiences of working according to the framework on roles and division of work". In the ToR dated 21 March 2006 it is mentioned that "FU has in consultation with UTV expanded the task somewhat and wants to cover several aspects of the field vision as described below". (See the ToR – appendix 1). As a specific context it also mentions Sweden's policy for global development and the Paris declaration, being "recent changes" not fully realized at the time of this decision referred to above.

Further: The review will:

- “(1) describe the changes brought about by the Field Vision regarding roles and responsibilities, regarding modes and areas of decision-making and implementation, and regarding kind of tasks and volumes of work between Sida-Stockholm and embassies and within Sida-S;
- (2) analyse the consequences of those changes and assess them in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, intended and unintended effects and the Field Vision's relevance in relation to the on-going transformation of development co-operation in general; and
- (3) present recommendations for further improving implementation of Sida's field orientation.” (ToR p 1.)

While approaching the subject I felt it would be relevant to go back to the original statement on the FV as mentioned in the mission to the FV-project in 2002:

Quote” Sida will accordingly be an organization *where a strong field, in terms of resources, decision making powers and access to international communication and a correspondingly specialized home office will make possible a deeper and wider dialogue a greater degree of partnership, and higher quality in programme of development cooperation.*

Sida will have *more staff in the field* and *more staff at headquarters will work to support the field.* Increasingly *experience gained in the field will be a requirement in the careers of Sida employees.* The number of *locally recruited programme officers will grow* and they will have postings at headquarters for training....” “the field will be active in the preparation of new policies, methods and regulations”.....” HRD ... more will be used to strengthen the field.”¹

¹ Action program for FV, 2002, italics added.

Since the implementation of the vision is an ongoing process, a number of studies have been made, reports written and initiatives taken. Some are well known to the whole organisation and some not. Where relevant, they are referred to here.

Well aware of the present fashion of not using the term, for purpose of simplicity and convenience I will anyway refer to the embassies and section offices as “the field”. “Field vision” and “field orientation” will be used as synonyms.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the field vision, how to proceed in the future, new venues of action etc. This means that besides looking at everything written – which is quite a lot it was also necessary to collect primary data through interviews and questionnaires. Thus 24 people have been interviewed at Sida HQ and 3 at MFA – mainly heads of department or heads of division. Questionnaires have been distributed to the field offices (65) and to HQ (60). Furthermore the embassies of Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia and Laos have been visited. Cambodia had to decline due to other urgent tasks. Ambassadors, heads of DCS, Swedish and local staff were interviewed. Telephone interviews were conducted with heads of DCS (equivalent) in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Tanzania, South Africa, Cambodia and Moldavia. Interviews were also held with the heads of DCS in Serbia and Tajikistan. Questionnaires to embassies and HQ are appended as appendix 2 and 3. The response rate was less than 50%, (less for HQ than embassies). Since so much other information is available this should not be seen as a major issue.

As far as is useful, I will comment on the field and HQ responses separately. By necessity questions and answers are of qualitative nature which makes it slightly difficult to analyze overall pictures from the various sources. At times the discussion could tend to be anecdotal. The text below thus reflects what has been forwarded to me in different forms within the context of questions that this review was supposed to answer (sections 7–13). My own conclusions and recommendations are in section 14 and 15 of the report. Sections 2–6 are introductory.

4. Earlier Studies and Analyses

Lots of time and thinking has been put into the process of field orientation. A wealth of studies and basic documentation is available – particularly the studies and memoranda produced during the field vision project work and the further method development work carried out by in particular sector departments. The scope for new knowledge and originality is thus a bit limited. I would refer particularly to the excellent internal audit no 7/2004² published in December 2004. Data collection was carried out between March and May 2004, thus too early to be incorporated in the decision 87/04 of July 2004. The audit study refers to a number of others – both internal and external – of interest to the present study. This relates particularly to the “steering tools” for Sida vis á vis the field organization. It also discusses the issue of roles and responsibilities and touches upon issues of Sida’s present and possible future organization.

The purpose of the audit 7/2004 study was to:

² Holmgren, Svensson: Fältvisionens konsekvenser för styrningen av Sida, dec 2004

- Describe and analyze the implementation of the field vision at Sida
- To analyze and assess the consequences of the field vision for the steering within Sida and
- Give recommendations on measures to improve Sida's internal steering against the backdrop of the implementation of the field vision.

Some of the major conclusions were:

- Sida should analyse and decide on the implications of an increased field orientation for part of Sidas operations that are not in the implementation program for the 2002–04 period
- Sida should also analyze and assess the costs related to the field vision implementation and use the experiences gathered for future processes of change
- Sida should produce statistical data and make analyses regarding the project portfolio, manning embassies and other administrative resources and use these in future planning processes.
- Sida should against the background of decentralization carry out a survey of the steering processes. The work with operation planning and country plans should be reviewed with the purpose to simplify and create more uniformity. The internal steering should be developed through clear connections with Sidas various organizational levels.
- The content and approach of the cooperation strategies are also questioned against the background of ownership of partner countries and PRS as point of departure. The auditors suggest the strategy in its current form be abolished
- Sida should define what quality and quality assurance means within Sida and create a consistent system for quality assurance corresponding to the requirements of a decentralized result-based organization
- Sida should review and develop the routines for personnel changes, particularly in the field. The introduction training should be reviewed and be better adapted to the needs arising from the implementation of the field vision. Sida should further develop the systems for transfer of competence between staff taking into account the conclusions of Sidas learning project.
- Sida should initiate an analysis of NPOs competence and competence development. Thereafter different forms of learning should be implemented e g locally or regionally and be kept together by Sida HQ
- Sida should continue the field orientation of its activities. Sida should in that connection map out the need for changes of Sidas organization at HQ. Within such a review the following areas should be covered:
 1. Responsibilities and roles between regional departments and field offices
 2. Develop the roles of sector departments as advisors and specialists
 3. Develop the role and competence to demand missions/tasks from Sida
 4. Analyze the consequences of increased field orientation to SEKA, SAREC and MULTI

These are the main remarks by the internal audit. It was also pointed out, on the subject of country plans and country strategies, that country plans need to be replaced by a rolling annual planning system.

The Sida management response in May 2005 to the audit covers the areas of expanding the vision to a wider coverage of the bilateral cooperation, (SEKA, SAREC and MULTI) on the cost of the delega-

tion, on making the operational planning process simpler and clearer, on quality assurance, on the implications for recruitment and capacity development of the staff, and on NPOs. Finally the importance of reviewing aspects of the organization of Sida HQ is mentioned. In conclusion, without going into too much detail, many of the areas pinpointed by the auditors have been taken up for further development.³

Another key study is the “Capacity study of Sida’s field organization in Africa” published in October 2004. In a memo by AFRA December 2004 a number of conclusions were drawn and recommendations made on sharpening the tools for manning the field. The purpose the study was to look into whether there could be standard criteria for how to dimension a field office. No particular action or follow up has been taken. Other regional departments have not, as suggested by AFRA carried out similar exercises. As a matter of fact in the above mentioned management response, reference was made to this study and its possible duplication in the other regions. The reasons given by other regional departments (RD) are that the study was not sufficiently conclusive, that it was not applicable to other regions, and that it had anyway been criticized by AFRA itself.

Nevertheless the basic assumptions for undertaking this study are still sound and it should be possible to develop and refine the standard manning structure as outlined by the FV project. It has been said that the principles for allocating resources to the field are neither explicit nor transparent.

The conclusions of the capacity study are based on the standard model for staffing established during the FV project related to required competencies (sector, project cycle management, analytical, controller etc) and size of the programs. Some countries are considered overstaffed other understaffed. The study also raised and tried to understand how and why and by whom regional field operations are established by Sida. On the regional staff or function the following is said:

“There are a number of unclear issues regarding the concept of regional posts. These relate to fundamental aspects, making it practically impossible to assess the need for regional positions and relevance of existing ones”. Further: “Based on our conclusions above, we recommend that Sida first defines the exact need that regional posts should satisfy and then defines the exact duties and areas of work of regional officers”⁴

Thus some of the issues outlined in my terms of reference have then already been looked into. However these studies are now almost two years old. I have seen as my task, to update the situation as of spring 2006. Still, some of the basic conclusions are still very relevant and should be followed up. I will return to these issues later in this report.

5. Some Statistics

Last year, 2005, total disbursement through Sida for international development cooperation stood at 13,829 billion SEK. Out of this 2,557 or 18,4% was for global cooperation, the balance for country or regionally directed cooperation. Disbursement from the regional budget lines (countries and regional cooperation) for the four regions amounted to 8,140 billion SEK (59% of total). Cooperation with countries only amounts to 6,921 billion SEK or 50% of the total. Of the country directed cooperation only the following shares represent aid to countries with fully delegated embassies:

³ Unmarked Memo Sida 2005-05-27

⁴ Capacity study p 3

Africa	64% ⁵
Asia	42%
Latin America	69%
Europe	0%

The following table gives the main disbursement indicators of interest for Sidas field orientation:

<i>Aid delivery through Sida during 2005</i>	<i>(disbursements SEK Billion)</i>	<i>%</i>
Total disbursement through Sida	13,829	
Global (not country or regional oriented) ⁶	1,463	10,6
Regional (all 4 regions)	1,216	8,8
Country directed (within country allocation) ⁷	6,921	50,0
NGOs	1,190	8,6
Humanitarian and conflict	1,876	13,6
Research	847	6,1
Others (Credits and Information)	306	2,2

This shows that only 30–35% of the total bilateral program through Sida is the responsibility of fully delegated embassies. Taking into account partly delegated embassies (where responsibilities for implementation rests with the field) increases the percentage slightly but not substantially. Thus so far the share of Sidas disbursements handled by delegated embassies is still low.

