

The Evaluability of Democracy and Human Rights Projects

A logframe-related assessment

ITAD Ltd in association with
the Overseas Development Institute



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Derek Poate
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Preface

In 1997, Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) initiated an evaluability assessment of projects for democracy and human rights (D/HR). The purpose was to investigate the scope for logframe-related impact evaluation, and to produce useful lessons for the planning and implementation of D/HR projects in order to facilitate such evaluation.

Sida supports a wide range of D/HR projects, for different purposes and with different prospects for impact evaluation. As a first step in preparing the assessment, an inventory of more than five hundred D/HR projects was made, representing around 90% of the total value of Sida's D/HR support in 1996. On the basis of the inventory, UTV decided to focus the assessment on projects for capacity development in public and civil organisations, a main theme of the agency's D/HR support. It was also decided to concentrate the assessment on projects in South Africa and Central America, both major regions for D/HR projects sponsored by Sida.

In late 1998, the assignment was awarded to British ITAD and Overseas Development Institute (ODI), offering a team with extensive experience of project planning and evaluation, as well as with relevant D/HR expertise. Supervision of the assignment was provided by Mr. Derek Poate (ITAD) and Mr. Roger Riddell (ODI).

The ITAD/ODI study provides a number of insights and recommendations on how to increase the scope for logframe-related impact evaluation, mainly by means of better project planning and implementation. As such, the report will be a useful input to efforts to improve the overall management of projects for D/HR development.

Stockholm, October 2000

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NOTE: Annex 7 is printed in a separate volume and is available upon request (telephone: +46-8-698 51 63, fax: +46-8-698 56 10, e-mail: maria-eugenia.blanco-vergara@sida.se).

Executive summary

Introduction

Support for democracy and human rights (D/HR) has played an increasingly important role in Sida's co-operation with developing countries ever since the early 1990s. Yet there is a considerable lack of reliable information on the impact of the Agency's D/HR initiatives. This evaluability assessment has the dual purposes of producing lessons on (a) useful methods for D/HR impact evaluation, and (b) good practices for the planning and implementation of D/HR projects.

Context

All Sida assistance is intended to contribute to the core objective of the Swedish aid programme: "to improve the standard of living of poor peoples". The Swedish approach to D/HR has evolved over time, and policy statements have been produced both by Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. During 1993–1998, the D/HR policy was refined to the effect that, not only do all aid initiatives need to be assessed in relation to poverty reduction, but poverty is itself a D/HR issue.

The difficulty of evaluating D/HR support is widely acknowledged. A 1997 Sida policy document noted that evaluation initiatives were hampered by fundamental design deficiencies – vague and over-optimistic objectives, for example – characterising the Agency's D/HR support. International literature on the subject also recognises the need for specific and realistic objectives to support evaluation initiatives. Recent work by the EU questions the extent to which the impact of specific projects can be linked to the overall situation of D/HR. These observations find direct support in this evaluability assessment.

The study was carried out on a sample of 28 projects in four countries: South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. The projects in South Africa span from the end of apartheid to the introduction of multi-party democracy. Operations began officially in 1992, Sida faced an avalanche of requests for support to the democratic transition and the 1994 elections. Subsequently, conflict resolution, gender-oriented programmes, popular participation, and the promotion of human rights became areas of emphasis.

The armed conflict in El Salvador lasted from the late 1970s to the signing of the peace accords in 1992. Sida's D/HR support has spanned two distinct phases. The first phase was that of support to organisations for establishing a

D/HR culture during the period of conflict. This was followed by a phase of support to government to ensure the implementation of the peace accords.

Guatemala experienced an uninterrupted period of military dictatorship from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, when basic democracy was restored. International aid has focused on support for the implementation of the 1996 peace accords between the government and the URNG rebel movement, and Sida has been active in this area mainly through its support to civil society and programmes co-ordinated by the UNDP.

Since 1990 Nicaragua has undergone a triple transition from war to peace, from a centralised to an export-led economy, and a transformation of key government institutions. A process of decentralisation together with efforts to strengthen civil participation formed an integral part of the institution building for peace and reconciliation initiated by the Chamorro government. In this context, the Sida support of the 1990s focused on processes of reconciliation, reconstruction and democracy.

Methodology

This study examines how well Sida's D/HR projects can be evaluated with the logical framework (logframe) as an organising evaluation structure. The logframe is a tool that helps planners and implementers structure the objectives of a project so that a clear understanding of means and ends is achieved. The logframe uses a four-row by four-column matrix to set out objectives in a vertical logic. *Activities* (e.g. police training) are financed to enable the delivery of *outputs* (skilled police). Target beneficiaries respond to those outputs and change behaviour or performance to achieve the project *purpose* (effective crime investigation) which contributes to the *goal* (reduced crime) and thereby also to the *higher goal* of D/HR development. The logframe also identifies assumptions on which the various steps of the logframe are based, indicators that specify the objectives, and the practical means of monitoring the actual achievement of objectives. A well-designed project would find all stakeholders in agreement over objectives, indicators and the other aspects of the project logframe.

The logframe is widely used for planning and evaluation of development projects. However, some practitioners argue that it is more suitable for projects where the expected changes can be accurately predicted and measured, than for complex processes such as institutional change and D/HR development.

Conventional evaluation of development projects is goal-oriented, comparing the performance of target groups after the project with their performance before it, and with a control group which was not targeted by the project. Logframe planning facilitates goal-oriented evaluation, and adds a bonus by making explicit the expected chain of causes and effects against which progress can be charted.

Evaluability assessment

The assessment was specified as a series of detailed tasks in the consultants' terms of reference. The tasks required the identification of logframes from project documents and interviews with stakeholders, the analysis of such logframes, the assessment of available data, collection of information on the wider project context, and consideration of alternative impact evaluation approaches for projects found less evaluable.

The team acknowledged the problem of assessing projects that were not planned in accordance with logframe practice and terminology, and the risk of criticisms of design failings becoming superficial and being based on semantics rather than substance. For this reason, rather than regular logframes, the team worked with *development pathways*, a less rigid manifestation of the logframe hierarchy of objectives, in the review of project documents and interviews with stakeholders.

Different stakeholder groups were interviewed separately to assess the extent of agreement on project objectives. Analysis was done with the aid of a structured checklist that helped minimise divergences of treatment by the consultants who worked on the study. Nineteen evaluation criteria were investigated by means of subsidiary questions, and a score given for each criterion, based on a four-point ordinal scale.

Fieldwork

Data were collected in three stages. A preliminary assessment of documents from Sida Headquarters in Stockholm was followed by reconnaissance visits to the four countries in November 1998. Following those visits, the methodology was updated and the main fieldwork undertaken in January/February 1999.

The 28 projects reviewed cover a wide range of policy issues within the D/HR theme. The team analysed the projects on the basis of Sida's own categorisation of D/HR subject areas. Two points are interesting to note. First, D/HR is a complex area difficult to categorise in a smaller number of more specific areas. For several projects, it is not possible to decide on a single discrete category since they appear in more than one category. Second, because the spread is so wide (the projects cover 16 of Sida's 19 subject areas) it is difficult to draw general conclusions on evaluability issues specific to particular subject areas. The projects were also diverse in terms of approved costs, with the smallest project at around 1 MSEK and the largest at 32 MSEK.

The projects were sampled by Sida/UTV. The sample concentrated exclusively on projects earmarked for capacity building of public and civil institutions, identified through a classification of Sida's 1996 D/HR project support. However, the classification and sampling effort turned out to be misleading, since it was based on Sida's project decisions and agreements with counterparts, not on information as to how funds were actually used. Only when the assessment was underway did it become clear that the sample in

fact also included other projects (and sub-projects), such as non-earmarked budget support and public information campaigns. This made the consultants' tasks more difficult and influenced the results of the assessment (for example, the logframe-related evaluation approach is generally more feasible to earmarked project support than to unspecified budget support).

Findings

The assessment was based on eleven evaluability criteria, but four were considered particularly crucial for logframe-related evaluation:

- quality of project purpose,
- quality of expected outputs,
- availability of baseline or monitoring data,
- the feasibility of attribution.

The first two criteria summarise the coherence, specificity and realism of the project intervention logic. Thirteen projects were rated good or satisfactory for these criteria, but only two projects – PANC and UPEP in South Africa – satisfy all four of them. The weakest aspect of evaluability concerns the feasibility of attributing development changes to the project investment. This is especially problematical where the Sida investment is small in comparison to other complementary work, or where interventions take the form of budget support, for example to NGOs.

The discovery of fundamental weaknesses in the specification of objectives matches the conclusions of international studies on D/HR evaluation. Analysts of D/HR projects often point out that design weaknesses arise because of sensitivity to political change. Precise objectives and assumptions are avoided so as not to attract adverse criticism. However, the assessment showed that design weaknesses transcend aspects of political discretion.

Alternative evaluation

The rating scores were used for an ordinal ranking of evaluability aspects, not for statistical analysis. But examination of the scores reveals interesting patterns. The most frequent evaluability problem concerns the availability of adequate baseline and monitoring data, which affects over three-quarters of the sample. Low evaluability due to non-existent or inadequate baseline and monitoring data needs to be dealt with by imaginative methods of data collection. These problems are not in themselves linked to the quality of the project design, but they limit the practical scope for collecting and analysing data, and they increase the cost of evaluation.

The most serious evaluability problem concerns the feasibility of attribution, affecting just over half of the sample. Again this is not solely a project design issue. Problems of attribution also hinge on the scale of project activities and

the overall project context, for example the relationship to other similar interventions. In cases where Sida's involvement was one element in a larger process, the project could probably not be evaluated for effectiveness, but might instead be evaluated for efficiency or relevance. Where support was directed through implementing NGOs, a programme evaluation of the NGO activities may be undertaken.

Low quality of project purposes and expected outputs appear next, affecting a smaller but still significant part of the sample (32 and 39 per cent respectively). For many projects a careful discussion with stakeholders would probably enable these project design features to be reformulated *ex post*. The remaining problems are of a practical nature. High evaluation cost characterises nine projects. Stakeholder ownership and accessibility are problems for only a few projects.

Little evidence was found to support different approaches to evaluation. For about half of the sample, the evaluability problems lie in poor specification of objectives, i.e. in weak project design. In some cases the objectives were poor because the process change being stimulated could not be foreseen with any clarity. Such projects may be best suited to techniques of self-evaluation, where beneficiaries are asked to form their own judgement about their conditions before and after the project.

In any evaluation, a number of specific techniques such as tracer studies of beneficiary trainees might be helpful in tracking outcomes. But these are not incompatible with the logframe approach, nor do they appear to represent insurmountable problems.

Conclusions

The findings should be seen in the context of the countries where the projects were planned. There was both a high level of requests and a commitment by the donors to support processes of change. In quite a number of cases, this led to a curtailed project preparation process, with the result that the planning deficiencies were so great that the overall effectiveness of the projects was probably seriously reduced. The logframe approach would have helped solve these problems but was not being used systematically by Sida at the time.

The team concludes that there is no reason in principle why D/HR projects could not be planned and evaluated with the logframe approach. Although only two projects were found ready for evaluation, one reason for low scores was the concern of the team not to lead stakeholders to make "improved" statements of objectives.

Most stakeholders agree on an overall intervention logic of the projects, although the purposes are often vague and numerous, and the indicators not stated, thus allowing stakeholders to actually hold different interpretations of the focus of the projects. In the view of the team, two elements of the project design are critical, and would if improved strengthen the evaluability of

many of the projects reviewed. First, the project's purpose is often confused with its goal and therefore tends to be unrealistic, given the time and resources dedicated. Second, outputs are not always well specified and thus do not provide a clear and logical link between activities and purposes.

Multiple and unrealistic project purposes possibly arise from the project designers' need to "sell" the project to the government or the funders. Vagueness on purposes can also be a way of leaving project funders and implementers free to contribute to a general process without committing themselves to the achievement of certain objectives. In some of the "projects", there is actually little sense of a clear time-bound project among implementers. Documents state project objectives, but the support is actually understood as an ongoing relationship in which there is greater emphasis on the general direction of the process than on achieving stated targets within stipulated time-frames.

Generally speaking, stakeholders present good ideas on how to measure project success, but there has not usually been any planning process whereby they share and come to an agreement on these ideas. This contributes to what may be termed a "smoke-screen" problem whereby there is no common and clear standard against which project performance can be monitored.

There are, however, projects for which the elaboration of a logframe is not so straightforward: (a) where the project is actually a programme or set of sub-projects and where separate logframes would be more appropriate, (b) where the project is highly experimental and the planned outputs and purposes unclear, and (c) where the support is provided to an institution undertaking a general reform process rather than a specific project that could be logframed.

There are also special reasons why D/HR projects are difficult to fit into a logical framework format. The study examined the evaluability findings from the perspective of different types of D/HR interventions. As noted above, this proved difficult, due to the wide range of interventions and policy areas. Three broad themes have been identified, however. First, several projects involve awareness-raising processes. The problem here is that intended effects may not have been well defined by project implementers. Democracy implies the freedom of a society to choose what it will do and how, i.e. a continuous process which has no pre-defined and obvious outcomes. What matters to the project is that issues are addressed and dealt with in some way. Hence the purpose is usually not defined in terms of specific changes, but is kept at the more general process-purpose level, e.g. "youth more actively involved in the local electoral and democratic processes". In such cases, it may not be possible to specify the project purpose further than in terms of "positive changes".

Second, several projects concern legislative development. As such development is the product of a national democratic process, it may be inappropriate for a project to set out to achieve the enactment of specific pieces of legislation. An appropriate purpose may rather be to support the passing and enforcement of legislation that results in improved protection of certain human rights. The purpose statement may therefore become vaguer.

Third, the evaluability of some institutional capacity building projects is adversely affected by the absence of a clear intervention logic for the capacity building. As noted, some projects provide general institutional support, not aimed at specific capacity building, but rather for the institution to continue carrying out its work. Capacity building of government agencies usually has a more explicit strategy. The key evaluability finding in these cases is that project designers sometimes define the purpose of the project in terms of the administrative capacity of the institution rather than the effectiveness of service delivery. However, this is a feature common to institutional strengthening in most other sectors, not just in the field of D/HR.

Lessons

- The policy framework needs to be refined and problem analyses conducted, partly to improve project relevance.
- Objectives should be structured using logframe practices to ensure that projects have realistic, specific and measurable purposes with verifiable indicators.
- Improved project objectives and indicators will help the feasibility of attributing development changes to project activities and Sida's project contribution.
- Flexible use of the logframe can be encouraged so that revisions can be made when implementation starts and to take account of changing means in process projects.
- All evaluations would benefit from the evaluability techniques of trying to elicit a project logframe from an identified development pathway.
- An evaluability assessment of Sida's D/HR projects is generally estimated to require up to eight days for document reviews and meetings with stakeholders in order to explore the project logic. Ideally, the approach is to try to identify or reconstruct a development pathway from discussions with stakeholders, using project documentation for cross-checking and clarification.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) had two main reasons for commissioning a study of the Agency's support for democracy and human rights (D/HR). The first was the growing importance of D/HR in Sida's co-operation with developing countries. The second was the lack of reliable information on the impact of the Agency's D/HR support. The study has the dual purposes of producing lessons on (a) useful methods for D/HR impact evaluation, and (b) good practices for the planning and implementation of D/HR projects.

UTV has conceived a two-phase approach to the exercise. Phase 1 comprises an assessment of the evaluability of a sample of Sida's D/HR projects in South Africa, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. The main tasks of the assessment are to surface and document the logframes on which the individual projects were either implicitly or explicitly based, to analyse these identified logframes with respect to whether they are complete, coherent, verifiable and realistic, and to analyse the availability of information necessary for a full impact evaluation. The team was also required to consider alternative evaluation approaches for projects found less evaluable from a logframe-related perspective. Phase 2 will concern a full-scale impact evaluation of a sample of projects which, according to phase 1, are evaluable.

This document constitutes the main report on phase 1: the evaluability assessment. Chapter 2 places the assessment in its wider context by focusing on (a) the evolution of Sida's D/HR approach, (b) some general issues concerned with the evaluation of D/HR projects, and (c) the D/HR context of the four countries covered by the study. Chapter 3 explains the methodology employed, and discusses the determinants of evaluability. Chapter 4 describes the activities undertaken during the preparatory and fieldwork phases, and provides an overview of the main characteristics of the projects reviewed.

The main findings are presented in Chapters 5–7. Chapter 5 discusses various evaluability aspects of the sampled projects. For projects found less evaluable, and a logframe-related evaluation considered particularly problematic, Chapter 6 discusses possible ways of overcoming problems of low evaluability, as well as a number of possible alternative approaches to impact evaluation. Chapter 7 draws together the main conclusions of the assessment. Much of the analysis presented in chapters 5–7 is based on the project assessments

completed for each project during document review and fieldwork interviews. These will be found in Annex 7.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents the lessons drawn from phase 1 regarding the context of D/HR support, the methodology and current practice of D/HR evaluation, the planning and implementation of D/HR projects (including the improvement of logframes), and the conduction of evaluability assessments.

The team would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the people met in Sweden, South Africa and Central America, for taking the time to participate in the study, often in difficult circumstances, and for freely sharing information and views on the projects with which they were involved.

Chapter 2

Context

This chapter places the subsequent discussion on evaluability in its wider context by focusing on (a) the evolution of Sida's D/HR approach, (b) some general issues concerning D/HR impact evaluation, and (c) the D/HR context of the four countries covered by the study.

2.1 Sida's evolving approach to D/HR

The policy outlined

All Sida support, including assistance focused specifically on D/HR development, is prepared and implemented in order to contribute to the core objective of the Swedish aid programme:

“The primary goal for Swedish development assistance continues to be that of improving the standard of living of poor peoples.”

The Swedish approach to D/HR has evolved over time and policy statements have been produced both by Sida (and the former SIDA) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In terms of overarching policy, three documents are of particular importance. In 1993, the former SIDA produced a document titled *SIDA's Strategy for Its Programmes of Assistance in Support of Democracy and Human Rights*. Its focus was predominantly on one cluster of rights, namely “civic” rights.

In 1997, the SIDA strategy was replaced by *Sida's Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights* which, in contrast, stated explicitly that “Sida regards Human Rights Support as including all actions which have as their primary objective to improve government's respect and protection of individuals' and groups' equal enjoyment of their civil, political, economic and cultural human rights”. What this suggests is that Sida's human rights activities should encompass all internationally recognised human rights. The 1997 policy document also highlights the importance of conflict prevention as part of Sida's overall approach to D/HR.

In 1998, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced its own and D/HR strategy document, highlighting a wide range of issues related to democracy and good governance: a viable civil society, a democratic culture, democratic public institutions and independent media.¹ Earlier, in 1997, the Ministry produced a

report which embraced the view that poverty reduction is also a human rights issue.² Implicitly, the view of the Ministry is that all Swedish aid should be assessed with respect to impact on poverty reduction.

Likewise, Sida's 1997 publication talks about the need for D/HR "to be reflected and respected in all bilateral Swedish development co-operation". Consequently, Sida's view is that all support needs to be assessed in relation to potential effects on violent conflict and the human rights status of both individuals and groups.³

The importance of contextual analyses

A recent emphasis in Sida's D/HR documents is greater attention to longer-term and contextual issues, and the concomitant need to place less emphasis on small, shorter and discrete interventions which are not linked to a wider programme. Thus, Sida's 1997 document (which of course raises issues besides those related to contextual issues) makes the following points:⁴

- human rights projects will "be integrated as far as possible into country strategies and long term country co-operation",
- impact will be better achieved by thorough analyses of the project context and clear and realistic goal formulation,
- Sida should concentrate its support, and take more initiative in programme identification, as well as insist on a prioritisation of activities and more long-term and sustainable programmes.

Some more specific points complement these general views. Human rights work, according to the 1997 document, should:

- focus on the groups most prone to human rights abuses, such as the police and prison officials,
- focus on women and children,
- include consciousness-raising activities, and
- include exerting pressure "through civil society and institutions".

¹ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Africa on The Move: Revitalising Swedish Policy Towards Africa for the 21st Century*, 1997/98: 122 (page 100), quoting the Ministry's publication *Democracy and Human Rights in Sweden's Development Co-operation*.

² Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *The Rights of the Poor – Our Common Responsibility: Combating Poverty in Sweden's Development Co-operation*, 1996/97: 169.

³ The following quote from the 1997 policy document is noted: "All other development co-operation programmes involving Sida will be scrutinised during their planning and implementation, with a view to identifying unintended and negative effects that may be harmful to democracy and human rights. In situations of armed conflict, Sida's minimum approach will be to seek to 'Do No Harm' with aid, i.e. to identify unintended effects that may fuel conflict" (p. 18).

⁴ The issues of context are highlighted because they are relevant to the discussion of how D/HR projects may be evaluated. It is not, however, within the scope of this overall study to present either an overall summary or critique of the 1997 policy document.

2.2 Evaluation of D/HR projects and programmes

Sida's experience

The 1997 policy document makes some oblique but important statements about the evaluation of D/HR projects:

“To make a summary of experience in democracy, human rights and conflict management assistance across countries is virtually impossible. Results have generally not been quantifiable or quantified and outputs cannot be standardised. It has to be recognised that the impacts of the inputs made on processes of democratisation and conflict management are difficult to measure in a way that makes them comparable over time and across countries.”
(page 44)

This suggests that the core evaluation problems are rooted in project design weaknesses, including poorly stated objectives. Overall, the document argues that D/HR evaluation is likely to be facilitated by greater attention paid to the following problems and weaknesses:

- objectives are too general, and need to be broken down into sub-goals,
- projects should be planned within a broad contextual analysis, often lacking or not made explicit in the present project planning exercises,
- there are conceptual and definitional problems in the areas of D/HR, something which calls for operational definitions to be developed and clarified,
- information flows and co-ordination within Sida should be improved, and
- Sida should engage more actively in dialogue with Swedish and other NGOs to identify common grounds and ensure mutual learning.

The international perspective

The international literature on D/HR evaluation is fast growing, but, by common consensus, still in its infancy. Nevertheless, the major strands of relevant contemporary studies indicate the following:

- D/HR support covers a wide variety of intervention types. It is unrealistic to expect there ever to be one general approach to D/HR evaluation. Evaluation initiatives will always have to be tailored to the specific characteristics of the support evaluated.

- Activities for D/HR development are not ends in themselves, but implemented to achieve certain sets of objectives. Thus, training of individuals and institutional capacity building are funded to stimulate wider D/HR-related development changes. This means that impact evaluation should focus not only on activity implementation and the delivery of project outputs, but also on the extent to which the wider objectives have been achieved and contributed to. One problem in this respect is that there are no generally accepted theories or models of exactly how different types of activities in fact do stimulate D/HR development.
- Most D/HR interventions are small-scale relative to the complexity of the problems addressed. It is often over-optimistic to count on significant progress towards wider objectives resulting from donor financed D/HR activities, and especially on the basis of one-off discrete projects, and this in turn has a bearing on the type of results information that evaluations could reasonably be expected to produce. In particular, the evaluation of outcomes are generally more feasible than the evaluation of impact (see chapter 3 for a definition of outcomes and impact).
- The evidence so far from D/HR evaluations suggests that advances in the areas of D/HR take time. This makes the timing of impact evaluations crucial. In many cases, there is no point in conducting such evaluations before or immediately after the support has been terminated.
- Evidence from D/HR evaluations suggests that success factors, and the weight to be given to such factors, tend to become clear through evaluation, i.e. once the evaluation is in process or has even been completed. This suggests that, even if projects are initiated with a cluster of specific indicators to assess performance, usually the indicators selected will not fully capture the complexity and the unique features of the project evaluated.

In spite of these problems, many donors have tried to develop indicators to assess the impact of different types of D/HR projects.⁵ However, OECD and other studies acknowledge that little headway has been made in developing, obtaining agreement upon and using a group of common indicators for the evaluation of D/HR projects.⁶

Recent work, including most notably a study by Canadian CIDA, cautions against using D/HR indicators mechanistically and focusing too much on

⁵ For example Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *First Guidance for an Output and Outcome Indicator System*, 1998. The way different donors have approached, and in some cases defined indicators, is discussed in greater length in Annex 5.

⁶ OECD *Final Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Participatory Democracy and Good Governance Part I and II*, 1997. This work is important also because it is based on a survey of evaluation methods and results of all major DAC donors.

quantitative indicators.⁷ Evaluators are advised not to try to create blueprint-type indicators which risk imposing artificial and rigid categories on D/HR development processes.

A recent evaluation of D/HR projects carried out by the EU concludes that it is not possible to draw a direct link between the impact of small discrete projects to the overall D/HR situation of a country. The implication is important, because if such links cannot be drawn, it is pointless to construct indicators of overall D/HR development.⁸

2.3 The country context

South Africa

The elections in 1994 ended the apartheid era in South Africa, and the country entered a rapid and complex period of transition. The legacy of apartheid is still a deeply divisive factor, but progress has been made in terms of constitutional legislation, the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings and local and national government elections. South Africa has achieved marked success in many areas in its transition to democracy, creating several of the needed instruments and laws to restructure its society in a more democratic manner.

However, the new development strategy as expressed through the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) has had mixed success in addressing the country's problems of inequality and poverty through its strategy of economic growth. The overall rate of economic growth has fallen, with GDP growth at 3 per cent, well below the 6 per cent target required to reduce the level of unemployment (recorded at 33 per cent in 1997). Poverty, crime and poor housing still remain problems for the majority of South Africa's inhabitants. Some critics have argued that the original RDP (which was subsumed by GEAR) in fact posed more radical solutions to these problems, and constituted more than large-scale and government-managed infrastructure plans. Indeed, RDP also implied engaging civil society more closely in all areas of development.⁹ In spite of these criticisms, there is no doubt that real progress has been made in creating the framework for a democratic society, and with the national 1999 elections, South Africa has taken a further step towards democracy.

⁷ I. Kapoor, *Indicators for Programming in Human Rights and Democratic Development: A Preliminary Study*, 1996 (paper prepared for CIDA's Political and Social Policies Division). This report follows earlier Canadian studies. See for example P. Rawkins and M. Bergeron *Lessons Learned in Human Rights and Democratic Development: A Study of CIDA's Bilateral Programming Experience*, 1994 (report prepared for CIDA's Good Governance and Human Rights Policies Division).

⁸ These issues are discussed in more detail in Annex 4. Readers wishing to pursue them further are referred to W. Heinz, H. Lingnau and P. Waller, *Evaluation of EC Positive Measures in Favour of Human Rights and Democracy (1991–1993)*, 1995.

⁹ The Voluntary Sector and Development in South Africa, *Development Update*, Vol. 1. No. 3 1997.

During the apartheid years, Sida was one of the most active donors funding the banned political parties, such as the ANC and oppositional NGOs outside and within South Africa. Although Sida has provided D/HR support to South Africa for over thirty years, it was only in 1992 that operations began officially within the country. Many Sida activities were considered high risk and sensitive by staff involved at the time and there was an avalanche of requests for support due to the 1994 elections.¹⁰

Following the 1994 elections, Sida's background of support to the anti-apartheid struggle meant that it was well-placed in terms of NGO contacts, political links with the new Government of National Unity and potential development partners on the ground. It did not have a country strategy in place at the beginning, but with the setting up of a legation in 1994 and the full embassy later that year, a bilateral agreement could be prepared and signed in 1995. The basis for Sida's support was to assist in the implementation of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Four areas of emphasis were identified: solution of conflicts, gender-oriented programmes, popular participation and human rights promotion.¹¹

During 1995–98, the planned financial framework was 140 MSEK. Because of the low capacity of the embassy at that time, and the barrage of requests, Swedish NGOs were used for project appraisal and supervision.¹² The NGOs chosen had greater administrative capacity, local knowledge and more extensive contacts at grass-root levels to assess proposals, act as a conduit for funds and act as a supervising agency for progress monitoring.

El Salvador

The armed conflict between the government and the rebel movement of the FMLN lasted from the late 1970s to the signing of the peace accords in 1992. Although the violence culminated in the early to mid-1980s, the effect of the war was to deeply divide the country's population. While presidential elections had been held in 1984 and 1989 they were widely recognised as not being democratic, owing to the highly militarised state of the country. The FMLN also boycotted the 1989 elections. In 1994 the first presidential elections were held with the full participation of the FMLN.

The peace accords covered a range of areas including demobilisation of armed forces, reform of the security services, the judiciary and the electoral machinery, investigation of human rights abuses and mechanisms for the protection of human rights. In 1993, the United Nations established an observer mission (ONUSAL) to monitor and support the implementation of peace accords. The mission withdrew in 1997.

¹⁰ Interviews with Johan Brisman and Lars-Olof Höök, Sida.

¹¹ Support to the media is also given as falling within the scope of the initial project assessment.

¹² Swedish NGOs were used as a substitute for local umbrella organisations, which during that time could not be successfully identified.

Sida's support to D/HR development has spanned three distinct phases in El Salvador. The first phase was that of support to organisations active in establishing a culture of peace, democracy and respect for human rights during the period of conflict. This was followed after 1992 by a phase of support for government reform to ensure the implementation of the peace accords and to contribute to the process of national pacification. As the implementation of the peace accords was a political process which had only a limited degree of support from government, this process involved providing support to civil society to push for the required changes.

Presidential, parliamentary and local elections were held in 1994, and were generally recognised as free and fair although they produced very poor results for the FMLN. In 1997 local elections were held which resulted in a much stronger showing for the left, with several large towns and cities, San Salvador included, going to the FMLN. The implementation of the peace accords at this time was beset with many problems. A UNDP study of governmental policies on structural adjustment and the implementation of the peace accords concluded that the key constraint on progress been, not the availability of external resources but the lack of political will. From 1996–97 onwards there was evidence of declining international support for the implementation of the peace accords. However the anticipated processes of electoral, judicial and public security reform, pacification, and reintegration of thousands of ex-soldiers and guerrillas, had all proceeded more slowly than anticipated.

Significant progress is recognised to have occurred in the areas of public security, the respect of basic human rights by the security forces, and the reintegration of ex-combatants. However El Salvador remains one of the most violent countries in Latin America and has a long way to go before it can be termed a basically peaceful society. The combination of massive insecurity with the rise of organised crime and continued power abuse and corruption makes the gains of the peace process precarious. Poverty and income inequality remain the greatest threat to the country. Continued external donor support and political influence is needed to stabilise the country.

Guatemala

Guatemala experienced an uninterrupted period of military dictatorship from the mid-1950s to 1985. During this period, the growth of a rebel movement and the resultant government-backed counter-insurgency campaigns are believed to have resulted in some 200,000 deaths over a 35-year period. Human rights abuses were most serious from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, when basic democracy was restored. Power was transferred from one government to another in 1991 and again in 1995. It was only in late 1996 that the peace accords were completed and the armed conflict between the URNG and the government ended. The peace accords covered similar areas to those in El Salvador, but also included measures to ensure the integration of indigenous groups into society and protection of their rights.

The peace accords established a framework for the reform of government and civil society, and aimed to transform the country into a multi-ethnic democracy. Mechanisms were established to ensure the representation of communities by means of urban and rural development councils, of women for example via the Women's Forum, and of indigenous peoples via the joint commissions for the implementation of the accord on the identity and the rights of indigenous peoples.

The accords laid out agreements to return the military to civil control, to convert the police to a public service institution, to re-establish the judiciary's independence from political interference and its capacity to ensure the dispensation of justice, to strengthen the legislature, and to reform the electoral machinery and various areas related to socio-economic and cultural rights.

A United Nations observer mission (MINUGUA) was established in Guatemala in 1996 to monitor the implementation of the peace accords. International aid has focused on supporting the implementation of the accords and Sida has been active in this area through its support to civil society groups and government programmes co-ordinated by the UNDP.

In the two years since the signing of the peace accords, much progress has been made in opening up society to greater levels of participation. As the human rights situation has improved (the UNHCR removed Guatemala from its list of countries with serious human rights problems in 1998) levels of fear of repression have subsided, resulting in a flourishing civil society active both in the development and advocacy areas. However there is a strong sense of frustration among many civil society organisations which feel that the government is abiding by letter but not the spirit of the peace accords, and is failing to apply enthusiasm and imagination to the resolution of the problems encountered in the negotiation and implementation of the reforms. The reconciliation process is also hampered by the enormity of the task and the probably temporary nature of international financial support. Recent MINUGUA reports on peace accords implementation warn that the government is not delivering progress on two key commitments: tax and constitutional reform, upon both of which the implementation of other agreements depends.

Nicaragua

Since 1990 Nicaragua has undergone a triple transition, from war to peace, from a centralised to an export-led economy, and a democratic transformation of the legislature, judiciary and constitution. Decentralisation and strengthening of local government together with efforts to enhance civil participation formed integral parts of the peace and reconciliation efforts initiated by the Chamorro government.

New channels for public debate over the reforms have been fostered at local level, most notably the creation of the local development committees both as a channel for participatory demand-making in local development processes and accountability and transparency of local government.

The challenges which faced the country in the mid-1990s were enormous. Even though structural adjustment measures have been successful in stabilising the economy, and some modest economic growth has been registered for a number of years, Nicaragua remains the poorest country in the region. The population growth rate is estimated at three per cent. Half the population, about two million people, live below the poverty line. Forty per cent of the poor, or twenty per cent of the population, fall below the extreme poverty line. Poverty thus remains an enormous challenge, and is linked to the deep-rooted problems of marginality and exclusion which gave rise to armed conflict for over two decades. Although demobilisation of armed groups was achieved in the early 1990s, Nicaragua still experiences outbreaks of violence.

The general elections in 1996 were a test of the efforts to achieve reconciliation and democracy building. Key institutions and social organisations were supported by the international donor community in the preparation and run-up to these elections, which were considered to be free and fair and without major expressions of violence. Nevertheless, democracy building is just beginning. The polarisation of society is widespread, and citizens' scepticism and lack of trust in public institutions deep-rooted.

Although peace and political stability have been restored, many problems remain before the country can experience full democracy and economic prosperity. The political challenge is to deepen the level of trust and legitimise public institutions. Within this context, Sida's D/HR projects of the 1990s embarked upon actions to enhance the process of reconciliation, reconstruction and democracy, with a particular focus on a strengthened civil society, training of local authorities for increased administrative capacity, and reform of the electoral system.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter explains the methodology of the study. The first section describes the concepts underpinning the logframe, illustrates the process of transforming a development pathway into a logframe, and introduces the concept of evaluability. The second section outlines the tasks undertaken in accordance with the terms of reference.

3.1 The logical framework and evaluation

The logical framework

This study examines how well Sida's D/HR projects can be evaluated with the logical framework (logframe) as an organising evaluation structure. The logframe is a tool that helps planners and evaluators sort out the rationale, or expected chain of causes and effects, of a project. The thorough preparation of a logframe helps planners ensure (a) that activities are directed towards clearly stated goals, (b) that important assumptions about external factors are taken into account, (c) that the goals can be logically derived from the activities, and (d) that indicators are identified for monitoring. Logframes are often presented as a matrix. The most common layout is shown in table 3.1:

Goal statement	Indicators of goal	Means of measurement	Assumptions about goal to higher goal
Purpose statement	Indicators of purpose	- ditto -	Assumptions about purpose to goal
Output statements	Indicators of outputs	- ditto -	Assumptions about outputs to purpose
Activity statements	Indicators of activities	- ditto -	Assumptions about activities to outputs

A fairly consistent terminology is used among donor agencies, but because some variations exist, the terms used in this study are defined in table 3.2:

Table 3.2 Definition of terms	
Term	Meaning
Mission	The overall aim of Sida's development interventions: poverty reduction.
Higher goal	Improvements in D/HR.
Goal	Objectives of the wider sector or national programme to which the project is intended to contribute (changes in governance, law and order, institutional performance, etc.)
Purpose	The central objective of the project in terms of sustainable benefits to target beneficiaries. It is good practice for a project to have a single purpose, to avoid competing objectives in the project design. For example, the purposes "Enable women to take an active part in the democratic transformation of South Africa through education and training on a grass-roots level, and mobilise against violence in general and domestic violence against women in particular", portray contrasting objectives and require different sets of activities and outputs.
Outputs	Goods and services delivered by the project as a result of project activities. Well-defined outputs bring added value to the project activities. Thus a value-added output from training activities is improved knowledge or application of a skill, not number of people trained; the output from building rural roads is number of people with improved access, not miles of road constructed.
Activities	What the project does, for example training of high court staff.
Inputs	The resources, including management, required to deliver project outputs.

