EVALUATION MANUAL FOR SIDA

By Elisabeth Lewin

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Evaluation Manual

for SIDA

by Elisabeth Lewin

1994

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Preface

EVALUATIONS ARE VITAL to improve the quality of development assistance. They are instruments which are used to steer projects towards the attainment of their goals and to provide information on which to base decisions. The knowledge and experience gained during evaluations helps us to understand the mechanisms in play within the development and assistance processes. Another purpose of evaluation is to provide a basis for accountability and information to external audiences. SIDA's evaluations report the results of development assistance. Credibility is assured by the utilisation of external, independent expertise.

The Evaluation Unit at SIDA bears overall responsibility for the evaluation of SIDA's development assistance. However, several of SIDA's other organisational units commission evaluations within their own sectors. Each unit must ensure that the results of these evaluations influence and enhance the activities of SIDA and its recipient countries.

This manual's primary aim is to clarify the role of evaluation as a working tool to SIDA management and personnel and to facilitate the work of evaluation at SIDA. A secondary aim is to explain SIDA's evaluation policy and quality requirements to consultants. Finally, it is also hoped that NGOs involved in development assistance and students interested in evaluation will be able to find information of value in this book.

The manual has no "official" status in that it establishes compulsory instructions for evaluation activities. Formal regulations are published in SIDA's Development Assistance Manual.

The main part of this manual has been written by Elisabeth Lewin, Head of SIDA's Evaluation Unit 1986-90. The first edition of this manual was published in 1992. A second edition followed in 1993. This edition includes a new first step in the evaluation process, the "Start Meeting" introduced by the Evaluation Unit in 1993.

This English version is a translation of the second Swedish edition. It is intended to meet the needs of non-Swedish staff at the Development Co-operation Offices abroad and international consultants contracted by SIDA.

Stefan Dahlgen
Head of Evaluation Unit

Chapter 1

What Are Evaluations and Why Are They Undertaken?

Introduction

EVALUATIONS ARE SYSTEMATIC assessments of projects and programmes, strategies and methods and their results and effects.

Evaluations are, of course, not exclusive to development assistance. They are carried out in all sorts of activities: technical, medical, economic etc – anywhere it is necessary to ascertain if objectives have been achieved, which results and effects the activities have had, which constraints and problems have occurred and if the efforts made have been worth the funds invested.

Evaluation of development assistance is no exact science, but neither is it merely generalised opinions. Evaluation in the development assistance context is implemented in a systematic and methodical fashion and is based on scientific method, expertise and sound common sense.

Evaluation, just as overall development policy, must be based on a concept of what is meant by development, how economic and social change is achieved and which processes lead to the real development of people, communities and nations. It is important to understand the development process on both macro and micro levels.

There is no single development theory which applies to every situation in every country. Various approaches have dominated in different eras and countries, and diverse political systems have espoused different ideas.

Similarly, there is not one single form of approach to, and method of, evaluation but a multitude. Evaluation methodology must be adapted in each individual case to the character of the programme, the context in which the programme is placed and the time and resources available. The aim of the evaluation also affects the choice of approach and data collection methods.

Various reasons for undertaking evaluations

THE PRIMARY AIM of evaluation is to provide knowledge and experience which will lead to improvement of both the quality of development co-operation and the processes of giving and receiving development assistance. By provision of a thorough and independent analysis of the results and effects of the various programmes, evaluations shall provide decision makers at all levels with the opportunity to make well informed decisions. There is a clear link between evaluation activities on the one hand and decision makers both in Sweden and recipient countries on the other. Evaluations are steering instruments. They also function as alarm bells which ring if projects are not leading to the desired results.

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Evaluations also provide information. Even if other objectives dominate, the accountability and information aspects are always present. In addition, evaluations attempt, at a more general level, to increase the level of knowledge of the mechanisms at play within development assistance.

Evaluations teach us what works well, and less well, in the programmes, which problems exist and why the intended objectives have been achieved or not as the case may be. They can prevent the repeat of the same mistakes and so lead to better development assistance.

In summary, evaluation activities can be said to have three major aims:

1) *to improve strategies, projects and programmes.*

Through evaluations of both unsuccessful and successful programmes, knowledge and experience is generated which can improve future development assistance. Availability of funds is always limited in relation to existing needs and it is a legitimate interest for both donors and recipients to achieve the best possible results from available resources. Evaluations can provide knowledge which contributes to an optimal utilisation of resources.

2) *to increase knowledge of development mechanisms and the effectiveness of different strategies*

Evaluations often give rise to debates concerning development objectives and programme design both within SIDA and in society in general. There are many examples of how this has lead to a re-examination and improvement of methods and approaches – both at the project and strategy levels.

Evaluations contribute to the learning process in organisations. In that evaluations demonstrate which strategies and methods are successful, and unsuccessful, and which factors encourage or hinder the attainment of the desired results and effects, they help to teach the management and personnel of all organisations involved. In the long term this should lead to a more effective and efficient development assistance.

3) *to report the results of development assistance*

Result reporting is here defined as the provision of systematic information on the results and effects which have occurred from a development assistance input. This information is required by the *parliament* which has established the goals for development assistance, supplied policy guidelines and allocated funds for its implementation, the *government* which provides instructions to SIDA as to the utilisation of the funds and the *public* which contributes resources through taxation. It should be observed that the information mentioned here does not include financial accounting for allocated funds which is carried out by external auditors.

For SIDA internally, and for the recipient countries the first two aims are the most important. The third aim is, however, fundamental to SIDA's external relations to Parliament, the Government and the general public and is essential to retain political support for development assistance.

Internal users of evaluations

- **SIDA:** sector divisions, regional secretariats, SIDA's Executive and management
- **Recipient countries:** project management, implementing institutions

External users of evaluations

- **Sweden:** Parliament, Government,

the general public

- Recipient countries: Government, public and private institutions, researchers, other donors
- **Donors agencies, international development organisations and research institutions.**

What is evaluation? Definitions and demarcations

ACCORDING TO THE Oxford Dictionary, the verb to evaluate means "to establish or assess the value or result". As applied to Swedish development assistance, the word means an activity which establishes the value and results of those development assistance programmes supported by Sweden.

Within the professional literature of the field, a large number of definitions can be found, some wider or narrower; others more vague or more specific. The Expert Group on Aid Evaluation, formed by OECD's Development Assistance Committee, DAC, representing the evaluation expertise of some twenty bilateral and multilateral development agencies has established the following definition:

> **An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and as objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development of efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.**

SIDA has adopted this definition and the approach it represents.

What, then, characterises evaluations, separates them from other studies and attributes special value to them as decision making tools?

SIDA's Evaluation Unit has formulated the following criteria for evaluations. They shall:

- review programmes which have been implemented for an extended period of time,
- aim at measurement of results and effects against stated goals, analyse causes and effects, examine efficiency, implementing processes and work organisation,
- be based on systematic collection of data and recognised evaluation methods,
- be as objective as possible and implemented by independent expertise who are unconnected to the activity to be evaluated,
- serve as a basis for decision-making and planning concerning continued support and/or the systematic build-up of knowledge in specific areas.

These requirements establish the character of evaluations but do not form an absolute and unambiguous borderline between evaluations and other types of assessment studies. Many other studies fulfil one or more of these requirements, sometimes it is a question of degree rather than type of distinction.

The *independence* criterion is an absolute demand concerning SIDA's evaluations and therefore establishes a demarcation line between evaluations and several other studies which are carried out, at least partially, by SIDA's own staff or by consultants or institutions closely connected with SIDA.

Impartiality in the evaluation process is a precondition for independent, neutral value judgements and decreases the risk of conflicts of interest between those responsible for the programme and the evaluating authority or organisation. Independent evaluators, who have gained experience of similar activities but have not previously been involved in the programme to be evaluated, can take a fresh look at activities and propose new and unconventional ideas and solutions.

An independent evaluation process and a high level of integrity of evaluators give credibility to evaluation results, especially with external interested parties. It must, however, be said that absolute independence is an ideal which is difficult to realise – even independent consultants may have interests to protect.

The position of the evaluation in the project cycle

EVALUATIONS ARE ONLY one of several sources of knowledge at SIDA's disposal. The authority continuously carries out both periodic and ad hoc assessments of projects, programmes, sectoral support, strategies and methods. SIDA has access to a large number of information sources – appraisals, formal and informal project reports , sector reviews, special studies and evaluations. All these sources interact to form SIDA's collected assessment and are the basis for decision making.

It is important that SIDA applies a single terminology with regard to different studies and reports. In-house definitions are as follows:

The *Appraisal* is an assessment of a project idea before SIDA takes the final decision on support. The Appraisal is often carried out by Swedish consultants in order to assist the recipient country in the development of a project idea or to specify and delimit a proposed project. The Appraisal Report forms the basis of the recipient country's request.

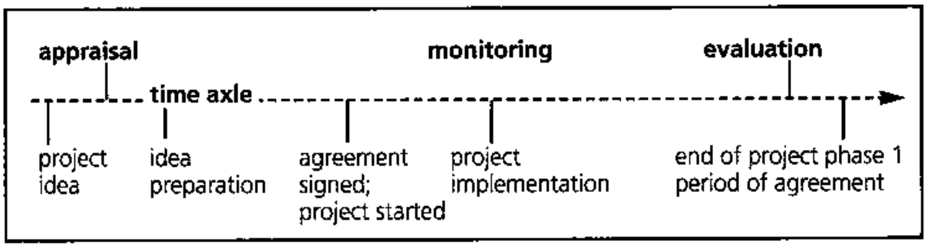
Monitoring is the term used for the continuous reporting concerning utilisation of resources and progress of activities which is carried out during project implementation. The aim is to check that activities are implemented as planned and lead to established objectives. Monitoring should be adapted to the recipient's own reporting procedures as far as possible. Annual sector reviews carried out by SIDA are a part of this process.

Responsibility for this monitoring lies within SIDA at the sector divisions and the Development Co-operation Offices (DCOs) in the countries concerned.

Evaluation is an assessment, after the fact, of the effects and results of a project or programme. Evaluation can be carried out when a long term development assistance project is about to be completed or when one phase of the project, eg an agreement period, comes to an end. The responsibility for evaluations may lie with the Evaluation Unit, the sector division which has administered the project, the Regional Secretariat or the DCO. Division of responsibility, and degree of involvement of Evaluation Unit is decided at the outset of each individual evaluation process at the so called "Start Meeting", (see Page 26 below).

The concepts appraisal, monitoring and evaluation must be clearly separated. It is especially important to remember that project, programme and sector reviews are various forms of monitoring and that evaluation is something totally different.

One distinction between these three



types of study is the timing of their implementation. Their respective places in the project cycle ie time schedule for the project is illustrated in the figure below. The studies are listed above the time axle and the project events below it.

What does the evaluation attempt to measure?

All evaluations differ. Each evaluation must be based on the programme to be evaluated, its objectives, plans, implementation, effects and special problems. It is, however, possible to identify a number of assessments which must be made in the majority of evaluations.

Relevance

Is the Swedish input relevant – in relationship to the needs and problems experienced by the recipient? In relationship to the Swedish development goals?

The degree of relevance has of course been explored before the Swedish support was initiated but the recipient country situation may have undergone change, or mistakes may have been made in the original analysis.

Achievement of objectives

To which degree have the stated objectives been achieved? The analysis concerns objectives at different levels: outputs and project, sectoral and development objectives.

Cause and effect

What were the causes of low or high levels of achievement of objectives? Can a cause and effect relationship be significantly established between the project and the measured results? What have been the main problems experienced during programme implementation? Which constraints and which opportunities exist in the project environment?

Efficiency

What have the activities cost – totally and in relation to results? Have resources been utilised efficiently? Could the same or better results have been achieved with less resources? Could the allocated resources have been utilised more efficiently?

Impact

Which long term results has the programme achieved? Which economic, social or other impact has the programme had on the target group and the society in which they live? Has the programme lead to any permanent and sustainable changes or improvements? Have any unforeseen effects occurred? Positive or negative? Has there been any environmental impact?

Lessons learned

Which important lessons and experience of a more general nature has the evaluation provided? Any lessons of interest to those who are not directly involved in the specific programme should be reported separately in the evaluation report.

Different types of evaluations

SEVERAL DIFFERENT TYPES of evaluation can be distinguished. Evaluations are carried out at *different aggregation levels* – project, programme, sector and country. Evaluations can also be thematic in nature.

NGOs or international organisations which are recipients of Swedish development assistance funds may also be evaluated.

Another possible focus could be the comparison of different development assistance methods. One special type of evaluation is named "impact evaluation". Below follows a brief description of each of the types mentioned above.

Project evaluation is aimed at one single project. This enables a thorough analysis of the entire project and can cover all its important aspects. This type of evaluation is problem oriented and project specific. The results of the evaluation can therefore be of substantial use to the management of the project. Evaluations of pilot projects can gain influence which extends far beyond the actual project in question.

Programme evaluation covers the evaluation of a programme, i.e. several projects which are interconnected and related to the same goal. As an example, the evaluation could cover several projects within the health sector in a country: training, essential drugs, equipping of health centres, support to the planning unit of the Ministry of Health etc. Swedish support to this type of programme is called sector support (see below).

The term programme is also utilised for certain other forms of development assistance which are not connected to projects or sectors, eg commodity assistance, support to structural adjustment programmes, regional programmes, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The concept "non-project assistance" is also used for these forms of assistance.

Sector evaluation concerns the evaluation of a country's sectoral support e.g. the Swedish assistance to several projects which are interconnected and related to the same goal (see above). In these cases the sector evaluation is the same as the programme evaluation. However, a sector evaluation can also cover several different programmes within the same sector in a country, e.g. the industry sector in Tanzania (small industries, rehabilitation o f large scale industrial plant and import support), where each programme has a different goal.

Country evaluation is the highest level of aggregation and consists of an evaluation of all SIDA's (or Sweden's) development assistance to a certain country over an extended period of time. Only a few such evaluations have been carried out to date.

Thematic evaluations cover the evaluation of a series of projects or programmes of the same or similar type, often in different countries. As examples, evaluations of essential drugs programmes, rural electrification programmes and development of teaching materials for primary schools can be mentioned.

Impact evaluations concern studies which attempt to measure the long term impact of a programme. An impact evaluation is only meaningful when a programme has consisted of a massive input aimed at solving a certain problem and has continued for a considerable period of time. An example of such an evaluation is the study carried out on the effect of a measles vaccination campaign on morbidity and mortality from this disease.

According to SIDA's "Guidelines for Project Support", the "input" is the part of the project financed by Sweden. Generally it is impossible to assess the effects of the Swedish contribution separately, only as a part of the project or programme supported.

The prevailing policy is that SIDA's support cannot be viewed as a separate phenomenon, but as an integrated part of a programme for which the recipient country bears the full responsibility. However, within the framework of the evaluation, special attention shall be paid to the Swedish input and SIDA's role in the development process.

Organisational evaluations are undertaken of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are recipients of SIDA funds for the support of development projects. Such studies called "capacity studies" are commissioned by the NGO Division at SIDA with the purpose of assessing these organisations' capacity to manage development assistance projects. International organisations through which SIDA channels development assistance may also be subject to such studies.

Evaluation of development assistance methods, finally, concerns analyses of the effectiveness of various approaches and strategies. As an example may be mentioned the evaluation of the effectiveness of technical assistance personnel or institution to institution collaboration.

Evaluation of multi-bi-projects. In principal, SIDA's mandate is limited to bilateral assistance, while multilateral development assistance is administered by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. However, a considerable portion of bilateral funds is channelled through the United Nations, in the form of multi-bi projects. This arrangement could mean that UNDP and one of specialised agencies of the UN (ILO, UNESCO, WHO etc) together with the recipient country are responsible for the planning and implementation of the project, while SIDA provides the financing. SIDA's role is then to examine the plans and budget before decision on financing is taken, periodically monitor reporting and possibly take part in evaluations.