Looking at the *number of decisions taken* and the *total amounts in SEK of commitments through decisions* and agreements distributed between Sida as a whole and the three regions where there is delegation to the field for the two years 2004 and 2005 gives the following: for Africa, Asia and Latin America 60% for the 2004, and for 2005 54% of all country directed decisions were taken by the fully delegated field. The size of decisions in money terms is not taken into account.

The corresponding measure in commitment terms does not show any clear trend. Delegation of authority is too recent to draw any long term conclusions and project/program size differ. During the last two years decisions taken by the delegated field in money terms (financial commitments) amounts to roughly 50% of all decision taken for the respective regions from the regional allocation.

What is the Potential for Further Field Orientation?

The share of Sidas total bilateral work to be covered by the field operations could in theory be; *total disbursements, minus Global cooperation minus Support to Swedish NGOs and minus most support to Humanitarian and conflict resolution.*

This calculation assumes that all field-offices are counted, irrespective of delegation level. This raises the above mentioned figure of 30–35% of disbursement relating to delegated field to a total of around 40–45% of disbursements and assumes that partly delegated embassies will be fully delegated.

Some of the country directed cooperation is managed directly from HQ and is not part of a field orientation. Still it would be possible to enhance the level of field orientation by reviewing the management of regional programs, humanitarian and conflict resolution and research cooperation. Sida may consider setting a target for an increased field orientation.

⁵ Adding Lake Victoria Initiative and HIV/AIDS secretariat increases this by a few percent.

⁶ NB Global under the global budget line, excluding humanitarian, NGOs and research of global nature as referred to in the text. This explains the difference between the figure 2,557 and 1,463.

⁷ As covered by Development cooperation agreements

6. Special Focus of the Current Study – What is New?

Generally this review will be made against the content of the decision by the Director General 87/04. Here the roles of different players and the steering /guiding mechanisms are set. More experience is available now 2006 and there has also been a rotation of staff between the field and HQ since the time of the decision which may have changed attitudes and understanding of the issues. Special attention is paid to the impact of the Paris declaration, and of the Policy for global development (PGD, PGU). The issue of allocation of resources to the field is also covered and goes both into the quantity and quality of resources, i.e. on the role, competence, status etc of the NPO s, as well as the numbers, quality, availability in space and time of Swedish staff.

The question of whether Sida has got two field visions has also arisen during the study. If that is the case; is that relevant and under what conditions?

7. Awareness and Attitudes

There are several aspects: e.g. how well known is the field vision and a number of technicalities around it. Answers to simple questions like: what is the content of decision 87/04, gave the impression that how to communicate important policy decisions may be an issue. The field itself and sector and regional departments knew it well and liked to refer to the vision mostly as a transfer of power (the means) rather than increased effectiveness of cooperation (the goal). Surprisingly the new rules for consultation during project cycle management were not widely known even in the field.

We asked people to define the meaning of the field vision. The response would show how well based the notion of field orientation is in the organization. In many cases the current post Paris-declaration and PGU thinking was reflected in the answers. Delegation is necessary for context based poverty analysis and the only reasonable and possible way to work with the harmonization agenda. There was no clear difference in defining the concept between HQ and the field.

When it comes to attitudes we enter more difficult ground. The field naturally sees the field orientation as an important measure for effective development cooperation. However they feel that much is business as usual. Many tasks given from HQ to the field are found only marginally relevant for the operations (perhaps also this current review). There are still some attitudes reflecting problems of power balance, of resources not being used in an effective manner, that the present organization is not geared towards the task at hand and that the total competence of the organization is not properly used etc. It is hard to generalize from the data. There are a few cases at HQ where clear doubts are expressed about the effectiveness and usefulness of the FV.

However it is safe to say that even if definitions may vary on the meaning of the vision there is a general consensus that Sida has to continue its work on further delegation and field orientation and that there is no way back. The view is rather that Sweden should continue to be in the forefront of decentralization. There is also an understanding that the harmonization agenda means that Sweden's room for maneuver is less than it used to be since we have to work more closely with our partners.

It was pointed out by many, both at HQ and the field, that the field vision is about a mind set; thus there is a need for the organization as a whole to think differently and always with a field perspective.

8. On Roles and Relations Between HQ and the Field

The roles suggested in decision 87/04 of sector departments, regional departments and others have basically been followed. However, there are still many points of view on the issues. The field asks: what should the role of *regional departments* be when the only important task they have in relation to delegated embassies is occasional country strategies and preparing the country plan in consultation with the embassies? Secondly, and this matter was raised at both HQ and the field: what is the role of *sector departments* in different situations related to delegated embassies, non delegated embassies and other activities that lie within the terms of reference of these departments as reflected in the documents produced on the subject and in reality? An important aspect is the normative role of the sector departments and how this role shall be developed, strengthened and maintained. Delegation of decision making could, as pointed out, lead to applications and different interpretations of policies unless sector departments have a clear way of handling their normative role.

This section tries to synergize some of the ideas that have been forthcoming during interviews and in responses to questionnaires.

Regional Departments

The regional departments' tasks in the FV decision are related to country strategies, country plans and links with MFA (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), dissemination of information to field offices (FO) in the region and responsibility for regional programs. An additional task for RDs is preparation of budget support. In interviews there are two very different ways of assessing the role of RDs. There is the view that regional departments have lost most of their overall policy role in regard to delegated embassies except the important work on country strategies and country plans. The roles in non- or partly delegated embassies remain, of giving mandate to full assessment of projects and programs and therefore retaining the coordinating role. But what is the role of the country strategist when all relevant decisions are taken by the field? The country context specific analysis will be carried out in the country increasingly as coordinated efforts with other donors, the monitoring of the country plan and current revisions are made by the field. This argument is further strengthened by saying that maybe country context specific knowledge is more important for sector departments than regional departments.

When allocating resources, the field vision thinking has been to give priority to analytical capacity in the field. Thus there seems to be a risk of duplication of work in that area between the RDs and the field.

In the main area of responsibility for regional departments, the country strategies, a common way of working has been developed giving a high degree of delegation to field offices, delegated or non-delegated. This is natural with the increased importance of national Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and harmonized approaches to develop the country strategies. Some field offices however, see this as going so far as RD not taking its overall responsibility for the process.

Secondly, in a situation where sector departments will have to be even more focused on their specialized competence – as in the case with the delegated field – the view has been expressed, both in the field and at HQ, that it is important to have a representative for country knowledge at headquarters since the sector department cannot be expected to keep the same level of country-contextual knowledge as before. The extension of this argument goes as far as suggesting that sector departments be wholly integrated into regional departments. This would be the only reasonable way to facilitate the holistic as well as context specific and non-sectoral approach to development required by Perspectives of Poverty.

Another way would be to separate the work to be done for the fully delegated embassies from the rest and retain as part of the regional department small specialized, maybe not sector groups, but rather the

technical expertise required by the delegated field. Even fully delegated embassies will need technical backstopping from time to time unless resources for sector competence are allocated to them. Thus it has been suggested that the role of the country strategist be further strengthened to represent the best available country contextual knowledge at HQ. The new role for budget support is also taken as an argument to enhance the role of regional departments. Interestingly, budget support is viewed as a regional specific issue, but seems to be handled differently by the regional departments.⁸

Finally it is worth mentioning that the view of the field on the four regional departments at headquarters varies. Since the most dynamic changes take place in Africa, it also puts special stress on AFRA and critical comments have been made regarding AFRA. The JAS (Joint Assistant Strategy) processes are cases in point where new ways of doing business have to be developed. This will put new demands on the RD.

Sector Departments

Sector departments (SD) have worked a lot on their changing roles and their expectations, and expectations on them as the number of delegated embassies increases. The field still sees the main issues as working relations and roles of sector departments together with the resource issue. In the decision 87/04 the wording on policy/special technical competence is: “from a policy point of view the SD is responsible for all development cooperation within the area” further: “.....normative steering. This role includes the development, quality assurance and transfer of knowledge on policies and other subject issues”. It is common knowledge that many if not all delegated embassies feel that they are under-supported by sector departments and this is a problem.

The position of the sector departments is equally well known: the continuously growing workload leaves less room for support to the delegated field. The assumption being that – through the additional resources as a result of the field vision – the resources is there on the spot. The situation remains problematic especially when the additional support in resource terms has been focused on analytical functions rather than on sector competence. Thus the three different roles of SDs towards fully delegated, partially delegated and non delegated embassies makes their work difficult and at times frustrating. The fast expanding number of partner countries in recent years has added to that frustration. The changed way of working by the Europe department delegating more project management work to SDs has also been brought up by them. The delegated amount may be small, but SDs have to work in new contexts that will initially require extra resources. Comprehensive work has been done by SDs to clarify the roles and functions in relation to different types of field offices⁹. Proposals have been presented to develop an action plan for areas of change of SDs in line with what is being discussed in this report and adjusting to recent developments on the aid scene.

Personal relations between the program officer in the field and HQ are a natural and a classic way of keeping good and productive relations and to create a better mutual understanding of the respective working situations especially if one comes from the same department. Another issue raised by several fields, both delegated and non delegated, is the sequencing of support from SDs. It was even suggested that, where response from SD was slow, regional departments could instruct SD to do the job. Particularly non-delegated embassies mentioned that even if there was no formal delegation, the (moral) responsibility for running the program ultimately rested with them.

