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EVALUATION

# Adaptation of aid in situations of conflict and fragility

A study of Sida's support system for conflict sensitivity  
and the case of Liberia

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Adaptation of aid in situations of conflict  
and fragility  
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## Preface

The Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV) identified the area of security and development as a priority theme for the agency in 2012. Global initiatives to find new ways of working in situations of conflict and fragility, in particular the *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*, have placed security and development high on the international agenda. Consultations with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and other key actors in the planning stage helped to define the focus of the study.

The purpose of this report is, through a case-study of Liberia, to contribute to a deeper understanding of how Sweden adapts aid to situations of conflict and fragility and how it links to systems of conflict sensitivity. Swedish development cooperation and Sida have undergone significant reform in the past few years, and continuous efforts to develop Sida's systems and tools to ensure that development cooperation is conflict sensitive have been, and continues to be, an integrated part of that reform. It is hoped that this report could contribute and stimulate thoughts and ideas to further these efforts.

Three SADEV staff members made up the core team for this report and consisted of Niklas Hansson (team leader), Ulf Jakobsson and Maria Johansson. Other SADEV staff, particularly Annika Magnusson and David Scott, have contributed with quality assurance at critical stages in the process. In addition, one external expert, Bryn Hughes at the University of Queensland, Australia, generously shared his thoughts and perspectives on the final draft of the report. Full responsibility for the views expressed in this report, however, rests with SADEV.

Finally, many thanks go to the staff at the Swedish embassy in Liberia, and other stakeholders in Liberia and Sweden who generously contributed with their time and knowledge.

December 2012



Lena Fagerlund  
Acting Director-General  
SADEV

# Executive summary

## **Background and purpose**

Swedish development cooperation, as well as the broader international community, has gradually paid more attention to situations of conflict and fragility in the past two decades. The New Deal, a set of shared commitments among more than 40 countries and organisations for new and holistic approaches in situations of conflict and fragility has placed security and development high on the international agenda.

The purpose of this study is, with practical examples from a case-study of Liberia, to contribute to a deeper understanding of how Sweden adapts aid in conflict-affected countries and the extent to which support systems for conflict sensitivity facilitates such adaptation.

## **Focus of the study**

The main questions explored in the study are how Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) have adapted development cooperation to conflict and post-conflict situations, and the extent to which support systems for conflict sensitivity facilitated such adaptation. The Swedish Policy for Security and Development (2010-2014) is taken as a starting point.

A qualitative method was used, including a case-study approach. Data collection included primarily documentation from Sida and the MFA. Interviews were conducted with staff from Sida, MFA, Liberian ministries, multilateral agencies and others in Stockholm and Monrovia. The selected interventions in Liberia were the UNDP County Support Team, electoral cycle support, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Programme.

## **Sida's support system for conflict sensitivity**

Conflict sensitivity, which has gained currency among international donors and implementing agencies in recent years, can be defined as the ability to understand the context in which you operate and the interaction between your intervention and the context, as well as the ability to act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts and to maximise positive impacts.

With the establishment of conflict- and post-conflict countries as a particular category of Swedish development cooperation came the recognition of the need for different approaches in these challenging environments. The use of a conflict sensitivity approach, including conflict analysis, the introduction of a Sida Support Unit (internal) and a Help Desk on Human Security (external) have enhanced Sida's ability to meet these challenges. Integrated embassies with closer MFA-Sida collaboration have also been conducive for the adaptation of aid.

## **Liberia and Swedish development cooperation**

Liberia's internal armed conflict lasted from 1989 to 2003 and left an estimated 250,000 people dead and nearly half a million internally displaced. Since the end of the conflict, Liberia has made important advances in its transition from a humanitarian situation to one with a long-term development focus. Liberia ranks among the ten poorest countries in the world, and ethnic tension and extreme disparities between the rich elite and the impoverished majority still plague the country. With Swedish aid to Liberia doubled, Sweden is the second largest donor today, and plays a leadership role with regard to the New Deal's, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) and the World Trade Organization's (WTO) engagements in Liberia.

## **Findings and Conclusions**

Regarding support systems for conflict sensitivity, *knowledge management* has not consolidated, although findings show that work is on-going. Context analyses are produced by Sida and MFA, but more can be done to take stock of existing material.

*Strong position of Sweden opens up opportunities.* By significantly increasing Swedish aid volumes and diversifying its portfolio, Sweden has carved out a strong role for itself in Liberia. Swedish leadership in the UN PBC, the New Deal and the WTO has further strengthened Sweden's commitments in the country. The scaled-up Swedish commitments in Liberia pose multiple challenges to Swedish development cooperation and its capacity to respond effectively.

*Availability of context analyses, but uneven application.* Sweden has produced a range of context analyses for Liberia, but these are not routinely spread throughout Sida. This conclusion echoes those of previous development evaluations.

*Adaptation due to contextual, but also organisational, changes.* Findings suggest that half of the adaptations were due to contextual changes (such as increased support due to the need for geographical expansion) and the other half were due to organisational changes (such as shift from a project to a programme approach).

*Twelve adaptations were found* in the four case-studies, including five re-designs, three increased support, three extensions and one quick new support. Flexibility regarding the electoral cycle support, the CST project and the HD Centre may be viewed in a favorable light with the constructive use of adaptations. Other adaptations, such as some associated with the LSFRP, came partly as the result of weak donor coordination.

*To allow for adaptation of aid, when the circumstances call for it, should be a natural part of development cooperation. However, with adequate strategic and operational planning, including applying a conflict sensitivity lens, the need for some adaptations could be reduced, thereby making development cooperation more effective. Knowledge management could play a key role in this process.*

## Acronyms

CDA	Collaborative for Development Action
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
CPC	Conflict and Post-Conflict
CST	County Support Team
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DEX	Direct Execution (UNDP)
DFID	Department for International Development
DNH	Do No Harm
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FBA	Folke Bernadotte Academy
FSP	Fragile States Principles
GoL	Government of Liberia
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HD	(Centre for) Humanitarian Dialogue
ICGL	International Contact Group for Liberia
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDLD	Liberian Decentralisation and Local Development Programme
LAMCO	Liberian American Swedish Mining Company
LSFRP	Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Sweden)
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Liberia)
MPEA	Ministry for Planning and Economic Affairs (Liberia)
MPW	Ministry of Public Works (Liberia)
NAI	Nordic Africa Institute
NEC	National Elections Commission (Liberia)
NEX	National Execution (UNDP)

NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIMAC	National Information Management Centre
NKSSR	Nationella Kontaktgruppen för Säkerhetssektorreform (The Swedish National Contact Group for Security Sector Reform)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission (United Nations)
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSD	Swedish Policy for Security and Development
PSGs	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals
SADEV	Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (United Nations)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and purpose

There is a large need [sic]...for flexibility in order to adapt to the changing reality in fragile situations.

- Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Director-General of Sida, 2011<sup>1</sup>

### *Background*

Swedish development cooperation, as well as the broader international development community, has gradually paid more attention to supporting conflict- and post-conflict environments and fragile states. As the result of a country concentration process, Sweden decided in 2007 to divide all cooperation countries into three main categories: (i) long-term cooperation, (ii) conflict- and post-conflict cooperation and (iii) reform cooperation in Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Levels of Swedish aid-flows to conflict and post-conflict (CPC) countries and regions, have increased in recent years and five of the ten largest recipients of Swedish development cooperation in 2010 were CPC countries.<sup>3</sup> Another key development in Sweden that helped raise the profile of peace and security issues was the establishment in 2002 of a new Swedish government agency, Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of international peace interventions, primarily in conflict-affected countries and fragile states. Finally, a new Swedish policy in security and development for 2010-14 established and clarified Sweden's positions on a number of key issues within this area.<sup>4</sup> The current Director-General of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, underscored in a 2012 speech that "development cooperation in situations of conflict and fragility is something that differs sharply to development cooperation in more stable development environments", and emphasized that Sweden, in such environments, needs to "provide funding with inbuilt flexibility to adapt to evolving situations".<sup>5</sup> This SADEV study focuses on adaptation of aid in the complex and highly volatile environments that characterise CPC countries. This decision was based on in-house discussions at SADEV as well as a series of consultations with Sida, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and other key stakeholders.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Nordic Africa Development Policy Forum (2011), *Sida finds WDR 2011 timely and useful*, <http://www.naiforum.org/2011/08/sida-finds-wdr-2011-timely-and-useful/>.

<sup>2</sup> There are two other, more marginal country categories: (iv) alternative democracy and human rights support, and (v) phase-out countries.

<sup>3</sup> Sida (2012), paragraph 4. According to Sida's annual report 2011, annex 3, the following five CPC countries are found among the top ten recipients of Swedish support: Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West Bank-Gaza and Somalia. See also [www.regeringen.se/sb/d/12432/a/137023](http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/12432/a/137023).

<sup>4</sup> Government Offices of Sweden (2011), *Peace and Security for Development. Policy for security and development in Swedish development cooperation 2010-2014*.

<sup>5</sup> Sida (2012b), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1 for a complete list of people interviewed.

*Sida Help Desk assignment for portfolio reviews of CPC countries*

An on-going assignment of the Sida Help Desk on Human Security<sup>7</sup> was important for defining the purpose of the study. The Help Desk has been given an assignment to assess the extent to which Sweden's Policy for Security and Development (PSD) is reflected in Sweden's development cooperation portfolios in CPC countries (category 2).<sup>8</sup> The assignment includes 12 country- and region-specific portfolio analyses, but does not focus on Sida's capacity to adapt its support to projects and programmes during the implementation phase. The Help Desk has produced two studies for Liberia, a desk study on political economy and a portfolio analysis (these are discussed in Chapter 4.4).<sup>9</sup> Responding to a government commission in 2012, the FBA also presented a report of relevance for this SADEV study. The FBA report focused on how Swedish support to international peacebuilding and conflict prevention contributes to Swedish development goals.<sup>10</sup> FBA presented nine principles for effective peacebuilding and conflict prevention, as well as a number of recommendations on how Swedish support in these areas could be improved.

*Purpose of the study*

The purpose of this report is to, with practical examples from Liberia, contribute to a deeper understanding of how Sweden adapts aid in conflict-affected countries and links to support systems of conflict sensitivity, including context analysis. The two reports mentioned above explore topics closely related to this. Consequently, another purpose is to complement these studies, in particular the on-going work by the Sida Help Desk on Human Security.

In addition, SADEV's strategic plan for 2012 had identified security and development as a priority theme which would have entailed significant agency resources and efforts to implement a series of evaluations during 2012 and onwards. Due to the recent decision by the Government of Sweden to restructure the external evaluation function of Swedish development cooperation – the core feature of SADEV's mandate – the scope of this report has been limited accordingly. The limitation means that the report is designed as a study, and not an evaluation. This means that the report does not evaluate Swedish development cooperation in the formal sense, although it provides observations and draws conclusions where possible. It is hoped that this study may serve as a basis for future studies and evaluations on this topic.

Target groups for this report are MFA and Sida. Sida's Department for Conflict- and Post-Conflict Cooperation (CPC department), as well as other relevant country- and regional teams with support to fragile states are deemed particularly relevant for the study. The MFA may find the results of this report relevant as input for policy developments in the area of security and development.

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<sup>7</sup> The Sida Help Desk on Human Security is discussed in Chapter 3.4.

<sup>8</sup> The category 2 countries include Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste, Guatemala, Iraq, Liberia, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Somalia and Sudan.

<sup>9</sup> *Desk Study – Political Economy Analysis Liberia*, and *Portfolio Analysis Peace and Security of Liberia*. Draft (2) 2012-09-14; both produced by the Sida Helpdesk on Human Security, 2012. See also Chapter 4.4.

<sup>10</sup> Folke Bernadotteakademien (2012), *Fredsbyggande och konfliktförebyggande – viktiga byggstenar i utvecklingssamarbetet*.

## **1.2 Structure of the report**

The report outlines the method used for the study in Chapter 2. The concepts of conflict sensitivity and adaptation, which in a sense underpins this study, are briefly reviewed in Chapter 3. The following section, Chapter 4, presents key features of the Liberian context and attempts to convey overall trends of Swedish development cooperation with Liberia over the past decade. The report's findings are presented in Chapter 5, followed by conclusions in Chapter 6.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Central questions of the study

This study has identified two central questions that focus on the internal processes and methods of Sweden's development cooperation in conflict and post-conflict environments. For the purpose of this study, "Sweden" refers to both Sida and the MFA. The first question intends to deepen the understanding of the ways in which development cooperation is adapted as a result of changes in the local context. The other question relates to Sweden's support system for conflict sensitivity.

*Question 1. How has Sida/MFA adapted development cooperation to conflict and post-conflict situations as a result of changes in the context?*

This question takes the Swedish Policy for Security and Development (PSD) as a starting point. The PSD outlines four approaches to guide implementation of Swedish development cooperation: (i) conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention; (ii) speed and flexibility; (iii) adaptation to time and context; and (iv) risk assessment, analyses and knowledge support. No sharp line can be drawn between the four approaches, but they may serve as a guide to support staff in the field and in Sweden.

*Question 2. To what extent has Sida's/MFA's support system for conflict sensitivity facilitated adaptation to conflict and post-conflict situations?*

The aim of the second question is to assess the links between adaptation of Swedish aid to conflict and post-conflict environments and Sweden's support system for conflict sensitivity. While recognising that there is not an established 'system' - in the formal sense of the word - for conflict sensitivity and adaptation, this report outlines the main features of the institutional set-up to facilitate conflict sensitivity. This includes aspects such as relevant departments and units, policy documents, manuals and Sida-MFA collaboration. See Chapter 3.4 for further discussion on this. As part of the analytical phase, these two central questions have been further broken down into sub-questions to guide interviews and other data processing. These cover aspects such as the timing of the adaptations, consideration taken for potential consequences of the adaptations, and which part of the support system, if any, facilitated adaptation.

The report neither pretends, nor expects, to find conclusive evidence on which part of the support system facilitates adaptation the most. The intention is rather to stimulate discussion on adaptation and the extent to which these occur in a systematic way or as ad hoc measures.

### 2.2 Qualitative method

Primarily a qualitative method is applied in the study, including a case study approach. The qualitative method is designed to deepen the insight into the mechanisms involved in the processes under scrutiny. Some statistics, such as the Sida PLUS database was used to facilitate selection of the case study and to convey broader trends of Swedish

development cooperation. In order to contribute to a deeper understanding of how Sweden adapts aid in conflict-affected countries, one case study was identified.

*Data collection* and analysis for the study included primarily Sida and MFA documentation, such as contribution-specific documentation<sup>11</sup> (e.g. project documents, decisions on contribution, reports etc.), country- and strategy reports, cooperation strategy and context analyses. Policies, strategies, previous evaluations and to some extent relevant literature were also included in the report to give the reader the broader context.

*Interviews* were semi-structured in order to leave adequate room for the interviewees to freely explore the issues touched upon. The interviews were important in the overall processing and interpreting of the findings, not least because much of the information regarding measures taken to adapt aid, and perhaps more importantly why and what processes preceded such decisions, are not likely to be found in documentation alone. Staff at various levels at Sida, MFA, the UN, the World Bank, national ministries and others were interviewed, both in Stockholm and in Monrovia (see Appendix 1 for a full list of interviewees). A field visit to Liberia was conducted 12-16 November to ensure optimal conditions for interviews.