Within the UN system **annual reviews** of projects are carried out together with more extensive **mid-term reviews** half way through the project period. These tripartite reviews are jointly carried out by co-operating parties: UNDP, recipient country government and the implementing agency. The latter can be one of UN's specialised agencies or a national institution. SIDA is invited to participate in reviews of Swedish financed multi-bi projects. The three parties named above plus the financier, e.g. SIDA, are also invited to take part in final evaluations of multi-bi projects. Generally SIDA 's participation is limited to approving the Terms of Reference, the selection or approval of evaluators, and the examination of the final report, although personal participation in such evaluations does also occur. This involvement provides SIDA with a valuable opportunity to monitor the effective use of development assistance funds and to ensure that they are utilised in accordance with guidelines for Swedish development assistance.

Approches and trends in development assistance

THE CAUSES OF underdevelopment and the processes of development are issues always at the fore for those involved with development assistance. These issues are very complex and there are no simple answers. Development theories change over time, each era is characterised by one or more dominant approach.

Organisations and donors design their development assistance policies in accordance with the approach that they and their decision makers adopt. When the approach changes, so do the policies.

Some clear trends can be distinguished concerning development and development assistance policies. Without claiming total coverage or accuracy, some of the most important trends in the last 30 years may briefly be described as follows:

During the 1960s, when the decolonisation of, primarily, Africa progressed at an increasing pace, an extreme development optimism prevailed. Development, which had been held back by colonialism would take off with the help of massive transfer of capital and technical assistance. **Development was equated with economic growth**. The goal of the UN's first development decade – the 60s – was an annual GNP growth of 5% for developing countries as a group. Towards the end of the decade, the insight that economic growth did not necessarily mean development began to dominate. Theories concerning continued dependence stated that the underdevelopment of the third world was a precondition for continued welfare in industrialised countries. Neo-colonialism became a current concept.

The 70s began with the establishment of a number of global strategies for the development of the third world. The problems were now considered to be so large scale and so complex that **co-ordinated inputs on a global scale** were necessary in order to find a solution to them. **Global UN conferences** followed each other in rapid succession: food supply, population, environment, water, women, industry. Global goals were established. Developing countries demanded that new organisations and special funds be set up for all these specific purposes.

After the first oil crisis of 1973, when the OPEC countries demonstrated their strength and the dependence of the industrialised world, the UN succeeded in adopting a resolution concerning a **New Economic World Order**. Unfair terms of trade were defined as the source of underdevelopment. Alterations in the rules of the game were demanded by the third world including foreign trade, transfer of technology and increased influence in international organisations. The North-South dialogue was initiated with the aim of creating a more equal situation between the industrialised and the developing nations. In Sweden the development assistance debate was widened to include developing countries as a whole and demands were made for a **co-ordinated Swedish development assistance policy**.

In 1976, ILO presented a new approach to development, the so called **basic needs strategy**. The most important development goals were now to fulfil the basic needs of the entire population: food, housing, health, education, employment opportunities. Distribution of resources rather than economic growth was emphasised. Development assistance was increasingly steered towards the social sectors and poorer groups. This strategy was well placed in the Swedish development assistance ideology.

The 1980s brought disappointments. The developmental optimism of the 60s had been replaced by pessimism. The recession in industrialised countries also affected the developing countries negatively in the form of decreased demand and lower prices for their products. Economic policies pursued in many developing countries failed which resulted in decreased agricultural production and ineffective industries. A massive transfer of resources during the 70s and early 80s from the industrialised countries to the developing countries eventually resulted in a paralysing debt crisis.

It became clear that the long term crisis and the enormous debt burden had damaged any preconditions for economic growth and development. A painful restructuring was considered, primarily by donors, as the only way of achieving future development. These therefore offered financial resources to those developing countries which were prepared to implement a structural adjustment programme. Macro economic analyses were increasingly used to design development assistance. Donors entered into "policy dialogues" with recipient countries to a much greater degree, i.e. discussions on the country's total development strategies.

The 80s became, with certain exceptions in e.g. South East Asia, to be concerned much more with survival than development. The 1980s was to be a lost decade for much of Africa and Latin America. Drought in Africa and other natural disasters lead to emergency situations in many countries which threatened the lives of many millions of people. Development assistance increasingly assumed the character of disaster relief. Global and national development plans were put on hold. GNP per capita decreased in many cases to 60s and 70s levels. Social indicators showed deterioration.

It became clear that the State had failed in its role as development motor. Centralisation, abuse of power, inefficiency and faulty investments were considered to be the causes of the negative results. The development model based on a strong governmental apparatus and centralised decision-making was abandoned. A democratisation process was initiated in many countries. In Latin America, a transfer from dictatorship to democracy occurred and by the end of the decade the era of the dictators was past.

Countries' own responsibility for their development was increasingly emphasised towards the end of the 80s. Development assistance can only be help to self help, a support to national development efforts. At the same time, the insight grew stronger that institution building and transfer of knowledge were the most important components to enable the countries themselves to exercise an effective development policy.

The beginning of the 90s is dominated by a development model which places people at the centre of development. The individual as a subject rather than an object. The goal is to provide reasonable living conditions for all, but also access to knowledge and opportunities for people to gain power and influence over their own lives – empowerment. Democracy, human rights and environment are considered important factors which affect human quality of life. Instead of the traditional living standard measurement – GNP/capita – UNDP has constructed a new measurement of development, the **"human development index"** which reflects the social as well as the economic life situation.

Development concepts are formulated to a lesser degree than before by the State. The role of the State has decreased and the public sector been reduced. Decentralised systems are partially replacing central planning and market forces determine production. **Self-reliance, independence and sustainable development** are important development goals for the 90s.

Global issues such as environment have been awarded an increasingly important role by the industrialised world. This is often reflected in donor development priorities.

Chapter 2

Evaluations at SIDA

The tasks of the Evaluation Unit

THE CENTRAL Evaluation Unit at SIDA reports directly to the Director-General. Organisationally the unit forms a part of the Planning Secretariat. The unit is independent of the operative sections, i.e. the sector divisions and regional secretariats.

In spite of the comparatively strong position of the Evaluation Unit, SIDA can be said to employ a decentralised evaluation system as it is the sector divisions which have the responsibility for the major part of project and programme evaluations. The Evaluation Unit concentrates its resources on a limited number of comprehensive and principally important evaluations.

One of the tasks of the Evaluation Unit is to *promote quality and independence* in all SIDA evaluations including those commissioned by the sector divisions or regional secretariats. The independence criterion dictates that evaluators shall be independent and unconnected to the decision making, administration and responsibility for the programme to be evaluated. This same independence should, in principle, apply to all stages of the evaluatio n process: decisions to evaluate programmes, design of Terms of Reference, selection of evaluators and approval and publishing of reports. The most important tasks of the Evaluation Unit are :

Establishment of Evaluation Plan

SIDA's Evaluation Unit proposes, after discussion with other units in the organisation, an Evaluation Plan for each financial year. This rolling plan covers three consecutive financial years. The final plan is approved by the Director-General on an annual basis.

The Evaluation Plan is an important policy instrument for SIDA as it determines the focus of the organisation's evaluations and therefore also the feedback and learning which is to occur.

Responsibility for implementation of certain evaluations

THE EVALUATION UNIT initiates, and is responsible for, the implementation of a limited number of general or thematic evaluations each year. This task tends to take an increasing amount of the unit's human resources.

The evaluations undertaken by the Evaluation Unit are generally of interest to several divisions and units, within SIDA and can significantly contribute to the overall development of knowledge in the organisation.

Provision of support to other units within SIDA

THE EVALUATION UNIT provides support and service to sector divisions and regional secretariats regarding planning and implementation of evaluations, design of terms of reference, organisation of evaluation process, selection of consultants and dissemination of evaluation results. Expertise in evaluation methodology, experience of management of evaluation processes, knowledge of consultants available in such areas as transfer of knowledge, institutional development, leadership and organisation, gender and environmental issues plus experience of effective feedback of results and lessons learned from evaluations can be found within the unit.

Training SIDA personnel in the management of the evaluation process

IN CO-OPERATION WITH SIDA's Personnel Development Division, the Evaluation Unit has the task of training SIDA personnel in the management of the evaluation process. Consultants may also participate in this type of training.

Follow-up of evaluation results

IT IS ALSO the responsibility of the Evaluation Unit to ensure that results and recommendations are taken into account when subsequent phases of the evaluated projects are under preparation.

Stimulation of Organisational Learning

IT IS IMPORTANT that general experience and lessons learned are internalised and lead to organisational learning. This information must be utilised in the planning of other inputs and the establishment and enhancement of strategies (see Chapter 6).

Using completed evaluations as a basis and in co-operation with the operative units, the Evaluation Unit attempts to disseminate the knowledge and experience gained and thereby stimulate learning within the organisation.

Publication of an annual report and individual evaluation reports

THE EVALUATION UNIT has an information mandate vis a vis the different interested parties, primarily outside SIDA. A reference library containing all SIDA evaluation reports since 1968 is maintained and an annual catalogue issued. A selection of evaluation reports are published in book form in the series "Bistånd Utvärderat" in Swedish and "SIDA Evaluation Reports" in English.

Beginning 1993, the Evaluation Unit publishes an Annual Report which includes a report on current evaluation themes and a summary of evaluations within a special field. Summaries of the previous year's evaluations are also included. The Evaluation Annual Report is a complement to SIDA's Annual General Report.

Responsibility for analysis of results in SIDA's budget proposal (FAF)

IN 1991, the Swedish Government introduced a system by which SIDA is required to report the concrete results of development assistance activities (FAF).

Even though the organisation as a whole must respond to this demand, Evaluation Unit has the main responsibility for the analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of development assistance programmes.

The Evaluation Plan

PLANNING IS INITIATED when proposals for evaluations are submitted by the operative divisions, regional secretariats and DCOs in connection with their annual planning exercise in March and April each year. Each proposed evaluation shall be well justified and fulfil certain requirements. Together with SIDA's Executive, the Evaluation Unit has a special responsibility to initiate evaluations which are of general interest to the entire organisation.

The Evaluation Unit makes a selection of proposed evaluations and proposes a preliminary plan to be discussed with SIDA's operative units, regional secretariats and Executive. The final plan is approved by decision of the Director-General, usually in May each year, and then distributed to all units in the organisation, including the DCOs.

The plan encompasses 20-30 evaluations per financial year. It should be emphasised that these studies are merely part of all the evaluations carried out by SIDA each year. Further project evaluations or detailed monitoring reports are carried out and entirely administered by the sector division or regional secretariat concerned. The common factors for all evaluations included in the plan are that they fulfil the necessary criteria and that the Evaluation Unit takes responsibility for them.

Evaluations included in the plan can be divided into three categories:

1. **Studies undertaken entirely by the Evaluation Unit.** These are marked (PLAN) in the Evaluation Plan.
2. **Priority evaluations** which are undertaken by a sector division or other unit within SIDA but in which the Evaluation Unit participates in certain phases and thereby attempts to guarantee a certain quality. These evaluations are named **priority evaluations** and marked in the plan by the use of boldface type. The Evaluation Unit participates in the design of the terms of reference, selection of consultants, checking of final report and feed back.

Approval of Terms of Reference and choice of consultant by the Evaluation Unit is compulsory for priority evaluations. As well as *actual* consultations, the Evaluation Unit shall *formally* approve these matters and be named on the decision form under "consulted" (samråd). Consultations also take place in the "Start Meeting" which is held to initiate an evaluation. Co-operation between the division responsible, the Evaluation Unit and other int erested parties, e.g. regional secretariats, shall be carried out according to prescribed administrative routines. A successful working model could be to form a *steering committee* (see Chapter 3, pages 26 and 38).

3. **Other evaluations entirely undertaken by sector divisions.** On request from the division concerned, the Evaluation Unit will assist in the form of advice and support regarding the design of Terms of Reference and choice of consultant, but no formal approval is required. The "Start Meeting" shall also be called for non priority evaluations.

It is obligatory to keep the Evaluation Unit informed of the progress of the implementation of the evaluation and furnish the unit with some copies of the final report. This is essential if all evaluation reports mentioned in the plan are to be kept in the Evaluation Unit's reference library.

which may be applied in other projects and programmes. The same is also true for evaluations of pilot projects and experimental activities.

5. **Question.** Evaluation results, particularly the unexpected ones, may question what is being done and may give rise to debate concerning objectives, programme designs, strategies or methods of implementation. Eventually this may lead to changes in these areas.
6. **Choose between different projects.** Evaluations can be used as a tool when two or more projects are in competition for funding, by reporting which project is most effective and efficient and therefore worth supporting. This can be specially useful in times of decreasing resources.
7. **Report and assess effectiveness and efficiency** of utilisation of development assistance funds. This function is of primary importance concerning SIDA's external principals – the Parliament, the Government and the general public.

A prerequisite for the influence of evaluations is, of course, *their active utilisation both within the development assistance authority and in the recipient country*. The greatest risk to the successful fulfilment of the Evaluation Unit's functions is that the evaluations are not put to use, that the reports gather dust on shelves and are not disseminated, read or discussed. Implementation of an evaluation is only half the job; to ensure that it influences decision making and learning within both donor and recipient organisations is the other half.

Abuse of evaluations

Evaluations are not always the objective and unbiased studies they claim to be. They are powerful weapons which can be used for obscure and unexpressed aims. It is wise to remember the risk of abuse. There are good reasons to be aware of the following situations:

- The real aim of the evaluation can be to validate decisions which have, to all practical purposes, already been taken, i.e. the evaluation is expected to provide arguments to back up a decision and thereby create opinion *within the organisation* for a certain action. An evaluation is demanded for a project, already known to be a failure, in order to obtain "objective support" for the difficult decision to terminate support.
- In close connection to the above is the evaluation undertaken to legitimise a programme or course of action which has been *questioned or criticised by outsiders*. An attempt is made to prove that the "right things" are being done, instead of reporting the real problems.
- An evaluation can be used to postpone difficult decisions e.g. cancelling a project, with the excuse that more information is needed.
- An evaluation can be used to cover up failure or mistakes by limiting the study to activities which have succeeded. Undesirable evaluation results can be ignored by claiming that the evaluators lack sufficient competence, independence or other prerequisites to carry out the evaluation.

- An evaluation can be used to sink a project, e.g. during a power struggle or other conflict between interested parties.

These examples are taken from literature on evaluations. They are included in order to make the user or commissioner of evaluations aware of abuse situations, not because they are common at SIDA or in any other development assistance organisation.

Review of the origins and development of evaluation

EVALUATION AS A CONCEPT within behavioural science has its origin in the 1930s in USA when the need arose to measure the target group effects of the social programme introduced during Franklin D Roosevelt's presidency. However it was not until the 60s and 70s that evaluations became a common method within the social sciences. Several of the standard works on the subject have their origins in this period.[1]

In Sweden, evaluation was first developed and applied in the 50s, primarily in the public school system through the auspices of Professor Torsten Husén. During more recent times the primary methodological innovators in the field have been the National Audit Board, the National Office for Rationalisation and Economy and the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, all of whom have a mandate to assess the efficiency of the public sector and the civil service.

During the 70s, evaluations were seen as a tool for project steering and policy development in development assistance agencies. After the first enthusiastic period of continuously expanding development assistance allocations and programmes and approaches often built on very shaky ground, a need was felt to take a breather in order to review and critically examine experience from activities to date. By the beginning of the 80s most donors had established evaluation units.

The United States Agency for International Development, USAID, has lead the field in development of approaches and methods such as the LFA – Logical Framework Analysis – a method which has later been applied by a substantial number of donors including NORAD and DANIDA. Within the UN system, concerted efforts have been made to standardise terminology. The World Bank has invested considerable resources in evaluation and has become a leading light concerning methodology development, especially cost/benefit analysis. This method is especially applicable to infrastructure projects, the Bank's most common field of operations at the time.

During the 80s, most attention was paid to evaluation as an instrument for project steering. The work of methodology development continued among donors in co-operation, primarily within OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) where a special expert group on evaluation was formed.

Utilisation of evaluation results was, however, considered to be the weak link in the evaluation process at the end of the 80s and considerable efforts were made by development agencies to improve and

1. For example Edward A Suchman: Evaluate Research, Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs,(1967) Carol Weiss: Evaluation Research in the Political Context (1975), Michael Quinn Patton: Qualitative Evaluation Methods(1980) and Peter H Rossi and Howard E Freeman: Evaluation, a Systematic Approach (1982)

systemise the feedback of knowledge and experience generated by evaluations. Another weak link was considered to be the recipient countries' lack of interest and involvement in evaluation activities.