On the other hand there were several comments from SD staff that not much has changed. “We work as before, there is not much difference”. As far as I can judge this comment relates to the more recently second or third round of delegated embassies and is likely to change over time. But it should be noted

⁸ Concern was expressed on how the subject matter knowledge of budget support will be handled by HQ and the role of POM vs regional department. This may be clear to HQ but not to the field.

⁹ E.g. NATUR s Memo on the subject Jan 2005

that management capabilities and styles differ at different embassies and thereby, together with the actual resource situation, will influence the relation and work between SDs and the field. So the variation is quite large.

Several interviewees pointed out the problem of SDs not being available when required in the field, especially when dialogue and negotiations have to follow timetables set by partners not easily controlled by Sida. The requirement of flexibility means that in several cases HQ cannot support even if time and resources in principle are available.

The Normative Role – New Rules of Project Management and Project Committees

Sector departments are under constant pressure to balance the normative policy role and the operational work; keeping pace and track with international development and at the same time maintaining a high profile internationally. This is important but comments from the field like: “The field for HQ now a days are New York, Washington and Brussels” points at a problem. Other comments like: “The field orientation is good but we should not miss opportunities for international influence in various global arenas. We are well thought of and have considerable influence not least because of our good work in field” point at the opportunities to connect the two areas. However how to balance between bilateral and global work remains a key question.

On the issue of division of labor there are many different models. In the “normal” case, that of the large delegated embassies, the Sector Department is seen as an important resource in the preparation process but is also sometimes requested for review and monitoring. Often the preparation process is the priority. The new rule for project cycle management makes it mandatory for the field to consult with SDs on projects on or above 25 MSEK. The new rule is accepted by the field with a few comments about unnecessary prescriptions from HQ, and is viewed by SDs as a necessary tool to fulfill their policy role and quality assurance as defined in DG’s decision. Informal consultations took place even before the formal rule was established in most cases.

There is a new rule on “New working procedures of Sida’s Project Committees” as required by the decision 87/04. The rule states that contributions above 10 MSEK should be processed at least once in a project committee and that embassies or SDs taking decisions on contributions above 10 MSEK shall have a project committee. It is further stated that presentations in both embassy and SD committees or in each others committees could be useful for improved quality assurance. Contributions above 50 MSEK shall always be presented in Sida’s main project committee. Since the rule is new it was not much discussed. The idea of letting a “harmonized” partner take the responsibility for quality control has unfortunately not been seen as an option. This was pointed out by some in the interviews.

Onward Delegation

The use of onward delegation¹⁰ is rather common particularly in technically complicated areas and where there are resource constraints. INEC seems to be the most common sector department concerned, probably since very few experts in some of its specialized areas are common in the field. The division for infrastructure typically gets responsibility through onward delegation to prepare a contribution *for decision of the head of development in the field*. This is a questionable procedure. Responsibilities are unclear. Onward delegation should normally cover the whole process.

¹⁰ Sometimes referred to as re-delegation

Other Role Issues

Some interviewees questioned whether it is rational for the field offices to handle most administrative issues or if it would be more cost effective for HQ to do this. The Europe department notes that by keeping economic administration at HQ the savings are in the order of 15 MSEK per year of the administrative budget.¹¹

The use of consultants as an alternative for sector division competence seems to be increasingly common. By expanding the use of locally employed NPOs some of the local competence is incorporated in the embassies. However the loss of opportunities, competence development, context specific country knowledge etc, by using consultants may be looked into.

Some field offices have pointed out, that when moving into wider and larger sector and budget support field influence may diminish since these projects/programmes normally are larger than 50 MSEK. This is likely to be more common in the future. Therefore it is important to codify that the preparation role of the field is unchanged, even if formal decisions, as it is already with projects larger than 50 MSEK, are taken by the DG.

Formal and Informal responsibilities

In the case of non delegated section offices the formal and informal responsibilities differ in a way that is not conducive to effective work. For example, in principle, sector departments have the right to give directives for implementation issues and certainly in preparation issues even if the office is well manned and with a qualified head of office. The informal (de facto) responsibility will obviously be seen to rest with the head of office even if formally with HQ. The current cases should be looked into with urgency. This applies to section offices both in Africa and in Europe.

Keeping the sector competence in a decentralized organization

In many decentralized organizations how to retain a uniform sector competence is a concern. If a large number of decentralized entities are responsible for applying policies and competence there may be great variation which creates nonconformity and different interpretations ultimately leading to insecurity and a dilution of knowledge. It seems that this worry does not exist in Sida. Sector departments are confident they can manage implementation and quality control of policies and keep the necessary competence.

9. The other Dimensions of the Field Vision

The final report of the field vision project in January 2005 mentions 5 dimensions of the vision. These are, over and above delegation; (i) Sida field offices are an asset for all Sida departments, (ii) field orientation of other programs, (iii) Sida is one organization with one objective and (iv) communication.

The focus on implementation of the FV has been on the decentralization of power and less on the other dimensions. The idea of using the field as an asset is becoming more common. A good example mentioned both by a few at HQ and the field in Africa is the HIV/AIDS secretariat that plays a multitude of roles – as advisors, implementors of the regional initiative, policy development on regional and global level – all of this of use for all Sida.

¹¹ Operational plan for Europe 2005 12 05

The reports by MULTI, SAREC and SEKA (from late 2004 early 2005) point at an ambition to widen the scope of the field vision. All this requires reallocation of resources to field offices. Regional solutions maybe useful. The multilateral issues have been given more emphasis not least through a harmonized approach between donors in order to save transaction costs. Delegation of regional programs falls into this category as well. It has been pointed out that the regional programs take proportionally more of HQ resources than other types of cooperation¹² and may be more efficiently managed by the field. Many recent regional initiatives will in any case require a higher involvement of the embassies. In research a few advances have been made, still more could probably be done.

It is not very clear what has been achieved in terms of improved vertical and horizontal interaction as a way of enhancing the mutual feedback within the whole of Sida. There are however several good examples of horizontal communication and sharing of experience, in addition to the classical regional meetings now institutionalized. Some of the concerned embassies in East Africa mention the “cc-group” (an informal group for exchange of information) as a way of meeting to exchange experience. Similar ideas have been tried in the Indochina region.

The number of subject matter (sector) conferences, now a normal feature, have been seen both by concerned Sector Departments and the field as excellent ways of working more closely together. These meetings as well as regional meetings are sometimes seen as an instrument for headquarters meeting and listening to the field rather than a meeting for mutual benefit. There is a need felt particularly by SDs to find new venues. Initiatives like POM forum are welcomed as well as the creation of reference groups involving the field in different areas including a joint reference group with the field and HQ for this very study. According to interviews, an increased networking also takes place. Clearly spelled out in responses is the need for sector departments to keep track of what’s going on in the field for policy development and other prioritized work.

Heads of development cooperation units looked for a mechanism to feed field thinking and experience into Sidas management¹³. There are several reasons: one is that since the centre of action is in partner countries the knowledge from the field will be increasingly important. There is also a feeling from the field that rotation between field management and home management is too limited.

Some field offices indicated that exchanges of working experiences in different contexts of use to colleagues in other countries is an area that should be expanded. This would be an extension of the “cc approach” in a wider group of field offices or on specific subject matters. This could relate to organizational issues, to best practices in harmonization as o and preferable beyond regional boundaries.

Finally on communication: it is still difficult for Sida HQ to adjust to English as the working language. Generally, NPOs say that things have improved over the last couple of years, but NPOs are irritated when working documents – e-mails etc, persistently appear in Swedish. At one office an internet based translation program was used with quite some success to partly overcome the problem. Communication from MFA still remains a problem. Communication of the field vision itself is still not effective. Surprisingly many are not familiar with basic documentation and principles of the field vision. Both the field and HQ agree that there is a need to revisit the way these (and probably other important policy issues) are communicated and used also in introduction and field training.

¹² Mål och mått, för 2004

¹³ A mechanism for this was suggested in the FV project report.

10. The Operational Planning System and the Steering/Guiding of the Field

The operational planning system (VP) is the key instrument for implementing the field vision. Overall policy guidelines to the field, the areas for delegation of the country strategy implementation to the field, the process for agreeing on joint work between HQ and the field and last but not least the agreement on use of resources, are the main tasks.

This is where most comments are made. There seems to be a consensus that there is a need to review the system. Some views are well known, others not. Nobody questions the importance of having a clear and comprehensive system for delegation of authority from HQ to the field, to define the rules of the game and the choices available. Policy guidelines and directions given by management are also important to the planning process. However, there are variations in the way delegation is interpreted, mostly in relation to how detailed the instructions are and how precisely projects are defined. There are differences between regions and even between countries. With consultation mandatory for every large project this should not remain a problem. At the same time uncertainties and changed conditions make the planning process less certain. Thus a number of additional mandates and decisions from RD may need to be given. A recent follow up of country plans by RELA shows that the number of unplanned projects/decisions have decreased quite markedly during the period 2003–2005¹⁴. I have not seen similar analyses for the other regions.

Many felt that the process of developing the joint operational planning does not work satisfactorily; too much time is given to processes that produce little and expectations are set too high to be realistic. The focus tends to be on resources and less on content of the operationalization of the current country strategy – somewhere referred to as “the missing middle” – which is the basis for next year’s plan. Very little discussion takes place on the content of the cooperation program unless there are obvious deviations from the mainstream strategy. Dialogue is weak. There is some consensus by the field that the process is too HQ focused.