*Quality assurance* has been built-in from the start of the project. One in-house resource person at SADEV and one external expert were identified to contribute to quality assurance at critical stages of the process. Sida, the MFA and the Swedish embassy in Monrovia have also been given the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on the draft report.

## 2.3 Selection of cases

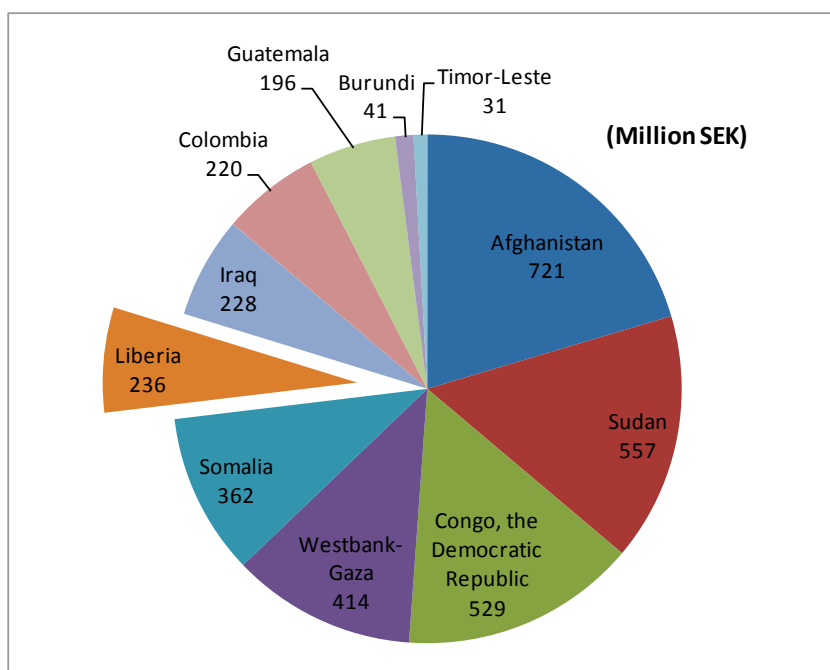
### *Liberia*

As a longer pre-screening and selection process has been neither possible, nor necessarily desirable, SADEV has given priority to Sida's suggestions on which CPC country may be most suitable for a case study. The selection of case-study was based on Sida's suggestions and the following criteria: (i) the security situation in the country and potential logistical challenges for a field visit; (ii) dynamic country context, i.e. the most recent history of the country should include contextual changes; (iii) dynamic Swedish aid portfolio, i.e. Swedish support should include a mix of actors and aid channels and preferably involve shifts over time to maximise possibilities for finding cases of adaptation; (iv) Swedish presence in the country with capacity to receive the SADEV team; and (v) current CPC country with medium to large annual aid volumes. Liberia was chosen as the case study, among other things because development cooperation with the country has grown rapidly in the past few years, both financially and from a strategic point of view of Sweden. As can be seen in Figure 1, Liberia is the sixth largest recipient of Sida support among CPC countries. Furthermore, both Swedish aid and the situation in Liberia have undergone significant changes over time.

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<sup>11</sup> The terms 'contribution' and 'intervention' or 'development intervention' are used interchangeably in this report. All terms refer to a development project or programme implemented in a developing country. Contribution may refer both to the financial contribution and the intervention itself.

Figure 1 Largest recipient countries among Sida's conflict and post-conflict (CPC) countries (category 2), 2011. <sup>12</sup>



The development interventions included in this study were selected in consultation with Sida's Liberia team. The aim of SADEV was to select a number of development interventions which had been adapted during the course of their implementation.

#### *Selected Swedish interventions*

Four development interventions were selected for the purpose of this report. They have all undergone transformations during the course of the implementation phase. Cooperation partners include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), an international consultancy company and an international non-governmental organisation (NGO). Although state-to-state support is picking up, multilateral aid and NGOs have been Sweden's preferred choice until recently and this is reflected in the case selection (see also Figure 7 in Chapter 4.3). A brief presentation of the cases and findings for each individual case is found in Chapter 5.

Table 1 Overview of selected cases of Swedish development interventions in Liberia.

Intervention	Sida sector	Cooperation partner	Timeperiod	Financial contribution
<b>UNDP County Support Team</b>	Local governance	UNDP	2009-12	SEK 50 mill.
<b>Electoral cycle</b>	Elections	UNDP	2010-12	SEK 50 mill.
<b>HD Centre</b>	Democracy, human rights, gender equality	HD Centre	2011-12	SEK 2.3 mill.
<b>Liberian-Swedish Feeder Road Programme</b>	Infrastructure	HIFAB	2009-14	SEK 218 mill.

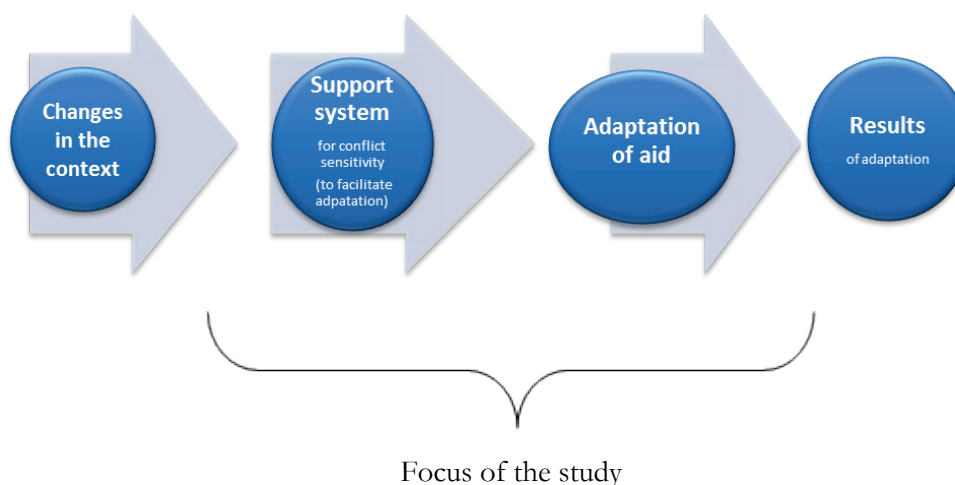
<sup>12</sup> Source: Sida's PLUS database. This includes the country allocation (country frame) and support to the humanitarian sector (HUM) and civil society (CIVSAM).



## 2.4 Delimitations

The selected interventions have not been studied in their totality, i.e. from design to implementation and end results. Instead, the focus of the study is primarily the adaptation of aid and the links, if any, to Sweden's support system for conflict sensitivity. Figure 2 illustrates this (see Appendix 3 for a more detailed figure). The four phases of the intervention cycle, from a conflict sensitivity and adaptation perspective, are (i) changes in the context, (ii) support system, (iii) adaptation, and (iv) results. The first sphere refers to *changes in the country context*, which may include such events as radical shifts in the conflict dynamics, escalating spirals of violence or local disputes in regions that may have a bearing on Swedish support. The second sphere refers to *systemic* aspects, i.e. Sida's/MFA's support system for conflict sensitivity and how it may contribute to detect changes in the context and facilitate adaptation of aid when required. This may include policies, strategies and conflict analysis tools which are further broken down in Appendix 2. The third sphere, *adaptation of aid*, the main focus of this study, refers to adaptation measures taken by Sweden and can involve anything from withdrawal of support to re-design or redistribution of funds. Appendix 2 contains a list of how adaptation may be broken down into sub-categories. Finally, *results* of the adaptation deal with the effects of the adaptation and whether it had a positive or negative impact. The study does not systematically analyse this as it falls beyond the scope of the study.

Figure 2 Delimitation: focus on adaptation



When we talk about adaptation of aid, we may speak about the capacity to adapt aid by the donor as well as by the local implementing agency. The assignment of the Sida Help Desk on Human Security emphasises the latter, i.e. to what extent the aid portfolio is conflict sensitive, including how well the implementing agencies have adapted the interventions to the local context.<sup>13</sup> In line with the purpose of this study, to avoid duplication and to complement on-going efforts such as the Sida Help Desk assignment, this SADEV report focus on aid adaptations *from a donor perspective*.

<sup>13</sup> Sida Help Desk on Human Security (2012a), *Portfolio Analysis Peace and Security of Liberia*. Draft (2) 2012-09-14. See also Chapter 3.3.

## 3 Conflict sensitivity and adaptation

### 3.1 Conflict sensitivity

When international assistance is given in the context of a violent conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict...When given in conflict settings, aid can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the conflict; it can also help to reduce tensions and strengthen people's capacities to disengage from fighting and find peaceful options for solving problems.

- Mary B. Anderson, Executive Director, CDA<sup>14</sup>

Human security, peace and conflict impact assessments, 'do no harm', conflict prevention and conflict management are just some of the concepts which have emerged in relation to international support in situations of conflict and fragility in the last two decades. Although it is not the intention of this study to treat each of these subjects and account for their evolution, tracking some overall trends and highlighting key issues may serve to give the reader a broader context.

*Conflict sensitivity* has gained currency among international donors and implementing agencies in recent years. Experience shows that regardless of its intentions, an intervention implemented in a situation of conflict or post-conflict will inevitably interact with that environment. This will have positive or negative consequences for the conflict dynamics. Already in 2003 'conflict management and human security' was identified as a central component of Sweden's Policy for Global Development guiding all Swedish development cooperation.<sup>15</sup> Fewer *et al.* (2005) defines conflict sensitivity as the ability to:

- understand the context in which you operate;
- understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and
- act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

Figure 3 illustrates the various phases of the evolution of conflict sensitivity. The field of conflict sensitivity has emerged partly as a result of the failure of the international community's efforts in situations of conflict and fragility such as Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s. Work on conflict sensitivity began targeting primarily humanitarian actors, but would gradually broaden to include the fields of development and peace-building.

The first phase included the development of so-called 'peace and conflict impact assessments' (PCIA) and early versions of the 'do no harm' (DNH) method developed by the Massachusetts-based Collaborative for Development Action (CDA). The latter

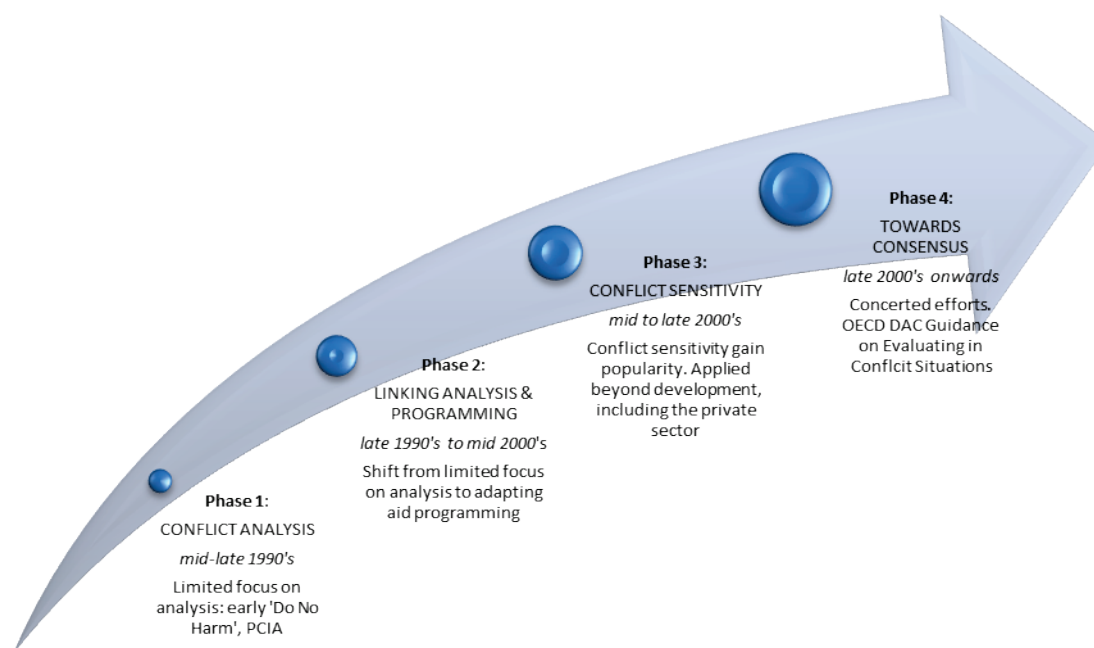
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<sup>14</sup> Anderson (1999), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Government of Sweden (2003).

approach, the DNH method, has been one of the most widely used among aid agencies, not least within Sida. It has grown to become almost synonymous with conflict sensitivity, and Sida has funded CDA for many years. The PCIA's were limited to assessing the conflict situations and the role of interventions in such environments. They did not go beyond that to provide clear links to operations of donors and implementing agencies. This began to be introduced in the second phase, when aid agencies began to adapt tools and methods tailored to their individual needs. In the third phase, 'conflict sensitivity' was adopted more broadly by an increasing number of actors. The concept tried to capture the diversity of approaches and to move beyond merely analysing the conflict to embrace and include options for programming of aid and to facilitate adaptation. In the fourth phase, which brings us to the present, small steps are being taken towards consensus. There are some signs of more concerted efforts, such as the OECD DAC Guidance on Evaluating in Conflict Situations which builds on the earlier work in previous phases.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 3 Evolution of the field of conflict sensitivity.<sup>17</sup>



The above description conveys a gradual improvement of the capacity of international agencies to not only understand the conflict setting in which they operate, but also the interplay between interventions and the particular context. The brief outline of the evolution of conflict sensitivity further shows that options for improving aid programming are now integrated into the widely used umbrella term conflict sensitivity. However, the real challenge today is how to ensure that aid agencies *act* on this new knowledge to improve and adapt aid.

<sup>16</sup> OECD DAC (2012), *Evaluating in Conflict Situations. Guidance for peace and development actors working in settings of violent conflict and state fragility* (forthcoming).

<sup>17</sup> Figure by authors, but based on Brown *et al.* (2009), p. 10.

### 3.2 *The New Deal* and fragile states

#### *The New Deal*

There is a growing recognition within the international community that situations of conflict and fragility make up some of the world's most challenging development situations and that in order to meet those challenges, donors, international organisations and governments need to find new holistic approaches to sustain transitions from conflict to recovery and stability. A response to these challenges is the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (the 'New Deal'), a set of shared commitments in situations of conflict and fragility, endorsed at the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (2011). The foundation document for the New Deal is endorsed by 43 countries,<sup>18</sup> international organisations and other members of the 'International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding' ('the Dialogue').<sup>19</sup> The New Deal builds on the Millennium Declaration and proposes a set of Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals (PSGs) focused on building mutual trust and achieving better results in fragile states. The cornerstones of the New Deal contain commitments in three areas:

- The use of PSGs: (i) legitimate politics, (ii) security, (iii) justice, (iv) economic foundations, and (v) revenues and services.
- A focus on country-led and country-owned transitions from fragility, including the following components: assessment, one vision, implementation mechanism (a 'compact'), monitoring and political dialogue.
- To build mutual trust by providing aid and managing resources more effectively for improved results, including emphasis on transparency, risk-sharing, use of country systems, strengthening capacities and timeliness and predictability.

