

## Evaluation of Sweden's Strategy for Multilateral Development Cooperation

SADEV has evaluated Sweden's Strategy for Multilateral Development Cooperation. The evaluation assesses whether the Strategy, as expressed in the Government Resolution of April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007, has contributed – or can be expected to contribute - to quality assurance and effectiveness in multilateral development cooperation. Another significant aspect is the degree of implementation of the seven recommendations of the Strategy.

In February 2010 the Swedish Government commissioned SADEV to evaluate Sweden's Strategy for Multilateral Development Cooperation adopted in April 2007.

The Strategy "*identifies needs for new instruments and working methods in Sweden's multilateral development cooperation*". In addition, it identifies areas in which there is a need for further analysis and investigation, the most important of which listed are:

- Review of multilateral bodies to provide guidance on rationalisation and priorities
- Formulation of organisation-specific strategies for the most important institutions with which Sweden cooperates
- Review of the division of labour between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Sida as regards multilateral development cooperation
- Review of statistics and reporting of multilateral cooperation
- Review of routines and methods for the exchange of information between Stockholm, missions abroad, the Swedish UN delegations, the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU,

constituency offices, etc., with the aim of achieving greater effectiveness in the preparation of decisions and in Swedish action in governing bodies

- Review of recruitment issues related to multilateral development cooperation
- Improve procedures and conditions of alliance-building

### KEY FINDINGS

SADEV's evaluation shows that the strategy has contributed to increased quality, improved knowledge of multilateral organisations and "institutional memory" within government, and the development of consensus. The ambitions have been high and several new tools have been developed and handed over to officers in charge.

The degree of implementation is still quite low and SADEV found it difficult to assess and evaluate whether the aims of the Strategy have been achieved. Because of the complexity it was impossible to, at this point in time, make judgments on noticeable improvements regarding quality assurance and effectiveness.

External factors may have significantly influenced the implementation of the Strategy. It seems, however, reasonable to assume that a complete implementation of the recommendations of the Strategy will positively influence quality assurance and effectiveness in Swedish multilateral development cooperation. It is therefore important that the Strategy be given future priority to enable both implementation and evaluation.

The low degree of implementation can be explained by resources required within Government Offices and Sida not corresponding to ambitions set. These problems should have been communicated and been taken care of at an early stage – basically a management issue. The lack of resources can be addressed through focusing on a smaller number of multilateral organisations, internal redistribution of assignment, lowering of ambitions, or introducing new ways of working.

SADEV found that assessments have been made for 23 of the 34 multilateral organisations officially considered as important. There are another 44 non-assessed multilateral organisations which during 2008 received financial support from Sweden. SADEV's informants argued that the assessments should not form the main basis for decisions on financial support levels to the multilateral organisations. In consequence there are no guidelines developed on how to determine appropriate levels for financial support to the organisations.

Another sign of the low implementation is the fact that only one organisation-specific strategy has been developed.

SADEV finds that measures to improve competence should be considered and external experts could be engaged to support in analyses and assessments.

SADEV's informants found it difficult to handle the large number of goals, policies and strategies and this creates difficulties in developing organisation-specific strategies. There is reason to clarify the overall decisions so as to simplify the development of organisation-specific strategies and future multilateral development cooperation. Proactive Swedish action would be facilitated by a general list of criteria stating Swedish demands and expectations.

Problems with the content of the Annual Report and statistics, put forward by the Committee on Foreign Affairs in 2005, still remain. The responsibility for reporting to the Parliament should be prioritised. The availability of reliable basic data should also secure adequate preparation for consultations between the Swedish government, Sida and other stakeholders.

Not much has been done in relation to deployment of Swedish staff within the multilateral system, but in the summer of 2010 MFA formulated an internal mission for further preparation in this area.

The evaluation also shows that minor efforts have been made in developing forms of involvement of civil society including NGO's and civil enterprise.

Responsibility has been handed over to other Ministries than the MFA, which has created problems as some Ministries tend to focus on their immediate priorities, rather than development issues. The responsibility could therefore be transferred to the MFA.

The cooperation between Stockholm and Swedish embassies and development cooperation offices abroad can be further developed. There is also a need for more competence and resources if the demands for follow-up and evaluation are to be fulfilled.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue the implementation of all elements of the Strategy
- Integrate assessments and organisation-specific strategies for the multilateral organisations.
- Consider whether the assessments should influence the prioritising and financing of a multilateral organisation
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of transferring responsibility from line ministries to the MFA
- Create a general list of criteria towards the multilateral organisations
- Develop a strategy for recruitment of Swedish staff to the multilateral organisations
- Develop the cooperation with embassies
- Solve the problems with statistics and accounting as soon as possible

SADEV also proposes that:

- Networks in development cooperation be analysed, including the involvement of civil society organisations
- An in-depth evaluation of the Strategy to be carried out in 2014

## SOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

This SADEV Evaluation Brief is based on the report *Utvärdering av den svenska strategin för multilateralt utvecklingsamarbete*, SADEV Report 2010:5. The report and other SADEV publications are available at [www.sadev.se](http://www.sadev.se)