The more general evaluations began to be seen as a tool for improving the quality of development assistance and as a valuable source of organisational learning about the development assistance process. SIDA's Evaluation Unit was formed as early as 1973. The evaluation function has, since then, developed in pace with increased demands and improved evaluation methods. Parallel with this growth, the Evaluation Unit has gradually acquired a stronger position within the organisation.

All larger donors now include one or several evaluation units. These units are either located within the governmental development assistance authority (Denmark, Sweden, Great Britain, Canada, USA) or within the ministry charged with the supervision of development assistance (Norway, Germany). In a few cases evaluation units are located both within and outside the development assistance authority (Holland). The World Bank has chosen a different model in that its evaluation unit is a totally independent department which reports directly to the Board of the Bank and not to its operative management.

The organisational location of the evaluation unit is not unimportant as it can be assumed that the choice of organisational form reflects the attitude to evaluation activities. In those cases where an independent, external evaluation function exists as in Norway and Holland, its main task is to examine and exercise control over development assistance and the work of the development assistance authority from a policy point of view. Studies undertaken are usually wide in scope and are carried out over a longer time period, generally one to two years. Evaluations are on a political/strategic level and the control function is important. In cases such as the Swedish model, however, when the Evaluation Unit is located within the development assistance authority and carries on close co-operation with the operative units, the emphasis is instead placed on the evaluation function as a provider of information on which to base decisions and as a source of organisational learning.

There has also been an evaluation function at ministry level in Sweden. The post of Development Assistance Inspector existed in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for some years at the beginning of the 80s. This position was cancelled and instead two posts as evaluators were established in the Department for International Co-operation of the same Ministry, one to examine bilateral development assistance and the other multilateral.

A study of the quality of decision-making processes in Swedish aid organisations initiated in 1989 by the Foreign Ministry of Sweden proposed the establishment of a special secretariat for the evaluation and analysis of development assistance. The Secretariat for Analysis of Swedish Development Assistance (SASDA) began its work in 1993. It's mandate is related to fundamental issues in Sweden's development co-operation policy. It does not replace the evaluation units of the individual development authorities. SIDA, SAREC, BITS and SWEDECORP continue to bear evaluation responsibility within their respective areas.

The Characteristics of a Good Evaluation System

EVALUATIONS ARE A representational reflection of development assistance activities.

- Evaluation of large scale, problematic, complicated or principally important programmes are given priority.
- Evaluations are focused on issues which are important for decision making within the donor agency and in the public administrations of the recipient countries; evaluations provide new knowledge and contribute to organisational learning rather than merely confirm what is already known.
- Evaluations are carried out from an independent perspective, using innovative approaches.
- Evaluations have credibility. The degree of credibility is, among other things, dependent on the quality of the personnel responsible for the evaluation process, choice of evaluators, survey methods used, the degree of balance in the evaluation conclusions (i.e. expression of both positive and negative aspects), design of evaluation report plus the degree of open and critical discussion concerning the evaluation implementation and conclusions between the various interested parties.
- Evaluations are timely i.e. the results are presented at a point when just this type of information is needed, e.g. at certain stages in the project cycle when decisions are to be made or when a certain problem becomes acute. This demands forward planning from those who schedule the evaluations and a certain sensitivity as to currents in the development assistance world.
- Evaluation results are utilised. This requires that conclusions and possible recommendations are relevant, that credibility is high, that they are presented clearly and understandably and that they are disseminated to all interested parties in the development assistance process.
- Both partners in the development process, not only the donor but also the recipient, participate actively and are committed to the evaluation process. This is specially important for the dissemination and feedback of the evaluation results.

A Litmus Test for Effective Evaluation Systems

(Abstract from checklist developed by the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom, ODA)

1. Is the selection of evaluation topics consistent with the stated evaluation purpose?
2. Does the purpose include providing an assessment of programme worth?
3. Are the resources and evaluation staff numbers adequate for independent evaluation?
4. Does the evaluation system provide the necessary degree of independence by:
   a. Not reporting to line management?
   b. Issuing evaluation reports in the name of their authors?
   c. Making the evaluation unit and those to whom the unit reports responsible for the choice of evaluators, evaluation topics and Terms of Reference for studies?
5. Does the evaluation department report to the right level within the organisation? If the evaluation department/unit reports to a senior management committee, does the committee include a senior advocate and supporter of independent evaluation?
6. Are all programmes evaluated by a team organised independently of line management?
7. Are all line managers expected to submit their own assessments on programme results and lessons?
8. Are there clear responsibilities set out for incorporating past lessons in programme design?
9. Does the governing body have unfettered access to programme worth reports?

Chapter 3

The Evaluation Process Step by Step

THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER is to assist SIDA's project administrators to plan, commission, manage and check evaluations of projects [2] and programmes.

Evaluations are strategic instruments for SIDA as a donor. Some of SIDA's personnel regularly initiate, plan and manage evaluations. This role presupposes a certain knowledge and understanding of the evaluation process and the various steps included in it.

The different phases in the evaluation process are described below in order of implementation, with special emphasis on the responsibilities of the SIDA project administrator.

Step 1: The decision to evaluate

A REMINDER OF the three major aims of evaluations as discussed in Chapter 1:

1) To steer the project and to improve projects and strategies
2) To increase knowledge on the mechanisms at play within development assistance, and to test and renew approaches and methods.
3) To report development assistance results.

The first step in the evaluation process is, of course, to take the decision to evaluate a certain project. This must be a carefully considered decision as an evaluation is not something to be undertaken lightly and demands a considerable amount of work, involvement and financial resources. For this reason it may be sometimes better to decide not to evaluate, if e.g. the project has developed as expected and sufficient knowledge of the project 's results and effects can be gained through efficient monitoring.

Sometimes the decision to evaluate is made when the project is at the planning stage. This may occur when, for example, a project is planned in clearly defined phases and each phase is dependent on experiences from its predecessor. This also occurs when an activity is planned as a pilot project on a small scale in order to, when the experience gained has been analysed and absorbed, continue on a larger scale.

Sometimes evaluations are specified in agreements, i.e. SIDA and the recipient country have made a formal agreement that an evaluation shall be undertaken at a certain point in time. The advantage of this system is that both parties are prepared for an evaluation which makes the whole process less dramatic. The disadvantage is that the evaluation is expected to be carried out whether there is a real need or not.

In other cases, the decision to evaluate is made while the project is ongoing. One reason for this could be that an assessment is thought necessary before decision to prolong is taken and that experience gained is to be incorporated into the next phase. However, the reason

2. The word "project" will be used as a group name for projects, programmes and sector support i.e. the different activities which are normally evaluated by SIDA.

advance; six months before the actual evaluation takes place is a suitable period.

Participants shall include sector division administrators, country desk officers plus possibly other members who may have valuable opinions on the matter as well as a representative from the Evaluation Unit. The desk officers shall have obtained any relevant ideas from the DCO prior to the meeting. The meeting deals with issues such as division of responsibilities, time schedule, approach and main design components of the evaluation.

It may be advisable to establish a *steering committee* from the outset which may consist of representatives of the sector divisions, the regional secretariats, the Evaluation Unit plus possibly expert members or institutional consultants. The Programme Officer at the DCO may be appointed as a correspondent member.

The work of the steering committee is often a natural prolongation of the START MEETING.

The following issues should be discussed and decided within the steering committee before the Terms of Reference is established:

- The aim of the evaluation .
- Who is the evaluation for?
- Its scope and focus.
- The background and competence needed by the evaluators.
- The time schedule for implementation.
- Estimated costs and sources of financing.

Step 2: The design of the Terms of Reference

ONCE THE DECISION to implement an evaluation has been taken, the next step is to design the Terms of Reference .

The importance of investing sufficient time and energy into the Terms of Reference cannot be overemphasised. This is the primary instrument used to ensure that SIDA receives the evaluation desired and instructs the chosen consultant correctly. The Terms of Reference establishes the framework for the evaluation and states SIDA's requirements. The selection and contracting of the consultant is based on the Terms of Reference as well as the assessment of the final evaluation report. A well designed and accurate Terms of Reference considerably increases the chances of receiving a relevant and useful evaluation .

The establishment of a good Terms of Reference is no easy or rapidly accomplished task. It must be unambiguous, well thought out and all interested parties must have agreed on the contents. Normally several rounds of consultations and redesign must be concluded before a Terms of Reference can finally be established.

The process must be allowed the necessary time. All parties concerned at SIDA and in the recipient countries must receive *real opportunities to influence the scope and focus of the evaluation.* In an ideal situation there should be at least 6 months between the first planning meeting and the beginning of the evaluation.

The responsibility for Terms of Reference design usually lies with the project administrator at SIDA . This task is included in the administrator's *official duties of public governance and may not be* they are not directly involved in the operative activities.

The independence criterion is less important in evaluations whose aim is the increase of knowledge, when no important decisions are to be based on the outcome or where the risk of conflict of interest is considered small. In these cases it may be acceptable for SIDA personnel or representatives of SIDA's institutional consultants to participate as consultative experts. These cases are however exceptions and even then a SIDA officer shall in no case be a full member of the evaluation team. However, the project administrator at SIDA Stockholm and the Programme Officer at DCO should not participate in this type of evaluation either, as they are too closely related to the project and belong to those parties who have a vested interest in the evaluation. Their role is to steer the consultants , furnish as much information as possible to them and provide useful contacts.

The advantages of employing external, independent evaluators are several: the results of the evaluation receive a higher degree of credibility and are therefore more easily accepted, evaluators who have exactly the correct special knowledge required can be contracted and can, in the light of their previous knowledge of other development assistance projects or activities, contribute fresh ideas and a new perspective on the activities.

The participation of the recipient country in the evaluation is an important issue.

SIDA's aim is to include at least one member from the recipient country on every evaluation team. This is partly due to the importance of incorporating the country's own perspective into the evaluation and partly to facilitate feedback in the country itself. An additional advantage is that transfer of knowledge and training in evaluation techniques is also achieved. This team member however shall not be considered as a *representative* of the recipient country. It is therefore important that SIDA officers avoid the use of the expression "recipient country representative" during contacts concerning the evaluation as these words send incorrect signals. In spite of this, the recipients commonly propose civil servants from involved ministries as members. This is *clearly unsuitable* as the individual cannot be expected to maintain a critical stance concerning the evaluated activities. It is better to locate suitable personnel in universities, research institutions or consultancy companies.

The size of the evaluation team may vary according to the nature and complexity of the evaluation. Most evaluations are carried out by a team of 2-5 people. A smaller team is preferable, if it fulfils required qualifications, as larger numbers increase the complexity of logistics and co-ordination within the team and bring higher costs.

The team generally needs a professional expert (agronomist, educationalist etc according to the orientation of the programme) plus an expert on development with knowledge of the country and the region. *Knowledge of evaluation methodology and approaches* should also be represented on the team to counteract the narrow, technical view of development which is often found in professional specialists. It must not be assumed that the professional expert shall automatically be the team leader, instead someone with thorough knowledge of SIDA and Swedish development assistance policy as well as experience of evaluations may be chosen.

In summary, it could be said that the evaluation team should include the following areas of competence: professional knowledge, development policy and evaluation expertise, knowledge of the country and the project environment and knowledge of gender and environmental issues. It is preferable to include both men and women on the team and desirable to include representatives from the Nordic countries as well as from the recipient country.

Procurement of consultancy services for evaluation shall follow the same formal regulations as procurement of other consultants (see SIDA's Manual on Procurement of Consultancy Services). As mentioned earlier, the Evaluation Unit shall approve the choice of consultant for priority evaluations. In this way the independence criterion can be fulfilled as it is not the responsible sector division alone who selects the evaluation team.

A formal contract is established with the selected consultant/s well in advance of the beginning of the evaluation. The Terms of Reference shall be the basis of the agreement and be included as an annex. The recipient country consultant is procured by the DCO after approval from SIDA Stockholm; the DCO establishes a suitable contract with him/her.

Step 4: Implementation

Once the team has been contracted, the administrator at SIDA should meet the members, or at least the team leader, for a thorough discussion of the task and SIDA's expectations concerning the completed report. This meeting gives an opportunity to provide information, discuss implementation, methodology and division of responsibilities as well as establishing a time schedule and travel plan.

This is also a suitable occasion for the SIDA administrator to provide more informal knowledge of the project, its environment, problems and conflicts. The chance must be taken here to provide the consultant with the best possible background information. For larger, very comprehensive evaluations, SIDA should request proposals concerning the structure of the study, suggested approaches, methods of data collection and estimated costs, before the evaluation itself is initiated.

An evaluation can sometimes be perceived as something threatening or intrusive by the recipient country, it is therefore vital that SIDA provides full information or, if necessary, requests approval from all parties concerned before the evaluation begins.

Larger scale evaluations are sometimes preceded by a preparatory desk study including a summary of documentation concerning the project and its environment. The reason for this study is to provide relevant information for the evaluation team in a concentrated form, with the aim of saving time and improving quality. This pre-study is carried out by the project personnel or by researchers or consultants in Sweden or in the recipient country. The desk study must be initiated sufficiently in advance for the material to be available when the evaluation starts. A special Terms of Reference shall be established for this pre-study. It is advantageous if the team leader takes an active part in this.

It can be motivated, in the case of large scale, more complex evaluations that the evaluation team, or at least the team leader, travels to the country in question one or two months before the field phase of the actual evaluation starts, to plan the process and possibly initiate pre-studies or data collection activities on site.

Normally, a welcome period of tranquillity is experienced by the project administrator as soon as the evaluation proper actually begins. If no acute problems arise and if the team does not request complementary material, the project administrator does not need to intervene and can wait calmly for the evaluation report.

All evaluations are differently structured but they also have many characteristics in common. The implementation of a typical evaluation is described at the end of this chapter on Page 34.

Step 5: Reporting

ONCE THE DRAFT report has been submitted to SIDA, it is the responsibility of the project administrator to distribute copies as rapidly as possible to the members of the steering committee, the DCO and other individuals or institutions in the recipient country with a request for comments within a reasonable period of time.

The report should be examined using the following points of departure:

- Does the form and content of the report correspond to the requirements stated in the Terms of Reference (compare to points under heading "The Task")?
- Have all the important issues been dealt with satisfactorily?
- Are the conclusions logical and well supported by facts and data presented in the evaluation?
- Is the analysis well performed and do the results have credibility?
- Are the methodology and constraints of the evaluation well described?
- Are the results presented in a clear and unambiguous fashion? Is the form, presentation, language and the technical quality of printing satisfactory?

The Evaluation Unit has designed a checklist for *assessment of evaluation reports* to use during this examination (see Annex 4 of this manual).

When the stated period for comments has expired, the SIDA administrator shall summarise comments from SIDA and other parties and forward them to the evaluating team. Even more advantageous is a meeting between the evaluators and the steering committee.

The evaluators shall produce a final report on the basis of the comments received. It should be observed here that the above mentioned comments should not aim at influencing the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluators. They should merely be aimed at the need for complementation of information, indication of errors or misunderstandings or proposals concerning improved presentation. It does occasionally happen, of course, that additions to or editing of the draft report is not necessary. Consultancy fees shall not be disbursed in full until the final evaluation report has been submitted and approved.

When the final evaluation report has been submitted, *SIDA shall respond to the conclusions and recommendations stated in the evaluation.* A good method is to organise a *"response meeting"* at SIDA between all involved parties to discuss the scope and form of measures to be taken as a result of the evaluation. It is not of course necessary for SIDA to accept all the assessments or recommendations proposed by the evaluation. It is recommended that a Memo be written or detailed Minutes of the meeting taken in order to document SIDA's views on the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations. These should be filed together with the evaluation report so that future administrators will be able to understand actions taken. An excellent idea is to hold a follow-up meeting 6-12 months afterwards to check that measures have been followed up.

Step 6: Feedback – dissemination – publication

Unfortunately there is a tendency to invest considerable time, resources and interest in the actual evaluations themselves, but to treat the feedback and dissemination of results a little more lightly. However it is not the evaluation itself but its *effect* that is the most important part of the evaluation process. Feedback is an integrated component of the evaluation process. Its application shall be discussed during the evaluation planning phase. The evaluation is not completed until the conclusions and recommendations have been made available to all interested parties and thoroughly discussed from all points of view.