Liberia is one of seven self-nominated pilot countries to implement the PSGs in cooperation with partner donors.<sup>20</sup> The Dialogue is co-chaired by a fragile or conflict-affected country and a donor government (rotating chair). The secretariat is hosted by the OECD. Sweden is a partner donor for the implementation of the New Deal in Liberia (see also Chapter 4.3).

#### *The Fragile States Principles (FSP)*

An earlier initiative by the international community to respond more effectively to the unique challenges encountered in fragile states is the OECD's *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, also referred to as the Fragile States Principles (FSPs).<sup>21</sup> The FSPs provide a set of guidelines to improve involvement of the international community in situations of conflict and fragility, ranging from development cooperation, diplomacy and peacebuilding, economic affairs, humanitarian action and state-society relations. Monitoring of the FSPs is conducted through a survey

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<sup>18</sup> As of January 2012.

<sup>19</sup> International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (undated). For more details see webpage: [www.oecd.org/international%20dialogue/](http://www.oecd.org/international%20dialogue/). Sweden has endorsed the New Deal.

<sup>20</sup> The other pilot countries are Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor-Leste.

<sup>21</sup> OECD (2007). See also OECD (2011).

organised by the OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF). The ten FSPs are listed in the table below.

Table 2 The Fragile States Principles (FSPs)

FSP 1	Take context as the starting point
FSP 2	Do no harm
FSP 3	Focus on state-building as the central objective
FSP 4	Prioritise prevention
FSP 5	Recognise links between political, security and development objectives
FSP 6	Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
FSP 7	Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
FSP 8	Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors
FSP 9	Act fast...but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
FSP 10	Avoid pockets of exclusion ('aid orphans')

Both the New Deal's PSGs and the FSPs apply an integrated and holistic approach in which state-building is the central theme. They also share the emphasis on national ownership, coordination, as well as taking into account linkages between politics, security and development to address the multifaceted and complex environments found in situations of conflict and fragility.

### 3.3 Previous evaluations and studies

The following section is a brief overview of key findings in recent evaluations and studies on topics of relevance to this report. These are mainly drawn from evaluations by Sida, Norad, Danida, DFID and EuropeAid.<sup>22</sup> The primary focus of most of these publications is on broader issues of conflict sensitivity and conflict analysis.

#### *Previous assessments of Sida*

The following is mainly drawn from observations and conclusions drawn in a SIPU report on Sida's support to conflict management and peacebuilding. It should be emphasized that this assessment is from 2000 and evidently do not reflect the current state of affairs of Sida's work in this area. However, it is the most relevant report among previous studies on this specific theme and will serve as a point of reference when drawing conclusions with regard to the present situation.

<sup>22</sup> These evaluations were collated through an initial overview, which included 22 evaluations, carried out between 2000 and 2012. Each evaluation covered different aspects, such as specific interventions, methods and approaches, institutions and organisations, and strategies. The following evaluations were particularly relevant for this study: Jørgensen Gebara and Van de Velde (2010), Bennett et al (2010), DFID (2007), DFID (2004) and SIPU International (2000).

Sweden is, in general, considered a flexible donor in conflict and post-conflict environments, both allowing and encouraging flexibility.<sup>23</sup> Flexible approaches were identified at various points in the project cycle, as well as at the institutional level at Sida and among its implementing partners. Sida is commended, in the SIPU assessment, for having a flexible approach whereby “they were interested in the means of achieving the output”.<sup>24</sup> According to one assessment, Sida projects are generally found to be sufficiently flexible for complex socio-political contexts, and in particular regarding one specific example of support to a business forum in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>25</sup>

Enhanced collaboration has developed between Sida and the MFA, for the purpose of analysing and understanding conflict situations and how Swedish support interacts with these, according to the SIPU report.<sup>26</sup> However, evaluators considered that this collaboration required a more formal mechanism for Sida and MFA in order to clarify the division of labour. The report points to routines for knowledge and information sharing, for instance through establishing resource groups with members from Sida, MFA and implementing partners.<sup>27</sup>

The SIPU report further notes that sharing of information and knowledge about the context, internally in Sida as well as with partners, varies considerably. Where the institutional knowledge of the appropriateness of interventions was weak in Sida, less restrictive practices and inconsistent follow-up were also observed.<sup>28</sup> The same report argues that this may be the result of an unclear reporting system. However, it pointed out that the unpredictable nature of conflict management combined with continuous shifts in the political context put greater emphasis on ensuring adequate experience and competence among Sida staff.<sup>29</sup>

The introduction of a budget line for smaller projects could enhance Sida’s flexibility is another proposal presented in the SIPU report. This type of project would better enable a donor to respond quickly to urgent needs that may arise in the face of suddenly deteriorating conditions.<sup>30</sup> In certain cases flexibility could have been better balanced with the need for strategic frameworks and plans, according to the aforementioned assessment of Swedish conflict management.<sup>31</sup> The capacity to adjust is perceived to be an advantage, potentially conducive for effectiveness and improved results. However, balancing flexibility with a strategic framework through sound planning could facilitate a more systematic adjustment process and improved effectiveness. Enhanced strategic clarity is recommended, where the project’s goals are stated and justified in relation to the conflict situation and its assessment.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> SIPU International (2000), p. 4

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, Annex 3, p. 64

<sup>25</sup> Jørgensen Gebara and Van de Velde (2010), p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> SIPU International (2000), p. 6

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 56

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 57

<sup>31</sup> SIPU International (2000), Annex 3, p. 7

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 56

*Previous evaluations and studies of other donors*

Some studies show a varying degree of availability of context analyses among donors.<sup>33</sup> Conflict settings require greater emphasis on analysis and knowledge of external experts. Coordination in the field and the exchange of information with other agencies are found to be particularly important. A DFID evaluation states that systems of early warning cannot depend exclusively on embassy personnel but should be complemented with external sources, such as other embassies, specialised agencies, international NGOs and the United Nations.<sup>34</sup>

Programme re-design requires a consistent flow of information and adequate management and sharing of documentation. This enables actors to take advantage of windows of opportunity that may otherwise be overlooked. Contingency planning may also feed into and benefit from adequate information management. A multi-donor evaluation of support to south Sudan found that few donors explicitly and regularly refer to conflict analyses in their planning.<sup>35</sup> The problem is found to be one of application rather than availability of conflict analyses. Such analyses are carried out but are not systematically utilised in the implementation phase. An evaluation of Norwegian development activities stated:

the real challenge is to feed commissioned research into the decision making process. But institutional constraints mean that there isn't time or space to critically reflect on the research generated. There is no time or forum to discuss the research findings and put them into a strategic context. There is no time for strategic thinking.<sup>36</sup>

Conflict sensitivity needs to be considered not only in the design phase, but also in the implementation. Conflict and societal analysis conducted as part of the project documentation reviewed for an evaluation of the OPT, were not referred to in annual plans or reports, nor was conflict sensitivity mainstreamed into decision-making.<sup>37</sup>

Conflict analysis should not be a one-off event. As the conflict evolves, the original diagnosis should be updated in order to enable adjustments and fine-tuning of programmes if needed. A DFID evaluation found that there was a lack of continuous communication between specialists and policy-makers, resulting in interventions and approaches lacking in quality assurance and addressing contextual changes.<sup>38</sup> The multi-donor evaluation in South Sudan found that despite changing dynamics in the different states, there was no reorientation of funding. The reasons for this were considered to be a lack of flexibility within projects and a lack of systematic conflict analysis among donors and international organisations.<sup>39</sup> Adequate analysis of the political economy in a transitional and dynamic post-conflict setting is not sufficient; it should also be reviewed and updated.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 21

<sup>34</sup> DFID (2004), *Evaluation of conflict prevention tools*, p. 54

<sup>35</sup> Bennett et al. (2010) *Aiding the peace: A multi-donor evaluation of support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities in Southern Sudan 2005-2010*,

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 128.

<sup>37</sup> Jørgensen Gebara and Van de Velde (2010), *Evaluation of the support to NIR for the Palestinian International Business Forum 2008-2010*, p. 18 and p. 30

<sup>38</sup> DFID (2004), *Evaluation of conflict prevention tools*, p. 51

<sup>39</sup> Bennett et al. (2010), *Aiding the peace: A multi-donor evaluation of support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities in Southern Sudan 2005-2010*, p. 127

Regarding funding arrangements, three-to-five year programme cycles promote stability in funding and staffing, but can also limit the accommodation of flexible responses grounded in local realities.<sup>40</sup> It is, however, important that financial resources are made available when changed contexts enable, or require, action and that there is sufficient flexibility for projects to be adjusted, particularly when evolving local conditions on the ground call for it.<sup>41</sup> Lengthy procurement processes and capacity-building can make changes in approach, actors or location difficult to incorporate. This was found to be particularly problematic when failing to take context as the starting point led to over-ambitious objectives.<sup>42</sup>

Short budget cycles can also have disadvantages, in terms of consequences for building up institutional knowledge and staff expertise. This has led to a high turnover of staff in international agencies, with recurrent transaction costs, including induction training and briefings which led to frustration among local staff who had to re-establish working relationships.<sup>43</sup> A lack of adaptation was found in some cases regarding multilateral aid and pooled funding arrangements, where harmonisation is the aim. Institutional characteristics of the multiple agencies involved have led to centralised donor structures, limited flexibility and low responsiveness, and subsequently progress on harmonisation was found to be weak.<sup>44</sup> The possibilities of redirecting and adapting larger programmes due to contextual changes are limited or even impossible. The same evaluation found that funding mechanisms “which score highly on donor coordination, harmonisation, and to some extent government ownership, have often failed to deliver on the ground, lacking sharp focus on the more urgent factors of conflict”.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, bilateral aid has enabled much more frequent monitoring and much better understanding of post-conflict contexts, and thereby more effective support. Effectiveness was optimised as a result of a combination of conflict analysis, local knowledge and continuity of staff,<sup>46</sup> as well as simplified procedures and better access to decision-makers. A bilateral approach, particularly in relation to the Scandinavian countries, may be regarded as more neutral in a conflict context.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.4 Sida’s support system for conflict sensitivity

International agencies and partners from other countries must adapt procedures so they can respond with agility and speed, a longer-term perspective, and greater staying power.

- Robert B. Zoellick, President of the World Bank, 2011<sup>48</sup>

Implementation of aid in conflict and post-conflict settings comes with many challenges. In order to ensure effective support and avoid unwanted interruptions in aid-

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<sup>40</sup> Bennett *et al.* (2010), p. 52

<sup>41</sup> DFID (2004), *Security and justice sector reform programming in Africa*, p. 15

<sup>42</sup> Bennett *et al.* (2010), p. 76

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> Bennett *et al.* (2010), p. 77

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132-133.

<sup>47</sup> SIPU International (2000), p. 54.

<sup>48</sup> World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2011, Overview, Conflict, Security and Development. Foreword.*



flows,<sup>49</sup> donors need a support system and an institutional set-up that can meet these challenges. In this chapter, we describe Sida's system for managing the implementation of aid in conflict and post-conflict settings, including Sida-MFA collaboration. It should be emphasised that Sida has undergone significant reform in the past few years, and this is not intended as a comprehensive mapping and assessment of these institutional changes. Nevertheless, this section presents some of the most salient features of Sida's support system for conflict sensitivity and adaptation. This includes a thematic policy, the most relevant Sida department and unit, a Help Desk as well as Sida-MFA collaboration.

*Sweden's Policy for Security and Development (2011)*

The main policy in the area of security and development is the Swedish government's Policy for Security and Development in Swedish Development Cooperation 2010-2014.<sup>50</sup> As can be seen in Table 3, the overarching objective of this policy is *to contribute to a lasting peace that makes development possible*. It further specifies three focus areas: promoting peace, promoting security and peace dividends. The policy further lays down the following general principles and approaches to guide Swedish development cooperation in CPC countries: (i) conflict sensitivity and prevention; (ii) flexibility and speed; (iii) timing and adaptation to context; and (iv) risk assessment, analyses and knowledge support.

Table 3 Sweden's Policy for Security and Development, 2010-2014.

<b>Overarching objective</b>	To contribute to a lasting peace that makes development possible
<b>Three focus areas</b>	<p>Promoting Peace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dialogue, confidence building and conflict management</i></li> <li>• <i>Women, peace and security</i></li> <li>• <i>Rule of law, transitional justice</i></li> </ul> <p>Promoting Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)</i></li> <li>• <i>Security sector reform (SSR)</i></li> <li>• <i>Small arms and light weapons (SALW)</i></li> </ul> <p>Peace Dividends</p>

Although the Policy for Security and Development (PSD) formally replaces the earlier Sida policy for promoting peace and security through development cooperation from 2005, it is important to mention as it demonstrates that a conflict sensitivity approach was relevant prior to 2010. Sida's policy differs from the PSD in that it includes more of operational guidance for the implementation of Swedish aid. This includes, for instance, how Sida should work to ensure its development cooperation is conflict sensitive and how it can promote peace and security at the level of projects and programmes.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> On the problems of "stop-and-go aid" in countries in conflict and post-conflict, see for example the World Bank (2011). The World Bank estimates that it takes 15 to 30 years for a fragile state to build up functional institutions in key areas such as security, justice and the economy.

<sup>50</sup> Government Offices of Sweden (2011).

<sup>51</sup> Sida (2005).

Both policies underline the need for conflict analysis, conducted or commissioned by Sweden, as well as continuous monitoring of national contexts and local dynamics.<sup>52</sup> Conflict analyses should be guided by Sida's manual for conflict analysis.<sup>53</sup> Sida's Support Unit (see below) for the CPC department may be consulted for guidance.<sup>54</sup> The importance of taking local context into account is also implicit in Sida's contribution management routines.<sup>55</sup>

### *The Department for Conflict and Post-Conflict Cooperation*

At Sida headquarters in Stockholm, the implementation of Swedish development cooperation in conflict and post-conflict situations falls under the responsibility of the Department for Conflict and Post-Conflict Cooperation (CPC department), one of Sida's five operational departments.<sup>56</sup> The CPC department houses 11 country teams, one regional team and one for humanitarian assistance.<sup>57</sup> The department has approximately 120 staff members at headquarters and at duty-stations in partner countries. The CPC department, led by a director and deputy-director, has the following responsibilities:

- to ensure that Sida fully implements the Swedish policies for security and development and humanitarian assistance;
- to ensure that human security issues are integrated where relevant when Sweden elaborates and implements new strategies;<sup>58</sup>
- to monitor trends, conduct global dialogue, work with advocacy, give advice and follow positions of other donors with regard to human security;
- to ensure availability of relevant competence related to human security within Sida; and
- to interpret Sweden's policy for security and development and relate human security to other policy areas.<sup>59</sup>

In 2012, the CPC department placed particular emphasis on conflict sensitivity and the 'Do No Harm' (DNH) method. One of the department's central goals in this regard is the delivery of trainings on conflict sensitivity and DNH to staff, both Stockholm-based and those at Swedish foreign missions abroad.<sup>60</sup>

### *Support Unit*

Within Sida's CPC department, a new Support Unit with thematic expertise, among other areas in peace and security, works to ensure that Sida projects and programmes in

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 9. The importance of using conflict analyses is also stressed in Sweden's guidelines for cooperation strategies; Regeringskansliet (2010).