As a method to allocate resources for long term, current activities and extraordinary action, the field maintains that the process has outlived itself. The logic for how to allocate or reallocate long term resources seems to be missing. This may be the reason the attempts made by the Field Vision Project, later followed up by the capacity study for Africa (see section 4 above) did not make much headway. There are several reasons expressed by the field and HQ why the allocation of short term resources has not been successful. *First*, resource demands to be met by sector and other departments at HQ. *Second*, decision-making procedures are centralized; the field has lost control over resources that in principle are part of their budget. Third, the committed resources are seldom delivered in full. Spot checks with some embassies indicate that 1/3 to 1/2 of committed resources are not actually delivered – some because of changed assumptions about the work planned but normally due to other reasons.¹⁵

The dissatisfaction with the operational planning system has its cause, in the view by many in the field, but sometimes also in HQ in the resource issue. It needs to be looked into seriously. It is not enough to talk only about very marginal redirections of resources in week-terms; resources have to be more substantial. The intention of the reform, funding personnel/competence from the program budgets and not from the administrative budget, it has been recalled, was to use this as an alternative for consulting services and for upcoming requirements in the field. During the implementation of the this new system resources have with very few exceptions been allocated for only long term contracts (2 years

¹⁴ Memo RELA 2006-03-30

¹⁵ The comment given above /sect 4/from the internal audit seems still relevant

and more) and very short, normally 1–2 weeks in the field, sometimes so short that its usefulness has been questioned.

In the current discussion about the short term reinforcements there is on the one hand the argument from SDs that the field does not clearly express what they want. They have difficulties to define what they want and for what purposes and therefore HQ does not know what and how to deliver. The field on the other hand claims that they know very well what is required but since the delivery has been unsatisfactory there is fatigue spreading around this issue. What has been brought forward during this review from both HQ and the field is the need for greater flexibility. From the field perspectives it is easy to define the specific requirements while HQ has to deliver from a, maybe, thin base of specialized knowledge of sector departments under competition from elsewhere in the departments work. A typical support to a preparation process is not one or two weeks, maybe rather 2–6 months or something in between. So far these kinds of longer term support have seldom been as the result of the operational planning process, but rather the result of special arrangements. As early as 1999 a decision was taken by PEO (750/99) that outlined the incentives for such short-term duties in the field. However there have been very few 30–180 days contracts in the field since this principle was established.

There are many uncertainties in the environment in which Sida works. As was pointed out – particularly by HQ – a better review and follow-up mechanism of the country-plan should be considered. This would allow HQ to deliver against promises and take into account changes in plans that always take place during the current operational year.

Outcomes of the new procedures for reviewing country strategies between Sida and MFA on an annual basis, a feature recently established in the letter of appropriation, may also be taken into consideration in such country plans follow up.¹⁶

11. Changes in Roles and Responsibilities as a Consequence of the Paris Declaration and the Policy for Global Development

The Paris declaration and its predecessor, together with the Swedish Policy for global development, raise a number of important issues for the field orientation of Swedish development cooperation administration. With the aims of the five core areas of the Paris declaration: Ownership, Alignment, Harmonization, Managing for results, and Mutual Accountability, the challenges are great. Decentralization will be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success. This is not questioned anywhere. Some of the discussions I had related to the ambitions, the different perspectives and the expectations from different players on the speed and sequencing of change. The perspectives of HQ and the field may also differ.

Units with policy responsibilities and expectations of moving the international agenda rapidly forward, the operational units and the field look at things differently. The field repeatedly refers to the increased workload and thereby resource requirements to move the harmonization issues forward. The increased transaction cost – hopefully limited to the transitional phase – is a reality that needs to be tackled. Managers in the field spend more and more time in partnership, coordination and harmonization meetings. The parallel of expecting quick results from sector wide approaches or sector budget support is striking.

¹⁶ Regleringsbrevet för 2006 sid. 14

The field is quite clear in its standpoint that harmonization work will not give quick results. The increased cost appears in the field, which is perfectly legitimate, but the field has the view that this has not been reflected in the resource availability. In theory part of the coordination could be done from HQ but as more and more donors decentralize, in order to meet the requirement of the Paris declaration there is a risk the HQs role will become more and more marginalized. A few people at HQ expressed the fear that the quality of aid will deteriorate if Sweden joins forces with other donors.

Harmonization has to take place in a context. Thus a better availability of specialized resources in the field, from HQ or elsewhere, becomes more and more a basic necessity. In one case the field has been strengthened by a function that has a part time responsibility for handling harmonization issues on an overall level. This may be duplicated in other embassies.

It was mentioned that there is a risk for an increasing gap between expectations and the agenda established by capitals, in donor meetings or in international conferences; these are quite far away from the realities on the ground. There seems also to be a risk that the pressure at HQ to produce results on the policy level will further alienate the two perspectives from each other.

In the practical operational work, the actual implementation of the harmonization agenda, things are moving at different paces. There are wide variations in what is going on in Zambia or Kenya on the one hand and Laos and Vietnam on the other. There is an opportunity for embassies to learn from each other. Sida should develop mechanisms for learning and using experiences between embassies. There are also known networks for this, like Nordic+, EU, likeminded donor groups etc that should be utilized better. Harmonization requires a better knowledge of the country systems donors should align with; it also requires knowledge about other donor systems in order to make best possible use of available mechanisms for all types of increased cooperation. It will probably take some time before partner country systems are efficient enough and accepted to be aligned with and reaching there could be a cumbersome and resource demanding process.

Thus, at project/program level the present delegation system works satisfactorily. There sometimes seems to be need for a clearer understanding from both perspectives, the field and HQ, what the harmonization agenda means in practice and the new role for sector departments in joint coordinated support. Furthermore the harmonized budget support may still be problematic when defining responsibilities, preparation and decision-making procedures. Some field offices expressed concern about this. Budget support is in many cases a joint operation with several donors co-financing (sometimes with a World Bank PRSC as the core). It often requires on the spot negotiations. Most "likeminded" donors may have such a mandate; Sweden should not lag behind in this respect.

Another feature in the harmonization work is the joint strategy processes sometimes referred to as JAS (joint assistance strategies). Most recent countries concerned are Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda. The rules and regulations, even if they were recently revised, are not geared to the new situation. The issue of how to deal with Swedish policy guidelines or Swedish foreign policy consideration has to be accommodated in revised guidelines. Examples of not adjusting to the new situation were mentioned several times in my interviews. In Zambia the government is very precise in its requests to donors in what areas they would like support. This certainly puts the whole issue in a new perspective.

The Paris declaration is clear on the ambition of joint country analytical work and that support should be managed through coordinated programs. As was pointed out both in Kenya and Zambia, Sweden and Sida need to take a clear standpoint on how to adjust the current guidelines based on Swedish principles, ideas and preconceived ideas, to the new harmonized way for strategy work. This will ultimately lead to compromises in some areas and a need to review the role of some sector departments. A consequence from the field vision perspective is that a wider negotiating mandate should be given as early as possible to the field in new strategy work. Thus there should also be a preparedness to

strengthen the respective field office to enable them to undertake this sometimes very qualified negotiation and dialogue work.

This means that one needs to look into the resource consequences in a wider perspective. Can Sida have the flexibility of adjusting capacity to the strategy cycle of countries and how should it handle an increasing number of decentralized and harmonized strategies? Would this at all be possible on “full scale” or is there a need to differ between more and less important countries, thus going back to the idea of core partners, where other development partner can work in the principle of delegated cooperation even for whole strategies?

The policy for global development requires a more ambitious context-specific poverty analysis, a deeper understanding of the rights and the perspectives of the poor. Obviously this is best done in the context-specific environment, in other words in the field. Competence has to be further developed. Many field offices see the need for further improvement. Sector and budget support, an important part of PDG has been referred to above. It is important to remember that the situation in different countries and regions varies.

The concentration issue is still an unknown. Will there be any decrease in the number of main partner countries? Will there be any major change in sector focus, through active work of embassies and regional department or by default through new joint strategies that will make choices inevitable? If change takes place in an organized manner it will provide new assumptions for how the field should be organized and supplied with resources and a new way of cooperating with other development partners.

On the specific issue of Swedish resources in development cooperation the situation is more unclear. The studies made by Åkesson, Wall and Rudebeck were discussed. From a field perspective the additional requirements suggested in the reports, of keeping a more up to date information flow of business possibilities related to Swedish funded development cooperation work, would point to a somewhat increased workload. But most of what has been suggested is already in place or taken care of by the other parts of the Swedish foreign administration. Besides, in a harmonized approach country specific commercial interest has only marginal impact on the field organization.

In sum, with some additional competence development, PGD will easily be accommodated into Sidas field organization. The PGD matters are more relevant for Stockholm than for the field.

12. Resources, Competence and Issues of Personnel

Swedish Staff

The field orientation and especially the delegated field work needs staff with higher qualifications, both at management level and as program officers. The Sida recruitment and competence development machinery has gradually adapted itself to the new situation.

On the management level it is explicitly stated that special competence is required to head a development cooperation section and be responsible for decision making at the same level as heads of department at HQ

Where ambassadors formally or informally have this role specific arrangements are required.