The *direct feedback* at project and programme level to administrators at SIDA Stockholm and DCOs usually functions in a satisfactory fashion. There is a natural, immediate need of the evaluation results among these groups of personnel, especially if they are in the process of making decisions concerning a new phase in the project. However the evaluation can also provide valuable information to those who recruit personnel, select, procure and train consultants or support the project through procurement of goods. It is therefore important to ensure that these groups also participate in discussions concerning the results of the evaluation and the lessons that can be learned for the future.

The main responsibility for the dissemination of the results of the evaluation lies with the SIDA administrator, but the programme officer at the DCO also has an important role to play in the process of feedback in the recipient country. It may be suitable for the same group which participated in the Start Meeting to reunite after the completion of the evaluation and discuss the feedback procedure in detail. The administrator responsible should consider the following during the feedback procedure:

- **that the information produced by the evaluation is available** – inform through suitable channels when the report is finalised, print the report in sufficient numbers to facilitate distribution.
- **that the report is made available to the correct people** – well thought out and rapid distribution at the point in time when the information is in demand. Distribution in the recipient county through DCO should also be considered.
- **that the report is easy to read – well written and edited,** not too long, good executive summary, sui-

table language and easily legible print.

- **that opportunity for discussion is afforded to all interested parties** – organise a seminar at SIDA and preferably in the recipient country as well.
- **that SIDA's assessment of the evaluation and decisions on measures to be taken are formulated.** This takes the form of an action plan for SIDA during the continuation of activities.

The *reporting* to higher levels of decision and policy making must be *selective*. SIDA's Executive is not so interested in the exact results of each individual project as much as the experience gained and lessons learned which may be applied in a wider context.

Dissemination and feedback must be carried out in several different forms adapted to the various target groups. Certain groups need detailed information whilst for others it is sufficient to receive a short summary and the most important conclusions. Below are listed various ways of disseminating evaluation results:

1) Distribute summaries (approx. 2 pages) to a wider circle. The Executive Summary which is an obligatory part of each evaluation report shall be suitable for this purpose. It is therefore important that SIDA ensure high quality in this part of the report.
2) Make summaries of important evaluation results either on an annual or sector basis or concentrating on a certain aspect of development assistance such as those produced for FAF – SIDA's detailed budget proposal.
3) Make brief presentations in SIDA's Management Committee of the more important evaluations. (The Evaluation Unit in co-operation with the division concerned).
4) Organise seminars in connection with the more important evaluations either in Sweden or in the recipient country.
5) Publish selected evaluations in the Evaluation Unit publications "Bistånd Utvärderat" or "SIDA Evaluation Report" or in the series published by the sector divisions themselves.
6) Send press releases or organise press conferences on specially significant or unusual evaluation results.
7) Maintain the reference library for evaluation reports which is available to administrators, researchers and consultants.

A vital task for the Evaluation Unit and divisional management is to ensure that those responsible for project planning and implementation apply the knowledge gained in planning of new projects.

Implementation of a typical evaluation – an example

Preparation phase

1. Study of project documentation: Appraisal and Feasibility studies, Idea Memos, Project Support Memos, Plan of Operation, routine reporting and any previous evaluations.
2. Planning of actual evaluation. Develop operational evaluation issues. Establishment of work plan and methodology. Decisions on time schedules and travel plans plus division of responsibilities between team members.
3. Discussion with principals concerning design, desirable focuses in the evaluation, background to and possible implicit motives for evaluation and selection of problem areas to be illuminated. Considering that the Terms of Reference is an official, formal document of quite brief format there may be valuable additional information that should be shared with the evaluation team.

Implementation (field) phase

4. The evaluation team's stay in the recipient country is normally initiated by a visit to the DCO followed by formal introductions of the team and its task to those authorities which bear responsibility for the activities to be evaluated. The Team Leader should be equipped with a number of copies of the Terms of Reference to be distributed to the main institutions and people who are interested. Sometimes two visits to the country of operation are necessary.
5. Project visits, observation, collection of data, interviews, discussions.
6. Collation and analysis of data and other information . Possible checking and complementing of information.
7. Discussions within the team and establishment of conclusions.
8. Presentation of preliminary conclusions to responsible authorities, project management and DCO before the team leaves the recipient country.

Final Phase

9. Report writing. Team members write their individual chapters. The Team Leader is responsible for editing, completion and submission of the evaluation report to SIDA .
10. Presentation of report and conclusions to principals. Possibly participation in a seminar or discussion on evaluation and its result.

Terms of Reference – form and contents

1. BACKGROUND

(half a page to one page long)

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION of the project. Which problems was the project intended to solve? What were its objectives? Which target group was assigned and how were they expected to be influenced? How long has the project been in action? Which activities were carried out? Where? How is the project structured? Who are SIDA's development partners? Who is responsible in the recipient country? What is the project environment like? What has the project cost to date? How have the resources been utilised? Which phase is the project in now, e.g. middle or final phase? Is it to be finalised or has it already been completed?

In order to ensure that this section is clear and concise it is best to draw the information from official SIDA documentation. As documents in Swedish – e.g. the Idea Memo – have the disadvantage of only being understood by the donors, it is an advantage if the Terms of Reference is based on documents which can be understood by all parties involved – recipients, non Swedish speaking consultants etc. The Agreement on Co-operation and the Plan of Operation are good examples of such documents.

2. REASON FOR EVALUATION

(8-15 lines)

WHY IS THE PROJECT to be evaluated? Why at just this point in time? How is the information the evaluation is expected to produce to be used? Who are the principals? Which other interested parties are there?

Most evaluations are undertaken for one or more of the following reasons:

- One phase of the project will soon be finalised and an analysis of results is needed for decision on and planning of the next phase.
- SIDA has to make a decision whether to continue or terminate support to the project.
- Experience and lessons from just this project are needed for utilisation in other contexts.
- The project is not working satisfactorily and it is necessary to find out exactly what the problems are and how they can be solved.
- The project has come to an end and the results and experiences should be summarized.

3. THE TASK

(1-2 pages)

THIS IS THE CORE of the Terms of Reference, its most important section. The following shall be included:

- What are the main issues to be examined by the evaluation? Which parts of the activities are to be paid special attention? Which parts are to be treated more superficially?
- What shall the project be compared to? Which objectives? Which points of departure shall be utilised? (It is an advantage to de-

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fine which documents and stated objectives the evaluation is to be based upon in the Terms of Reference).

- Which types of analysis are to be made?
- Which aspects shall the evaluation cover? (It is impossible to evaluate everything, the most significant aspects must be selected).

Generally the evaluation shall cover at least the following aspects: relevance, achievement of objectives, cause and effect analysis, effects on target groups (gender specific) efficiency and sustainability of results. Assessments as to competence development, institutional development and environmental effects are generally also included.

4. METHODOLOGY, EVALUATION TEAM AND TIME SCHEDULE

(half a page to one page long)

IT MUST BE EMPHASISED that it is not merely the time schedule which is to be included here but also the organisation of the evaluation and the approaches to be used.

How does the principal expect the evaluation to be implemented? Which parts are to be carried out in Sweden and which in the recipient country? The evaluation consists of which different phases? Is it to be implemented in one or two stages? (The two stage model implies a planning phase in the recipient country before the evaluation proper takes place). Has a baseline study been carried out? Shall a feasibility study be carried out before the actual work of the team begins?

Which SIDA documentation and other background material is to be studied before the evaluation? Which places or sites should be visited? Which data is to be collected? Which methods of data collection are anticipated? Which interviews are to be made in Sweden respectively recipient country?

How many people shall be included in the team? Which areas of competence should they possess? In which ways shall people from the recipient country participate? Is it possible for them to carry out pre or sub-studies on site which may form background material for the evaluation?

How many weeks shall the evaluation take? When is it to be carried out? When is it to be completed? How is the time to be divided between preparation, field visits, analysis and report writing?

If SIDA has appointed a steering committee for this evaluation, state here its members and their respective roles.

A methodology and time schedule also forms a good basis on which to base an approximate cost estimate for the evaluation. Information on costs and budget should not, however be included in the Terms of Reference as this document must be available for wide distribution.

5. REPORTING

(approx. a quarter of a page)

STATE THAT A SUMMARY, spoken or in writing, covering the preliminary conclusions shall be delivered to the responsible authorities, the DCO and project management before the team leaves the recipient country.

State the date that the draft report is to be submitted to SIDA and mention in how many copies it shall be submitted. State also how many days or weeks the evaluators have to finalise the report once they have received comments on the draft.

Decide in which language the report is to be presented. State that the report shall follow a format which SIDA has established and attach **"SIDA evaluation reports – a standardized format"** to the Terms of Reference (Annex 3 in this manual).

State that the report shall be written on a word processor in the programme Microsoft Word and that a diskette shall be supplied to SIDA. This procedure ensures that SIDA can, if necessary, edit the report on its own computer equipment for publication which saves time and money. Point out that the report shall be so written that it can be published immediately without further editing or proof reading.

It may be suitable to state the approximate number of pages the report is expected to include. SIDA's aim is that the reports shall be analytical, summarised, easy to read, well structured and possessing a clear organisation and table of contents.

The number of pages varies of course, but most reports should be within the 40-60 page range. The "Executive Summary" may be maximum 3-4 pages long. A considerable amount of material can advantageously be placed in the annexes.

If applicable, state that SIDA expects the implementation of a seminar or similar to discuss the results of the evaluation and point out if the evaluators' participation in this is included in the agreed fee.

Recipient participation in evaluation

It is important that the recipient plays an active part in the evaluation process. This both gives the evaluation more weight and improves the preconditions for an efficient feedback process. This participation must be planned from the outset which may prolong the planning stage.

The recipient, usually the agreement co-signee or the recipient country authority responsible for the project should:

- participate in the decision to evaluate;
- influence and approve the Terms of Reference;
- propose or approve the members of the evaluation team;
- at the earliest opportunity, receive the draft report and the opportunity to submit comments on it, and
- actively participate in discussions on the conclusions and recommendations, e.g. in the form of a seminar with SIDA representatives.

It is given that the evaluation team begins its work by being introduced to the recipient authorities and project management and personnel. Similarly that the team presents preliminary conclusions to the same people before leaving the country. In addition to the fact that good manners demands this, efficient feedback is also facilitated.

The final report, written in a language understood by all parties in the recipient country, shall be submitted to all organisations involved without delay.

The ideal situation is when the evaluation team consists of consultants from both the donor and the recipient. In principle, the same requirements concerning independence, personal and professional qualifications shall be placed on recipient country consultants. However it is occasionally necessary to accept a slightly different profile. One of the most important contributions which can be made by national consultants is an understanding of the project environment and local conditions. Their frame of reference reflects national culture and values which helps in the interpretation of information. Recipient participation may also take the form of commissions to local researchers or institutions to implement baseline studies, feasibility studies, pre-studies, sub-studies or data collection.

Unfortunately, it is often the case that the recipient shows little interest in evaluations. It is felt that the recipient has no influence in the matter and that evaluations are primarily for the donor's own purposes and often utilised to check the flow of funds. There is often a lack of understanding on the part of the recipient that evaluations are management tools and represent a learning process of mutual value.

The advantages of external evaluators

EXTERNAL EVALUATORS:

- are independent of the activity to be evaluated, possess greater objectivity and therefore bring more credibility and weight to the evaluation. Their conclusions and recommendations carry therefore more weight in this context.
- often have more specific professional knowledge and a wider experience of similar development assistance programmes.
- take a fresh look at the project, are not mired down in the existing approach and often contribute new ideas and different perspectives.
- are neutral in their relationship to project management and personnel which is specially advantageous if conflicts exist between different groups in the programme.

EXTERNAL EVALUATORS ARE SPECIALLY IMPORTANT

- when the evaluation is to form the basis of a decision on continuation or termination.
- when internal conflicts and problems exist in a project,
- when the evaluation is implemented by a funding or controlling authority .

The Evaluation Steering Committee

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN the sector division, the Evaluation Unit and possibly other SIDA units, consultants and other interested parties should be operated in an organised form. A useful model to use is a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the above groups which is formed at the very beginning of the planning stage. The group that gathers for the official Start Meeting would probably be the core members of the Steering Committe e. Point 1 listed below shall be discussed at this Start Meeting. The Steering Committee meets several times during the evaluation process to discuss and take decisions concerning the implementation of the evaluation. The Steering Committee's most important tasks are as follows:

1. Discuss the reasons for carrying out the evaluation, who the principals are, how the results are to be utilised, how feedback is to be carried out.
2. Design and take the decision on the Terms of Reference.
3. Select the consultants.
4. Examine the draft report and submit comments to the authors.
5. Approve the final report.
6. Plan and organise the dissemination and feedback activities of the evaluation results in suitable forms through e.g. publication, seminars etc.
7. Ensure that the evaluation results are utilised in the continued planning and management of the project.

Evaluation – for whose benefit?

AN IMPORTANT ISSUE is for whose benefit an evaluation is carried out and how it will be utilised. There are several principals for each evaluation, both in Sweden and the recipient country. These often have mutually disparate motives and interests which can sometimes be united, but often are in fact totally incompatible. It is not unusual for conflicts to occur between the different principals. It may be necessary to clarify exactly who is t he main principal. When an evaluation is commissioned and financed by SIDA it is usually this organisation which carries the most weight. An analysis of the different actors and their motives could be described as follows:

SIDA'S MANAGEMENT

Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the project, give legitimacy to commitment of resources.

THE SECTOR DIVISION

Provide information on which to base decisions and future planning.

THE DCO

Assess goal attainment and efficiency, problem analysis, receive proposals on how to solve problems.

SIDA AS A WHOLE

Increased knowledge, institutional learning.

SIDA'S INFORMATION SECRETARIAT

Provide information for interested outsiders on the results of development assistance .

RECIPIENT COUNTRY AUTHORITIES

Provide information on activities. Insight and control. Learning. Provide background information on which to base further applications for development assistance .

PROJECT MANAGEMENT/ PERSONNEL

Provide attention and approval for work efforts. Problem analysis and proposals on solutions.

EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES IN SWEDEN: (THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NATIONAL AUDIT BOARD, PARLIAMENT ETC)

Check that development assistance funds are efficiently and correctly utilised for the purposes stated.
As is discussed in Chapter 1 (page 19), there may be interested parties who wish to utilise the evaluation for negative reasons. It lies in the critical nature of an evaluation that problems and faults are illuminated. This means that evaluations may be used by e.g. *mass media* and politicians as a *weapon against development assistance* instead of a tool for its improvement. This forms a *dilemma* for evaluation activities.

Data collection during a field trip. (Construction of health buildings, Kenya)
• Arrival and introduction
• Group interview with village health committee
• Inspection and interview with personnel

A large team requires efficient division of responsibilities.

Photo: Stefan Dahlgren

Assessments to be Made During Evaluations

Introduction

THE AIM OF EVERY development project is to achieve *change (improvement)* for a certain group of people, an institution or a community. It is expected that these changes shall occur within a certain given period of time and within the framework of a certain planned resource allocation (cost). At the inception of the project, the desired changes should be formulated as immediate objectives (project objectives). All actors in the development co-operation should be unanimous concerning these objectives. As is mentioned in the previous chapter, the importance of documentation clearly stating these objectives and target groups cannot be overestimated. These documents must be available to the donor, recipient and the evaluating consultants in order to create a common frame of reference for the evaluation.

It is essential that the desirable changes and improvements are so described that *whether the project has achieved the stated objectives* can be measured later. It is important to be able to ascertain if the project has benefited the exact intended target group. The measurement of the achievement of objectives in relation to the stated *target group* is the main function of the evaluation.

The connection between on the one hand, the original project documentation, and on the other hand the results and effects, forms the basis and point of departure for the evaluation. *The assessment of the outcome of a project compared to expected results* as formulated in the decision and planning documents is the essence of the task. Requirements for project documentation are therefore legion; they must be clear, well thought out, logical a nd consistent. This is not only vital for project implementation but also to enable an evaluation of the project after the event. If the project decision makers and planners have not clearly defined exactly what they wish to achieve (the objectives) or clearly defined the target groups, it is not possible for the evaluators to assess the extent of the project's success.