<sup>53</sup> Sida (2005), p. 12. The Manual for Conflict Analysis is from 2006; Sida (2006).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> A checklist for Sida contribution management routines underlines that it is important that intervention designs take "possible social and political tensions into account, or alternatively contributes to handling it"; Embassy of Sweden (2012): "Beredning av insats (N-Org)", version IU 2012-06-17.

<sup>56</sup> Sida's other operational departments are responsible for global cooperation, international organisations and policy support, programme cooperation, and reform and selective cooperation. For an organigramme, see Sida's website, [www.sida.se/Global/About%20Sida/organigram\\_eng.pdf](http://www.sida.se/Global/About%20Sida/organigram_eng.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> In 2007 Sida's cooperation countries were divided into five categories (see background section).

<sup>58</sup> This report does not include an analysis of follow-up to the policy on humanitarian assistance, as this is linked to a separate budget allocation, which lies beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>59</sup> Sida (2011d), *Terms of reference for Help Desk on Human Security*, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Sida (2011), *Genomförande av policyn för fred och säkerhet för utveckling 2012*, p. 1–2.

conflict and post-conflict situations are implemented in line with the Swedish policy for security and development as well as with the Swedish country and regional strategies. The Support Unit provides backstopping for all Sida staff, at headquarters and abroad. Although the unit dedicates most of their time to CPC countries, this also means that it services the entire agency, including countries and regions categorised as long-term development cooperation and reform cooperation in Eastern Europe (category 1 and 3). Support is provided through trainings, workshops, conferences and other forms of competence development activities. In 2012, the Support Unit held regional workshops on conflict sensitivity for Sida personnel in Kenya and Colombia. The team further provides continuous input and backstopping to Swedish foreign missions in their day-to-day work. Established in January 2011, the Support Unit currently consists of a team director, two peace and security advisers and one intern.

### *Help Desk on Human Security*

To ensure that Sida adequately implements the Swedish policies for security and development and humanitarian assistance, an external Help Desk on Human Security was established in September 2011 to complement Sida's in-house expertise. The Help Desk is made up of a consortium of three institutions: Sthlm Policy Group, the University of Bradford and Saferworld. It provides expert advice both to Sida headquarters and field-based staff. Sida may request the Help Desk to conduct portfolio reviews, strategic conflict analyses and DNH analyses as well as training. It may further be consulted when drawing up adequate terms of references for such analyses,<sup>61</sup> and to provide expertise and advice on a short-term (one to three days), medium-term (one to 15 days), or long-term basis. Requests from individual Sida staff members are also part of the Help Desk's responsibilities.<sup>62</sup>

### *Cooperation between Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs*

Sweden's Policy for Security and Development (as well as the earlier Sida policy) underline the need for continuous consultation between Sida and the MFA.<sup>63</sup> Biannual consultative meetings are held between Sida and the MFA to assess progress on the implementation of Sweden's cooperation strategies. These consultations provide Sida with an opportunity to inform the MFA about challenges encountered and to receive feedback on how these challenges may be addressed. In addition to these biannual meetings, consultative meetings are held when needed and can be initiated by either the MFA or Sida. They may include other Swedish governmental agencies and other Swedish actors besides Sida and the MFA.<sup>64</sup> Finally, monthly meetings are held between Sida's CPC department and MFA's Division for Security Policy to exchange information on international cooperation and Sweden's contribution to policy developments within the OECD DAC's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF). There is a trend towards integrating Sida and MFA staff in Swedish embassies abroad. Therefore, there is sometimes a preference to talk about embassy staff, regardless of whether the person comes from Sida or MFA. For the sake of clarity and to facilitate for the reader, this report refers to Sida and MFA staff respectively, when appropriate.

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<sup>61</sup> Sida (2011), *Terms of reference for Help Desk on Human Security*, p. 5–6.

<sup>62</sup> Sida (2012), *How to use Sida's Help Desk on Human Security*, 2012-03-19.

<sup>63</sup> Sida (2005), p. 12. See also Sweden's Policy for Security and Development, p. 28.

<sup>64</sup> Samarbetsstrategi för utvecklingssamarbetet med Liberia juli 2008–juni 2013, p. 10.

## 4 Country context and Swedish development cooperation in Liberia

### 4.1 The Liberian country context

The Republic of Liberia was founded in 1847 by Afro-Americans and liberated slaves from the United States. Americo-Liberians, descendants from liberated slaves, became the ruling class and oppressed and excluded other ethnic groups from state power. It was not until 1904 that other ethnic groups were entitled to citizenship. The Americo-Liberians, which today make up around 5 per cent of Liberia's population, ruled the country through the dominant True Whig party until it was overthrown in 1980 by Samuel Doe. A number of military coups followed and destabilised the country in subsequent years, leading eventually to the outbreak of civil war in 1989. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), a rebel group led by Charles Taylor, attacked the government in 1989 and triggered civil war. Principal root-causes of the conflict include the marginalisation of the majority of the population by restricting access to political power and economic assets, and an economic crisis with unemployment and increased consumer prices fuelling resentment and escalating societal tensions.

Figure 4 Map of Liberia<sup>65</sup>



Fourteen years of civil war and chaos eventually came to an end with a peace agreement signed in 2003 between the Liberian government, the rebels and the political parties. Taylor, the president at the time, was forced to leave Liberia as part of the peace settlement. He was arrested and brought to the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), accused and convicted in 2012 of war crimes and crimes against humanity and for instigating violence in Sierra Leone. The civil war led to an estimated 250,000 casualties, 464,000 internally displaced and more than 350,000 refugees in neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>66</sup>

Since the peace settlement, two free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections have been held. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected and inaugurated in 2006 as Africa's first elected female president. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has helped

<sup>65</sup> Source [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13729504](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13729504)

<sup>66</sup> Eriksson, Hans (2008), p. 13.

Liberia to move towards sustainable peace and stability, and continues to maintain a strong presence throughout the country. Liberia's development is also closely connected to regional conflict dynamics, where spill-over effects of political instability in Côte d'Ivoire continues to affect the country.

Table 4 Liberia facts

<b>Full name</b>	Republic of Liberia
<b>Population</b>	4.1 million (UN, 2011)
<b>Capital</b>	Monrovia
<b>Area</b>	99,067 sq km (approx. 20% of the area of Sweden)
<b>Languages</b>	English is the official language, plus some 20 ethnic dialects
<b>Religions</b>	Christianity, Islam, indigenous beliefs
<b>Life expectancy</b>	56 years (men), 59 years (women) (UN)
<b>Main exports</b>	Diamonds, iron ore, rubber, timber, coffee, cocoa
<b>GNI per capita</b>	USD 240 (WB, 2011)
<b>HDI ranking<sup>67</sup></b>	182 of 187 countries (UNDP, 2011)

The government of Liberia has promoted a reform agenda and significant progress has been made in terms of restoring infrastructure, services, the economy and the consolidation of state authority with a vision of decentralised administration at county level. A national Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008–2011) was launched in 2008 as a result of participatory county-level consultations.<sup>68</sup>

Despite progress made, Liberia remains a divided nation characterised by deep inequalities with regard to financial resources and economic and social opportunities. Many of the issues fuelling civil unrest and violent conflict during the civil war are still present in Liberia today, including tensions along ethnic lines, dramatic disparities between the rich minority and the impoverished majority, and land ownership.

## 4.2 The international community in Liberia

While donors have been engaged in Liberia for many years, the main focus of their support is gradually changing from humanitarian assistance to long-term development cooperation. The United States, with its long-standing interest and close relations with Liberia is, by far, the largest donor. The latest official OECD statistics (2009-10) reveal that the United States, France, Japan, Germany, Italy and Sweden are the largest donors in descending order. However, estimates for 2012 suggest that the United States, Sweden and Norway are the top three international donors to Liberia.<sup>69</sup> Whereas Sweden's estimated development cooperation budget for Liberia is SEK 230 million (approx. USD 34 million) for 2012 (including allocations for humanitarian and civil society support), the United States budget was SEK 1,400 million (approx. USD 209 million), i.e. six times that of Sweden.<sup>70</sup> This may serve to illustrate the dominant position of the United States among international donors in the country.

<sup>67</sup> UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI).

<sup>68</sup> Republic of Liberia (2008).

<sup>69</sup> The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) Liberia-seminar at Uppsala, Sweden, 15 October, 2012.

<sup>70</sup> These are not exact and final figures, but an estimation as the accounts for 2012 had not been closed when this report was being finalised. However, the SEK 230 million figure includes the country frame, humanitarian support and civil society. See also figure 4. Conversion from Swedish kronor (SEK) to US dollars (USD) is based on the rate of SEK 6.7 for 1 USD.

The EU Commission has had a limited presence in Monrovia but has increased staff numbers in recent years and Sweden has maintained continuous dialogue with its representation in Liberia. The perception of the EU Commission used to be that it had low capacity, although this has improved today.<sup>71</sup> Parts of the UN system have also been limited by low capacity and high staff turn-over, which may not be unusual in hardship duty-stations such as Monrovia. Regarding aid modalities, it is worth noting that the EU Commission as well as the World Bank and the African Development Bank have provided budget support to Liberia. While sharing the ambition to open up budget support eventually, Sweden maintains a restrictive position on this matter and is currently not providing budget support to Liberia. The lack of like-minded donors and established structures for donor coordination as well as high staff turn-over, and sometimes low capacity, among national and international partner organisations make development cooperation especially challenging and labour-intensive.<sup>72</sup> Partly as a result of this and to compensate for deficits in national statistics and overall monitoring and evaluation structures, Sida tries to mitigate this by the use of external advisers and experts to assist in the drafting of project documents in collaboration with Liberian partners.<sup>73</sup>

Nevertheless, as more stable and favourable circumstances conducive for development cooperation are slowly beginning to emerge, foreign direct investment and donor interest are increasing.<sup>74</sup> One example of this is the multi-donor trust funds (MDTF) for human security and private sector development established and maintained by the UNDP. UNMIL, which was established in 2003 to support the implementation of the peace process, continues to play a central role in the country. UNMIL was initially staffed with about 15,000 personnel and have, in subsequent phases, been reduced to its present staffing of just under 9,000.<sup>75</sup> Its current mandate runs until 30 September 2013. Thanks to significant progress made over the past few years, a gradual withdrawal of military troops is underway. The police component is projected to be increased to strengthen the Liberian National Police and the national capacity for upholding the rule of law.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a new UN body established in 2005 as part of a broader UN reform package, has been engaged in Liberia since 2010. The PBC's three core functions are (i) bringing together relevant stakeholders; (ii) marshalling resources; and (iii) advising on, and proposing, integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. Liberia is one of six countries on the Commission's agenda and the work is organised around six country-specific configurations.<sup>76</sup> While the overall mandate of the PBC in Liberia is broad, three focus areas

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<sup>71</sup> Various interviews conducted in Monrovia 12-16 November, 2012, point to this. See also Sida Strategy reports (e.g. for 2010) and *Nationella Kontaktgruppen för Säkerhetssektorreform* (2009), p. 34.

<sup>72</sup> Sida strategy report for 2010 states "Att starta nya insatser är personalintensivt och i Liberia finns få pågående större program att ansluta sig till vid sidan av de multilaterala insatserna och få likasinnade givare." ("To initiate new interventions is labour-intensive and few on-going programmes exist in Liberia to join besides the multilateral interventions and few like-minded donors") (Sida (2010), p. 1).

<sup>73</sup> Sida (2010), p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> A 'business opportunity seminar' was held at the Swedish Trade Council in Stockholm 19 October 2012. High-level speakers included the Swedish Ministry of Trade's State Secretary Gunnar Oom and Liberia's Ambassador to Sweden H.E. Ethel Davis. The seminar focused on the energy, ICT, transport and agribusiness sectors.

<sup>75</sup> As of 30 September 2012 UNMIL's staff was made up of 8,981 uniformed personnel (7,545 troops, 128 military observers and 1,308 police), and 1,687 civilian staff (international and local staff, including UN Volunteers); [www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmil/facts.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmil/facts.shtml).

<sup>76</sup> The other five countries on the Commission's agenda are Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Central African Republic; [www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/index.asp](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/index.asp).

guide its efforts: rule of law, security sector reform and national reconciliation.<sup>77</sup> The PBC works closely with UNMIL, the UN Country Team in Liberia and other international and national stakeholders.

### 4.3 Swedish development cooperation with Liberia

#### *Introduction*

Sweden has a long track-record of close relations with Liberia over the past 50 years. Swedish missionaries were engaged in the country 50 to 60 years ago, but perhaps the most enduring Swedish legacy in Liberia is the work of the Liberian American Swedish Mining Company (LAMCO), sometimes described as Swedish industry's greatest investment in Africa. LAMCO was active in the mining sector in Liberia from 1963 until it closed its operations in 1988, but continues to be a point of reference among Liberians for Swedish involvement in the country.

In the more recent past, former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hans Dahlgren served as EU representative for the Mano River Union, covering Liberia as well as Sierra Leone and Guinea, from 2001 to 2007. During the same period, Sweden contributed with 230 troops to UNMIL.<sup>78</sup> Today, Sweden plays a key role in Liberia, and previous engagement in Liberia may have paved the way for Sweden's broadened agenda. Over the past few years, Sweden's Minister for Development Cooperation has developed a close relationship with Liberia's current President, which seems to have resulted in a high level of mutual trust. In combination with Sweden's strong commitment to the New Deal, where Liberia is one of the pilot countries working in partnership with Sweden (and the United States), this has facilitated a broader and deeper Swedish commitment in Liberia.

Furthermore, a Swedish national, Staffan Tillander, holds a key post for the UN's overall strategic approach to Liberia as the Chair of the PBC's Liberia Country Configuration. It is also worth noting that another Swedish national, Karin Landgren, is currently the top UN official in Liberia, both serving as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Liberia (as well as the head of UNMIL).

#### *Swedish presence in Liberia*

Before 2008 Sweden did not have a permanent presence in Liberia, but was represented through the Swedish embassy in Senegal.<sup>79</sup> This placed many restraints on Sida's ability to follow developments in the country.<sup>80</sup> When the transition from humanitarian to long-term development cooperation was initiated and Swedish support began to increase, Sweden established a temporary MFA post in Monrovia at the end of 2008. As Sida support for the country increased, that person reported to Sida from 2009 and a Sida office was established in Liberia that same year. As Liberia continued to be one of Sweden's important strategic partners in the region, Swedish presence in the country was further strengthened with the establishment of a Swedish

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<sup>77</sup> United Nations General Assembly Security Council (2010), *Statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia*. PBC/4/LBR/2.

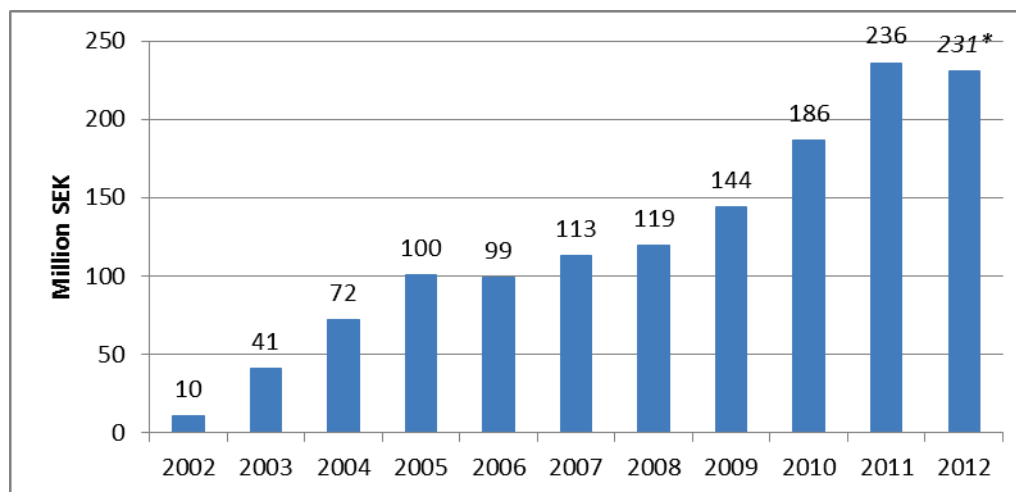
<sup>78</sup> Today, Sweden contributes with 19 Swedish police as well as corrections personnel for UNMIL (as of November 2012).