Logframe experience shows that the two middle levels (outputs and purpose) hold the key to project design. Outputs and purposes are commonly mis-specified. Outputs should define the delivery of goods and services which the project management can be held accountable for. The purpose should describe the expected change (outcome) in terms of target group performance. This change is outside the direct control of the project management, but the reason why the project is implemented.

Development pathway

The logframe approach was introduced as a standard tool by Sida relatively recently but is now considered an integral part of the way Sida works.¹³ Most of the projects reviewed were planned in the period 1993–97, however. Hence the project documents do not usually contain logframes. An exception is UPEP (see table 4.1 for full project names) in South Africa, where both designers and consultants prepared logframes. Even in this case, the logframes were not used as living references for planning but instead as a way of satisfying the donor.

Most project implementers, NGOs and Sida staff are now familiar with the idea of the logframe, and a good portion have received logframe training.

¹³ Sida, *Guidelines for the application of LFA in project cycle management*, 1996 and Sida *Sida at Work. Sida's methods of development co-operation*, 1997.

However, the fieldwork revealed that few staff in South Africa had applied logframe “thinking” to the projects prior to this study, and not many were enthusiastic about retro-fitting a logframe to their projects. In Central America, there was greater interest in the approach. This may be due to the involvement of UNDP in some projects, and the use of a standard UNDP format for developing a hierarchy of objectives. Diakonia, involved in four of the assessed projects, also uses logframe approaches in its planning processes.

Beneficiaries have had even less exposure to the logframe approach. Most of the projects reviewed are institution-building projects where the targeted institutions are primary beneficiaries, and the institutions’ clients ultimate beneficiaries. Some target institutions were familiar with the logframe approach.

It was concluded that because project implementers and beneficiaries were either unfamiliar with logframe methods and terminology, or had not used the approach in the preparation of the sampled projects, it would be counter-productive to develop logframes and use logframe terminology during interviews with stakeholders. Therefore, the emphasis was instead placed on identifying development pathways, and stakeholders were asked to comment on this.

A development pathway is the narrative description of the project logic, without necessarily classifying into outputs, purpose and goals. It lays out all the stages from activities to goal. The link between each level in the hierarchy should be rational and reflect the necessary assumptions on external factors that influence the project logic. The pathways are valuable guides to the project management during implementation. Progress reports on the delivery of outputs, and examples of beneficiary responses can provide data on whether change is taking place in the desired direction. A simple example of a development pathway is shown in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3 Development pathway for a police training project	
Goal	To reduce infringements of human rights in designated area
<i>Development hypothesis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police service becomes more effective and fairer - Police work is reinforced by actions in local courts - Public respond positively to new police actions - Police voluntarily maintain new approach - Police evaluate results from new approach - Police change attitude and practice to try new approach - Police receive associated equipment/changes in procedures - Police gain new knowledge and skills - Police agree new approach responds to their needs - Police attend training sessions and community demonstrations - Project prepares and delivers training
Activities	Delivery of training on improved interview procedures to local police

The development pathway may also be described as a development hypothesis, intervention logic, or project theory. When a project has not been planned using the logframe approach, it is often easier for implementers to describe

the pathway, without having to describe the steps in terms of outputs, purpose and goals, since the pathway allows for greater detail to be included, and mixes direct actions with assumptions. However the differences between the two should not be overstated: the logframe is essentially a packaged version of the development pathway which illustrates the main features of the project. Hence developing a project logframe from a development pathway can be fairly straightforward. This process includes discussing with stakeholders the correct specification of outputs, purpose, and goal. A simple logframe derived from the pathway in table 3.3 is shown in table 3.4. Assumptions now appear in the right-hand column.

The approach adopted was to discuss the development pathway with stakeholders in the field, thereby avoiding two problems: first, the need to impose a particular language and structure on the discussions, and second, the appearance of unnecessary rigidity when packaging objectives into the four boxes of the logframe. For the purpose of assessing evaluability, however, the team found it necessary to move one step beyond development pathways, and to fit the elements of the identified pathways into a matrix format, specifying goal, purpose, outputs and activities. It is this modified development pathway which is presented for each project in Annex 7.

The team faced various problems in fitting the elements of the development pathway into a matrix format. Only a few projects were documented using a logframe structure according to the rules of a co-funder, such as the UNDP. Many projects had multiple purposes. Other projects were general funding contributions to programmes, with few specific objectives.

The following text continues to refer to these matrices as development pathways rather than logframes, for three reasons. First, the structure of the tables presented in Annex 7 does not correspond to a regular logframe structure, as they focus on presenting different stakeholder views rather than consensus. Second, considerable work remains in terms of completing key performance indicators, means of verification and risks and assumptions before the logframes can be considered complete. Without further consultation with stakeholders, there would be no iterative feedback to improve objective statements, a time-consuming but important part of logframe development. Third, the team focused on presenting the pathways as found in documentation and elaborated on by stakeholders during interviews. The team did not substantially revise or improve these pathways in order to produce “good” logframes, since that would undermine the second task of assessing the project design.

Table 3.4 Simple logframe derived from table 3.3			
Narrative	Performance indicators	Means of measurement	Critical assumptions
Goal To reduce infringements of human rights in designated area			
Purpose Police voluntarily maintain new approach			Police work is reinforced by actions in local courts, and the public responds positively to new police actions
Outputs Police gain new knowledge and skills			Police receive requisite equipment, and relevant procedural changes are introduced
Activities Police training on improved interview procedures			

Evaluators use a standard set of evaluation criteria, easily related to the logframe structure. *Relevance* mainly concerns the coherence between the project and donor and national objectives. *Effectiveness* concerns the extent to which the purpose of the project has been achieved. *Efficiency* concerns how well activities deliver outputs. *Sustainability* is a complex criterion and is often applied by evaluators to assess the ability of a project to maintain the production of outputs after the withdrawal of donor support. *Impact* concerns the actual effects of the project on its surroundings, and is primarily related to goal achievement.

The term impact is sometimes used to describe both outcomes (achievement of purpose) and impact (contribution to goals). But by defining outcomes separately from impact, a clear distinction is made for evaluation.

The development pathway perspective highlights a number of factors that affect project evaluability. For process projects in general, and D/HR projects in particular, it may be difficult to specify the development pathway in detail. The extent to which activities stimulate the desired changes may at best be conjecture, and the size of the investment so small that major assumptions are necessary for the project to be expected to achieve the purpose and contribute to the goal. The reason why these aspects (which are further discussed in chapter 2 and Annex 4) constitute evaluability problems is that project evaluation is mainly concerned with the extent to which projects achieve and contribute to their objectives. A project is a set of time-bounded activities with committed resources and specific objectives. Project evaluation is primarily about the efficiency and effectiveness with which those objectives are accomplished. Without specific objectives, indicators and a baseline cannot be developed and defined.

In other words, the link between outputs (project deliverables under the control of management) and the purpose (the behavioural change of the target groups expected from the project) is critical. This link must be plausible and clearly stated. Thus, two key criteria will be considered by the evaluability assessment:

- the quality of the project purpose,
- the quality of expected outputs.¹⁴

Taken together, these criteria tell us whether the stated relationship between planned outputs and the project purpose is specific and realistic. The team devoted significant effort to understanding this aspect of the project design. Outputs and purposes may not be stated with precision, but the overall logic of the development pathway may still be identifiable, either from project documents or from the stakeholders' interpretation of the project design.

From a project design perspective, the link between purposes and goals is also important. But it is excluded from the core evaluability assessment because, as explained in chapter 2, there is little theoretical or practical wisdom on how more exactly projects contribute to different types of D/HR development.

Evaluation design

The specification of project objectives, and the links between outputs, purposes and goals, have a bearing on the design of evaluations. Evaluation is based on two types of comparisons: between the situation before and after the project, and between the situation with and without the project. The before-after comparison reveals the development changes that have occurred in the wider project environment, for example better police investigations and reduced crime rates.

When development changes have been identified, the evaluation will analyse if these changes could be considered the results of the evaluated project, rather than results of external factors. For example, if the development change identified is better police investigations, the evaluation will analyse to what extent this change is the result of improved police investigation skills delivered by the police training project, and to what extent it is (also) the result of external factors such as an improved system for police recruitment and new police commanders more committed to law enforcement.

Two basic forms of control can be made to distinguish between the respective contributions of the evaluated project and external factors. The first and most widely used form of control is to compare the performance of the group targeted by the project with the performance of a similar group not targeted, i.e. with a "control group" – for example, to compare the investigations car-

¹⁴ Clearly, for the outputs to achieve the purpose, the development pathway that links them must be sound. The soundness of a project design is something that may only be assessed qualitatively, using professional judgement supported by the statement of objectives. The logframe approach facilitates such a judgement by setting out objectives in a logical hierarchy.

ried out by the policemen who participated in the evaluated police training project with the investigations carried out by policemen who did not participate. Such a comparison, however, faces two challenges. First, many projects seek to prevent deterioration rather than stimulate progress. In such cases, the performance of the group targeted by the project may only be represented by a counterfactual hypothesis of what its performance would have been if the project had not been implemented. Second, where the expected change is indeed positive, how can a suitable “control group” be identified, with the same characteristics and potential as the group targeted by the project? Without suitable control groups the attribution of identified development changes to the evaluated project will be less feasible.

The second form of control compares the performance of the target group with the performance of a control group that already possessed the desired “with the project characteristics” before the project was implemented. Such control is used in cases where the evaluated project tries to change the performance of the target group in line with the existing performance of non-targeted groups. It is not relevant, however, in a situation where an entirely new pattern of behaviour is introduced, as there is no example of desired behaviour before the project, which is possibly the case in many D/HR projects.

Against this background, logframe-oriented planning brings certain advantages to evaluation. The development pathway explains how, according to the intervention logic, the target group is expected to change and thereby contribute to more far-reaching development changes. The process of expected changes depicted by the pathway offers a chance for indicators of success to be developed and monitored.

Two conclusions with respect to evaluability can be drawn from the above discussion. First, in order to make comparisons between the situations before and after, and with and without, the evaluated project, there must be baseline data relevant to the project. A widespread criticism of project arrangements for evaluation is that baseline data rarely exist.¹⁵ To require baseline data for D/HR projects would thus be to treat these projects more rigorously than the acknowledged performance of projects in other sectors. A more reasonable approach is to enquire about the existence of reliable monitoring information that would enable a baseline to be reconstructed. Second, the extent to which observed development changes can be attributed to the evaluated project depends on a mixture of the way in which the purpose and goals are defined, the scale of the project, and, indeed, the existence of relevant baseline data and reporting. Two further key evaluability criteria can thus be added:

- the availability of baseline or monitoring data,
- the feasibility of attribution.

¹⁵ G. Coleman, *Monitoring and evaluation in agriculture and rural development projects: lessons and learning*, in *Journal of International Development*, 1992, Vol. 4, No. 5, and E. B. Rice, *An overview of monitoring and evaluation in the World Bank*, in The World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department Report No. 13247, 1994.

3.2 Evaluability assessment tasks

The terms of reference required the assessment to be carried out as a series of specified tasks. These tasks are described in the following sections.

Task 1

The terms of reference describe task 1 as being “*to identify the logframes on which the sampled projects are founded, i.e. to identify expected project activities, outputs, objectives and causal/risk assumptions.*”

As explained above, from the team’s experience in the inception phase this intention was confirmed, but with the modification, during fieldwork interviewing, of putting greater emphasis on the development pathway than on the logframe matrix. The steps followed were to:

- draft a development pathway based on project documents, discussions with Sida staff and project implementers. Where documents stated activities, outputs, purposes, and goals, these descriptions formed the starting point of the analysis,
- discuss the pathway separately with groups of key stakeholders to identify instances of agreement and divergent views,
- at the same meetings, explore what risks the stakeholders believed affect the pathway, and
- ask how progress along the pathway may be tracked.

Structure of the development pathway table

Development pathways were prepared for each project, and are reproduced in Annex 7. In the first column of the pathway table, the main intervention logic is summarised, as derived from project documents and adjusted, where necessary, to reflect stakeholder interpretations. The first column is therefore the best approximation the team could make for the pathway followed by the projects. The highest level, the mission statement, has been excluded since it was assumed that Sida’s mission is always to reduce poverty. Usually the higher goal is the same: D/HR development. However, where the project expressed a different higher goal, this has been recorded. The goal, purpose, outputs and activities are then described (with the reader sometimes referred to the project documents for the activities). Inputs have been excluded since they are of minor interest for the evaluability assessment, although the overall value and scale of the inputs invested were part of the analysis.

In the next column key indicators, or success criteria, are recorded as stated in documents or as elicited from field interviews. A code of D or F is used to distinguish between indicators found in documents or from the fieldwork (unless otherwise stated, the indicators originate from the fieldwork). In circumstances where other stakeholders hold markedly different views, these views

are set out in the adjacent columns and also commented on in cases of important differences in activities, outputs, purposes and goals. Finally, in the last column, any pertinent questions are placed.

Explanation of the elicitation process

One important question arising as work proceeded was how proactive the team should be in defining the development pathways. Greater emphasis was placed on carefully recording what the different interviewees said and thought, and less on modifying or correcting these findings in order to improve or clarify the structure of their thinking. The approach was generally to follow an assessment guide (see below) as a way of structuring the interviews, but to use other aids such as index cards or blackboards to set out the views of the respondents, and to seek clarification where needed.

Elicitation was a major challenge to the assignment. As noted above, the team tried to solve the problem of forcing respondents into logframe thinking by first working on development pathways, rather than embarking directly on logframes. Another concern was to avoid debates about terminology when the overall thrust of the development pathway was evident.

The task was to assess the logframe-related evaluability of the projects. The logframe is not a precise tool. It is an approach by which stakeholders can describe the planned intervention in a structured way that distinguishes between what the project does, what project managers can be held accountable for, what kind of target group changes the project tries to achieve, and what kind of goal the project is contributing to.

The development pathways emerged from project documents, supported or modified by interviews with stakeholders. Neither the documents nor the stakeholders were asked to phrase their descriptions in precise and predefined logframe terms. As mentioned earlier, some stakeholders were more familiar with the logframe approach than others. Familiarity, however, did not mean that the wording and descriptions were always precise when judged against logframe definitions. One exception concerns outputs, a concept which is widely understood even where the logframe approach is not used. The team used the phrases from project documents if they were the phrases stakeholders agreed on as accurately describing the project. Other than minor changes in the English or for translation from Spanish, the objective statements were not reformulated or rephrased. This approach was adopted for several reasons:

- the first task was to identify the logframes on which the projects were founded, without seeking to reorganise or improve these during interviews,
- the way the projects were managed reflects the way the objectives were described. Consequently, actions that affect evaluability, such as collection of data and monitoring of progress, can only be interpreted against original objectives, and

- the second task was to analyse the logframes identified. If the objective statements had been rephrased or reformulated, the analysis would have been of the quality of the team's phrasing, not the project. In cases where the wording of objectives was poor, but the overall project design sound, the comments by the team on each project take into account the possibility of improving the logframe specification as part of a future evaluation. This action helped ensure that the analysis focused on the meanings of the project description and not a narrow interpretation of words.

To re-classify statements away from documents' and stakeholders' intentions, or to reformulate the phraseology, would also have been a lengthy exercise, requiring agreement of stakeholders if it were to have any legitimacy. Even if desirable, this could not be done as a desk exercise by the assessment team. The team instead identified weaknesses in project formulation, from a logframe perspective, and give recommendations on project planning and evaluation work.

The fact that the logframe is not a precise tool with correct or incorrect solutions means that there are no absolute standards for its application. The logframe definitions used in this study represent best practice by development agencies. But examples exist of institutions routinely using logframe definitions in a sub-optimal way. "Capacity building" is a typical example. A purpose found in many projects is that of developing the capacity of a group of people. Rigorous use of the logframe treats capacity building as an output, and the intended performance changes that arise from the capacity building as the purpose. The mis-specification of capacity development as a purpose is an example of a poor purpose, but not necessarily a purpose which implies an inadequate development pathway.

The evaluability assessment of the 28 projects sampled in the four countries was undertaken by a team of six consultants. It was not possible to ensure that a completely consistent approach was followed in every case. The assessments were undoubtedly influenced by the specific circumstances and cooperation of stakeholders for each project. A careful reading of Annex 7 reveals differences of emphasis between the consultants. In hindsight, the exercise may have benefited from fewer projects, and from being spread over a longer time period with a smaller team. The interview checklist could also have been better grounded in pilot tests before the full fieldwork.

Stakeholder coverage

The consultants divided the range of potential stakeholders into six categories, and attempted to cover representatives of each group during the interviewing period:

- staff at Sida Stockholm who either had or currently have supervisory responsibility,
- Swedish embassy officials responsible for the projects. Where a project is run from Sida Stockholm, or via a Swedish-based NGO, the embassy has no direct responsibility,

- NGOs or other local organisations used by Sida to manage the projects,
- in-country government office or NGO managing the projects,
- primary beneficiaries, for example those who received training or support directly,
- ultimate beneficiaries, i.e. those in the wider population who benefit as a result of changes achieved by or through the primary beneficiaries.

Given the rapid nature of the assessments, it was not possible to gather all stakeholder views. The list above shows the stakeholder types covered, but this does not, of course, reflect the full range of stakeholders that could have been interviewed.

Separate interviews

The choice of interviewing stakeholders separately held advantages and disadvantages. While contamination of viewpoints was avoided, and false consensus less likely, the decision to keep stakeholders apart meant that it was difficult to be sure when truly different views between stakeholders existed, or when differences were only questions of emphasis rather than substance. With more time available to the team, a wider discussion between stakeholders would have clarified this matter.

Task 2

The terms of reference describe task 2 as being “*to analyse the identified logframes.*”

This task was approached by means of a structured checklist. The list prompted the reviewer to examine the extent to which stakeholders embraced the objectives and development pathways of the projects. These aspects are fundamental to evaluation design. Divergent views, gaps in the development pathway and output to purpose logic all undermine the choice of indicators and hence reduce project evaluability.

Project scoring

The checklist provided a systematic framework for the assessment. The complete list included nineteen criteria: one about the current implementation stage of the projects, five about the logic of the development pathway, three about data availability and access to stakeholders, one about evaluation costs, one about causal attribution, four about the priority with which an evaluation may be approached, and four related to task 4. Comments on the scoring system for each criterion can be found throughout the findings chapter as appropriate.

To enable a comparative analysis, each criterion was approached in two ways. First, for each criterion a small number of questions were defined to ensure a consistent approach by different consultants. Second, the assessment of the criteria is based on a four-point scale, with an abbreviated guide to the scale. This is illustrated in table 3.5 for the question on ownership of the project purpose. Most ratings employed a simple comparative scale. Where a more complex concept was involved, such as whether a project purpose is realistic, definitions (e.g. of purpose realism) are given under the relevant sections of the findings chapter.

Figure 3.5 Assessment questions for criterion 2b	
Criterion	Questions
2b Broad ownership of project purpose among stakeholders Score: 1. all share, 2 most share, 3 some share, 4 few share	6. How well is this purpose shared among stakeholders? 7. Do stakeholders state different purposes? 8. Has the purpose changed during the life of the project?

The text under the questions (in Annex 7) explains the rating given for each criterion. The criteria and the questions were designed prior to the fieldwork and were subsequently modified after experience of a few projects. Modification was kept to a minimum, however, in order to maintain a broadly comparable information set. In addition to the explanatory text under each question, a general commentary is provided and should be read together with the ratings.

Any rating system ultimately rests on the judgement of the reviewer. In this study, a total of four interviewers were used (the consultancy core team) plus three additional local consultants in South Africa. The team tried to standardise the scoring in four ways:

- by discussion in a team workshop held prior to the field visits,
- by sharing working versions of the assessment forms on an internet-accessible database during fieldwork,
- by direct email exchanges between team members during the study, and
- by discussion in a team workshop after the field visits but before analysis was completed.

The team's original intention was to aggregate the assessment score, in order to express an overall assessment of evaluability. However during the data analysis, the team came to the conclusion that such an approach would be of little value. While the ratings provide a sound relative assessment of each project, and ensure that the assessment of each project was made on a comparable basis, variations in country or project context reduce the value of statistical analysis of the findings.

Task 3

The terms of reference describe task 3 as being “*to document which sources and types of information are available and relevant to the full-scale impact study, and to analyse the costs and resources required to make proper use of such information.*”

After the inception phase, the team focused this task more specifically on an analysis of the information available on implementation progress. The starting point was, in effect, the “means of measurement” column of the logframe. The questions listed below were incorporated in the structured checklist:

- Are there any baseline data of any sort on the pre-project situation?
- Has there been any systematic monitoring at any level, such as implementation of activities, output delivery, or purpose achievement?
- Where indicators were identified, what means of data collection would be required for evaluation?
- Is there evidence of such a strong consensus among stakeholders about the scale and nature of actual development changes that further investigation would be unnecessary and wasteful?
- If additional data collection is required, what techniques are needed for such collection and what are the cost and timing implications?

Task 4

The terms of reference describe task 4 as being “*to collect information, for each project, on: the institution-building context, the degree of specificity of the knowledge, services or equipment, the ownership of the project, and the commitment and capacity of the targeted institution.*”

These questions fall outside the scope of the evaluability assessment, but contribute to the wider understanding of the context to which the projects belong. The required information was collected using the structured checklist and is presented in Annex 7.

Task 5

The terms of reference describe task 5 as being “*to analyse and possibly also propose alternative impact evaluation approaches.*”

During the analysis of the findings, a change occurred in the team’s interpretation of this task. In the inception report (in line with the ToR), it was proposed to consider the logframe as one potential evaluation approach, to identify projects with low evaluability from a logframe-related perspective, and then to propose alternative methods of impact evaluation. However, the logframe approach is not in itself an evaluation methodology. Rather it is a framework which can be used to structure the design of a project: its goal, purpose, outputs and activities; the risks taken into account; the assumptions made in the project design; and the means by which success is to be judged.

This framework can then become the basis for impact evaluation, which may be carried out using a number of evaluation approaches such as document review, structured interviews, data collection, statistical analysis, participatory techniques, etc.

Against this background, the focus of the discussion of “alternative evaluation approaches” shifted to a discussion of how the project design can be better stated in order to form a basis for evaluation. The evaluation itself may then be carried out using any number of standard evaluation methodologies. Therefore, chapter 6 considers how problems of low problems of evaluability, including design problems such as low quality of purposes and expected outputs, can be solved for projects reviewed.

Chapter 4

Fieldwork

This chapter outlines the activities undertaken by the study, including field visits to South Africa, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador in November 1998 and January/February 1999.

4.1 Preliminary information gathering

Initial team meetings and a visit to Sida in Stockholm were held in September/October 1998. During the first visit to Stockholm, the team met with Sida staff from relevant departments (UTV, RELA, RESA and DESA) as well as with co-operating organisations based in Sweden, including NGOs responsible for managing several projects on behalf of Sida (see Annex 2 for a complete list of people met). Interviews focused on exploring the Sida policy framework, and the context and origins of the selected projects. The original list of 30 projects was modified to arrive at the final list of 28 to be covered by the evaluability assessment. The team then worked in the UK, meeting for a week in November to review documents, design a project database, prepare a bibliography, and prepare for the initial country field visits.

Reconnaissance field visits to South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua were carried out in November 1998. These visits proved a valuable exercise, enabling the team members to hold meetings with relevant Swedish Embassy officials, introduce key stakeholders to the purpose of the assessment, hold preliminary discussions on the background and objectives of the projects, and to seek agreement for participation in the main fieldwork. Relevant documentation was collected for all projects. It should be noted that the first field visit to Central America occurred shortly after Hurricane Mitch, which delayed the preparatory work in Nicaragua and rendered certain Swedish Embassy staff less accessible.

The full titles of the projects covered in each country, along with the acronym adopted by the team, are listed in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 List of sample projects by country with acronym, code and title

Acronym	Code	Title
South Africa		
AOG	RESA6/94	Democracy and electoral training
CALS	RESA76/95	Support to University of Witwatersrand
CPP	RESA126/93	Community peace programme
DPSA	DES0501/96	Support to civil service reform
IAJ	DES0168/96	Institute for the Advancement of Journalism
IDASA	RESA11/94	Training for election monitoring
LRGU	DES0500/97	Law, race and gender unit
NUM	RESA39/95	Support to National Union of Mineworkers
PANC	RESA61/95	Provincial administration of the Northern Cape
SAPS	RESA143/94	Police training
UPEP	INEC441/97	Urban planning and environment project
WDF	RESA64/94	Training of female parliamentarians
WILDD	RESA39/94	Reaching for clarity
Nicaragua		
CSE	RELA 14/95	Support to the Supreme Electoral Council in Nicaragua.
INIFOM	RELA 23/96	Training of local government staff.
LDC	RELA 22/96	Local development committees
RAASRAAN	DESO 358/97	Institutional support to the autonomous Atlantic regions
Guatemala		
COINDE	GD21/97	Diakonia programme for Guatemala
COPMAGUA	GD21/97	Diakonia programme for Guatemala
IIDH	RELA 118/97	Human rights programme
ONAM	RELA 42/97	Technical support to gender-related legal reforms
El Salvador		
ACJ	RELA 104/94	Central America YMCA-YWCA, youth activities 94/95
ANSP	RELA 64/95	Technical assistance for the National Academy of Public Security
CONSORCIO	RELA 66/96	Civil society's participation in the election process.
ECJ	RELA 63/95	Support to the legal system of El Salvador
FONDO	RELA 24/96	Fund for the protection of wounded and disabled
FUNDAUNGO	GD21/97	Diakonia programme for El Salvador
SACDEL	GD21/97	Diakonia programme for El Salvador

4.2 Fieldwork

Field visits to South Africa, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala took place in January/February 1999. The field visits were undertaken by four international consultants (Nick Chapman and Roger Riddell in South Africa, Tony Curran and Irene Vance in Central America). In each country, the consultants worked with local partners who between them contributed considerable expertise on D/HR issues.

In South Africa, the team visited Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Kimberley, Cape Town and Worcester, visiting all 13 projects for between one and three days each. They benefited from good co-operation from most project stakeholders and from the Embassy, and managed to interview representatives from between two and five groups of stakeholders (see table 4.2 for a categorisation of stakeholders) for all projects.

In El Salvador and Guatemala, the team spent an average of two days per project interviewing project staff and beneficiaries. In Nicaragua, problems related to Hurricane Mitch delayed initial project contacts and data collection. Despite these problems, the fieldwork went ahead and all projects were covered. The time factor combined with the communication problems still prevailing in the country meant that visits to rural areas could not take place, so interviews were restricted to those that could be conducted from Managua.

Stakeholder coverage

As shown in table 4.2, the range of stakeholders interviewed for each project was limited for a number of reasons. In only one project could all six groups of stakeholders be found and interviewed. For most projects, three or four groups were typical. While the implementers were usually interviewed, this did not always mean that they were the implementers during the targeted funding period. In several cases, both new and old management had to be interviewed.

Regarding Sida personnel in Stockholm and at the embassies, the key people involved in the supervision of the projects were frequently unavailable. Embassy staff changes meant that those present today would not have been involved in projects completed two or three years ago. As expected, the most difficult group to contact were the ultimate beneficiaries, mainly because of the limited time available for locate and meeting them, but the consultants were able, in all cases, to interview the project funding agency, the project management, and at least one group of direct beneficiaries.

Data collection

Data were collected in accordance with the approach set out in chapter 3. As the fieldwork progressed, the results of the project assessments were posted onto a web-site. The data form included a box for visitors' comments. Due to the intensity and logistical complexity of the fieldwork, the consultants were not able to prepare full responses to the questions in the project assessments during the fieldwork period. Hence the data posted onto the website at this time were considered to be preliminary results only.

Table 4.2 Stakeholders interviewed during fieldwork in Sweden and in-country¹⁶

Project	Stakeholder group						Total number
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
AOG	C	n/a	✓	✓	✓		3
CALS	A	n/a	✓	✓	✓		3
CPP	A	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
DPSA	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓		4
IAJ	D	✓	n/a	✓	✓		3
IDASA		n/a	✓	✓	✓		3
LRGU	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓		4
NUM			✓	✓	✓		3
PANC	✓	✓	(TA)	✓	✓		4
SAPS	A	n/a	✓	✓	✓		3
UPEP	B	✓	(TA)	✓	✓	✓	4
WDF	C			✓	✓		2
WILDD		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
CSE	✓	✓		✓	✓		4
LDC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
INFOM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
RAASRAAN	✓	✓		✓	✓		4
IIDH	✓	E	n/a	✓	✓		3
COPMAGUA		E	✓	✓	✓		3
COINDE		E	✓	✓	✓		3
ONAM	✓	E	✓	✓	✓		4
CONSORCIO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
FONDO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
ECJ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
ANSP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
ACJ		✓		✓	✓		3
FUNDAUNGO		✓	✓	✓	✓		4
SACDEL		✓	✓	✓	✓		4

¹⁶ Key to stakeholder groups: (1) Sida staff; (2) Swedish embassy officials, (3) NGO or other local organisations, (TA) technical assistants working for the organisation, (4) Implementing government office or NGO, (5) primary beneficiaries, (6) ultimate beneficiaries. Key to Sida and embassy staff: (a) Mikael Boström contacted by email, (b) Sevana Bunke unavailable in Sida during field visits in November and December 1998, (c) Birgitta Sevefjord unavailable in Sida during field visits in November and December 1998, (d) Helen Nordenson met but Peter Erichs not interviewed, and (e) change of programme officer: no officer in embassy at time of visit, but brief meeting held with development counsellor.

4.3 Project characteristics

Based on Sida's own categorisation of subject areas within the broad theme of D/HR, the team has analysed the sample of 28 projects covered by the assessment. Table 4.3 shows the spread of projects across Sida's subject areas. Two points are interesting to note. First, several individual projects do not belong to one single subject area: each project often covers more than one area. Secondly, since the spread is quite wide (the 28 projects between them cover 16 of the 19 subject areas) it is difficult to draw general conclusions on evaluability issues specific to particular subject areas.

The projects also included a marked contrast in terms of approved cost, with the smallest at around 1 MSEK and the largest at 32 MSEK. Data on project funds actually disbursed, used and accounted for are incomplete. This was due to a number of factors. For example: (a) many projects had earlier and/or later phases of support, for which financial information was not always collected, (b) while approved amounts were available from project agreements, information on the funds actually used was not easily accessed because financial statements were not always produced in time by projects, and because no summaries were available from the Sida finance section.

Sida was sole donor for seven of the 13 projects in South Africa. In some of these cases, there was strong dependence on Sida. In Central America, 13 of the 15 projects were co-financed by other donors. Both completed and ongoing projects were included in the sample. In South Africa, funding had been terminated for four projects.

Some projects represented single investments of short duration for a very specific purpose, for example the election training projects in South Africa. Most projects were packaged as funding agreements signed for a year, eighteen months or sometimes two years. The longest single agreement was for three years (PANC). Agreements were often extended or renewed and so formed continuous but phased funding to an institution. Others were complemented by Sida financing of related but different investments to the same institution or sector (AOG, UPEP). Further project characteristics are provided in tables 1 and 2 found in Annex 5.

Policy subject area	Central America	South Africa
1 Peace-building activities		CPP
2 Good governance (accountability, transparency and accessibility of public service sector)	ANSP	PANC, UPEP, DPSA, SAPS
3 Popular participation	FUNDAUNGO, ACJ, SACDEL	UPEP
4 Judicial system	ECJ	CALS, LRGU
5 Independence of the media		IAJ
6 Democratic local government	SACDEL, INIFOM, FUNDAUNGO, LDC RAASRAAN, COINDE	PANC, UPEP
7 Parliamentary functions and work methods	RAASRAAN	WDF
8 Women's participation in the democratic process		WILDD, WDF
9 Organisations and groups working to improve respect for human rights	IIDH	SAPS
10 Promotion of states' respect for and protection of women's human rights	ONAM	WILDD, WDF
11 Promotion of states' respect for and protection of rights of the child	ACJ	
12 Promotion of states' respect for and protection of persons with disabilities	FONDO	
13 Dialogue with co-operating governments on the importance of guaranteeing democracy, ratifying international conventions and observing human rights		
14 Other political bodies, parties and constellations of the above		
15 Capacity development for holding general elections	CSE	IDASA
16 International networks and organisations for monitoring states' human rights performance		
17 Civic education, especially in human rights	CONSORCIO	AOG
18 Trade union movements work in democratisation		NUM
19 Promotion of states' respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and specially discriminated minorities	COPMAGUA	

¹⁷ Sida, *Justice and Peace, Sida's Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights*, 1997.

4.4 Project details

In order to give the reader a better sense of the range of objectives and activities of the 28 projects, this section contains a summary description of each project, drawn from the project assessments that were completed during the fieldwork. The summary is deliberately short and purely descriptive, leaving analysis of the evaluability aspects of each project to chapters 5–7. For further detail the reader is referred to the full text for each project presented in Annex 7.

South Africa

The only project in the sample classified as a peace building project was CPP. The project is the direct successor of the Community Peace Foundation, which was established in 1992, and is one of the projects managed for Sida by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute. The purpose of CPP is to create a replicable model for the development of consciousness that empowers communities to cater for their own safety and security, and to deepen the understanding of processes underlying the building of local democratic structures.

Four projects can be grouped together as good governance projects. DPSA has provided a six-point programme of support to the Department of Public Service and Administration. DPSA has been at the centre of public service reform since 1996, and Sida placed emphasis on the provision of flexible support for its work. The purpose of the programme was to transform the public service into a coherent, representative, competent, efficient and democratic instrument for implementing government policies and meeting the needs of all South Africans. The key element was the provision of an advisor working with the Minister for Public Service and Administration. SAPS resulted from the urgent need for transformation of the South African Police after 1994. This project comprised a range of activities, the core ones being exchange with senior officials in international human rights, and the training of station commissioners in the policing of a democratic society. There were also additional elements that were supported by Sida, for example a needs assessment of the commissioners' training programme, and specific information provision.

The other two governance projects concentrated on the strengthening of local government. PANC has been supported by Sida since 1994. The assistance has mainly taken the form of technical assistance through a Swedish specialist agency in administrative reform (SIPU). The focus of the project is on good governance and transforming provincial government into a co-ordinated and proactive organisation responsive to the changing needs of the citizens of the province. The province is today seen as a model of administrative reform in line with national public service reform policy. UPEP addressed the problem of weak local government in Kimberley, and assisted the City in delivering services to its socially heterogeneous and economically disparate population. The project consists of three elements: the production of a comprehensive urban plan for the City of Kimberley, pilot tree planting, paving and lighting, and a pilot housing project.