In order to *measure changes* between one point in time and another, information on the original situation, *the basic data* must be available. It is a distinct advantage if certain important information on the project area and target group is collected before the project is initiated. This data can then be compared to the equivalent information collected at another point in time e.g. when evaluating, and possible changes noted. When this data gathering is carried out in a thorough and systematic fashion, the procedure is called *a baseline study.* Unfortunately such studies are not routine which considerably limits the preconditions for successful evaluation activities.

In 1992 the Evaluation Unit published a handbook dealing with this issue –

"Baseline Study Handbook, Focus on the Field" by Solveig Freudenthal and Judith Narrowe – which may be extremely useful for project administrators planning a new programme. See further "A brief checklist for Baseline Studies" at the end of this chapter on page 55.

Goal related and process related evaluations

DISTINCTIONS ARE DRAWN between goal related and process related evaluations.

Goal related evaluations assess the results of the project in relation to its stated objectives and attempt to discern to which degree these results are due to the effects of the project and which are due to other factors. These evaluations answer the question: What has happened as a result of the project? Goal related evaluations are carried out in projects such as construction of roads or power plants, renovation of health centres, teacher training or child vaccination programmes.

Process related evaluations assess the project as to how it functions in its environment and its community. The aim is to understand the processes which are initiated by the project and the consequences of these processes. They measure e.g. the changes in how an institution functions, how programmes are implemented and knowledge developed. They answer the question: *What is happening* as a result of this project? *Which processes* have been initiated? Process related evaluations are carried out in the case of e.g. support to institutional and human resources development, improvement of teaching methods and democratisation projects.

The border between these two types of evaluation is not absolutely delineated. Often, it is not a case of the one or the other – the common scenario is that the evaluation attempts to assess both achievement of objectives and process initiation, perhaps with special emphasis on the one or the other.

Bases for assessment

AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED in Chapter 1, achievement of objectives is not the sole basis of assessment for an evaluation. Other issues are examined such as the relevance of the project, cause and effect connection between activities and results, side effects, efficiency, impact on the target groups etc. Below follows a more thorough review of these concepts:

1. RELEVANCE

THE DECISION to supply development assistance is preceded by a problem analysis. The vital issue is whether the proposed activities are the correct inputs to solve the identified problems. This question is again applied during the evaluation. Has the project actually contributed to the solution of the problem? Has the project been the correct solution to the problem? Is the project still relevant in a situation which has possibly undergone changes of circumstance? Relevance should of course be considered at the inception of the programme, however external changes can have diluted the relevance of the project. The following questions should then be applied during the evaluation :

- Has the project developed otherwise than that anticipated?
- Have the circumstances surrounding the project and its environment changed to a significant degree?
- Were the correct assessments made

in the original problem analysis and project design?

2. ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

THIS ACTIVITY includes an assessment of attainment of the originally established objectives. The analysis concerns goals at different levels: outputs, immediate objectives (project objectives), sectoral objectives and development goals are the normal levels applied but variations are possible.

Together they form the concept *goal hierarchy* which is illustrated on page 54.

Common to all Swedish development assistance is the primary goal– *to improve the living standard of the poorest people.* This goal has been separated into the following five development objectives which have been adopted by the Swedish Parliament:

- Economic growth
- Economic and social equality
- Economic and political independence
- Democratic development of society, and
- Sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment

Each individual development assistance input does not have to fulfil all five goals but should not work against any of them. Several of the goals are interrelated: economic growth is, in most cases, a precondition for the attainment of all the other goals. It is not unusual for one goal to be in conflict with another e.g. economic growth can be a direct threat to equality or environmental preservation.

Goal formulation is not only vital for the planning of an input, it is also important for its evaluation. These goals must be formulated *clearly and unambiguously* if an assessment of their attainment is to be made. They must be operationalised i.e. they must be made *practical and measurable.* It is not sufficient to formulate a goal as "to increase" or "to improve" without stating by how much and in which ways. However it must be noted here that the goals higher up in the hierarchy can seldom be operationalised and formulated so clearly that they are directly measurable.

Once the objectives have been established, the *indicators,* i.e. the actual modes of measurement shall be chosen.

The following, unusually distinct example, may illustrate this procedure. In a nutrition project for malnourished children, the objective is that they shall reach normal weight; the indicator is the children's *weight* in relation to a stated weight scale according to age, sex and build. Unfortunately, there are seldom such clear and measurable objectives available as in this example.

The evaluation begins by measuring achievement of objectives at the *lower* levels of the goal hierarchy. Resource inputs, activities and outputs seldom present serious problems if the planning documents have been properly completed and the periodic reporting has been efficient. The measurement of immediate objective attainment is, however, a more complex task as there are factors outside the project which cannot be influenced by the donor and which also affect the attainment of immediate objectives.

The higher goal levels cannot be achieved by a development assistance project *alone.* Instead, an attempt must be made to assess the project's *contribution* to the sectoral and development objectives. This is difficult to prove as these higher level objectives have seldom been operationalised. What is meant by improved health (sectoral goal) or by democratic development (development goal)? Even in the considerable number of cases where it is not possible to prove to which degree the project has contributed to sector and development objectives, the evaluator should include a discussion on the connection between the results of the project and these objectives.

It should be noted that the goal hierarchy includes a *time dimension* – the higher up in the hierarchy the longer it is estimated it will take to attain the goal.

The plans for the utilisation of resource inputs and activities plus the attainment of outputs normally cover the same period of time as the agreement period, i.e. approx. 3 years. These are then reworked for the next agreement period. The immediate objective (project objective) lies considerably more in the future, perhaps in excess of 8-10 years. The intermediate or sectoral objective is even further into the distant future, usually decades away. The development goals may be considered as "guiding stars" on the horizon. As a summary, the time perspective could be stated as follows:

Goal level	Time dimension
Development objectives	Guiding star on horizon
Sectoral objectives	15-20 years or more
Immediate objectives	8-10 years or more
Outputs	2-3 years

The approximate time schedules for the different levels of objectives should be stated in the planning documents. A general observation here is that project planners are often far too optimistic and have exaggerated expectations of rapid results. The goal formulations tend to be far too ambitious which leads to disappointment and poor evaluation results. It is useful to remember that development assistance work is long term, gradual and that results are often slow in coming.

Making an assessment of the realism of the stated objectives should be part of the evaluation. The evaluator must also take the time dimension into consideration at the different levels of objectives and avoid applying *unrealistic demands for rapid results.*

3. CAUSE AND EFFECT

THE CONNECTION between the project and goal attainment may be illustrated as follows:

Project → Achievement of objectives
Other factors → Achievement of objectives

The evaluator shall examine the existence of a causal relationship. Are the results and effects really due to the project activities or can there be other factors behind them? Observed better standards of health may be the result of improved nutrition as a result of good harvests or availability of clean water and not the result of a Swedish financed health care project. Higher agricultural productivity may be the result of improved weather conditions and not the agricultural extension service and improved seeds provided by a SIDA supported project.

The assessment of causal effect is difficult as many different factors outside the project can affect the situation. The cause and effect connection between different factors is seldom obvious. It is especially difficult if a long period of time has elapsed between the initiation of the project and the point of measurement as the surrounding circumstances, i.e. the project environment, has had time to change considerably.

4. TARGET GROUP

WHEN A PROJECT is planned, the intended target group must be carefully defined. The target group is the group of people, households or other units which the project activities are to affect positively so that their situation is improved. The target group can be defined in various ways by gender, age, living standard, urban or rural residence, geographical position, trade or profession etc. The important point is to clarify from the inception who the project is designed to reach and that SIDA, project management and the recipient authorities are in agreement and apply the same definition of the target group.

In certain projects the target group is very closely defined as in e.g. a project for the rehabilitation of the disabled. In other projects a wider definition is applied e.g. support to primary schools on a national level, and encompasses an entire age group – both the poorest and the not so poor – in a country. There are also development assistance activities where the target group can be said to be the entire population in e.g. larger scale infrastructure projects. In other instances it is impossible to identify a target group as in assistance to public administration or balance of payments assistance.

The *primary* and the *secondary* target groups are identified separately. The primary target group is the people who are directly affected by the project, e.g. agricultural instructors who are trained in a development assistance project. The secondary target group then becomes the people who receive advice and service from those who have been trained i.e. the peasants or smallholders in a certain area. It is the latter group who should receive pri mary attention during an evaluation of the results of the project.

5. IMPACT ON WOMEN AND MEN RESPECTIVELY

ONE OF THE BASIC principles of Swedish development assistance is that Swedish supported projects shall benefit both men and women. Experience has shown that development projects have primarily benefited men in most cases. This has not generally happened on purpose. One of the reasons is that the planners have not been in possession of a clear idea of the different roles played by women and men and their different tasks in the societies involved. They have therefore not designed the development assistance activities in such a way as to fulfil the needs of both women and men.

The insight that women and men are affected differently by development assistance inputs has resulted in SIDA, both in the planning of new projects and in the monitoring and evaluation of old projects, undertaking gender specific analyses. For evaluations , this means that assessment is not made on the effects of the project on the entire target group only but also the degree to which women and men respectively have participated and been affected.

Collected data shall, as far as possible, be gender disaggregated, the effect on the situation of women and men in the family and society examined, and the participation of both women and men in the various phases of the project assessed.

Any possible constraints which prevent the project from meeting the needs of women must be identified and analysed. The *strategic* needs of women can thereby be separated from their *practical* needs. The practical needs can be met within the framework of the traditional role of women as those needs are related to food production, children, responsibility for family health, housing etc. Their strategic needs on the other hand, are those whose coverage results in the position of women in the family and society being changed and strengthened, e.g. ownership rights to land and property, new income opportunities, education, fairer division of workload plus increased equality within the family and society.

6. SIDE EFFECTS

It is not unusual for a project to have effects other than those anticipated at the planning stage. These effects, usually called side effects, can be positive or negative.

It is important that the evaluators do not have too narrow a view of the project but are also observant of factors which lie outside the actual project in order to identify possible side effects. Some examples of side effects follow:

An agricultural project can, through increased utilisation of fertiliser, provide increased harvests but also contributes to the degradation of the environment – a negative side effect. A project aimed at drilling wells can also save a great deal of time for the women of the area – a positive side effect. But it may also lead to an overutilisation of water supplies which may lead to a water shortage – a negative side effect. The project may also affect groups other than the target group positively or negatively. Increased availability of water through well drilling for one group may lead to a decreased availability for another.

Negative impact on the environment is the most common side effect. It is therefore SIDA's responsibility to carry out *environmental impact studies* before decisions concerning new inputs are made (see further "Environmental Consequences", page 50)

7. COST-EFFECTIVENESS

What has the project cost? How do costs and budget reconcile? Are the costs reasonable in relation to achievements? Could the same results have been achieved at a lower cost, i.e., are there more *cost-effective alternatives*?

All evaluations are required to include a calculation of the financial costs and benefits and an assessment of the efficiency of the utilization of resources. If we consider only the financial costs and benefits which accrue to the project and the actual prices the project faces, we are doing *financial cost-benefit analysis*.

If we instead 1) consider all the costs and benefits which arise because of the project and 2) assign them their true economic value, then we are performing *economic cost-benefit analysis*. This kind of analysis includes *external effects*, that is, costs and benefits which arise because of the project but do not accrue to the project. For example, if a factory pollutes fishing waters, or if a public agency trains its employees who then quit to get jobs in the private sector, then there are costs and benefits which do not accrue to the factory and public agency respectively.

The true economic cost of putting recourses to one use is its *opportunity cost,* the benefits forgone by not putting the resources to their best alternative use. If the prices the project faces do not reflect opportunity costs, then economic cost-benefit analysis requires that *shadow prices* reflecting opportunity costs be calculated. For example, if the exchange rate is fixed so that foreign currency is scarce and rationed and the exchange rate on the parallel market is higher, then the opportunity cost of foreign currency is higher than the official exchange rate.

Economic cost-benefit analysis is a very comprehensive and time-consuming exercise requiring high level expertise in economic analysis. Several development agencies, including the World Bank, UNIDO, and OECD, have elaborated detailed guidelines on how to proceed when carrying out economic cost-benefit analyses of development projects.

If it is not possible to put a monetary value on the benefits of a project, then an economic cost-benefit analysis is not possible. This is often the case in the social sectors such as health and education. Sometimes *cost-effectiveness analysis* can be used instead. With this technique benefit are counted and then compared with costs, often in the form of a cost per unit of output, e.g., per teacher or per vaccinated child.

Cost-effectiveness analysis is always comparative. It is used to compare different ways of achieving the same objective and choosing the alternative that will accomplish the objective at lowest cost. Often some imagination is required to find a sensible basis for comparison. Those in SIDA's sector divisions responsible for systematizing evaluation results should assume the role of gathering and systematizing data on costs in projects of different types, thereby gradually building up a data bank which can provide a basis for cost-effectiveness comparisons.

In projects aiming and social impact (awareness,empowerment, strengthening of institutions, etc.) it may be difficult to measure the output or benefits in quantitative terms. In such cases, the analysis may have to be limited to a discussion of the reasonableness of the costs in view of the results. A comparison of similar projects may give a useful perspective. The level of cost-consciousness of the project management can also be discussed; signs of wasted resources can be looked for.

8. IMPACT

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS aim at improvements for a certain target group – effects which remain in place also in the long run. This is called project impact. Impact is distinct from achievement of project objectives primarily in their time perspective and their orientation towards the target groups.

Have primary health care projects really lead to improved health, lower infant mortality, longer life expectancy? (Health care projects can have been "successful" in the improved delivery of service but the expected impact has still not materialised).

Have literacy and education for women lead to influence and a stronger position in society? (Education for women may have been successful, but perhaps has not lead to increased influence).

Has the construction of a certain highway really lead to decreased dependence on a neighbouring country? (The highway may have been completed according to plan, but is perhaps not fully utilised due to fear of sabotage; dependence on previous transport routes remains).

The impact assessment is fundamental for determining whether a project can be considered successful and worth the resources invested in it. One problem is the time aspect. The relatively early timing of evaluations usually precludes an assessment of sustainable, long term effects as it may be necessary to wait 5-10 years or more to be able to ascertain their extent. However waiting this long to assess impact would in itself cause a problem of *attribution*, i.e. the possibility to trace back effects to just this project as so many other changes have occurred in the meantime.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

To develop is to increase the knowledge possessed both by individuals and countries.

Human resources development is a major element in almost all development assistance programmes, not merely for projects which are of a directly educational character. Human resources development must be an integrated part of any project plan and must be regularly monitored.

Human resources development occurs when the total mass of knowledge within an organisation increases. During project preparation, the level of competence (quality and quantity) in the organisation should be established as a baseline or "benchmark". Objectives for the development of competence should be formulated, plans on how to achieve the objectives be made and indicators of measurement identified. If this is properly carried out, it will be possible to include an assessment of the human resource development attained in a future evaluation.

10. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certain development assistance inputs, e.g. within the assistance to Public Administration and Management have the primary goal of *institutional development*. Institutional development can encompass training of personnel, organisational change, development of system and routines, acquisition of modern equipment in order to make the work more efficient etc.

However, many, in fact the majority of programmes aimed at a totally different primary objective include *institutional development as a sub-goal* e.g. strengthening of recipient organisation. If the programme is to be sustainable in the long term, is not merely dependent on the attainment of its primary goal, but also to a considerable degree on if the sub-goal – the strengthening of the recipient organisations – has been attained. For this reason most evaluations must include an assessment of institutional development and competence.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Effective, long term development requires a sustainable utilisation of natu resources and the protection of the environment. The concept environment is awarded, in this context, a wide interpretation and encompasses everything that surrounds us and forms our life environment: the soil, the seas and oceans, the climate, natural resources, plants and animals and their natural environment, the immediate surroundings of human beings and their health.

Not all development assistance projects affect the environment, but many do. The effects on the environment are sometimes obvious, but sometimes also indirect and difficult to interpret. Effects may occur through a long chain of cause and effect which can be difficult to discern. Types of projects which, from experience, always effect the environment are those within agriculture, forestry, fishery, water supply, transport and industry. Those which seldom produce negative environmental effects are projects within environment, education, health care and institution building. However, environmental aspects shall be included in the assessments of projects in these areas as well.