<sup>79</sup> A number of MFA officials were sporadically working in Monrovia at different time-periods from 2006 to 2008.

<sup>80</sup> Sida (2008), p. 10.

embassy in December 2010. The Swedish ambassador for Liberia is Stockholm-based, and the embassy in Monrovia is, in the absence of the Ambassador, led by a *chargé d'affaires* in close cooperation with the head of development cooperation. As of November 2012, there were 14 staff members, of whom eight are Swedish staff and six are national staff. During the strategy period a fundamental shift has taken place from Stockholm-based Sida staff to a fully delegated Liberia team today with virtually all of Sida's Liberia staff located in Monrovia.<sup>81</sup>

Figure 5 Sida's annual budget for Liberia, 2002-2012<sup>82</sup>



\* The figure for 2012 is only an estimation, based on tentative information from Sida.

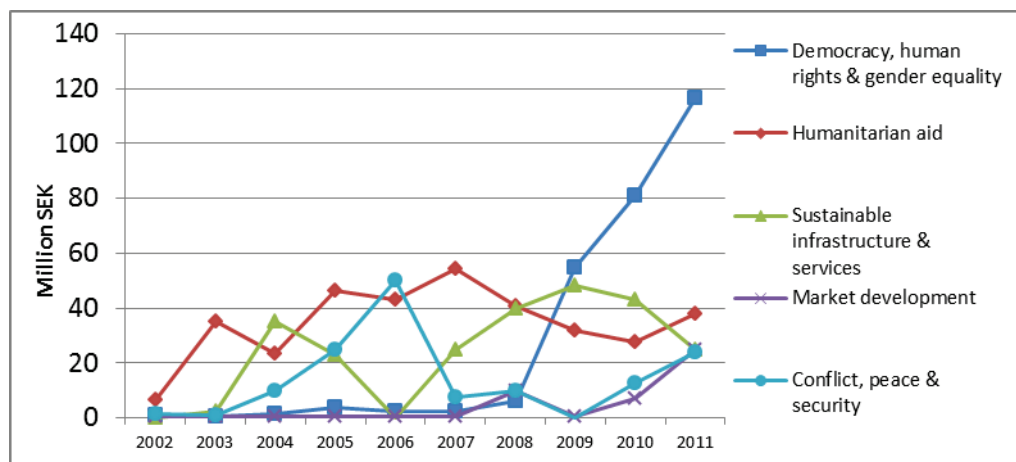
Besides Sweden playing a key role in terms of shaping the political framework for the international community's engagement with Liberia, Sweden is also the second largest bilateral donor. As seen in Figure 5, Swedish development cooperation for Liberia has, with the exception of a marginal drop in 2006, increased steadily for nine consecutive years. Total Swedish development cooperation (including the country frame, civil society and humanitarian support) have doubled during the current strategy period from 2008 to 2012. Besides sharply increased volumes of Swedish aid to Liberia, the diversity and complexity of the aid portfolio has also broadened to include democracy and human rights, justice and security sectors, agriculture, and infrastructure to emerging areas such as private sector development (see Figure 6).<sup>83</sup> For the justice and security sector, Sweden has a coordinator at the embassy, who also chairs a justice and security donor group in Liberia formed in 2011.

<sup>81</sup> No Sida staff member works full-time for the Liberia team in Stockholm.

<sup>82</sup> Source: Sida PLUS database. These amounts include the country allocation (or the country frame/ 'landramen'), support to the humanitarian sector as well as to civil society (CIVSAM). Projected estimated annual budget for 2012 are based on email communication with Adam Amberg and Ida Vikström, Sida, 28-29 November, 2012. Indications from Sida and MFA suggest that there will be a significant increase in 2013, but this is not yet confirmed and decided.

<sup>83</sup> Swedish Vattenfall, SWEFUND and the Swedish Trade Council are preparing or establishing work with Liberia.



Figure 6 Five largest sectors of Swedish support to Liberia, 2002-2011<sup>84</sup>

### *Sweden's cooperation strategy for Liberia*

The current Swedish strategy for development cooperation with Liberia ('the strategy') is the first bilateral cooperation strategy<sup>85</sup> for the country. The overarching goal is "to strengthen peace, respect for human rights, democratic governance and the effective implementation of Liberia's poverty reduction strategy."<sup>86</sup> The two cooperation areas are identified as (i) democratic governance and human rights; and (ii) agricultural development and business, including regional and international trade.

The following priorities are included within the area of democracy and human rights: public administration, decentralisation, local participation, education, security sector reform, sexual and reproductive rights and land ownership rights. The other cooperation area, agricultural development and business, includes the following priorities: employment, improved conditions for business and investment climate (especially for women), sustainable management of natural resources and contribution to Liberia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The strategy further specifies a number of dialogue objectives such as implementation of Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, human rights, gender-related violence and accountability and transparency. Given the post-conflict context of Liberia, the strategy underscores that a conflict-prevention perspective shall be a guiding priority, and that all support should be conflict-sensitive.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, several risks are highlighted in the strategy as well as in strategy- and country reports. The strategy identifies the resumption of the conflict as one of the greatest threats to poverty reduction.<sup>88</sup> Other threats and challenges to development cooperation and sustainable peace in Liberia are land disputes and corruption,<sup>89</sup> low national capacity in state institutions, in particular below the top-level.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Source: Sida PLUS database.

<sup>85</sup> Before 2008, Sweden had a regional strategy for development cooperation with West Africa; Strategy for Swedish development cooperation, West Africa, Burkina Faso, Mali. January 2004 – December 2006.

<sup>86</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden (2009), p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 7, and Sida (2010), p. 15.

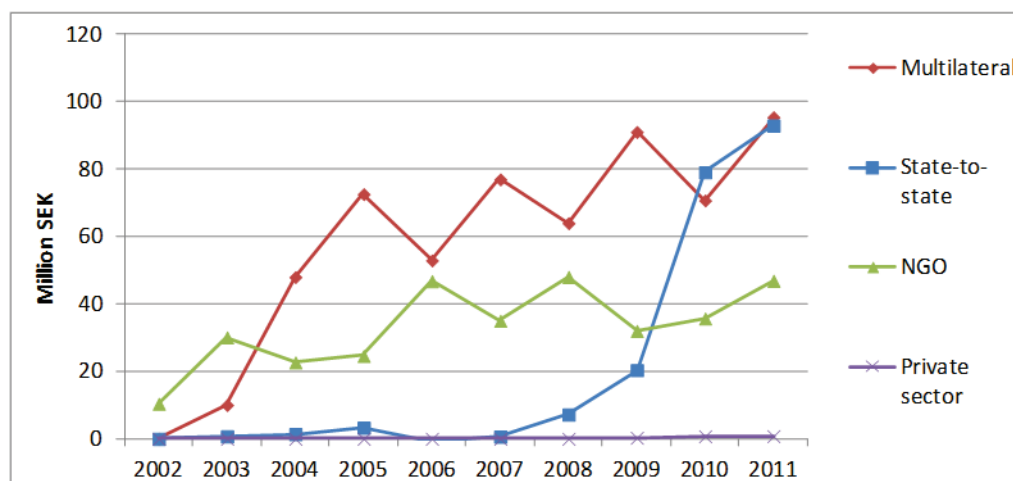
<sup>90</sup> Sida (2008), p. 8. A report from 2012 on instability in West Africa identifies similar sources of tension and violent conflicts as these mentioned here. However, with relevance for the Mano River Union countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea), they also include youth disenfranchisement, exploitation of natural resources, elections and regional insecurity; p. 10, Conciliation Resources (2012).

### *Evolution of the Swedish aid portfolio in Liberia*

Liberia is in a transition from a humanitarian context to one increasingly characterised by long-term development cooperation. This is illustrated in Figure 6 where Swedish support for the humanitarian sector is being phased out from 2007. It shows a temporary increase in 2011 due to the crisis in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, which resulted in an influx of some 180,000 refugees into Liberia.

The *democracy, human rights and gender equality* cluster has increased sharply from about SEK 5 million in 2008, the same year the Poverty Reduction Strategy<sup>91</sup> was published, to almost SEK 120 million in 2011. *Market development* and *conflict, peace and security* also show significant increases since 2009. The Swedish Contact Group for Security Sector Reform (NKSSR) conducted a preparatory study on the security sector in Liberia<sup>92</sup> that same year, which paved the way for increased support to this sector (as well as the recruitment of a Swedish staff member dedicated to this area mentioned above). Support to infrastructure went up during the strategy period and makes up a significant part of the Swedish aid portfolio.

Figure 7 Sida's cooperation partners in Liberia, 2002-2011<sup>93</sup>



Changed patterns regarding the choice of implementing partners are shown in Figure 7. Support to multilateral agencies, primarily through the UN, the World Bank, and Swedish and international NGOs, has been consistently high since 2003-2004. This has been a conscious choice on the part of Sweden as Liberian state capacity has been low. It is only in recent years (from 2007) that Sweden has begun to shift track to gradually allow for more state-to-state support. Finally, private sector actors have emerged as new partners for Swedish development cooperation, but this has not yet taken off. Much preparatory work and planning is currently underway, and it remains to be seen to what extent this could be rolled out in coming years.

#### 4.4 Context analyses conducted or commissioned by Sweden

Sida and the MFA have produced quite a number of context analyses over the past few years. These could provide guidance and support for the strategic and day-to-day management of Swedish development cooperation in Liberia. Table 4 provides an

<sup>91</sup> Republic of Liberia (2008).

<sup>92</sup> Nationella Kontaktgruppen för Säkerhetssektorreform (2009).

<sup>93</sup> Source: Sida PLUS database.

overview of the context analyses conducted or commissioned by Sweden (Sida or the MFA) during the current strategy period (2008-2012).<sup>94</sup>

Five of the documents are conducted by Sida and the MFA and seven are commissioned.<sup>95</sup> Nine of the reports have a thematic focus, one is a cooperation strategy, one is a portfolio analysis and one is a power analysis. Regarding the thematic focus of the reports and analyses, four are public financial management and economic analyses, two are focused on gender-based violence, and one each on environment and climate, human rights and security sector reform respectively.

From the point of view of the Swedish Policy on Security and Development and its seven policy and focus areas, *women, peace and security* received most attention (four analyses contained significant elements of this). *Dialogue, confidence-building and conflict management* and *security sector reform* also received significant attention in the analyses reviewed (three analyses contained a significant dialogue/SSR dimension). On the other side of the spectrum, the policy area which received the least attention is *peace dividends*. Comments from various interviews conducted for this SADEV study may offer a partial explanation for this. This particular policy area is perceived as crucial in conflict and post-conflict environments as it provides immediate and tangible improvements in the daily life of ordinary people. This is important as it also implicitly contributes to ensure the broader population's buy-in for long-term international support to areas such as SSR reform, which may take a decade or more to see the results. Nevertheless, several interviewees view this policy theme as rather ambiguous and difficult to define. Observations along the same lines were made in the 2012 portfolio analysis.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> These are the analyses SADEV received in the data collection phase. It should also be noted that the strategy for Swedish development cooperation is evidently not an analysis as such, but as it does contain analytical sections, it was included in the list.

<sup>95</sup> The five conducted by Sida/MFA includes *Mänskliga rättigheter i Liberia 2010*, *Analys och förslag på möjliga kommande svenska SSR-insatser i Liberia (2009)*, *Economic Development – towards a Strategic Focus (2009)*, *Strategy for development cooperation with Liberia, July 2008 – June 2013 (2009)* and *Achieving pro-poor growth in Liberia (2008)*. The SSR-study was authored by the working group of the National Contact Group for SSR, of which Sida forms a part. This is why it is included in this category. The commissioned reports include: *Portfolio Analysis Peace and Security of Liberia (2012)*, *Desk Study – Political Economy Analysis Liberia (2012)*, *Sexual and gender based violence in Liberia (2011)*, *Report on Gender-Based Violence in Liberia: input to policy dialogue (2009)*, *Liberia 2008-2013: PRS, power structures and security concerns (2008)*, *Draft Liberia Environment and Climate Analysis (2008)* and *Analysis of public financial management in Liberia: background paper (undated)*.

<sup>96</sup> Sida Help Desk on Human Security (2012a).

Table 5 Context analyses for Liberia conducted or commissioned by Sweden.<sup>97</sup>

Title (year)	Author	Policy areas - Swedish Policy for Security & Development 2010-2014							Linkage to operations	
		Promoting peace			Promoting security			Peace dividends	Strategic/policy level	Intervention level
		Dialogue, conflict management	Women, peace, security	RoL, TJ	DDR	SSR	SALW			
<i>Portfolio Analysis Peace and Security of Liberia (2012)</i>	Sida Help Desk								Yes	Yes
<i>Desk Study – Political Economy Analysis Liberia (2012)</i>	Sida Help Desk								Yes	No
<i>Sexual and gender based violence in Liberia (2011)</i>	GoL/UN								No	No
<i>Mänskliga rättigheter i Liberia 2010 (Human rights in Liberia)</i>	MFA								No	No
<i>Analys och förslag på möjliga kommande svenska SSR-insatser i Liberia (2009)<sup>98</sup></i>	NKSSR								Yes	Yes
<i>Economic Development – towards a Strategic Focus (2009)</i>	Sida								No	No
<i>Strategy for development cooperation with Liberia, July 2008 – June 2013 (2009)</i>	MFA								Yes	Yes
<i>Report on Gender-Based Violence in Liberia: input to policy dialogue (2009)<sup>99</sup></i>	Sida Help Desk								No	No
<i>Liberia 2008-2013: PRS, power structures and security concerns (2008)</i>	NAI								No	No
<i>Achieving pro-poor growth in Liberia (2008)</i>	Sida								Yes	No
<i>Draft Liberia Environment and Climate Analysis (2008)</i>	Göteborg University								Yes	No
<i>Analysis of public financial management in Liberia: background paper (undated)<sup>100</sup></i>	Oxford Policy Management								Yes	No

<sup>97</sup> This table includes only context analyses and other analyses, reports and studies which contain a conflict analysis dimension. The documents came from Sida and the Swedish embassy in Monrovia. For full titles of documents in the table, see reference list. Abbreviations in the table (policy areas): Rule of Law (RoL), Transitional Justice (TJ), Security Sector Reform (SSR), Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Other abbreviations: Government of Liberia (GoL), Nationella Kontaktgruppen för Säkerhetssektorreform/National Contact Group for Security Sector Reform (NKSSR), Nordic Africa Institute (NAI). Dark blue indicates there is a significant component of the policy sub-theme in the document, and light blue less significant.