Two projects primarily address legal reform. CALS provided core funding for the Centre for Applied Legal Studies via the Raoul Wallenberg Institute with the aim of contributing to the gender and race sensitisation of the legal system, and promoting a human rights culture. The funding was primarily used to support four sets of activities: production of the South African Journal on Human Rights, establishment of a documentation centre on D/HR, organisation of judges' conferences, and training of e.g. magistrates and police. CALS also supports research on administrative law, federalism and labour law, and litigation work in the area of human rights. LRGU focuses on the reformation of the justice system, in particular of magistrates. The project aims to make magistrates aware of discrimination in the areas of race and gender, through training in two key areas: interpretation of the law, and issues around race and gender in the courtroom.

IAJ is the only project focusing on support for the independence of the media, a policy area that until recently received less attention from Sida. Formed in 1992, the IAJ has grown steadily in resources and recognition, being the primary journalist in-service training centre in South Africa as well as a key regional centre for media advancement. The focus of the support has been on television and print journalist training.

Two projects have a specific gender focus. WDF is a training programme for female members of parliament, the goal of which was to empower women to redress existing injustices and bring about changes of image and self-perception among women. The purpose of the project was to train women for regional and local government in two phases: to provide women with an understanding of governance, and to develop women's operating skills in the post-apartheid climate. WILDD's goal is to promote greater gender equality and representation of disadvantaged populations. WILDD started in 1994, based on a women's group in Johannesburg. With support from a Swedish NGO, it prepared a plan for training poor black women, with the intention of preparing the most interested for political office by 1999. The purpose is therefore twofold: to enable women, through education and training at grassroots level, to take an active part in the democratic transformation, and to mobilise opinion against general and domestic violence to women.

There are two election training projects, though with different target groups. AOG, identified through the links that existed between churches in Sweden and the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal church group, was one of many initiatives aiming to reach, encourage and train previously disenfranchised people for the 1994 elections. Its purpose was the drawing up and collation of an impartial voting instrument for the education and empowerment of blacks to participate in the elections. The expected output was for disadvantaged groups to understand voting rights and take part in the election. Activities included voter education classes and workshops, setting up information kiosks, distribution of pamphlets and posters, and conducting statistical surveys to test opinion on the elections.

In contrast, IDASA focused on the training of party agents for the 1994 elections. IDASA is a large (140 staff), well-funded and respected NGO with a good deal of specialist expertise in the field of D/HR reform. The project involved designing of the training programme, organising a team of trainers and running weekend workshops across the country for party agents sent by all the main political parties participating in the elections.

Finally, in the area of trade union development, NUM was implemented through the Swedish Raw Materials Group with special emphasis on building the capacity of organised mining labour. The aim was to strengthen the National Union of Mineworkers to work in a more democratic and competitive manner, and to adjust its role in the post-apartheid era for collective bargaining rather than confrontation and strikes to improve the working conditions of its members. The support strategy was to train selected individuals in the research section of the union to access and understand information concerning the structure of the international mining industry in order to negotiate more effectively with industry owners.

El Salvador

Seven projects in El Salvador were assessed. ANSP focuses on good governance issues with respect to the specialisation, recruitment and selection of the National Police Academy. The academy was established in 1993 as part of the peace accords signed in 1992 between the rebel movement FMLN and the government. It was established to replace the militaristic institutions which enforced public order up to this point, and which were responsible for many human rights abuses. While there was agreement that the institution had to prepare a new type of public-service-oriented and professional policeman; exactly what this meant in terms of policing was never properly agreed between the donors, resulting in the implementation of a series of disconnected support projects to the institution.

Three projects concern the promotion of popular participation. Two local NGOs are being supported through Diakonia's D/HR programme: SACDEL, and FUNDAUNGO which is a democracy research and dissemination NGO. The third project is the ACJ support to YWCA-YMCA's Central America programme. Between 1990–1993 the aim was to set up the youth movement and to rebuild the social organisation as part of the peace and reconciliation efforts. Gender-awareness raising and activities for women were a separate component of the programme. The youth leadership training in schools was carried out in San Salvador.

One project focuses on the judicial system: the ECJ support to the legal system. This support covers the three UNDP projects designed in 1995. Two projects (design of training and career systems for justice sector officials, and training of members of parliament and other legal groups on the proposed new penal code as well as on human rights) were designed to run for six months, while the main project (training of public prosecutors in criminal in-

vestigation techniques, and of public defence lawyers and justices of the peace in human rights) was designed as a two-year project.

One project is in the area of respect for disabilities: FONDO's support for the protection of war-wounded and disabled. This two-year project began in 1996 as one of the outcomes of the peace accords. The project provides institutional strengthening assistance in order to improve the provision of services to this vulnerable group.

Finally, there is one project which can be classified as civic education. CONSORCIO is a group of five NGOs working in the area of democracy development including electoral reform. It was formed in 1993 to promote civic participation in the electoral process and to support the 1994 elections. Despite the many demands made on the government to implement electoral reform this was not done in preparation for the 1997 elections, hence the need for civil society to mobilise the population to register and vote responsibly and to pressure the government for free and fair elections. The project ran from 1996 to 1997 and was aimed at increasing the conscientious participation of citizens in the 1997 elections.

Guatemala

One project, COINDE, is concerned with democratic local government. This is one of Diakonia's 35 projects in the Central American region. Diakonia's overall goal is to promote local democracy through decentralisation and popular participation. The "project" assessed is the local development programme of COINDE's three year organisational plan.

The other three Guatemala projects are concerned with the promotion of human rights of various groups. The COPMAGUA project is the latest in a series of funding provided by Diakonia to COPMAGUA as part of its attempt to support organisations lobbying for reforms in the area of equality of rights and opportunities for the country's indigenous peoples. Diakonia is one of two principal funders of COPMAGUA. The project aims to build up Saqb'ichil-Copmagua's capacity to support indigenous representation in the negotiations of the peace agreements (particularly those related to indigenous peoples), to disseminate the agreement and to generally promote the indigenous communities' contribution to the negotiation process.

The IIDH programme delivers human rights education to a wide range of governmental and non-governmental groups. IIDH is regarded as a very influential institution in the human rights field, above all for its ability to attract both government and civil society institutions to its events. This was seen as important at a time when the government was still very dismissive of human rights issues and reluctant to talk to certain sectors of society.

Finally, ONAM (the National Women's Organisation) develops more gender-sensitive legislation and lobbies both the legislature and civil society to approve the legislation, and to also approve the establishment of a national

women's institute. ONAM was considered best placed to propose and push for legislative and policy reform contributing to greater gender equality as this was the organisation's mandate within government.

Nicaragua

CSE is an institutional strengthening project made up of eight sub-components targeting the Supreme Election Council. The three most important components aim to modernise, upgrade, automate and integrate the civil registry, issue identity cards, and prepare a permanent electoral roll. Together with the other components of information system, civic education and cartography, these components serve the purpose of running elections or a plebiscite efficiently and effectively.

The three remaining Nicaraguan projects all focus on democratic local government. RAASRAAN is in its second phase of support to the regional councils and municipalities of the autonomous regions of the Atlantic Coast. The project activities aim to increase the capacity of the regional and municipal assemblies. LDC was a five-month project in support of the Ministry of Social Action to consolidate the Local Development Committees formed in the early 1990s as vehicles for community-based demand making and local planning. Finally, INIFOM is a part of on-going support to the Municipal Development Institute which began in 1993, and financed by UNDP, France, Sweden and Spain. Three consecutive projects have been funded by Sida focused on the building of local democracy, mainly through the training of municipal staff.

4.5 The project sampling

The 28 projects (originally 30) were sampled by Sida/UTV as part of the preparation of the terms of reference for the assessment. The sample concentrated exclusively on projects specifically earmarked for capacity building of public and civil institutions, identified through a classification of 90 per cent of Sida's 1996 D/HR support (excluding projects with a total Sida financed budget of 0,5 MSEK or less). Capacity building was loosely defined, including all sorts of staff training and organisational development initiatives for public and civil society institutions.

The focus on public and civil institutional capacity building was due mainly to UTV's classification concluding that such support (a) represented as much as 65 per cent of Sida's total 1996 D/HR support, (b) tended, relatively speaking, to be more specific and have a well-defined target group, and hence (c) was more likely to be suitable for a logframe-related evaluation approach. The other categories of UTV's classification scheme included civic education for the general public, external monitoring of treaties and elections, human rights counselling, research, as well as a significant "no information" category including general and not specifically earmarked budget support (for details, see Annex 1, section 5).

However, as indicated by the previous section on project characteristics, the classification and subsequent sampling effort turned out to be misleading, since it was based on Sida's project decisions and agreements, not on counterpart reports on how the Sida funds were actually used. Counterpart reports were generally not available at Sida Stockholm, and the decision memoranda and agreements, it later emerged, did not always give the full or completely correct story of what the projects were or would be about (an important lesson in itself). Only when the assessment was underway did it become clear that the sample in fact also included projects and sub-projects that were not supposed to be part of the sample, for example non-earmarked budget support and general civic education campaigns, something which made the consultancy team's tasks more difficult and to a certain extent influenced the results of the assessment.

In short, while the original intention was that the sample should only include capacity building support for public and civil institutions, and while most of the sampled projects actually did represent such support, some 20–40 per cent of the projects and, in particular, of the distinct project components should rather be treated as fairly typical of Sida's D/HR support in general.

Chapter 5

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings on logframe-related evaluability, based on the assessment of the development pathways identified. The chapter is structured as follows. First, the evaluability issues related to project design are considered. It must be remembered that, with one exception, the assessed projects were not planned according to logframe principles, which means that an analysis against logframe definitions and terminology inevitably reveals design weaknesses. Second, some general evaluability issues are discussed which are not specifically related to project design. The third and final section returns to the four key criteria identified in chapter 3, and identifies the projects with the greatest potential for evaluation using a logframe-related approach.

One difficulty in presenting data of this sort is that while the logframe structure enables design elements (objectives, indicators, risks and assumptions) to be disassembled and analysed in detail, these elements are in reality interrelated and need to be considered as a whole, as well as in parts. It is a consequence of a written report that each element must be considered separately. The following evaluability criteria are discussed:

Design criteria:

- quality of project goal,
- quality of project purpose,
- ownership of purpose,
- quality of expected outputs,
- the existence of indicators, and
- risks and assumptions taken into account in the project design.

Other criteria:

- availability of baseline data,
- availability of monitoring data,
- accessibility to stakeholders,
- likely evaluation costs, and
- feasibility of attribution.

5.2 Quality of goal

The identified development pathways concentrate on four levels: goal, purpose, outputs and activities. The goal specifies what the project is trying to achieve in broader terms and beyond the immediate scope of the project itself. The goal should target a particular D/HR sector or policy area, and should link to the higher goal of D/HR development which in turn contributes to Sida's mission of poverty reduction.

The quality of goals is less important for evaluability than the quality of purposes because projects contribute towards goals but cannot achieve them directly. It is however necessary to distinguish between goals and purposes, partly to ensure that the project is consistent with Sida's policy strategy, partly to check the coherence of the project with other initiatives. The goal specification was found to be satisfactory for most (22) projects in the sense that they targeted particular areas within the scope of Sida's D/HR policy framework.

Several projects do not distinguish between goal and purpose. For example, in four cases (PANC, IAJ, DPSA, CPP) implementers concentrated on an overarching goal and did not differentiate a separate project purpose. With no purpose defined for the funding period, it is hard to evaluate the extent to which the project had the desired outcomes. One possible explanation for the lack of separate purposes is that the designers were tempted to "sell" the project by focusing on how it addresses an important D/HR sectoral issue.

In the case of DPSA, where the management was engaged in the reform of the South African civil service, Sida's support was perceived as addressing a common goal (but not a separate purpose) through the funding of a range of distinct sets of activities which could each be treated as sub-projects on their own. The lack of a unifying single project theme makes it hard to identify a development pathway for Sida's investment which could be used to underpin an evaluation initiative.

5.3 Quality of purpose

The project purpose is a key aspect of any project design, and an important determinant of evaluability. The purpose defines the expected changes in terms of target group performance and is the reason why a project is undertaken. If purposes are not adequately specified and agreed on by stakeholders, the ability to evaluate project effectiveness is severely limited, since there is no agreement on the intended outcomes of the project.

The quality of project purposes is assessed by considering whether the purposes are specific, realistic and measurable.¹⁸ The assessment draws on data from both project documents and interviews with stakeholders.¹⁹

Most of the documents reviewed contain a purpose statement in some form. A number of points need to be made, however:

- The terms used in project documents, or by stakeholders, to describe the purposes varied, and included output(s) and goal(s), as well as purpose.
- In several cases, the purpose statements were vague and sometimes inconsistent with other statements in the same reviewed document. ACJ is an example with a number of general purposes touching on raising awareness, increasing the participation of women and youth, and promoting education and youth training processes.
- One important question is whether the purposes defined are consistent with the projects' scope and duration. This topic is addressed below in the discussion of purpose specificity, realism and measurability.

Specificity

A specific purpose is one where (a) there is a direct link between the activities carried out and the stated purpose (i.e. where the purpose can be expected to be achieved as a direct result of project activities), and (b) the phrasing of the purpose is detailed enough to provide a proper understanding of the anticipated outcomes of the project. Lack of purpose specificity implies low evaluability, since it is difficult, or impossible, to evaluate whether a project has achieved its purpose if the purpose itself is not clearly stated.

Overall, eight projects had a purpose (or at least one of their several purposes) which was not stated specifically enough (LDC, COINDE, COPMAGUA, IIDH, ACJ in Central America, and CALS, CPP, WILDD in South Africa). Part of the problem was poor wording, and in many cases discussions with project managers enabled the team to understand a more exact purpose. More time would have enabled the team to explore the specificity of purposes in greater depth.

An example of an unspecific purpose is “to enable women to take an active part in the democratic transformation of South Africa through education and training at grassroots level” (WILDD). This purpose may be interpreted in different ways, such that different stakeholders may actually be expecting and working towards different project outcomes. In the WILDD example, does the purpose mean “to get more women into political positions of power” (as

¹⁸ Definitions of specific, realistic and measurable are derived from training and promotional material used by the World Bank, the European Commission and logframe training firms.

¹⁹ The scoring system provides only a shorthand way of summarising the quality of project purposes. The reader is therefore advised to read the full project assessments (in Annex 7) in order to capture the wide variation of this evaluability criterion.

one stakeholder interprets it) or “to empower local women” (as another stakeholder interprets it)?

The following projects were judged to have all or most of their purposes as specific: AOG, DPSA, IAJ, IDASA, LRGU, NUM, PANC, SAPS, UPEP, WDF in South Africa and CSE, INIFOM, RAASRAAN, ONAM, ANSP, CONSORCIO, ECJ, FONDO, FUNDAUNGO, SACDEL in Central America.

Realism

A realistic purpose is one where it is likely that the proposed end-of-project situation can be attained within the time frame and budget of the project. Behavioural change, if required for success, must be attainable without the use of heroic assumptions. It is difficult, and perhaps pointless, to evaluate a project objectively against a purpose which is clearly unrealistic. But evaluation by other means, such as user-oriented evaluation, might cater for projects where important outcomes are produced in spite of an unrealistic purpose.

In eleven cases the purpose was not realistic, given time-frame set and the scale of resources dedicated to the project. This was the gravest weakness in the area of purpose quality. Four other projects had multiple purposes, of which at least two were considered unrealistic. Examples include the development of municipal governments’ capacity to raise revenue, deliver services and work in a participatory way (FUNDAUNGO and SACDEL). IAJ proposed to “raise the standards of journalism” which was unrealistic in the time period funded.

Projects found to have realistic purposes (or most of their several purposes) were: RAASRAAN, INIFOM, COINDE, COPMAGUA, ANSP, CONSORCIO, ECJ in Central America and AOG, CALS, CPP, IDASA, LRGU, PANC, UPEP, WDF, WILDD in South Africa.

An integral part of purpose realism is the extent to which the project design has accommodated external assumptions. This aspect is considered in section 5.7, but it is important to remember that projects, in particular those which intervene in sensitive areas of D/HR, can only be considered soundly designed if their purposes take into account external conditions (on which project success depends). Voter education projects, for example, will have to assume that the election process takes place in an atmosphere of peace and stability. Police reform work will likewise rely on government providing incentives to the police to respect the constitution and judicial process.

Measurability

A measurable purpose is one where data for the indicators could be reasonably expected to be available at project completion to demonstrate project success. Clearly, if a purpose is difficult to measure, it will not be possible to evaluate project effectiveness objectively. The evaluation will be reduced to subjective judgements, and evaluability must therefore be rated lower.

Eight projects had purpose(s) that were found difficult to measure. As further discussed in chapter 2 and Annex 4, certain types of D/HR impact appear intrinsically difficult to “measure” in a quantitative sense, and further research is needed on alternative ways to judge purpose effectiveness. CALS presents measurement problems because of its scope of activities involving wide-reaching constitutional reforms and legal research. Likewise, the CPP development of a new and replicable model for community-based policing presents challenges to the measurement of how and in what ways the model is in fact successful and replicable.

Projects considered to have measurable purposes were: CSE, INIFOM, LDC, RAASRAAN, COPMAGUA, ONAM, ANSP, CONSORCIO, ECJ, FONDO, FUNDAUNGO in Central America, and AOG, IDASA, LRGU, NUM, PANC, SAPS, UPEP, WDF, WILDD in South Africa. Two projects, ACJ and IIDH were rated as neither specific, realistic nor measurable. The case of ACJ is illustrated below:

Programme purposes:

1. Promote education and training processes for the induction of youth into the labour market.
2. Develop programmes that enable access to recreation, culture and sports for youth.
(Youth leadership component) Strengthen and train youth leaders so that they contribute to the reconstruction and reconciliation of the country and thereby to democracy building.

None of the ACJ purposes are specific since they do not target certain beneficiaries. They are unrealistic in relation to reconstruction, reconciliation and democracy building, and do not describe concrete development changes which a project of this duration and with the resources available could bring about. The purposes present major difficulties in terms of measurement because they deal with attitudes, behavioural change, self-esteem and strengthened leadership, all of which are processes or conditions which take time and do not emerge uniformly.

Purpose level

The setting of the purpose higher or lower than good logframe practice is a common problem. The terms of reference required the team first to identify and then to analyse the project logframes. For the analysis to make sense, the identification had to be grounded on the views of stakeholders. Chapter 3 explains how the team elicited the logframes without substantially changing stakeholders’ understanding or wording of the goal, purpose and outputs. Where stakeholders’ views could be reinterpreted to improve the project design, this is commented on in the project analysis in Annex 7. Reinterpretation during the study would have invalidated the analysis of the logframes.

Projects found to have unrealistic purposes tend to set the purposes at too high a level. By not differentiating the goal from the purpose, the projects fail

to state what the project by itself will achieve in terms of outcomes. The consequence is a gap in the logic between outputs and the goal. The purpose should describe a specific change in the development status of specifically targeted beneficiaries such that the project activities and outputs can be closely and logically linked to this. An example of this problem is: “transform the public service into a coherent, representative, competent, efficient and democratic instrument for implementing government policies and meeting the needs of all South Africans” (DPSA).

Two examples that illustrate better goal-purpose levels are:

1 CONSORCIO:

Goal	Contribute to an increase in conscientious participation of citizens, especially new voters, youth and women in the municipal elections of March 1997 in El Salvador.
Purpose	Develop citizens' capacity to evaluate candidates' electoral platforms, establish candidate commitments and evaluate the degree of fulfilment in 63 municipalities.

2 LRGU:

Goal	Contribute to the transformation of the administration of justice through a focus on magistrates' courts.
Purpose	Establish a well-networked core of magistrates who will participate actively as leaders in the transformation of justice and dispense equal justice without race or gender bias.

Seven projects (including several UNDP projects in Central America) show the weakness of setting the purpose too low. They involve interventions that probably produce limited development change, and the stated purposes are more truly outputs or even activities. In a trivial sense, these purposes are easy to evaluate because outputs are in most circumstances measurable from project records. But outputs only describe what the project does, not why. Without a separate project purpose there can be no agreement about what constitutes project success, hence evaluability is lower. There is also a danger of project implementers devoting their efforts to delivering project outputs with no concern for the extent to which those outputs stimulate effective change.

For example, ANSP gave one purpose as being “to strengthen the information management system for the selection system” and another “to create installed capacity for the elaboration and reproduction of bibliographic material”. These purposes do not describe changes in terms of the overall effectiveness of the institution in producing appropriately trained police officers, and are really describing project outputs. Other examples include “to update ten laws as proposals for parliamentary approval” (ONAM), and “to train party officials so that they can exercise their responsibility on the election day” (IDA-SA). Both fail to describe any kind of expected outcome.

One interpretation of purposes being set at a low level is that the project has no purpose. But a purpose that is too low is no less wrong than one that is too

high. The team assessed the quality of purposes derived from the brief project visits. If there is a sound overall development logic, an improved specification of purpose could probably be made through further in-depth discussions with stakeholders.

Changes to purpose

One factor that affects evaluability is purpose consistency over time. Unless changes of purpose statements during the project lifetime are made only to specify vague objectives, the changes are in fact equivalent to the formulation of new projects. Activities and outputs would need to undergo corresponding changes in order to generate the new expected outcomes. This multiplicity of interventions would make evaluations more complex and expensive, and hence also reduce evaluability. While many purposes have been constant over time (for 19 projects), there are some examples (9 projects) where the purposes have changed with different funding phases. Thus CPP can be contrasted with LRGU. CPP started with a general purpose in terms of police solutions to rising township crime but later became focussed on developing a particular policing model in a small number of locations. LRGU on the other hand concentrated from the beginning on the magistracy as its target group. Various reasons were identified for changing purposes:

Longer time span/different funding phases Projects with a longer time span or several funding phases often evolve to meet different needs. A positive point to note here is Sida's flexibility in adjusting to rapidly evolving circumstances. One example is COINDE altering its global plan to tackle the issue of public dissemination of the peace accords, which were only signed after the programme had been formulated.

Increased ownership of local implementers As local agencies gain confidence and capacity, they are able to exert greater control over the projects, and the purposes may be adjusted to reflect this increased ownership. The ACJ programme established a youth movement which then took on a life of its own and redefined its purposes, including the shift from a rural to an urban focus. In the case of NUM, the managers of the mining union sought a wider organisational change from the project. They wanted a large number of staff to use the research information while the Swedish NGO supporting the project focused on assisting a small research unit and training for the use of a mining database. By the second phase of funding in 1995, the union proposed to extend the research capacity to mining branches so that shop stewards would be better equipped in negotiations with mine-owners.

Management changes Differences between the documented purpose and the purpose stated by implementers may be the result of changes in management. Several projects changed their management after project commencement. The new managers have in some cases taken different views of what the projects are trying to achieve, or placed different emphasis on the original purposes. For example, CALS changed its role from that of a supporter of government legal

reforms at the time of the 1994 elections, to that of a critic of the government as the new leadership sought to widen its mandate. Once ACJ was established, it set out its own new institutional goals and distanced itself from the vision of its creator, the Latin American Federation. Similarly, new management in the gender-related legal reforms project in Guatemala (ONAM) supported legislative projects which were not defined in the original project design.

Altered Policy or Political Environment Some projects altered their purposes in response to changes in the policy environment in which they were situated. For example, the need for decentralisation has emerged in a number of projects in South Africa and this has to some degree altered their purposes. The DPSA and PANC public service reform projects began to stress the devolution of responsibility as a reflection of policy changes. WDF also switched its approach from a central focus (assisting female parliamentarians) to a district focus (assisting locally elected women).

Changes of purposes because of new management approaches, altered policy, different funding phases, or increased local ownership, make the evaluator's task more complex. Different phases of implementation that match separate purposes may have to be treated separately, or even as distinct projects. Capturing the earlier project logic may be hard when those concerned have changed their views of what the project tries to achieve. Also, if an earlier project design was appropriate at the outset of the project, but has since become redundant, what is the point of spending evaluation resources on something that is of purely historical interest and of little relevance to present or future problems?

Multiple purposes

Where there are several different purposes, there is room for different priorities on the part of different stakeholders. If prioritisation is not clarified and agreed on at the start, different stakeholders may in effect follow different intervention logics, which will reduce evaluability against a single logframe. The majority of projects have more than one stated identifiable purpose, and in one case up to seven purposes (COPMAGUA). In some cases it is appropriate to rather treat these purposes as outputs and goals.

Another common feature of projects with multiple purposes is that they receive core-funding from Sida that lasts for several years (CSE, INIFOM, COINDE, COPMAGUA, IIDH, ONAM, ANSP, FONDO in Central America, and CALS, CPP, IAJ, WDF WILDD in South Africa). As these organisations evolve, their *raison d'être* changes, particularly as they respond to rapid political and social changes. In some instances, the same activities, e.g. training of magistrates, continue but the content of the training evolves in order to address new purposes. In other cases, new activities are introduced in order to reflect the new purpose.

In some cases, it would be valuable for core-funded projects to be required to make periodic revisions of their purpose in order to reflect new directions and, in due course, to make their work more evaluable. In any case, evalua-

tions based on the logframe approach would have to distinguish between different phases of an organisation's development in order to find periods of implementation where a clear logic was followed and activities related to a single purpose.

A final point is that in the brief elicitation process allowed by the fieldwork, the surfacing of multiple purposes was by no means complete. In some cases, the same respondents adjusted their emphases and/or revealed new purposes to those already given. Also, where it was not possible to meet certain stakeholder groups, their perspectives on the purposes went unrecorded. Thus, the problem of accurately identifying different purposes should not be underestimated, particularly for projects with long periods of support, or where there is a wide range of project stakeholders.

Summary: quality of purpose

Of the 28 projects, 11 were rated as having purposes that met the three criteria of being specific, realistic and measurable. The remaining projects partially met the criteria. In the case of multiple purposes, the judgement was based on the most widely shared purpose, or by taking a balanced view of the different purposes:

Purpose is specific, realistic and measurable	11
Only two of s/r/m apply	8
Only one of s/r/m applies	7
Purpose is neither specific, realistic nor measurable	2

5.4 Ownership of project purpose

Apart from the intrinsic qualities of the project purpose, the feasibility of a logframe approach to evaluation is also affected by the extent to which different project stakeholders agree on the purpose. This issue is different from multiple purposes in that it concerns the interpretation of purposes by different stakeholder groups. If different stakeholders have different views on a project's purpose, they are unlikely to agree on the indicators by which to measure success, and hence evaluability is lower. There appears to be broad agreement on purposes in many projects, but the situation is far from straightforward, and it was not possible to assess the whole possible range of stakeholder views within the limited time available.

In general, managers responsible for carrying out the projects agreed with the purpose(s) as stated in project documents, although the emphasis often varied. There are examples where significant differences were noted in the interpretation of the purposes. In some cases where the project was large and

complex, different stakeholders only understood the part of the project in which they were involved. The IIDH programme, with over fifteen separate components, is a case in point. In the case of CONSORCIO, different stakeholders had limited knowledge of the project structure (although each party was familiar with their “own” components), but they understood the overall logic of what the project was aiming to achieve.

In many projects, beneficiaries had only a partial understanding of the purpose. Some beneficiaries emphasised the delivery of tangible benefits, while project implementers focused on the development of a model or getting a process right (UPEP, CPP, FONDO). UPEP provides an interesting case of three different views of the project purpose. The implementers stressed the delivery of an urban plan for Kimberley and the adoption of a participatory and integrated approach to planning. For Sida, the process of participatory planning to build democratic local government structures was a stronger reason for support. The city residents appeared less concerned about improved planning methods, and stressed the delivery of housing and other services introduced by the project in a pilot fashion.

Some project implementers gave separate or parallel purposes to the purposes stated in the documentation. For example, the AOG purpose agreed with Sida was to empower the illiterate black population to participate in the 1994 elections. But for the Assemblies of God, the implementing agency, and to some extent the Swedish PMU, it provided at the same time an opportunity for the Pentecostal church to overcome its divided past and help its members to play a more active role in civil society.

Summary: ownership of purpose

Table 5.2: Ownership of purpose (number of projects)	
All share	6
Most share	16
Some share	6
Few share	0

Despite the low quality of many project purposes, it is striking that for the majority of projects there appeared to be reasonably wide agreement or understanding on the purpose among stakeholders.²⁰ Understanding means

²⁰ “Most share”, in table 5.2, means that the majority of the six stakeholder groups contacted about a particular project stated that they were in agreement over the main purpose(s) recorded in the documents or as elicited from the main project agency or implementer. “Some share” means that as many as half of those groups contacted were in agreement. “Few share” means that only one or two of the six groups of stakeholders agreed. The six stakeholder groups are: (1) Sida staff, (2) Swedish embassy officials, (3) NGOs or other local organisations managing the projects, (4) implementing government office or NGO, (5) primary beneficiaries, and (6) ultimate beneficiaries.

that in the brief time available for discussion, the stakeholders who were consulted displayed a positive knowledge about the project. This apparent commonality of purpose is a strong point for evaluability. If more time had been available however, apparent differences and agreements could have been explored in more detail, and the veracity of objectives fully explored. Furthermore, the lack of contact with ultimate beneficiaries during the fieldwork raises concerns that our assessment of shared purpose is only an apparent consensus rather than a true one.

5.5 Quality of expected outputs

As noted in the methodology discussion, the requirement of a planned output is that it should reflect added value to primary beneficiaries as a result of the activities carried out. Thus, there should be an indication of a qualitative or quantitative change emanating from the goods or services provided. If planned outputs are not clearly stated, evaluation of efficiency is problematic, and evaluability is reduced in consequence. In five projects, no outputs were stated in the documents, only activities and project purposes. In the case of ACJ, the training of journalists (an activity) was expected to lead to the “purpose” of improved standards and independence in journalism in Southern Africa. No intermediate outputs were defined, leaving the question open as to exactly how the training would produce the desired purpose.

In eleven cases, the “outputs” found in documents were in fact re-stated activities, such as the number of persons trained or workshops held. These “outputs” did not define what the training was supposed to achieve (for example to establish a certain knowledge or skill). In a small number of cases, the fact that the purposes were over-ambitious meant that the outputs stated were not sufficient to achieve the purpose.

Not all projects had poorly stated outputs. Some good examples:

- “A common understanding of the Electoral Act among party voting agents” (IDASA). The idea here is that the party agents would not only attend the training but leave the event afterwards with an understanding of the Act that they could pass on to their party members and use at the election.
- “Improved understanding of the Municipal Code amongst municipal officials” (FUNDAUNGO and RAASRAAN). The officials trained under the project are expected to demonstrate improved knowledge and capacity in administrative and financial management after the training events.
- “The Research Unit to provide the Collective Bargaining Unit with information on the mining industry” (NUM). While the activity was that of training for the research unit to use a mining database, the output is that the unit then uses its new capacity to provide the union’s bargaining unit with relevant information to negotiate more effectively.

- “New organisational structures, plans and budgets in use; budgets aligned with deliverables” (PANC). With increased training and capacity for new financial planning methods provided by the project, the “deliverable” stated is the publication of improved budgets and service plans.

During interviews, implementers could often state expected outputs even in circumstances where no outputs had been set out in the project documents. This was a topic of considerable discussion among implementers and primary beneficiaries, particularly in the case of training projects where there was much concern to clarify what the benefits of the training should be.

Summary: quality of expected outputs

The assessment of outputs draws on the data gathered from project documents and interviews with stakeholders. Individual projects generally have a quite large collection of outputs, some more appropriate than others from a logframe perspective. The assessment is based on the number of outputs which are logically linked to the project purpose, have an added value element, do not restate activities, and which are complete in terms of matching the specified project activities.

Good	3
Satisfactory	14
Marginal	10
Poor	1

5.6 Existence of indicators

Logframe-related evaluation requires criteria for the judgement of success to have been developed by the project. Such criteria refer to objectively verifiable indicators that show above all to what extent the purposes are achieved. Lack of indicators, or inability to unearth them, implies lower evaluability because the indicators provide the objectivity and precision that clarify goals, purposes and outputs. For example, the output “policemen to gain skills in applying rules of evidence” is given precision when supported by indicators such as “70 per cent of trainees score 65 per cent or more in the end-of-course test”.

Do project documents identify success criteria?

Only five projects have documentation which contain at least some indicators of expected achievement. An example is WILDD where the main achievement indicator is that 500 women trained under the project will attain elected positions in the 1999 elections. Other projects had achievement indicators

mentioned in the documents, although usually vague and unlikely to be interpreted and used by different observers in a consistent way. An example is FUNDAUNGO for which some of the eight indicators of increased municipal management capacity require further specification: “at least 34 municipalities improve their capacity to negotiate with the private sector” or “34 municipalities improve their financial administration”. It is not clear exactly what is meant by “capacity to negotiate”, or “financial administration”.

Most projects have other kinds of indicators in the documents, but these refer to activities (such as number of persons trained and number of events carried out) and not to outputs and purposes. Finally, in eight cases, no indicators of any kind were found in the documents.

Can stakeholders identify indicators and are they widely agreed?

During interviews, respondents were generally able to suggest plausible indicators. While project documents were weak on indicators, the respondents could usually suggest some appropriate indicators at goal and purpose levels, and nearly all at the output and activity levels. In 18 cases, relevant goal and purpose indicators were defined (INIFOM, LDC, RAASRAAN, COINDE, COPMAGUA, IIDH, ONAM, ANSP, CONSORCIO, ECJ, FONDO, FUNDAUNGO in Central America, and CPP, DPSA, NUM, SAPS, UPEP and WILDD in South Africa). In the remaining 10 projects, only output indicators could be identified (CSE, ACJ, SACDEL in Central America, and AOG, CALS, IAJ, IDASA, LRGU, PANC, WDF in South Africa).

The indicators should have quantity, quality and time dimensions to make them fully acceptable, but it was not always possible to elaborate on these aspects in full detail during interviews. It would therefore be incorrect to say that 18 projects had complete and verifiable indicators. However, in a full-scale evaluation, stakeholders could probably refine their indicators in an ex-post fashion. The real problem is that pre-project baseline data may not be available to allow any ex-post defined indicators to be monitored (see sections 5.9 and 5.10).

Even where good indicators were available from the start, they were rarely used for follow-up. Why? For some projects the reporting requirements do not appear to stress the analysis of such indicators. For other projects, no resources had been set aside to follow up on the indicators, and there was no serious effort to examine outcomes and impact empirically.

As noted, the degree of shared understanding between stakeholders could not be confidently confirmed in the time available. However, three points can be noted. First, different views on goals and purposes are likely to produce different indicators. ANSP is a case where different perceptions of the exact nature of the purpose resulted in different indicators suggested by different stakeholders. In the case of LRGU, project implementers expected the project to achieve greater changes than, for example, the target institution, and therefore apply more ambitious success criteria than do other stakeholders.

Second, differences in the scale of change anticipated imply different opinions on the appropriate specification of indicators. For example, if the indicator is “municipal tax collection increases”, it is likely to be generally accepted as an overall indicator of municipal development. But implementers may a 15 per cent increase sufficient, whereas the government, the funding agency or the municipality may expect a 30 per cent increase.

Finally, there is often disagreement on the appropriate nature of indicators of successful capacity development. The institutions supported sometimes regard internal indicators of increased capacity (such as the creation of a better information management system) as proof enough of project success, while the funders and direct beneficiaries judge capacity improvement in terms of scope, timing and quality of service delivery.

FONDO and ANSP are examples of these problems. There is no great disagreement over the purpose of FONDO, but there are different perceptions of how quickly and in what way the institution should deliver its services. Thus FONDO did not expect to deliver much within the project’s lifetime, but the beneficiaries, UNDP and Sida expected substantial service delivery. In the case of ANSP, there was agreement between the National Academy of Public Security and the police that the strengthened academy would deliver a certain number of well-trained policemen within a certain time period. Only later did it emerge that the two institutions had different ideas of what actually constitutes a well-trained policeman.