Nowadays, SIDA is required to assess future environmental consequences during the preparation of all project proposals (4). The results shall be stated in the Idea and Project Support Memos. All evaluations must include an assessment of environmental impact. The task of the evaluators is to examine any environmental impact made by the project. The availability of a environmental impact analysis carried out during the preparation phase is, of course, advantageous as it provides baseline data for comparison.

12. EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

THE EVALUATION SHOULD also contain an analysis of *the execution and administration of the project* covering how the various actors – SIDA-S, DCO, any consultants involved, recipient organisations, project management and personnel – have performed their various roles. An important issue connected to this is if the recipient has taken full responsibility for the activity and if SIDA has played the required supporting and advisory role. Experience shows that the donor all too easily takes a dominating role which does not bode well for the survival of the activity.

13. SUSTAINABILITY

THE DECISIVE ISSUE concerning the value of a development project is whether the activity supported can continue and be maintained retaining a reasonable level of quality after support from external sources has been withdrawn.

The Evaluation Committee of OECD/DAC has defined sustainability as follows:

> **"A development programme is sustainable when it is able to deliver an appropriate level of benefits for an extended period of time after major financial, managerial and technical assistance from an external donor is terminated."**

The sustainability of a project will not be demonstrated until long after the withdrawal of donor funds. It is therefore not always possible to make definite assertions concerning sustainability during evaluations; instead *the preconditions for the survival of the activities* should be discussed. The

4. See "Guidelines for environmental impact assessments" SIDA, april 1991

degree of sustainability of the project depends on several factors including:

a) Recipient government policies

Development projects always operate within the context of a national government policy environment. Government commitment and policies that support project objectives are critical to sustainability. Even the results of a "good" project will not be sustainable if the policy environment is hostile. The donor and the recipient government may have different priorities. Where there is no perceived need for a development programme, government support is unlikely to be forthcoming. In contrast, programmes that are consistent with government priorities may expect national support.

b) Management, Organisation and Local Participation

Good management and effective organisation in host-country institutions are key factors in achieving sustainability. Most development assistance projects include support to the institutional development of the recipient ministry or institution involved. One decisive factor for survival is whether the institution has developed sufficient management capacity at the point in time when development assistance is withdrawn.

c) Financial factors

A major impediment to sustainability is the inability to provide continued, regular funding of annual operating costs. Support from donors must be replaced by financing from other sources. One method is to introduce user fees for services provided i.e. the consumer pays for access to water, health care or education. A second way is for the project to include income generating components such as the sale of medicines to finance a health care project. A third possibility is that the government or local authority allocates funding for the activity. There is strong evidence to suggest that prospects for sustainability are greater for projects which do not depend on general public funds..

d) Level of technology

The technology utilised in the project must be appropriate to the economic, educational, cultural and institutional conditions in the country in question. If the level of technology is too advanced, the likelihood of continued operations once the donor has withdrawn its technical assistance, is reduced.

e) Socio-cultural factors

For a programme to be sustained it must be well integrated into the local social and cultural environment and be accepted by the local population and decision makers. While a project may be able to exert some influence over local socio-cultural factors when external funding is still available, it is unlikely that this will continue when assistance is withdrawn.

f) Environmental factors

The ecological balance is often fragile in developing countries and under continual pressure from population and poor management of natural resources. Certain development assistance programmes tax scarce local resources and accelerate environmental degradation. Sometimes, projects have unintentional impacts which are detrimental to the environment or ecological balance. For example a water supply project involving well drilling leads to an o verexploitation of water and a resultant lowering of the water table.

The occurrence of negative environmental effects may force the cessation of the activities supported by development assistance.

An example of goal hierarchy

IT IS OF VALUE to read the goal hierarchy illustrated on the next page both upwards and downwards. Note that objectives at one level form the means of reaching the objectives at the next level above. The situation is designed so that:

- **inputs** are needed in order to implement activities
- **activities** must be carried out in order to attain outputs
- **outputs** must be attained in order that immediate objectives shall be achieved, but they are not decisive by themselves
- **immediate objectives** contribute to the attainment of sectoral objectives, but are merely a minor, non decisive part
- **sectoral objectives** contribute in their turn to the achievement of development objectives.

The success of the project depends partly on factors which can be controlled by the project and partly on external factors which cannot be controlled, e.g. government policies, trade barriers, lack of infrastructure, events such as drought, armed conflicts, epidemics and environmental degradation.

While the project can exercise a relatively strict control over the lower levels of the goal hierarchy (investment of inputs, implementation of activities, attainment of outputs), external factors play a vital role in the achievement of objectives at higher levels. It is not possible for the project to influence and control these factors.

This makes it even more essential to *identify and analyse external factors and assess the risk* of their affecting the success of the project during the planning and implementation stages. This procedure is included in the *risk analysis*.

g) External factors

Development projects function within the existing political, economic, social and cultural frameworks of the recipient country. These lie outside the control of the project but are decisive for its possibilities to function and develop.

Political instability decreases the chances of national economic growth on which all development activities are based. Economic instability in the form of e.g. high rate of inflation, lack of foreign currency or cutbacks in the national budget decreases the programmes' chances of survival. Natural disasters may also terminate the operation of development activities.

The list of bases for assessment above is not intended to cover every eventuality, neither is it a catalogue of aspects which *must* be included in every evaluation. As mentioned before, different evaluations have differing emphases and focuses. No evaluation can completely cover every possible aspect. It is SIDA's task to state priorities in the Terms of Reference, i.e. which aspects are to examined in detail and which may be treated more generally.

Goal hierarchy for health care project

Development objective	Economic and social development
Sectoral objective	Improved health for the population of Province X
Immediate objective	A well functioning primary health care system for mothers and young children in Province X. Staffed by trained personnel.
Outputs	Established system for health checks of pregnant women and children 0-5 years. Vaccination of 90% of children 0-5 years. Participation in health infor mation events by 80% of mothers. Home visits and advice to 80% of new mothers. Training of 100 midwives and 200 health promoters per year. All health centres fully equipped by 1995.
Activities	Purchase and supply of vaccine, organisation of vaccinations. Health info campaign. Home visits to new mothers. Train health care personnel. Equip health centres.
Inputs	NN SEK during the period 1992-96. Equipment according to agreement. Vaccines and drugs. Advisers (number of people and months).

This line of argument, as applied in the example above gives the following: The project has good control of the situation as far as inputs and activities are concerned and fair control concerning the attainment of outputs. Difficulties multiply, though, after this point. There is no guarantee that primary health care will function well, even if the personnel have been trained – perhaps they do not wish to work in this province. Vaccines can be destroyed because power cuts have affected their refrigeration. The area can be affected by armed conflicts so that the population do not dare to visit the health centre.

A brief checklist for baseline studies

WHAT IS A BASELINE STUDY?

A BASELINE STUDY is a collection of primary and secondary data which describes and analyses the socio-economic situation in a certain area at a certain point in time. This data then forms the benchmark for measurement of change at a later point in time. Indicators are established to demonstrate change which are then utilised when monitoring and evaluating.

WHY IS A BASELINE STUDY IMPORTANT?

THE BASIC AND EXACT information provided by such a study enables the formulation of clear and realistic objectives at different levels. The baseline study provides the basis for the planning of the project and activities.

WHEN AND HOW IS A BASELINE STUDY USED?

1. In connection with the planning of the project. The information provided facilitates the planning of the activities needed to attain the goals and to establish the needs of the different parts of the target group.
2. To design the monitoring system and to be able to continuously measure changes in relation to the starting point, the benchmark. This makes it possible to check that the project is moving in the desired direction and if not, to institute changes.
3. To be used as a point of departure and to enable measurements of change over longer periods of time which are to be made during the evaluation of the project. To be able to use objective data to establish goal attainment.

WHEN?

A BASELINE STUDY shall be carried out when idea preparation is completed but before project support preparation begins, i.e. when the sector and geographical area have been established but the actual planning of the project has not yet begun. A good baseline study takes time – a few months – so advance planning is essential.

Further reading – **BASELINE STUDY HANDBOOK FOR SIDA** by Solveig Freudenthal and Judith Narrowe, published by the Evaluation Unit, 1992.

Chapter 5

Evaluation Approaches and Data Collection Methods

THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER shall not be considered as a definitive manual on evaluation methods but more as an orientation in certain different approaches which are applied to evaluations. Anyone wishing to study the subject more closely will find a fairly lavish amount of literature on the subject, some of it mentioned in annex 7.

Formal and informal evaluation methods

The primary task of the evaluator is to measure changes, explain them and assess to which degree they are the result of the project under evaluation. The problem is to find reasonable, proper and practically implementable methods for data collection which are acceptable from the point of view of the time and funds available. These methods can be divided into the formal and the informal.

The *formal methods* originate in the world of research and are characterised by a clearly defined method, established in advance with data collection and measurements carried out directly on the target group or project. The results consist of quantitative and qualitative information of a high degree of precision.

The advantage of these formal methods is that they, as far as is humanly possible, reduce the problem of subjective, personal influence and low validity and reliability (see definitions at the end of this chapter, page 65). However, formal methods generally demand extensive amounts of time and resources and can be specially difficult to apply in developing country environments.

The *informal methods* are characterised by the fact that they do not follow clearly established criteria and are therefore less exact, systematic and verifiable. In contrast to general opinion, the informal methods require higher standards of competence and experience from the evaluators as they are more dependent on the individual executing them (the evaluator) and his/her knowledge, experience, values and working methods. There may be a tendency for an evaluator to subconsciously notice exactly the kind of information which supports his/her preliminary conclusions and neglect any information which indicates anything different.

Evaluations using informal methods may, although they need not, have a lower degree of reliability than those applying formal methods. The advantages of the informal types of evaluation are that they are less demanding as far as time and resources are concerned and often result in information which is adapted to the needs of decision makers.

Development assistance evaluators should endeavour to use, whenever possible, a combination of the formal and informal methods. Some type of middle way is usually applied, often tending more to the informal than the formal. These can be called *"adapted methods"* whose aim is more to analyse and explain a situation rather than carry out exact measurements of results. The goal is to maintain a reasonable degree of precision without undertaking the collection and processing of substantial amounts of data which demands enormous time inputs.

Some basic approaches

BEFORE – AFTER PROJECT

THE EVALUATOR utilises methods which enable a comparison of the situation before the project began with the situation some years later at the evaluation. This method is named the *before–after project approach*. The method presupposes knowledge of the pre-project situation, preferably in the form of a baseline study (see Chapter 4) before the project began. The equivalent data is collected during the evaluation and any changes can be assessed. The most serious methodological problem with this approach is to establish and assess any independent changes within the project environment and their possible effects on project results.

WITH – WITHOUT PROJECT

THIS APPROACH consists of a comparison between the situation in the project area with another, similar area which has not been part of the project. This means an attempt to establish a "control" situation. This approach is named *with–without project* and is often suitable for the evaluation of pilot projects and experimental activities. The major methodological problem with this approach is to find a control situation which exhibits the same characteristics as the project area and to isolate those factors which may have influenced the two areas in different ways. A disadvantage is that the costs are doubled for this type of study as data collection must be carried out twice. In addition, it could be considered ethically doubtful to intensively study a target group without taking any measures which could contribute to their development.

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

OTHER METHODS used to assess the results of a project are based on economic models, primarily the *cost/benefit analysis* or a *cost-effectiveness analysis*. One problem with this method is that it is based on certain suppositions, made by the evaluator, on the costs and benefits of a project. Establishing the costs of a project is not usually a problem, however assigning an objective value to the benefits is not so easy. (See page 48–49)

This approach is best utilised when evaluating projects based on capital investment e.g. industry and infrastructure projects rather than education, health care and public administration. However, even in the latter case it is of importance to include *an analysis of costs and benefits*. This is useful in that at least the planned costs and results can be compared to the actual costs and results. Cost/benefit analysis should not be the only approach utilised, it should be applied parallel with other complementary methods.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA AND ANALYSIS

INFORMATION COLLECTED and analysed for the purpose of evaluation can be quantitative or qualitative. *Quantitative methods* are defined as data collection methods which can easily be expressed in figures, be collated in tables and processed using statistical methods of analysis. This data may be project specific or general statistics.

Quantitative data in the form of figures and tables provides a illusionary impression of objectivity and credibility. However, availability and quality of statistics in developing countries is often uncertain and it may be difficult to assess the reliability of existing statistical data. It is therefore important that any such data, and the methods used to gather it, be critically examined by the evaluators. Quantitative methods are used by researchers in e.g. medicine, technology and economics and also by sociologists who work with large scale surveys.

Qualitative approaches and data collection methods provide information which is difficult to transform into figures, collate into tables or process statistically. Qualitative data is descriptive, often expressed in words and contributes to the increased understanding of the situation. However, it should be noted that qualitative information can also be awarded number values and summarised in tables; for example, it may be possible to rank th e units examined by placing them on a scale. Qualitative methods are typically used by social anthropologists and other social researchers.

Almost all evaluations use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The two methods used together provide better preconditions for convincing conclusions than each one by itself. Some quantitative data is always included but its usefulness is often limited.

Many issues under evaluation are such that they cannot be discussed using quantitative data alone. Development programme evaluations are generally based on information of the qualitative type which can net a lot of information which would otherwise be lost and therefore advantageously complements quantitative information. However one of the disadvantages of qualitative methods is that they tend to be coloured by the evaluators own values and interpretations.

Importance of several different sources as bases for conclusions

THE DECISIVE ISSUE for the credibility of the evaluation is the amount and quality of information which the evaluators utilise as a basis for their assessments and conclusions. The importance of using *several sources* – preferably both qualitative and quantitative types – cannot be stressed enough. These sources are commonly referred to as *"multiple lines of evidence"*.

The more sources utilised and the more information which supports them, *the more reliable the evaluation conclusions.* It is also relevant to state here that the conclusions must be based on facts and relationships which have been observed during the evaluation not on general opinions.

Below is a survey of various sources of information and a number of methods of data collection which can be utilised in an evaluation .

Various data collection methods

DESK STUDIES

THE PREPARATION PHASE of all – and there are no exceptions – evaluations includes a desk study of the project documentation. A considerable part of the data needed by the evaluators is to be found in SIDA's documentation, primarily the "Idea" and "Project Support" memos, decision documents, formal agreements, baseline studies, plans of operation, monitoring reports and previous evaluations.

DIRECT MEASUREMENTS

WHEN EVALUATING projects which have physical, measurable objectives, (e.g. productive projects, infrastructure and other projects with quantitative objectives), quantitative measurements can and should be made. Such measurements could be body weight and height in a nutrition project, production volume in an agriculture or industry programme or number of books produced in a education programme. Often this type of information is already available from the monitoring reports but needs to be collated, analysed and compared to plans and prognoses.

A distinction is made between *primary data* which is collected by the evaluators for a certain need and *secondary data* e.g. statistics which is already available. If the evaluation is to be based on primary data, it generally must be implemented in two or more phases and include at least two visits to the recipient country. The planning and execution of the data collection must be carried out well in advance of the actual evaluation in order for the data to be available in time. Quantitative data must generally be combined with an assessment of quality in order to be meaningful.

It is important to critically examine data collected by different people as conscious or subconscious systematic measurement errors may occur.

INTERVIEWS WITH KEY PEOPLE

THIS IS WITHOUT DOUBT the most common method used in SIDA evaluations. It is doubtful that any SIDA evaluation exists which does not include this as one of the main methods used. The concept "key people" consists of a variety of groups representing SIDA, organisations and authorities in Sweden and corresponding entities in the recipient country who have been involved in the project in one way or another.

Selection of interviewees is decisive for the utility of this method. The choices made must be well thought-out and representative. All the actors and interested parties in the project should be given a hearing. Interviewees shall be selected on the basis of their position and their knowledge, not because they are available or well known to the project personnel. A common practice is to select interviewees with the help of project person nel, which exacerbates the risk of a biased sample.

The opinions and attitudes of the project administrator at SIDA plus the project management naturally colour the evaluator's image of the project. This is difficult to avoid and there is a considerable *risk that the evaluators become caught in this image.* It is therefore extremely important that others who view matters from another perspective have their say, e.g. non management personnel in the project and target group representatives. These people may express totally different opinions on how the project functions in reality. It is usually necessary to use some type of random selection method when constructing the target group sample.