<sup>98</sup> A translation of the Swedish title of the report would be "Analysis and proposals for possible future Swedish SSR-interventions in Liberia".

<sup>99</sup> This report is marked as not including a linkage to operations, although it does contain practically oriented sections, such as some preliminary listing of relevant actors in the field of GBV, which could potentially feed into planning for operations. However, these are not linked to Swedish operations as such.

<sup>100</sup> Terms of Reference for this commissioned study, to feed into the proposed Swedish Cooperation Strategy, is from 2008.

Almost all of the analyses apply, to some extent, a conflict analysis lens, although this varies greatly between the texts. Three of the analyses differ sharply in that they contain the most systematic use of conflict analysis as an overarching perspective throughout the reports: the two most recent Sida Help Desk studies (the portfolio- and political economy analysis) and the SSR analyses by the Swedish National Contact Group for SSR. The SSR analysis is probably the one that comes closest to a comprehensive and integrated conflict analysis, and is also the only one which included a field visit to Liberia. Furthermore, two of these, the SSR study and the portfolio analysis, are the only ones (together with the strategy) that offer the clearest linkage to Swedish development interventions. These include suggestions and recommendations to consider for improving and adapting Swedish support to the Liberian context.

## 5 Findings

### 5.1 Sida's support system for conflict sensitivity

Sida, integrated in the Swedish embassy in Monrovia from 2010, has undergone an intense period of transformation and adjustment as the result of a significantly increased and diversified Swedish aid portfolio in a short time span. Any assessment or reflections on how conflict sensitivity has been applied to the development cooperation with Liberia today should be seen in this light.

#### *Improved analytical capacity at the Swedish embassy*

The analytical capacity has been reinforced at the embassy during the current strategy period from 2008 until today. One coordinator for security sector reform, a temporary political affairs officer (contracted for a three-month period in 2012) as well as plans for recruiting a national programme officer will enhance the analytical capacity of the embassy. Some capacity development in conflict sensitivity in 2011-2012 and the on-going Sida Help Desk assignment for portfolio reviews of CPC countries have further advanced Sida's efforts to improve support systems for conflict sensitivity.

#### *Knowledge management*

Taking into account the above, overall findings for this report indicate that *knowledge management*, including the systematic sharing of information and knowledge among staff throughout the organisation with respect to Liberia, has received little attention. Although analysis is not always formally and explicitly integrated as a stand-alone task in job descriptions, many interviewees say that analytical tasks are part of the overall responsibility. The conclusion that very little *systematic* use is made of information and analyses is also made in a 2012 study, which observed that the challenge is "to make use of that knowledge and experience in a more structured way and ensure decision-making as a *result of* contextual understanding."<sup>101</sup> The consequence of this is that Sida has relied on context analysis done by its cooperation partners, primarily the UNDP and the WB.

A check for cross-references among the 12 analyses produced by Sida and the MFA and reviewed in this report (see Chapter 4.4) reveals that only one of these makes such a reference.<sup>102</sup> The same trend is observed when reviewing the country-, strategy- and mid-term review reports: only one of these reports makes a reference in passing to one of these 12 texts.<sup>103</sup> Almost all sources used in these reports are documents from the UN, the World Bank and other international sources, which is logical given the observation made above regarding knowledge management. While these are important and relevant sources, the document review reveals that little effort is made of taking stock of analytical work already conducted or commissioned by Sweden. The SSR

<sup>101</sup> Sida Help Desk on Human Security (2012c). Italics in original.

<sup>102</sup> Sida Help Desk on Human Security (2012c) makes a reference to the 2009 SSR-study.

<sup>103</sup> Country Strategy Report for 2010 mentions the 2009 Sida Help Desk on Human Security *Report on Gender-Based Violence in Liberia: input to policy dialogue*; p. 3, Sida (2010).

report is the only analysis that seems to have a clear link to operations, as it provided input for which type of Swedish support was to be provided in this particular area. Apart from these exceptions, very little evidence was found that the analyses produced are being systematically integrated into Swedish development cooperation, including contribution management documentation, such as assessments and decisions for the cases reviewed for this study.<sup>104</sup> Interviews also suggest that staff at the Swedish embassy have limited awareness of this material. That said, the recent steps taken by Sida to strengthen its systematic approach to conflict sensitivity (described in Chapter 3.4) are important and address some of this.

### *Conflict sensitivity*

Although staff at the Swedish embassy in Liberia are generally aware of the root-causes of the conflict, progress in terms of DNH and the use of other tools for ensuring a conflict sensitive approach of Swedish development cooperation is still very limited regarding the cases reviewed in this study. The 2012 operational plan for Sida's CPC department<sup>105</sup> is new and too early to assess, but the Sida policy on peace and security emphasised the importance of conflict sensitivity and the DNH method already in 2005. The new Support Unit in the CPC department grapples with the challenge of providing backstopping in the area of international peace and security for all of Sida's departments (although primarily focused on CPC countries). As the Support Unit, the Help Desk on Human Security and the increased priority on conflict sensitivity are so new, it is too early to make an assessment. Suffice to say that the SADEV team observed very little *systematic* use of DNH analyses in the Sida documentation reviewed for the cases.

### *Sida-MFA coordination*

Progress on moving towards an integrated embassy seems to be far advanced in the case of Liberia, perhaps as the result of a mutual need and dependency for each other's expertise and knowledge among Sida and MFA staff in the current scaling-up of Swedish support. Weekly staff meetings, including Swedish and national staff, take place regularly. Furthermore, the Swedish embassy in Monrovia, the MFA in Stockholm and the current Swedish chair of the PBC's Liberia country configuration in New York hold bi-weekly meetings by means of telephone conferences. These recently established routines and fora for communications facilitate a close relationship between the different Swedish government agencies at home and abroad. This also fosters informal working relations, crucial when sudden changes in the Liberian context may require swift decisions.

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<sup>104</sup> For instance, OECD DAC underlines the importance of utilising and applying analysis and states that it is important to "keep referring back to the political analysis and strategic choices...and keep them under review in the light of experience"; OECD DAC (2011), p. 60.

<sup>105</sup> Sida (2011), *Genomförande av policyn för fred och säkerhet för utveckling 2012*.

## 5.2 UNDP County Support Team

### *Background*

Sweden has been a supporter of the UN County Support Team (CST) from 2006, and the current agreement ensures continued support until the end of 2012. The main feature of the initial phase of the CST project (2006-2008) was humanitarian, with an additional community-based recovery and development component integrated in the intervention. The initial phase was very much focused on supporting the construction of the basic infrastructure of the state.<sup>106</sup> The current overall objective is to support capacity development of local administration to deliver essential services in support of decentralisation, consolidation of state authority and economic recovery. Specific objectives include the following: to strengthen (i) local administration capacity, (ii) local development co-ordination, and (iii) data & information management capacity, and to contribute to (iv) construction and rehabilitation of administrative buildings. With the Swedish contribution covering 93 per cent of the total CST budget for the first phase and 83 per cent for the second phase, Sweden is clearly the dominating donor. Besides the CST project, there is a similar project within the area of decentralisation funded by the European Union: the Liberian Decentralization and Local Development (LDLD) programme.<sup>107</sup> Both the CST and the LDLD share the overall objective of contributing to decentralisation in Liberia, but with separate budgets and activities.

Table 6 Basic facts about UNDP County Support Team

<b>Name of intervention</b>	<b>UNDP County Support Team</b>
<b>Implementing agency</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>Partner organisations</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs (principal partner), Ministry for Planning and Economic Affairs, Liberian Institute of Public Administration, UNOPS, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNMIL
<b>Overall objective</b>	To support capacity development of local administration to deliver essential services in support of decentralization, consolidation of state authority and economic recovery.
<b>Swedish support</b>	SEK 50 million <sup>108</sup>
<b>Timeperiod</b>	2009-2012
<b>Sida sector</b>	Local governance

### *Cooperation partners and management arrangements*

Sweden's cooperation partner for the CST support is UNDP in Liberia. Due to the capacity deficit encountered in Liberia in general as well as for this intervention in particular, UNDP applies a Direct Execution (DEX) modality. This means that UNDP is directly responsible for the execution of each and every activity within the project. Nevertheless, UNDP relies on several national implementing partners in order to roll out the various activities stipulated in the project document. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is the principal implementing agent within the government of Liberia. MIA, the Ministry for Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA) and the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia make up the Joint Steering Committee for the project. The Steering Committee guides both the CST and the

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Dominic Sam, UNDP Country Director, Liberia. Monrovia, November, 2012.

<sup>107</sup> The CST, the LDLD and a third related project, the NIMAC project, were all evaluated 2012; Dalton and Marvey (2012).

<sup>108</sup> SEK 40 million for 2009 and SEK 10 million for 2011-12.



LDLD programme and provides strategic direction and support to ensure progress is made according to plans. The CST support has undergone several transformations and adaptations along the way, as a result of changes in the Liberian context and dialogue between Sweden and UNDP. Some of these adaptations are described below.

*Adaptation I: re-design (from humanitarian to long-term development cooperation)*

Although several of the current programme components, such as construction of county administration buildings, were already part of the design from the start, it has added and strengthened certain aspects in subsequent stages, for instance the enhanced emphasis on capacity-building.

Starting in 2009, UNDP has taken small steps towards delegating management and financial responsibility to national counterparts by gradually shifting from a Direct Execution (DEX) to a partial National Execution (NEX) modality for the CST and the LDLD programme. In this case, this means that UNDP releases disbursement of funds on a quarterly basis to the project's principal national partners, such as the MIA and the MPEA.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the CST project was transformed from a humanitarian intervention to a project more characterised by a long-term perspective. This meant that the CBRD component was removed. Another important change in the project was the reinforcement of capacity-building of national institutions to ensure the project could be sustained over time. Evidence shows that the role of Sida was very decisive in the development of this new phase of the CST.<sup>110</sup> As the sole donor for the intervention at the time and with a priority to move from a humanitarian mind-set to a broader more forward-looking agenda, Sida was unusually pro-active in the re-design of the CST.

*Adaptation II: re-design (from project to programme approach)*

UNDP submitted a project proposal (ProDoc) to Sida in early 2011 for approximately USD 3.5 million for one year. This ProDoc was rejected as Sida expressed an interest in the CST evolving from a project set-up to more of a programme approach. As a result of this, a second ProDoc was approved but with a smaller amount and intended as a bridge fund for 2012. This was done so as to avoid cutting funds abruptly, and to allow reasonable time for UNDP to adequately re-design the programme in line with the UNDP-Sweden dialogue on a more integrated programme approach.<sup>111</sup> In Sida's view, CST had been too narrowly focused on reporting on individual activities, rather than being built on a theory of change which would allow for the application of a traditional logical framework approach (LFA) capturing and extending the logical chain from activity to output to outcome and impact. This is no minor transformation and interviews support the claim that Sweden was not only contributing to this shift, but rather was the *driving force* behind it.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the priority given by Sida to move from project to a programme approach regarding the

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Abibu Tamu, UNDP Liberia, November 2012.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Karin-Anette Andersson, Sida, November 2012. This is also supported by Dominic Sam, UNDP Country Director for Liberia; interview in Monrovia, November, 2012.

<sup>111</sup> While UNDP was the obvious and natural dialogue partner with Sweden, as it had implemented the project from the start, UNMIL also participated in the dialogue on the potential future phase of the CST support (Sida beslut om avtalsändring, 2006, p. 3). This may serve to illustrate the close working relationship between the various international actors in Liberia. Swedish nationals within the UN and the WB also facilitated this dialogue.

<sup>112</sup> Interviews with UNDP and Sida, Monrovia and Stockholm, November, 2012.

CST support stems from Sida's broader ambition to transform the majority of its operations supported worldwide to programme approaches in order to facilitate monitoring and result-oriented development.

*Adaptation III: re-design (ensuring synergies)*

Another critical adaptation observed relates to potential overall synergies with other similar programmes or initiatives. In this case it concerns the relationship between the CST and the closely related EU-funded LDLD programme, both of which share the overarching goal of decentralisation. Sida's role in promoting a closer CST-LDLD relationship was perhaps not as decisive as the project-to-programme shift described above. However, Sida had advocated for an evaluation to be made of the CST support, which, when materialised, included CST, LDLD and the additional intervention NIMAC.<sup>113</sup> While Sida assessed the monitoring component to be satisfactory,<sup>114</sup> the 2012 evaluation talks about missed opportunities because of "CST not holding joint monitoring visits and not making greater efforts to share county information."<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, some improvements have been made in this regard since the evaluation.<sup>116</sup> For instance, the two decentralisation programmes, the CST and the LDLD, now share a joint annual workplan, while maintaining their distinct programmes.

*Links to Sweden's support system for conflict sensitivity*

Little evidence was found that a systematic conflict sensitivity approach was applied to inform the planning of previous phases or of the new post-2012 phase of the CST. None of the reviewed Sida documentation for the CST intervention makes reference to any of the context analyses conducted or commissioned by Sweden. Although no study was made on decentralisation specifically, some contain elements of it and could potentially be useful in providing contextual background for CST programming.<sup>117</sup> This echoes similar findings in recent evaluations, such as one on Norwegian conflict prevention and peacebuilding support which states that "the real challenge is to feed commissioned research into the decision making process".<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, decentralisation is very much linked to the root-causes of conflict in Liberia and the inter-ethnic tension reflected in the country's division of 15 counties. This underscores the relevance of tools for conflict sensitive programming, further highlighted in a Sida assessment noting the risk of decentralisation potentially contributing to the resurfacing of inter-ethnic tension if not managed cautiously.<sup>119</sup> However, this is not elaborated on or further explored in a systematic way to identify strategies and possible action to mitigate this development, should it arise.

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<sup>113</sup> Dalton and Marvey (2012).

<sup>114</sup> Assessment memo, July, 2011, p. 14.

<sup>115</sup> Dalton and Marvey (2012), p. 48.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Abibu Tamu, UNDP, Monrovia. November 2012.

<sup>117</sup> See for example Nordic Africa Institute (2008), and Nationella Kontaktgruppen för Säkerhetssektorreform (2009). The two recent desk studies authored by the Sida Help Desk on Human Security (both 2012) also address decentralization to some extent.

<sup>118</sup> Bennet *et al.*, p. 128. This is also discussed above in Chapter 3.3.

<sup>119</sup> When discussing risks of decentralisation, Sida mentions that "decentralisation can be seen as promoting ethnic and regional differences rather than the cohesive central state."; Sida (2012), *Assessment MEMO*, p.12.

*National ownership*

Relations between the donor and the implementing partner, in this case Sida and UNDP, seem to have been constant and maintained throughout the roll out of the project. They have maintained a close dialogue, not only during the design phase of new contributions, but during the implementation phase to ensure, to the extent possible, that the project is on track. The CST project is still guided by the DEX modality with UNDP maintaining financial management, although a gradual shift is taking place to hand over management responsibilities to the national institutions, with a view to moving to the National Execution (NEX) modality when the situation allows for it. Nevertheless, much remains to be done before national ownership can become a reality but the small steps already taken to facilitate the DEX-to-NEX transition are important.