Program officers in delegated embassies tend to have more qualified tasks where the steering and guiding is done from the field manager rather than at a distance. So far there is a feeling that training

before taking up posts abroad in a delegated field would need to be more adapted to the realities, particularly in a setting where wider cooperation between many partners is required and where the dialogue agenda gets more complicated. At the same time more knowledge about the implications and technicalities of the field vision is required on all levels also at HQ. PEO's division for competence development has in accordance with decision 87/04 made improvements and revision of the introduction program, simultaneously the field has improved their on the job introductions.

Many views have been voiced on the recruitment process and involvement of the field and on the final decision making. Formally, the decision rests with the head of RD. However, praxis varies. It could be argued, as is done by some managers in the field, that for recruitment to the field a mechanism should be established that makes it possible to influence choice of candidate while the overall responsibility rests with PEO. Cases were mentioned where vacancies had created lasting problems.

As was mentioned earlier, the new way of doing business within the Paris framework requires not only more specialized and qualified positions in the field; there is also a need for greater flexibility. The old ambition of having various contract lengths needs to be revived. As discussed above (section 10) requests for short term assignments (more than the standard 1–2 weeks) would be made if such a resource was available. Besides, other factors than the Swedish project preparation plan will determine when and how resources are needed. In conclusion, a more flexible system of supplying resources is required. Incentive systems should be revisited and maybe a condition for employment could contain an undertaking to serve abroad on short term contracts.

NPO

NPOs constitute today almost 40% of the total staffing of the field offices. The increase has been dramatic as has the increase in recent years of the number of field offices. Thus NPOs are an increasingly important resource and will carry a large responsibility for development cooperation work. NPOs generally represent a technical expertise, are responsible directly to the head of office – often with a mandate more or less equivalent to the Swedish program officer. This is the most common case. There are also NPOs working in a team with Swedish staff, and there are assistant POs. In the cases I studied NPOs seem to stay on for long periods, even if they sometimes expressed a wish to move on to new positions. It is becoming increasingly clear that NPOs play a key role as bearer of continuity, as interpreter of the context, to advise on cultural or other issues of importance and to understand developments in the host country. In some environments it would be very difficult to manage a programme without NPOs. Often the combination of competencies of the Swedish and local programme officer would be optimal. Thus it is important to create an environment where these synergies would be further developed. It is not possible to give general recommendations. It has to be up to managers to develop such a conducive environment.

Overall, in the interviews I had NPOs seem satisfied with the workplace and often appreciate the freedom of work and the importance of tasks given to them by management. And managers in the field are in most cases very pleased with the quality and performance of NPOs. Unfortunately there is still at least one case where the Ambassador does not allow NPO to act on behalf of the embassy. This has to be brought up with MFA immediately and corrected. Still one hears in embassies of NPOs not treated as full members of the team. There are also views of a few respondents at HQ on what can, is reasonable, or should be delegated to NPOs. Often the issue of dialogue is raised. As noted above the language issue is still there.

There are many views on competence development. The initial introductory training is considered good but very little is offered later. There is an expressed need to develop more understanding of Swedish society, of strategic policy, dialogue techniques – just to mention a few. There are several issues here. First, the expectation that Sida-PEO should be in a position to assess overall requirements is

unrealistic; secondly, that individual variations are substantial; thirdly, that almost all NPOs need to understand Swedish society, Sida and Sida culture better; fourthly, that managers in the field have to take more responsibility for competence development of their NPOs; finally, that the SDs must make time and capacity available to receive NPOs at HQ in order to develop their professional and personal links.

There are a number of venues open for extended training. For example it is surprising that the ITP courses have not been used more. PEO should together with the managers in the field develop a strategy of how to take care of the needs of NPOs. It is important that field staff, not least NPOs themselves, contribute to developing course content. PEO should continue to work on and improve standard competence development packages.

Career possibilities for NPOs needs to be looked into. Either Sida decides that this should be an option or not. Now there is great uncertainty. There are a number of ideas from the NPO group. These should be discussed only if there is an intention to move this issue further.

Integration

The administrative integration of embassies is still being processed. That administration shall now be the responsibility of MFA will – according to the field – probably only mean temporary difficulties. The use of dual, PLUS and Agresso, systems could also create some inconveniences.

Key to success of integration is that a good, clear and explicit working order (arbetsordning) is developed and that a procedure for joint consultation and revision is agreed upon. It has been pointed out by the field that the issue here when it comes to personnel and competence, is that the ambassador normally comes from other areas than development cooperation and from a culture not used to a high degree of delegation. An ambassador with little experience of development cooperation with its fast and dynamic change and now implementation of the Paris agenda faces a challenge. Thus it is important to be clear about these requirements and to stringently implement the mechanism reflected in the government decision on integration to review ambassador's performance in development matters. It is also foreseen as a general principle that a Sida manager placed in the field (dev. Counselor) will take operational responsibility.

13. Effectiveness and Efficiency

Has development cooperation been more effective and has the quality of aid improved through decentralization? The general view voiced by persons interviewed is: yes, we produce better aid with decentralized decision making. It has not been possible to make an assessment of the efficiency of the vision. That would require a deeper study and more sophisticated methodology.

However, it is clear that partner countries appreciate both that planning and preparation times are shorter and that decision makers are closer – which facilitates the dialogue.

There have been very few views on the questions put in the ToR about sequencing of the implementation of the field vision. My interpretation is that this is not an issue. It seems that it has been efficient to implement the reform in the way it was done. The wider issue is rather *how far to widen the field orientation and how far is it efficient to go?* Another area that was not touched upon in the ToR but needs to be looked into sooner or later is how Sida compare with other donor organizations and what can be learnt from them.

The eternal question, there from the start in 1999: is the higher cost of placing people in the field worth the difference? Many say yes, others no! Nobody however questions the cost-efficiency of placing more NPOs in the embassies. However NPOs are costing more. The RELA region is the most expensive, (about 1/3 of a Swedish PO) followed by AFRA, Europe in third place and last ASIA.¹⁷ Costs have increased by between 60 and 125% over the period 2000 to 2006. Nobody seems to believe that the field vision saves resources. Still, proposals from the field to make major reallocations of resources from HQ to the embassies are quite common.

Attempts were made by the field vision project to establish reference levels for manning fully delegated embassies based on the size of the development cooperation program. The AFRA attempt to refine the model was not successful. Since resource allocation is still a very important issue to most embassies and the operational planning system does not seem to deliver, there are good reasons to have a second look on what the optimal field dimensioning would be. In this connection one could also look into how to deal with support functions like administration. It has been argued that administration need not necessarily be in the field. For cost saving they might be brought to HQ. Neither embassies nor sector departments were enthusiastic however.

Here it could be of interest to look into how the Europe department sees the field organization. The operational plan for 2006 (VP) has: "A field organization implies a risk for increased capacity demands on the home organization and is very expensive compared with having similar capacity in Stockholm". How to handle this and "reduce the demands on a large field organization" is to design the development cooperation in such a way that it requires minimal presence of Swedes abroad. Being geographically close makes things easier, financial administration remains at HQ, while most staff are NPOs. But this approach does not seem to follow the mainstream principles. Even with closeness to HQ and no delegation there are still unfulfilled capacity demands on sector departments from field offices. In a sense the Europe department has got its own interpretation of the field vision. This being the case it should be formalized that other rules and visions are to be used in Europe. Others could then see what may be learnt from the Europe model.

Many have mentioned the regional approach as a good model of field orientation. Today there are numerous variations from the all embracing HIV/AIDS secretariat in Lusaka to individuals with regional advisory functions such as those on human rights or health or energy. The HIV/AIDS secretariat in Lusaka has 16 professionals which makes it as large as a medium sized embassy. The RRD in Nairobi is still another version of a regional support function. It has only an advisory role. Two regional setups have full delegation; Lake Victoria in Nairobi and the HIV/AIDS secretariat in Lusaka. Most regional functions do not have their own program budget. Delegation comes from the RD, but in other cases from sector departments at HQ. The variations here are quite wide. There is a lack of a clear strategy or common view within Sida as to why, how and when the regional model could be used.

The Paris agenda prompts us to look for a more logical connection. National resources could be combined with regional resources; this might be more cost effective than HQ-based services. But there may be other arguments. From the field vision perspective it's unfortunate that the regional perspective of allocating resources has not been further looked into. It is recommended that the whole issue of regionalization of the field is revisited and experiences from other donors like Dfid, the Dutch and Norwegian etc are studied. While outside the scope of this study, it would be appropriate if and when a reorganization study of Sida is carried out.

¹⁷ Memo FU 060418

14. Further Work and Future Directions

Field orientation is as old as Sida and Sida. It has had its ups and downs over the years; however Sida has always been in the forefront. The situation today has many ingredients not there in 1998 when the first decision was taken. The argument then was based on the importance of ownership, harmonization, (or aid coordination in those days) joint financing, sector wide approaches and localized poverty analyses.

Now 7 years later, developments in many partner countries, the Paris agenda and PGD, have changed the preconditions for ways of doing business in development cooperation. Developments are rather uneven in different parts of the world however, and when designing its field organization Sida must take account of that fact.

There are a few issues here:

- How shall Sida proceed when there is only marginal involvement – in Research, Humanitarian, NGO, the Multilateral area for example? What is reasonable, cost effective and will improve quality of aid?
- Secondly, what are the implications of a successful implementation of the intention and targets of the Paris declaration?
- How should scarce resources be utilized? Or how thin should resources be allocated?

The first issue was dealt with in section 9.