One or more *interview guides* should be designed in advance stating which questions will be put to which categories of interviewees. Valuable assistance can be provided by the establishment of an *interview schedule* stating the different categories of personnel to be interviewed on one axle and the questions to be put on the other.

Questions to be put to each group can then be ticked off.

The evaluator should take notes during or immediately after the interview. He/she should be well read as far as the project and its context is concerned so that the interview can begin with current information and continue to new information. In this way more well informed questions can be put concerning the relationships and problems in the project. In the case of the most important interviewees, it is advantageous to schedule at least two interviews with each person in order to deepen the contact and to be able to confront him/her with any new information which may have been collected during the course of the evaluation .

The atmosphere during the interview should be open, informal and create confidence in the interviewer. Interviewees shall be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity in the evaluation report i.e. they will not be named when quoted. The interviewer may not, of course, spread information which has been given in confidence.

The criteria used for the selection of interviewees shall be recorded in the methods chapter of the evaluation report and a list of those interviewed shall be attached as an annex.

The method "Interviews with key people" can be used to advantage:

- when general, descriptive information is needed.
- to gain insights into motives and relationships among the various actors
- to interpret available quantitative information and to make qualitative assessments.
- when the aim is to generate proposals and recommendations
- when the need is to develop issues, hypotheses and proposals for later testing.

The limitations of the method lie primarily in the risk of one-sidedness or bias in the selection of interviewees and that the interviewer may interpret the information in a non-objective manner. This method should not be utilised alone but in combination with other methods of higher reliability and validity e.g. statistical data, quantitative data from project reports or first hand measurements.

Interviews with key people may appear far too fuzzy and subjective but this need not be the case. The method does, however, need a well structured selection of interviewees and preparation of systematic interview guides in order to achieve good results. It also requires evaluators who are experienced, methodical and of independent nature.

GROUP INTERVIEWS

COLLECTING A NUMBER of people, sometimes referred to as *focus groups*, and holding a question and discussion meeting instead of interviewing them individually can give advantages concerning both time and results. Observed group dynamics can supply information on reactions and relationships within the group which would not have been available using any other method. The method is suitable if it is necessary to find out the target group's attitude and degree of support to a planned project, the priorities of different categories and individuals and possible conflicts within the group.

Leading such groups is extremely demanding. Good background knowledge, well formulated, exact questions and experience of managing similar situations contribute to success. There is a risk that one or several individuals dominate the discussion, effectively silencing those who hold other opinions.

If this is the case then complementary discussions with smaller groups or individuals who have not been able to state their opinions might be suitable. It is sometimes advisable to hold separate discussion sessions for women and men.

QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRES IN THE FORM of lists of questions to a larger sample could be an alternative to personal interviews in order to obtain information from a wider circle of people. Questionnaires do have several disadvantages, not least in the context of developing countries where literacy is often poor or non existent, there is limited experience of filling in forms and a lack of trust in anonymity promises. Also experience has shown that the reply frequency is extremely low in extensive questionnaire surveys. There are however circumstances when questionnaires can be used to advantage, e.g. when administered to course participants at the completion of a course.

The selection of the sample is decisive. It can sometimes be difficult or impossible to select a representative sample. A controlled, non-representative sample will risk the reliability of the result. This method may therefore only be used with care and only as a complement to other methods.

OBSERVATION

THE FIRST HAND OBSERVATIONS of the evaluators concerning the project, its environment, the various actors and their reactions are always an important complement to other data collection methods. The primary aim of the project visit is to provide an orientation for the evaluators.

A distinction is made between participatory observation, a method mostly used by anthropologists, and non participatory observation which has a much wider application e.g. in medicine and education etc. These methods are briefly described below:

Participatory observation works in such a way that the observer (often a social anthropologist in development assistance situations) *participates as a member* of a social system which is under study. Observation is carried out during an extensive period of time (months or even years) so that the observer's participation gradually ceases to disturb and influence the results. This method is specially useful when the aim is to understand unknown socio-cultural situations, processes and reaction patterns e.g. in order to anticipate how a certain type of project will be received and function.

A disadvantage of this method is that it demands extensive resources in the form of time and consequently generates high cost levels. In addition the quality of the information is considerably dependent on the observation abilities, character, training level , experience and values of the observer.

Non participatory observation appears in all evaluations (with the exception of pure desk studies) as the evaluators when visiting the project and its environment observe, register and evaluate what they see.

The observations can be more or less systematic. An observation guide can contribute to the completeness and systematisation of the observations and minimise the risk of subjective assessments. This is valuable in that it helps the evaluator to understand the project situation and contributes to placing information obtained through interviews in the correct context. It is given that the quality of the information gained depends on the observation abilities of the evaluator. It is not unusual that the evaluator registers situations and relationships which have not been noticed or mentioned by the personnel who live and work in the project. It is natural of course for the impressions registered by the evaluators to be influenced – consciously or subconsciously – by their own values and frames of reference. The use of several observers can be valuable in order to counteract this individual influence.

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

THIS CONCEPT REQUIRES that the people who work in the project and those who form the target group evaluate it themselves often without inputs from outside.

However is it hardly possible to discuss "participatory evaluation" as an isolated occurrence. Instead it must be considered as a part of the process where *the target group participates in every stage*: planning, decision making, implementation and evaluation. The evaluation therefore becomes one of several activities in the project in which the target group participates. The aim of the participatory evaluation could be to steer the project or to increase knowledge about it and the development process.

In recent years the concept "target group participation" has been highlighted especially among popular movements and organisations which work at grass roots level with strongly target group oriented projects. *The participation of the target group is both a means to reach a result and a goal in itself.* It forms a method for the target group to gain power, responsibility and control over its own situation and development – in other words "empowering".

A participatory evaluation is valuable from several points of view primarily as a method of increasing knowledge, involvement and self confidence among the target group and project organisation. It should also be remembered however that the method has its limitations.

Participatory evaluation cannot replace an external, independent evaluation. It cannot be used by the donor to gain an objective impression of the project's results. It is not useful to obtain a critical examination of the project organisation or the effectiveness of the project implementation. Neither is it possible if there are problems or conflicts of interest within the project. Finally, participatory evaluation seldom throw s up new perspectives or proposals for new solutions.

RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL (RRA) PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA)

THESE METHODS may be viewed as variations of participatory evaluations. They were developed at the end of the 70s for rapid evaluation of agricultural projects and have become an alternative to time-consuming, costly and extensive data collection methods. The design of these methods is a result of dissatisfaction with studies carried out by highly qualified agricultural experts which were often misleading as these evaluators had very little understanding of the living conditions of the rural poor.

Another reason was the dissatisfaction with the methods then applied which required long, complicated questionnaires and extensive and expensive data processing. A contributing factor was also the insight within donor and agricultural circles that the rural population itself had valuable knowledge and experience and that it was efficient to take advantage of this knowledge directly.

Initially, RRA was met by scepticism from the academic world but once it had been proved that this method could provide just as reliable results as the traditional survey techniques, it became more accepted. *Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)* is a more modern variation developed from RRA, which allows the rural population rather than external expertise to play the major role in the process to an even greater degree.

Briefly, RRA and PRA are based on the technique that the evaluators attempt to collect data by talking directly to the rural population about their experiences, problems and priorities. The methods are focused on a limited number of key issues. Unnecessarily extensive data collection is avoided and costs can therefore be considerably reduced. The interviewer behaves flexibly during the interview, listens carefully and attempts to avoid contr olling the interviewee too much. Interviewees should not come from the leadership level in the local society. The poorest, the women and people who live on the periphery are carefully listened to and learned from.

This method has advantages and disadvantages. It is extremely informal and requires that the evaluator possesses a humble attitude and especially good ability to settle in to a usually demanding project environment, to establish personal contacts and to listen actively. The method is specially suitable for studies aimed at increasing knowledge, identifying problems, developing new ideas and providing a general understanding of how the project functions rather than evaluations which are aimed at assessing effects, physical results and efficiency.

Some concepts used in data collection methodology

RELIABILITY The reliability of a measurement refers to the degree to which this measurement can be depended upon to secure consistent results upon repeated application. This means that reliability demands that several measurements of the same situation made by different people, give the same results. Measurements of weight and height for example are examples of high reliability whilst estimates of intelligence tend to give low reliability.

VALIDITY states that measurements must be made of what was intended to be measured and that the information provided is relevant to the situation which is to be illuminated. Which measurement, for example, has the highest validity for measuring the degree of success of a family planning project? An increase in the number of couples using contraception? A decrease in the birth rate? Changes in attitudes?

ATTRIBUTION Concerns the fact that a certain result can be directly attributed to the project and does not arise from other, external factors.

SAMPLING Due to constraints of time and cost, most evaluations cannot interview all the units in a programme, all the members of the target group. A selection must be made. There are various ways of selecting a sample.

RANDOM SAMPLING All units have a similar chance of being included into the sample.

STRATIFIED SAMPLING The population (the units to be studies) are divided into sub groups before the selection is made e.g. as to age, sex, work etc.

REPRESENTIVITY A sample is representative if it possesses the same characteristics as the whole population.

GENERALISABILITY Do the results possess a validity for situations other than the specific project situation studied?

INDICATORS are defined as variables whose purpose is to measure change in a given phenomenon or context. In the development context indicators are specific, selected measurements of changes or results expected at each level of the goal hierarchy in order to demonstrate progress. Indicators should be objectively verifiable, meaning that different people using the same measures should come to the same result. Examples of indicators are: (hi gh) body temperature which is an indicator of illness, school grades which supposedly indicate knowledge, performance and ability to learn. However, all indicators are not so self evident. Is GNP per capita a measurement of the welfare of the population? Are high school grades a measurement of suitability for further studies? Is the percentile participation in an election a measurement of democracy?

Some difficulties and problems in connection with evaluations

10 discussion questions

1. An evaluation is a slice cut through time. It provides a static picture of a dynamic reality.
2. The period between the planning of a project and its evaluation includes changes in the conditions, objectives, methods and values of the donor. There is a risk that a project is assessed according to today's values, rather than those relevant at the time of project initiation.
3. The available project documentation demonstrates a poor or incomplete problem analysis and an unfinished goal hierarchy. For this reason the evaluators do not know which problems the project was intended to solve, what was to be achieved.
4. The objectives are formulated so that it is impossible to measure if they have been attained, e.g. "improve the quality of education" – what does "improve" mean? What is "quality"?
5. Lack of baseline data. There is no information as to what the situation was like when the project started so that changes cannot now be measured.
6. Difficulties in establishing cause and effect connections. Reality is not a laboratory. How many of the results depend on the project and how many on other external factors?
7. When the objective of the project is defined as a process it is difficult to measure achievement of objectives. For example "to increase self-reliance, ability to solve problems, promote integration and co-operation".
8. Difficulties in identifying adequate indicators to measure achievement of objectives.
9. Objectivity requirement. Do independent, objective evaluators exist?
10. How can it be guaranteed that the actors in the development assistance process really learn from experience and avoid repeating mistakes? How does organisational learning occur?

Chapter 6
Learning through Evaluation

There are many sources of learning within SIDA, but one of the most important is its evaluation activities. One of the main aims of evaluation is, as stated at the beginning of this book, to enhance knowledge of development mechanisms and test strategies and methods through the systematic analysis of experience acquired.

When experience has taught us what functions well and less well, our work can gradually change and improve. We can avoid repeating mistakes and learn which methods function best through the observation of successful cases. We can gradually become better at identifying factors which mean risk of failure and also those which provide the best preconditions for good results. This applies to life in general and also to development assistance activities. The idea is that experience leads to knowledge which in its turn leads to improved working methods.

The information and conclusions drawn from evaluations are answers to important questions about the effectiveness of development assistance programmes. *Evaluations are management tools,* i.e. high quality evaluations provide information on which to base important decisions and quality planning at project and programme level.

Evaluations form a tool for institutional, strategic learning.

There are lessons to be learned on two levels:

Operational lessons: learning concerning project organisation, design, planning and implementation, choice of technology, development of knowledge and institutions plus cost-effectiveness, i.e. learning at the project level.

Development lessons: lessons at a higher level i.e. concerning the effectiveness of different development strategies, the importance of donor assistance for development in different sectors, the roles played by donors, recipients and other actors in the development process respectively, the long term effects of development assistance and the sustainability of programmes.

"Lessons learned" are defined as knowledge which is generated by individual evaluations but which has replicability beyond the project specific level and can be applied at a more general level. Every evaluation report shall include a special chapter for such information entitled "lessons learned". A selection of these lessons are integrated and become a part of SIDA's "organisational knowledge bank". Lessons learned can affect thinking, strategies and decision making in the organisation for many years and in many different contexts.

It is necessary to emphasise that the *relevance and quality* of the evaluations and the *professionalism and credibility* of the evaluators are decisive for the role that the evaluations will play in organisational learning. It is important that SIDA carefully selects and spends time and resources on such evaluations which are of *central importance* to the Swedish development assistance. It is also important that evaluations are aimed at *general issues and problems* and are not limited to details or project specific situations only.

Learning occurs within the entire organisation, continuously and in many different ways. *Learning is in the interest of the entire organisation* – no one SIDA unit can be assigned primary responsibility for this process. However, with regard to learning from evaluations, the Evaluation Unit plays a key role. The unit must create channels and mechanisms to transfer important evaluation results and lessons to the different levels of the organisation. The evaluation material needs to be adapted to the various interested parties. The information must be concise and easily available: 10 minute summary presentation of major evaluation results in SIDA's Management Committee, summaries of current evaluation results by sector or theme, analyses of evaluation results for publication in the budget proposal, establishment of case studies for training activities and publication of evaluation reports are examples of such adaptation.

SIDA's Evaluation Report Reference Library enables the Evaluation Unit to provide SIDA reports from the last 20 year period. However, SIDA has access to a much wider network of evaluation information. Twenty or so donors – through OECD/DAC's Expert Group on Aid Evaluation – have established a common database from which SIDA can draw an enormous amount of high quality evaluation information.

The feedback process is concentrated to a great degree to SIDA Stockholm and the DCO offices, whereas the equivalent process in recipient countries is considerably weaker. This is unfortunate as the main responsibility for development efforts lies with recipient authorities and organisations. Those who have the greatest need of learning gain least benefit from the lessons provided by evaluations. There are therefore pressing reasons to pay increased attention to improving feedback and learning mechanisms within the recipient countries.

Between 1986 and 1988, The Swedish National Audit Board (NAB) undertook an extensive examination of SIDA's learning capacity. The final report **Does SIDA Learn?** states that there is a clear interest in learning within SIDA and that SIDA has established several effective systems for learning. However it is pointed out that there are structural constraints which limit the organisation's ability to learn and change.

A discussion on learning generates many questions:

- How does learning occur? Who learns and how does it happen?
- How is knowledge and experience which are provided by evaluations transferred to decision makers and project administrators at SIDA? To relevant people in the recipient countries?
- What mechanisms ensure that acquired experience is utilised and applied in future development assistance work?
- What role does evaluation play in institutional learning?

Annex 1

Terminology Swedish – English

...iteter	activities
...ndsmål	development objective
...dsgivare	donor
...gande utvärdering	participatory evaluation
...udie	feasibility study
...bar, bärkraftig utveckling	sustainable development
...ikator	indicator
...stitutionellt samarbete	institutional cooperation
institutionell utveckling	institutional development
inre faktorer	internal factors
handlingsplan	plan of operation
kostnadseffektivitet	cost-effectiveness, efficiency
kunskapsutveckling	human resource development
könsaspekter/genusaspekter	gender aspects
miljöaspekter	environmental aspects
mottagarland	recipient country
mål	goal, objective, purpose, target
målgrupp	target group
måluppfyllelse	achievement of objectives, effectiveness
personalbistånd	technical assistance
produktionsmål	outputs
projektbeskrivning	project document
projektgenomförande	project implementation
projektgranskning	appraisal
projektmål	immediate objective, project objective
relevans	relevance
resursinsatser	inputs
sektormål	intermediate or sectoral objective
svensk biståndsinsats	Swedish support, input
sektorstöd	sectoral support
uppföljning	monitoring
uppdragsbeskrivning	terms of reference
utvärdering	evaluation
utvärderingsmetodik	evaluation methodology
utvärderingsrapport	evaluation report
varaktiga effekter	impact
yttre faktorer	external factors, assumptions

Annex 2

Heading for Model *Terms of Reference* – Different Languages

A STANDARDIZED FORMAT for the contents under each heading can be found on pages 34-36

English – Terms of Reference

1. Background
2. Reasons for the Evaluation
3. Scope and Focus of the Evaluation
4. Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule
5. Reporting

Swedish – Uppdragsbeskrivning

1. Bakgrund
2. Anledning till utvärdering
3. Uppdraget
4. Metodik, utvärderingsteamets sammansättning och tidplan
5. Rapportering

Spanish – Términos de Referencia

1. Antecedentes
2. Propósito de la evaluación
3. Descripción de tareas
4. Metología, equipo y fecha para la evaluación
5. Informe

French – Mandat

1. Contexte
2. Raisons d'évaluation
3. Envergure et axes d'évaluation et échéancier
4. Méthodologie, équipe d'évaluation et échéancier
5. Activités de compte-rendu

Annex 3

Sida Evaluation Report – A Standardized Format

(SIDA evaluation reports – a standardized format)

INFORMATION TO AUTHORS OF EVALUATION REPORTS FOR SIDA:

ALL SIDA EVALUATION reports should follow a standardized format. The language of the report should be English unless otherwise agreed. If considered necessary, SIDA may demand that the report be checked by a professional language consultant at the expense of the author(s) of the report.