### 5.3 Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Programme

The aim of the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Programme (LSFRP) is to rehabilitate and maintain 580 km of feeder roads in the three counties of Lofa, Bong and Nimba, located in the north-west and known as Liberia's bread basket. The LSFRP promotes economic development and trade by supporting Liberia's efforts to re-establish basic infrastructure after the civil war by maintaining a feeder roads network designed to withstand the rainy seasons.<sup>120</sup> In 2009 Sida provided SEK 100 million for activities in Lofa and Bong for 2009–2012.<sup>121</sup> The selection of counties was based on, among other things, agricultural potential and the fact that both the World Bank and USAID had ongoing agricultural projects in those counties prior to the conflict.<sup>122</sup>

Table 7 Basic facts about the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Programme

<b>Name of intervention</b>	<b>Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Programme (LSFRP)</b>
<b>Implementing agency</b>	Ministry of Public Works
<b>Partner organisations</b>	HIFAB International (project manager)
<b>Overall objective</b>	To support the government's efforts in re-establishing basic infrastructure and maintaining the road network passable during and after the rainy seasons, demonstrating substantial and visible benefits to the population
<b>Swedish support</b>	SEK 218 million
<b>Timeperiod</b>	2009–2014 <sup>123</sup>
<b>Sida sector</b>	Infrastructure

Sida made four adjustments during the course of the implementation of the LSFRP programme. This included the geographical expansion of support to a third county (Nimba), an extension and increased support for activities in Lofa and Bong, as well as enhanced focus on capacity-building, primarily for the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) and entrepreneurs. The four adjustments are presented and discussed below.

<sup>120</sup> Sida (2009), Assessment memo, 29 May 2009 p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Sida (2009), Decision, 10 June 2009.

<sup>122</sup> Sida (2009), Assessment memo, 29 May 2009 p. 7.

<sup>123</sup> The Nimba component was added in 2012.

*Adjustment I: increased support (geographical expansion to Nimba County)*

The first adjustment followed from a request by the Liberian government and consisted of a geographical expansion of the LSFRP to Nimba County to a budgeted cost of SEK 92 million.<sup>124</sup> Sida's argument for broadened support was that the activities in Lofa and Bong, although successful, were "not nearly sufficient" to meet Liberia's needs.<sup>125</sup> Sida underlined the links between sustainable road infrastructure, poverty reduction, economic growth, access to services, local governance structures, and peace and security.<sup>126</sup> The budget was later increased by an additional SEK 11 million.<sup>127</sup>

*Adjustment II and III: extension and increased financial support*

Following another request from the Liberian government, Sida decided in 2012 to extend LSFRP activities in the two counties of Lofa and Bong, and to increase financial support with an additional SEK 15 million. Due to a lack of capacity at the MPW and among road entrepreneurs responsible for rehabilitation and maintenance work, programme implementation in Lofa and Bong was "heavily delayed".<sup>128</sup> With this extension, activities in all three counties were integrated in one joint activity plan.

*Adjustment IV: re-design (increased focus on capacity-building)*

The fourth adjustment consisted of an increased focus on capacity-building and training for contractors and MPW staff. During its first year of implementation, the LSFRP addressed capacity-building and institutional strengthening in an "ad hoc manner".<sup>129</sup> Over time, the programme broadened its focus "from mainly road construction to include also capacity development".<sup>130</sup> Compared to the initial project proposal regarding Lofa and Bong, the proposal for Nimba County emphasised the importance of the MPW and local contractors to acquire adequate capacity.<sup>131</sup> Concrete capacity-building measures included, for example, training for local contractors on how to present offers and set prices. An effort was made to select more experienced contractors and to support them better in the field.

*Reflections on the adjustments*

A first question relates to whether Sida considered the potential consequences of the adjustments on other cooperation partners engaged in similar work. With regard to the first adjustment, Sida stated, similarly to its reasoning for the selection of Lofa and Bong, that the criteria for county selection included agricultural potential and the fact that both the WB and USAID supported agricultural projects in Nimba County. According to Sida, the feeder roads component of these projects was insufficient to facilitate access to markets.<sup>132</sup> However, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and BHP Billiton, a mining company, are

<sup>124</sup> Sida (2011), Decision, June 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Sida (2011), Liberian Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County, 2011–2014. Assessment memo, 2011-03-25, rev. 2011-06-16, p. 5.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>127</sup> SADEV did not have access to the documentation regarding this increase, which is why the increase is not included as a case of adaptation in the report.

<sup>128</sup> Sida (2012), Liberia Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP), Extension of Feeder Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance in Lofa and Bong Countries. Beslut om insats, 2012-03-06.

<sup>129</sup> Sida (2010), Monitoring of the Liberia-Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP), 12 July 2010, p. i.

<sup>130</sup> Sida (2012), Assessment memo, 2 February 2012, p. 6; see also Ministry of Public Works (2010) Project expansion proposal regarding Nimba County, revised February 2011, p.5; and Sida(2011), Assessment memo 16 June 2011, p. 6.

<sup>131</sup> Ministry of Public Works (2010), Project expansion proposal regarding Nimba County, revised February 2011, p. 5.

<sup>132</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 2011-03-25, revised 2011-06-16, p. 7.

other actors involved in the feeder roads sector in Nimba County.<sup>133</sup> When Sida's monitoring consultant met with representatives of the ILO to learn about their feeder roads projects, which were being implemented in Lofa, Bong and Nimba, it was noted that development partners shared a common problem in that there was a lack of contractors. There was "such a pressure on...existing contractors that they engaged in many projects scattered all over the country". It was also noted that donors had "no database or information available of where and how the contractors are engaged by the various development partners".<sup>134</sup> Increased coordination together with other donors could have enabled the LSFRP to tackle this problem, make more strategic selections of contractors, and improve programme implementation.

Regarding the adaptation of increased focus on capacity-building, the LSFRP did include a capacity-building component from the outset. This included training of MPW staff, contractors and communities.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, Sida cooperated together with the GIZ and the ILO to ensure that the latter's training courses could benefit the LSFRP.<sup>136</sup> One of the interviewees noted that the MPW benefited from the GIZ's procurement trainings, and that training within the framework of the LSFRP contributed to increasing contractors' completion rates. Sida took a number of measures early on to facilitate programme implementation. Sida procured, on behalf of the MPW, the services of a consultancy company, HIFAB International, to assist the ministry in managing the LSFRP.<sup>137</sup> Sida recruited additional consultants to assist the MPW in programme monitoring<sup>138</sup> and preparation of a project proposal.<sup>139</sup>

Nevertheless, it is possible to detect a somewhat overambitious tendency in Sida's initial assessments of how the LSFRP would evolve. For example, Sida calculated that private sector development would "result naturally from the increased opportunities available to contractors", and that government capacity would increase as a result of their "involvement in sub-project planning and execution".<sup>140</sup> This does not entirely correspond to Sida's initial risk assessment, where Sida stated that management and implementation capacities at the MPW and among private sector contractors were "weak",<sup>141</sup> and that, without external support, there would be "obvious risks for delays and difficulties".<sup>142</sup> No assessment was made of training needs of key stakeholders before the LSFRP was launched.<sup>143</sup> Donors face difficult choices when working in a post-conflict environment. But given that limited resources and capacity in Liberia's public and private sectors were known to Sida, one may argue that the emphasis on capacity-building could have been made at an earlier stage of the programme, possibly even before launching it. Such a measure, combined with increased donor coordination,

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<sup>133</sup> Ministry of Public Works (2010), Project expansion proposal regarding Nimba County revised February 2011, p. 8.

<sup>134</sup> Sida (2011), Monitoring of the Liberia-Swedish Feeder Road Project (LSFRP), 25 February 2011, Annex C.3.

<sup>135</sup> Sida (2012), Assessment memo, 2 February 2012, p. 3; Ministry of Public Works (2009), Project proposal regarding Lofa and Bong, 19 May 2009, p. 8; Sida (2009), Assessment memo, 26 May 2009, p. 5. See also Sida (2010), Monitoring of the Liberia-Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP), 12 July 2010, p. 4.

<sup>136</sup> Sida (2009), Assessment memo, 29 May 2009 p. 8, p. 10.

<sup>137</sup> Sida (2009), Assessment memo, 2009-05-29, p. 11.

<sup>138</sup> Sida (2010), Decision, 25 February 2010.

<sup>139</sup> Ministry of Public Works (2009), Project proposal regarding Lofa and Bong, 19 May 2009, p. 6; Sida (2009), Decision, 12 March 2009.

<sup>140</sup> Sida (2009), Assessment memo, 29 May 2009 p. 6–7.

<sup>141</sup> Sida (2011), Liberian Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County, 2011–2014. Assessment memo, 2011-03-25, rev. 2011-06-16; see also Sida (2009), Liberian Swedish Feeder Roads Programme. Assessment memo, 2009-05-29, p. 11.

<sup>142</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 2011-03-25, revised 2011-06-16, p. 12.

<sup>143</sup> Sida (2010), Monitoring of the Liberia-Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP), 12 July 2010, p. 4.

could have reduced the need of not only having to extend the agreement period, but also of having to increase financial support ad hoc.

## 5.4 Election support and HD Centre

### *Background*

Liberia's electoral cycle in 2011 included presidential and parliamentary elections as well as a referendum. These were Liberia's second general elections after the civil war, and the country's newly formed national institutions conducted the elections without massive support from UNMIL and the international community, as was the case during the 2005 elections. To help facilitate the process, Sweden supported two projects aimed at strengthening Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC). The first project included logistical and operational support to the NEC and was channeled through a UNDP-administered basket fund. Sida adjusted its support by means of a financial replenishment and by disbursing funds earlier than anticipated, which is discussed below. The second project was implemented by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), a Geneva-based NGO specializing in mediation. The aim of the project was to strengthen trust between the NEC and Liberia's political parties and presidential candidates. In addition, Sweden financed another project, also implemented by the HD Centre, aimed at supporting Liberia in its post-civil war reconciliation efforts. As the second and third projects were set up ad hoc, they are treated below as cases of adaptation in their own right.

### 5.4.1 Support to the 2010–2012 Liberian Electoral Cycle

The first project was entitled "Support to the 2010–2012 Liberian Electoral Cycle". The Liberian government and UNDP signed the project document in 2010. The objective was to strengthen the NEC's capacity, enhance Liberia's electoral processes and improve conformity of Liberia's legal and administrative framework with international standards. The project was the international community's main tool to support Liberia's 2011 general elections.

Table 8 Basic facts about Support to the 2010–2012 Liberian Electoral Cycle

<b>Name of intervention</b>	<b>Support to the 2010–2012 Liberian Electoral Cycle</b>
<b>Implementing agency</b>	UNDP
<b>Partner organisations</b>	National Elections Commission (NEC)
<b>Overall objective</b>	To strengthen the capacity of the National Elections Commission, enhance the electoral processes and improve Liberia's legal and administrative framework with international standards.
<b>Swedish support</b>	SEK 50 million
<b>Timeperiod</b>	2010 – 2012
<b>Sida sector</b>	Elections

Sida decided in July 2010 to support the project with SEK 40 million, with two disbursements of SEK 20 million to be made in 2010 and 2011 respectively.<sup>144</sup> Sida signaled that the amount, “in response to the conditions of the process and the project itself”, could be revised.<sup>145</sup>

*Adjustment I: increased support (including revision of disbursement plan)*

Following a UNDP request, Sida decided in 2010 to increase its support to the fund with an additional SEK 10 million and to release its second SEK 20 million disbursement already in 2010, which was earlier than planned. UNDP informed Sida that election preparations were delayed and that this necessitated a revision of the project’s original time plan.<sup>146</sup> In addition, the project continued to suffer from a funding gap, which especially affected civic and voter education, one of the areas which Sweden had emphasised from the outset.<sup>147</sup> Sweden’s total support thus amounted to SEK 50 million, making Sweden one of the largest donors to the fund. UNDP’s chief technical advisor underscored in an interview that Sida not only made its second and third disbursements to the project on one single occasion, but that Sida also demonstrated a flexible approach with regard to agency requirements of receiving progress reports before disbursement of new funds.<sup>148</sup>

#### 5.4.2 HD Centre

*Adaptation I: quick new support*

The second project, ‘National Dialogue for a Peaceful and Credible Election in Liberia’, was set up more ad hoc and in response to sudden and increased political tension that could potentially have led to violence. In the run-up to the national elections in 2011, there were few signs of any real dialogue among Liberia’s political parties. One sign of the lack of communication could be seen at the NEC’s Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC), a forum for electoral-related technical issues, where senior party officials did not fully participate.<sup>149</sup> The opposition questioned the NEC’s neutrality and claimed that Liberia’s political environment suffered from a lack of equal opportunities for all parties. One of the leading opposition parties boycotted the IPCC meetings altogether, and some opposition parties threatened not to abide by the rules and hinted that they might resort to violence if the electoral process (in their eyes) was skewed.<sup>150</sup>

Senior UNMIL officials approached the Swedish embassy in Monrovia regarding support to a HD Centre mediation project.<sup>151</sup> Sweden’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs recommended that support be provided to the HD Centre, not least because its senior advisor for Africa, David Lambo, had a “broad network among African leaders”.<sup>152</sup> There were requests from several actors, including UNMIL, the NEC and

<sup>144</sup> Sida (2010), Decision July 2010.

<sup>145</sup> Sida (2010), Assessment memo, 23 June 2010, p. 14.

<sup>146</sup> Sida (2010), Decision, 30 november 2010.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Rudolf Elbling, Monrovia, 15 November 2012.

<sup>149</sup> HD Centre (2012), Final Report: August 2011 – March 2012 – National Dialogue for a Peaceful and Credible Election in Liberia, p. 7; Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> HD Centre (2012), p. 14; Sida (2011), p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> Sida (2011), In-depth Assessment of National Dialogue for a Peaceful and Credible Election in Liberia: A project by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

Liberian party leaders, that the HD Centre complement the UNDP-administered electoral cycle project.<sup>153</sup> Sida decided in August 2012 to support the HD Centre's project with SEK 2.3 million.<sup>154</sup>

Table 9 Basic facts about National Dialogue for a Peaceful and Credible Election in Liberia

Name of intervention	National Dialogue for a Peaceful and Credible Election in Liberia
<b>Implementing agency</b>	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre)
<b>Partner organisations</b>	None
<b>Overall objective</b>	To strengthen the NEC and Liberia's electoral process in order to achieve peaceful and credible elections.
<b>Swedish support</b>	SEK 2.3 million
<b>Timeperiod</b>	2011 – 2012
<b>Sida sector</b>	Democracy, human rights and gender equality

This project's overall objective was linked to the electoral cycle project in terms of seeking to strengthen the NEC and Liberia's electoral process and to help facilitate peaceful and credible elections. More specifically, the project sought to open up informal channels of dialogue between Liberian political actors, for the most part Liberia's five main political parties and the country's presidential candidates. By increasing these actors' confidence in the NEC, and the electoral process more generally, the project aimed at preventing any outbreaks of violent conflict.<sup>155</sup>

#### *Adjustment II: extension*

Following a request from the HD Centre, Sida decided in 2011 to grant a three-month no-cost extension to the centre's mediation project. The centre's activities at that point continued to support informal dialogue among Liberia's political leaders, but they also expanded as the centre undertook preparatory work for another project aimed at supporting Liberia's reconciliation efforts (see below).<sup>156</sup> One of the interviewees indicated that the extension was made in order to provide the HD Centre with additional time to prepare a new project, and to ensure that such an initiative enjoyed the support of the Liberian government.<sup>157</sup> According to the interviewee, the extension was approved in a short timespan during the Christmas holidays, and required swift action and close cooperation between the very few staff members on duty at the Swedish embassy in Monrovia and Sida headquarters in Stockholm. It is probably fair to say that this rapid mobilisation of joint Sida-MFA action at a time of highly reduced staff went beyond standard routines and what could be normally expected.