Summary: Agreement on indicators

Table 5.4: Agreement on indicators (number of projects)	
All agree	2
Most agree	15
Some agree	10
Few agree	1

Table 5.4 shows that in most cases there appeared to be slightly less agreement on the kind of success criteria required for a project, compared to the level of agreement on purposes and outputs. However, the agreement on indicators concerns elicited indicators, most of which were only simply defined as “success criteria” rather than “objectively verifiable indicators”. Thus, while respondents were able to share views on broadly drawn “success criteria”, there may well be underlying differences in their perceptions of what the project is about. Real differences appear when the exact meanings of these phrases are defined by the setting indicators with a quantity, quality and time dimension. This is an important finding for evaluability, because lack of agreement on indicators undermines any agreement on objectives. To this extent, table 5.4 provides only limited insight into project evaluability with respect to indicators.

5.7 Risks and assumptions

External factors or risks need to be taken into account in the project design, as demonstrated in table 3.4. Although not recorded separately in the assessment guide, note was taken during interviews of the risks that the respondents had or had not addressed. Assumptions are stated to confirm that certain risks have been taken into account and that there are reasonable grounds to believe that they will be taken care of or ameliorated by factors external to the project. Chapter 3 explains why a sound development pathway is a necessary requirement for evaluability. The quality of purpose and outputs was discussed in earlier sections, and indicators reviewed in the previous section. Inadequate specification of risks and assumptions may be a symptom of an inadequately specified intervention logic. Poor specification of the intervention logic also makes it difficult to assess objectively which risks that should be addressed by the project design.

Political circumstances change rapidly in the study countries, and in such volatile situations it is hard to predict the extent and importance of external factors. D/HR, compared to other sectors, is a sensitive field which calls for a more rigorous risk analysis. But because of this sensitivity, it may at the same time be difficult for planners to be outspoken about intended project purposes or to mention explicitly a political risk. For projects with a high experimental element, a greater level of risk should be allowed. However, the project documents reviewed generally mention very little in the way of risks and assumptions. Also, the interviewees were in some cases not present at time of design and hence could not comment on the extent to which risks and assumptions had actually been accommodated.

There are various examples of risks and assumptions not taken properly into account:

- In the case of institutional strengthening, *local capacity* was often assumed to be higher than it was or could become (PANC anticipated that local government staff would be available to work with Swedish technical assistance). High *staff turnover* was a related risk that was not assessed (INFOM). The assumption was that the organisations concerned would have the capacity and will to retain staff.
- It is sometimes wrongly assumed that the *political will* exists to ensure project results. For example, it was assumed that trained staff would be able to carry out the intended purpose and contribute to the goals. It was also assumed that political party agents trained as trainers would return to their mass party agent body and transfer the skills of electoral management. Women trained to be leaders would be adopted by their chosen parties to be candidates for elections. These assumptions may turn out to be over-optimistic.

- A related assumption in many capacity-building projects is that the *beneficiary is willing and able* to develop his/her capacity and to make use this capacity in their daily work. There is not much explicit attention to this key assumption in project design (for example by specifying criteria for the selection of beneficiaries or by attaching conditionality clauses to the support). The training interventions had to assume that the trainees had the *willingness to respond* to the training and change their opinions and subsequent behaviour. In the context of strong historical divisions and hardened attitudes, this was in some instances unrealistic (e.g. police commanders and magistrates in South Africa).
- Given the *short-term nature* of some projects, it was unrealistic to assume that the expected purposes could be achieved (FUNDAUNGO, SACDEL, ONAM). Several such short-term projects found it necessary to extend the agreements several times.
- The *slowness of legislative change* was underestimated. Legislative reform in Central America took longer than anticipated (ONAM, ECJ, FONDO, INIFOM). In South Africa, by contrast, the pace of reform was more rapid than expected, and projects struggled to keep up (CALSA, DSPA).
- *Collaboration* between different institutions was assumed to be stronger than it turned out to be. D/HR projects are possibly more vulnerable to obstruction by the institutions on which they depend. This is often due to the projects' political nature, where certain interest groups actually do not desire the intended development changes. INIFOM expected more cooperation between the training bodies supporting local government than it should have.
- It was often assumed that *local funds* were available to provide the required counterpart funds. The risk that government or the local NGO are unable to raise their contributions is not always accommodated in the project design.

Summary: Logframe-related evaluability criteria

Chapter 3 argued that certain criteria are crucial for evaluability. Two of these criteria are derived from the logframe structure: quality of purpose, and quality of expected outputs. Table 5.5 shows the projects rated as either good or satisfactory against these two criteria:

Criteria	South Africa	El Salvador	Guatemala	Nicaragua	Total rated as good or satisfactory
Quality of project purpose	PANC, UPEP, LRGU, IDASA, NUM, AOG, WDF, SAPS, WILDD	CONSORCIO, FUNDAUNGO, FONDO, ECJ, ANSP	COPMAGUA, ONAM	RAASRAAN, CSE, INIFOM	19
Quality of expected outputs	PANC, UPEP, LRGU, IDASA, AOG, CALS, WDF, CPP	CONSORCIO, ECJ, FUNDAUNGO	ONAM, IIDH	RAASRAAN, CSE, LDC, INIFOM	17
Projects meeting both criteria	PANC, UPEP, LRGU, IDASA, AOG, WDF	CONSORCIO, FUNDAUNGO, ECJ	ONAM	RAASRAAN, CSE, INIFOM	13

5.9 Availability of baseline data

Baseline data describe the situation of target groups prior to the project. The data can be expressed either as a pre-project value for an indicator (e.g. reduced proportion of youths aged 16 to 20 being convicted of petty offences from the present 40 per cent to 30 per cent), or as a collection of statistics on the characteristics of target groups. Baseline data are important from an evaluability perspective because it provides benchmarks against which change can be monitored. But to be useful, the data have to be relevant and specific to the project target groups.

The overall finding is that the majority of the projects have inadequate baseline data, although some projects collected such data during the project period, either as a side-effect of working with the target groups, or because it was part of the project activities to assess the target group situation (e.g. COPMAGUA which collected data on beneficiary organisations).

Several projects aim to train, develop new attitudes and build institutional capacity. For such projects, there was rarely any baseline analysis of beneficiary knowledge, attitudes or practices prior to project implementation. As a result, not only is project success in delivering outputs and achieving purposes hard to monitor, but the design of the training, awareness-raising and institution building is often flawed. The content of a training course will usually be more relevant to trainees if the level of their knowledge about the subject matter is assessed beforehand. Similarly, the content of an institution-building project will often be more relevant if it is preceded by an institutional analysis.

Where baseline data do exist, the information is too general. It is almost never relevant to project key indicators. Instead, it is sometimes confused with a pre-project situation or needs analysis, i.e. the kind of general target benefi-

ary survey that some projects conduct before defining their intervention strategy. In some cases, such studies include success indicators, but often (as, for example, in the case of the ECJ judicial sector studies, and the IIDH human rights assessments, they do not.

In some cases, the collection of baseline data is deemed prohibitively expensive in relation to the scale of the intervention (SACDEL). Also, the knowledge possessed by beneficiaries was sometimes assumed rather than empirically verified (e.g. AOG).

Summary: Availability of baseline data

Good	0
Satisfactory	7
Marginal	17
Poor	4

The overall finding is that the majority of projects had little baseline data on their target group or institution. In terms of evaluability, this is a serious flaw that can only be (partially) addressed ex post by using secondary sources or memory recall information. Where pre-project knowledge of beneficiaries is very limited, it could confound any attempt to discern project impact and therefore present serious attribution problems.

To some extent, development pathways help mitigate the problem of baseline data. Evaluations comparing the state of beneficiaries before and after the project are enriched by the ability to track the behaviour of target beneficiaries along the development pathway. Thus, the existence of monitoring and reporting data concerning the status of participants at project commencement can partly compensate for a missing baseline.

5.10 Availability of monitoring data

Once a project is underway, the production of regular progress reports is a valuable aid to tracking implementation. Where the reports only cover financial disbursements and activities, they are less useful for evaluation purposes than if they also address outputs and purposes. The logframe approach to progress monitoring gives advance indications of the likelihood of achieving the planned project purposes. Monitoring reports also enable evaluators to construct hypotheses about the effectiveness of the project. Thus, good monitoring facilitates evaluation. The assessment recorded first, if any reports existed, and second, what these reports covered.

Report availability and quality

For almost all projects, the availability of progress reporting was adequate or better. Of the 28 projects, only two produced little in the way of reports (SAPS, SACDEL). Others produced separate reports for different project components, but no overall progress summary, while still others covered project matters in a more general way.

However, the reports and progress records available provide almost exclusively financial and activity information. Output delivery and purpose achievement are generally not adequately addressed, and the risks affecting the project were rarely monitored. The project designers, by not providing sufficient detail of output and purpose indicators, handicapped the subsequent monitoring system. In some cases, the project management ignored or did not re-examine the original project design, but carried out activities irrespective of the original targets. NGOs are considered effective channels of Sida support, but there is no evidence of better reporting quality in projects implemented by NGOs. Most NGOs involved in the sampled projects also placed emphasis on activity (rather than output and purpose) monitoring, and on the development of local partner NGOs. Swedish NGOs do not appear to offer any marked improvement in terms of report quality compared to local NGOs funded directly by Sida, and in some cases they appeared to produce even less information, although the team's judgement is tentative on this.²¹

PANC is an example of good reporting, however. The project produces "results analyses" on a range of outputs for improved public service management and delivery, and cost-effectiveness.

It may be argued that D/HR projects are more sensitive than other areas, and hence that it is easier or desirable to keep reporting simple and concerned with fund flows. This is especially true, perhaps, where the project is failing and it is politically risky to reveal the real reasons. However there are a number of non-sensitive areas where other problems are causing low quality of monitoring data. For example, in Central America, the UNDP monitoring committees were weak in pressing for reports on project results.

Another problem is that funding agency officers are often insufficiently aware of the extent of support for their projects from other donors. According to a number of project implementers, funders usually conduct separate monitoring processes, which often means that the monitoring is disruptive for the implementing organisation, which has to deal with several report formats for the same project (COINDE, IIDH, IAJ).

Focusing specifically on Sida's monitoring system, the study found that pressure from Sida to obtain reports that went beyond financial and activity data was

²¹ The assessment was constrained by language (Swedish NGO reports to Sida are in Swedish) and by not being able to access reports or meet certain Swedish NGOs in the time available (RWI had reports which we were unable to see, Folkpartiets Kvinnoförbund could not be interviewed for the WILDD project, and the Raw Materials Group only had one draft final report available for NUM).

generally low. Release of funds was often delayed because of late or incomplete financial reports, and this follow up work by embassy staff took up their attention and time. In Central America, the division of responsibilities between Stockholm and the embassies for the monitoring of certain projects was also unclear. The team also found that data on project expenditure (as opposed to allocations) were not easily available from Sida, nor consistently or reliably reported. Finally, the use of decision codes to identify projects proved confusing in several cases, as these do not always relate to actual projects. Some projects have several decision codes attached, mainly from decisions on extended funding. In other cases, one Sida decision actually covers funding for several different projects, such as ECJ, where one decision referred to three UNDP projects (albeit of similar type). It was not always obvious to the team where Sida draws the boundaries around a project (e.g. ONAM).

Summary: Availability of monitoring data

Good	1
Satisfactory	4
Marginal	20
Poor	3

While the availability of financial and activity related data was acceptable in the majority of cases, the standard of monitoring was very weak. 23 of the 28 projects produced data of marginal or poor quality. This is one of the most serious evaluability problems, since without progress information on output delivery and purpose achievement, a project is difficult to evaluate at any stage but particularly after implementation. The standard of monitoring data is even lower than that of baseline data.

5.11 Accessibility to stakeholders

Evaluability requires a sufficient range of relevant stakeholder groups to be accessible, so that their views and experiences can be taken into account in the evaluation (see table 4.2 for a list of six typical stakeholder groups). For terminated projects, project designers and managers may be hard to trace. Beneficiaries may likewise have lost contact with the project, or even forgotten what kind of assistance they received. If so, evaluability is lower.

Ultimate beneficiaries are typically the most difficult group to reach. They may comprise the wider community in a city, province or even in the whole country. For 15 projects it was concluded that contact with ultimate beneficiaries was likely to prove difficult or impossible. For some projects, sample lists may not be available, while for others the target population's knowledge of

the project may be minimal or non-existent. Even so, in some cases, informed and representative beneficiary views may be obtained (for example through participants in CONSORICIO's electoral promotion events). Ultimate beneficiaries are of course more difficult to contact where project records are not up-to-date or accessible (AOG, ACJ), where the beneficiaries were involved several years ago and have little incentive to take part in an evaluation (WDF, LDC), or where they have moved on to other positions (IDASA). In Central America, weak infrastructure or poor communications can make contacts with beneficiaries more difficult and costly. Finally, in certain areas there is a security risk involved in contacting beneficiaries (e.g. parts of Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa for democracy education projects).

Primary beneficiaries are easier to identify and contact, in particular in cases where the project has clear focus and the target group is relatively small. Primary beneficiaries ranged from one or two people (NUM), to some hundred (UPEP, WDF) or many thousands (AOG, WILDD).

Summary: Accessibility of stakeholders

5-6 groups	19
4 groups	6
2-3 groups	3
1 group	0

Table 5.8 shows that for the majority of projects, a wide range of stakeholders are still identifiable and accessible, including relevant persons from Sida HQ, the local Embassy, NGO channels in Sweden, the implementers, and the primary and ultimate beneficiaries. This is a very positive finding in terms of project evaluability.

5.12 Evaluation costs

In light of the project design, baseline/monitoring data, and stakeholder accessibility, what are the likely costs of carrying out evaluations? Two aspects were explored to answer this question:

Project complexity and length Projects with a wider range of activities require more costly evaluations, irrespective of the project investment costs. For example, compare the DPSA activities built around eight different policy goals with the NUM database training of one individual. Other projects embody concepts that are difficult to measure, for example increased legitimacy, transparency and sustainability (RAASRAAN), and increased public awareness ONAM. Also, projects with several support phases require more complex evaluations to cover the different purposes addressed by each phase (CALS).

Need for empirical data For some projects, the evaluations would rely on key informant interviews and reviews of documents and other secondary material. Other projects require primary data collection which increases the evaluation cost. For example, projects working directly with rural women throughout the country (WILDD) would need a survey methodology, especially if statistical representativeness is required. In the case of ANSP, the police trainees, located across the country, would also need to be sampled and surveyed. For projects with activities in different geographical areas, sampling would be more costly (LDC, CONSORCIO).

Summary: Evaluation cost

Low	3
Moderate	15
High	9
Very high	1

There are so many factors affecting the cost of evaluations, including the type of evaluation to be done, that the findings presented in table 5.9 are only tentative. The grouping of projects reflect the subjective judgements of the evaluators, since no hard data was available for measuring the potential cost of evaluation.

5.13 Feasibility of attribution

The final evaluability criterion concerns causal attribution. This is a complex yet crucial topic. Attribution is often a problem for evaluators, given that many projects are relatively small pieces of assistance, but still seek to bring about significant development changes that are exposed to a multitude of external factors. However, if it cannot be established that observed development changes have been caused by, and hence can be attributed to, the evaluated projects, then the questions of project effectiveness and impact are largely left unanswered. Thus, low feasibility of attribution means less evaluability.

Two types of attribution are of interest to Sida: the extent to which (a) the project alone delivers the planned and expected development changes, and (b) Sida's contribution can be isolated in cases of co-financing and considered the cause of observed development changes.

Attribution to the project

A number of circumstances affect the ability of attributing observed development changes to the evaluated project: project design, timing, beneficiary identification and the existence of control groups.

Project design If objective indicators have not been developed, or are not monitored regularly, it is harder to decide exactly what development changes to observe in the first place (and thus to test with respect to attribution). In the case of CALS, active in the areas of constitutional reform and legal training and research, relevant development changes are hard to identify because no indicators of success were attached to the project other than for the activities, such as studies and training. Where the projects involve complex processes, with broad sets of expected changes in different sectors, the task of attribution also becomes difficult. Thus, DPSA, in tackling civil service reform at the national level, presents a sort of attribution problem because of the number of client agencies served, as well as the range of other institutions involved. In contrast, for UPEP, working at municipal level, the process was relatively simpler and the clients fewer.

Timing of the evaluation The later an evaluation is done after project termination, the more difficult the task of attribution, because it will be harder to trace beneficiaries and analyse changes that were possibly the result of the project. This is especially true of the voter education projects in South Africa, which were terminated more than five years ago.

Beneficiary identification Where project beneficiaries are less documented or more dispersed, the feasibility of attributing observed development changes to the project is weaker. For example, WILDD had a target group of 10,000 grassroots women leaders located across the country in small groups of 20–40 members. Records kept on the women were minimal, and it would be difficult to identify the changes among so many people on the basis of their attendance at project training events. Where beneficiaries are easily identified and circumscribed, for example a specific cadre of police officers or a group of trained journalists, the project stands better chances of being linked to performance changes in these target groups.

Control groups None of the projects reviewed appeared to monitor the development of control groups so as to be better able to attribute changes in the target groups (see chapter 3 for a discussion of monitoring control groups). For projects influencing public policy, strengthening national-level institutions and raising public awareness, this would not have been feasible. But where services are provided only to a section of the potential range of beneficiaries, the monitoring of control groups would have been possible, for example in cases of municipal government development, technical training, and local electoral promotion and education.

Attribution to Sida's project contribution

The second aspect of attribution concerns ability to identify Sida's contribution to the achievements of project outcomes and impact in cases of co-financing. A key requirement is for the proportion of funding provided by Sida to be clear. Sida was the sole funding agency in half of the South Africa projects and in three Central American ones. In some cases Sida provided the

bulk of funding, because the local implementing agency had only limited fund raising capacity (WILDD) or sought few alternatives (CPP). In these cases, the local organisations defrayed recurrent costs and provided little or no incremental funding. On the one hand, this enables the attribution of project impact to Sida's contribution. On the other hand, such cases tend to underestimate the value of non-financial contributions. This is a very difficult issue which this study has not been able to consider in further detail.

Attribution is also negatively affected by the fact that Sida's funding generally is more flexible and fungible than that of other donors. Sida deliberately allows recipients more flexibility in the way they apply for and use funds. One consequence, however, is that the ability to trace the effects of those funds is reduced. Budget support, for example to and through NGOs, is an example of this problem, where Sida funds are not earmarked for a specific set of activities, but may be moved between different budget items and activities according to need (IAJ, CALS, CSE).

Summary: Feasibility of attribution

High	3
Moderate	10
Marginal	9
Low	6

It was difficult to assess the projects against the criteria of attribution, partly owing to the time limits of the assignment. The general finding is that the chances of attributing any observed development changes to the project alone are moderate or marginal. In only three cases was it thought that attribution would not constitute an obstacle to evaluation: UPEP where the target beneficiaries belong to a discrete group and the preparation of the urban plan was entirely funded by Sida, FONDO's direct assistance to war wounded, and RAASRAAN where Sida was the key funder in the province.

5.14 Summary: Evaluability findings

As argued for in chapter 3, there are four crucial evaluability criteria. Two are derived from the logframe structure: quality of project purpose and clarity of outputs. Another two concern the quality of baseline or monitoring data, and the potential of attributing development changes to the evaluated projects and to Sida's financial contributions.

In table 5.5, 13 projects were rated as good or satisfactory against the two logframe criteria. Of these 13 projects four are rated as good or satisfactory also

with respect to baseline or monitoring data. Eight projects meet both the log-frame criteria and have a high or moderate attribution potential. Only two projects satisfy all four criteria: PANC and UPEP. Full details of the scores given to each project for each criterion are found in tables 3, 4 and 5 in Annex 5.

Criteria	South Africa	El Salvador	Guatemala	Nicaragua	Total
Criteria 1+2	PANC, UPEP, LRGU, IDASA, AOG, WDF	CONSORCIO, ECJ, FUNDAUNGO,	ONAM	RAASRAAN, CSE, INIFOM	13
Criteria 1+2+3	PANC, UPEP			CSE, INIFOM	4
Criteria 1+2+4	PANC, UPEP, LRGU, IDASA	CONSORCIO, ECJ	ONAM	RAASRAAN	8
Criteria 1+2+3+4	PANC, UPEP				2

Chapter 6

Remedies and alternative approaches

Chapter 5 assessed the sampled projects against eleven evaluability criteria. Four criteria were considered crucial, against which only two projects were rated good or satisfactory. How may the remaining 26 projects be evaluated?

This question is explored from two angles. First, by examining where the main areas of evaluability problems lie and by considering how these problems may be overcome. Second, by exploring the possibility of using different evaluation approaches, i.e. different from the logframe-related approach. It should be noted, however, that the logframe approach is not an evaluation model in itself. The logframe is a construct that enables evaluators to develop hypotheses on how projects achieve and contribute to expected objectives. Evaluation is mainly about testing these hypotheses: that outputs are delivered efficiently, that the outputs achieve planned outcomes, and that the outcomes contribute to the desired impact. The alternative evaluation models briefly discussed below do not change the nature of such tests, but they change the ways in which the hypotheses about change are constructed.

The practical ways in which development hypotheses are tested, such as the use of sample surveys or case studies, data collection techniques, key informant interviews and memory recall, are not explored in this chapter. One exception is the reference to tracer studies to follow up on participants of training programmes, a well-established technique which appears relevant to a number of the projects reviewed.

6.1 Evaluability deficiencies

Table 6.1 lists the evaluability weaknesses of the assessed projects:

Table 6.1 Evaluability weaknesses		
	Number of unsatisfactory projects	% of the total project sample
Lack of monitoring data	23	82
Lack of baseline data	21	75
Difficulty of attribution	15	54
Low quality of stated outputs	11	39
Lack of or disagreement on indicators	11	39
High cost	10	36
Purpose that is not specific, realistic or measurable	9	32
Absence of broad ownership among stakeholders on purposes	6	21
Low access to stakeholders	3	11

The most frequent evaluability problem concerns baseline and monitoring data (23 projects). The lack of or poor quality of such data limits the practical scope for conducting evaluations, and increases the cost. Next come problems of attribution, affecting just over half of the sample. Attribution problems mainly hinge on the scale of project activities and the overall project context, for example the relationship to other interventions. Problems of purpose and output quality, i.e. the core aspects of logframe design, appear next, affecting 32 and 39 per cent of the sample. High cost affects ten projects, while problems of purpose ownership among, and access to, stakeholders concern only a few projects.

Table 6.2 presents the extent to which evaluability characteristics are inter-related. The table shows, for five pairs of criteria, the number of projects that received a satisfactory rating (score 1 or 2) and an unsatisfactory rating (score 3 or 4) against the two paired criteria, as well as the number of projects for which the ratings against the two criteria do not match (1 or 2 for one criteria and 3 or 4 for the other):

Table 6.2 Associations between evaluability weaknesses (number of projects)			
Evaluability Criteria	Rating 1/2 for both	Rating 3/4 for both	Ratings do not match
Availability of baseline/ monitoring data	4	20	4
Ownership of purpose/ agreement on indicators	16	5	7
Quality of purpose/ quality of expected outputs	13	5	10
Quality of purpose/ feasibility of attribution	8	8	12
Availability of baseline data/ feasibility of attribution	4	12	12

The closest association is between the baseline and monitoring data. 24 projects had similar ratings for both criteria. The next strongest association (for 21 projects) concerns purpose ownership among stakeholders and agreement on indicators. The relationship between the other three paired criteria is weaker, with 16–18 projects having associated ratings, and 10–12 non-associated ratings. These relationships are logical and support the findings in chapter 5. The lack of baseline data is linked to the lack of monitoring information. Projects with broad stakeholder ownership of the purpose generally have indicators agreed on by those stakeholders.

Although the logframe approach brings many advantages to project planning, there are some limitations. Two limitations are particularly relevant to this study: the extent of ownership of the project design by stakeholders, and the identification of unintended results. First, a skilled planner can design a project that meets all the logframe criteria of goals, purposes, outputs, assumptions and indicators. But if the design has not been developed in consultation with stakeholders, the objectives and indicators may not be “owned” by the stakeholders, and project plans not followed during implementation. Chapter 5 suggests that this is not the case with the projects reviewed. Indeed, the opposite appears true, that stakeholders have a good understanding of the project purpose and outputs, as well as the overall development pathway. For projects with a low quality of purposes and stated outputs, but with a shared interpretation of the overall intervention logic among stakeholders, it should be possible to reformulate appropriate purposes and outputs in the early stages of an evaluation.

Second, unintended results, positive and negative, raise problems for goal oriented evaluations, since it becomes difficult to judge the success or otherwise against the original development pathway. At the same time, logframes enable evaluators to construct hypotheses about the nature of the project results. If these hypotheses are rejected during the evaluation, the logframe may in fact help stimulate an analysis also of unintended results (for many of

the reviewed projects, stakeholders identified important outcomes and impact which the original intervention logic did not anticipate).

The assessment found several likely cases of *additional* (unintended) results rather than *different* (unintended) results. For example, one important ONAM stakeholder claimed that the project directly contributed to a division in the women's movement over the proposals for a National Women's Institute (negative unplanned result). Another stakeholder claimed that within certain sections of the movement, the project helped unify and strengthen several groups (positive unplanned result).

A common unintended (or at least not explicitly planned) result was improved levels of inter-group tolerance and understanding among previously alienated groups brought together in training or other events (such as electoral education, and human rights seminars and courses). The "by-products" of such training events were often cited as being as, if not more, important than the planned results, for example:

- IAJ trainees felt that the opportunity to discuss journalism issues in a neutral space was as important as the technical skills learned.
- Party agent training by IDASA was seen to increase levels of tolerance among course participants. These were individuals from different political and ethnic groups who had little opportunity to meet in the past, and who could find a neutral ground on which to build mutual confidence through learning about the legal and technical aspects of electoral procedures.
- CALS argued that bringing a largely white and conservative cadre of judges together for workshops was important in itself. The spirit of the workshop was such that confidential opinions and fears could be exchanged and the process of overcoming prejudice encouraged.
- The IIDH project sought to raise awareness on human rights, but a parallel output was the "creation of spaces" in which groups that previously were totally opposed to each other could sit together and talk about human rights issues, something that was critically important to the Guatemalan reconciliation process at that moment.

6.2 Possible solutions to low evaluability

Lack of baseline and monitoring data

The lack of baseline and the existence of poor reporting is not peculiar to D/HR projects. Two approaches used for the evaluation of projects in other sectors would help overcome this problem, but at increased evaluation cost. The first approach is to undertake primary data collection, using beneficiary memory recall to record circumstances prior to the project. As noted above, in situations where the scale of the intervention is very small (e.g. SACDEL) the additional evaluation cost may not be justified. The second approach is to

make use of self-evaluation techniques, whereby beneficiaries are asked to make their own personal assessment of project results.

Self-evaluation is dependent on the quality and honesty of respondents' judgements. A requirement of evaluation quality is often that the results information be objectively verifiable, i.e. that different observers agree on the interpretation and value of the data. Self-evaluation is, by definition, not objectively verifiable. Triangulation, where a stated fact is checked by relevant questions to other knowledgeable people, may be used to cross-check the results information, but it is not as powerful as objective data.

Difficulty of attribution

This is a serious evaluability deficiency. Attribution, from an evaluability perspective, concerns the evaluator's ability of determining the extent to which observed development changes are indeed caused by the evaluated project, or by the donor contribution to the project. Ideally, evaluators assess net outcomes and impact, i.e. development changes that are directly attributable to project activities. In practice, however, estimation of gross development changes, not rigorously attributable to the project, is what often can be estimated. The evaluation question then is how plausibly the observed changes can be attributed to the project and to the donor contribution.

Where the feasibility of attribution is low because the activities were completed some years ago, it is unlikely that the problem can be overcome. There are, however, ways of getting round it. First, a number of projects have been given a low score because of poor project design. Since it may be possible to improve the quality of purposes and outputs through deeper discussion with stakeholders, this would in some cases result in better prospects of attribution.

A second approach is to concede that outcomes cannot be firmly ascribed to the evaluated project, but instead to ask how efficiently outputs were delivered. Projects planned in social sectors such as health and education are often appraised by means of cost-effectiveness analysis rather than cost-benefit analysis, because relevant development changes are hard not only to ascribe to the evaluated projects, but also to identify and quantify in the first place. An analysis of efficiency may also be adequate to awareness raising projects, where the attitude changes are hard to attribute to anything, but where the process needs to be undertaken as efficiently as possible.

Other reasons for problems of attribution are situations where Sida is one of several donors contributing to the project, and where Sida provides general support through NGO channels. In both situations, Sida's contribution is hard to disentangle. One way of approaching this problem is for Sida to undertake programme evaluations, where the programme is defined either as the broad multi-donor purpose, or as the overall objectives of the intermediary NGOs such as the Raoul Wallenberg Institute. Such evaluations are less concerned about issues of attribution to specific projects, but concentrate on the broader changes promoted.

Problems of purposes and outputs

To the extent that low purpose and output quality undermines evaluability, solutions may be found in a reformulation of such objectives through deepened discussion with stakeholders. Using reformulated objectives is not an ideal proposal, but the evaluation would then be able to comment on the extent to which the objectives fit with Sida's policy objectives, and to analyse outcomes and impact in relation to the reformulated logframe. In cases of disagreement between stakeholders, perhaps the only solution is to evaluate the project from more than one stakeholder perspective.

6.3 Alternative evaluation approaches

The team has briefly reviewed a number of alternative approaches that may help solve (some of) the problems of low logframe-related evaluability. Six approaches were identified:

- **Experimental:** where experimental design is followed, assigning subjects to treatment or control groups at random, and controlling extraneous factors.
- **Decision-focused:** where the provision of information for programme management and operation is emphasised. The evaluation is structured around future management decisions and the needs of decision-makers.
- **Responsive:** any evaluation is conducted from certain perspectives, e.g. the donor's, the implementing agency's or the beneficiaries'. A responsive approach portrays the results of a project from the perspectives of all stakeholders, rather than from a single point of view.²²
- **Participatory:** where target groups collaborate with evaluators to decide on the terms of reference, prepare questions and investigations, and participate in the analysis of findings and conclusions.²³ This approach is a form of empowerment and is concerned with processes rather than the means of enquiry.
- **Self-evaluation:** where target groups choose their own objectives and measures of development change. A special feature of this approach is that it is not objectively verifiable, a key requisite of most evaluations.
- **User-oriented:** where the evaluation emphasises the perspectives and interests of groups and individuals affected by the evaluated project.²⁴

²² Stecher, Brian M. and W. Alan Davis, *How to focus an evaluation*, 1987.

²³ UNDP, *Who are the question makers? A Participatory Evaluation Handbook*, UNDP, 1997.

²⁴ An alternative meaning of this term appears in Stecher et al, as an approach that emerged in the USA in the 1970s as an attempt to enhance the use of information by the clients of evaluations.

Of these six approaches, two are rejected as less suitable to the reviewed projects. The experimental approach appears impractical for social projects. The decision-focused approach may be better portrayed as performance management, where monitoring is developed to provide a more or less continuous flow of information.

The four remaining approaches may be considered in cases of low evaluability from a logframe-related (i.e. goal-oriented) perspective: responsive, for projects which operate in circumstances of extreme diversity of stakeholder views; participatory, where stakeholders are empowered (although this approach should be prepared by participatory planning and implementation to be fully successful); self evaluation, and, finally, user-oriented evaluation.

The user-oriented approach, as defined by the terms of reference and correspondence for this assignment with Sida, is stated as a type of evaluation where projects are assessed directly with reference to their benefits and costs to affected groups and individuals. The evaluation focuses on the effects generated through the production of outputs irrespective of prior intentions of project planners and others: a form of goal-free evaluation. This approach represents a departure from conventional project evaluation. A project is a set of activities with stated objectives, specified resources and bounded time frame. Project evaluation is usually about the extent to which a project is successful in reaching its objectives. Finance is provided for projects because they are designed to achieve desired objectives and hence pass the tests of appraisal. Goal-free evaluation is more akin to social experimentation, where the purpose of the activity is to find out what impact or effects are generated. There may be a valuable role for this approach in the context of Sida's D/HR portfolio. Since there is little firm empirical evidence about causes and effects on which to base the design of D/HR projects, user-oriented evaluation might help fill that gap.

A specific context in which the user-oriented approach may be fruitful is where the project purpose is unrealistic. In most of the projects reviewed, unrealistic purposes were associated with an objective being set at a very high level, beyond attainment in the time frame and with the resources of the project alone. By taking a user perspective the evaluator could analyse the actual outcomes.

Apart from the logframe-related approach, the most promising approaches to the evaluation of D/HR projects are: responsive, participatory, self-evaluation and user-oriented approaches, as summarised in table 6.3. It should be noted that for each one of these approaches, a range of different data collection methods may be used.

Table 6.3: Summary of feasible evaluation approaches	
Evaluation approach	Characteristics
Logframe-related (goal-oriented)	Suitable where objectives are clearly defined and a development pathway is a key feature of the project design.
Responsive	Suitable where higher objectives are clearly defined but differences of interpretation or opinions exist among stakeholders on the development pathway and possibly about intermediate objectives.
Participatory	An approach founded in empowerment, whereby project objectives and development pathways are designed in a participatory way and can be evaluated in the same way.
Self-evaluation	Suitable where achievement of the target state is defined by participants and independent verification is not required.
User-oriented	Suitable where the original project design is difficult to identify and specify.

For those projects that obtained a large proportion of low scores in the evaluability assessment, specific suggestions are made below with respect to potential evaluation approaches.

South Africa

- The CALS was a long-term programme of support with changing specific objectives and stakeholders. There is no reason why such a programme could not have been planned with a logframe structure, at least for some of the individual projects. But without clarity of objectives there is no obvious way of assessing project impact.
- WDF could be evaluated using a logframe-related approach. The problems arise mainly from the difficulties of contacting the large number of scattered beneficiaries. Better record-keeping would have helped overcome this problem.
- DPSA was a small set of stimuli to a wider range of changes. The logframe approach would be workable, but specific purposes would need to be defined by stakeholders. In view of the need to judge civil service reform in a holistic sense, the evaluation would be better done as part of a broad analysis of policy reform.
- WILDD could be evaluated by means of a tracer study (a form of self-evaluation) focusing on the lives of the women who passed through the various courses, and on what they, according to themselves, achieved as a result of the project. A study of cost-effectiveness could also be considered, comparing the WILDD approach of grassroots support with other empowerment approaches in South Africa.

- SAPS had two purposes, no outputs and disagreement among stakeholders on indicators. A tracer study of training beneficiaries is the most productive course of action. But the fundamental problem is the absence of a clear project strategy and purpose. If these were reformulated, a logframe approach could be used.