As to the second issue, Sida has a number of options. Assumptions or unknown factors are: will country concentration proceed at any reasonable pace? How quick will JAS processes be implemented? Will there be a genuine will among development partners to work within delegated cooperation contexts? Is it reasonable and feasible to delegate more strategic responsibility to field offices? Is it possible to get out of traditional nonflexible compositions of field office manning and adjust it to the phases of joint strategy work. Will there be the competence and capacity to intensify the policy dialogue which logically follows with an increased level of policy aid? Will the number of cooperating partner countries decrease?

If positive responses are given to these questions there is a good case for a more strategic proactive field orientation. However, it will probably require some rethinking of the way HQ is organized.¹⁸ But the conclusion would be that specialized technical competence will not be required everywhere since other donors may have this expertise and be ready to share. Thus Sida will need health, education, rural development, water etc expertise in much fewer countries than to-day, and more resources will instead be needed for policy dialogue. This has to be reflected in the way resources are used, allocated and trained.

Another option would be to proceed more or less like today and wait for harmonization to start work in practice before any decision of change in manning of embassies is made.

With fewer cooperation countries more resources could be allocated to the major cooperation countries. With stronger resource availability it would also be possible to accommodate other interests in Swedish society. A possible scenario could be, if country concentration takes time, that more harmonized and delegated cooperation would be the rule in many of the smaller countries. Rather than keeping a field presence, the strategy could be developed by HQ but programme implementation by development partners.

¹⁸ This is outside my ToR so I will not touch upon that

Finally, in order to follow and guide the future direction of Sida's field orientations the establishment of a standing working group could be considered. Today such a forum is missing. FU could be the secretariat for such a group to ensure involvement of the field in a suitable manner.

15. Lessons Learned, Conclusions and Recommendations

(Recommendations are given in *italic*)

The field vision is no longer a vision, it is a reality; the field orientation of Sida is widely accepted and fears expressed by parts of the organization seem now unfounded. But there are a number of issues that still need to be tackled and followed closely. These are mentioned here.

- There is a general feeling at embassies that much is still lacking in overall attitudes from HQ vs the field. The mindset needs to change in favor of field orientation. Unnecessary information and documentation is given to the field, examples mentioned are material for recent salary review and the rich documentation for operational planning. Too little time is given for reaction and comments.
- There seems to be a lack of knowledge of the basic documents guiding the field vision. Maybe the documents tend to drown in the flow of papers or intranet is still not being used in a proper way. It is very important that the content of these documents is completely familiar to all Sida staff. Improving knowledge and awareness is the responsibility of the managers at all levels everywhere. It would be advisable for Sida management to reiterate not only that there is a vision but also the content/philosophy of the vision. *The communication strategy for the vision needs to be refreshed in order to keep the vision alive.*
- The field vision actually applies to less than half of Sida's work. (with the FV's limited interpretation relating to full delegation) More is being done and needs to be done especially by SAREC, SEKA and for regional projects/programs. The reports produced by SEKA and SAREC 2004 need follow-up. *A target/explicit ambition for a widened field vision may be set. The regional project and programs should be reviewed with the purpose of finding solutions to a wider delegation of authority to the field. SEKA should follow up its earlier attempts to widen the scope for delegation to the field.*
- The roles and relations between the field and HQ work reasonably well but a better mutual understanding is needed between the field and HQ. The issue of reorganizing the HQ repeatedly came up in interviews both with HQ and with the field. It is noted that the issue is raised in the recent "where do we go from here" exercise.
- In some cases onward delegation takes place without the accompanying right of allocation (dispositionsrätt). E.g. delegation of project preparation responsibility, but without the right to take the formal decision. This leads to unclear responsibilities since it divides the preparation responsibility from decision responsibility. *RDs should clarify the principles for onward delegation.*
- Views on the importance of country-contextual sector competence differ both in departments and in the field. Differences are not along the field/ HQ axis, but depend rather on the past background of individual officers or experience of good or bad incidents of work. There seem to be no clear-cut answers. The trend towards sector specific organization of work rather than country related seems to be a step in the right direction for sharpening the role of SDs as technical expertise. *How to reflect the need for country context specific competence and its balance between SDs and RDs has to be looked into further from an organizational point of view.*
- There are still uncertainties on how sector competence shall be retained and developed within the framework of decentralization. The fear of diluting sector policies and competencies is not felt to be

a serious issue. *However, how to retain sector competence in a decentralized organization needs to be looked into preferably in connection with an organizational review.*

- The role of regional departments was raised by field offices. The views expressed vary between a stronger role for the country strategist to a very limited role. *There is a case for further coordination of RDs work vis a vis the field organization.*
- There are specific problems with section offices. It is hardly acceptable that formal and moral responsibilities do not go together. A lack of clarity remains between formal and informal roles. *There is a tendency to judge managers from their informal role rather than their formal role. This creates confusion. Priority and resources should be given by Sida to facilitate an early full delegation to the concerned offices.*
- Full delegation has been given not only to 14 embassies but also to two regional functions: Lake Victoria and the HIV/AIDS secretariat in Lusaka. Could these be models for similar delegation decisions? Regionalization of the field as an option to national offices has been on the agenda for a long time. There may be a non effective and non rational use of Sida's resources in the way regional posts or setups are created. Some are very relevant while others could be questioned. The recommendation of the AFRA capacity study still stands: *There is a need to look into the whole issue from a number of perspectives including regionalization of sector competence. This will require a separate study. It is recommended that such a study be carried out with priority.*
- The operational planning system is still not well adapted to the field vision. It is still too HQ oriented and is not a sufficiently good mechanism for resource allocation. HQ feels that it does not get necessary information from the field, while the field feels it does not get the wanted response. *Operational planning as an instrument to allocate flexible resources to the field needs revision. New guidelines should be developed jointly by the field and HQ.*
- The issue of how to allocate resources between the field and HQ is still sensitive and unresolved according to many – including the field. In some cases the Dfid model (where most of operational competence is based in the field) is taken as a good way of doing business. *Sida need transparent, explicit and long term principles on allocation of staff resources between different parts of the organization.*
- The “flexible field” is difficult to accomplish. The intention to create a field where resources could be used more flexibly adjusting to actual and varying requirement of the individual embassy has not been successful. There are very few examples of a more flexible use of Sidas total personnel resource. *There is a need to revisit the personnel policies of Sida especially regarding obligations by newly employed staff to accept shorter or longer postings at embassies as part of a normal career in Sida. It is also necessary to accept a greater mobility in accordance with how needs develop within programs and countries. The incentive system should be adapted to such a practice. It is recommended that a further analysis and review is made of this issue.*
- *The recruitment procedures should to be refined to enhance the role of the field in the process.*
- The NPOs play an increasingly important role in the field organization. Thus the NPO issues should be given due attention. It still happens that NGOs are not allowed to represent Sweden which is certainly against principles settled during the field vision. Other issues are roles and responsibilities. These may vary from time to time and place, there is no case for uniformity. *Career and competence development issues should be given priority and creative thinking will be required. A joint team of managers in the field, NPOs and PEO should be established to work out proposals.*
- MFA see the Sida working method through the field vision: greater decentralization, more staff in the field, principles that could be copied by them. MFA relations with operational issues are managed through HQ, which means there are no specific views on operational work in the field. RDs are the link to MFA on these issues.

- Field vision and integration is not an important concern as long as the government decision is followed when it comes to competence requirements of heads of embassies as well as clear-cut, explicit and agreed standard “working order” (arbetsordning) between Sida and MFA and clear reporting requirements of ambassadors to the head of regional departments of Sida.
- On the Paris declaration. There are still wide gaps in the conceptualization of the issues. Views on what the work implies differ both between HQ and the field generally but also between different parts of the field. There are also context-specific issues. There is a feeling that what the work implies and the resources required in the medium term, are not understood.¹⁹ On sector and budget support there is a general consensus. The issue of Joint Assistant Strategies vs. Development Cooperation Strategies has not been thoroughly discussed by Sida HQ or MFA yet so is not resolved. The status of different countries and regions needs to be taken into account. There is a great potential for those in the embassies to learn from each other in the ongoing harmonization processes. *There is a need to develop principles of how Sweden shall manage the highly delegated programming strategies related to PRSs. Specify the roles of Sida and MFA. There is an obvious risk that unless this happens, Sweden will lag behind in the joint processes. As a consequence of the above the guidelines for cooperation strategies may need revision. This ongoing harmonization work would provide a unique learning opportunity.*
- PGD and the field vision. The importance of context-specific poverty analysis is accepted but still found difficult to implement. The same goes for the perspectives of rights and of the poor. The strengthening of embassies with analytical capacity is a step to facilitate that work. As for of the Paris declaration, planning and implementation of sector and budget support varies a great deal depending on country context. The PGD per se will impact on the field vision in the sense that any contextual analysis will require contextual competence which has to be from the field implying the need for increased resources. However joint analyses and strategic dialogue will demand less, when that happens. The concentrations issue will have its impact the day fewer countries are on the list of recipients and fewer sectors in remaining countries. On the specific issue of Swedish resources in development cooperation the picture is more unclear. Certain conclusions by Åkesson, Wall and Rudebeck would point to a greater role for the field offices – more work for embassies generally and marginal increases for the DCS in the countries concerned. Additional training may be required before taking up posts in the field.
- Feedback and utilization of the field knowledge and perspectives in both policy development and feeding field experience into Sida s management and dialogue are areas to be further developed. The FV project had proposals on how to facilitate this. These were not put into practice. *The field is and feels alienated from the management team. A mechanism to overcome this has to be found.*
- During the review it has become clear that Sida may have dual field visions, one for the Europe department and one for the rest of the organisation. If that is a deliberate policy it should be made explicit. In many other areas the regional department for Europe has harmonized its work and work methods with the rest of the organization. *It is necessary to make explicit the reasons for having another approach to Europe department, be it costs, closeness, specific “political” dimensions of the cooperation or whatever.*
- The future direction of the field vision will to a large extent depend on how the concentration work progresses, and thereby how many field representations are required and how the harmonization agenda will develop. An efficient mode of sharing responsibilities and resources in the field with development partners would make a good case for a more strategic and proactive field orientation.