The report must follow the Terms of Reference agreed upon for the evaluation. The report should be brief and concise, the normal length varying between 40 and 60 pages. Additional material should be presented in annexes or appendices.

The report shall be typed on a word processor, using Microsoft Word as software. Authors shall supply SIDA with a disk to facilitate editing and printing.

Format for SIDA evaluation reports

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- First in the report immediately following the cover. Preferably not more than two-three pages; these pages numbered separately.

The summary should be self-contained and self-explanatory – it will be read by some people who do not know anything about the programme. It should include

- a very brief description of the project/programme/sector support evaluated (purpose, time frame, volume of funds, main components, geographic location)
- purpose and focus of the evaluation as expressed in the Terms of Reference
- summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations (this should be the main part of the executive summary).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAMME CONTEXT

- the development context of the project
- the project history
- description of the project: the goal-hierarchy, the Swedish inputs, activities planned and undertaken, expected outputs, effects and impact.

THE EVALUATION; METHODOLOGY.

- reasons for the evaluation, scope and focus of the evaluation as outlined in the Terms of Reference
- approaches and methods used in conducting the evaluation (what was done, by whom, when, where and how)
- limitations of the study

FINDINGS

(MAY BE EXPANDED into several consecutive sections)

Information, analysis and findings should be presented in clearly defined sections addressing each one of the issues to be covered in the evaluation as outlined in the Terms of Reference. Conclusions should be stated clearly and substantiated by the evidence and analysis presented.

The degree of confidence with which the conclusions can be drawn should be explicitly mentioned.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS CHAPTER SHOULD contain a summary of conclusions and recommendations. Conclusions and recommendations may be written in separate chapters. It should be concise and may preferably make references to the sections of the report where the respective conclusions are dealt with more extensively.

LESSONS LEARNED

THIS SHOULD BE a short chapter on lessons of a more general nature that the evaluation has generated, i.e. lessons and experiences that may be of importance also for other projects and programs.

APPENDICES

1. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation (must be included).
2. List of persons interviewed, including the institution they represent and the position they hold.
3. List of documentation and other references.
4. Tables, diagrams, statistical information etc (optional).

Annex 4

Checklist for Assessment of Evaluation Reports

- ❑ Are all points stated in the Terms of Reference covered?
- ❑ Is the aim of the evaluation clearly stated?
- ❑ Is the composition of the Swedish input clearly stated?
- ❑ Are the results achieved clearly stated?
- ❑ Does the evaluation include an assessment of:
  - ❑ the relevance of the input?
  - ❑ achievement of objectives?
  - ❑ efficiency?
  - ❑ sustainability?
- ❑ Have the following points been dealt with?
  - ❑ gender
  - ❑ environment (if applicable)
  - ❑ institutional development
- ❑ Is there a chapter on lessons learned?
- ❑ Have the evaluators clearly stated which document/documents have formed the point of departure (reference point) of the evaluation? (This is not always the "project support memo")
- ❑ Are the data collection and analysis methods reasonable?
- ❑ Does the evaluation report contain a summary of costs and other resources (e.g. personnel months) for the input?
- ❑ Are the conclusions and recommendations clearly supported by the evaluation results?
- ❑ Do any points need to be clarified or expanded?
- ❑ Is the report the right length? (Main text 50-60 pages or shorter if possible)
- ❑ Can any points be abbreviated or moved to the annexes?
- ❑ Is the report sufficiently rich in facts and argumentation to be able to be read independently and used for decision making without extra, verbal information?
- ❑ Is there an Executive Summary? Is this a real executive summary and not a summarised discussion?
- ❑ Are the conclusions and recommendations contained in independent chapters and not part of the Executive Summary?
- ❑ Are the following points well described?
  - ❑ background
  - ❑ methods
  - ❑ sources
  - ❑ team
- ❑ Are the following annexes attached?
  - ❑ Terms of Reference
  - ❑ People met/interviewed
  - ❑ Field visit/visits programme if applicable
  - ❑ Acronyms and abbreviations
  - ❑ Printed sources/bibliography
- ❑ Is the level of the text and context appropriate? (The target reader should be a person who, though

he/she is well versed in development assistance issues, does not have detailed knowledge of this project or recipient country, e.g. a member of SIDA's Board of Directors)

- ❑ Is the language of an acceptable standard? (It is possible to include a sum for language editing in the original contract sum)
- ❑ Have abbreviations been avoided or at least explained in the text the first time they appear?
- ❑ When the original report is in Spanish or Portuguese – is there a full summary in English?
- ❑ Has the report been submitted in the requisite number of copies?
- ❑ Is the text on a diskette in MSWORD? (The diskette is submitted together with the final report).
- ❑ Has the Evaluation Unit received a copy of the Draft Report?

Annex 5

Methods for Evaluation of Environmental Consequences

THE EVALUATION PROCESS can, with advantage, be divided into three sequential steps:

1) determination of project type
2) evaluation of environmental consequences
3) check that the evaluation covers all necessary aspects

1. Determination of project types

Projects are divided into two categories: environmentally neutral and environmentally consequential projects. This determination is generally easy to carry out and occurs with the application of sound common sense.

ENVIRONMENTALLY NEUTRAL PROJECTS

PROJECTS IN THIS GROUP cannot be considered to have any effect on the environment, or at least an extremely indirect effect.

Administrative transfer of knowledge, health projects, food aid and teaching projects can be mentioned as examples of environmentally neutral projects.

A group of projects which at first sight appears environmentally neutral but whose focus can cause environmental effects form a grey zone which should be considered carefully. This type of project includes education, vocational training, research, disaster relief, institutional support and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. (see also pages 16–17 in SIDA's Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Consequences).

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSEQUENTIAL PROJECTS

ALL NON ENVIRONMENTALLY neutral projects are included in this group, even projects whose primary aim is to protect the environment or rehabilitate damaged areas. The actual goals of these projects demand that positive or negative goal attainment is evaluated.

2. Evaluation of the environmental consequences of the project

SIDA'S GUIDELINES for Assessment of Environmental Consequences are a useful tool during evaluation. The most relevant questions concerning the most common project types are listed there.

In addition to the environmental impact which can be observed during field visits there are many other sources to refer to e.g. project management personnel, local population and NGOs, earlier environmental impact studies, earlier follow up of such studies, national, regional and local environmental authorities, universities and technical colleges, national surveying authorities, literature and databases.

ENVIRONMENTALLY NEUTRAL PROJECTS

THE ENVIRONMENTAL evaluation of these projects is based on a question which the evaluator should ask himself and both central and local project management when visiting the project:

- Have any positive or negative environmental consequences been noted?

If the answer is yes then the type and scale of the impact should be noted together with any measures taken to deal with possibly negative impact.

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSEQUENTIAL PROJECTS

A MORE DETAILED evaluation is carried out for these types of projects. A step by step guide is presented below.

The types of questions may vary a little depending on whether an environmental impact study has previously been carried out.

An environmental impact study has previously been carried out

Begin by asking if a follow up study of environmental consequences has already been carried out, if not start with question 3.

- Was the follow-up full scale? Were any aspects neglected?
- Are the reported results in accord with the opinions of the project leadership, environmental authorities, local population and the evaluator's first hand observations?
- Describe the most important environmental effects. Positive or negative? Use any existing follow up, interview key people, make a field inspection. Use SIDA's checklists.
- How does the actual environmental impact compare with that envisaged in the Environmental Impact Study?
- Have the environmental inputs mentioned in the documentation actually been implemented?
- Have any measures to counteract possible negative consequences been taken?
- Is there or should there be a continuous environmental impact check mechanism?
- Is a more extensive study of environmental impact necessary?

An environmental impact study has not previously been carried out

- Attempt to create a picture of the environmental situation before the start of the project. Use e.g. project documents, aerial photographs, maps, satellite photos, interviews with key people and local population.
- Make an assessment of environmental impact through interviews with project leadership, field observations and local sources. Use SIDA's checklists.
- Have the environmental activities mentioned in the documentation actually been implemented?
- Have any measures to counteract possible negative consequences been taken?
- Is there or should there be a continuous environmental impact check mechanism?
- Is a more extensive study of environmental impact necessary?

Checklist for evaluator

1. Identification of impact

Has the project affected environmentally sensitive areas, e.g. rain forests, mangrove swamps or coral reefs?

Has the project caused a significant positive or negative impact?

Has the total geographical area of the impact been considered? Delays before the impact is noticed?

Is a more extensive study of environmental impact necessary?

2. Limitation of environmental impact

Have measures been taken to decrease possible negative impact?

Have the interests and opinions of those people directly affected been taken into account?

Have people or property been moved?

Have compensation measures for affected people been executed?

3. Procedures

Has SIDA's methodology for environmental evaluation been utilised?

Has the value of the positive and negative effects been taken into consideration in the financial/economic analysis of the project?

Have the recipient environmental authorities been consulted and have they been able to express their views on the environmental consequences of the project?

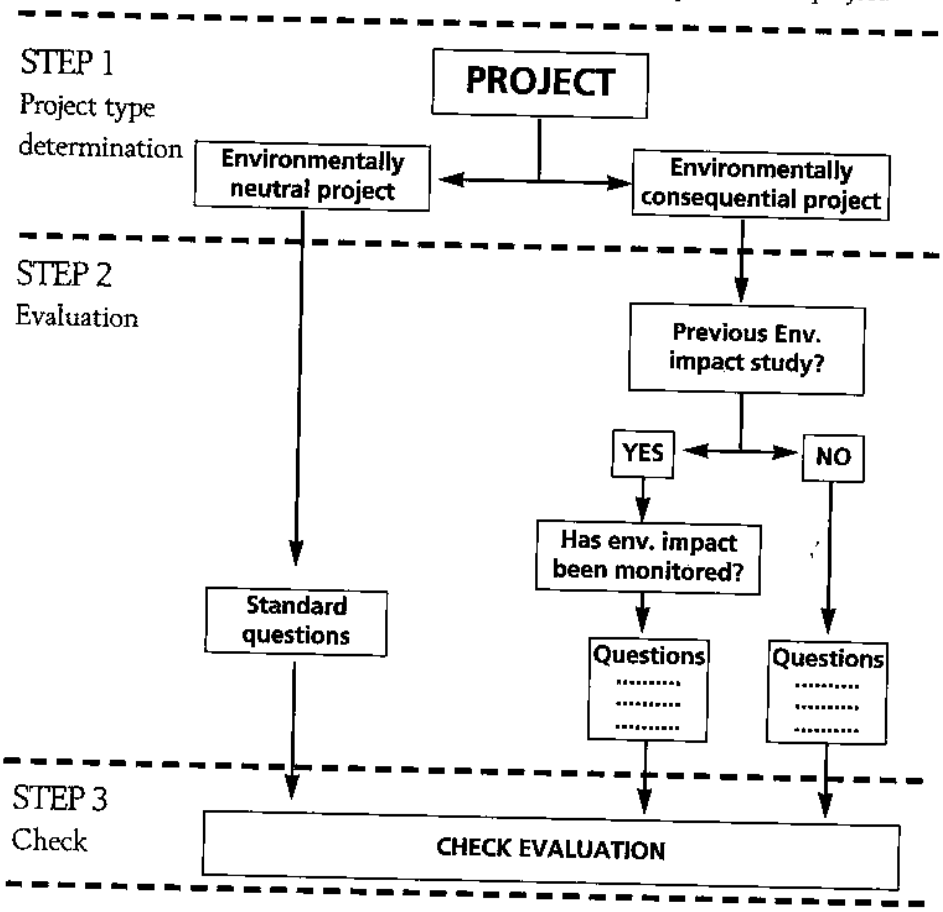
4. Implementation

Have sufficient baseline studies been carried out?

Have the environmental activities mentioned in the documentation actually been implemented?

Does the recipient country need support to be able to include specific environmental components in the project or support for environmental education?

Has the environmental impact been monitored during the implementation and operational phase of the project?



Annex 6

Methods for Integration of Gender Aspects in Evaluations

1. Formal regulation within SIDA

INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING evaluations can be found in SIDA's Guidelines and Action Plan for development assistance to women (9 October 1985).

To apply these guidelines it is recommended that the following questions should be answered in the evaluation:

- Which groups, separated into men and women, is the development assistance aimed at, directly or indirectly?
- Which positive respectively negative effects has the project had on women and men respectively?

Further it is stated that these aspects shall be included in the Terms of Reference of the members of the evaluation team.

SIDA's **Gender Unit** shall be provided with an opportunity to **give their views** in order to ensure that these aspects are considered properly.

2. Methods of assessment

Which methods have been developed within SIDA to assess the impact on women and men in evaluations?

The concept "target group" is expanded to cover three separate groups of women and men which should be covered by the analysis:

- "the **target group**", i.e. those who are benefited by the input;
- **groups which are expected to take part in implementation;**
- **groups which will be influenced** but which are neither target group nor participants.

Important aspects to remember when planning evaluations:

- Terms of Reference should include a practical gender perspective i.e. the actual questions to be answered shall be formulated in the Terms of Reference – if necessary in an annex.
- **The evaluation team** should include one person who possesses gender competence and who is assigned the task of monitoring gender aspects in the evaluation as well as ensuring that the other members of the team consider these aspects in their work.
- The gender perspective should be considered as relevant **in all aspects of an evaluation** including financial, technical, administrative and social as well as having its own place as a separate issue.
- **Reports** on gender aspects shall be submitted by all members of the team. They are to be integrated into the main report and not included as an annex.

Even if the input under evaluation has not had the explicit objective of integrating gender aspects, or lacks specific data or monitoring system, *there are opportunities to monitor gender issues* through e.g.

- Identification of **lack of information** concerning the different groups – target group, participants and affected groups;
- collection of existing **gender specific statistics** and identification of important gaps in information;
- Identification of **special constraints** on women – factors which mean that women do not have the same opportunities as men to benefit from the project, and explanations of possible negative effects on women.
- identification of **indicators** for improved monitoring.
- **practical proposals for changes in the input.**

3. What does OECD/DAC recommend?

OECD/DAC WID Expert Group and Evaluation Expert Group have together established a plan covering those gender aspects which should be integrated into Terms of Reference for evaluators (May 1992).

These questions are by no means complete or perfect but they can be utilised and further developed.

1. Idea Preparation, Project Proposal and Project Implementation

a) How were the interests and roles of women (in comparison to those of men) examined and considered during the three stages mentioned above in the project/programme under evaluation?

b) In which ways did women (in comparison to men) take part in these processes?

2. Results and Impact

a) Were women (in comparison to men) positively or negatively affected by the project/programme concerning access to income, training, workload, household and social role and health?

b) How were the interests and roles of women (in comparison to men) examined and considered during the evaluation stage?

c) Have important factors concerning women (in comparison to men) not been considered at the project proposal stage?

3. Availability of data.

Was gender specific data available at all project/programme stages?

i) idea preparation
ii) project proposal
iii) implementation
iv) monitoring
v) evaluation

4. Sustainability

Have the results attained by the project/programme the same level of sustainability for women as for men?

Annex 7

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