Central America

- COPMAGUA is a marginal case for a logframe evaluation provided further modifications take place as suggested by the assessment. However, a self-evaluation may focus on studying the views of the various indigenous peoples to record how they perceive their lives to have benefited or not benefited from the Guatemalan Peace Accords.
- The suggestion for ANSP is to compare officers who are ANSP graduates with those who are not, and use self-evaluation of ANSP's influence on the trainees.
- COINDE would need an approach that evaluates the capacity of different member NGOs, and their influence on political reform. Because of the many stakeholder groups and the complex relationship between these groups and the processes of political reform, a wider research study about participation may be more appropriate.
- The ACJ project for the building of a youth movement involved a process approach without a clear project plan. While logframes can be constructed to describe process change, this was not done in the case of ACJ. Impact evaluation might best be undertaken using self-evaluation by the youth beneficiaries, to assess their own perspectives of the changes that have occurred.
- LDC would be difficult to evaluate because some of the key institutions, such as the sponsoring Ministry, no longer exist and political support for the project approach has diminished. It is suggested that an evaluation study investigates the types and forms of people's participation, and involve stakeholders.
- The IIDH consisted of a wide range of brief and specific interventions. These could be evaluated using different user-oriented perspectives based on participant assessments of courses and seminars, together with independent third-party views (from universities and institutes) of the IIDH contributions to human rights development in Guatemala.

Chapter 7

Evaluability conclusions

7.1 Evidence and principal conclusions

This study has examined the evaluability of 28 Sida projects in the area of D/HR. Their evaluability was tested with respect to the logframe-related evaluation approach.

The projects were assessed against 19 evaluability criteria. Four criteria were considered particularly crucial for successful evaluation: quality of project purposes, quality of stated outputs, the availability of baseline or monitoring data, and the feasibility of attribution. Only two projects satisfy these four criteria.

The assessment draws a range of conclusions relevant to Sida's evaluation strategy and to the planning and design of the Agency's D/HR projects:

Goal The goals were found to be satisfactory for the majority (22) of the projects, in that they targeted a particular sector or policy area of Sida's D/HR strategy framework. One common problem was poor distinction between the goal and the project purpose. In such cases, evaluation is weakened because the specific impact changes expected from the project is not clear to the evaluators.

Purpose The purpose is the most important logframe feature, since it describes the expected outcomes of the project. Overall, eight projects had purposes which were not stated specifically enough. In such cases it is difficult to assess project effectiveness. In at least eleven cases the purpose was not realistic, given the scale of resources dedicated or the time frame set for the project. This was the most common weakness in the area of purpose definition. Four other projects had several purposes of which at least two were unrealistic. Seven projects had purpose(s) which were found difficult to measure. Certain types of D/HR outcomes appear intrinsically difficult to "measure" in a quantitative sense, and further research is needed to find alternative ways of judging purpose achievement. Seven projects show the weakness of setting the purpose too low in the logframe hierarchy, and stating what are more truly outputs or even activities. While many purposes have been constant over time (19 projects), there are some examples (9) where the purposes have changed with different funding phases. At least half of the projects have more than one purpose. Low quality of purposes is a problem found across many

sectors and in this respect the D/HR field is not different. The complexity of D/HR interventions and the long time span for development changes to emerge contribute to make this a key area for attention by planners.

Ownership of purpose Despite the low quality of many project purposes, it is striking that for the majority of the projects there appeared to be reasonably wide agreement on the purpose among stakeholders. This commonality of purposes increases evaluability since effectiveness can be more easily assessed, even if the stated purposes differ from the original plan.

Outputs If there is no specification of outputs, evaluation of efficiency is problematic, which in turn reduces overall evaluability. In five projects, no outputs were given in the documents, only activities and purposes. In eleven cases where documents referred to “outputs”, these were in fact mainly restated activities (such as the number of persons trained or workshops held).

Indicators Indicators are important to project evaluation because they add specific targets to project objectives. Agreement on indicators means that stakeholders accept the means of measurement of progress towards project objectives. Only five projects had written documentation containing specific indicators of expected development. The majority of projects had other kinds of indicators in the documents, but these generally concerned project activities (such as the number of persons trained) and were not indicators of expected outcomes or impact. In eight cases, no real indicators of any kind were found in the documents. During interviews, however, stakeholders identified indicators even where they were not specified in project document. There appeared to be slightly less agreement on the kinds of success criteria required for a project compared to the level of agreement over purposes and outputs.

Baseline or monitoring data The overall finding is that most projects lack baseline data on their target groups. In terms of evaluability, this is a serious flaw that can only be (partially) addressed ex post by using secondary sources or memory recall information. In almost all projects, monitoring reports were available, but the information provided by the reports almost exclusively focuses on project costs and activities. Output delivery and purpose achievement were generally not reported on, and the risks affecting the projects were rarely monitored.

Access to stakeholders For 15 projects, accessibility to ultimate beneficiaries is likely to prove difficult or impossible. Primary beneficiaries were usually easier to identify and contact, at least in cases with a clear project scope and small target group. Accessibility to stakeholders is generally not a major evaluability problem.

Attribution The last “project design” criterion was the extent to which observed development changes can be attributed to the evaluated project and Sida’s project contribution. The feasibility of attribution is generally quite low, mainly because of problems related to project design, timing, beneficiary identification, and the existence of control groups. Other problems concern the proportion of funding provided by Sida compared with total funding, and the use of intermediate NGO channels, which often imply that individual projects are “masked” by wider programmes.

The principal conclusion is that only two projects are ready for logframe-related evaluation, but that the chances of using a logframe-related evaluation approach would increase if, during the early stages of evaluation, the design of the projects were reformulated, and objectives and indicators further specified and agreed on with stakeholders.

There are several conclusions for project planners. Specification of D/HR project objectives is important, to ensure that beneficiaries are adequately defined and the means by which project activities are expected to stimulate change are explained and shared by stakeholders. If the project is a small element in a wider programme, both in a financial and organisational sense, the wider “programme goals” to which the project contributes need to be clearly defined.

The study also examined alternative approaches to evaluation. As mentioned earlier, a main cause of low evaluability is poor specification of objectives. The study also concludes that there is no reason why, with training and quality assurance, these problems could not have been tackled during project preparation. However, other projects involve process change for which ex ante targets are almost impossible to specify. In such circumstances self-evaluation by beneficiaries may be the only course of action. For projects that are small contributions to wider programmes, possibly the best approach is for Sida to examine efficiency and relevance of the specific project, and then the effectiveness of the wider programme.

7.2 Are D/HR interventions less amenable to evaluation?

There are some factors which render D/HR projects inherently difficult to evaluate. This topic is further discussed in chapter 1 and Annex 4. Here is it sufficient to conclude the following:

- Sida’s D/HR portfolio involves a wide range of interventions. The sampled projects cover 16 of the 19 different policy areas defined by Sida’s D/HR strategy framework. Each project typically covers a number of policy areas inter-related in a rather complex manner. This means that it is often difficult to categorise projects and pin down specific goals, purposes, objectives and outputs.
- Linking activities in the field of D/HR to desired purposes and goals is difficult, because these links are often based on unstated assumptions about the capacity of, say, the police for establishing a more democratic society in isolation of external factors. The projects reviewed were very weak in specifying assumptions that would allow the activities to be convincingly linked to the goal.

7.3 Evaluability and D/HR themes

The D/HR field as defined by Sida and most donors is very wide and “cross-cuts” into most other areas of development. Many projects aim at the institutionalisation of D/HR. This is done, first, by raising awareness on certain D/HR related problems among the target groups within government and civil society, and, second, by supporting the development and implementation of sustainable solutions to these problems. The key processes commonly supported by the D/HR projects reviewed are public awareness-raising, legislative reform and the institutional development of government and civil society organisations. This chapter concludes with some comments on evaluability issues specific to these three thematic areas.

Public awareness-raising

Public awareness-raising projects develop public demand for change by government and civil society. They also develop the will of communities to contribute to the democratic process, and to protect the rights of the weak, discriminated against, etc. Examples of such projects are awareness-raising on:

- the country’s treatment of human rights affairs in accordance with internationally agreed norms (IIDH, ECJ, SAPS, ANSP),
- gender issues (ONAM, WILDD),
- the level of discrimination against particular ethnic groups and the advantages of multi-ethnic societies (COPMAGUA),
- the importance of full and conscious popular participation in elections (CONSORCIO, CSE, AOG, IDASA, WDF); and
- the development of community leadership responsibility and skills (ACJ, LDC, CPP).

The strategies employed to achieve changes in terms of attitudes and awareness include mass-media campaigns, special events, training courses, seminars, etc.

Hidden objectives and intervention logic In an evaluability perspective, the interesting fact is that the specific intended effects of awareness and attitude-changing processes are not very well defined by project implementers. Democracy implies the freedom of a society to choose what it will do and how, a continuous process with no clear, pre-defined outcomes. Hence it is hard to state at the start of a project the new and necessary mechanisms to protect minorities, ethnic and gender rights, etc. The importance of the project is that D/HR issues are addressed and dealt with in some way. Often, therefore, the purpose cannot be rigidly defined in terms of specific changes and has to be kept on the more general process-purpose level, for example “youth more actively involved in the local electoral and democratic processes”.

Similarly, it is often difficult to define specific indicators of success of awareness-raising or to reach agreement on such indicators between stakeholders.

An inappropriate indicator would be “legislation passed guaranteeing equal pay between men and women for equal work”. Project planners must often be content with general indicators such as “evidence of increased discussion of the issue in the mass-media or in parliamentary debate” or “legislation or policy developed to address the issue”. This implies that while project planners may identify certain desired results (e.g. compensation paid to HR victims) as the purpose of a HR awareness-raising project, a number of possible results may actually occur, and any result is acceptable if it represents progress in attitudes.

The “hidden” purpose for funders and project managers may actually be the creation of spaces to bring previously opposed groups together (e.g. army personnel and human rights NGOs). This is often not given as the formal purpose, perhaps because of political sensitivity or because it does not represent achievement significant enough to justify funding. In such cases, a brief pre-evaluation exercise is worthwhile in order for the evaluator to assemble the intervention logic faced by major stakeholders at the time of the funding of the project. This will allow an evaluation against different purposes, or against one combined intervention logic, rather than just against the intervention logic stated in the project proposal document.

Attribution Another evaluability problem associated with awareness-raising processes is that of attribution. In all the project examples above, it is very difficult attribute changes in peoples’ levels of awareness to one particular project. This problem will, however, vary according to the topic addressed. Attribution may be possible if the project evaluated was the only project for such awareness-raising, for example FONDO’s public awareness campaign on the problems of the war-wounded and handicapped in El Salvador. With several other projects addressing a certain issue, it may be possible to assess the extent to which the evaluated project influenced people’s attitudes by conducting surveys among the general population. However, where the projects concern areas which are subject to influences by several factors, such as attitudes to ethnic groups, gender, voting in elections etc., then the attribution problem is very difficult to solve.

Timing A final evaluability problem associated with awareness-raising projects is evaluation timing. Some processes of attitude change take longer than others. Projects which appear to have had little or no impact on public consciousness may later turn out to have been instrumental in getting the awareness-raising process started. One such example is IIDH’s human rights education among the security forces and other public sectors in Guatemala.

Legislative development

D/HR development is about protecting the legal rights of members of society and ensuring effective and fair government. Progress in terms of development change in attitudes and practices is often formalised by means of legislation. Examples include the technical proposals and lobbying for the reform of

key laws to ensure fair gender treatment (ONAM), support for the preparation and negotiation of proposals for constitutional reform and key pieces of legislation to ensure the proper introduction of a multi-ethnic society (COP-MAGUA, LRGU, CALS), and support for the development of legislative proposals for the implementation of peace accords with respect to compensation for victims of human rights abuses (IIDH).

As legislative development is the product of national democratic processes, it is inappropriate for a project to press for specific pieces of legislation (as was done by ONAM). An appropriate purpose might be improved protection of a particular type of human rights through support to the passing and enforcement of certain legislation, but it should not specify the actual legislation to be enacted.

Legislative development projects are likely to involve significant attribution problems, since legislation will be influenced in many ways and by different sources, apart from the project evaluated. For the more attributable cases, the evaluators could interview legislators in order to get an idea of which sources influenced the legislation, and in this way also an idea of the contribution of the evaluated project.

Institutional development

A third common project theme is institutional development. The institutions which benefit from the reviewed projects are government institutions (DPSA), institutions operating in the areas of electoral administration (CSE, CONCORCIO), public security (ANSP, SAPS), service delivery to specific groups (FONDO), justice (ECJ), regional and local government (RAAS-RAAN, INIFOM, SACDEL, FUNDAUNGO, PANC, UPEP), and civil institutions involved in local development (COINDE, LDC, ACJ).

The evaluability of some institutional development projects is adversely affected by the absence of clear and specific objectives for the intended institutional capacity building. Some projects consisted of the provision of general support to an institution, not aimed at strategic strengthening of the institution, but rather in order for the targeted institution to continue with its work. One such example is COINDE, where the actual project is vaguer than that expressed in the funding application, consisting of general support for various processes (education, awareness-raising, policy influencing) considered useful. This particularly applies to NGO support. The core support through Diakonia to COINDE, for example, gives the latter organisation the flexibility to respond to a changing socio-political environment. Hence, COINDE is not forced to adhere closely to its funding document. This makes it more difficult to evaluate not only COINDE's global plan, but also Diakonia's contribution to COINDE's overall work according to one development hypothesis.

Projects for the strengthening of government institutions usually have a more explicit strategy. In this respect, the key evaluability finding is that project designers sometimes define the purpose of the project, and the associated indi-

cators, in terms of the capacity of the institution as such, for example in terms of administrative effectiveness, rather than in terms of the effectiveness of the institution in delivering services to beneficiaries. An example is INIFOM's purpose as the establishment of a national training strategy, rather than the strengthening of local government service delivery.

An institutional development project should cover a sufficient period to establish new systems, and to allow those systems to result in improved service delivery to the beneficiaries. A well presented institutional development purpose would be stated in terms such as “achieve (x) development change among the beneficiary group by strengthening the institution's capacity to do (y)”. The accompanying set of indicators would be short-term (describing improved institutional capacity), medium-term (describing better service delivery), and long-term (describing development changes among the target group of ultimate beneficiaries).

Chapter 8

Lessons learned

This chapter attempts to present constructive lessons on how different phases of the project cycle can be improved in order to facilitate evaluation activities which provide good learning opportunities for Sida and its counterparts. The lessons are divided in six categories: the context of D/HR interventions, improving project design, improving planning and implementation, improving current monitoring and evaluation practice, and lessons on evaluability assessments.

8.1 The context of D/HR interventions

Sida's D/HR policy framework

Sida's D/HR policy framework is very broad and would benefit from prioritisation. The policy framework is set out in such a way that it was difficult for the team (and even some Embassy officials) to see where the main priorities lay, and which D/HR areas are considered secondary. The country strategies provide a better sense of prioritisation.

Problem and context analysis

Given the lack of problem analysis in a number of the projects reviewed, discrete problem analyses should be done as part of routine project preparation. The problem to be addressed should be fully examined within the context of the sector and country. As Sida's policy framework confirms, context analysis is generally insufficient or lacking. It is noted however that these areas are officially required as part of project assessment and that the recently prepared projects of the sample had a more thorough problem and context analysis.

8.2 Improving project design

Consultative planning

A wider consultation process needs to be followed in project planning. Participation of target primary beneficiaries or their representatives is essential. Those projects that did this were generally better prepared with a shared pathway (WDF, WILDD), while those with less consultation produced different understanding among stakeholders of project objectives (NUM, SAPS, IAJ).

Project goal

Goals should refer to development progress among a target beneficiary group towards which the project contributes. By doing this the project designers would make the intervention logic clearer. Impact measurement in evaluation would also be much easier. In such cases, the project will often find that it is useful and possible to identify and monitor the baseline values of final impact indicators.

Project purpose

Attention should be paid to two areas regarding the definition of project purposes. The purpose should be clearly differentiated from the goal and it should be elaborated in such a way that it is specific, realistic and measurable. Setting the purpose at the right level is the hardest task. More modest purposes are likely to be more agreed on by stakeholders as well as more easily achieved. However, the purpose should include sufficient development change to justify the project investment.

Where a programme includes several separate projects, or sub-programmes, there is sometimes confusion in the documentation about how these link together to achieve the overall programme purpose. In such cases, it is appropriate to develop a logframe for each component project or sub-programme which link to the overall logframe. In such cases, the goal of the component projects is the purpose of the overall programme.

Outputs

Project designers should be much clearer on the project's outputs, or what the activities will produce in terms of immediate services and goods to primary beneficiaries. Well defined outputs are critical links in the project hierarchy of objectives, since they allow (a) stakeholders to understand what the immediate benefits are, (b) clarification of assumptions about the initial changes expected in the target population or institution, and (c) a more informed tracking of progress during implementation.

Risks and assumptions

The coverage of risks and assumptions needs to be much more explicitly treated in the project design. At each level of the development hierarchy, greater effort is required to identify the assumptions which allow progress towards the purpose and goal. Indicators should also be set for the most critical risks and assumptions, so that they can be monitored during project implementation. In the D/HR context, the pace of political change is a key area of concern and relevant risks should be carefully addressed.

In projects influencing government policy or institutional reforms (which have an effect on the distribution of power and wealth), assumptions about

government commitment and resourcing are often killer assumptions. In such cases, the project design must look for explicit commitments upon which donor funding needs to be conditioned (e.g. the retention of trained staff in the positions for which they are trained).

Logframes for general institutional support

Where Sida support is provided as core funding to an institution rather than to specifically earmarked projects, it is generally harder to identify a clear development pathway or logframe because the institution has often not specified its purposes and goals clearly.

While it would be inappropriate for funding agencies to be over-rigid in their search for performance measures, it would often help both the funders and the counterpart institution if the institutional development strategy over the medium term could be specified as a logframe. This would probably contain several sub-programmes, each of which should also be structured as a clear development pathway. Such an approach would allow both the institution and the funding agency to be clear on what the institution is really trying to achieve in terms of outcomes and impact, and to measure success against such objectives.

General institutional logframes should be updated periodically, and the purposes, outputs and indicators defined in a way that the process-supporting nature of the institution need not be compromised.

Logframes for “process” projects

Several stakeholders stated that their project was a process-project and that a logframe could not be applied to it, but this is often a misunderstanding. Where the project needs to change direction as a result of its own achievements and learning, or of external circumstances in the project environment, the logframe can be adjusted accordingly. If planned outputs cannot be explicitly and comprehensively defined, then more general “process-related” outputs should be stated. The important point here is to not let the “process-nature” claim result in confusion on what the project is trying to achieve and how.

8.3 Improving planning and implementation of Sida D/HR projects

Longer time horizon

Chapter 2 notes that D/HR projects typically are medium to long-term interventions, yet most of the projects assessed are based on funding agreements of one or two years. Even though several separate funding phases often take place, the overall project concept does not encompass these extensions and recipients are left uncertain as to Sida’s longer-term commitment to the

achievement of stated objectives. A longer time frame would strengthen the feasibility of attaining the relatively ambitious goals, but also help allow shorter term outputs and specific project purposes to be defined within a sound and realistic programme structure.

The justification for short duration projects is sometimes that the country needs such training or public education at a specific time only, to help it through a transition period, and that there was no need to build in an institutional development factor that guaranteed sustainability of the delivery of project benefits. While this may be true in isolated cases, usually the need for such benefits is actually a long-term one and sustainability should therefore be built into almost all projects. Thus there was a need to co-ordinate and rationalise human rights education in Guatemala in 1997, and to bring opposing factions together to discuss HR issues, but these same needs persist today and the concerned IIDH project did not attempt to develop this capacity within a Guatemalan institution.

In the case of El Salvador and Guatemala there was a great rush of international support to the implementation of the peace accords in the first two or three years following their signing. After this, however, project stakeholders complain that such funding is rapidly declining. They argue that the processes which the donors claimed to be supporting are processes which require quite a few years in order to achieve their basic objectives. Hence the reduction in donor funding comes precisely at the time when support is needed to ensure the attainment of key reforms. It is often at this time (for example a few years after the signing of the peace accords) that the eyes of the media and “the international community” are turned away from the country, that the issues of resourcing and political will are most acute for programme success. There are many who claim that the target government’s commitment to pushing through reforms is not there, and that the international community is not sufficiently present, active or co-ordinated to properly encourage the government’s fulfilment of its obligations.

Revisions of the project design

Project managers often propose modifications to the original project design during implementation. This implies a modification at the purpose level, and of the selection of indicators, or more commonly of the technical strategy chosen to reach the purposes. In such cases, however, the management team should also propose a new project document which must be formally approved as the document (and intervention strategy) against which project success will be judged. This document will then form the basis of a new logframe. Each version of the logframe should be clearly marked.

It is clear that the production of a revised project logframe may be a very time-consuming process, due to the need for key stakeholder ownership of the resultant new intervention strategy. Hence it is something which must be done as few times as possible, and it must be carefully planned and conducted

within a tightly managed time frame. For projects which are more experimental or exploratory in terms of defining implementation strategies, this means that the logframe will have to state intended activities and outputs in rather general terms and even define its indicators of purpose achievement without much detail.

The implication for evaluability is that (a) when an evaluation is conducted it should use the most recent logframe, (b) an evaluation will also have to review the progress achieved during the first part of the project (before the project was altered) for which it will have to use the original document and logframe, and (c) where projects alter their purposes, evaluability often drops and the costs of doing an evaluation increases.

8.4 Improving current monitoring and evaluation practice

More systematic basis for carrying out evaluations

According to Sida,²⁵ it is during the project assessment that agreement should be reached between Sida and the co-operating partner on whether and when to do an evaluation. Yet our review of the project documents in our sample rarely mentioned such pre-determined evaluation arrangements. Sida's declared evaluation policy sets out three grounds for conducting evaluations: control, learning and development of knowledge.²⁶

It would be helpful to translate this policy to practical guidelines for use by project designers, so that they can specify in project agreements what evaluations should take place and when. There should, however, be enough flexibility for programme officers to propose any project for evaluation if it can be shown that it would present an interesting institutional learning opportunity.

More informative progress reports

The generally poor quality of most reporting was so widespread that Sida must strive to improve progress reports from all projects so that they will include the delivery of benefits and not just financial statements and description of activities. While general guidelines on this are now in circulation, further steps are needed. For example, the project agreement should specify in detail which outputs and purpose information are required and by when. Sida and partner agencies may also consider using local specialist evaluation staff or consultants to support stakeholders in project monitoring.

²⁵ Sida at Work, op. cit., (page 88).

²⁶ Sida, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, *Sida's Evaluation Policy*, 1995.

Joint donor progress reports and evaluations

In the cases of multi-donor funding of projects there are very few instances of joint monitoring between the donors (though it is occurring in some Central American projects between Denmark and Sweden). Were this to occur, it would allow deeper and better quality monitoring as more time and resources could be dedicated to the process both by the project implementers and beneficiaries and the funders/channelling agencies. Furthermore, joint donor evaluations of multi-donor projects appear attractive as both a cost-effective and better shared learning experience. They are in fact rarely done, mainly because each donor has different priorities and wishes for its contribution, and hence also for any evaluation initiative. From the recipient's point of view, however, joint donor evaluations would probably be more attractive than single donor evaluations, saving them time and energy, and also allowing an overview from the point of view of the project or institution to be obtained.

Baseline data

The ability to undertake evaluations will be strengthened if projects collect relevant baseline data on the pre-project situation. While alternatives may be used and cost less (key informant testimony, reports and studies produced for the relevant sector), these data are generally not disaggregated to serve as relevant baseline data for the specific project. Funders are therefore wise to ensure that resources are provided to obtain such baseline information before project commencement.

8.5 Lessons on the evaluation of D/HR projects

Evaluability assessment tools Many of the principles of evaluability assessments identified in this study could be usefully applied by all evaluators when approaching the evaluation of a D/HR project. These include (a) establishing the hierarchy of objectives (b) addressing stakeholder perspectives and (c) identifying and attempting to reconcile different perspectives on criteria for judging project success.

The logframe approach to evaluation Where no written statement of the project logic exists, evaluations should start by constructing one from the understandings of the project implementers and verifying this with other key stakeholder groups. Where one does exist, the evaluator must check whether this is understood by the implementers as the relevant project logic, since it is possible that different stakeholders are actually working towards different project results. In reality few evaluations (whether mid-term or final) do this, in particular it is rare for an evaluator to explicitly elicit the project logic and success indicators from community beneficiaries. It is recommended that evaluators use a development pathway of as many levels as are needed to establish and clearly explain the intervention logic, then elicit specific indica-

tors for each logframe level (except activities) and finally check for stakeholder agreement on the elicited indicators (since it is only when indicators are specified that real differences in perspective may emerge).

Checklists for evaluability against logframe criteria are particularly suitable at an early stage in the design and planning of projects, before varying interpretations of the project design appear among stakeholders. The earlier evaluability is assessed, the less the need for “eliciting” the project design.

Improving attribution The first way in which the feasibility of attribution can be improved is by making project purposes more specific. For example, if the purpose “to enable women to take an active part in the democratic transformation of South Africa” were specified as “to support women in poor communities in (specified locations) to run for and win local elections and to be effective representatives of their communities”, indicators could be better specified, and the analysis of attribution made easier.

The feasibility of attribution is also greatly helped by the monitoring of control groups or institutions which were not beneficiaries of the support. This is particularly important when the project supports processes which are positively or negatively influenced by external factors. Examples are the attribution of increased human rights sensitivity in the South African police, or greater capacity and self-confidence and leadership among black South African women, where the general environment of democratic South Africa is supporting such changes. The attribution problem in these cases is one of identifying the marginal benefit of the projects in such processes. Only one project reviewed conducted the monitoring of control groups.

There are circumstances where the implementer or sponsor has little interest in attempting to isolate the contribution of the project *per se*. They regard the work as necessary in any case, and they accept that their efforts were mixed in with many other efforts. What is important to them is not the specific project contribution, but the relevance and effectiveness of the strategy (implemented by them and others). It may be these aspects that require evaluation (they are insufficiently evaluated as a rule), rather than the exact contribution of the projects.

8.6 Lessons for evaluability assessments

In the course of the study a number of issues have arisen from which the team has learned about evaluability assessments. Having undertaken perhaps the first evaluability assessment sponsored by Sida, it is useful to record some of the lessons from the experience for the guidance of similar assessments in future. The background to evaluability assessment has been in non-development related contexts, and more for the purposes of assisting in the improvement of implementation of ongoing projects. In these cases more time is spent ensuring that implementers play a full part in and understand the processes, so that they will support and remain involved in any eventual evalua-

tion. Such approaches take several weeks. By contrast, the approach used here can be described as relatively “quick and dirty”, the emphasis being placed on studying a large number of projects in a short period of time, in order to provide a body of case material.

Project funding and implementing officers were often very appreciative of the opportunity which this study offered for trying to explain their understanding of how the projects are expected to operate to achieve their objectives, and how the attainment of objectives may be measured. But the concept of evaluability was an unfamiliar one, and many interviewees still believed the exercise was in fact a kind of Sida evaluation, and they treated it as such.

Use of the logframe

One of the key problems encountered was that of trying to work with the logframe in settings where the logframe were never used and stakeholders unfamiliar with logframe concepts. The problem is not so much the logframe itself, but the rigour with which it should be applied. Taken as a simple hierarchy of objectives, the logframe is easy to explain and stakeholders grasp the idea rapidly. But, as is well known from reviews of the logframe by development agencies, rigorous use requires careful specification of project purpose and it is common for activities, outputs and purposes to be mixed up. The dilemma is how strict the evaluability analyst should be. The standard to be imposed on an organisation that bases project design on the logframe approach, and where staff have been trained, must be different from settings where the concept is novel. This study erred towards a softer interpretation.

Second, there is also the question of whether it is better first to identify a documented logframe or pathway and then present stakeholders with this to assess their degree of agreement, or to elicit stakeholders’ perceptions of the project without any prompting. Both options have advantages and disadvantages. Discussing a prepared development pathway or logframe tends to set the agenda for discussion, but quickly focuses interviewees on a specific intervention model. The most appropriate method would seem to be to allow a completely unprompted interpretation of the project logic by the stakeholder, and then to refer to the documentation in cases of evident inconsistencies.

Scope of discussions

For a team with substantial experience of evaluation, but not of evaluability assessment, it proved challenging to limit the scope of discussion. Ordinarily, facts emerge during evaluations as trust develops between evaluator and evaluated. There was no time for a relationship to develop in the short period available for the evaluability assessment. Consequently, observations and findings are likely to be more superficial than those of an evaluation.

Duration and resources

It is estimated that an evaluability assessment needs an average of two to three days per project dedicated to desk-based review of documentation and four to five days devoted to fieldwork. One day per stakeholder group would be necessary with the right conditions for holding a workshop-style event (with an appropriate environment, materials, etc.). As there are usually at least three main stakeholder groups, this would cover at least four days including preparation and write-up. A fifth day would be necessary to present the results to a selection of the different stakeholders in one event where the differences emerging could be presented, confirmed and commented upon.

It was not possible fully to assess the degree of sharing of project purposes and means of judging success (indicators of purposes) by stakeholders in the time allotted. This would have required a process of systematically presenting apparent differences in perspective between key stakeholder groups and a check to see whether they thought that critical disagreements did indeed exist. Full stakeholder coverage in an evaluability assessment means interviewing a sufficient cross-section of cultural and socio-economic groups of final beneficiaries, including non-beneficiaries. This is obviously a time-consuming process.

Whereas the study was able to elicit a number of indicators, it was not able to spend the time required to assess fully the specific data availability and collection problems associated with these indicators. In a study covering so many projects, the team was only able to discuss general levels of data accessibility and reliability for some of the major indicators. An evaluability assessment, however, should really discuss only the key success indicators. Once it is established among the key stakeholders what are the most useful indicators for judging success, these should be subjected to an analysis of data accessibility and reliability. A discussion on the attribution of the changes reflected by these indicators to the projects then occurs. Obviously, several days' detective work could easily be devoted to each main indicator.

Separate discussions with stakeholders versus workshops

The interview method chosen was that of interviewing stakeholders separately and then resolving contrasting views during a preliminary analysis with members of the assessment team. This held advantages and disadvantages. While contamination of viewpoint was avoided, and false agreement between stakeholders rendered less likely, the decision to keep stakeholders apart meant that it was difficult to be sure where different viewpoints existed. In other words, the different views expressed may only have been questions of emphasis rather than substance. Without an opportunity to discuss this topic openly, it was hard to make a judgement in the limited time available. In the right circumstances, a wider discussion between stakeholders, possibly in a workshop environment, would have helped clarify this matter. It was clear that in some situations, putting different stakeholders together might not work

well, especially where there were marked differences in education or background. The right approach needs to be decided for each case, and this generally requires extra time for the assessment.

It was generally felt that evaluability assessments cannot be done in the timeframes set for the assignment, as they require the evaluator to “get under the skin of the project” and to familiarise him/herself with a great deal of data. They should therefore only be done for projects of a certain minimum size and which are very likely to be evaluated. The consultants found that they were presented with a great deal of information concerning the progress and problems of the projects, even though this was not the focus of the study. It was an inefficient use of resources to collect this type of information and then discard most of it in order to make some conclusions regarding evaluability.

Use of surfaced logframes

The development pathways developed for this study cannot be used as the basis for the Phase II evaluations envisaged by Sida. They still need to undergo an “ownership-building” process in which representatives of key stakeholder groups are permitted to discuss, modify and agree to a logic and indicators for the evaluation. This could probably be completed in a one-day workshop session (for each project), providing it is well prepared. As the “logframes” surfacing in this study contain only those indicators which were identified in the documentation or from the interviewees, there is a need for the evaluators to analyse the logframes in order to suggest alternative and possibly better indicators which could be proposed in such workshops for discussion.

Planning for evaluability

This study has identified areas in which D/HR projects can and should be planned more carefully, and in such a way that the likelihood of impact monitoring and evaluation increases significantly. However it should be noted that evaluability can deteriorate even in the case of well-planned projects, since there are factors beyond the control of the planners such as the introduction of new actors and perspectives which will reduce the evaluability of projects already considered ready for evaluation.

Annex 1

Terms of reference

1 Background

In early 1997, Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) decided to prepare and finance a thematic evaluation of the agency's support for democracy and human rights (D/HR). The initiative came as a response to the fact that, although considerable resources have been provided by Sida to D/HR-related projects during recent years, there is a serious lack of systematic and reliable information on the impact of the agency's D/HR support.

In October 1997, as a first step in elaborating the evaluation project, UTV prepared an inventory of Sida's 1996 D/HR support. Main findings are found in Appendix 1 of the tender dossier. The inventory made a distinction between five D/HR project purposes:

- public and civil institution building (69% of Sida's total D/HR disbursements);
- civic education for the general un-organised public (20%);
- external monitoring of elections and treaties (6%);
- human rights counselling (3%); and
- scientific research (2%)

By and large, this list was found to be exhaustive: there were no D/HR projects which did not correspond to one of the five abovementioned purpose categories. Although the exact amounts of money spent by Sida remained unclear, it was concluded that the bulk of the agency's D/HR support was provided for building public and civil institutions.¹

The inventory also made a distinction between three components of institution building: human resources development (HRD), organisation development, and the provision of equipment. HRD was found to be by far the most dominant component. Around 42% of *all* of Sida's D/HR disbursements

¹ It should be noted that UTV's definition of institution building is extremely broad. UTV has classified all forms of support for a given institution (including e.g. an isolated one-week study tour for 10 local government representatives) as institution building.

were allocated for various forms of HRD activities for public and civil institution building.

On the basis of the inventory's findings, UTV decided to focus the up-coming evaluation on the impact (or effects) of D/HR projects for public and civil institution building. It was also decided that the point of departure of the evaluation would be the D/HR projects' individual logframes.

The root idea of such a "logframe-related" evaluation is that the beliefs and assumptions underlying individual D/HR projects can be expressed in terms of a phased sequence of causes and effects (i.e. a logframe). The evaluation is expected to collect data to see how well each step of the logframe is in fact borne out.²

The logframes guide and structure the analysis of how the projects actually unfold towards success, and how and where in the expected causality chain they break down and fail to deliver desired effects. As such, logframes are instruments for producing reliable impact information and general lessons to be learned by donor agencies and counterparts.

In reality, however, logframes are rarely used to systematically guide and structure Sida evaluations. Therefore, while there is hardly anything new about the idea or value of logframe-related evaluation, it could be expected that such approaches would mark a real advance over most Sida evaluation practices.

2 Purpose

The present evaluation has two formative purposes, namely to produce lessons on:

- useful methods for impact evaluation of D/HR support; and
- good practices for the planning and implementation of D/HR projects.

The evaluation has two main target groups. First, the management and desk officers at Sida, in particular those responsible for financing, monitoring and evaluating the agency's DHR support. Second, representatives of Swedish and local (or "Southern") organisations responsible for the planning and implementation of the D/HR projects financed by Sida.

² See Weiss C., *How Can Theory-Based Evaluation Make Greater Headway?*, Evaluation Review, August 1997 (page 50 1) for an identical description of so-called theory-based evaluation. Since the term 'logframe' is more established than "project theory" these terms of reference talk about logframe-related approaches, not about theory-based approaches.

3 The assignment

In serving the two purposes described above, the contracted consultant shall:

- critically assess the possibilities, benefits, limitations and costs of employing logframe-related approaches to the evaluation of Sida's D/HR support; and
- by means of such approaches, identify the effects of a sample of D/HR-related institution building projects; explain how and why identified effects have occurred; analyse the relevance and sustainability of these effects; and compare findings with a view to generating *general* conclusions on factors behind the success and failure of D/HR-related institution building.

The assignment shall be carried out in two phases and under two contracts. The first phase covers the evaluability of the D/HR projects, while the second phase deals, when evaluable, with the full-scale study of project impact. The methods to be used by the consultant are outlined in Appendix 2. The outline is a broad framework aimed at inspiring and guiding the assignment, not a detailed or once for-all instruction.