#### *Adaptation III: re-design*

In 2012 Sida decided to fund a new HD Centre project entitled "Continuation of Informal Dialogues while Preparing for National Dialogue in Liberia"<sup>158</sup> for an initial three-month period in 2012.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 8

<sup>154</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 7.

<sup>155</sup> HD Centre (2011), Project proposal, p. 9–12.

<sup>156</sup> HD Centre (2012), Final Report: August 2011–March 2012 – National Dialogue for a Peaceful and Credible Election in Liberia", p. 10; Sida (2012), Assessment memo, 14 February 2012, p. 3.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Charles Lawrence, November 2012, Monrovia.

<sup>158</sup> Sida (2012), Decision, 12 March 2012.



Table 10 Basic facts about the Continuation of Informal Dialogues while Preparing for National Dialogue in Liberia

<b>Name of intervention</b>	<b>Continuation of Informal Dialogues while Preparing for National Dialogue in Liberia</b>
<b>Implementing agency</b>	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre)
<b>Partner organisations</b>	None
<b>Overall objective</b>	To assist Liberia in reconciling its political actors in the aftermath of the 2011 elections and support the coordination of Liberia's reconciliation and national dialogue efforts for long-term national healing.
<b>Swedish support</b>	SEK 1.3 million
<b>Timeperiod</b>	2012
<b>Sida sector</b>	Democracy, human rights and gender equality

With respect to Liberia's long-term national reconciliation process, the HD Centre would, as a first step, facilitate dialogue among Liberian political actors and civil society in order to identify issues to be addressed. In a second step, the centre would assist UNMIL and Liberian institutions in designing a dialogue and reconciliation process. Finally, the centre would facilitate the adoption of a reconciliation agenda by the political parties.<sup>160</sup>

#### *Adjustment IV: extension*

Sida approved an extension of the project, prolonging the project's activity period by an additional six months.<sup>161</sup> According to Sida, the extension was made because of a delay in the implementation of project activities. This delay, in turn, was due to Liberian stakeholders' "lengthy consultations" and "slow progress" in their work to finalise a reconciliation roadmap.<sup>162</sup>

#### *Reflections*

With respect to the HD Centre's mediation project, Sida noted in its assessment that time was a critical factor, given the fact that Liberia's political parties had already begun their official campaigns.<sup>163</sup> The HD Centre stated in its final report that they arrived in Monrovia only one month prior to the October elections and that they managed to establish relations "despite the late start of the project".<sup>164</sup> Preparations were key, given that there were risks associated with the project, including the risk of worsening relations between Liberia's political players.<sup>165</sup> The HD Centre conducted six missions to Liberia from late 2009 to mid-2011, meeting with both political leaders and civil society representatives.<sup>166</sup> However, because general elections in Liberia occur every six years, the facts in themselves should be no reason for the project to have started sooner if needed. UNDP's chief technical advisor, although positive about the support, echoed

<sup>159</sup> Agreement between Sida and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue also known as the HD Centre: "Continuation of Informal Dialogues while Preparing for National Dialogue in Liberia" 1 April 2012–30 June 2012.

<sup>160</sup> Sida (2012), Assessment memo, 14 February 2012, p. 3–4.

<sup>161</sup> Until the end of 2012. Sida-HD Centre agreement II.

<sup>162</sup> Sida (2012), Decision, 30 July 2012.

<sup>163</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 10.

<sup>164</sup> HD Centre (2011), National Dialogue for a peaceful and credible election in Liberia", Final Results Report August 2011–March 2012, p. 4.

<sup>165</sup> HD Centre (2011), Funding proposal, p. 14.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the sentiments of the HD Centre's final report and questioned whether the project could perhaps have been set up at an earlier stage.<sup>167</sup>

At the same time, it should be noted that the mediation project is described, by all interviewees and by the HD Centre in their reports, as both successful and appreciated, among Liberian as well as international actors, including top government officials. According to one interviewee, it could be argued that the intervention could have begun sooner, but that tensions among Liberia's political leaders did in fact increase as the elections drew closer,<sup>168</sup> with inflammatory statements by the youth wing of the opposition party Congress for Democratic Change (CDC). Another interviewee pointed out that the Swedish embassy maintained dialogue with the HD Centre in the late spring and summer of 2011, and that this had been important to ensure that the initiative was supported by the Liberian government. In the summer of 2011, the embassy explored the possibility of providing support through the MFA due to the urgent need for implementation. Another important note to make is the HD Centre's relation to UNDP's electoral cycle project. The latter was largely a blueprint from similar UNDP election projects elsewhere. Although the project in Liberia took into account lessons learned, there was also a risk that it might "hamper alternative and new ways of addressing certain challenges".<sup>169</sup> By supporting the HD Centre's mediation project, Sida complemented the activities of the electoral cycle project, something which could have been cumbersome to do, at least within the same time-frame, had the objective been to get other donors on board.

What about the impact of the HD Centre's dialogue and mediation project on other actors involved in similar work? In addition to the track II mediation conducted by the HD Centre, there was track I mediation carried out by actors such as the ICGL,<sup>170</sup> the UN and ECOWAS.<sup>171</sup> It is clear from the HD Centre's reports and the interviews that the centre coordinated its activities with a range of actors, including the UN and ECOWAS, and that collaboration between them is perceived to be successful. One of the interviewees underlined that the Swedish Embassy in Monrovia had continuous preparatory information exchanges with, for example, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the HD Centre. According to Sida, the HD Centre's added value was its independence and impartiality and its capability to operate informally outside the media spotlight.<sup>172</sup> The HD Centre had access to the very top layers of Liberia's political leadership,<sup>173</sup> and the aim was to strengthen the other mediation efforts.<sup>174</sup> Consensus among the interviewees suggests that Sweden's MFA has a track record of good relations with the HD Centre, which is likely to have facilitated quick action.

As mentioned above, Sida extended the HD Centre's project on dialogue and reconciliation, because of a delay in the implementation of project activities. There are a

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<sup>167</sup> Interview with Rudolf Elbling, Monrovia, 15 November 2011.

<sup>168</sup> A similar description is made by the HD Centre (2011), Funding proposal, p. 7.

<sup>169</sup> Sida (2010), Support to the 2010–2012 Liberian Electoral Cycle, assessment memo, 23 June 2010, p. 8.

<sup>170</sup> The International Contact Group for Liberia (ICGL) includes the following members: the African Union, ECOWAS, UN, WB, Ghana, Germany, Nigeria, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US.

<sup>171</sup> HD Centre (2011), National Dialogue for a peaceful and credible election in Liberia", Final Results Report August 2011–March 2012, p. 5.

<sup>172</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 8.

<sup>173</sup> HD Centre (2011), National Dialogue for a peaceful and credible election in Liberia", Final Results Report August 2011–March 2012, p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> Sida (2011), Assessment memo, 1 August 2011, p. 8 and p. 11.

number of Liberian actors relevant for the work of reconciliation and national dialogue, including the Nobel laureate Leymah Gbowee, government ministries, the Governance Commission, and the Independent Human Rights Commission, the latter with a mandate to develop a framework for the implementation of the recommendations of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 2009 report. There have also been different views as to how much and what kind of reconciliation would be appropriate. Sida underlined in its assessment memo that reconciliation is one of the Liberian government's priorities, but that not much progress was made, not least regarding the implementation of the TRC report's recommendations.<sup>175</sup>

Given that information about the slow-moving national reconciliation process, the complexity of the subject matter, and the large number of actors involved was known beforehand, it could be argued that Sida could have foreseen that three months would be too short a period for the HD Centre to carry out its activities as planned.

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<sup>175</sup> Sida (2012), Assessment memo, 14 February 2012, p. 2

## 6 Conclusions

The main questions explored in this study centred on how Sweden has adapted development cooperation in conflict and post-conflict situations as a result of changes in the local context, and the extent to which this was facilitated by support systems for conflict sensitivity, including conflict analysis. Further studies and evaluations could provide support for more solid conclusions and recommendations. However, these are the conclusions drawn from the findings in this report.

**Strong position of Sweden opens up opportunities.** Sweden has carved out a strong place for itself in Liberia, by significantly increasing Swedish aid volumes as well as diversifying its portfolio. In addition to Sida's bilateral development cooperation, which ranks second in Liberia, Sweden has developed a platform of mutual trust with the government of Liberia. This has resulted in a set of shared commitments on a number of high profile issues on political and economic affairs, most notably the UN PBC's and the New Deal's engagement in the country as well as Liberia's aspirations for accession to the WTO. It remains to be seen how well Sweden capitalises on this in coming years. Although analytical capacity at the Swedish embassy has been recently reinforced, challenges remain to balance scaled-up commitments and capacity.

**Availability of context analyses, but uneven application.** The challenge of managing Sweden's broadened commitments and rapidly increasing aid volumes during an intense and complex transition phase from a humanitarian to a long-term development context is likely to have limited possibilities for consolidating systems for quality assurance regarding analysis and conflict sensitivity. Context analyses on issues of high relevance for Liberia, conducted or commissioned by Sweden during the current strategy period from 2008 until today, are available but are not routinely spread among staff at the Swedish embassy in Liberia. As a result of this, the embassy has perhaps been overly reliant on its partners' context analysis, while at the same time, the significant body of work produced in-house is to a large extent unknown among the staff. The observation that context analyses are often one-off events ticked-off on checklists once finalised, is echoed in previous evaluations. The recent reinforcement of Sida's department for conflict and post-conflict cooperation with a Support Unit is noted and is well placed to continue to develop this area further.

**Adaptation due to contextual, but also organisational, changes.** Contrary to what may be expected, we found an important part of the adaptations of Swedish development cooperation associated with organisational aspects rather than as the result of contextual changes in Liberia. This follows from the observations and conclusions already made. As the use of context analyses and conflict sensitivity is not systematically applied throughout the intervention cycle for the case-studies reviewed in this report, it should come as no surprise that adaptation does not always occur as the result of changes in the local context. Findings suggest that half of the adaptations were due to contextual changes (such as increased support due to the need for

geographical expansion) and the other half were due to organisational changes (such as shift from a project to a programme approach).

**Twelve adaptations** were found in the four interventions reviewed in this study, including five re-designs (two of which strengthened capacity-building components), three increased support, three extensions and one quick new support. Flexibility in terms of disbursement of funds to the electoral cycle project before completed reports were received, pro-active engagement to re-design the CST project and quick new support for the HD Centre can be viewed in a favorable light and are examples of constructive use of adaptations. Some adaptations of the LSFRP, on the other hand, came about as a result of, among other things, weak donor coordination.

In a time when the calls are intensifying for more holistic and integrated approaches to the world's most challenging situations of conflict and fragility, the demand for *understanding* the complexity of the interplay between that environment and internationally supported interventions, and *adapting* aid, is increasing.

**To allow for adaptation of aid, when the circumstances call for it, should be a natural part of development cooperation. However, with adequate strategic and operational planning, including applying a conflict sensitivity lens, the need for some adaptations could be reduced, thereby making development cooperation more effective. Knowledge management could play a key role in this process.**

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## Appendix 1. Persons interviewed

### *In Sweden*

Annika Nordin Jayawardena, Head of Evaluation Unit, Sida  
Bo Forsberg, Director, Diakonia  
Björn Holmberg, Director, Swedepeace  
Carly Jönsson, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA)\*  
Erik Wallin, former Programme Officer for Liberia, Sida\*  
Gisela Strand, Country Director for Liberia, Sida  
Hans Lundborg, MFA  
Henrik Moberg, Team Liberia, Sida  
Jens Schörlien, Sthlm Policy Group  
Karin-Anette Andersson, former Country Director for Liberia, Sida  
Kjell-Åke Nordqvist, Stockholm School of Theology  
Lena Myrgård, Evaluation Unit, Sida  
Lena Sundh, MFA  
Monica Wulfing, Folke Bernadotte Academy  
Niklas Eriksson, MFA  
Per Carlson, Swedish Ambassador for Liberia, MFA  
Pernilla Trädgårdh, Lead Policy Specialist for Peace and Security, Sida  
Samer al Fayadh, former Programme Officer for Liberia, Sida\*  
Sara Flygare, Evaluation Unit, Sida  
Staffan Tillander, President, UN Peacebuilding Commission, Liberia configuration, New York\*  
Ulf Brudfors, monitoring consultant, HIFAB International\*  
Urban Sjöström, former Programme Officer for Liberia, Sida\*  
Åsa Wallton, Advisor in Peace and Security, Sida

### *In Liberia*

Abibu Tamu, Programme Manager, UNDP Liberia  
Börje Mattsson, *Chargé d'Affaires a.i.*, Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia  
Charles Lawrence, National Programme Officer, Sida, Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia  
Christian Herbert, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Public Works, Liberia  
Coleen Littlejohn, Deputy Country Manager, World Bank  
Dominic Sam, Country Director, UNDP Liberia  
Emmanuel Baker, Special Implementation Unit, Ministry of Public Works, Liberia  
Ghosh Mrityunjoy, HIFAB-Liberia  
Gisela Strand, Country Director, Sida, Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia  
Inguna Dobraja, Country Manager, World Bank  
Jallah Kennedy, National Programme Officer, Sida, Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia  
Katja Svensson, SSR coordinator, Folke Bernadotte Academy, Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia  
Robert Backlund, Programme Officer, Sida, Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia  
Tiah Nagme, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Liberia

## Appendix 2. Forms of adaptation

*This is an inclusive list of possible ways to divide different types of adaptation, subdivided in three levels: intervention level, portfolio level and dialogue level. The intervention level refers to changes within one individual intervention and portfolio level focuses on adaptation concerning several interventions, sectors or the entire aid portfolio. Finally, dialogue deals with non-monetary activities and measures, which may or may not be linked to a specific intervention. The dialogue level, in particular, involves Sida-MFA coordination.*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Forms of adaptation</b>
<i>Intervention</i>	Withdrawal of support (permanently) Frozen support (temporarily, with possibility of resuming support) Increased or decreased financial support Quick new financial support (outside regular application procedures) Re-design Extension Change of implementing partner (with same or similar content) Lobbying to support or facilitate intervention (linked to dialogue) Assume support role (expertise, advice, other non-monetary support) Adapt contingency plan for intervention
<i>Portfolio</i>	Redistribution of funds between priority areas (linked to cooperation strategy) Redistribution of funds among interventions Redistribution of funds among support channel (the state, civil society, multilateral organisation etc.) Adapt contingency plan for overall portfolio
<i>Dialogue</i>	Denunciation Political support (for government, civil society or other actor) Lobbying (in general or linked to a specific theme) Negotiations (peace or cease-fire negotiations) Renegotiation of bilateral cooperation agreement with the country

## Appendix 3. Adaptation of Swedish development cooperation in conflict- and post-conflict situations.

This process scheme does not pretend to provide a complete picture of the process from contextual changes to adaptations. However, it does serve to illustrate the main components in the overall process, and the focus of this study.