¹⁹ Ref to current debate on proliferation and transaction cost for donors by harmonization see: “Proliferation and Fragmentation: The transactions Costs and Value of Aid” Arnab Achayra et al in Journal of Development Studies, January 2006.

- To follow, strengthen and develop Sida’s field orientation it would be reasonable to give that task to a part of the organization working on operational development cooperation issues. *It is suggested that regional and sector departments should share responsibility assisted by PEO and in close and structured cooperation with the field, (eg representation for the field).* This set-up could, on an ad hoc basis, be responsible to management for monitoring Sida’s field orientation – a set up parallel to POM-forum. *Such a group would also follow the developments of JAS processes and other harmonization, and suggest how to adjust the field orientation from that perspective. This group could also continue, revise and refine the work started by the AFRA capacity study.*

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference for a Review of Sida's Field Vision

1 Purpose of the Review

In Sida's decision GD 87/2004, which defines the final stages of the Field Vision project, the Field Unit (FU) is charged with the task of presenting a report 'on the affects and experiences of working according to the framework on roles and division work' laid out for the project. The decision talks about presenting 'a few case studies' but FU has, in consultation with UTV, expanded the task somewhat and wants to cover several aspects of the Field Vision as described below.

The Field Vision may be the most important change in Sida's mode of work since the 'new' Sida was created in 1995. A number of more recent changes, e.g. the Rome and Paris Declarations, Sweden's policy on global development (PGU) and the continuing reorganisation of our embassies, have increased the importance and potential impact of the Field Vision.

The purpose of the review is to provide a reasonably comprehensively picture of what has so far been achieved with the Field Vision and to provide a basis for decisions on further measures to improve Sida's effectiveness. The review will:

- (1) describe the changes brought about by the Field Vision regarding roles and responsibilities, regarding modes and areas of decision-making and implementation, and regarding kind of tasks and volumes of work between Sida-Stockholm and embassies and within Sida-S;
- (2) analyse the consequences of those changes and assess them in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, intended and unintended effects and the Field Vision's relevance in relation to the on-going transformation of development co-operation in general; and
- (3) present recommendations for further improving implementation of Sida's field orientation.

2 Background

Following a pilot phase starting in 1999, when three embassies²⁰ received so-called full delegation, the Field Vision ('A Strengthened Field Orientation at Sida') was launched in 2002.

The ultimate aim of the Field Vision is 'creating the best possible prerequisites for fulfilling the poverty reduction goal'²¹. Medium-term objectives are to 'create a balance between an empowered and strengthened field organisation and a supportive organisation at headquarters'. The Vision document also says that 'flexibility will govern the allocation of resources...'

The experiences from the pilot phase were used to formulate an Action Programme which was formally established in decision GD 119/02. The Action Programme had six components:

- redefining the roles
- reassessing steering tools
- quality assurance
- information capacity, including IT-investments

²⁰ Managua, Dar Es Salaam and Hanoi

²¹ Action Programme 2002–2004, preface.

- special support to small field offices
- human resource development

A slightly different formulation of the aim of the programme is found in the project's final report where the focus was stated as threefold:

- 1) First, to reach out within Sida and emphasise the field and the importance of a field oriented organisation and work methods.
- 2) Second, to support the activities necessary to further field orient Sida, as described in the Action Programme. Many of these aimed at facilitating the work of fully delegated field offices.
- 3) Third, to quality assure what had already begun.²²

As mentioned above a follow-up decision was taken in 2004 (GD 87/04) where the objectives were reiterated and the Field Unit was designated as the focal point for the Field Vision after the formal end of the project.

3 Stakeholder Involvement

Consultations with embassies and various departments at Sida-S will take place during the preparation of the review. A reference group will be established to guide the review by providing comments to the draft ToR and to the draft report. The draft final report will be circulated to all embassies and departments for comments before finalisation.

4 Scope and Limits for the Review

The ultimate aim for the Field Vision, as stated above in section 2, is in evaluation terms an impact level problem and this is hardly possible to cover within the time and resources available for the review.

Although still fairly vague the intermediate objectives may be possible to assess and discuss.

Of the components in the Action Programme the review shall concentrate on roles and steering tools while also include other components if that is considered important. All three categories of delegation (full delegation, partial delegation and no delegation) shall be covered by the review. Both embassies and section offices shall be included.

The concrete procedural change which is the core of the Field Vision is the formal mandate to certain embassies to independently make decisions on contributions²³. Although this implies that the Field Vision would mainly affect the preparation phase (*beredningsprocessen*) the review shall not be limited to that part. Instead the review shall, to the extent possible, look at all development cooperation tasks at embassies²⁴ and operational departments – sector departments and regional departments – at Sida-S.

The increased responsibilities for a delegated embassy will clearly affect time and resources available for follow-up of the agreement phase, which has always been the primary task for Sida's field organisation. Most embassies are from time to time heavily involved in preparations of a new cooperation strategy and the greater emphasis of the development dialogue as well as demands caused by the Paris declara-

²² Vision for a Strengthened Field Orientation. Final report from the Field Vision Project. Sida, Field Unit January 2005.

²³ As long as they are considered to be consistent with the current co-operation strategy for a particular country. For contributions above SEK 50 million the same decision-making rules apply as for all contributions, viz. that the final decision is made by Sida's Director-General after review by Sida's central Project Committee.

²⁴ The term 'embassy/embassies' is used loosely in this document, referring primarily to so-called delegated embassies (with full or part decision-making powers), but also other embassies and development cooperation offices may be indirectly affected by the Field Vision, e.g. through re-organisation of sector departments at Sida-S.

tion on aid effectiveness add to the work load. At Sida-S particularly sector departments have been re-organised as a consequence of the Field Vision and attitudes in general regarding division of work between Sida-S and 'the field' may have changed during the last few years. Such and other important aspects that may be identified during the review shall be included in the work.

An important part of the Field Vision is increased employment of locally recruited programme officers. Experiences and consequences from this at embassies and – indirectly – at Sida-S shall be included in the review. Issues would be e.g. if locally recruited staff has affected the quality in preparations, assessments and implementation by increasing Sida's collective knowledge about a country or if the work is carried out in different ways now compared to when embassies had few or no program officers recruited locally or when their formal status was less independent.

The review shall specifically include descriptions and analyses on:

- allocation of resources between Sida-S and embassies, particularly regarding staff and the recruitment process;
- effectiveness of steering instruments and tools, particularly the Country Plan; and
- the share of Sida's bilateral interventions which is affected by measures related to the Field Vision in relation to Sida's total undertakings.

Among questions to be asked are:

- Has the Field Vision been implemented according to plans and what worked and what did not work at the outset?
- Have embassies and departments at Sida-S reacted in a similar manner to the Field Vision or are there variations in roles and practices and what actual changes in the organisation are outcomes of the Field Vision?
- Are particular parts or functions of Sida's organisation less influenced by the Field Vision?
- Are attitudes and experiences from the Field Vision similar or different between Sida and the Foreign Ministry?
- What seem to have been the advantages and disadvantages with implementing the Field Vision in stages?
- Which seem to have been the main obstacles and risks for implementing the Field Vision successfully?
- What are the possibilities and limits regarding decisions for delegated embassies in view of e.g. the increasing agreement periods.
- What main factors that seem to affect development cooperation today were not included or foreseen when the Field Vision was designed?
- Does Sweden's policy on global development (PGU) create any problems (or advantages) for implementing the Field Vision?

5 Method

The review shall be based on documents, interviews and a written questionnaire to selected embassies and departments. The consultant shall before commencing the main data collection phase, submit a short inception report to FU, which will be discussed by the reference group. The inception report shall outline methodology, indicate broadly the questions to be covered in interviews and the survey, and propose what departments at Sida-S and embassies and section offices should be visited for interviews and included in the survey.

6 Consultant

It is assumed that the review will be carried out by one consultant.

The consultant shall have extensive knowledge about development assistance and its execution both at headquarters level and in the field as well as experience from evaluation. Also the consultant must have detailed knowledge about Sida's organisation and preferably about the re-orientation towards the country level that is taking place in several development cooperation agencies.

7 Reporting and Time Schedule

The total time for the review, including visits to a small number of embassies, is estimated to approximately six weeks. The main part of the data collection will take place during April 2006.

The consultant shall submit the following reports:

28 March Inception Report

15 May Draft Report

22 May Draft Final Report (provided comments from Sida have been given at the latest 18 May)

9 June Final Report

The Draft Final Report and the Final Report shall not exceed 35 pages, excluding annexes. It shall be written in English and contain an executive summary of maximum four pages and chapters on conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The Final Report shall be delivered in two hard copies and one electronic version in Word format which is proof-read and ready for printing.

The Consultant shall be prepared to present the Report for Sida's Management at a seminar planned to take place at the end of May 2006.