3.1 Phase 1: Evaluability assessment

In the first phase of the assignment, the consultant shall analyse the feasibility of using logframe-related evaluation approaches during the second phase. A sample of 30 institution building projects in South Africa, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador shall be analysed (see Annex B for a list of projects).³ The outcome of the evaluability assessment will have considerable merit in its own right. Even if the second phase is not carried out, the first phase is expected to produce important lessons regarding practices for the planning and implementation of Sida's D/HR support.

The following sections describe the tasks of the evaluability assessment. For an elaboration and a few examples of these tasks, see Appendix 2, sections 2–3) in particular.⁴

3.1.1 Identification of logframes

The consultant's *first* task is to identify the logframes on which the sampled projects are founded, i.e. to identify expected project activities, outputs, objectives and causal/risk assumptions. Logframes are rarely documented explicitly or adequately, but this does not necessarily mean that underlying beliefs and assumptions are not guiding actual project planning and implementation. The task, therefore, is to surface and document the tacit logframes.

³ During the initial stages of the evaluability assessment, UTV may find it necessary to replace a limited number of the 30 projects. Such replacement shall be made in a way which will *not* affect the cost, workload or geographical location of the assignment.

⁴ See also the sections on evaluability assessment and rapid feedback evaluation in Wholey J. *Evaluation: Promise and Performance*, The Urban Institute, 1979 (page 49–115).

Information sources are written documents (such as project proposals and assessment memos) and the views of relevant stakeholders (such as representatives of financing, channelling and implementing organisations). Different views on the logframes of individual projects shall be clearly documented by the consultant.

The identification of logframes will require field visits and interviews with (former) project management and staff. The consultant should however make optimal use of Swedish information sources and long-distance communications.

3.1.2 Analysis of logframes

The consultant's *second* task is to analyse the identified logframes. This task is likely to be associated with two problems, namely that:

- there are different views between or within different stakeholder groups on the logframes of individual projects; and that
- some of the logframes expressed in documents and by stakeholders are incomplete, incoherent, unverifiable and/or unrealistic.

The consultant shall analyse the extent to which the identified logframes describe agreed-on (among stakeholders), complete, coherent, verifiable and realistic chains of causes and effects. The analysis shall be based on first hand information on how the projects actually operate/have operated, and preliminary information on likely project effects. Information sources include monitoring and audit reports, interviews with knowledgeable observers, site visits in the field and telephone surveys of project participants. The consultant shall provide transparent and detailed information on how and why it reaches certain conclusions on the identified logframes.

There are two main reasons for gathering information on the projects and their likely impact during the evaluability assessment. First, it is important that the consultant establishes whether or not the identified logframes indeed can be used to guide and structure the full-scale impact study of the second phase. There is always a risk that the logframes do not reflect adequately or in detail what has actually happened in the field, and there is no point in organising an impact study on the basis of logframes which are obviously and completely out of touch with reality.⁵

⁵ Donor evaluations are typically "goal-oriented", i.e. they try to establish whether or not the objectives formulated by the project management have been fulfilled. A risk with this approach is that important side-effects which were never part of the management's plans are forgotten and neglected by the evaluation. One way of minimising this risk is to carry out user-oriented evaluations, guided by the programme users' or beneficiaries' views on the worth or merit of the evaluated projects, not by the management's expectations and objectives. User-oriented approaches based on consumers' views are particularly instructive when, as may well be the case in some of Sida's D/HR projects, there are reasons to believe that the management's expectations and objectives indeed are incomplete, incoherent and/or unrealistic. Therefore, when collecting preliminary information on likely impact, the consultant shall take into consideration, as far as possible, also the views of project beneficiaries. Hence the need for telephone surveys of project participants.

Second the consultant shall, as part of the evaluability assessment, analyse the quality of the information available to the second phase (see section 3.1.3). In order to make such an analysis, the consultant must have an idea of what information to look for, i.e. information relevant to the full-scale impact study. This task, in turn, requires that the consultant has a preliminary idea of the projects' likely impact, or at least likely impact areas.

The consultant shall analyse the identified logframes, and the findings on likely impact, for the purpose of focusing the second phase on the weakest and most crucial links in the established chains of causes and effects. Exactly how such focusing should be carried out in relation to the concerned D/HR projects is impossible to foresee at this early stage.

In line with all other tasks of the assignment, the consultant shall critically discuss any problem associated with the task of focusing the full-scale impact study on the most relevant links or sequences of the identified logframes.

3.1.3 Analysis of the availability of relevant information

During the second phase, the consultant shall collect detailed information on how each step in the sequence of causes and effects on which the full-scale impact study is focused in fact has been (or is likely to be) borne out. As mentioned, this task requires that valid, reliable and relevant information on this sequence, and on other project aspects (in particular those aspects listed in section 3.1.4 below), is readily available to the consultant.

Since donor evaluation experience shows that the availability of relevant information is typically limited, the consultant shall assess the extent to which the projects are evaluable as requested by the second phase. For example, if there is no reliable baseline information on the preceding situation which the D/HR project set out to improve, "before and after" comparisons become difficult. Similarly, if there is no list of participants kept by the management of a project, the prospects for identifying and attributing results "with and without" the project are seriously limited.

The consultant's *third* task, therefore, is to document which sources and types of information that are available and relevant to the full-scale impact study, and to analyse the costs and resources required to make proper use of such information.

3.1.4 Collection of data for purposeful project sampling

The ideal result of the evaluability assessment is that all projects are found evaluable from a logframe-related evaluation perspective. However, even if the logframes make perfect sense and evaluability is exceptionally high, all 30 projects will not be covered by the second phase. A purposeful sampling will be made by UTV to ensure the selection of a limited number of projects. The task of the consultant is to produce background information and a basis for such sampling.

During the field visits of the evaluability assessment, the consultant's *fourth* task is to collect information, for each project, on:

- the overall institution building *context* in which Sida-financed project has been carried out, in this case information on the project's relation to other (past and present) Sida support to the targeted institution, to the support of other donors, and to the institution's own development efforts;
- the degree of *specificity* of the knowledge, services or equipment provided through the evaluated projects, in this case information on the degree to which the support is of a situationally restricted use related to the daily work and duties of the targeted staff and/or institution;
- indicators regarding the *ownership* of the project, in this case basic information on the identity of the implementing organisation, the identity of the organisation which initiated, designed and planned the project, and the implementing organisation's views on the incentives for the targeted institution's participation in the project (e.g. in terms of daily allowances and career benefits for course participants); and
- the *commitment* and *capacity* of the targeted institution's top management to realise the changes intended by the project, in this case basic information (or at least a best guess) on the readiness and opportunity of the management to provide a "sound" environment for the project and its expected effects.

3.1.5 Analysis of alternative evaluation approaches

The main objective of the evaluability assessment is to analyse the extent to which the sampled projects are evaluable with respect to logframe-related evaluation approaches. The outcome of such analysis is likely to be mixed: some projects are evaluable, while others are not.

For those projects which are found not to be evaluable from a logframe-related perspective, the consultant's fifth task is to analyse and possibly also propose alternative Impact evaluation approaches. One example of such an alternative is so-called user-oriented evaluation (see footnote 5).

3.2 Phase 2: Full-scale impact study

On the basis of the evaluability assessment, UTV will select a limited number of projects for the full-scale impact study. Since it is impossible to foresee how many projects if indeed any, that will be covered by the second phase, the below tasks will be regulated by a separate contract.

3.2.1 Impact identification

The consultant's *sixth* task is to collect information on whether/how the projects have actually influenced each link in the chain of causes and effects on which the evaluation is focused. Precisely how this task should be carried out depends on the individual character of the concerned projects. Appendix

2, section 4, shows in very general terms how a logframe-related impact identification of an imagined police management training project could be carried out.

Methodological transparency is essential. The consultant is required to show in detail how and why it reaches certain conclusions on the impact of individual projects. Any major problem associated with the task of identifying impact shall be analysed and documented.

3.2.2 *Impact evaluation*

The consultant's *seventh* task is to evaluate the identified impact. The consultant shall judge the worth or merit of the sampled projects by comparing impact to two standard evaluation criteria: *sustainability* and *relevance*. While certainly not without methodological and other problems of its own, the sustainability criteria is relatively straightforward. Impact shall be judged sustainable if it stands a qualified chance to continue benefit the concerned institution also in the future.

The relevance criteria needs special clarification. In donor evaluations, impact is sometimes taken as relevant as long as it does not contradict the usually abundant needs of the counterpart organisation (and/or the broad and often imprecise policies of the donor agency). The present evaluation shall analyse relevance in a different way. The identified impact on the targeted institution, i.e. the institution "building", shall be judged relevant if it:

- corresponds to *the priorities*, or effective demand, of the institution's top management as well as of important stakeholder groups of the concerned country, region or local community (e.g. government cabinets and NGO constituencies), and
- is a *technically adequate solution* to the wider institutional problem which the project addressed (e.g. that an operational controller function at a local police authority, as a result of a management training project, is the right medicine for a "focal" problem of police service inefficiency and injustice).

3.2.3 *Synthesis: trends and conclusions*

The consultant's *eighth* task is to compare findings from the full-scale impact study and to conclude on general trends and factors behind the success and failure of D/HR institution building. In particular, the consultant shall discuss the context, specificity, ownership and commitment of the D/HR support (see section 3.1.4).

4 Reporting

Since it is unclear how many projects or countries that will be covered, reporting of the second phase will be regulated by a separate contract. Reporting requirements related to the first phase, i.e. the evaluability assessment, are:

- *a regular dialogue* between the consultant's team leader and UTV's project manager on the progress and problems related to the assignment, not excluding the means of telephone and e-mail;
- *an inception report*, approximately six weeks after the assignment has been initiated, covering the detailed methodological and practical preparations required for carrying out all the tasks of the evaluability assessment;
- *a main report*, covering findings and conclusions from the studies in Sweden and from the field work in South Africa and Central America regarding all tasks described in section 3.1 of these terms of reference.

The draft main report shall be sent for written comments to concerned stakeholders, i.e. to the organisations which channelled, implemented and benefited from the projects covered by the evaluability assessment. Although not necessarily accommodated in the consultant's own findings and conclusions, these comments shall be fully and transparently described in the final main report. If demanded by stakeholders, the consultant shall also hold a number of seminars in Sweden, Southern Africa and Central America, during which the conclusions of the evaluability assessment are presented and discussed. The results of such seminars shall be accommodated or at least described in the final main report.

All reports shall be written in English. The main report shall be written in Word 6.0 for Windows and presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. Within one month after receiving UTV's comments on the draft main report, a final version in 4 copies and on diskette shall be submitted to UTV.

Format and outline of the main report shall follow the guidelines in *Sida Evaluation Report: a Standardised Format* found in Annex F of the draft contract. The consultant shall also produce a summary manuscript for reproduction in *Sida Evaluations Newsletter*. Subject to decision by UTV, the main report will be published and distributed as a publication of the *Sida Evaluations series*.

5 Profile of Sida's democracy and human rights support

5.1 Introduction

The Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit (UTV) has carried out an inventory of Sida's support for democracy and human rights (D/HR). The inventory is based on Sida's D/HR disbursements registered in the agency's EA (planning) system in 1996. It traces and analyses project documents related to each disbursement figure, and links these figures to a number of support profile categories in a database covering 90% of Sida's 1996 D/HR support.

The inventory is summarised in two tables. Table 1 shows disbursements per type of implementing agency: recipient state, Swedish state, local NGO, Swedish NGO, international NGO, multilateral organisation and private company. Table 2 shows disbursements per type of overall objective: central democracy (state), local democracy (state), democratic pluralism (civil society), and democratic culture (citizenry).

Both tables also show disbursements and an estimated number of projects per project purpose category: organisational capacity building, civic education, international monitoring of treaties and elections, human rights counselling, and science and research.

5.2 Profile

In 1996, Sida's D/HR support amounted to 525 million Swedish crowns (msek).⁶ With an exclusive focus on individual disbursements of 0.5 msek or more, UTV's inventory covers a total of 474 msek, or 90% of Sida's D/HR support.

5.2.1 Who implements Sida's D/HR support?

An answer is provided in Table 1. In brief, the table shows that most support is implemented by local (or "Southern") NGOs. The exact number of NGOs is unclear, but a guess of 350 is modest. 73% of the total amount implemented by local NGOs (193 msek) constitute indirect support channelled through Swedish NGOs. Other implementing agency types are (recipient) state authorities (102 msek), international NGOs (51 msek) and Swedish NGOs (45 msek). The table also shows that the most dominant project purpose is organisational capacity building (164 msek), in particular human resources development (100 msek). The amount for which information on project purposes is lacking in the reviewed documents is significant (220 msek).

⁶ This figure does not include the D/HR support financed by yearly multi-purpose block grants to Swedish framework NGOs, roughly estimated to a total of 115 msek in 1996. Neither does it include, with a few exceptions, D/HR support which for various reasons has been classified under wrong sector categories.

Important is of course if the 220 msek hidden behind the “no information” category would change the trends indicated in the table. This is likely to be the case. When distributing implementors’ respective shares of the 220 msek along their respective disbursement patterns, the result is even bigger relative shares for organisational capacity building, in particular for HRD. In other words, when assuming that, for example, local NGOs spend their share of the 220 msek in a similar manner as they spend their share of the Sida support which indeed was possible to classify according to project purpose, the result is more disbursements for organisational capacity building and HRD.

5.2.2 What are the objectives of Sida’s D/HR support?

An answer is provided in Table 2. In brief, the table shows that the support is mainly provided for central and local democratisation (96 msek and 48 msek respectively). The strengthening of citizens’ democratic culture (47 msek) and democratic pluralism in civil society (32 msek) are also important overall objectives. The problem of no information (220 msek) remains.

The table summarises the overall objectives of Sida’s D/HR support. It has been constructed more by common sense than on the basis of information found in the reviewed documents. For example, when Sida has financed courses on democratic governance for local government officials in Estonia, UTV *assumes* that the objective was organisational capacity building for “local democracy”.

Table 1: Who implements Sida's D/HR support? Disbursements (SEK '000) and number of projects (in brackets) 1996

Specific objective	Implementing agency								Grand total
	Recipient state	Swedish state	Local NGO	Swedish NGO	International NGO	Multilateral organisation	Private company	Grand total	
Capacity building	25 673 (14)	27 295 (24)	17 101 (31)	18 568 (14)	2 135 (2)	8 233 (5)	1 652 (2)	100 657 (92)	
Human resources	28 376 (6)	5 890 (5)	5 780 (8)	—	900 (3)	3 919 (3)	—	44 865 (25)	
Organisation	14 825 (5)	—	—	230 (1)	—	3 500 (1)	—	18 555 (7)	
Equipment	68 874 (25)	33 185 (29)	22 881 (39)	18 798 (15)	3 035 (5)	15 652 (9)	1 652 (2)	164 077 (124)	
<i>Total</i>									
Civic education	4 488 (1)	7 486 (6)	3 483 (9)	3 717 (5)	995 (1)	—	—	20 169 (22)	
Workshops/seminars	14 500 (4)	—	11 056 (18)	857 (3)	500 (2)	—	—	26 913 (27)	
Public information	18 988 (5)	7 486 (6)	14 539 (27)	4 574 (8)	1 495 (3)	—	—	47 082 (49)	
<i>Total</i>									
External monitoring	—	—	—	—	—	10 900 (7)	—	10 900 (7)	
Treaties	—	2 126 (3)	—	—	—	1 500 (1)	—	3 626 (4)	
Electrons	—	2 126 (3)	—	—	—	12 400 (8)	—	14 526 (11)	
<i>Total</i>									
HR counselling	—	—	7 435 (9)	—	—	—	—	7 435 (9)	
Research	—	3 150 (7)	2 012 (3)	400 (1)	—	—	—	5 562 (11)	
Other	4 084 (2)	—	6 195 (9)	1 211 (5)	3 740 (3)	100 (1)	—	15 330 (20)	
No information	10 372 (18)	—	140 062 (277)	15 590 (31)	43 718 (28)	10 631 (6)	—	220 373 (360)	
Grand total	102 318 (50)	45 947 (45)	193 124 (364)	40 573 (60)	51 988 (39)	38 783 (24)	1 652 (2)	474 385 (584)	

Source: UTV and Sida's EA (planning) system

Table 2: What are the objectives of Sida's D/HR support? Disbursements (SEK '000) and number of projects (in brackets) 1996

Specific objective	Overall objective						Grand total
	Central democracy	Local democracy	Democratic pluralism	Democratic culture	Other	No information	
Capacity building	31 902 (30)	43 469 (27)	25 286 (35)				100 657 (92)
Human resources	36 285 (14)	1 735 (2)	6 845 (9)				44 865 (25)
Organisation	15 055 (6)	3 500 (1)	—				18 555 (7)
Equipment	83 242 (50)	48 704 (30)	32 131 (44)				164 077 (124)
Total							
Civic education				20 169 (22)			20 169 (22)
Workshops/seminars				26 913 (27)			26 913 (27)
Public information				47 082 (49)			47 082 (49)
Total							
External monitoring	10 900 (7)						10 900 (7)
Treaties	3 626 (4)						3 626 (4)
Elections	14 526 (11)						14 526 (11)
Total							
HR counselling					7 435 (9)		7 435 (9)
Research					5 562 (11)		5 562 (11)
Other					15 330 (20)		15 330 (20)
No information						220 373 (360)	220 373 (360)
Grand total	97 768 (61)	48 704 (30)	32 131 (44)	47 082 (49)	28 327 (40)	220 373 (360)	474 385 (684)

Source: UTV and Sida's EA (planning) system

Annex 2

List of people met

List of People Contacted in Sweden 25th – 30th October 1998

Sida staff

Reference Group

Stefan Molund	Dep. Head of Dept., UTV
Göran Schill	Evaluation Officer, UTV
Anton Johnston	Programme Officer, DESA
Anders Emanuel	Programme Officer, DESA
Ingalill Colbro	Programme Officer, DESA
Ina Eriksson	Programme Officer, RESA
Mariana Liljesson	Programme Officer, DESA

(Birgitta Sevefjord, reference group member and Programme Officer, RESA was not available)

Other Sida staff interviewed (South Africa projects):

Lena Forsgren	Programme Officer, DESA
Johan Brisman	NATUR (ex-head of Development Division, Swedish Embassy South Africa)
Lars-Olov Höök	Head of RESA, South Division
Stefan Engström	Resource person for study
Johanna Grinde	Resource person for study
Not available:	Helen Nordensson, Programme Officer, DESA

Other Sida staff interviewed (Central America projects)

Håkan Mårtensson	Programme Officer, RELA
Pernilla Trägårdh	Programme Officer, DESO
Ina Eriksson	Programme Officer, RELA
Ulrika Hjertstrand	Programme Officer, RELA
Mariana Liljesson	Programme Officer, DESO
Krister Adolfsson	Former Programme Officer based in El Salvador.
Eivor Halkjaer	Head of RELA (Formerly Swedish Ambassador to Nicaragua)

Non-Sida People (South Africa)

Leif Agnestrand, Henry Aspeqvist Alf Carling	Pingst Missionen Utland (PMU) Programme Officer Director (SIPU) Former Advisor to Ministry of Public Service and Administration, South Africa (DESO501/96)
Leif Holmström Magnus Ericsson Ove Gustafsson Florence Lag-Brundell	Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Vice-Director Raw Materials Group, Coordinator Swedish donor congregation Advisor to Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC)
Kristina Rosen Bo Synnerholm	Raw Materials Group Managing Director Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU)
Gunner Swahn	PMU Programme Officer

Non-Sida People (Central America)

Barbro Toren	Executive Secretary for Development Assistance – KFUK-KFUM
Anita Andersson	Secretary for Development Assistance – KFUK-KFUM.
Ewa Widen Hans Magnusson	DIAKONIA – Secretary for Central America Former DIAKONIA Programme Officer for Guatemala
Anders Kompass	Director of the Department for the Americas and formerly Resident Representative UNDP in El Salvador.
Carin Gårdbring Pierre Frühling	Latin America Programme Officer – Lutherhjälpen. Consultant for Atlantic Coast Regional Governments Programme – Nicaragua.

ITAD/ODI Field visit South Africa

NC: Nick Chapman; JS: Jeremy Sarkin; RR: Roger Ridell; AW: Adele Wildschut; JC: Jon Campbell

Date	City	Organisation	Team	Activity
Sun 17 Jan				<i>Nick Chapman arrives Jo'burg a.m.</i>
Week 1				
Mon 18 Jan				
	Pretoria	Hotel 8am	NC+ JS+ AW + JC	Briefing
	Pretoria	Embassy of Sweden 10am	NC+ JS+ AW + JC	Courtesy call and preliminary briefing: Thomas Kjellson and Lotta Sylvander
	Pretoria	Diakonia 2pm	NC+ JS+ AW + JC	Georg Andrén, Regional Rep. Southern Africa
	Jo'burg	JC's office 4.30pm	NC+ JS+ AW + JC	Set up office and documentation. Confirm meetings, and organise materials
Tues 19 Jan				
	Jo'burg	8am WILDD preparation (Womens Institute for Leadership and Democracy)	NC + JS+ AW+JC	Prepare formats and project logic:
		11 am WILDD office	NC + JS + AW+JC	Meeting with Field Workers, and Board Members
Wed 20 Jan				
	Jo'burg	WILDD field visit: Eldorado Park	JS + AW + NC	Field Visit to beneficiary women's group in Pretoria area, meet with WILDD field officers, Visit WAWA project Eldorado Park
		WILDD office	JS + AW + NC	Final meeting with WILDD management
		Write up WILDD	JS + AW + NC + JC	Evening
Thu 21 Jan				
	Pretoria	Justice College, LRGU 9am	JS + NC	Magistrate training
	Jo'burg	WDF preparation	AW	Prepare formats and project logic. Review data collected, evaluation surveys carried out.
		WDF	JS + AW + NC	Barbara Watson, Exec Director, WDF

Date	City	Organisation	Team	Activity
			NC/AW/JC	Co-ordination meeting Complete WILDD assessment
Fri 22 Jan				
	Jo'burg	WDF (continues)	AW	Meeting with/ calls to female politicians supported through the project
		NUM 7.45	NC	General Secretary
		NUM 8.30		George Masha, Devan Pillay and H. Tsikalange
		Write up NUM, WDF Training of voters, AOG Preparation	NC	<i>NC flies to Durban 12am</i>
	Durban	Assemblies of God meeting at AOG office	NC	Colin La Foy, Sekusile project: meeting with David Samuels, Jacob Moumakwe, Earl Wilkinson
Sat 23 Jan				
	Durban	Training of voters Assemblies of God / PMU	NC	Field visit to Pt Shepstone. Met with Practical Ministries. Clement Joseph, Margaret Moonsammy, and beneficiary: Rose Madadala,
Sun 24 Jan				<i>NC Fly back to Johannesburg 1 pm</i> Write up Voter education by AOG Post results on web
Week 2				
Mon 25 Jan				
	Jo'burg	CALS Preparation	JS	Background reading
		CALS	JS	Prof. Shadrack Gutto, Director + CALS and ex-CALS staff concerned
	Jo'burg	Institute for the Advancement of Journalism	NC	Background reading Prepare formats and project logic <i>Strengthening media</i>
		IAJ Meet trainees (11am)	NC	Interviews with journalists trained under project Write up results
		IAJ 2pm	NC	Meeting with Hugh Lewin (Director), IAJ staff and Trainees: Gill Gifford, Kaizer Ngwenya, Ferial Haffejee, Angie Kaplianis
		3pm WDF	NC+JS	Dr. Ellen Kornegay, ex-Director, WDF
Tues 26 Jan				
		IDASA preparation	NC	Prepare formats and project logic: <i>Voter education</i>

Date	City	Organisation	Team	Activity
	Pretoria	Idasa 11am	NC	Meet with sample of Party agents trained by Idasa and Members of Multi-Party Forum
		Training of Party member election monitors, IDASA	NC	Paul Graham, Executive Director, IDASA; Trainers: Benny Makena, Kabelo Selema, Merissa Geyer. Party Agent: Spongy Moodley
		IDASA'	NC	Write up results
	Jo'burg	CALS (continues)	JS	David Unterhalter, Shadruck Gutto, Mark Heywood, Theunis Roux. Magistrate Helen Allman, Magistrate Nigel Bruce, Magistrate Robert Henney, Carole Cooper, Robert LaGrange.
Wed 27 Jan				
	Pretoria	Swedish Embassy: UPEP 9am	NC + JC	Dag Sundelin, Development Counsellor
		Swedish Embassy: PANC, DPSA 10am	NC + JC	Thomas Kjellson, Development Counsellor
		SAPS 2pm	NC + JC	Elaine Venter, Head of Donor Coordination, SAPS
Thu 28 Jan				
	Pretoria	DPSA, Civil Service Reform	NC + JC	Preparation
		DPSA 10am	NC + JC	Dr. Mala Singh., Chief Director, DPSA; Collect materials and meeting as needed.
		DPSA	NC + JC	Write up findings.
	Cape-town	WDF/WILDD/LRGU	AW	Meet Lotta Sylvander (Swedish Emb'y) to review WDF/WILDD/LGRU
Fri 29 Jan		NUM, IAJ, Idasa, DPSA		Follow up telephone calls, write up results
Sat 30 Jan				Contacts with beneficiaries in relevant service sectors of PANC (Health and Education); Write up notes on PANC
Sun 31 Jan				<i>R.Riddell arrives Johannesburg in pm</i>
Week 3				
Mon 1 Feb				
	Kimberley	Prepare for Provincial Administration of Northern Cape	NC + RR	Background reading Prepare formats and project logic
		PANC 9am	NC + RR	Meeting with MEC Education: Mrs Joumat-Petersson.

Date	City	Organisation	Team	Activity
		PANC 11am	NC + RR	Head of Dept. Education. Mr Nkoane
		PANC 1pm	NC + RR	Director General, PANC, Martin van Zyl
		PANC	NC + RR	Write up assessment
	Capetown	LRGU preparation	JS +AW	Prepare formats and project logic <i>Judicial system</i>
		Law, Race and Gender Research Unit, University of Cape Town	JS +AW	Francois Botha, Faculty of Law. Francois Botha, Leanne de la Hunt, Inze de Jonge, Ricco Settler, Nigel Burt, Ilze Olkers, Saras Jagwanth, Christopher Petty, Prof Hugh Corder,
		LRGU	JS +AW	Magistrates Joanne Fedler, Robert Henney, Helen Allman, Sabrina Sonnenburg
	Pretoria	SAPS	JC	P.Cronje, Human Resources Management Unit SAPS
		SAPS	JC	Police Training Coordinator Belinda Steyn; Captain Jama, Commissioner, Entebeni Police Station, Superintendent Harty, Commissioner, Kriel Police Station
Tues 2 Feb				
	Kimberley	Prepare for UPEP	NC + RR	Background reading Prepare formats and project logic
		Urban Planning and Environment Project	NC + RR	Mayor of Kimberley
		UPEP	NC + RR	Meeting with 4 councillors
		UPEP	NC + RR	City Engineer & Planning officers
		PANC	NC + RR	Visit to primary school in Greenpoint, Galeshewe, Headmaster Jabu Mongale
		UPEP	NC + RR	Meeting with 4 ward representa- tives from Kimberley city: Joseph Sillands, Simon Sivela, Priscilla Thomas
		UPEP	NC + RR	Write up notes on UPEP
Wed 3 Feb				
	Kimberley	SAPS	NC + RR	Police Training Coordinator and Station Commander: Deon Pistorius and Trudie de Klerk and 2 trainees
				<i>RR. NC fly to Capetown 11.30</i>
	Capetown	CPF preparation	RR + NC	

Date	City	Organisation	Team	Activity
		Visit to CPF community (pm) (Worcester)	JS + AW + NC + RR	Prof. Clifford Shearing, John Cartwright, Julia Ndlovu, Mbuyi Dyasi
		CPF, Worcester	JS + AW + NC + RR	Additional magistrate, Andrew le Fleur.
		CPF, Zwelethemba, Worcester	JS + AW + NC + RR	Zwelethemba Peacemakers Association members: Vuyisile Malangeni – Chairperson; Thoko Klaas; Margeret Tani; Belinda Ngollo; Neliswa Nkonombini; Lindelwa Phatho; Mr J Dudu; Madoda Allum; Mr.V. Mubale; Thembile Lubobo; Anthony Funda ka Vinjwa.
Thur 4 Feb				
	Capetown	Minister of Justice 8am	JS + AW + NC + RR	Meeting with Dullar Omah
		CPF 10am	JS + AW + NC + RR	Meeting with Prof Shearing and John Cartwright
		Team meeting	NC, RR, JS, AW	Review overall findings
Fri 5 Feb				
			NC + RR	<i>Fly to Johannesburg 0725</i>
	Pretoria	Meeting with Swedish embassy officials 11am	NC, RR, JC	Claes Norrlof, Thomas Kjellson, Emma Sundberg, Lotta Sylvander,
		Discuss follow-up actions	NC, RR, JC	NC departs 9pm to London
Sat 6 Feb				RR departs for Zambia

ITAD/ODI Field Visit Central America

El Salvador	18 th Jan	TC + IV	Police Academy (ANSP)
	19 th Jan	TC + IV	War-wounded Fund. (FONDO)
		TC + IV	UNDP (ANSP)
	20 th Jan	TC + IV	ALFAES/ASALDIG (FONDO)
		TC + IV	COMITEH/ALGES (FONDO)
	21 st Jan	TC+ IV+AR	UNDP (ECJ)
		TC + IV	UNDP (FONDO)
	22 nd Jan	TC+ IV+AR	Inspecc. General of Police (ANSP)
		TC+ IV+AR	Police Force (PNC) (ANSP)
		TC+AR	Fiscalia General de la Republica (ECJ)
25 th Jan	IV+MG	DIAKONIA (El Salvador Prog.)	
	TC+AR	Procuradaria General de la Republica (ECJ)	
	IV+TC+MG	Fundaungo	
	IV+MG	Fundaungo – Field Visit to Porvenir (Sta Ana) (Municipal govt. and community groups)	
26 th Jan	TC+RC	Judicial Training School – ECJ (ECJ)	
	IV+MG	Consortio	
	TC	ACJ	
27 th Jan	IV+MG+TC	Field visit - Mejicanos Municipality (Consortio) – Mayor and community group.	
	MG+RC	Sacdel	
	TC	Field visit – Puerto El Triunfo (Usulután) - Municipality and groups (Sacdel).	
Guatemala	28 th Jan	IV	Travel to Guatemala
		TC	Travel to Nicaragua
	28 th Jan	TC	Swedish Embassy – El Salvador programme (T.Lundh)
	29 th Jan	TC	UNDP – R. de Contreras (ONAM)
		TC	ONAM (Ex-management)
	1 st Feb	TC	Parliamentarian (Flora de Ramos) (ONAM)
		TC	GRUFE-PROFEM (ONAM)
	2 nd Feb	TC	Swedish Embassy – Guatemala programme (Ewa Dahlin)
		TC	IIDH – Lorena Gonzales Volio (Education)
		TC	Min. of Education .(IIDH)
TC		Supreme Court (IIDH)	
3 rd Feb	TC	Procuradaria de los Derechos Humanos(IIDH)	
	TC	Fundacion Myrna Mack; SERCATE	
4 th Feb	TC	Members of HR Forum. Roberto Cuellar – IIDH	
	TC	Saqb'ichil-COPMAGUA	
5 th Feb	TC	IUCM (COPMAGUA)	
8 th Feb	TC	Reps of 5 NGOs (members of COINDE-DESCOM)	
	TC	COINDE Field Visit – ABAD – Chimaltenango (COINDE)	

Nicaragua	Jan 29 th	IV	RAAN-ASDI-RAAS Management Team
	Jan 30 th	IV	RAAN-ASDI-RAAS Regional Coordinators
	Feb 1 st	IV	Embassy Staff Member (various projects)
	Feb 2 nd	IV	UNDP MAS
	Feb 3 rd	IV	INIFOM
	Feb 4 th	IV	Supreme Electoral Council INIFOM
	Feb 4 th	IV	INIFOM
	Feb 5 th	IV	Supreme Electoral Council
	Feb 10 th	IV	MAS UNDP
	Feb 11 th	IV	Ex – Project Staff MAS
	Feb 12 th	IV	MAS

TC – Tony Curran
IV – Irene Vance
AR – Ana Rodriguez
MG – Maribel Gutierrez
RC – Rosalia Chavez
C – Carolina

Annex 3

Key documentation list

1. General documents

Summary of Experiences Gained from the use of ROPPS/LFA, B. Rylander, Nov 1995

Follow up on the use of LFA in Zambia and Zimbabwe, B. Rylander and L. Bergstrom, Policy and Legal Services Dept., Sida, Dec 1996

Two Years After, a review of the introduction of the LFA method in Sida, J. Andante and M. Padrigu, June 1998

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Justic and Peace, Sida's Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights, Sida, May 1997

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SIDA's Strategy for Aid and Support for Democracy and Human Rights, Sida, (June 1993 (unofficial translation from Swedish)

Democracy and Human Rights, Facts and Figures 95/96, Dept for Democracy and Social Development, Sida

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Policia y Sociedad Democratica. (Pena y Estado) No. 3 1998.

Directorio Politico Centroamericano 1998 (CODEHUCA).

Políticas y Propuestas de Descentralización en Centroamérica. Borrell et al. (FLACSO 1997)

Diakonia's policy (undated)

Proposals for a Regional Strategy for Central America, Sida, Nov 1996

2. South Africa

Human Rights in South Africa, Setting the Context, B. Pityana, 1997

South African Human Rights Commission, Portfolio of Documents including list of publications

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Interfund's Civil Society Fund: institution building, lobbying and advocacy of democracy, Draft Policy and criteria document, April 1997

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In Search of Citizenship, Local Democracy and Donor Interventions in South Africa, P. Nordlund and S. Friedman, Sida, March 1998

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Study on the Role of NGOs in Development Work in South Africa, I. Heldal for Embassy of Sweden, Pretoria, Feb 1998

On Democracy in theory, in policy, in reality, A. Ingelstam, Diakonia, May 1998

Evaluation of the OPC/SDP project within the Voter Education and Elections Training, A. Lysen and J. Fairbairn, Olof Palme International Centre, Nov 1995

The VEETU Project in Retrospect, Valuation of and Evaluation, A. Brodin, Univ of Goteborg

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996

The Voluntary Sector and Development in S.Africa, 1996/7, Development Update, 1997

First Guidelines for an Output and Outcome Indicator System, Good Governance, Danida, Sept 1998

Evaluation of EC Positive Measures in Favour of Human Rights and Democracy, 1991–93, W. Heinz, H. Lingnau, P. Waller, German Development Institute, Berlin, May 1995

Institutions Supporting Democracy, A Report for Sida, Idasa, South Africa, 1997

Raul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian law, A Study of activities financed by Sida and an assessment of development co-operation capacity, 1997

Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method, A Review of Literature and Ideas, Mick Moore, IDS, Sida Evaluation Report 1995/1

3. El Salvador

Analisis del proceso de democratizacion , los derechos humanos y el sistema judicial en El Salvador, G. Costa et al. Dec 1994

The Peace Accords and Post-war reconstruction. E.Wood

Evaluacion del proceso de paz en El Salvador – Informe del Sec. Gen de las Naciones Unidas, July 1997

Informe Final de la Mision de Naciones Unidas en Materia Electoral, Naciones Unidas, S. Sal, Nov 1997

Ejecucion de los Acuerdos de Paz en El Salvador, Naciones Unidas, Jan 1997

Demobilization, Reintegration and Pacification in El Salvador, Arias Foundation, 1997

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MINUGUA – Informe sobre la Verificacion de los Acuerdos de Paz en Guatemala, Oct 1998

Guatemala 1983–1997, Hacia donde va la transicion, Armon et al, FLACSO, 1997

The Mayan Movement Today, Choy & Borrell, FLACSO, 1997

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La Cooperacion de las Naciones Unidas para la consolidacion de la paz en Guatemala, Sept 1997

La ONU y el Proceso de Paz en Guatemala, Franco et al, FLACSO, 1996

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Country Assistance Programme (Building Democracy Section) USAID, 1998

Annex 4

Note on democracy and human rights indicators

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Note is to summarise a rapid review of the literature, including donor and other experience, on indicators used to evaluate democracy and human rights (D/HR) aid projects. It looks in particular at what (other) donors have done in developing using and especially in trying to develop indicators that can be used across different groups or clusters of democracy and human rights (D/HR) projects.

Three preliminary comments need to be made. Firstly, in many respects to focus on evaluation indicators is to start “at the wrong end”. If indicators to assess the impact of projects had been discussed and agreed at project commencement or at the pre-project stage then it would not be necessary to have to think afresh about what indicators to use to evaluate D/HR projects. Thus in some senses, the search for appropriate/relevant/usable indicators is itself an indicator of deficiencies at the planning stages of the project. Alternatively the absence of specific indicators could be an indicator of the “open-endedness” of the project/programme being supported. Though it is difficult – perhaps even impossible – to assess a project which does not have a clear purpose or goal, there might well have been sound reasons for initiating such a project.

Secondly, as the discussion below suggests, the literature suggests that there are important reasons for assessment indicators to be agreed among the different stakeholders – not least as this is likely to minimise (though not usually eliminate) strong differences in judgement about successes and failures. To the extent that this viewpoint is taken on board, it suggests that it is misplaced the search for more “objective” indicators.

Thirdly, it is important to differentiate between the “quest for indicators” and the legitimacy of undertaking work and funding projects in particular areas. Thus the widely acknowledged difficulty of developing and agreeing a common set of indicators for D/HR projects, or even of more narrow clusters of such projects, does not mean that the funding of activities in these areas is

therefore undermined. The fact that assessment is problematic and independent verifiable corroboration of judgements made in evaluation difficult to obtain should not be used as the basis for arguing that *therefore* D/HR projects should not be attempted.

This Note contains three further sections. The next and longest section provides a definition of an indicator, discusses the ways different donors and evaluators are approaching the issue of indicators for D/HR projects and gives examples of the sorts of indicators that have recently been used in evaluating D/HR projects. Section III provides a brief discussion of indicators used in institution and capacity building projects. Finally Section IV provides some very brief and preliminary thoughts on what the data, ideas and information from the earlier sections might imply for this phase of the study.

2. Donor work on democracy and human rights indicators

2.1 Overview

It is widely recognised among leading OECD donors that there remain large gaps in the development of and the development of a consensus on the drawing up of specific indicators for D/HR projects. It has only been in the five to 10 years that donors have begun to try to assess D/HR projects, and even more recently that donors have felt the need to try to approach the issue of the evaluation of D/HR projects in a more holistic (sectoral) fashion. Both OECD-wide studies and work initiated by individual donors all knowledge that little headway has been made on developing, obtaining agreement upon and using a group of common indicators for evaluating D/HR projects. Notwithstanding this general conclusion, as subsequent pages of this Note reveal, work among donors is going on and a number have created and are using a range of indicators to assess D/HR projects, with USAID providing the most complex and detailed list of indicators among all donors.

Within this context, one needs to ask whether it is realistic to expect to make rapid headway in developing and agreeing a set of indicators to evaluate D/HR projects? There are four important factors which should caution one against being too optimistic.

Firstly, D/HR projects cover an enormously *wide range of* different interventions. Indeed, to the extent that one accepts the view that there is a synergy between all development projects and human rights, then one could argue that all aid projects need to encompass a human rights assessment. In relation to this, all donors readily acknowledge D/HR projects are likely to involve quite complex human and institutional processes. It is thus unrealistic to expect there *ever to be* developed and agreed a set of indicators that could both be manageable (that is there are not too many of them) and be applicable across

all such projects. As is true for indicators more widely, on the one hand the more general (less specific) the indicator chosen (and agreed) the less it is likely to be able to show detailed changes at the project level; on the other hand, the more project-specific the indicator chosen, the less likely it is to be applicable across a wider ranged of different sorts of projects.

Secondly, many if not most D/HR projects are concerned with funding (hopefully concrete) activities not as ends in themselves but in order to achieve broader/wider objectives. Thus training or individuals or institutional/capacity building of institutions are funded to achieve a wider objective. This means that evaluation, and particularly impact assessments need to focus not merely on whether the specific outputs of the project have been achieved but they also need to try to make a judgement about whether these have indeed contributed to these wider objectives. A major problem here is that the link between outputs and outcomes, and between the project purpose and the wider objectives can (frequently) be based either on assumptions and untested theories or only be partially linked together. This in turn is profoundly influenced, if not caused by the fact that there remains no *agreed theory or model of democracy or human rights against which to measure progress*.

A practical example of this kind of problem – of some relevance to the Sida study – comes from a recently concluded synthesis evaluation of the impact of DFID-funded police training projects. In discussing the link between the training conducted and the contribution of this to wider goals, the following comment is made:¹

A policy framework which sees support to the police as a means to create a climate in which economic and social development can take place is based on generalisations about the pre-conditions of development and largely untenable assumptions about the role of the police. Setting such goals can lead to situations in which too much is expected from the outcome of projects which have a relatively short time frames and comparatively low levels of funding

More specifically, the authors suggest that it is often illegitimate to try to link the outputs of a particular (police training) project to the wider outcomes expected precisely because of the influence of other (non-controllable) variables. Thus, they argue that it is often simply *impossible* to try to judge the link between training (successfully) completed and the contribution of this training to the achievement of wider goals (page 10):

The absence of wider reforms to the criminal justice department, the failure to empower civil society and develop transparent and accountable political processes are all likely to vitiate the impact and sustainability of projects.

¹ Biddle, K., I. Clegg and J. Whetton (1998) Evaluation of ODA/DFID Support to the police in developing countries: Synthesis study. Swansea: University of Wales, School of Social Sciences and International Development.

This synthesis study also raises questions about the “view” – because it remains untested that community policing WILL lead to a marked impact on crime levels. And if the link can be doubted, it is questionable (fruitless) to use this as an indicator to measure broader impact (page 30):

The classic social and economic correlates of crime – high rates of youth unemployment, family breakdown, social dislocation, violence, gangs, drugs, illiteracy and historical patterns of racial discrimination – will not be removed by community policing. Community policing is no substitute for social and economic change. As a crime-control measure, it must be understood in a limited perspective not as a long-run or keystone feature of a successful anti-crime policy.

Thirdly, there is broad consensus among donors and evaluators that making significant advances in the areas of human rights and democracy is a *long process* – advances, that are not going to be achieved in a short period of time (two to five years) and especially on the basis of one-off discrete projects. Further, as many donor interventions in the D/HR area – and this is especially true for the smaller donors such as Sida – are themselves small-scale relative to the magnitude of the problems to be addressed it is unrealistic to *expect* significant impacts of these discrete projects vis-a-vis the larger goals. This point has a direct bearing on the discussion of indicators: it is going to be particularly difficult to agree a set of indicators that are able to capture changes at the (small) project level as well as capture changes at the aggregate level.

Fourthly, and based in part on these other three points, the evidence from evaluation of D/HR projects which have been undertaken suggest that it can often happen that key factors influencing projects and performance, or the weight to be given to different factors, only become clear when the evaluation is being conducted or has been completed. What this suggests is that even if one can start with a core cluster of specific indicators to assess performance, it is unlikely that these indicators will provide a complete set of indicators necessary to capture the complexity and the unique features of the particular project under scrutiny. At best, one can only hope that even if one is able to develop a set of pre-selected indicators they will contribute to but not provide the complete template upon which judgements of performance are to be based.

2.2 Definitions of indicators

The 1996 CIDA study defines indicators as

is an instrument to tell us how a project/program is proceeding. It is a yardstick to measure results, be they in the form of qualitative or quantitative change, success or failure. An indicator and how it changes can be used in monitoring whereas an evaluation just takes snap-shot...

Four sorts of indicators can be identified:

Input indicator	measures the quantity/quality of resources provided for programme activities
Output indicator	measures the quantity/quality of outputs created through the use of inputs
Outcome indicator	measures the quantity/quality of the direct results achieved through outputs
Impact indicator	measures the degree to which wider programme goals are achieved through programme outcomes.

2.3 Some donor approaches to the use of indicators

We now review some of the donor studies on indicators.

A 1994 CIDA study² confirmed the view expressed in this Note that one of the major problems about assessing D/HR projects and in trying to find appropriate indicators lies in the failure of many projects to specify clear purposes and objectives. It also argued that as most projects were a response to request for funds rather than drawn up as part of an overall plan to address D/HR problems, it was even more difficult to establish a pattern of support and thus a pattern for analysing this support. A third point raised was that it may well be premature to focus on indicators if (as seemed to be the case) CIDA personnel were not well versed in using indicators.

Of more direct relevance to the current discussion is a 1996 CIDA study specifically on indicators in H/DR projects.³ In summary, the following general points are made about the difficulties of drawing up and using indicators for D/HR projects.

- Very little work has been done in assessing results in political development; and the principally qualitative nature of political change has tended to make analysts shy away from attempts to measure or quantify it.
- It is usual for the results to be closely linked to their context, so that it is difficult to make wider generalisations.

Kapoor argues that for D/HR projects one should try to focus on – and make use of – *three* sort of indicators: quantitative, qualitative and participatory indicators. He goes on to point out that qualitative indicators *can* be quantified through such instruments as public opinion polls, attitude surveys and participation observation. Yet they also suffer from problem of not capturing the

² Rawkins, P. and M. Bergeron (1994) *Lessons Learned in Human Rights and Democratic Development: A Study of CIDA's Bilateral Programming Experience*. Report prepared for the Good Governance and Human Rights Policies Division (YHR) Policy Branch, CIDA. Ottawa.

³ Kapoor, I (1996) *Indicators for Programming in Human Rights and Democratic Development: A Preliminary Study*. Paper prepared for CIDA's Political and Social Policies Division, Policy Branch. Ottawa.

complexity of the process being assessed. The importance of participatory indicators is that they can address some of the (important problems) resulting from the use of top-down blue-print indicators. Thus, participatory indicators can capture HOW people feel about their rights, freedoms, (dis)empowerment and responsibilities. Relatedly, the usefulness of indicators is increased since all stakeholders choose relevant criteria for results measurement and determine the ways in which results are to be interpreted.

What Kapoor proposes for D/HR projects is a “double approach” of using participatory indicators and also the linked qualitative and quantitative ones. What is then crucial is the process of drawing up and agreeing indicators. First, he suggests, a consultative team should be created, focussing human rights of people and democratic development. The team will be charged with: tracking whether the agency’s D/HR policy objectives are coherent and can be implemented; identifying common problems and lessons learned; and tracking the extent to which country programme frameworks include D/HR priorities and procedures.

For specific projects, he makes the following proposals and gives the following advice:

- Start with the assumption that you need to begin by considering the use of use quantitative, qualitative and participatory indicators, though the mix will vary from project to project
- The choice of indicators will itself be determined by the manner in which the goals and purpose of the project/programme have been established: generally speaking the more precise the purpose the more precise and specific are likely to be the indicators one can choose.
- Do not have indicators which are overly technical go rather for clarity.
- Have a small number of indicators, which need to consider impact on women.
- Kapoor also emphasises the need not to be too optimistic about what indicators can do. More specifically he says that there is a need to acknowledge that “most development objectives are only measurable in the intermediate or long-term (output/impact indicators). Indicators monitoring short-term change will most likely only be able to measure the implementation of project procedures (input/output) indicators. This is a sobering thought.
- He also highlights the need to involve the partners/project implementers in the process of agreeing indicators. He argues that partner executing agencies will be reluctant to agree to project performance indicators “in the cold” for fear of having to accept all project risks.
- To develop relevant D/HR indicators, Kapoor proposes that for each project 3–4 day workshops are convened, involving 10–40 participants, and that this initial workshop is followed by others during the course of the project cycle.

- One needs to be particular cautious about trying to create a priori blueprint-type indicators as they risk imposing artificial and rigid categories on what are fluid human rights/democratic development processes. It is these that participatory indicators tackle.

Kapoor acknowledges that many CIDA D/HR projects take place through institutional strengthening/capacity building. As a result, he argues that therefore many of the results indicators will need to be complemented by indicators for capacity development. In other words, it is necessary to think about the need to think about developing TWO sets or clusters of indicators for such projects which put into perspective the need for the eventual list of indicators to remain small and relatively non-technical.

Though Kapoor acknowledges that USAID has done more than any other agency in drawing up and specifying D/HR indicators, he is critical of the approach both because of its focus on quantitative indicators and because the consequent approach is mechanical, missing the participant's involvement in identifying the indicators produced and thus lowering the likelihood of their identifying with the analysis and the conclusions drawn.

A different sort of approach to evaluation and to indicators for evaluation is proposed by an evaluation of D/HR projects carried out for the European Community.⁴ It begins by affirming – and confirming the point made in the police study see Note 1) – that for most (EU) projects it is simply not possible to even think about trying to draw a direct link between the specific impact of small discrete projects and the overall situation of human rights in a country. The implication is important – namely that because such a link cannot be drawn it is idle to try to construct indicators to trace the link. It thus proposes a two-tiered process of evaluation of D/HR projects:

- at the lower level, the project impact can be assessed as a contribution to the objective of the respective project category or sector;
- at the next level, the impact of an improved juridical system can be assessed in terms of its contribution to the improvement of a country's situation in human rights and democracy.

In a fashion similar to the Canadian study, the EU study suggests that it is a good idea for there to be some sort of “technical unit” within the EU with expertise to identify, implement and monitor efforts to develop approaches to assessing D/HR projects, using this expertise to help discrete project interventions. It continues by suggesting that discrete projects be located far more precisely within a context of a strategy for D/HR activities in the country, which specify particular objectives, sectoral goals and monitorable performance indicators and procedural changes. What this implies for the indicator discussion is that it is *necessary* to build up and agreeing the assessment indicators *before* project commencement.

⁴ Heinz, W., H. Lingnau and P. Waller (1995) “Evaluation of EC Positive Measures in Favour of Human Rights and Democracy (1991–1993). Berlin (May).

For its part, DFID (formerly the ODA) has recently welcomed the publication of a substantive text on human rights which it commissioned. For our purposes what is notable about this study, which purports to provide a comprehensive view and approach to human rights projects is that there is no mention of evaluating human rights aid projects.⁵ Likewise, a recent study produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as a Policy Document contains nothing on how to assess the impact of work in this area.⁶

However, DFID (ODA) has attempted to address the issue of evaluation through some of its sectoral work. Most notably, its 1996 study *Law, Good Government and Development: A Guidance Paper* was drawn up for the core purpose of trying to improve the impact of British aid to legal development in the context of good government.⁷ A complete chapter is devoted to the issue of evaluation, though in common with other donors, it remarks that “there is no easy way to evaluate the quality of justice, although there can be indicators relating to the *improvement in administration* (page 17.) In terms of developing indicators, this report focuses on indicators – in particular in identifying particular indicators – in relation first of all to the *particular problem to be addressed*. This in turn provides pointers for how to draw up a project and how to assess performance. An example illustrating this particular use of indicators is given in Box 1.

⁵ J. Häusermann (1998) *A Human Rights Approach to Development*. London: Rights and Humanity.

⁶ UNDP (1998) *Integrating Human Rights with Sustainable Human Development: A UNDP Policy Document*. New York: UNDP.

⁷ ODA (1996) *Law, Good Government and Development: A Guidance Paper*. London: ODA, Government and Institutions Department.

Box 1 Example of Problem, Indicators and Possible approach from DFID/ODA Guidance paper.

Problem: Inadequate legal training in the country

Indicators

- absence of clear syllabus and standards for legal training
- academic facilities eg university law school have insufficient resources
- unavailability of law libraries holding case-law, regulations and texts for students and practitioners
- trainee lawyers dont have the possibility of being taught a range of subjects such as HR law, banking and environmental law
- legal training at university and after university does not equip students with practical skills eg advocacy, drafting, accounting practice and ethics
- law graduates do not receive appropriate supervision and training on leaving university

Possible approach

- support law library development
- staff training
- staff support
- syllabus and materials review
- encourage private/public sector partnership in training
- encourage the development of inspection of law firms
- encourage compulsory continuing education.

Source: ODA (1996), pages 70–71.

2.4 Examples of indicators used by donors

Although, as pointed out above, donors (and evaluators) have only recently begun to focus on ways in which to approach the evaluation of D/HR projects and programmes in a *systematic* way, there are an increasing number of examples of donors and evaluators developing, using and sharing with others the indicators that they have used in their assessments.

One characteristic of these different efforts is the enormous *differences between donors and evaluators* in the indicators they use – in the number used; in their complexity and/or simplicity; and in the sorts of changes they are trying to monitor. In the following examples of different indicators used, the extremes are from the Danish on the one hand – which are the simplest – to the Americans on the other – which are the most detailed.

2.4.1 Danish indicators

In September 1998, Denmark (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danida) published its *First Guidance for an Output and Outcome Indicator system*.⁸ These group D/HR projects and programmes (including governance) into four clusters: rule of law and human rights; civil society; support to democratic institutions and electoral processes; and support to public sector reform and transparency in government.

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danida (1998) First Guidelines for an Output and Indicator System. Copenhagen: Danida and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In turn, (most of) these clusters are then divided into sub-groups. For instance, the rule of law and human rights comprises indicators for the following:

- case management improved in courts;
- increased confidence in the judiciary by the general public;
- working facilities for the judiciary improved;
- peoples' access to legal assistance improved.

Again, some of these are further broken down into sub-groupings. Thus, the last sub-group is divided up into:

- people/institutions receiving legal aid; and
- peoples' access to information and advice on legal rights by trained para-legals improved.

Under the Danish approach, a group of (usually not more than six) indicators are then provided for the smallest sub-group. Most of these end with the Danish (Danida) contribution to total national effort. Box 2 illustrates the Danish approach by reproducing the indicators for the three sub-groups which comprise "Support to Democratic Institutions and Electoral Processes".

Box 2 Danida indicators used for evaluating Support to Democratic Institutions and Electoral Processes

Type of institution and administrative level	Before programme start	Project intervention to current period	Accum. 12 months status	Programme (Target year)
1. Sources of Information Improved at Libraries, in Parliaments and other Information centres 1.1 No of books/periodicals Provided 1.2 No. of other information sources 1.3 No. of people using information 1.4 Danida contribution to estimated need				
2. An independent and credible office of an Ombudsman or other related institutions (eg audit department) established/supported and capacity increased 2.1 No of complaints received 2.2 No of cases handled 2.3 No of major procedures, rules and regulations changed 2.4 Danida contribution in relation to expenditure for institution				
3. Elections increasingly complying with international standards for independent and democratic elections 3.1 No of election commissioners trained 3.2 No of these who are women 3.3 Total no to be trained for election 3.4 Information campaigns supported (Y/N) 3.5 Structure for registration of voters & monitoring procedures supported (Y/N) 3.6 Danish contribution to total election costs 3.7 Danish general support to democratic elections organisations/institutions				

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danida (1998).

2.4.2 USAID indicators

The Americans have developed the most detailed and complex sets of indicators for monitoring and evaluating D/HR projects. It is simply not possible to even attempt to capture or summarise the indicators used in this Note – for

just one sub-set of projects, those focusing on governance, the list of USAID indicators covers no less than *64 pages* of closely written text.

USAID has clustered their D/HR indicators into four groups (under Agency Objective 2): Section A, the Rule of Law; Section B, Political Processes; Section C, Civil Society; and Section D, Governance.

For each section, a process of “nesting” takes place: groups of “intermediate” results are listed providing the means through which the (broader) agency objectives are to be achieved, and, in some cases, there are lower-level intermediate results to achieve higher-level intermediate objectives. Box 3 summarises the Agency’s objectives and different intermediate results for Section C, Civil Society.

Box 3 USAID Civil Society Framework

AGENCY OBJECTIVE:	INCREASED DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY
<i>Intermediate Result 1</i>	<i>A Legal Framework to protect and promote civil society ensured</i>
Intermediate result 1.1	Strengthened advocacy for legal and regulatory reform
Intermediate result 1.2	Increased public support for needed reforms
<i>Intermediate result 2</i>	<i>Increased citizen participation in the policy process and oversight of public institutions</i>
Intermediate result 2.1	Improved CSO advocacy
Intermediate result 2.2	Increased openness of public institutions to CSO involvement in the policy process
Intermediate result 2.3	Increased political participation of groups representing marginalised populations
<i>Intermediate result 3</i>	<i>Increased institutional viability of CSOs</i>
Intermediate result 3.1	Improved financial management systems
Intermediate result 3.2	Improved fund-raising techniques
Intermediate result 3.3	Increased participatory management
Intermediate result 3.4	Improved management systems
Intermediate result 3.5	Improved external relations
<i>Intermediate result 4</i>	<i>Enhanced free flow of information</i>
Intermediate result 4.1	Plural array of independent sources of information encouraged
Intermediate result 4.2	Improved investigative reporting
Intermediate result 4.3	Increased use of new information technologies
Intermediate result 4.4	Improved financial sustainability of independent media entities
<i>Intermediate result 5</i>	<i>Strengthened democratic political culture</i>
Intermediate result 5.1	Expanded higher quality civic education in schools
Intermediate result 5.2	Expanded higher quality informal civic education initiatives

Source: USAID (1998).

It is within this framework that USAID presents the different indicators it has selected – one cluster of indicators for each of the intermediate results. For some intermediate results, two or three indicators are provided, but in some cases up to 10 can be listed, some of which are broken down into (a) and (b).

USAID does not only specify the indicators it also explains how the indicator should be defined, its relevance and how data should be collected. The process outlined as follows:

- indicator is specified
- indicator defined it and how it is to be “measured”
- comments made on its relevance (high/low)
- summary of how the data would be collected to measure the indicator and a comment on its cost
- target setting trend data – what to look for over time and the relevance of the trend data.
- plus a comments section...

Box 4 gives an example of two specific USAID indicators used to monitor and evaluate a subgroup of Governance projects. Thus, the intermediate result – policy formulation and implementation capacity strengthened – forms one part of a sub-set of the intermediate result – enhanced policy process in the executive branch – which, in turn, is to achieve the overall agency objective for governance, namely, “more transparent and accountable government institutions.

Box 4 Indicators for achieving intermediate result “policy formulation and implementation of capacity strengthened

<i>Indicator 1</i>	<i>% of people receiving training who say they have used their new knowledge and skills and can give examples of this.</i>
Definition:	as in the indicator out of all those trained or receiving TA on policy processes.
Relevance of indicator:	this is a proxy measure... It requires that those who have gone through a process of technical assistance are prepared to say that they have made use of what they have learned to be more effective
Data methods:	Sample survey. Interview with people who have attended courses “It is important to press interviewees for convincing examples. Do not do surveys until 6–12 months after training has taken place.
<i>Indicator 2</i>	<i>no. or % of users applying policy analysis tools to policy</i>
Definition:	users could be individuals, govt offices, NGOs or others. Tools include mapping, stakeholder analysis. Need to convert indicator to a scale of frequent use/occasional use/ limited use/ no use for a series of lists of key policy issues and then average scores across the issues
Relevance of indicator:	This indicator seeks to get at the actual use of the methods learned.
Methods:	Detailed interviews with sample or panel of stakeholders. Interviews will need to be conducted by persons familiar with policy analyses methods.

Source: USAID (1998).

Box 5 provides a listing of the USAID indicators specified for projects focusing on building capacity in the electoral process. These come from Section A, Political Processes (discussed above). Here, the Agency Objective is for “More genuine and competitive political processes”. The first-level intermediate result is “Credible electoral administration”, followed by the second-level intermediate result: effective administration of the electoral process. Box 5 lists the 15 indicators specified for monitoring and evaluating projects aimed at achieving this lower-level intermediate result.

Box 5 Indicators for Effective Administration of the Electoral Process

- 1 no of years since update of voters registry completed or since as audit
- 2 % of errors in voters roll
- 3 degree to which parties have opportunity to review voter registry and challenges inaccuracies
- 4 % of eligible voters registered to vote
- 5 key benchmarks in electoral calendar accomplished
- 6 degree to which vote tabulation and reporting votes is carried out accurately
- 7 % of polling places opening on time at election day
- 8 % of polling places that ran out of material on election day
- 9 nature of complaints about access to public print and electronic media
- 10 nature of credible complaints concerning favouritism of electoral authority
- 11 nature of complaints about significant security arrangement breaches
- 12 breadth of dissemination and quality of voter education materials used by election authority
- 13 degree to which spoiled ballot papers are due to inadequate understanding of voting process
- 14 % of eligible voters unable to vote because of problem at polling stations
- 15 degree of malapportionment based on provisions in the electoral law

Source: USAID (1998).

Note: As discussed in the text for this Note, for each indicators, USAID provides the following: definition and unit of measurement; relevance of the indicator; data collection method; and target setting and interpretative issues.

A number of features of the USAID approach should be noted. First, the indicators are provided a priori, there is no indication that they are to emerge from pre-project discussion. Thus, they are not participatory; rather, they are provided as a sort of “Template” against which project performance is to be measured. Secondly, these are not only indicators for evaluation, they are also – and perhaps more importantly – indicators to be used in project design stage and in monitoring. Finally, to reiterate what was said at the start of this section, it is simply impossible in this Note to provide here the mass of detail which is contained in the listing of indicators provided by USAID. The four different sections – the Rule of Law; Political Processes; Civil Society; and Governance – contain over 160 pages specifying well over 500 different indicators for these four agency objectives.

2.4.3 Indicators used by other donors and evaluations

The ODA (DFID) guidance paper on the law and good government provides a list of some 60 pages of almost 250 indicators for assessing the following four clusters of legal projects: formulation and drafting of law (97 indicators listed); application and interpretation of law (89 indicators listed); provision of legal advice and representation (46 indicators listed); and promotion of public access to and understanding of law (15 indicators listed). As discussed above, what is interesting about the ODA/DFID approach is not merely the listing of indicators but the way in which these are directly linked to the problem to be addressed and the proposals set forth for ways in which the problem might be resolved.

Moving from the specific and detailed approach of the ODA/DFID, the EU evaluation discussed above provides far fewer indicators for assessing all D/HR projects. Box 6 provides the complete list of both the overall indicators given to assess D/HR projects and the indicators listed for the six sub-project categories.

Box 6 Indicators proposed and used in EU evaluation to assess achievement in terms of the overall objective – Human Rights and Democracy

Core Indicators:

- significant decrease of severe human rights violations
- significant increase in the investigation of severe human rights violations and the punishment of offenders
- extensive competition for state power
- highly inclusive access to rights of political participation

2 Evaluation Indicators for project categories

2a support for the legislative branch

- parliament is elected democratically
- opposition rights exist and are respected
- laws are drafted as far as possible and approved mainly by parliament
- a parliamentary assistance service permits effective legislative work of parliament vis a vis the government#universal human rights are supported by parliament.

2b Support for the Executive branch

- a govt institution exists for citizen's complaints
- government-established human rights institutions are able and willing to investigate complaints
- abuses by military and police personnel decrease significantly
- effective investigation of abuses by military courts, civilian courts acting as a last instance

2c support for the juridical system

- period of time required for cases to be brought is significantly diminished as a result of juridical reform
- the no of backlog in cases is reduced
- alternative dispute mechanisms relieve significantly the burden of the juridical system.

2d support for NGOs working in the field of D/HR

- no evidence of govt discrimination against NGOs in legislation and harassment by govt action or third parties go unpunished
- free NGO access to the govt, the media, civil society and donor funds
- investigations by national And international human rights NGOs permitted and supported by the govt

2e support to independent journalism

- media can be set up and operate freely
- govt does not interfere with the media, state-run media enjoy editorial independence
- major media achieve professional status
- no harassment of journalists
- no monopolisation of the media

2f support for vulnerable groups

- abuses of members of vulnerable groups by govt agents decreases significantly
- increased access of vulnerable groups to the juridical system and alternative dispute mechanisms
- vulnerable groups improve significantly their level of self-organisation at the local and national level
- legislation is enacted for victims of human rights abuses.

Source: Heinz et al (1995).

Finally in this section, we return to the Canadian study undertaken by Kapoor. Though, as noted above, Kapoor is insistent that indicators used in D/HR projects should not be presented as a take it or leave it template but should be worked out in some sort of participative way with the main stakeholders, he does provide what he calls an “illustrative” list of indicators that is not exhaustive but which could be used to guide the choice of indicators for particular projects. He insists that this list “should NOT obviate the need to design and select indicators according to the requirements of particular projects in consultation with stakeholders” page 15). Box 7 lists Kapoor’s indicators for projects focused on Support to Electoral Processes and Legislative Assistance, while Box 8 lists Kapoor’s indicators for Legal/Human Rights Support, Women’s rights and Support to Civic Society Organisations.

Box 7 Proposed Indicators for sub-groups of D/HR Projects

1 *Support to Electoral Processes*

1. Freer and fairer elections

Indicators

- two or more independent parties contesting elections
- increased no. of people who run for public office
- increase in % of voters registered
- increase in % of eligible voters who vote
- public opinion polls that elections are free/fair/open
- increased % of voters knowledgeable about election issues/rights/responsibilities/procedures
- increased no of polling stations
- increased public access to polling stations
- fairness ratings by independent election monitors
- extent of political party boycott
- existence of/strengthened independent election commission
- extent of acceptance of results by public/political parties
- decreased no. of violent incidents
- regularity of elections

2. *Support of political parties*

Indicators

- improved party platforms
- more effective organisation at local/national level
- increased membership
- increased coalition building
- existence of/strengthening of internal party decision-making/democracy
- greater access to media
- greater campaign financing

2 *Legislative Assistance*

Indicators

- strengthening of/steps towards democratically elected federal/provincial/local legislatures
- increased laws drafted/enacted regarding civil and political rights and socio-economic and cultural rights
- regular government assessment of country's human rights situation and submissions to UN human rights bodies
- greater parliamentary/legislative consultation with citizens
- increased opposition party power and independence in legislature.

Source: Kapoor (1996).

Box 8 Proposed Indicators for sub-groups of D/HR Projects

3 *Enhancing Democratic Culture and Public Dialogue*

Indicators

- increased dissemination of legal information and education
- change in population believing in equal rights
- better public understanding of rights and responsibilities
- increased citizen participation in civil society associations and local/national bodies
- increase tolerance for dissent for minority groups
- improved/increased public access to state programmes and services
- increased public debate and dialogue on key political/development issues
- increased non-violent conflict mediation among government/citizen/minority groups
- increase public fora/roundtables on controversial public issues

4 *Legal/Human Rights support*

Indicators

- increased parliamentary ratification of and support for universal human rights
- strengthened/better functioning government human rights institutions
- increased investigation/prosecution of human rights violations
- increased independence of juridical system
- increased/improved due process rights
- decrease in abuses by police or military personnel
- more effective functioning of police and prisons systems
- less corruption in juridical system and police force (increased corruption cases brought to court, survey or lawyers experts re corrupt practices, increased corruption prosecutions, independent corruption/ethics body/ethics reform implementation, equitable/competitive salaries/improved human resource system)
- increased effectiveness and popular access to juridical system/courts
- increased public perceptions of personal freedoms and security
- decreased abuses of members of disadvantaged groups
- improved self-organisation of disadvantaged people
- increased government support for human rights abuse investigation by independent human rights organisations

5 *Women's rights and economic, social and cultural rights*

Indicators

- increased participation of women in socio-economic and political life (specific things mentioned)
- increased protection of women against violence, dowry system
- increased/improved legislation and enforcement for: protection and enhancement of employment; working conditions; right to equal pay for equal work; trade unionism, collective bargaining' access to land/resources; adequate standard of living; education; food; health (mental, physical, reproductive; housing; leisure and rest; participation in the cultural life of the community; freedom in scientific research and creative activity; protection of authorship and copyright.

6 *Support to Civil Society Organisations*

Indicators

- increased citizen participation and influence in public policy-making
- increased citizen/NGO activity
- more effective management of NGOs/CBOs
- increased participating in community decision-making
- increased community empowerment
- freer NGO/CBO/trade union access to government media, funding
- increased freedom and effectiveness of the media

Source: Kapoor (1996).

3. Capacity building indicators and issues

As discussed in previous documents, most of the Sida-selected projects for this assignment are linked to or directly concerned with capacity building. Thus as well as focusing on indicators to assess D/HR projects, it is also necessary to consider indicators for assessing capacity building projects. As this Note is focused particularly on D/HR indicators, this section will be relatively brief.

In his study (commissioned by Sida), Moore (1994) highlights the same problem in evaluating capacity building projects as encountered in trying to evaluate D/HR projects, namely that there is no agreement on how to define institution/capacity building.⁹ As there is no agreed theory or agreed end-point, the ways in which projects and programmes might be assessed is open to differing interpretation. Moore lists what is known or agreed about institution-building (1994: 31):

1. Institution-building (IB) is a long term activity; insofar as it requires external support, this support should be long-term.
2. Also IB is more a process than a blueprint activity' it cannot be programmed in detail and will require flexibility and adaptiveness on the part of the people involved including funders.
3. IB is no a mechanical activity but requires adaptiveness to the specific political, cultural, economic etc context. Effective IB agents should therefore be familiar with the context.
4. IB involves at some level or other changes in social relationships. These often generate resistance. there should thus be substantial commitment to the process on the part of the people directly concerned and (with some scope for trade-offs) the people who have the power over the organisations concerned.
5. Successful IB requires effective, proactive leadership.
6. There are generic skills that can assist in the process of organisational change. Yet there is considerable disagreement over the usefulness of generic specialisation.

In this context, how does one go about evaluating institution building? Moore argues that this is not easy, because of five specific problem areas: (page 34).

⁹ M. Moore (1994) "Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method: A Review of Literature and Ideas". Report to Sida. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. See also Moore, M., S. Stewart and A. Hudock (1995) Institution Building As a Development Assistance Method: A Review of Literature and Ideas. Sida Evaluation Report 1995/1. Stockholm: Sida.

- The field is wide, diffuse and poorly defined.
- IB is not a goal in itself, so how far should one be thinking of evaluating the process of IB and how far the results of IB: the outputs, impacts of institutions. In practice it is often difficult to evaluate at any of these levels.
- Evaluation of IB is essentially contested: there is an inevitable tension between external evaluator and the agency over the evaluation procedures and no evident prospect of resolving this.
- There are significant attribution problems – how to link cause and effect is not easy.
- Evaluation of IB is difficult, as there is not even agreement in the theoretical literature over central concepts.

It is for this reason that the literature on evaluation of IB generally comprises a series of checklists of things to look for. Unfortunately the content of these check-lists tends to vary widely. For instance, Phillips lists 14 points in three groupings:¹⁰

- success in bringing about change programme impact; acceptance; adaptation to local conditions; innovation; expansion; relevance of standards;
- support. Survival; continuity of programme and leadership; backing and support; financial support from domestic resources;
- leadership and quality. Leadership; efficiency; growth of professionalism; pressures for reform.

In contrast, Goldsmith suggests that four different dimension of IB be evaluated separately:¹¹

- resource acquisition;
- structure and function;
- outputs and outcome
- linkages.