Appendix 2

Questions put to HQ Officers for the Evaluation of the Field Vision (FV)

Assumptions: you are one of a randomly chosen group of individuals representing the various departments, part of the evaluation of the Field Vision. Replies are treated confidentially.

Please read the Terms of Reference: (Stödfunktioner – Field unit – Field vision) then reply, briefly, by 3rd May this year to: janolovagrell@yahoo.se. Please give your reply the same number as the question. If one response is to several questions, please quote the question numbers. Thank you.

The exercise should take only a half hour or so. This study was commissioned by the Field Unit.

Your comments are of great importance.

- 1) How long have you worked with your present responsibilities? Where in the organisation do you work? With a regional department or sector department or elsewhere?
- 2) Have you recently worked in the field?
- 3) Are you a head of division or a programme officer?
- 4) How would you define “Field Vision”?
- 5) Do you think the concept “Field Vision” clear? If not, please comment.
- 6) Has Sida management adequately explained what Field Vision means, and what the attitude of senior management is to field orientation?
- 7) Has your work changed in any way since Field Vision was introduced? Was the change as a result?
- 8) Do you see your role as different now than it was earlier?
- 9) If you do, what is you do less of now, what more of?
- 10) For sector departments: as a programme officer, do you find that you have more or less opportunity to apply your particular knowledge? What is the reason?
- 11) Has your department/division reorganised in order to match the demands of the field orientation? Is there a short or long-term strategy?
- 12) Do you feel that increased field orientation may have negative consequences for Sida?
- 13) What in your opinion are the positive effects? Can they be defined, do you think they can be assessed or measured in some way?
- 14) For sector departments: has your relationship to fully delegated embassies changed with regard to content of the work or contact with people there?
- 15) Have you taken part in assessment processes for the fully delegated field operations? Do you find this different to what you did earlier or what you still do in relation to the non-delegated field?
- 16) Do you experience that more is demanded of you in relation to your work with delegated embassies? If yes, in what way?

- 17) For regional departments: if you experience any problems with regard to your role in relation to delegated embassies what are they?
- 18) Do the different delegated embassies seem to have different approaches? If they do, how does this affect your work?
- 19) Has the step-by-step implementation of FV – full delegation – caused you problems?
- 20) For regional departments: Is there any difference – besides trivial formalities – in the way the various kinds of fully delegated embassies prepare decisions?
- 21) Can you briefly describe a “case” where a field orientation has functioned well – or poorly? (for example in assessment and cooperation in country strategy, policy work – or whatever).
- 22) Do you feel that the new (Jan ’06) regulations for how contributions be managed will change the way you work with delegated embassies?
- 23) Are there other factors that have significantly affected how you and your department work today compared with, say, 5 years ago? If there are, what are they?
- 24) Does the field vision have the same relevance today as it had 3–5 years ago?
- 25) What is your opinion of how the implementation of PGU will affect the field vision?
- 26) Describe your view of the risks/opportunities the new harmonisation represents for Sida HQ
- 27) In what way do you feel the different departments differ/work differently in relation to the different fields?
- 28) Do you believe that Sida’s management system (operational plan, VP etc) divides work effectively between the field and HQ, and directs resources most effectively?
- 29) Is there a reasonable division of resources between HQ and the embassies?
- 30) When the planning decisions are arrived at, do you as a programme officer have a proper understanding of what the embassies expect of you?
- 31) If not, what changes/improvements of VP would you suggest?
- 32) When you next time apply for a field post as a head of cooperation, programme officer or head of administration will the type of embassy affect your choice?
- 33) The delegated embassy gives a great deal of authority to the officer in the field. Does this prompt a discussion about authority and power?
- 34) Finally: is there anything further you would like to mention as important, or that you think should be taken into account when discussing field orientation?

Appendix 3

Questions for the Field for the Evaluation of the Field Vision

The following questions are part of the evaluation of the Sida field vision (FV). It is very important to get your views in this work. You could find the ToR for the Study on the Intranet under support functions – field support – field vision. Please read it.

My estimate is that you may spend some 30–45 minutes to answer the questions. It would appreciate that you send your answers to me; janolovagrell@yahoo.se. at the latest on 3 May. Your answers will be treated confidentially.

If you find that some question do not concern you depending on your level of delegation skip them or just not NA

Your views are very important, try to answer referring to each of the question numbers. That will facilitate for me to compile and analyse the answers. Thank you for your cooperation.

- 1) What is your position at the embassy: Head of development, head of administration, Swedish programme officer or Local Programme officer (NPO).
- 2) How long have you been posted to/employed by this embassy.
- 3) Are you employed at a fully delegated embassy, partly delegated embassy or embassy without delegation, Sida office, section office?
- 4) Which region? AFRA, ASIEN, RELA or Europe.
- 5) Are you clear about the differences of the above categories?
- 6) Before this job were you working at Sida HQ, if so at sector department, regional department, other department. If you don't come from Sida who was your previous employer (only in general terms/area).
- 7) How do you define the field vision?
- 8) Do you think that the content/implication of the field vision is clear?
- 9) Has the Sida management made it clear what the FV means and where they stand?
- 10) In general terms, in your view, what are the pros and cons of the FV.
- 11) From your horizon could you mention some good cases and bad cases of the working of the FV?
- 12) Do you believe that the HQ has a common view on the meaning and implementation on the FV? If not elaborate!
- 13) Do you think that HQ departments, sector, regional and support have organised themselves in a way that facilitates the implementation of the vision?
- 14) Could you identify different ways by different departments, do you see any particular best practice?
- 15) If you have been posted for a longer time do you see any clear changes in either direction?
- 16) Do you think that the roles and responsibilities are now clearly seen and stated between the field and HQ various departments?

- 17) There was a recent debate on problems of cooperation between field and HQ (Göran Holmquist on the intranet last fall) How relevant do you think this is. Could you see change over time on this aspect?
- 18) The new rule for project cycle management limits the decision making power by delegated embassies to some extent and codifies in a new way how the collaboration should be carried out, do you see any problems arising from that?
- 19) Do you see a different view on the FV by Sida and MoFA. If so how does it show in the practical work of the embassy? Is there an issue of culture of decentralization?
- 20) In your view will the implementation of the government decision of integration between MoFA and Sida in the field have any impact on the implementation of the filed vision? If yes specify.
- 21) If you work at a fully delegated embassy: Has your content of work changed after the embassy got full delegation?
- 22) Has the quantity and content of “re-delegation” to HQ changed? How do you perceive the idea of “re-delegation” as part of FV?
- 23) In the recent operational planning process (for 2006) it was stated that the new procedure was much more geared towards relation between tasks and resources and much more towards the needs of the FV and the field. Do you agree? If not please specify.
- 24) Further on the Operational planning (VP), do you see it as a good instrument of planning the participation of HQ in areas like you want them to, like strategic dialogue, specific subject matter competence in project/programme planning, monitoring. If you want improvement, how?
- 25) Do you think you have sufficient authority and resources to carry out your task? What is missing, if anything? Do you think that HQ steering is too strong or too weak?
- 26) Do you believe that the FV has overall meant more effective use and eventually using less resources?
- 27) Competence development. How do you assess the competence development /training you have received in order to carry out your present task.
- 28) For NPOs. How can Sida improve its training programs and career program for NPOs?
- 29) For NPOs: How do you see your role in the embassy? (e.g. advisor, programme officer, assisting programme officer, own or shared responsibility for subject matter areas etc) Do you think that your competence is well utilised, do you think you should have more or less responsibilities?
- 30) It has been said that the policy for global development (Pgd) will change the assumptions for field delegation, the argument being that other factors outside the competence and control by Sida will influence the work of development cooperation in the field. How do you comment on this?
- 31) How do you think PGD will impact on the work of your embassy? And your own tasks and way of work? How do you see your communication network change? And your requirements for new knowledge? (for embassies working in “phasing out situations”: relate this question to the issue of” Bredare samarbete”).
- 32) The Paris-declaration will certainly change the way we work. Do you think that this fact is reflected in the FV? What are the implications for FV generally and specifically in your embassies case?
- 33) Is there an issue of the role of the field when the ambition is to maximize the number of big budget support, sector budget support and SWAPs e.g. when it comes to decision making and competence.
- 34) Please give any other comments you think relevant for this evaluation of the filed vision.

Appendix 4

Abbreviations:

DCS	Development cooperation section
FU	Sida Field Unit
FV	The field vision
HQ	Headquarters, Sida-Stockholm
HRD	Human resources development
ITP	International Training Program
JAS	Joint assistance strategies
MFA	The (Swedish) ministry for foreign affairs
NPO	National Program Officer
PGD	Policy for global development
PO	Programme officer
RD	Regional department
SD	Sector department
VP	Operational planning system

Reference Reports:

- Final report from Field Vision Project: Vision for a Strengthened Field Orientation, January 2005
- DG decision 87/04: Strengthening the Field Orientation of Sida (The Field Vision) July 2004
- Internal Audit Memo: Holmgren, Svensson: Fältvisionens konsekvenser för styrningen av Sida, december 2004
- Capacity Study of Sida's Field Organisation in Africa, AFRA, October 2004
- Utvecklings-samarbete och näringsliv i samverkan – förändrade arbetssätt inom, UD, Sida och ambassaderna. H. Åkesson, februari 2006
- Utvecklings-samarbete och näringsliv i samverkan – dialog, arenor och instrument. Karin Rudebeck och Carin Wall, februari 2006.

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