Another “way into” drawing up indicators for assessing capacity building is to try to draw out those factors which assessments of capacity building projects have found particularly important in achieving objectives. The following list from Austin’s synthesis study of UK ODA capacity building projects, provides a 10-point list of factors deemed to be important:¹²

¹⁰ H. Phillips (1969) *Guide for Development, Institution Building and Reform*. London: Praeger.

¹¹ A. Goldsmith (1991) *Institutional Development for Agricultural Research: Concepts, Models and Measures*. The Hague: International Service for National Agricultural Research.

¹² C. Austin (1994) “The Process of Change: A Synthesis Study of Institutional Strengthening Project and Experience”. London: ODA, Evaluation Department.

- a realistic assessment of the whole institutional framework – social, political, cultural, budgetary, economic and legal, including analysis of the essential prior conditions;
- a multi-disciplinary team approach including specialist skills;
- a strong commitment and ownership by the partner organisation of mutually agreed objectives;
- flexible project design, responding especially to the recipients' absorptive capacity and willingness to change;
- realistic objectives and careful and detailed monitoring;
- cost-effective (especially local) training;
- consideration of institutional twinning or NGO links;
- dynamic and committed leadership;
- motivated project staff and beneficiaries;
- a long term approach to both design and longer term aid.

Moore sums up his views on how to approach evaluation of capacity building by arguing that any general framework for evaluation can compromise little more than a series of check-lists and that the relevance of particular points in any checklist will vary from case to case. He emphasises two points. Firstly, that aid agencies be as clear as possible about the framework that will be used for evaluation and stick to that so that aid recipients know what is expected of them. Secondly, that aid agencies should try to move towards relatively standardised evaluation frameworks, in practice standard checklists.

4. D/HR indicators and phase 1 of the Sida study

This paper has been written as a background Note to the first phase of the Sida study. It ends with some reflections for the first phase work.

- It is unrealistic to aim to draw up a set of indicators for evaluating D/HR projects in Phase 1, and unlikely that it will be possible in Phase 2.
- To the extent that one is persuaded by the arguments made in the paper by Kapoor, it is undesirable to think in terms of trying to create an a priori template of indicators distinct from the history of each project and programme; these should be drawn up in a participatory way.
- Much of the literature indicates that to approach indicators at the evaluation stage of the project cycle is to approach things from the wrong end. There are severe limits to what can be done with indicators for evaluation when no clear indicators have been developed prior to the evaluation taking place.

Annex 5

Data tables

Table 1
Key features of projects in South Africa

Title	Code	Title	Total Funds (MSEK)	Funding Completed	Earlier or later funding phases	Sida sole foreign funder of project	2 years or more support ¹	Swedish NGO channel/ Embassy	NGO/ Govt.
CPP	RESA126/93	Community Peace Programme	5.7 ¹		✓	✓ ³	✓	RWI	NGO
IDASA	RESA11/94	Training for election monitoring	1.6	✓		✓ ²		SILC	NGO
AOG	RESA6/94	Democracy and electoral training	2.0	✓		✓		PMU	NGO
SAPS	RESA143/94	Police Training	1.43	✓		✓		RWI	Govt.
PANC	RESA61/95	Provincial Administration of Northern Cape	32.5			✓ ³	✓	Embassy	Govt.
CALS	RESA76/95	Support to University of Witwatersrand	1.0 ¹		✓		✓	RWI	NGO
WILDD	RESA39/94	Reaching or Clarity	10		✓	✓	✓	FPK/DIAKONIA	NGO
WDF	RESA64/94	Training of Female Parliamentarians	1 ¹	✓		✓ ³	✓	Embassy	NGO
NUM	RESA39/95	Support to National Union of Mineworkers	1	✓	✓		✓	RMG	NGO
DPSA	DES0501/96	Support to Civil Service Reform	25		✓		✓	Embassy	Govt.
IAJ	DES0168/96	Institute for Advancement of Journalism	4.8		✓		✓	Embassy	NGO
LRGU	DES0500/97	Law, Race and Gender Unit	4 ¹		✓	✓	✓	Embassy	NGO
UPEP	INEC441/97	Urban Planning and Environmental Projects	20.7			✓		Embassy	Govt.

¹ excluding earlier or later phases of funding

² for this project yes, but IDASA has multi-donor funding

³ other donors funds present but in minor amounts.

Table 2
Key features of projects in Central America

	Code	Title	Total Project Funding	Sida Funding	Funding Completed	Other Funding Phases	Sida sole foreign funder	2 years or more support	NGO Channel/ Embassy	NGO/ Govt
Nicaragua	CSE	Support to the Supreme Electoral Council in Nicaragua.		SEK 36 m ¹	✓	✓ ²	No	✓	Embassy	Govt.
	LDC	Local Development Committees	³	SEK 3m ⁴	✓	✓	No		UNDP	Govt.
	INIFOM	Training of Local Government Staff.		SEK 1.6m ⁵	✓		No	✓	UNDP	Govt.
	RAASRAAN	Institutional Support to the Autonomous Atlantic Regions in Nicaragua.		SEK 25m (Phase 2)		✓ ⁶	Yes	✓	Embassy	Govt.
Guatemala	IIDH	Human Rights Programme	\$1m (approx)	SEK 2.22m	✓		No	✓	Embassy	Govt.
	COPMAGUA	Diakonia Programme for Guatemala	SEK 9m	SEK 4m	✓	✓	No	✓	Diakonia	NGO
	COINDE	Diakonia Programme for Guatemala	\$400,000 ⁷	SEK 1.56m ⁸	✓	✓	No	✓	Diakonia	NGO
	ONAMI	Technical Support to gender-related legal reforms	\$604,000	\$300,000			No	✓	UNDP	Govt.

1 Relä 14/95 (SEK 15m) plus Relä 31/96 (Support to elections) (SEK 21m).

2 Relä 31/96

3 Whole Programme (including Support to Transition of local govts(?)) – \$1.9 m (Source – Sida Stockholm)

4 Followed by extension – RELÄ 89/96 – SEK 2 m.

5 Additional funding by govt. of \$ 253,000.

6 Relä 6/94

7 Global 3 year plan (96–99)

8 1997 and 1998 Diakonia funding.

	Code	Title	Total Project Funding	Sida Funding	Funding Completed	Other Funding Phases	Sida sole foreign funder	2 years or more support	NGO Channel/ Embassy	NGO/ Govt
El Salvador										
CONSORCIO	RELA 66/96	Civil society's participation in the election process.	\$ 1.13m	SEK 1.68m	✓		No		Luther-hjälpen	NGO
FONDO	RELA 24/96	Fund for the Protection of wounded and disabled due to armed conflict.	\$812,000	\$783,000	✓		No	✓	UNDP	Govt.
ECJ	RELA 63/95	Support to the Legal System of El Salvador	\$693,000	\$ 535,000	✓		Yes	✓	UNDP	Govt.
ANSP	RELA 64/95	Technical Assistance for the National Academy of Public Security.	\$ 687,000	\$ 687,000	✓	✓	No	✓	UNDP	Govt.
ACJ	RELA 104/94	Support to YMCA-YMCA Programmes in C.America, youth activities 94/95	\$ 3m	SEK 2.4m ⁹	✓	✓	Yes	✓	KFUM-KFUK	NGO
FUNDAUNGO	GD21/97	Diakonia Programme for Guatemala	SEK 5.6m ¹⁰	SEK 0.7m (1997+1998)	✓	✓	No	✓	Diakonia	NGO
SACDEL	GD21/97	Diakonia Programme for Guatemala	\$540,000 (1997+98)	\$343,000 ¹¹	✓		No	✓	Diakonia	NGO

⁹ 1994-96 \$ 150,000 from Sida for El Salvador. Total Sida support to 1990-96 programme (El Sal)- SEK 2.4m (Source - Sida Stockholm).

¹⁰ Total support from all funders - 1997 and 1998 .

¹¹ 1997-1998 (SEK 480,000); 1996-1998 (SEK 700,000) (Diakonia application to Sida). Plus \$275,000 additional municipal devt. prog. 1997-98 (Source Diakonia Nov.98)

Table 3 Project assessment scores by technical evaluability criteria
Central America

Evalability Criteria	CONSORCIO	RAASRAAN	ECJ	ONAM	FUNDAUNGO	CSE	INFOM	FONDO	SACDEL	COPMAGUA	ANSP	CONDE	ACJ	LDC	IDH
Part A Project design and ownership															
Purpose specific	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Purpose realistic	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Purpose measurable	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
2a Quality of project purpose	1	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	4	3	3
2b Broad ownership of project purpose among stakeholders	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	3	3
2c Identifiable outputs	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
2d Broad agreement by primary stakeholders on success criteria	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	3	3	2	3	2
2e Output to purpose pathway clearly understood	1	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	4
3a Availability of baseline data	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
3b Standard of monitoring system and availability of monitoring data	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	3
3c Sample of stakeholders identifiable and contactable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	2
4 How costly would an evaluation be	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	4
5 How easily can benefits be attributed to the project intervention alone	2	1	2	2	3	4	3	1	4	3	3	3	2	4	4
Sub-total Evaluability	19	20	22	22	22	22	23	23	23	25	25	26	28	29	31

Table 4 Project assessment scores by technical evaluability criteria
South Africa

Project	PANCS	UPEP	CPP	LRGU	IDASA	NUM	AOG	IAJ	CALS	WDF	DPSA	WILD	SAPS
Evaluability Criteria													
Part A Project design and ownership													
Purpose specific	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Purpose realistic	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Purpose measurable	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
2a Quality of project purpose	2	1	3	1	2	2	1	3	3	1	3	3	2
2b Broad ownership of project purpose among stakeholders	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3
2c Identifiable outputs	1	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	4
2d Broad agreement by primary stakeholders on success criteria	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	3
2e Output to purpose pathway clearly understood	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
3a Availability of baseline data	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	3
3b Standard of monitoring system and availability of monitoring data	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
3c Sample of stakeholders identifiable and contactable	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
4 How costly would an evaluation be	3	1	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
5 How easily can benefits be attributed to the project intervention alone	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	4	3	4
Sub-total Evaluability	18	19	22	22	22	23	23	24	24	24	24	25	27

From the point of view of technical suitability, our assessment scoring system would provide a maximum score of 10 and a minimum (if every criteria received a score of 4) of 40. The results in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show that the 28 projects range from 18 to 31. Table 3.4 summarises the results by providing a count of the different scores by criteria.

Table 5 Count of scores by region for technical evaluability criteria

Criteria	All (28) Count of Scores				South Africa (13) Count of Scores				Central America (15) Count of Scores			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Quality of project purpose	5	10	12	1	4	4	5	0	1	6	7	1
Broad ownership of project purpose among stakeholders	6	16	6	0	3	7	3	0	3	9	3	0
Identifiable outputs	3	14	10	1	2	6	4	1	1	8	6	0
Broad agreement by primary stakeholders on success criteria	2	15	10	1	1	5	7	0	1	10	3	1
Output to purpose pathway clearly understood	1	18	8	1	0	11	2	0	1	7	6	1
Availability of baseline data	0	7	17	4	0	4	8	1	0	3	9	3
Standard of monitoring system and availability of monitoring data	1	4	20	3	1	1	10	1	0	3	10	2
Sample of stakeholders identifiable and contactable	19	6	3	0	7	5	1	0	12	1	2	0
How costly would an evaluation be	3	15	9	1	2	7	4	0	1	8	5	1
How easily can benefits be attributed to the project intervention alone	3	10	9	6	1	6	4	2	2	4	5	4

Annex 6

Priority criteria and recommendations for phase 2

Chapter 5 (Findings) and Chapter 7 (Conclusions) in the Main Report analysed which of the sample of 28 projects could be considered to be technically evaluable using logframe related methodologies (i.e. the evaluability assessment). However in deciding whether or not to evaluate any particular project at any particular time, donor agencies will want to take into account a range of other factors. Some of these were identified in Task 4 of the Terms of Reference: the overall institution building context in which the project has been carried out; the degree of specificity of the knowledge, services or equipment provided through the evaluated projects; indicators regarding ownership of the project; and the commitment and capacity of the targeted institution's top management.

The team has also identified a number of 'priority criteria' which may help to determine how important it is for Sida to evaluate a project at a given time. For example, a project which is rated as having low evaluability according to logframe criteria may be interesting to evaluate because it is particularly innovative or experimental. Hence it will be necessary to consider how to solve problems of low evaluability with alternative methods of evaluation. Alternatively a project which has been very well designed and has high technical evaluability may be concerned with a policy area which is no longer a Sida priority, so Sida may not be interested in committing resources to conducting an evaluation. Four priority criteria are considered: the policy frame of Sida into which the project fits; the attitude of stakeholders to doing a full evaluation; the innovatory or experimental nature of the project; and the existence of other evaluations of the project or plans for future evaluations.

Finally there is the question of timing – how appropriate is it to evaluate a project 'now', to what extent can the benefits be expected to have been realised? This Annex deals with these each of these issues in turn, and concludes by making some brief recommendations as to the potential selection of projects for a full impact evaluation. The text summarises briefly the key findings. For full details the reader is referred to the Project Assessments in Annex 7.

1. Information relevant for sampling for future evaluation

1.1 Institution building context

Institution building has both a narrow and a wide meaning for most of the 28 projects in the sample. In the narrow sense, the projects frequently aimed to develop the capacity of the targeted institution itself (often a local government organisation or NGO). However in most cases the purpose was also to use the implementing agency to reach and strengthen or reform the wider institution, for example:

- the parliament and other democratically-elected institutions,
- the media,
- the magistracy,
- the judicial system,
- political parties and electoral institutions

In a few cases, no strengthening of the implementing agency occurred or was intended, for example with the electoral support projects.

Project's relation to other Sida support to the institution

Within the sample of 28 projects we can identify a number of different patterns of Sida support. Firstly, there were a few cases where Sida has funded another and distinct project through the same implementing institution. In South Africa there are two examples: Assemblies of God was funded to implement a voter education project, and it also has an adult education project funded by Sida. IDASA has other Sida support. In Central America, there are also two examples: INIFOM and ANSP.

However, whilst there are not many cases where Sida funded several discrete projects through the same institution, there are many examples where Sida has provided extensive support to an institution through several consecutive funding agreements for basically the same project. In many of these cases the purpose of the project has evolved through different funding agreements but the goal has not really altered IAJ, LRGU, CALS, CPP, COINDE and COP-MAGUA. In fact it is interesting to note that the reason for the new funding agreement may be because the real purpose of the project has changed rather than vice versa. From an evaluation perspective, it may be interesting to evaluate all projects or phases of projects implemented by one agency together, in order to fully assess the impact of the project(s) and the impact on the capacity of the implementing institution (as well as for logistical ease).

In some cases, Sida has continued to fund the same area of democracy and human rights or the same purpose, but using different implementing agencies. For example, in the case of AOG, further democracy education has continued through another church based NGO, Practical Ministries. In such cir-

cumstances, an evaluation of the first project could be tied in with the second project, so that lessons may be learned about the different implementation experiences, and to draw out broader lessons by comparison of how the different NGOs operated.

In certain policy areas, Sida has funded several different projects concurrently. For example, in South Africa, the three governance projects tackle public sector reform at national, provincial and municipal level. Thus a review of good governance, an increasingly important area of Sida support, might usefully evaluate the three projects as a group (together with other related projects) if it wished to draw broad lessons on the design and impact of public institution building interventions.

Another distinct pattern of Sida funding is the use of intermediary channels such as UNDP, or the Swedish NGOs: Diakonia and the Ralph Wallenberg Institute. In these cases, the intermediary may bring its own policy framework, or special expertise, which could provide a focus in an area. RWI has, for example, specialised in police and policing, and has guided three projects in South Africa that have interacted with each other at different times in support of the formal and informal institutions involved. Similarly, in Central America, Diakonia is focusing its strategy on local democracy development both at the local government and community development level – blending local project development with lessons learning and national policy development. It would be useful to evaluate each of these groups of projects together.

Other donor support

In Central America all of the sampled projects are co-financed with other donors except one: RAASRAAN. In contrast, in South Africa only six are co-financed and even for these six, Sida is the main external funder. It may be interesting, especially in Central America to coordinate evaluation efforts with other donors in order to be able to gain a full picture of the projects activities and impact.

Self-development efforts

In terms of dependence on donor assistance, some institutions rely or relied entirely on Sida for their existence (e.g. WILDD). They may have very limited ability to raise funds either because of their lack of attachment to any larger organisation, because they do not offer services for which they could charge, or because their target group are too poor to pay. Other institutions are adept at raising funds for their work. In South Africa, CALS and IDASA are good examples of projects where the implementing NGOs that have mobilised grant funding from a wide variety of sources for their work. In Central America local NGOs are aware of the unreliable nature of donor funding and are looking to raise funds locally as well as operate their own small enterprises. In terms of cost-recovery few projects operating in the field of democracy and human rights have the opportunity to charge for their services. In South Africa, IAJ is about the only example of an NGO successfully pursuing cost re-

covery because its training is of value to the media which in South Africa, if not in SADC region, has sufficient profit levels to pay for their staff to attend courses.

For public institutions increasingly tight public finances have affected the strength of their resource base. National control of revenues in South Africa means that at municipal and provincial level, they have little ability to generate their own resources until public revenue reforms are completed. Thus, the local government implementer of the UPEP and PANC are very much dependent on Sida's assistance for acquisition of external resources and skills.

In summary, for many working in the democracy and human rights area, there is limited possibility of significantly reducing their total dependency on external aid and hence they are keen to reform themselves into professional organisations that will have greater possibilities of maintaining donor support. Any assessment of the capacity of targeted implementing institutions and the sustainability of project impact should bear these limitations of context in mind.

1.2 Degree of specificity of project support to targeted staff and institutions

The time in the field was too short to meet a substantial number of beneficiaries, however the limited evidence available suggests that in the majority of projects the knowledge, services or equipment provided were relevant or very relevant to the needs of the institution. In some instances the project was the only source of support in a crucial area of democracy and human rights, and met a critical need at the time. A general point noted by many target institutions was that working with Swedish NGOs helped the local agency to better understand donor procedures, and how to access external funding. In the context of South Africa, this was very relevant to organisations who had not been able to develop international links prior to 1994. Through this experience, therefore, the target institutions were able to improve their ability to request more relevant assistance, and gained confidence in dealing with donors.

The use of Swedish NGOs that understood the target institution's needs was another factor that appeared to improve the relevance of the assistance provided. In the case of the CPP, the project was essentially experimental and was able to evolve according to the results obtained on the ground in searching for peace-building strategies. The expertise, local knowledge and flexibility of the Raul Wallenberg Institute helped the project to redefine its activities. However where Swedish NGOs appeared not to have a sufficient appreciation of local circumstances, it was noted that this tended to reduce the specificity of services of knowledge offered. The WILDD and IDASA projects are examples of the latter, because in the view of the local partners, the Swedish NGOs (FPK and SILC) were not aware of the local context hence could not provide relevant assistance in all areas.

In certain other cases, beneficiaries felt that training courses and seminars were not as relevant, specific or tailored to their needs as they should have

been. For example, the human rights training offered to police advisors and commanders under the SAPS, contained international aspects which were not seen as directly relevant to the daily work of police. An issue worth raising is that knowledge on perhaps sensitive areas of human rights and democracy issues would not be seen necessarily as immediately relevant to those targeted. The function of some of the projects was however to broaden attitudes and create space for these reforms and new attitudes to take hold.

Where Swedish experiences were provided either through courses or by visiting experts, the applicability of some aspects of the 'Swedish model' was not always considered directly relevant. For example, elements of municipal planning (UPEP), good governance (DPSA) and (PANC), and policing (SAPS) were not always judged to be relevant given the context that they would be applied to in South Africa. These experiences were seen more as an ideal to be aimed for.

1.3 Ownership of stakeholders

The nature of the implementing institution

The scale and capacity of the different implementing institutions varies widely from national arms of government to small NGOs. In South Africa, four of the implementers were public agencies (DPSA, UPEP, PANC and SAPS). The remainder were either independent NGOs (five) or semi-independent bodies attached to a university (four). In Central America, nine projects are associated with NGOs, five with government bodies and two are autonomous bodies created by acts of parliament (FONDO and INIFOM). The majority of the sample can therefore formally be classified as NGOs of one kind or another, with only nine of the 28 projects directly working within a government agency.

The designing/initiating organisation

The most influential designer in Central America was UNDP which was responsible for initiating six projects in the sample. Diakonia supported four projects using Sida funds. In South Africa the Embassy adopted a deliberate strategy of using Swedish NGO expertise to help in appraising the large number of requests that were received from South African NGOs,¹ hence Swedish NGOs had a major role in the design of eight of the projects in the sample. The most prominent was the Raul Wallenberg Institute which was responsible for three projects in the sample, as well being involved in several other initiatives.²

The targeted participants

A wide range of participants (meaning primary beneficiaries or those who directly received the project benefits) were involved in the sampled projects, from the illiterate poor to judges, lawyers and police commissioners. Details are provided in the individual project assessments.

¹ Personal Communication from M. Bostrom, Sida 1999.

² Centre for Development Studies; Community Law Centre; Constitutional Committee of the ANC.

For most projects, participation can be described as mainly voluntary. Residents of townships and rural communities took part in training courses, receiving no or minimal expenses (WILDD, CPP). But for others, overseas training or study tours provided an incentive to participate (SAPS, UPEP, NUM). The opportunity to meet with professional peers in conferences or workshops was an incentive in other cases (CALs, LRGU, INIFOM). It is very hard to generalise in this area since the nature of the targeted beneficiaries and the arrangements for involving was extremely varied.

1.4 Commitment and capacity of target institution's management

During the fieldwork the consultants examined whether the target management seemed to have the potential to realise the changes intended by the project: their readiness and opportunity to provide a 'sound' environment for the future activities and effects of the project. In evaluation terms, this will obviously have a significant impact on the assessment of project sustainability.

Commitment of the target institution's management

Given the limited time available and the fact that several projects had closed and/or management had changed or moved on, it was difficult to arrive at a judgement as to the degree of commitment that the management had to sustaining the benefits that the project had or was delivering. However where it was possible, then commitment was generally judged to be either high or moderate. In South Africa, many implementers came from a background of struggle under the apartheid regime and had shown considerable courage and determination in earlier years. This had transformed itself into a clear pursuit of the same goals in the subsequent transition to democracy. On the other hand, a few cases show evidence of a reduction in commitment now that the focus of the project or the target institution had become less critical. Key players may have left in such instances (CALs, WDF) to pursue what they perceived as more relevant tasks elsewhere.

In the police training projects, it was felt that there was a legacy of opposition to reform and to the acceptance of basic human rights which reduced commitment to the project. In El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua there were doubts expressed frequently as to the commitment of many government officials and politicians to the implementation of reform processes aimed at strengthening democracy and respect for human rights.

Capacity of target institution's management

Some of the target institutions are relatively young and still forming themselves (FUNDAUNGO), so it is not possible at this stage to make a judgement as to management capacity. However, where a judgement could be made, the capacity of management to continue the work of the project after its completion was generally considered to be quite low. A number of projects had been impeded by problems of financial management and reporting. Sida had suspended funding in some of these cases until the accounts had been audited and statements

presented to Sida. Similarly, the management was sometimes unable to use all of the funds allocated. The shortage of qualified personnel is a common difficulty faced in the projects examined, as were in some cases the resources to recruit required staff. In other cases, the institutional development achieved was seriously undermined by elections in which trained officials were rotated out of their original positions (e.g. INIFOM and RAASRAAN).

2. Priority criteria

We will now turn to consider the factors which in addition to technical evaluability might affect the priority Sida places on conducting an evaluation.

2.1 Sida policy orientation

Most projects in the sample appeared to fit with current Sida policy on democracy and human rights support, and indeed in some cases a project appears to address more than one policy priority. The only exception to this was the support to the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) project in South Africa. This was rated as 'High priority at time but less important now' because support to the media is now of lower priority in the Sida South Africa country strategy.

On the face of the evidence available (see Table A6.1), the criteria 'does the project fit current Sida policy?' does not appear to distinguish between the projects in the sample. However, our assessment is to some extent uncertain because we felt that the main policy document (Justice and Peace, 1997) does not make the relative priorities of different policy areas very clear. If Sida decided that certain areas of its democracy and human rights support policy merited greater support or emphasis in future, this may affect the relative priority given to evaluations of the projects in our sample, as it might be assumed that Sida would then be more interested in learning the lessons from the design and implementation of similar projects in its past portfolio.

Table A6.1 The project fits current Sida policy orientation	No. of Projects
High priority at time of project initiation and now	26
High priority at time but less important now	1
Moderate priority	1
Low priority	0

2.2 Positive attitude to evaluation among stakeholders

The attitude of key stakeholders to an evaluation exercise is a key determinant of the ease with which an evaluation can be carried out, as well as potentially the quality of information obtained. Clear cases were noted where a project would be quite evaluable on logframe related criteria, yet there was a

very low interest in doing in evaluation and that this might so affect the level of cooperation that any evaluation would be difficult if it required a participatory element, and probably would prove of limited value (for example the Training for Election Monitoring Project in South Africa (IDASA)).

The range of stakeholder views solicited was limited by the time available. In general, stakeholders in 14 projects had a very positive attitude and wished to play an active role in any evaluation. More specifically, amongst project implementers, 18 expressed an interest in an evaluation exercise. Other implementers were positive but expressed a range of caveats:

- they did not wish to be actively involved: they would prefer instead to be externally evaluated (UPEP) as they felt too close to project activities to be objective;
- they wanted the evaluation focused on the most recent activities, because it was considered that the past phases of the project were either not relevant to the present purpose, or evaluations of those earlier efforts had already been done (YWCA-YMCA, ACJ and CPP);
- they were interested so long as the evaluation bore in mind future planning needs, and aimed to produce lessons for anticipated new projects (IIDH and CSE);
- they were interested so long as the evaluation was not of the Sida project in isolation, but was of the larger programme of which the project forms a part (e.g. DSPA).

Several project implementing organisations expressed a desire that the evaluation consist of a mixture of external people and people from within the project or implementing organisation. This is so that the often complex socio-political-cultural contextual factors which affect the design and implementation of democracy and human rights projects are fully built into the evaluation, and so that the results of the evaluation can be more fully owned and therefore acted upon by the institutions concerned.

Project implementers also recommended that the donor or funding agency (Sida, UNDP or funding NGO) be included in any evaluations conducted. This is because project implementation can sometimes be aided or hindered by the funding agency – for example where it gets involved in technical decision-making, delayed fund release, delayed plan approval etc, and so this factor must be assessed in project evaluations.

Ten projects had implementers and/or beneficiaries who were not interested in an evaluation. There were several reasons for this: the project was a long time ago; those involved would be hard to locate (AOG and DASA); the project was still ongoing and impact was still to emerge (FUNDAUNGO); or the agencies concerned were no longer in existence (LDC) and therefore there was limited or no relevance to them in doing an evaluation now. In some cases the project would prefer to do their own evaluation rather than participate in one organised by Sida. This may be due to the multi-funded nature of the project (CALIS) or where local funding is a high proportion of project cost (PANC).

In summary, of the 28 projects considered, stakeholders in 18 were either interested or highly interested in an evaluation, whereas in 10 there was marginal or little interest. For those where there was little interest, the feasibility of undertaking an evaluation which relies on soliciting views from a range of stakeholders should be seriously considered. For other projects, a positive attitude from key stakeholders can overcome a number of other obstacles.

Table A6.2 Positive attitude to evaluation among stakeholders	No. of Projects
Highly Interested	6
Interested	12
Marginally interested	8
Little interest	2

2.3 Project design has important innovative or experimental features

A project which has low evaluability in logframe terms may still yield many valuable lessons for future democracy and human rights projects because of its experimental or innovative nature. Innovation has different aspects: innovative as far as Sida is concerned may be highest priority here, even though innovative in the local context or as far as other donors are concerned may be low. The institution targeted is also likely to have a view on the innovative or experimental value of the project in relation to its own needs. This study was handicapped by not knowing Sida's experiences elsewhere, however three projects were considered highly innovative or experimental (see Box A6.1).

Apart from the three cases described below, nine other projects were judged to have moderate innovative or experimental features. It would seem that in the area of democracy and human rights support, given the relatively short period for experience to have developed, innovation or experiment is still a common feature of many projects and the different forms of innovation should be considered carefully in making an evaluability assessment.

Table A6.3 Project design has important innovative or experimental features	No. of Projects
High innovative value	3
Moderate value	9
Marginal value	12
Little or no value	4

Box A6.1: Examples of Innovative Projects

Community Peace Programme (CPP)

This project is the most innovative and experimental in the South African sample. It has set out to develop a new approach to community policing in the South Africa context in an effort to overcome the failure of traditional police methods to reduce crime and improve public safety particularly in large townships areas.

Support to Peace Accords on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (COPMAGUA)

This project is considered innovative as it is designed to equip the representatives of the indigenous populations with the tools needed to pursue negotiations for the implementation of those aspects of the Peace Accords which relate specifically to them (languages, land, sacred sites, traditional law etc.). COPMAGUA pursues these negotiations by maintaining a massive participatory and consultative process across the country.

Gender-related Legal Reforms (ONAM)

This project is considered by the project ex-management as innovative because it focused on developing political lobbying strategies around specific law reform for gender equality. It also aimed to establish this capacity amongst civil groups and within ONAM. These techniques are not usually implemented in development projects and there are lessons to learn on the most successful techniques developed.

2.4 Project is due to be or has been evaluated by another organisation

Whilst a number of projects in the sample had had 'evaluations' conducted, our assessment and often that the stakeholders was that these were usually only partial. This may have been because only a part of the project was investigated, or that there had not been time for the full impact to have emerged, or that the evaluator did not have sufficient resources to undertake a more comprehensive study. For the majority of projects, no evaluation had been conducted, none had conducted ex-post impact evaluations, and few were countenancing evaluations (with the exception of three). This is quite surprising given the fact that many of these projects represented complex and relatively unusual undertakings for the agencies concerned.

A number of other reasons were identified for there being few evaluations in our sample. Firstly, there is no apparent system at country level for Sida to undertake evaluations of its projects. Secondly, the Embassies did/do not have sufficient capacity to mount and supervise evaluations. In some instances, evaluations were included in the project agreement, but no follow-up occurred. In several cases, project implementers expressed an interest in having an evaluation conducted but indicated that there was no money allocated for it in the budget.

In sum, there would appear to be no cases where a project should not be considered for evaluation because it has already been the subject of a comprehensive study. There are three cases where our information suggests that a full evaluation is already planned, and this fact would need to be considered in the decision to select projects for full impact evaluation. There may be possibilities for Sida to combine an evaluation with that already planned. For the

projects that had been evaluated in the past, either by Sida or by others, very few reviewed by the team were considered either comprehensive or sufficiently rigorous to have addressed the questions of goal achievement, relevance, effects, efficiency and sustainability, as set out in Sida's evaluation policy.³ (Nor, indeed, would it appear that they would have met all the requirements for: objectivity, impartiality, transparency, co-operation, credibility, quality, efficiency as set out in Sida's evaluation policy document).

Table A6.4 Project is due to be or has been evaluated by another organisation	No. of Projects
No evaluation yet	15
Partial evaluation	10
Evaluation due to be carried out	3
Full evaluation done	0

2.5 Timing of the evaluation in relation to project cycle

The extent to which a project's impact can be evaluated obviously depends to some extent on the stage in the project cycle which the project is expected to have reached. If the project has only just started it will be unreasonable to expect it to have had any significant impact on beneficiaries. If the project was complete a long time ago, it may be reasonable to expect to see benefits, but the key contacts may have moved on, and it will be difficult to isolate the specific benefits which can be attributed to any one project.

The key question to be considered is 'what stage of the project cycle should the sampled projects have reached at the time of our assessment (January 1999)?'. For a project that is still being implemented, it may be appropriate to carry out a mid-term evaluation which focuses identifying achievements and problems to date, and then making recommendations for the remainder of the project life. For a project which has finished, an impact evaluation may be carried out, aiming to judge whether the goal and purposes have actually been achieved. However, particularly in the field of democracy and human rights, the achievement of full impact may take many years (for example if this relies on changing attitudes of key groups such as the policy or the judiciary) and so a full impact evaluation may not be able to be conducted for several years.

In this study, the team concentrated on asking, if an evaluation was to be carried out, what would it be reasonable to expect the project to have achieved, based on project documentation and stakeholders comments.

In South Africa, the majority of projects were assessed as suitable for an evaluation of the project outputs and purpose, whilst only two projects could be expected to have achieved the stated goal (IDASA and WDF). In Central America, as many as one third (five) of the projects were judged to be at a stage where project impact in terms of contribution towards goal achieve-

³ Sida (1995) Sida's Evaluation Policy, Dept for Evaluation and Internal Audit

ment should have been achieved. Six could be evaluated against their stated purpose, whilst four others were at relatively early stages in implementation and hence could only be expected to have achieved implementation of activities and achievement of outputs.

To some extent the answers to this question of timing depend on the nature of project purpose proposed. If the project was ambitious and set a high purpose, then it would be less likely that it could be evaluated against its purpose by the end of the project life. Where the purpose was set too low, without a sufficient degree of development change foreseen, then an evaluation would be more likely to capture the purpose or goal (INIFOM and IDASA). In other cases, the purposes were multiple so that some may have been achieved by this point while others are still to be reached (LRGU, CALS, ONAM). Finally, it was evident that capacity building projects often required extra time for the impact to manifest itself (DPSA, PANC).

Assuming that an evaluation would be most useful to Sida and to most stakeholders where at least achievement of project purpose can be assessed, then a total of 20 projects can be categorised as suitable for evaluation at this stage.

Table A6.5 Timing suitable for:	No. of Projects
Impact evaluation	7
Purpose evaluation	13
Output evaluation	7
Activity evaluation	1

2.6 Conclusions on priority criteria

The detailed scores for each project can be found in the detailed project assessment forms in Annex 7. In summary, from a priority perspective, the projects which are rated the highest (on the basis of a simple aggregation of the scores for each of the priority criteria) are:

COPMAGUA	Diakonia Programme for Guatemala
ONAM	Technical Support to gender-related legal reforms, Guatemala
ANSP	Technical Assistance for the National Academy of Public Security, El Salvador
CONSORCIO	Civil society's participation in the election process. El Salvador
ECJ	Support to the Legal System of El Salvador
IIDH	Human Rights Programme
UPEP	Urban Planning and Environmental Projects
CPP	Community Peace Programme

The least variation was found in the criteria concerned with orientation to Sida policy (most projects did fit with key policy areas) and whether an evaluation has already or will be carried out (most had not been comprehensively

evaluated). The most critical priority criteria therefore are the questions of *timing*, the *attitude of stakeholders* to an evaluation and the *innovative or experimental* nature of the project.

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The Evaluability of Democracy and Human Rights Projects

Democracy and human rights play an increasingly important role in Sida's co-operation with developing countries. In 1999, democracy and human rights represented around 15 percent of the agency's total project portfolio, compared to 10 percent in 1994. Principal areas of support are capacity development in government institutions and civil society, civic education for the general public, monitoring of political elections and treaties, scientific research, and human rights counselling. Main regions of co-operation are Southern Africa, Central America and Eastern Europe.

The results of these efforts have not been fully examined. Existing project evaluations do not provide much information about development impact. Why is that? Are democracy and human rights projects particularly difficult to evaluate? What are the requirements of successful evaluation? How could projects be planned and implemented in order to better facilitate impact evaluation?

These questions are the points of departure for the evaluability assessment presented in this report. The assessment is based on 28 selected projects in South Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. It was commissioned by Sida's Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, and carried out by British ITAD and Overseas Development Institute.



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